



## AUSTRALIAN DONORS RAISE \$9M FOR AFGHANISTAN

**INSIDE:** Ethiopia crisis • The Les Murray Award  
Celebrating World Refugee Day • COVID-19 update

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**ON THE COVER:**  
Nine-year-old Nazeela watches elders chat in a camp for displaced people in Afghanistan.

© UNHCR/Edris Lutfi



## WELCOME

Recent events in Afghanistan have left us all feeling shocked and saddened. Australia for UNHCR has been supporting UNHCR's humanitarian programs in Afghanistan since we were established over 20 years ago. Our support for refugee repatriation, shelter, livelihood and girls' education projects has given many of us a sense of connection to the country and its people.

Now, again, UNHCR is at the forefront of the UN's humanitarian response in Afghanistan, as lead agency for protection and emergency shelter. The situation is rapidly changing and hugely complex, but as long as we have access to the displaced population, UNHCR will stay and deliver. Australians have responded strongly to our Afghanistan emergency appeal, but the needs remain huge. If you haven't already done so, please turn to page 6 to see how you can help.

'Stay and deliver' has come to define UNHCR's response in the face of many long-running conflicts. Syria is another example of our sustained commitment. After 10 years of war, UNHCR remains on the ground, providing support and protection for millions of Syrian refugees and displaced people.

Each year, UNHCR coordinates a massive 'winterisation program' in Syria and surrounding countries to help vulnerable families prepare for the coming winter. Australia for UNHCR is a major supporter of this operation, with your gifts providing thousands of families with thermal blankets, warm clothing, heating stoves and fuel, extra cash and shelter kits to help them winter-proof their homes and survive the coming cold. This year's roll-out is already underway across Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq. We will shortly be launching our Winter Appeal in Australia and I hope we can count on your support.

In July, the Tokyo Olympics provided some respite from the troubles in our world and the chance to celebrate our shared humanity. For the second time, a refugee team marched under the Olympic flag, symbolising the courage, resilience and determination of displaced communities worldwide. Their achievements, along with those of many former refugees representing their new nations, were an inspiring example of how refugees can enrich our societies and realise their dreams, given the opportunity.

The late Les Murray, AM, was a great believer in the unifying power of sport. The legendary SBS broadcaster, himself a former refugee, was known for his passionate promotion of football as the people's game, and the support he gave young players from diverse backgrounds. At our World Refugee Day event in June, Australia for UNHCR joined forces with SBS to launch a special refugee recognition award in his name. To find out more see page 12.

Thank you all for staying connected, compassionate and responsive to the needs of refugees at this challenging time.

*Naomi Steer*

**Naomi Steer, National Director**

THE DIFFERENCE YOU MADE



# Heartfelt thanks from Yemen

◀ Mohammed and his children sit in their shelter at the hosting site for internally displaced persons in Marib, Yemen. They have been displaced three times since the beginning of the war.

**“**  
*Your support really makes a difference. I witness it every day.”*

**Jean-Nicolas Beuze,**  
UNHCR  
Representative  
in Yemen



© UNHCR/David Azia

**A**ustralians were quick to respond to our special appeal in May, donating a record AU\$1.84 million to provide desperate families in Yemen with emergency shelter, health care and cash assistance to help them pay for food and other necessities.

While rarely in the headlines, Yemen remains the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, a country battered by conflict, economic collapse, acute food shortages, disease outbreaks and a string of natural disasters. More than two-thirds of the population are now in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Of these, over half are going hungry every day and a further 5 million are at imminent risk of famine.

In June, Jean-Nicolas Beuze, UNHCR’s Yemen Representative, made an impassioned plea to Australia for UNHCR supporters during our Frontline Club webinar. Speaking from the city of Sana’a, he described the terrible plight of the country’s 4 million displaced

people, and the scourge of malnutrition and disease among young children. He expressed his fear that recent cuts to international aid could soon cost lives and jeopardise the efforts of relief agencies.

Your response was overwhelming and deeply appreciated by UNHCR teams on the ground in Yemen. In August, Jean-Nicolas Beuze sent this message of thanks to Australia for UNHCR staff, volunteers and supporters who worked so hard on this appeal and gave so generously:

“As we say here – Mabrouk! [well done and bless]. What an incredible gesture of solidarity of Australians for Yemenis. Thank you all so much for joining forces with us and making a difference in the lives of so many.”

With your help, UNHCR has delivered emergency shelter kits to people fleeing the recent fighting in Marib and Al Hudaydah governorates. A further 20,951 vulnerable families have received cash assistance to help cover their food bills and basic living expenses for four months.

UNHCR is also providing critical support to the health care system in Yemen which, in some parts of the country, is on the brink of collapse. Many hospitals have been damaged in the fighting and almost all are running short of staff and medical supplies. UNHCR funds a network of refugee health centres and recently made a major donation of equipment to hospitals and laboratories in the cities of Sana’a, Aden, Lahij and Taizz.

