

Today's date: Sunday, 10 June 2007



World Refugee Day 2007

Every year on June 20 the world honours the courage, resilience and strength of refugees. On this sixth anniversary of the United Nations-designated World Refugee Day, thousands of organisations in hundreds of countries will come together to focus global attention not only on the plight of refugees and the causes of their exile, but also on their determination and will to survive and on the contributions they make to their host communities.

Often classified unfairly with economic migrants, refugees flee their country not for economic gain but to escape persecution, the threat of imprisonment and even threats to their lives. They need a safe haven where they can recover from mental and physical trauma and rebuild their hopes for a better future.

The intolerance that is often at the root of internal displacement and refugee flows is also present in some of the countries that refugees flee to. Instead of finding empathy and understanding, they are often met with mistrust or scorn.

On World Refugee Day, let's not forget that some day in the future any one of us could be knocking at a stranger's door hoping to find a safe and friendly shelter. We should extend refugees the same kind of welcome we would like to receive if we were in their position.

While most refugees want to go home, some cannot safely return. But wherever they are, refugees will always strive to pick up the pieces

and start over. The courage and determination demonstrated during their darkest hours will serve them well in rebuilding a new life. On World Refugee Day, let us honour them for these qualities and recognise the richness and diversity they bring to our societies.

For more information:

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