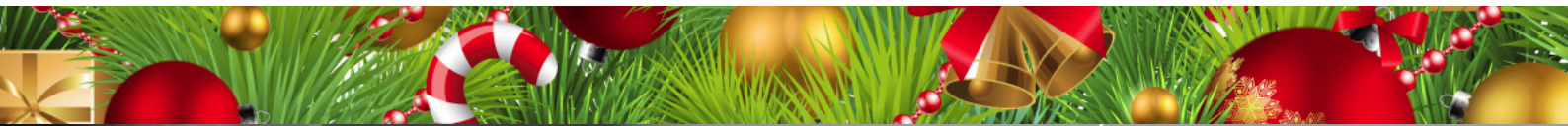




CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2015

Patron
His Excellency
the Honourable Hieu Van Le AO
Governor of South Australia



"I value peace more than anything else...
It's easy for us who are now in safe countries to
forget where we have come from."

SAFARI'S STORY



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SAFARI'S STORY

Safari was born in a small town in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He lived happily with his parents and siblings until 2011 when during the school holidays rebels invaded their village, burning down houses and destroying infrastructure. Safari's parents were kidnapped, never to be found, and his sister was murdered.

"Those were the hardest experiences of my life. I was depressed and lost hope. Life was suddenly meaningless."

Desperate, Safari and his two remaining siblings managed to flee the country, walking over 250kms with no food and few belongings, sleeping in the bush, constantly exposed to the elements. They eventually reached Uganda where they lived in a refugee camp for two years.

"The war experience is so depressing. I've seen women and children struggling, having lost everything. I've seen kids dying from starvation."

Upon arriving in Australia Safari felt a sense of calm and peace. He once again was able to experience people smiling and was astounded by the warm-hearted welcome he received. He finally felt safe once again, over two years after witnessing the atrocities of war.

"I value peace more than anything else... It's easy for us who are now in safe countries to forget where we have come from, that we left hundreds of thousands of people, innocent people, in a desperate environment, where death, persecutions, impunity and misery are the everyday experiences. Where tears are the only smile left on people's faces."

Christmas is an especially difficult time for Safari, and when he misses his lost family members the most. Christmas in the Congo was an exceptionally joyful occasion, with every house decorated, singing all night long on Christmas Eve,

mountains of rich food, and presents galore, with communities and families coming together to share the holiday period. But now, the only family Safari has is his two siblings, and they profoundly miss the rest of their family.

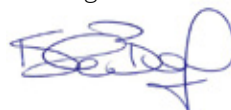
This year, Safari will spend time in the lead up to Christmas with his ARA family, helping to put together Christmas hampers for ARA clients and families in need. He says that spending time with ARA makes him feel a sense of belonging and welcome, and that he enjoys being able to give back to the organisation who helped him to settle in Australia.

ARA goes above and beyond to ensure that all of our clients have what they need to get through the holiday season comfortably, providing food hampers and gifts, as well as extended support throughout the period. However, to continue working harder to support vulnerable members of our community, **we need your help.**

It is through the generous donations of our supporters that we are able to provide programs to people from a refugee background, as we have done for 40 years. Donating to our Christmas Appeal is one powerful way that you are able to support those who are struggling this Christmas; a simple donation can make a lasting difference in someone's life.

On behalf of the Australian Refugee Association I thank you for your continued support of the organisation, and wish you and yours a wonderful festive season.

Kind regards



Kirsten Bickendorf
Chief Executive Officer