Our donations are also supporting the COVID-19 emergency response. With your help, UNHCR has recently distributed thousands of additional hygiene kits in refugee communities, and 1,800 handwashing basins in 17 displacement camps. ■

# In the News



© Goal Click/UNHCR/Positive Youth Foundation

Internally displaced Ukrainian footballer Maria Romanchenko, 17, trains in Odessa.



© Goal Click/UNHCR/Maria Romanchenko



15-year-old Madina Ali fled Afghanistan with her family due to conflict. She hopes to one day play soccer for Australia.

© Goal Click/UNHCR/Melbourne Victory FC/Madina Ali

## » AFGHANISTAN

A series of personal photos and stories by refugees and others forced to flee is highlighting the power of football to foster inclusion and promote physical and mental wellbeing among displaced communities and their hosts.

The photo campaign, Goal Click Refugees, collaborates with refugees and asylum seekers around the world to document their personal stories and experiences through football in refugee settlements, urban situations and among their host communities. Goal Click gave each participant a disposable camera to capture the unfiltered realities of their football lives and communities, on and off the pitch.

Now in its second year, the 2021 series includes multiple contributions from Australia, including from fifteen-year-old Madina Ali. Madina and her family fled Afghanistan due to conflict, she now lives in Melbourne and plays for a team organised by Melbourne Victory FC.

“I didn’t play football before coming to Australia. I had to leave my homeland because of wars, to get a better education and have freedom. In my country men have freedom. However, women in Afghanistan don’t have much freedom, such as being able to finish school, go out alone, and other simple things that we are allowed here in Australia,” she said. ■

» Explore the series: [unhcr.org/goalclick](https://unhcr.org/goalclick)



© BDRCS

## » BANGLADESH

Rohingya refugees are facing new challenges after heavy monsoon rains inundated refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, leaving many homeless once again. 700mm of rain fell in just one week in late July and early August, affecting more than 400 local villages, washing away shelters and triggering flooding and landslides that killed some 20 people, 10 of whom were refugees. Some 24,000 refugees were forced to abandon their homes and belongings.

Over the past four years, some 700,000 minority Muslim Rohingya have fled violence in Myanmar, crossing the border into Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar, joining hundreds of thousands of others already settled in overcrowded camps there.

Meher, 60, fled from Myanmar four years ago and has been living with her son, daughter-in-law and grandchild in a refugee camp in Cox’s Bazar District. After days of heavy monsoon rain she noticed water coming in their shelter and within a few hours water was up to their chest. “I felt helpless, I didn’t understand where to go,” said Meher. “The water was rising so fast that we couldn’t go back. Most of our belongings were washed away.”

The adverse weather, latest landslides and floods further exacerbate the suffering and massive humanitarian needs of refugees who have suffered for years from disease, heavy rains and fires. In March, a massive fire in a refugee camp in Cox’s Bazar killed 11 refugees and left tens of thousands homeless. ■

▲ AT TOP: UNHCR-trained refugee volunteers and other partners have been working in heavy rain, day and night to help families in urgent need.

## » LEBANON

Lebanon is currently facing the worst economic crisis in decades, coping with a pandemic and health emergency, and still dealing with the repercussions of the devastating port explosion in Beirut on August 4, 2020. More than one million Syrian refugees are in Lebanon, giving it the highest per capita proportion of refugees in the world, placing enormous pressure on the country and its people.

“When Syrians first fled to Lebanon in search of protection, they had just left their families, their homes, their schools or work behind. Some had even brought some savings,” said Ayaki Ito, UNHCR Representative in Lebanon. “But as the years went by and they remained in a situation of exile – paying rent every month, buying food and covering medical expenses, just like everyone else – they quickly depleted any savings they initially had, and instead started accumulating debts.”

Nine out of ten Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty and life for already vulnerable refugee families has become more and more difficult, with limited possibilities to generate income to cover basic needs. ■



➤ Mohamad, a Syrian refugee, cuts hair at a settlement in Lebanon. Before the war he dreamed of opening a hair salon in Syria.



▲ Ayan fled from Ethiopia to Somalia to escape the drought, however was evacuated after her shelter in the coastal town of Bossaso was destroyed by Cyclone Gati last November.

## » SOMALIA

The impacts of our changing climate are being felt worldwide, but countries already struggling with conflict, poverty and high levels of displacement are dealing with some of the most severe effects. Droughts, flooding, and other extreme weather events are hitting those least equipped to recover and adapt and many of the countries most exposed to the impacts of climate change are already host to large numbers of refugees and internally displaced.

Ayan Muude Adawe moved to the coastal town of Bossaso in north-eastern Somalia's Puntland region after fleeing drought in Ethiopia. However, she has been displaced from a settlement in Bossaso several times by heavy rains. Adapting to life there has been a daily struggle but the impact of Cyclone Gati, which hit Somalia last November, tested the limits of her resilience.

