

If the refugee is today's tragic icon of a war-ravaged world, then Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars, a reggae-inflected band born in the camps of West Africa, represents a real-life story of survival and hope. The six-member Refugee All Stars came together in Guinea after civil war forced them from their native Sierra Leone. Traumatized by physical injuries and the brutal loss of family and community, they fight back with the only means they have — music.

The film tells the remarkable and uplifting story of a group of six Sierra Leonean musicians who came together to form a band while living as refugees in the Republic of Guinea. A brutal civil war (1991-2002) forced them from their homes in Sierra Leone. Many of their family and friends were murdered in the violence, leaving them with physical and emotional scars that may never heal. Despite the unimaginable horrors of civil war, they were saved through their music. Through music they find a place of refuge, a sense of purpose and a source of power. The film follows the band over the course of three years as they make the difficult decision to return to their war-torn country and realize their dream of recording an album of their original music.

The result is a tableau of tragedy transformed by the band's inspiring determination to sing and be heard!



BLACK NATURE

“My name is Alhaji Jeffery Kamara, a.k.a. Black Nature. I was born in Sierra Leone, West Africa. I started doing music at a very young age. When I was 8 years old I started going into clubs as a performer. The first thing to influence me was dance, I was inspired by my own culture and traditional practices, also by break dancers and rap artists. I began to create raps when I was 9 years old. I was a street rapper doing my own thing. And I cultivated my dream that I would one day have the chance to speak to the world with positive words.

There was an unfortunate and brutal war in my country from 1991-2002 and during the war I fled to Guinea as a Refugee. I lived in 5 different refugee camps throughout the next 8 years. Being in a refugee situation it the hardest thing in life. To leave your country, leave everything and everyone behind and find yourself alone in a foreign land. It is a horrible experience. There is a lot of suffering at the Refugee Camps, many people

died. There are a lot of unmet needs. Not enough food, medicine, shelters, clothing. People feel hopeless and depressed, suffering from the traumas they experienced during the war.

At the Refugee Camp I began to interact with a group of musicians who came together as a group. We called ourselves Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars. We wrote songs together and I would compose raps. As a group we felt the need to uplift the spirits of our brothers and sisters around us. We have all been through too much and we deserve some much needed healing and happiness. As musicians we know that music is a healing force and has the power to move people to have the strength of hope and courage. Throughout all these experiences the dreams of the group are to spread out the word of peace and that war is not the answer. War creates total destruction and there are many other ways to solve our problems without going to war. Whether you are black or white, rich or poor, we are all citizens of the world.

In 2000 the band met with film makers Banker White and Zack Niles who wanted to film the experiences of the band's progression. We were together off and on for a few years while they documented our first tour throughout all the refugee camps in Guinea. They created the documentary film *The Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars* which has received many awards.

The band recorded its first album back in Freetown called "Living Like a Refugee". It is just like a miracle when the band became popular and toured all around the world. We have been to the World Economic Forum representing the Refugees of the world, we have been on the Oprah Winfrey show, and been interviewed on the most well known news programs such as BBC, PBS, CNN. We are featured on the Save Darfur album with Aerosmith, a project put together by Amnesty International. We have toured on 5 continents and met with incredible peoples".