



World Refugee Day 2013 – Adults' booklist

Read a Book About Refugees

There is a great variety of books written about refugees - including award-winning fiction – and books by refugees themselves. Why not borrow one of these from your local library or buy one from your local book shop?

Do you have a book club? Maybe you would consider adding one of these titles to the reading list.

Fiction:

The House of the Mosque *Author: Kader Abdolah. Translator: Susan Massotty. Publisher: Canongate.* In the house of the mosque, the family of Aqa Jaan has lived for 8 centuries. The house teems with life, but this family will experience upheaval unknown to previous generations. For in Iran, political unrest is brewing. The shah is losing his hold on power; the ayatollah incites rebellion from his exile in France; and one day the ayatollah returns. The consequences will be felt in every corner of Aqa Jaan's family.

Mornings in Jenin *Author: Susan Abulhawa. Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing.* Forcibly removed from the ancient village of Ein Hod by the newly formed state of Israel in 1948, the Abulhejas are moved into the Jenin refugee camp. There, exiled from his beloved olive groves, the family patriarch languishes of a broken heart; his eldest son fathers a family and falls victim to an Israeli bullet, and his grandchildren struggle against tragedy toward freedom, peace, and home. This is the Palestinian story, told as never before, through four generations of a single family.

Purple Hibiscus *Author: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Publisher: Harper Perennial.* An impressive debut novel about the promise of freedom and the blurred lines between childhood and adulthood in Nigeria told through the eyes of a 15-year-old girl.

The Wandering Falcon *Author: Jamil Ahmed Publisher: Riverhead Trade* "Superb. The work of a gifted story teller who has lived in the world of his fiction, and who offers his

readers rare insight, wisdom and-above all- pleasure." – Mohsin Hamid, author of *Moth Smoke and The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

Monsieur Linh and His Child *Author: Philippe Claudel. Translator: Euan Cameron. Publisher: Maclehose.* Monsieur Linh is an elderly refugee who arrives in France with other "boat people", clutching a flimsy suitcase and a newborn baby. All those who knew his name are dead. His infant grandchild became the sole reason for going on. He strikes up an unusual friendship with a man who does not speak the same language. "Holding out hope of dialogue between people sundered by history, the novel is a delicately sympathetic portrayal of trauma, as well as a poignant evocation of guilt – the survivor's and the soldier's." – The Guardian

The Other Hand *Author: Chris Cleave. Publisher: Sceptre.* Little Bee, a 16-year-old Ibo girl from Nigeria has fled her country and is being held in a UK immigration detention centre. This is a powerful and sometimes shocking novel which explores complicated subjects in an accessible manner.

The Saffron Kitchen *Author: Yasmin Crowther. Publisher: Penguin.* Forced to leave Iran after her father disowned her for shaming the family through a misunderstood encounter with his assistant, Ali, Maryam nevertheless has a powerful bond with the place and its people. Exploring the themes of displacement and exile, of families struggling to embrace more than one culture, of longing and despair, *The Saffron Kitchen* is ultimately a love story, not only between a woman and a man, but of a woman for her homeland.

The Farming of Bones *Author: Edwidge Danticat Publisher: Penguin* The measured narration by the Haitian protagonist, Amabelle Desir, at first give no indication that this will be a story of furious violence and nearly unbearable loss. The setting, the Dominican Republic in 1937, when dictator Trujillo was beginning his policy of genocide, is a clue, however, to the events that Amabelle relates. Haitians in the DR, always regarded as foreigners. When a military-led assault against them does erupt, it is a surprise, however, and as Amabelle barely survives a massacre by soldiers and an equally bloodthirsty civilian population, the narrative acquires the unflinching clarity of a documentary.

Day After Night *Author: Anita Diamant. Publisher: Scribner.* This is based on the extraordinary true story of the October 1945 rescue of more than 200 prisoners from the Atlit internment camp, a prison for "illegal" immigrants run by the British military near the Mediterranean coast south of Haifa. The story is told through the eyes of four young women at the camp who survived the Holocaust. Haunted by unspeakable memories, afraid to hope, they find salvation in the bonds of friendship and shared experience even as they confront the challenge of re-creating themselves in a strange new land.

What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng *Author Dave Eggers. Publisher: Penguin.* This novel is based on the real-life story of Achak Deng, a young Sudanese refugee separated from his family during the Second Sudanese Civil War and forced to flee. We follow his life as he walks to Ethiopia with thousands of other orphans, encountering government soldiers, janjaweed-like militias, liberation rebels, hyenas and lions, disease and starvation, but also friendship and romance along the way.

