



PRESS RELEASE, WINGS OF HOPE FOR AFRICA FOUNDATION

Calgary charity recognizes World Refugee Day with early kickoff to refugee relief campaign for Burundians

HEADLINE: United Nations Refugee Agency's appeal for Burundi sparks help from Calgary charity

June 4th, 2018

A Calgary humanitarian organization will kick off an emergency relief campaign for Burundian refugees on June 15. Wings of Hope for Africa Foundation aims to raise at least \$15,000 to help families who have fled severe flooding, political unrest and destitute conditions in Burundi and are now living in an Ugandan refugee camp.

The fundraising campaign will launch just five days ahead of World Refugee Day on June 20. The campaign will end on Aug. 30. Charity founder Aline Nzeyimana says it's important to increase awareness about the plight of refugees. She was once one herself. The married mother of one son grew up in Burundi in East Africa and came to Canada in 2005 as a refugee.

She encourages Calgary area residents to consider helping these refugees who come from one of the world's poorest nations. "Even though they are far away, they are human beings," says Nzeyimana. "You can uplift someone in need. We are fortunate in Canada to be able to help others."

Nzeyimana and a small group of volunteers will deliver supplies to Burundians living in the Nakivale refugee camp within Uganda, starting November 30th. The team will respond to the urgent call for assistance and in-kind donations requested by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Money raised from the campaign will be used to buy and distribute food, water, soap, blankets, sanitary napkins, and other basic necessities in the Nakivale camp. It's estimated that close to 100,000 refugees, many from Burundi, are living there.

Wings of Hope will help as many families as possible through food, goods and community supports. Supplies will be bought in Uganda. "Our goal is to help 100 families," said Nzeyimana.

Wings of Hope for Africa in Canada will work together with the UNHCR to deliver the supplies. With a strong track record of many international aid projects, Wings of Hope is well positioned to monitor and evaluate the program at key points.

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The refugee campaign comes at a time when Burundi faces longstanding issues politically and is also facing natural disaster hurdles currently. The United Nations is reporting that at least 75,000 people have been displaced since January due to flash floods in the Bujumbura rural region of Gatumba following heavy rainfall in the region. As of May 27, UNHCR, known also as the UN Refugee Agency, estimates that 424,470 Burundian refugees have fled since political violence erupted three years ago.

Political unrest concerning President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a successful, third term sparked violence in 2015, forcing thousands of fearful Burundians to flee to neighboring countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and as far away as Uganda and Zambia.

Despite recent high-level efforts to engage the Burundian government, there have not been significant improvements in the security and human rights situation on the ground. The deteriorating economic situation is also a cause for concern and could trigger further displacement.

Charitable Background - Wings of Hope for Africa

In 2016, Wings of Hope conducted a successful campaign to help Burundians living in Rwanda's Mahama Camp, the country's largest refugee settlement. A total of \$8,496 was raised thanks to the generosity of Albertans. Nzeyimana, board member Jordan Mack and a volunteer photographer bought and delivered 100 mattresses, 1,200 pairs of undergarments, 118 shoes for women and children, as well as 60 shorts and 60 T-shirts, 40 pants and 40 long-sleeved shirts for children. The donations were given to UNHCR representatives to distribute.

Wings of Hope for Africa, a registered Canadian charity based in Calgary, is dedicated to emergency relief, education, sponsoring children in need, and developing self-sufficiency programs like community gardens in order to end poverty in Burundi. Since its creation in September 2011, Wings of Hope has successfully completed more than 30 projects, ranging from promoting education to income generation, healthcare, and disaster relief.

In July 2016, we delivered supplies to Burundian refugees during our long-awaited trip to Rwanda's largest refugee settlement, the Mahama Camp. We delivered over 100 mattresses, plus clothing, shoes, and personal hygiene products for the Burundian refugees. We also did our absolute best to bring a ray of hope and optimism to those in living in desperate conditions – showing them that the world knows and cares about them.

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Your Donation

Donation to the project are welcome through the charity's website www.wingsofhopeforafrica.ca/donate You can also send a cheque to the address above, payable to Wings of Hope for Africa Foundation.

For an interview on the Burundi refugee project or feature on Wings of Hope for Africa, contact founder Aline Nzeyimana at 403-815-0037 or email us at info@wingsofhopeforafrica.ca. For further information, call communications assistant Laura Tester at 587-439-2663.





Our Founder, Aline, with young children of the Mahama Camp in Rwanda.