

**For Immediate Release  
June 20, 2007**

**Contact: Gedlu Metaferia  
314-776-8885**

## **AMAAM OBSERVES WORLD REFUGEE DAY African Refugees and Allies Focus on the Genocide in Darfur**

St. Louis, MO – Today, the African Mutual Assistance Association of Missouri along with several co-sponsors including St. John’s Episcopal Church, St. Louis Save Darfur Coalition, the International Institute, and Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates coalition hosted an event to commemorate World Refugee Day. Although the program featured a presentation on the increasing problem of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Africa and information on the genocide in Darfur, it was also a celebration of humanitarian efforts of St. Louis groups such as the National Council of Jewish Women which has launched a Solar Cooker Program which provides a more secure way of cooking for Sudanese families. A few booths provided a range of information on issues including comprehensive immigration reform. Alalake Sidime International set the tone with a brilliant musical performance, and Ethiopian food was provided by Meskerem Restaurant.

“This event is really about unity,” said AMAAM director, Gedlu Metaferia, “unity in our community here in St. Louis and unity of our community with refugees around the world. It is especially timely because there is a growing crisis of displaced persons especially in Africa and the Middle East. The U.S. Senate is also debating comprehensive immigration reform in the upcoming days that will truly affect real people all over the country.”

Pastor Teresa Mithen of St. John’s Episcopal Church, which provided space for the event, added, “All the issues that were addressed today are important not only for immigrants and refugees, but for the greater St. Louis area and our nation. People from all over the world make their homes here, and we are especially blessed here in South City with such a diverse group of people with such rich culture and heritage.”

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