

Alert campaign: #visarefusé

V., a child of 12 years old wants to join his mother recognized refugee in France.

Political militant in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), his mother is currently blocked and only in Morocco, following a visa refusal from the French Embassy. Mrs. M. was forced to leave her country in urgently leaving behind three of her children. Arriving in France at the end of 2015, she obtained refugee status a year later. Meanwhile, his 12-year-old son, V., is on his way to exile with his uncle to try to join her. Arrived in Morocco, his uncle had to leave again quickly. He confides to a compatriot the boy, who is eligible for a family reunification procedure, thinking that obtaining a visa would be only a formality. Indeed, a refugee in France has the right to bring his family.

But the reality is quite different as often in refugee reunification procedures. In June 2017, V. appears for the first time at the French Embassy to apply for a visa. The consular officer refuses to receive him. The Cimade then alerts the consular post on the urgency of the situation and contacts the GADEM to accompany him in his efforts. Then begins for this young boy a long fight to face all the administrative requirements and complete the file. In November 2017, when it is complete, a new request for an appointment at the consulate remains unanswered. Faced with this silence, the GADEM calls on consular services many times. It is only on February 21, 2018 that V. can finally submit his visa application file to the Consulate General of France in Rabat, that is 10 months after the first attempt.

The Cimade alerts the French Family Law Office several times in France. Refugees (BFR), which co-administers visa application files, on the urgency of deciding on the deterioration of the child's physical and psychological state of health. Delivered to himself, housed in precarious conditions and out of school for two years, V. threatens to kill himself or to embark on a makeshift boat. Despite this, on June 22, 2018, two days after World Refugee Day, V. is notified of a visa refusal by the consular post on the grounds that "the best interests of the child require him to remain with his other parent in his country of origin" and that the application for family reunification was not made for the other two children left behind. If the consulate and the BFR had really studied the file, they could have read that the father of V. is a refugee in the Netherlands and that reunification for the other two children has been started, but that files have still not been deposited at the Embassy of France in the DRC, for lack of issuance of passports by the Congolese authorities.

GADEM and La Cimade recall that France has ratified the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, whose Article 10 §1 provides that "any application made by a child or his parents for the purpose of entering or leaving a State Party for the purposes of family reunification shall be considered by the States Parties in a positive, humane and diligence. " In addition, the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in Resolution No. 85 (XLIX) – 1998, "urges States, in accordance with the relevant principles and standards, to take the necessary measures to facilitate the Refugees on their territory, especially through the examination of all related applications in a positive and humanitarian spirit and without undue delay.

"The young V. must join his mother in France as soon as possible. More generally, La Cimade and GADEM call for easier access to refugee families in French consulates and the

cessation of the systematic suspicion that slows down family reunification. This increases the length of separation of families, puts children at risk and adds trauma to people who have already experienced extreme violence.