

WORLD REFUGEE DAY: HIGHLIGHTING A GLOBAL NEED AND AMERICA'S RESPONSE



"We honor the dignity, courage, and determination of these men, women and children who have fled persecution and violence in their homelands and the commitment and generosity of the countries and organizations that provide them protection and assistance during this difficult time."

- President Barack Obama

Refugees survive terrible ordeals: torture, upheaval, perilous journeys, and the loss of everything and everyone they knew. They flee violent conflict. They are persecuted because of their race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, social group or political beliefs.

RECOGNIZING REFUGEES AND THOSE WHO ASSIST

On June 20, World Refugee Day, the world honors the courage and resilience of refugees as well as the dedication and generosity of those who help them. This day was established by the United Nations and is observed by governments, international organizations, and civic groups worldwide.

TODAY'S REFUGEES

The number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide has surged to more than 51 million, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "Level 3 emergencies" – a UN designation for the highest level of humanitarian crisis – have been declared in Syria, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. These three emergencies alone have forced millions of people to flee for their lives.

U.S. ASSISTANCE

The United States is the largest single donor to humanitarian activities worldwide, providing some \$5 billion in 2013. The U.S. Government has provided more than \$2 billion to Syria since the conflict there began. This funding helps provide safety, food, shelter, and medical treatment to over 4.7 million people inside Syria, to more than 2.8 million refugees in the region, and to communities in neighboring countries hosting refugees.

The U.S. Government also is assisting more than one million people who have been displaced by conflict in the Central African Republic; more than 1.3 million South Sudanese driven from their homes; and millions of others around the world.

PARTNERING FOR REFUGEES

The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, together with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provide humanitarian assistance through:

- the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- the World Food Program (WFP)
- other international organizations and NGOs

STARTING NEW LIVES

When it is safe, refugees are helped to return home. When this is not possible, they are helped where they have taken refuge or they start new lives elsewhere. Every year, UNHCR identifies tens of thousands of refugees who are eligible to be resettled.

More refugees are resettled in the United States than in any other country. Last year nearly 70,000 refugees from 65 nations found a new home in the United States. The U.S. Department of State works with other federal agencies, resettlement agencies, and civic and charitable organizations to help them get settled.

REFUGEE CONTRIBUTIONS

Once in the United States, refugees seize the chance for a new beginning. They start small businesses, pay taxes, attend school, put down roots, and assist newer arrivals in need. They make our communities more vibrant and diverse. Refugees share many of America's values: courage, resilience, openness to new experiences, and the determination to rebuild their lives in a new land.