“I was never prepared for such a devastating storm,” said Ayan. “The flood water destroyed our shelter and washed away our belongings. We were evacuated the following morning, but my four-month-old son got sick and died the next day. He was cold and unable to breathe.”

Extreme weather events like cyclones used to be a relatively rare occurrence in Puntland, but as climate change disrupts weather patterns, they have become more frequent and now happen almost yearly. While countries such as Bangladesh have always been susceptible to storms and flooding, climate change is causing more frequent and intense cyclones and flooding which is threatening both Bangladeshis and more than 870,000 Rohingya refugees who fled violence in Myanmar.

UNHCR is working to reduce the risks that extreme weather events pose to refugees and internally displaced people and calling on States to urgently and collectively take action to combat climate change and mitigate its impacts on the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people around the world. ■

## » MALAWI

Education provides a path to rebuilding lives for refugee children, however two-thirds of refugee youth might never get to secondary school, according to UNHCR's 2021 Education Report. Secondary school should be a time of growth, development and opportunity, yet according to data gathered by UNHCR in 40 countries, only 34 per cent of refugees at secondary level are enrolled. In almost every country, the rate trails that of host community children.

COVID-19 has been disruptive for all children, but for young refugees who already face significant obstacles to getting into school, the pandemic could further hinder their chance of getting the education they need. “Recent progress made in school enrolment of refugee children and youth is now under threat,” said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi. “Confronting this challenge requires a massive, coordinated effort, and it is a task we cannot afford to shirk.”

In 2021, Rachel's school was closed for nine months due to COVID-19. Unable to study properly, she did not pass her high-school final exam, like many of her peers. Rachel is now taking a computer literacy course in Dzaleka camp, in Malawi, offered by UNHCR and partners. She hopes to one day become a doctor, and through this course, Rachel is developing vital skills that can help accelerate her pathway to future studies. ■



◀ Rachel, like many of her peers did not pass her high school final exams due to disruptions caused by COVID-19.



# Afghanistan emergency

**HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF AFGHANS HAVE BEEN INTERNALLY DISPLACED SINCE THE START OF THE YEAR.**

**M**ore than 600,000 Afghans have been internally displaced due to conflict since the beginning of the year amid what is now a humanitarian emergency.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi visited Afghanistan in September where he met with the interim Afghan government as well as staff from the UN Country Team who have stayed on the ground and maintained operations, despite challenging circumstances.

“The United Nations Refugee Agency is committed to protecting and assisting those who are fleeing. We must help in all the possible ways we can,” said the High Commissioner.

UNHCR continues to provide support to the millions of Afghans requiring humanitarian assistance, with access to almost all provinces in Afghanistan. Priorities are providing protection and core relief items including food, shelter, water and hygiene and sanitation kits. With less than four per cent of the entire population fully vaccinated, the spread of COVID-19 is turning this complex situation into a deadly one.

Thanks to the incredible generosity from our donors and supporters, Australia for UNHCR has raised \$9m.

Your support has ensured that UNHCR can continue its critical and life-saving work in the country while also working with authorities in countries neighbouring Afghanistan to plan and prepare for potential future large-scale movement of Afghan refugees, including to safeguard their right to seek asylum.

However, the needs are ongoing and UNHCR is only 42 per cent funded against overall needs of \$351m to help support and provide for the people of Afghanistan. ■

**If you would like to support families forced to flee in Afghanistan, visit [unrefugees.org.au/afghanappeal](https://unrefugees.org.au/afghanappeal)**





< Afghan children at a camp for internally displaced families in Panjwai district of Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

Relief convoys continue to arrive in Afghanistan and aid is being distributed.



© Aved Tanveer/AFP

✓ Relief convoys arrive at the UNHCR warehouse in Kabul from Pakistan to deliver tents and other relief items for displaced Afghan families.



## HOW UNHCR HAS HELPED



© UNHCR/Ghulam Abbas Farzami

■ UNHCR has already supported more than 300,000 displaced people inside Afghanistan with relief items and cash assistance this year, and is rapidly scaling up its operations to help more people ahead of the fast-approaching winter.

■ In September, a convoy of trucks arrived at a UNHCR warehouse in Kabul from Pakistan containing thousands of tents and other relief items for displaced Afghan families.

■ In Mazar-e-Sharif, in northern Afghanistan, the High Commissioner inaugurated a carpet workshop that employs 45 workers who are supporting hundreds of family members.

■ In addition to emergency assistance, UNHCR also continues its regular programs in Afghanistan. Key investments are being made in areas such as health and education, including to support the sustainable reintegration of internally displaced people (IDPs) who previously returned to their areas of origin or may do so in the future.

■ Construction is also ongoing to establish 19 schools, youth learning centres and a women's cafe, as well as nine health clinics, with mental health and psychosocial services.



© UNHCR/Ghulam Abbas Farzami

# Winterisation

THE BITTERLY COLD WINTER MONTHS  
ADD TO SUFFERING FOR REFUGEES AND  
DISPLACED PEOPLE.

