

Media Update

18 June 2021

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

VIDEO MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT 19 June 2021

Sexual violence in conflict is a cruel tactic of war, torture, terror and repression.

It reverberates down generations, and threatens both human and international security.

In places affected by conflict, the turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more difficult to hold perpetrators of sexual violence to account.

At the same time, survivors face new obstacles to reporting crimes and accessing support services.

Even as we respond to the pandemic, we must investigate every case, and maintain essential services for every survivor.

We cannot allow this already underreported crime to slip further into the shadows. Perpetrators must be punished.

Investment in recovery from the pandemic must tackle the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence.

On this International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, let's resolve to uphold the rights and meet the needs of all survivors, as we work to prevent and end these horrific crimes.

Video Link:

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Audio file mp3,

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English sub-title,

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United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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VIDEO MESSAGE ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY « TOGETHER WE HEAL, LEARN AND SHINE » 20 June 2021

War, violence and persecution have forced more than 80 million people around the world to flee their homes, leaving everything behind to save themselves and their families.

Refugees must begin their lives anew.

But for so many, the pandemic has wiped out their livelihoods, led to stigmatization and vilification and exposed them disproportionately to the virus.

At the same time, refugees once again demonstrated their invaluable contribution to their adoptive societies as essential and frontline workers.

We have a duty to help refugees rebuild their lives.

COVID-19 has shown us that we can only succeed if we stand together.

On World Refugee Day, I call on communities and governments to include refugees – in health care, education, and sport.

We heal together when we all get the care we need.

We learn together when we are all given the chance to study.

We shine together when we play as a team and respect everyone.

On World Refugee Day, I commend the countries that have welcomed refugees. But we need more support – from States, the private sector, communities and individuals – if we are to move together towards a more inclusive future, free of discrimination.

The refugees I have met have shown me what it means to rebuild your own life while summoning the strength to enrich the lives of others.

As High Commissioner for Refugees for 10 years, I was inspired by their courage, resilience and determination.

I thank refugees and displaced persons across the world and reiterate my personal admiration for what they have taught us all about the power of hope and healing.

This World Refugee Day and every day, we stand together with refugees.

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UNHCR

PRESS RELEASE

1 million children born as refugees in three years globally

Number of people fleeing wars and violence rose to 82.4 million; forced displacement hits record high; one per cent of humanity is displaced.

ISLAMABAD, 18 June 2021: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency revealed on Friday that almost 1 million children were born as refugees between 2018 and 2020, and called for greater efforts to prevent and end conflicts. Failing to do so will result in children continuing to live as refugees for years to come.

According to a newly released Global Trends report by UNHCR, it is estimated that the number of people fleeing wars, violence, persecution and human rights violations in 2020 rose to nearly 82.4 million people – a 4 per cent increase on top of the already record-high 79.5 million at the end of 2019. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, called for greater political will to address conflicts and persecution that force people to flee.

Turkey hosts the largest refugee population worldwide with 3.7 million refugees, followed by Colombia with 1.7 million, and Pakistan with 1.4 million Afghan refugees.

According to the statistics, 1 per cent of humanity is displaced, and there are twice as many forcibly displaced people than in 2011, when the total was just under 40 million.

The 2021 World Refugee Day theme is: *Together we heal, learn and shine*. In Islamabad, UNHCR, together with the Government of Pakistan, organized a virtual event to express solidarity with refugees and the communities that generously hosted them.

The online event was attended by the UNHCR Representative in Pakistan, Ms. Noriko Yoshida, the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (Islamabad Headquarters), Mr. Farid Ullah Jan, other government officials, representatives from diplomatic missions, UN agencies, partners, civil society and refugees.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Yoshida said that the continuous rise in forced displacement worldwide is alarming. “The most worrying fact is that 42 per cent of all displaced people are children below the age of 18,” she said, adding that hundreds of thousands of children continue to be born as refugees, and that efforts should be made to prevent displacement across the globe.

“Despite its own challenges, Pakistan’s commitment to Afghan refugees has never diminished; it deserves special recognition”, Ms. Yoshida said. She appreciated the Government of Pakistan for its policies that include refugees, such as its national COVID-19 vaccination programme, and for the access to educational opportunities and health care that the country provides.

Referring to the Support Platform for Afghan Refugee Solutions created in 2019, she appreciated and welcomed the renewed interest shown by the international community in sharing the responsibility and burden with Pakistan in hosting Afghan refugees.

“In 2021, we mark World Refugee Day amid a continuing pandemic, and the pandemic has taught us that we are stronger when we stand together,” she added. Despite the challenges they face every day, she said that refugees have stepped up, working as doctors and nurses, and keeping their communities functioning. She said that given the chance, refugees will continue to contribute to a stronger, safer and more vibrant world.

Mr. Jan from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, the government body responsible for managing Afghan refugee affairs in Pakistan, welcomed further international support for Pakistan’s efforts.

“The people of Pakistan opened their hearts to refugees and welcomed them when they fled conflict. For over forty years, we left no stone unturned in our support to refugees,” he said.

Afghan refugees who participated the virtual event also shared their thoughts, needs and dreams with the audience.

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Photo captions:

UNHCR holds its World Refugee Day commemoration, together with government representatives, high-level supporters as well as refugees. © UNHCR/A. Shahzad

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