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CARITAS ZAMBIA CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY, PROTECTION, AND DIGNITY FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

LUSAKA | Monday 28 September, 2026

Theme: “Even Just One of These Children”

As the global Church commemorates the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Caritas Zambia stands in firm solidarity with refugees, displaced families, migrants, and children on the move across our nation and the region. Grounded in our Catholic faith, biblical teachings, and Catholic Social Teaching, caring for refugees is a profound moral imperative. We recall that Jesus Himself experienced displacement, fleeing to Egypt with Mary and Joseph to escape persecution (Matthew 2:13–15). Every displaced person bears inherent human dignity that must be protected and upheld.

This year’s theme, “*Even Just One of These Children*”, reminds us that no child is a mere statistic or forgotten casualty of conflict. Each child is created in the image of God and deserves protection, education, and hope. Our Christian discipleship is measured by the mercy we embody and the justice we pursue in safeguarding forcibly displaced children, youth, and families.

Caritas Zambia remains deeply committed to empowering young refugees through livelihood and vocational skills training, financial inclusion, and vital psychosocial counselling services to support healing from trauma. However, achieving sustainable protection and integration requires collective action, strong partnerships, and aligned national policy frameworks.

While we commend the Government of the Republic of Zambia for its longstanding commitment to refugee protection and the launch of the 2024 National Refugee Policy, significant legal and operational challenges persist. To operationalize these commitments and unlock the economic potential of refugees, Caritas Zambia urges the following concrete actions:

- 1. Enact Comprehensive Legislation and Harmonize Protections:** Formulate and implement an overarching statutory framework dedicated to safeguarding the rights of refugees and migrants. Existing national legislation including the Immigration Control Act No. 3 of 2026 and relevant labour laws must be harmonized with the Refugees Act No. 1 of 2017 and the 2024 Refugee Policy. The alignment of these legal instruments will secure

fundamental rights, broaden freedom of movement, facilitate access to formal employment, and strictly uphold the principle of non-refoulement.

- 2. Enhance Inter-Agency Coordination:** Strengthen collaboration across departments under the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security including Immigration, the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees, Anti-Human Trafficking, and the Zambia Police Service for efficient, rights-based service delivery.
- 3. Invest in Refugee Self-Reliance and Integration:** Expand support for vocational training, entrepreneurship, and economic inclusion targeting refugee youth and women, transitioning from emergency assistance to long-term community integration.

Let us remember our shared humanity and work together toward a society where every refugee is welcomed, protected, and empowered to thrive. May Our Lady and Saint Joseph watch over all displaced families journeying in uncertainty.

ISSUED BY:



Fr. Dr. Gabriel Mapulanga
Executive Director, Caritas Zambia