> Siba, 10, a Syrian refugee living in a settlement camp in Beqaa Valley, where heavy snow storms are common in winter.



© UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sánchez

**“ Now as winter looms, conflict has forced people from their homes into harsh winter conditions. Millions of Afghan families who left their homes in search of safety will struggle to stay warm this winter. ”**

Refugees are already some of the most vulnerable people in the world, many have suffered violence, loss and hunger, but now as winter looms in the Middle East and North Africa, displaced families face significant risks to their health and wellbeing.

This year, Syrian and Afghan families are particularly vulnerable and facing a triple threat of the three Cs: conflict, COVID-19 and climate. They've already suffered from war, but now they have to contend with the COVID-19 pandemic and worsening climate crisis, which is contributing to harsher winters.

In Afghanistan, even prior to the events that unfolded in recent months, more than 18 million Afghans required urgent humanitarian assistance. Over 3.5 million have been displaced from their homes by conflict and remain inside the country, including some 630,000 this year.

Now as winter looms, conflict has forced people from their homes into harsh winter conditions. Millions of Afghan families who left their homes in search of safety will struggle to stay warm this winter.

In Lebanon where more than one million Syrian refugees are hosted, they are now facing a tough winter ahead in light of worsening economic conditions. Many refugees in Lebanon dread the arrival of winter as it brings unrelenting freezing winds, heavy rains and snow.

Last winter, refugees were caught in a heavy snow storm when winter storm Joyce hit. Displaced refugees from Syria living in flimsy tents at high altitudes struggled to cope.

This year with the ongoing economic crisis in the country and the high inflation, the money and the aid

refugees get from UNHCR won't go far. On top of this, the COVID-19 pandemic has made humanitarian needs more acute than ever. Restrictions to contain its spread have threatened jobs and pushed households deeper into poverty.

Each year, UNHCR's winter aid program helps support refugees and displaced people by providing them with core relief items such as thermal blankets; seasonal cash assistance for vulnerable families so they can buy heaters, food, fuel and medicine; and shelter weather-proofing kits and improvements to infrastructure to help withstand the worst of the weather. ■

**To support the winter aid campaign please visit [unrefugees.org.au/appeals/winter-survival-fund](https://unrefugees.org.au/appeals/winter-survival-fund)**



# Celebrating World Refugee Day

*In June we held our first hybrid World Refugee Day (WRD) event pre-lockdown in Sydney, which raised more than \$240,000 for UNHCR's global COVID-19 operation.*

This year's World Refugee Lunch event was a hybrid in-person and online event, with 330 guests in attendance at Sheraton on the Park in Sydney, and almost 200 online attendees.

Our guest speakers included Rosemary Kariuki, star of the award-winning documentary *Rosemary's Way* and winner of the Australian of the Year 2021 Local Hero award.

Refugee athletes Asif Sultani, Akec Makur Chuot and Golgol Mebrahtu also participated in a panel discussion about the role of sport in building inclusive communities in Australia, moderated by Australia for UNHCR Special Representative Ian Chappell.

Online attendees were also taken on a special 'virtual mission' with UNHCR Jordan External Relations Officer, Lily Carlisle.

Special VIP guests included Adrian Edwards, Regional Representative for UNHCR, Rosalind Croucher, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, our Chair Michael Dwyer AM and members of the Board including Kate Dundas, Rick Millen, Zoe Ghani and John Boulton AM. Also in attendance were Australia for UNHCR Special Representatives and Ambassadors Yarrrie Bangura, Aminata Conteh-Biger and Carina Hoang.

The event also saw the launch of The Australia for UNHCR – SBS Les Murray Award, and we screened a special video commemorating his life and achievements, with members of Les Murray's family in attendance. ■



## ▲ FROM TOP:

CEO of First Sentier Investors, Mark Steinberg, National Director Naomi Steer and Raja Yassine.

Board member Rick Millen and Strategic Director, Debra O'Neill with members of Les Murray's family.

Regional Representative for UNHCR, Adrian Edwards.

Special Representative Ian Chappell with refugee athletes Golgol Mebrahtu, Akec Makur Chuot and Asif Sultani.



# COVID-19 update

**UNHCR works to ensure the 82.4 million people displaced worldwide are included in COVID-19 vaccine rollouts, while also supporting families affected by the secondary impacts of the pandemic.**

Bangladesh rolls out a COVID-19 vaccination program for Rohingya refugees living in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

© UNHCR/Amos Halder

**A**s vaccination programs roll out across the globe, UNHCR is continuously advocating at country, regional and global levels for refugees and forcibly displaced people to be included in international strategies. According to UNHCR's Global COVID-19 Response Report, 47 countries have reported that over 62,000 persons of concern have received a vaccine.

Syrian refugee and community health volunteer Sameeh, 32, works in Za'atari Camp, Jordan, where he helps fellow refugees in the camp register for the COVID-19 vaccine.

