

PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS AND GOODWILL AMBASSADOR SUPPORT



A refugee student delegation visits Free University of Berlin on World Refugee Day 2019 in Germany.

Public campaigns

As part of its advocacy to raise empathy and increase support for refugees, IDPs and stateless persons, UNHCR strives to engage audiences through broad-based platforms such as World Refugee Day, the Nansen Refugee Award and the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness.

For World Refugee Day, UNHCR launched a global challenge to #StepWithRefugees. Thousands of people walked, ran, danced, cycled or took inspiring steps in support of refugees. Similarly, the private sector campaign, 2 Billion Kilometres to Safety, launched in 2019, engaged over 110,000 new supporters who covered 30 million km in solidarity with refugees. The campaign raised UNHCR's profile through promotion at major (sporting) events, fitness apps, media and social media coverage and partnerships, and reached over 870 million people worldwide.

UNHCR also launched its 2019 World Tour, resulting in 280 solidarity events in 190 cities around the world. From food and music festivals to community walks and 10 km runs, the narrative reinforcing better inclusion of refugees was loud and clear. More than 225 cities across some 50 countries added their support to a global statement of welcome and inclusiveness for families forced to flee. The statement is part of UNHCR's year-old Cities #WithRefugees initiative. The "Take a Step With Refugees" video series also highlighted shared values between six refugees and their welcomers in Beirut, Denver, Kuala Lumpur, Nairobi, Paris and Panama City.

Cities #WithRefugees initiative



"Take a Step With Refugees" video series



Similarly, 25 faith actors came together to communicate their commitment to upholding the dignity of refugees through offering effective protection, access to social services, fulfilment of human rights and enhancing peacebuilding efforts.

Since 2016, the #WithRefugees Coalition has focused the support of powerful civil society entities in the worlds of faith, sport, education, business, technology, and humanitarianism to drive action and keep refugee inclusion on the global agenda. By the end of 2019 the Coalition's membership had grown to 500 companies, universities, foundations, faith-based organizations, and youth groups, and had members in 82 countries. In 2019 the Coalition amplified key communication milestones such as World Refugee Day and UNHCR's annual Education Report, and its thematic groups made important commitments at the Global Refugee Forum.

UNHCR's ten year #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness reached its mid-point in 2019, marked by a High-Level Segment on Statelessness during the Executive Committee meeting in October. Throughout the year, positive actions by governments and NGOs towards the Campaign's goals were highlighted, most notably the Kyrgyz Republic becoming the first country to resolve all known cases of statelessness, an achievement reflected in the choice of 2019's Nansen Refugee Award winner.

Watch the video "What does it mean to be stateless?"



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The Nansen Refugee Award

Since the Nansen Refugee Award was established in 1954, more than 60 people, groups and organizations have been acknowledged for their dedication and outstanding work on behalf of forcibly displaced people.

Mr. Azizbek Ashurov, a lawyer whose work was crucial in the efforts of the Kyrgyz Republic in becoming the first country in the world to end statelessness, was honoured as the 2019 winner. The Award recognized Mr. Ashurov's dedication over sixteen years in helping thousands of people gain Kyrgyz nationality after they became stateless following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The monetary prize of \$150,000, jointly donated by the Norwegian and Swiss Governments, will be used by Mr. Ashurov to focus on the prevention of future statelessness in the Kyrgyz Republic and the region, with the opening of a centre for legal identity and nationality in Osh, and on setting up legal clinics for law students.

Five regional winners were also honoured with Nansen Refugee Award certificates. These were Mr. Évariste Mfaume, the founder of NGO Solidarité des Volontaires pour l'Humanité in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who champions the rights of Congolese people displaced by conflict as well as the rights of refugees and their host communities; Ms. Bianka Rodriguez, a trans woman and executive director of NGO COMCAVIS TRANS who advocates for the rights of forcibly displaced LGBTI persons in El Salvador; Mr. Alberto Cairo, a physiotherapist in Afghanistan and head of the International Committee of the Red Cross orthopaedic programme, who for 30 years has worked in Afghanistan to provide prosthetics and help find jobs for injured Afghans; Humanitarian Corridors, a cross-border initiative established with the Italian Government in 2015 to enable particularly vulnerable refugees to start a new life in safety in Italy; and Mrs. Abeer Khreisha, a community volunteer in Jordan, known as "the mother of Syrians" for her work helping refugees.



Goodwill Ambassador support

“We all have an individual duty should [...refugees] reach our own doorstep in search of safety and sanctuary that we welcome them.”

—Khaled Hosseini, novelist and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador

With the support of a core group of diverse and committed UNHCR Goodwill Ambassadors, celebrity supporters and influencers around the world, 2019 was another impactful year for UNHCR in leading the global narrative on the refugee cause. By generously donating their time and harnessing their networks, they raised awareness, leveraged fundraising, and amplified refugee voices. Their advocacy included 73 missions across 27 countries, reaching new and existing audiences in the hundreds of millions across a variety of media platforms. Their support also bolstered partnerships and helped raise millions of dollars. By conveying the humanity of the refugee story through innovative and creative projects, they inspired empathy, uniting people in their commitment to make a real difference in the lives of the forcibly displaced and their hosts.

The Global Refugee Forum enjoyed the prominent backing of UNHCR celebrity supporters and refugee advocates via the #EveryoneCounts campaign. The campaign galvanized expressions of solidarity for its core message that “everyone has a role to play”, by promoting inclusion, compassion and tolerance, while giving refugees a voice and opportunities to positively impact society. The main campaign video was viewed 7 million times. Other dialogues between supporters and refugee advocates, such as Goodwill Ambassador Ben Stiller and South Sudanese model and former refugee Adut Akech, elevated the stories of refugees in public debate and discourse in countries around the world.

Through a powerful and insightful interview with activist Maha Mamo at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness, Goodwill Ambassador Cate Blanchett brought prominence to the global plight of an estimated 10 million stateless persons.

#EveryoneCounts
multi ambassador
film



Platforms were provided for young refugee advocates such as UNHCR high-profile supporter and Syrian refugee trainee pilot, Maya Ghazal who brought her personal story and her powerful advocacy to many events during the year, including at the Global Refugee Forum, where she spoke about the importance of education. With determination, hope and resilience Maya has started a new life in the UK and is currently studying Aviation Engineering at Brunel University with the aspiration of becoming the first female Syrian refugee pilot. Pictured with her, after her inaugural solo flight, was British actor Douglas Booth, who has supported UNHCR since 2015. He met in Sicily with survivors of the Mediterranean sea crossing, and with families resettled through safe and legal pathways.

Elsewhere, UNHCR supporter and Iraqi refugee, Aya Mohammed Abdullah, joined high-profile speakers to champion refugee voices at The Imagine Forum: Women for Peace, in Iceland; while UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and Sudanese refugee, Emi Mahmoud’s powerful and poignant slam poetry at the Sziget festival in Hungary went viral with 1.3 million views on social media.

