

# World Refugee Day gets ten-day mini film festival lead up

To honour Refugee Day on 20 June 2105, the Refugee Social Services in Durban will be hosting 'The Other People's Film Festival', a mini film festival happening in venues in and around Durban from 12 to 20 June.

The focus this year will be on creating awareness around the stories of forced migration and refugees and aims to promote dignity, respect, understanding, tolerance and human rights for all people.



Director of the Refugee Social Services, with Sandile Nzuza: film festival project manager Image by: Publicity Matters

Funded by Oxfam in South Africa and UNHCR, the films are provided with courtesy of the Tricontinents Human Rights Film Festival with films from Africa, the Middle East, North America and Europe.

There will be screenings in partner organisations - including Alliance Française de Durban; Lawyers for Human Rights; Archie's Cafe at the Diakonika Centre; Right2Know; Legal Resources Centre; and Refugee Pastoral Care at the Denis Hurley Centre.

"We plan to use the opportunity of World Refugee Day to highlight the contribution of the refugee community to our society," says Yasmin Rajah, Director of Refugee Social Services. "Each event in the festival will be free of charge and open to the public. All are welcome, as we seek to build a stronger sense of compassion, understanding and tolerance among all South Africans for people who have faced great turmoil and hardships in their homelands, forcing them under threat of persecution to seek asylum in our country."

## Opening Spanish film

The opening film, a documentary, will be screened at 5pm on Friday, 12 June at the Diakonika Centre. *'The Door of No Return'* is a Spanish-language film, with English subtitles and was recognised at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). Alphonse, a 70-year-old man, born and raised in Benin, left his country 40 years ago with the promise to quickly return but he never did. Instead, he lives in Madrid and makes a living selling things in the market.

When Alphonse receives the news that his sister Veronique is ill, he finally cannot put off his return to Benin any longer. With his son, Santiago, following his return on camera, Alphonse will have to face the past and the present of his homeland. He will have to explain 40 years of silence, shame and disillusion. *The Door of No Return* is an intimately filmed, beautifully told story about his journey from North to South, and South to North from the present to the past. It is also a son's honest and moving testament of his father's story.

As part of the programme on Friday, the balladeer, Rene Tshiakanyi will perform some of his original acoustic songs.

## **Thousands of legitimate refugees in South Africa**

There are approximately 9.8 million refugees in Africa. In 2010, it was estimated that South Africa alone hosts some 270,671 refugees and asylum-seekers that are legally entitled to residence in the Republic of South Africa. The majority are from the Great Lakes regions of Africa, such as DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia.

Refugee Social Services (RSS) serves as the social implementation partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In accordance with its vision, RSS strives to be a global leader in providing holistic quality and innovative service to assist asylum seekers and refugees who are in possession of legitimate documentation from the South African Home Affairs. It prioritises focusing on the most vulnerable in the community. For more information, call +27 031 310 3578 or email [admin@refugeesocialservices.co.za](mailto:admin@refugeesocialservices.co.za).

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