"Before COVID-19, my role as a community health volunteer in Za'atari Camp was just like any other normal job," Sameeh said. "But now my job means something. You feel there is an urgency. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine could be a matter of life or death."

In Jordan, nearly 3 million people have been vaccinated as part of the national COVID-19 vaccination program since it began in January 2021. In refugee camps, the number of vaccinated refugees continues to increase, reaching over 24,000 refugees in total, with close to 40,000

registered to receive the vaccine. Throughout the pandemic, UNHCR has also been working to ensure refugees and internally displaced people receive life-saving support by boosting water and sanitation facilities, increasing access to public health and hygiene as well as airlifting emergency supplies and establishing isolation units.

## PROTECTION FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Even prior to the pandemic, displaced women and children were at greater risk of gender-based violence, forced marriage or missing out on opportunities to realise their potential, however a new data visualisation shows how the pandemic has increased their risk of violence and abuse.

'COVID-19 deepens threats for displaced women and children' is the fourth in a series examining how the COVID-19 crisis has worsened conditions for displaced communities.

Data shows that worsening socio-economic conditions, lockdowns and school closures have further threatened the safety and well-being of displaced women and children.

"Over a year into the crisis, it is clear that COVID-19 has rolled back years of incremental gender equality and child protection gains and will continue to impact displaced women and children well into the future. Action is needed now to mitigate those impacts," said Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Gillian Triggs.

UNHCR is working to respond to this urgent situation and to support women and children affected by the secondary impacts of COVID-19.

In Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, displaced women lack phones to call hotlines, so refugee volunteers are going door-to-door sharing information with Rohingya refugees on services available for gender-based violence survivors.

To support children in lockdown in Mexico, UNHCR and partners developed child-friendly information materials on COVID-19 and supported recreational activities.

In Lebanon, while urgent and high-risk cases of gender-based violence continued to receive in-person support and access to services, UNHCR also provided emergency cash assistance, and psychosocial counselling. ■

## CASH ASSISTANCE SUPPORTS REFUGEES DURING PANDEMIC

For mother-of-three Naada, who was forced to flee her home in Syria to Jordan, after her husband died in the conflict, cash assistance has been essential to her family's survival.

The pandemic robbed Naada of the small income she made from sewing bags which she sells at a local community centre and with no government safety net to fall back on, the cash assistance she receives from UNHCR has become more crucial than ever.



*It comes at the beginning of the month and every month I feel like I can breathe again when I receive the SMS. Before when we ran out of something, food, basic household items, we didn't have the means to replace it. Now we can."*

## UNHCR RESPONSE



**INDIA:** 25 oxygen concentrators and 60 hospital bed mattresses were donated to hospitals catering for refugees and asylum-seekers during the second and impending third wave of COVID-19.



**PAKISTAN:** UNHCR donated 600,000 face masks and ambulances to support its COVID-19 response, benefiting both Pakistanis and Afghans.



**ETHIOPIA:** a total of 36,451 handwashing stations have been installed in communal centres and households in the different refugee camps to promote regular handwashing with soap.

© UNHCR/Roger Arnold

✓ Every year, thousands of refugees are forced to flee their homes in search of safety.



# Walk in the footsteps of refugees and help save lives

All over the world people are joining a global movement, in solidarity with families forced to flee their homes. Join other Australians and walk, run or cycle the distance refugees travel when fleeing their home.

*This November, we're asking you to walk in refugees' shoes by taking part in the 2 Billion Kilometres to Safety challenge.*

**EVERY YEAR, THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES** are forced to flee their homes and set out on a difficult, dangerous trek to safety. More than 600,000 Afghan people have been newly displaced since January 2021 and this crisis will lead to new displacement within the country as well as to neighbouring countries and beyond.

This November, we're asking you to walk in refugees' shoes by taking part in the 2 Billion Kilometres to Safety challenge. You can sign up yourself or take up the challenge with a friend, your family or colleagues. Simply choose the distance you can cover in a month, register on the website and ask your family, friends and colleagues to sponsor you. And you don't have to walk – you can run or cycle too.

By getting active and hitting the pavement this November you will be helping to support newly displaced Afghan refugees.

UNHCR will 'stay and deliver' in Afghanistan and are on the ground assisting with emergency shelter, food, health care, water and sanitation support and cash assistance, but a shortage of funding means humanitarian resources are falling dramatically short. ■

To find out more and register visit [unrefugees.org.au/get-involved/fundraise/2-billion-kilometres-to-safety/](https://unrefugees.org.au/get-involved/fundraise/2-billion-kilometres-to-safety/)

LES MURRAY AWARD

# A new award celebrating the contribution of refugees

The Australia for UNHCR – SBS Les Murray Award recognises the talent, creativity and courage of refugees in helping make a more inclusive and diverse Australian community.



From left: Andrew, Tania and Natalie Murray, National Director Naomi Steer, Chairman of the Board, Michael Dwyer, and SBS Managing Director, James Taylor.

