

### **Become part of a virtual movement**

This is a call for applications for volunteer researchers for the Southern Refugee Legal Aid Network (SLRAN), a new FAHAMU global project (see [www.fahamu.org](http://www.fahamu.org)). The SLRAN project is coordinated by Dr. Barbara Harrell-Bond. Much of this work will be *virtual*, but ideally some volunteers will be in Oxford. Not only would you be contributing to the prevention of violations of the rights of refugees in the 'global South', but if accepted, your work could be added to your curriculum vitae or even possibly be used for your own degree work.

### **Background to Project**

Less than .01% of refugees will be 'resettled' to countries where their rights are respected; most will remain in the global South where the observance of rights for everyone, but especially refugees, is generally deteriorating. With the increasing restrictions to 'getting in', the very concept of asylum itself is under threat around the world.

The basic infrastructure for beginning to enforce rights is missing in most countries. 45 States have not ratified the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol, some of them hosts to major refugee populations. Few States in the global South have domestic legislation to regulate refugee matters and where domestic legislation exists, it is often not in conformity with the standards of international human rights law or the 1951 Convention. Most Southern States are in urgent need of law reform to bring their domestic refugee law into conformity with international standards. Refugee law is rarely taught as a *subject* by faculties of law or even by masters' courses in human rights. Increasingly, refugees in the South are subject to refugee status adjudication but there are only a handful of NGOs providing them with *pro bono* legal aid to navigate this process. Even with the exponential increase in human rights organizations, there are still many countries where there is no agency that is promoting refugee rights because the 'human rights industry' has somehow forgotten that refugees have the same rights as all other humans. The problem of statelessness, a responsibility accorded to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is on the increase and is scarcely being addressed.

With even this brief introduction, it is evident that the challenges the SRLAN has taken on are enormous and can only be accomplished by an 'army' of committed volunteers. Many tasks for which you are needed involve country specific research and corresponding with individuals/organizations identified; others involve specific legal research, e.g. one project already begun is a review and evaluation of domestic refugee legislation in each Southern country where such laws exist. This SRLAN project will be coordinated by Marina Sharpe, Asylum Access, and Fatima Khan, Faculty of Law, University of Cape Town and volunteers are urgently required. Devising a strategy to influence law schools to introduce refugee law will be another project that will necessitate research and eventually forming a global association of refugee law teachers. Another project will involve identifying human rights and/or refugee rights NGOs by country and investigating their potential for providing legal aid. Other research projects that have been identified include statelessness. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these projects, please send a cover letter indicating your interests, the number of hours per week that you could commit, and your curriculum vitae to [barbara.harrell-bond@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:barbara.harrell-bond@qeh.ox.ac.uk)