

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY

20 June 2022

On World Refugee Day, we reflect on the courage and resilience of those fleeing war, violence, and persecution – and we recognize the compassion of those who welcome them.

Today, the global refugee population is at a record high.

The war in Ukraine has triggered the largest and fastest displacement in Europe since World War II.

Together with the women, children, and men fleeing conflict elsewhere in the world, the total number of forcibly displaced people has reached 100 million – a grim indictment of our times.

This year's World Refugee Day affirms a fundamental tenet of our common humanity: everyone has the right to seek safety – *whoever* they are, *wherever* they come from, and *whenever* they are forced to flee.

International law is clear:

The right to seek asylum is a fundamental human right.

People escaping violence or persecution must be able to cross borders safely.

They must not face discrimination at borders or be unfairly denied refugee status or asylum due to their race, religion, gender, or country of origin.

They cannot be forced to return if their lives or freedom would be at risk.

And like every human being, they should be treated with respect.

But safety is just the first step.

Once out of harm's way, refugees need opportunities.

Opportunities to heal, to learn, to work, and to thrive.

Opportunities to return home if they so choose, or to rebuild their lives elsewhere, in safety and dignity.

Across the world, refugees have brought new life, prosperity, and rich cultural diversity to their host communities.

Protecting refugees is a responsibility we all share.

Today, let us pledge to do more for refugees everywhere – and for the countries that host them while themselves facing a cascade of challenges.

Let us stand together in solidarity.

Let us defend the integrity of the international protection regime.

And let us never lose sight of our common humanity.