*“Our father was a passionate and compassionate person. There were two causes that he lived for – football and refugees. We are honoured to have our father’s name live on through this award.” – Natalie Murray*

Visit [unrefugees.org.au/about-us/les-murray-award/](https://unrefugees.org.au/about-us/les-murray-award/) to find out more and to apply.



© SBS

The Australia for UNHCR – SBS Les Murray Award for Refugee Recognition honours individuals who through their contribution in the arts, sports or media have engaged Australians and raised positive awareness about the situation of refugees.

The Award was launched at Australia for UNHCR’s World Refugee Day event and commemorates the legacy of Les Murray AM, a celebrated and loved icon of Australian sport and supporter of refugees and human rights. Established by Australia for UNHCR, the Award is supported by SBS – Australia’s most diverse broadcaster.

SBS Managing Director James Taylor said: “SBS’s purpose is about inspiring among all Australians a shared understanding, respect and celebration of our differences.”

“As a refugee, Les embodied all that SBS aspires to be. Passionate about our purpose and SBS’s role in helping people understand each other better, he was a true advocate.

“I know I speak for the entire SBS team when I say that we are extremely proud to be supporting the Award and Les would be honoured to know it holds his name and his legacy.”

Les Murray’s daughter Natalie Murray said her father would have been proud and humbled for the Award to be named after him.

“Our father was a passionate and compassionate person. There were two causes that he lived for – football and refugees. We are honoured to have our father’s name live on through this Award,” she said.

Nominations for the Les Murray Award are now open, and applications are encouraged from authors, artists, actors, community leaders, sports people, film-makers and journalists who have settled in Australia as refugees.

The Award recipient will receive \$10,000, generously donated by SBS, in recognition of their work.

Nominations close on 31st January 2022, and a winner will be announced in April 2022. The winner will be invited to an Award Ceremony held at our World Refugee Day event in June 2022. ■



# Islamic Philanthropy

**OUR ISLAMIC PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE HAS HAD A SUCCESSFUL SIX MONTHS, WITH A SOLD-OUT PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AND A NEW COLLABORATION WITH ISLAMIC RELIEF AUSTRALIA.**

In June, Australia for UNHCR and Islamic Relief Australia announced a three-year strategic partnership to maximise support for refugees and displaced people around the world.

Through this joint collaboration, the two organisations will leverage their respective areas of expertise and networks to raise much-needed funds for UNHCR’s emergency assistance and humanitarian relief programs.

Joint projects and initiatives that acknowledge Islamic charitable giving practices will be identified and developed to raise awareness about the situation and needs of refugees worldwide and connect the Islamic and wider Australian community in support of the 82.4 million people displaced globally.

“This alignment of organisations in a time of unprecedented global displacement acknowledges the significant impact the Islamic community plays in global humanitarian relief, and we look forward to working with Islamic Relief Australia to reach new supporters of UNHCR’s vital work and help empower refugees to build better futures,” said Naomi Steer, National Director of Australia for UNHCR.

“Since starting the UNHCR Refugee Zakat fund in 2019, we have raised over \$90 million dollars for some of our most vulnerable communities. The valuable funds that obligatory giving practices, such as Zakat, provide charities like Australia for UNHCR and Islamic Relief Australia with a continuous and life-altering stream of funds.”

Charitable giving is an institution in Muslim communities and through the practice of Zakat, adults contribute a fixed portion of their excess wealth to help the poor and the most vulnerable.

Islamic Relief is one of the most trusted organisation worldwide for Zakat donations. The two-decade-old organisation works in 40 countries across the world.

“Our partnership with Australia for UNHCR is one of collaborative giving and innovation,” said Walid Ali, Chief Executive Officer of Islamic Relief. “By harnessing the collection and distribution of Zakat Al Mal (obligatory faith giving) we want to ensure we reach the most vulnerable and in an attempt to make indelible impact on their future plight, thereby giving true meaning to the concept of Philanthropy in Islam.” ■



## Australia for UNHCR Photography Exhibition

**EARLIER THIS YEAR**, to launch our Islamic Philanthropy division, we held an event at the Australia for UNHCR office where our Islamic Philanthropy ambassador and award-winning designer, Peter Gould shared photographs from his time in the Middle East.

Following the success of this event, a special photography exhibition was held at the State Library where Peter shared his photographs and insights from his creative and spiritual journey across the Middle East, including pre-war Syria. The event was also an opportunity to learn more about and celebrate Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan. ■

▲ MAIN PHOTO: Australia for UNHCR Islamic Philanthropy ambassador, Peter Gould presents his work at the State Library in support of refugees.

# Making a connection

THE LEADING WOMEN FUND OFFERS DONORS THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF CONNECTING DIRECTLY WITH REFUGEE WOMEN THROUGH A WORLD-FIRST APP.

> A refugee from Syria, Reem lives in Amman with her husband and six children. Through UNHCR's *Connecting Worlds App* she was matched with a donor, Sarah, and the two bonded quickly.

