



Restoring Dignity, Inspiring Change.

ICMC Secretariat
1, rue de Varembe
P.O. Box 96
CH-1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 919 10 20
Fax: +41 22 919 10 48
Email: info@icmc.net
www.icmc.net

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Resettlement is a Life-Saving Protection Mechanism that Works

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Statement by the International Catholic Migration Commission

Delivered by Mantalin Kyrou, Policy Officer

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Madame/Mr. Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. In light of the panel on the Sahel, we at the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) would like to take this opportunity to highlight a pressing operational reality that our ICMC Deployment Scheme field colleagues in Niger.

We are encountering an increasing case load of children *migrating alone* from the Horn of Africa who have suffered horrific abuse including torture and rape by traffickers. For example, one ICMC deployee recounted the story of a boy whom he had identified and processed for resettlement who had been tortured by traffickers and wound up in a Libyan detention center. The traffickers forced him to call up his mother to pay a ransom for his release. While on the telephone, the traffickers began to torture him again, so that his mother could hear her son's screams. His mother, a widow with extremely limited resources was forced to sell her house to raise funds for the ransom but the sale proceeds weren't enough. So, she had to start begging. Thanks to the excellent Emergency Transit Mechanism--a partnership between IOM and UNHCR--the boy was rescued in Libya and brought to Niger where our ICMC deployees received him for resettlement processing. This is good but given the number of children we're seeing, more needs to be done.

In light of these operational realities, we urgently call States to increase resettlement places and in addition offer complementary pathways including family reunification, prioritizing cases for unaccompanied children from the Emergency Transit Mechanisms in both Niger and Rwanda.

We at ICMC know that resettlement is a life-saving protection mechanism that works. And indeed, we are encouraged by IOM and UNHCR's new CRISP initiative which seeks to expand the base of resettlement countries by encouraging emerging states to begin resettlement programmes.

In resettling unaccompanied minors, we have seen how giving them a new start on life brings life to and creates connections in the new host community. Natalie, a foster mother in Salt Lake City, USA who has resettled two Eritrean children, Tedros and Yorusalem, from the Niger Emergency Transit Mechanism says that despite the challenges, "[t]his experience has been amazing, and I receive a lot of support... These kids are incredible and having them with me brings meaning to my life...I absolutely recommend the experience to anyone."

Thank you.