Inge and Mira *Author: Marianne Fredriksson. Publisher: Phoenix Paperbacks.* Blonde Inge is a native of Sweden, while dark Mira has fled there to escape the living hell of Chile at the time of the military coup led by General Pinochet. They are brought together by their mutual

love of plants, but this gentle pastime is soon overshadowed by the terrible legacy of Mira's past. This is a deeply moving tale of lives haunted by past violence.

In the Sea There Are Crocodiles *Author: Fabio Geda. Publisher: Random House.* This is the true story of Enaiatollah's five-year ordeal from Afghanistan to Italy, where he seeks political asylum at age 15, having endured the physical and emotional agony of dangerous border crossings, trekking across bitterly cold mountain pathways and being stuffed into the false bottom of a truck. "A remarkable, heart-warming story of courage and endurance" - The Irish Examiner

The Memory of Love *Author: Aminatta Forna Publisher: Atlantic Monthly Press* Set in Sierra Leone at the turn of the 21st century, *The Memory of Love* is a heartbreaking story of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. "Fate and tragedy intertwine in this stunning and powerful portrait of a country in the aftermath of a decade of civil war". - Kristine Huntley

Sweetness in the Belly *Author: Camilla Gibb. Publisher: Heinemann.* Orphaned at 8, Lilly is left in the care of a Sufi sheikh in Morocco. When political turmoil erupts, she is sent to the ancient walled city of Harar, Ethiopia where she falls in love with an idealistic young doctor. But the two are wrenched apart when Lilly is again forced to flee, for her safety and his, this time to London. Despite her British roots, Lilly discovers she is as much an outsider in London as a Muslim as she was in Harar as a white foreigner.

The Kite Runner *Author: Khaled Hosseini. Publisher: Bloomsbury.* Now a major film, international bestseller, *The Kite Runner* is a deeply moving debut novel. The book tells the story of boyhood friendship cut across class boundaries. Their relationship is imaginatively told against the backdrop of social upheaval in Afghanistan.

A Thousand Splendid Suns *Author: Khaled Hosseini. Publisher: Bloomsbury.* It is a tale of two generations of characters brought jarringly together by the tragic sweep of war, where personal lives—the struggle to survive, raise a family, find happiness—are inextricable from the history playing out around them.

The Tyrant's Novel *Author: Thomas Keneally. Publisher: Sceptre.* In a detention camp where he is neither granted asylum nor readied to be sent back to his native land, a detainee bides his time. He was born in a country that had once been a friend to the United States but is now its enemy. Little else is known about him until a writer comes to interview him. This is a dazzling story of a man caught between the demands of his government and his impulse to run for his life.

Strength In What Remains *Author: Tracy Kidder Publisher: Random House* Deo arrives in the US from Burundi in search of a new life. Having survived a civil war and genocide, he lands at JFK airport with two hundred dollars, no English, and no contacts. He ekes out a precarious existence delivering groceries, living in Central Park, and learning English by reading dictionaries in bookstores. Then Deo begins to meet the strangers who will change his life, pointing him eventually in the direction of Columbia University, medical school, and a life devoted to healing.

The Internationals *Author: Sarah May. Publisher: Vintage.* Set in a Macedonian refugee camp during the 1999 Kosovo crisis, this brilliantly satirical novel spans the 78 tense days from the commencement of NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia to the withdrawal of Serb forces from Northern Kosovo. The cast of aid workers and diplomats find themselves becoming

inextricably involved with refugees, advertising executives and an Albanian mayor in ways none of them expected.

The Depths of the Sea *Author: Jamie Metzl. Publisher: St. Martin's Press.* At the end of the Vietnam War, Morgan O'Reilly was only able to get one of the many street children he worked with out of the country, his surrogate son, Sophal. Years later, Sophal, now a CIA agent, disappears on a secret mission in the Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand. This is a thriller that both entertains and educates.

Refugee Boy *Author: Benjamin Zephaniah. Publisher: Bloomsbury.* A powerful and popular novel telling the story of a young boy left in the UK by his parents to start a better life away from the political problems in Ethiopia. The story deals with his experience in a strange new country and how, through help from social services, the Refugee Council and his foster parents, he adjusts to his new life in the UK.

Autobiography:

Keeping Hope Alive: One Woman: 90,000 Lives Changed *Author: Dr Hawa Abdi. Publisher: Grand Central* This is the moving memoir of Dr. Hawa Abdi, "the Mother Teresa of Somalia" and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, who is the founder of a massive camp for internally displaced people located a few miles from war-torn Mogadishu, Somalia. Since 1991, she has dedicated herself to providing help for people whose lives have been shattered by violence and poverty.

The Other Side of the Sky: A Memoir *Author: Farah Ahmed. Publisher: Gallery* Ahmed's memoir delivers a remarkably vivid portrait of her girlhood in Kabul. She herself narrowly escapes death when she steps on a land mine. Eventually the war forces her to flee, first over the mountains to refugee camps across the border, and finally to America. Ahmed proves that even in the direst circumstances, not only can the human heart endure, it can thrive.