When we founded the Leading Women Fund in 2020, our goal was to create a connection between donors and refugee women worldwide, and one of the ways we have achieved this is through the ground-breaking *Connecting Worlds* app.

Last year we conducted a trial whereby donors were matched with a Syrian refugee woman living in Jordan, and texted, swapped photos and recipes for one month. This year, the app has been developed further and refined, with donors being offered the chance once again to learn more about the daily lives and experiences of refugee women.

"One thing that strikes me so much is that, overwhelmingly, it's the emotional support that is so beneficial for the refugee women who take part," said Lara Schlotterbeck, UNHCR's project lead for the *Connecting Worlds* app.

"Particularly for single mothers, who are caring for children and running the household. No one asks them

at the end of the day how they are, or how they're feeling. So having someone check in with them means a huge amount, more than we could imagine."

Many of last year's group of donors described their month on the *Connecting Worlds* app as a life-changing experience. Some found common ground in the universal trials and tribulations of raising children, or hobbies like cooking or gardening. Others shared an interest in books and philosophy. Most donors gained an insight into the struggles faced by the women they were matched with.

"I was lucky to connect with a Syrian woman who really opened up to me," said retired nurse and Leading Women Fund donor Joy Donovan. "She had a 10-year-old daughter and they lived in a flat that had mould on the walls. She slept on a thin mattress on a tiled floor. I texted her every day and I still think about her often."

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*Particularly for single mothers, who are caring for children and running the household. No one asks them at the end of the day how they are, or how they're feeling. So having someone check in with them means a huge amount, more than we could imagine.*”

Interior designer Penny Castillo loved the friendship she struck up with her matching, saying: "I was working late during the app trial, trying to keep my business together, so we'd often exchange messages late at night. I felt we supported each other.

"Giving through the Fund, with the personal connection I formed through the app, brought me to a place of empathy that's quite different to traditional giving. Neither of us wanted our friendship to end." ■

**For more information on the Leading Women Fund visit [unrefugees.org.au/get-involved/leading-women-fund/](https://unrefugees.org.au/get-involved/leading-women-fund/)**

# Ethiopia crisis

UPDATE / ETHIOPIA

**ALMOST A YEAR AFTER CONFLICT DROVE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TO FLEE ETHIOPIA'S TIGRAY REGION, UNHCR REMAINS ON THE GROUND PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THOSE IN NEED.**

Since last November, more than 62,000 people have fled the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region into Sudan, where the Tunaydbah and Um Rakuba camps host close to 48,000 Ethiopian refugees, most of them women and children.

UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation, particularly the ongoing preparation of a new camp identified in Amhara region for the relocation of Eritrean refugees from Tigray.

In August, UN High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, visited Um Rakuba camp as part of a three-day mission to Sudan, and met with refugees, including father of four, Hailu Mehari. Hailu, 65, crossed into Sudan last November with his wife and two

of their children, leaving behind raging conflict across Ethiopia's Tigray region.

"It's difficult here but I am very happy to be alive," he said. "I am grateful for everything I have received in Sudan."

The High Commissioner noted that the situation is very challenging and added that UNHCR is working closely with the government of Sudan and other aid agencies to improve services.

"Conditions in the camp are fragile as in any humanitarian situation but they have improved. We've seen services such as education, food distributions and health care being offered to the refugees," he said.

