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PRESS RELEASE | 4 APRIL 2018

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS FAILS TO ABIDE BY SUPREME COURT OF APPEAL ORDER:
CAPE TOWN REFUGEE RECEPTION OFFICE REMAINS CLOSED**

The Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town (SCCT) and the Somali Association of South Africa (SASA) are disappointed that the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) has failed to re-open the Cape Town Refugee Reception Office (RRO), as [ordered](#) by the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) in September 2017.

The SCA found the decision to close the Cape Town RRO 'substantively unlawful and irrational' and required the Department to re-open and maintain a fully functional RRO in the Cape Town metropolitan area by 31 March 2018, and to report monthly on its progress in complying with the order. To date, the Cape Town RRO remains closed to new asylum applicants, and DHA has failed to file any reports on its progress. Along with SASA, SCCT is consulting with their legal partner, the Legal Resources Centre, to ensure the order is implemented and that asylum seekers are able to utilise a fully-functional RRO in Cape Town. The refugee protection system is now characterised more for its creation of undocumented asylum seekers than by its primary goal: to identify and provide protection to refugees.

We are concerned as this failure to adhere to the rule of law is occurring as the asylum system collapses, driven in large part by DHA's unlawful closures of RROs and associated policies. Since the closures, pressure has increased at the remaining RROs and the system has a backlog of appeal hearings suffering huge [backlogs](#) and [delays](#). These delays mean that asylum seekers will take years to navigate the asylum process and due to the closure of urban RROs, are forced [to travel](#) long distances repeatedly in order have their permits extended and their asylum applications adjudicated. Since the Cape Town RRO closure was found to be unlawful, asylum seekers with permits from other RROs can now access the Cape Town RRO but asylum seekers [continue to struggle to renew their documentation](#).

We will communicate further information as it becomes available. For more information, please contact:

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