



# With you

News of the help that together we're bringing to refugees

2014 ISSUE 2

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## UNHCR's High Commissioner Visits Canada

*Ottawa urged to open doors to more Syrian refugees*

The UN Refugee Agency's High Commissioner, António Guterres, recently visited Canada and addressed the need for countries around the world to open their doors to uprooted Syrians, as part of a long-term solution for resettlement.

Guterres said that countries like Lebanon and Jordan are reeling under the enormous weight of hosting millions of Syrian refugees. This is why UNHCR is appealing to other countries, including Canada, to ease some of the pressure by taking in refugees, who now find themselves in camps with nowhere to go and no real chances of returning home anytime soon.

In May, the UN called on international partners to help resettle 100,000 Syrian refugees worldwide, in addition to the 30,000 it had asked countries to accept last year. Canada has already promised to accept 1,300 Syrian refugees, including 200 residing in UNHCR camps and another 1,100 privately sponsored by Canadian citizens or other groups.



May 2014: The High Commissioner at a roundtable event with UNHCR partners. L to R: Furio De Angelis, UNHCR Representative in Canada, António Guterres and James Milner, researcher, policy adviser and professor.

During his visit, Guterres welcomed the Canadian government's support of UNHCR, whilst recognizing its multi-million dollar contribution in humanitarian aid. "Canada has always been extremely generous in relation to international solidarity on refugee issues so I'm confident

*that Canada will give a positive and adequate response to the needs that today exist,"* said Guterres.

*"...It's also symbolically very important,"* he said, *"because that helps the Jordanians, the Lebanese and others feel they are not alone."*

## Andrea Kiel's Story

Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya



February 2014: Andrea and her colleagues went on mission to Kakuma to witness the positive impact Morneau Shepell's employees have made on refugees' lives.

This photo was taken just before we left the camp. Executive Chairman of Morneau Shepell, Bill Morneau, managed to squeeze in one last chat with some of our curious onlookers.

"How come you're not in school?" he asks. The oldest boy responds back, "We're on lunch break." Before we turn to board the plane, I ask the little ones, "Would you like me to take a picture of you?" The boys' faces light up with excitement. "Yes!" they shout in unison. The boys huddle together

with a contagious grin on their beautiful faces. I take a moment to realize how lucky I am to be here in Kakuma.

"Are you leaving us now?" they ask as I turn to see a pair of sad eyes looking at me through the barbed wire fence. Right there, I feel like I've learned the true meaning of complete heartbreak.

In the distance, my colleagues are calling me – the plane is ready to depart and I'm the last one to board. The little boy offers me a warm smile. "See you soon!" I want to hug him, but the barrier won't allow it.

I remember looking at the metal of the fence and realizing how much more the barrier symbolized. Nobody deserves to be barred from having a safe place to live and to call home. Back in Canada, I know I've taken this for granted. I wonder what else we can do to make a difference.

As I slowly trudge back to the plane, I look over my shoulder and see all of the kids waving goodbye. "How can we fit over 132,000 refugees in here with us?" I ask myself.

Kakuma. For a place that means "nowhere," there's nowhere else I'd rather be than with these courageous refugees.

## Refugees: The Grim Statistics

"Peace is in dangerous deficit"



Over 51 million people are now forcibly displaced worldwide, the largest number since WWII.

For the first time since World War II, the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people has exceeded 50 million.

If this population were a country, it would be the 26<sup>th</sup> largest in the world.

"We see here the immense costs of not ending wars," says UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres. "Peace is today dangerously in deficit. Without political solutions, the alarming levels of conflict and the mass suffering that is reflected in these figures will continue."

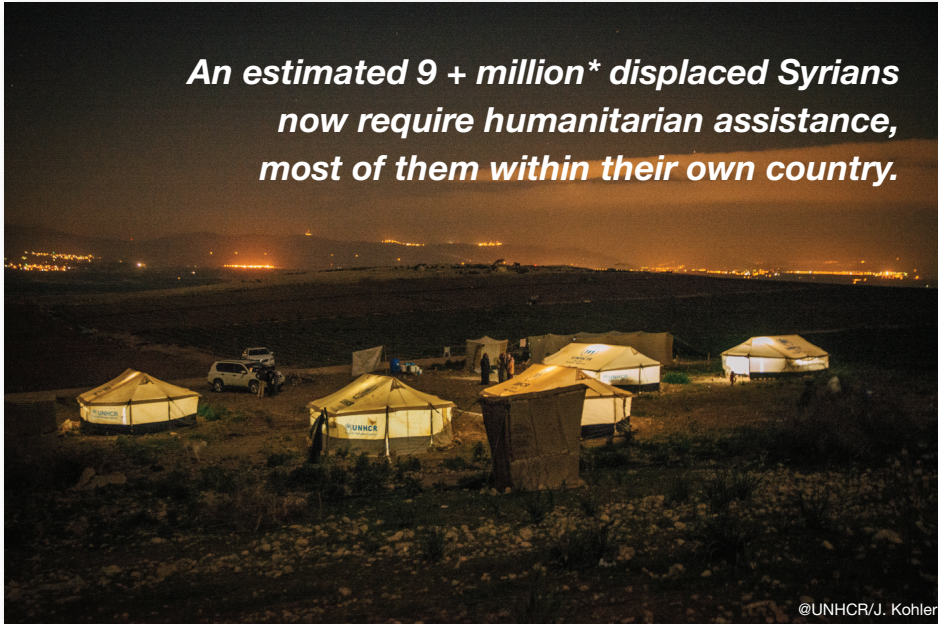
"The international community has to overcome its differences and find solutions to the conflicts in South Sudan, Syria, Central African Republic and elsewhere," said Guterres.

