

# Terms of Reference – Global Network of Refugees with Disabilities

## Context

While there are no reliable figures, it is estimated that 18 million persons with disabilities are among the 120 million forcibly displaced globally.<sup>1</sup> Refugees with disabilities face additional barriers to access assistance, healthcare, education, and employment, as well as heightened risks of violence and exploitation.

## Global Challenge

Current global responses to refugees with disabilities are fragmented and insufficient. While organizations like [UNHCR and the International Disability Alliance](#) have made strides to raise the visibility of this population, significant gaps remain. Refugee-led organizations often struggle to access funding and advocacy opportunities due to bureaucratic hurdles and lack of recognition. Additionally, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) may not always represent the voices and needs of refugees with disabilities, and refugee-led organizations may not be inclusive of this group.

## Need for a Global Network

A Global Network of Refugees with Disabilities will be the key to bridge these gaps. This network will empower refugee-led organizations to access advocacy opportunities at national, regional, and global levels, and to raise funds for their initiatives. By uniting these organizations, the network will amplify their voices and ensure that their needs are addressed in global policy and humanitarian responses.

## Mission and Vision

**Mission:** To empower and support refugees with disabilities through advocacy, capacity building, and resource mobilization.

**Vision:** A world where refugees with disabilities are fully included and their rights are upheld in all humanitarian and development efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is based on applying the [WHO estimate](#) that 16% of the global population has a disability to the [UNHCR Global Trends](#) in 2024.

## Objectives

1. **Advocacy:** Promote the rights and needs of refugees with disabilities at all levels.
2. **Capacity Building:** Strengthen the capabilities of refugee-led organizations to support their peers.
3. **Resource Mobilization:** Secure funding for initiatives led by refugees with disabilities.

## Membership

The Global Network of Refugees with Disabilities (GNRD) is an international coalition that brings together disabled refugee-lead organizations to advocate for the rights and inclusion of refugees with disabilities. The network offers various types of membership, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. Here's an overview:

### 1. Full Membership

**Eligibility:** Must be a disabled refugee-led organization specifically focused on advocating for refugees with disabilities. In some areas where it is not possible to register an organization, full membership can be accepted provided the organization is led by disabled refugees.

**Role:**

- **Active participation:** Full members play an active role in shaping the agenda and strategies of the network.
- **Voting rights:** They have voting rights in decision-making processes, including policy positions, strategic directions, and leadership elections.
- **Advocacy:** Engage in joint advocacy efforts, representing the network in various international forums and contributing to the development of global policies on disability inclusion.
- **Collaboration:** Participate in working groups, task forces, and collaborative projects aimed at advancing the rights of refugees with disabilities.

### 2. Affiliate membership

**Eligibility:** NGOs, civil society organizations, and other groups that work in related fields, such as disability rights, refugee protection, or humanitarian aid, but are not exclusively focused on refugees with disabilities.

**Role:**

- **Support and collaboration:** Affiliates contribute to the network's initiatives by providing expertise, resources, and support.
- **Non-voting participation:** While they do not have voting rights, affiliates can participate in discussions, provide input, and collaborate on advocacy campaigns.
- **Knowledge sharing:** Share best practices, research, and resources that can enhance the network's work.

### 3. Observer Status

**Eligibility:** International organizations, governmental bodies, or other entities that wish to stay informed about the network's activities without formal membership.

**Role:**

- **Information sharing:** Receive updates on the network's activities, publications, and events.
- **Consultation:** May be consulted on specific issues or invited to contribute to discussions, but do not have a formal role in decision-making.

### Ways of working

The network is going to meet twice a month by Teams or Zoom meetings, coordinating funding opportunities. The network maintains transparency in its decision-making processes, with members having the opportunity to participate and provide input.

GNRD provides regular financial and activity reports to its members and donors, demonstrating accountability in the use of resources and the impact of its work.

### Members

- Association of Refugees with Disability ARD
- Kakuma Voice For Disabled People Association (VDPA)
- Movement of Asylum Seekers Ireland (Disability Voices)
- Newcomers with Disabilities in Sweden
- Sounds of Silence Africa Initiative
- UMOJA People with disabilities
- Women for Action Organization

### Contact Information

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