Tears of the Desert: One Woman's True Story of Surviving the Horrors of Darfur *Author: Halima Bashir. Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton.* When Janjaweed militias attacked her village, Halima treated the traumatised victims, and sickened by what she saw, decided to speak out in a newspaper and to international charities. The secret police came for her and although she finally escaped, the nightmare just seemed to follow her. This inspiring story tells of one woman's determination to survive and her passion to defend her people.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Child Soldier *Author: Ismael Beah. Publisher: Sarah Crichton Books.* Beah tells of how he fled his community in war-torn Sierra Leone after seeing his family massacred and his village razed. At 13 he was coerced into joining the government army, where young soldiers were forcibly given cocaine and cannabis, indoctrinated with ideas of revenge and forced to commit atrocious crimes.

The Flagless Ones *Author: Hassan Faramarz, Publisher: Argus Enterprises, Intl.* A disturbing but heart-warming memoir by an Iranian who, after several of his brothers were executed, found himself *persona non grata* in Iran and became a refugee in 1997, fleeing first to India, then to China. He and his family were resettled to Ireland as programme refugees. Hassan relates a saga of revolution, broken promises and betrayal.

Running from Tenda Gyamar A Volunteer's Story of Life With the Refugee Children of Tibet *Author: Lesley Freeman Publisher: Mantra* Leaving her job in London, selling her home, leaving family & friends, Lesley travelled to India to be a volunteer teacher in a vocational training centre in Northern India. She learnt of the struggles Tibetan children endure, escaping torture, violence and oppression by the Chinese authorities in their homeland, Tibet. In this book Lesley describes her own ups and downs of living with both Indian and Tibetan cultures and recounts the poignant stories of the children, describing in their own words the suffering they escaped and what their hopes are for the future.

Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran *Author: Roya Hakakian. Publisher: Crown.* Roya Hakakian was raised in a Jewish family in Tehran, daughter of an esteemed poet, in a household that hummed with intellectual life. As a young girl she dreamed of becoming a writer. But in February of 1979, when Ayatollah Khomeini returned with an iron fist from a 15-year exile, everything changed. Within a year, a third of Iran's Jewish population was gone. Within five years, Hakakian's family, too, was contemplating political asylum.

My Childhood Under Fire: A Sarajevo Diary *Author: Nadja Halilbegovich. Publisher: Kids Can Press Ltd.* Nadja was only 12 when war broke out in Bosnia. In this book she shares pages of her diary in a powerful first-hand account of the life of a child living through conflict.

The Translator *Author Daoud Hari. Publisher: Random House.* In 2003, when Hari's village in Darfur was attacked and destroyed by Sudanese-government backed militia groups, he managed to escape and lead survivors to safety. Hari went on to offer his services as a translator to international aid groups and reporters, risking his life in doing this. This is an incredible tale of one man's bravery in the face of genocide and terror.

War Child *Author: Emmanuel Jal Publisher: St Martin's Press* "In 'War Child' he succeeds in making this crazy war and all its ramifications utterly grounded, specific and real. Recently, he has been the subject of a documentary film, and his music has been featured in movies and TV shows, even though he reports he still has spent more than a few nights sleeping on London park benches. You'll come away from this book loving Emmanuel Jal." – Washington Post

Child Soldier *Author: China Keitetsi Publisher: Souvenir Press.* The powerful true story of Keitetsi, a child soldier who joined the Ugandan National Resistance Army at just eight years old. Her story details the abuse she suffered at the hands of her officers and how she finally escaped to Europe to start a new life.

Never Give Up *Author: Kristy Krasniqi Publisher: Our Lives Press* When Kristy refused to marry the man chosen by her parents, she was 'sold' by her father and trafficked from Albania to Italy, France, Belgium and England. A friend helped her to escape from the violent men she was working for.

Slave *Authors: Mende Nazer & Damien Lewis. Publisher: Virago.* The memoir of a girl kidnapped at the age of 12 and sold into slavery. Transferred to London to serve a member of the Sudanese diplomacy, Nazar managed to escape, and sought asylum in Britain. The book compares her peaceful childhood in the Nuba Mountains with the 7 brutal years she spent in slavery.

I was a Boy in Belsen *Author: Tomi Reichental Publisher: O'Brien Press* Tomi Reichental who lost 35 members of his family in the Holocaust gives his account of being imprisoned as a child at Belsen concentration camp.

Goodbye Sarajevo: A True Story of Courage, Love & Survival *Author: Atka Reid & Hana Schofield. Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing.* Hana was 12 when her sister, Atka, placed her and sister, Nadia, on a refugee bus. Hana is forced to cope as a refugee in Croatia, far away from home and family, while Atka stayed on in Sarajevo to look after her 5 youngest siblings. "A sparky memoir of survival written by such driven and inspirational women." - Independent.