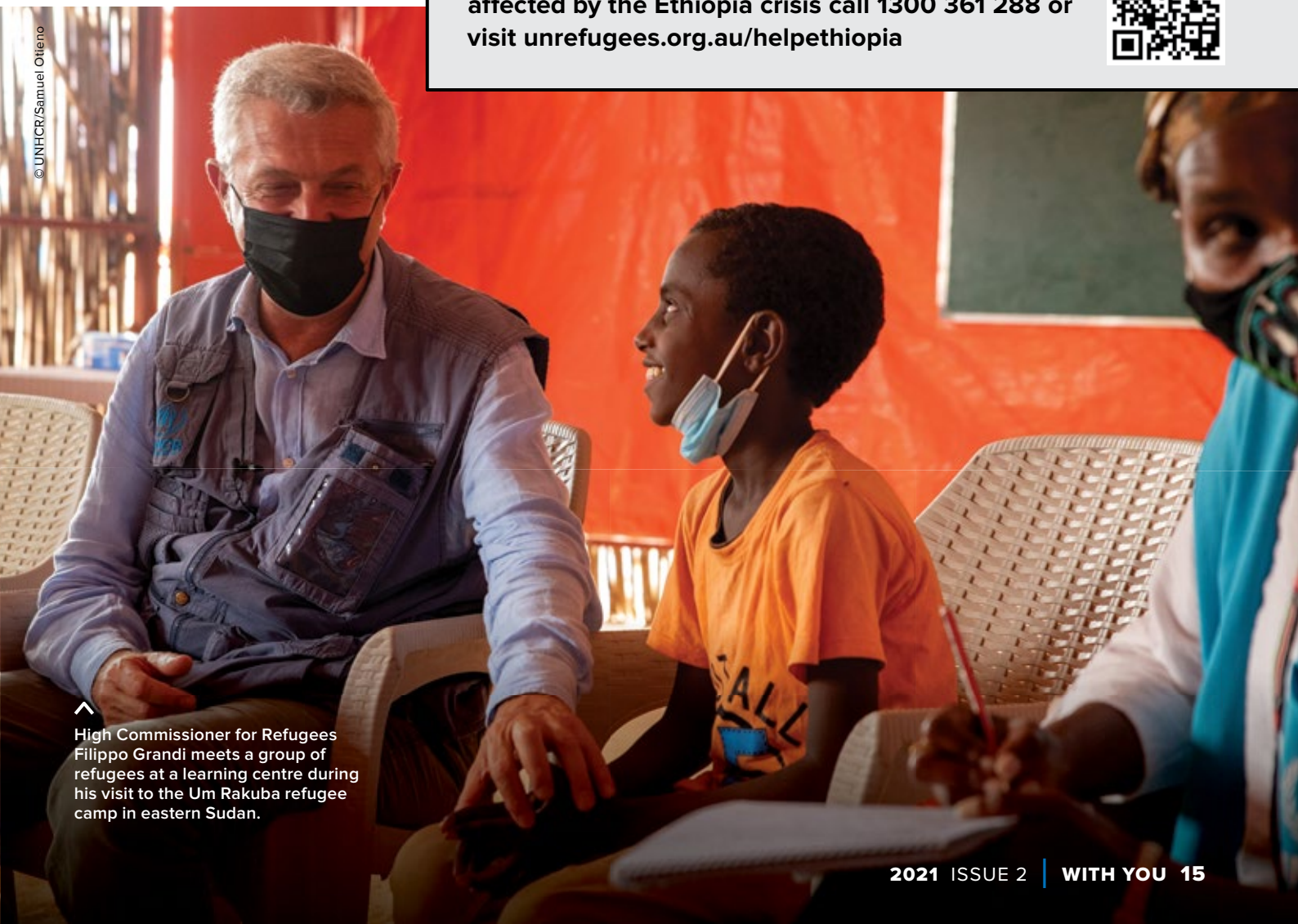
The immediate and long-term priority is to further strengthen assistance in protection – in particular child protection, gender-based violence response and anti-trafficking measures – as well as shelter, core relief items, WASH, health and logistics.

Given the increasing humanitarian needs, UNHCR is appealing for US\$164.5 million to assist 96,000 Eritrean refugees and 650,000 internally displaced people in Ethiopia's Tigray region and up to 120,000 Ethiopian refugees in eastern Sudan. Funding is currently 66 per cent funded with more support urgently needed. ■

If you would like to help support refugees and IDPs affected by the Ethiopia crisis call 1300 361 288 or visit [unrefugees.org.au/helpethiopia](https://unrefugees.org.au/helpethiopia)



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High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi meets a group of refugees at a learning centre during his visit to the Um Rakuba refugee camp in eastern Sudan.

# Your Will can be their refuge

Leaving a gift in your Will to Australia for UNHCR enables us to continue our life-saving work, beyond your lifetime.

**GATHERED HERE** has partnered with Australia for UNHCR to help people create a Will online for free. Head of Partnerships, Lucy McMorrow, explains how it works.

**Q What services do Gathered Here provide?**

Gathered Here provides products and services to help people prepare for and manage end-of-life situations including Wills, probate and funerals. Our online platform is supported by an in-house legal team and by using our online Will platform you can create and update a legally binding Will for free. It's really easy and only takes 10 minutes to complete a simple Will.

**Q Why is it important to have a Will?**

Having an up-to-date Will is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family, however more than 70 per cent of Australians don't have one. Not only can a Will legally protect your family and assets, it can spell out exactly how you would like things handled after you have passed. Making a Will is the best way of providing for those you leave behind. Your Will alleviates worry for your family and makes life a little easier at a very difficult time.

For more information on Gifts in Wills, please contact Aylin Salt, Planned Giving Manager for Australia for UNHCR on (02) 9276 6871, [ASalt@unrefugees.org.au](mailto:ASalt@unrefugees.org.au) or visit [gatheredhere.com.au](http://gatheredhere.com.au)



**Q Why is it important to include a gift in your Will?**

Gifts in Wills are the extraordinarily generous gifts left to not-for-profits like Australia for UNHCR in people's Wills. A large number of organisations are reliant on these gifts to enable them to do their work and safeguard their mission for generations to come. We are so proud to partner with Australia for UNHCR to offer a free Will writing service to all their amazing supporters so the organisation can keep doing their incredibly important work for many years to come. ■



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## 4 KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU MAKE A WILL

- *Are your loved ones well looked after?*
- *How should your assets and estate be distributed?*
- *Who do you want to be responsible for administering your estate?*
- *Are there any charities or causes you would like to include in your Will?*