Only when conflicts are resolved and peace resumes, can displaced people return home.

# The Syrian Crisis Continues

More than 9 million people are homeless

**An estimated 9 + million\* displaced Syrians now require humanitarian assistance, most of them within their own country.**



@UNHCR/J. Kohler

A dozen Syrian refugee families in an informal settlement – a mix of tents and Bedouin-style shelters. More than 1,600 Syrian families live in tents outside Jordan's formal camps, like Za'atri, as they search for work in rural areas.

The humanitarian situation in Syria remains grave and extremely challenging. An estimated 9 + million\* displaced Syrians now require humanitarian assistance, most of them within their own country.

The current conflict has major implications for refugee operations both outside the country and within. Insecurity restricts movement and often disrupts UNHCR's access to affected populations. This lack of

freedom increases the importance of reaching, monitoring and assisting those in need.

Unfortunately, plans regarding internal displacement are being made on the assumption that Syrian refugees in 2014 will not return to their homes in significant numbers. Despite this, UNHCR will maintain its strategic role in refugee response, as the leading agency for protection and shelter.

In a situation that often seems overwhelming, it is important to focus on the achievements made possible, thanks to our donors and friends. In 2013, more than 3.3 million internally displaced Syrians were provided Core Relief Items, improved access to healthcare, rehabilitated places of shelter and “family kits” that included mattresses, blankets and kitchen utensils.

Please continue helping us in our ongoing efforts to assist the world's largest refugee population.

\*At press time.

## World Refugee Day 2014

World Refugee Day 2014 (20 June) commemorated the strength and resilience of the millions of uprooted people who are forced to flee their homes due to war or other forms of conflict.

What's more, UNHCR asked everyone around the globe to show their support for displaced families by sharing their very own refugee stories. The response was overwhelming!

You can see for yourself, by going online and visiting <http://stories.unhcr.org/ca>

To those of you who recognize World Refugee Day, please accept our sincere thanks.



@UNHCR/R. Arnold

UNHCR Special Envoy Angelina Jolie visits ethnic Karenni refugee Baw Meh, aged 75 years, and her family from Myanmar, in Ban Mai Nai Soi refugee camp, approximately 2 km from the Thai-Myanmar border.

## Twin Crises: South Sudan and CAR

*Your support is saving lives*

In the face of this dual conflict, UNHCR donors have responded generously to our recent appeal to assist refugees from South Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Since our last update, the situation in South Sudan has remained unpredictable. Shootings have been reported around the UN base in Jonglei state. Armed elements attempted to commandeer a cargo plane carrying humanitarian relief items, such as blankets, buckets, plastic sheets and kitchen sets. The conflict has intensified, as there are now over 1 million internally displaced people. Over 400,00 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.\*

In CAR, the religious-based violence continues, displacing more than 918,012 of its citizens.

Churches, mosques and other places of worship, which used to provide a safe-haven for refugees, have

now been attacked in Bangui, the capital of CAR; and all across the country. UNHCR is currently documenting and verifying the situation of urban refugees and asylum seekers to ensure they have a safe place to stay.

Your donations are helping to protect and provide humanitarian assistance to those who need it most, so thank you! Contributions also ensure UNHCR can continue working with neighbouring countries to ensure borders remain open to refugees seeking safety.

*\*At press time.*



@UNHCR/P.Rulashe

## This is Fane's Story



@UNHCR/S. Phelps

70-year-old Fane Abdelkarim Arame sits in a tent at the Ecole Liberty camp in the town of Bossangoa.

*Ever since the French and the regional African force (FOMAC) have arrived, the anti-Balaka [militias] continues to burn our houses. We can't step back in our own quartier now, it's been taken.*

*In December, I saw 18 bodies, cut into pieces. It was horrible. I have had 4 of my own relatives killed.*

*We grew up in this country, my grandparents are Central African and we were here before independence, we have seen 6 regimes come and go.*

*The most important thing for us is security and a situation where we can live like we did before in harmony with the Christians. I don't care so much that my home is burnt; I just want to have some security reinstalled so we can go on with our lives. We have fear in our stomachs every day when we wake up. Last night we did not sleep. We were so scared of an attack. I gathered all the children together and we stayed awake till the sun came up.*



**Thank you for your support!**

**UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency)**

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