An Ordinary Man: The True Story Behind Hotel Rwanda *Author: Paul Rusesabagina. Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing.* "Part memoir, part polemic, part social history, An Ordinary Man is a deeply impressive work that pays fitting tribute to the 800,000 who lost their lives." - Scotland on Sunday.

Alek: Sudanese Refugee to International Supermodel *Author: Alek Wek. Publisher: Virago Press Ltd.* A powerful celebrity autobiography from one of the world's leading supermodels. Wek was born in war-torn Sudan and witnessed violence from a young age. The book charts her journey from Sudan to the UK and US as her highly successful fashion career begins.

Factual:

The Lost Boys of Sudan: An American Story of the Refugee Experience *Author: Mark Bixler.* This book follows the progress of four young men as they adjust to life in modern America, learning to use kitchen appliances, take public transportation, and look for work. Bixler chronicles their struggles to overcome loneliness and to come to terms with the brutality of their past, as well as their frustrations with job hunting and the growing suspicion of foreigners post-9/11.

Across Many Mountains: Three Daughters of Tibet *Author: Yangzom Brauen. Translator: Katy Derbyshire. Publisher: Harvill Secker.* The extraordinary story of three Tibetan woman, whose lives have seen a daring escape from Tibet in the forties, endurance in the refugee camps of India and a remarkable transformation in the West.

Innocents Lost - When Child Soldiers Go to War *Author: Jimmie Briggs Publisher: Basic Books* A powerful examination of the lives of child soldiers, told through the first-hand accounts of the children themselves.

What Is She Doing Here?: A Refugee's Story *Author: Kate Clanchy. Publisher: Picador.* Antigona left Kosovo in March 1999, when Serb policemen came looking for her husband, held her at gunpoint, threw her screaming daughter off the roof, and a few nights later, set fire to nearby houses. Antigona took her 3 children and made a run for it, crossing forests and seas to get to London. Clanchy, a middle-class, Oxbridge-educated award-winning poet meets Antigona on the street and offers her a job on the spur of the moment making for an unlikely relationship.

Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Ireland *Author: Paul Cullen. Publisher: Cork University Press.* The sudden increase during the 1990s of the number of people seeking asylum in Ireland focused attention for the first time on a wide range of debates: the need for political asylum and Ireland's international role, how to deal with this new phenomenon domestically,

Ireland as a country of immigration as well as emigration, and the adequacy or otherwise of public policy in dealing with the problem. The book looks to the future, assessing political options and considers the implications for the future of Irish society.

Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees *Author: Deborah Ellis. Publisher: Groundwood Books.* This frank and harrowing account of young victims of the Iraqi war involves interviews with 24 young people, most of them refugees living in Jordan. Their resilience is inspiring.

Human Cargo *Author: Caroline Moorehead. Publisher: Chatto & Windus.* An extraordinary investigation into the fate of the 17 million people currently displaced from their homes, giving voices to refugees and asylum seekers in countries such as Afghanistan, Liberia and Sudan, as well as immigration officials and staff at the UNHCR.

The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community *Author: Mary Pipher. Publisher: Mariner Books.* Profiling Anton and other refugees from around the world Russia, Croatia, Yemen, Hungary, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone bestselling author Pipher (Reviving Ophelia), drawing upon anthropology, sociology and psychology, offers a deft, moving portrait of the complexity of American life.

Outcasts United: A Refugee Team, an American Town *Author: Warren St John. Publisher: Fourth Estate.* An inspiring story about a single season for a football team in Clarkson, Georgia made up of refugee children. The Southern American town's designation in the 1990s as a refugee settlement centre made it home to scores of families in flight from the world's war zones - from Liberia and Sudan to Iraq and Afghanistan. Luma Mufleh, a Jordanian woman sets up a youth football team to unify the refugee children and to keep them off the streets.

Graphic novel:

Persepolis *Author: Marjane Satrapi. Publisher: Pantheon Books.* This graphic novel is about a young girl growing up in revolutionary Iran. Now a motion picture, this poignant, and often humorous, memoir tells the story of coming of age against the backdrop of life under a fundamentalist regime.

Photography:

In Hope and Despair: Life in the Palestinian Refugee Camps *Photographer: Mia Grandahl. Publisher: American University in Cairo Press.* A collection of photos taken in Palestinian refugee camps based in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the occupied territories. Through the medium of art, this anthology draws attention to one of the most important political problems in the world today. A beautiful series of intimate photos depicting the struggles so many have to face.

With thanks to Mrs. Marie Boland, Executive Librarian, Clonmel Library, for her help in compiling this list.