



EUROPE'S FASTEST-GROWING REFUGEE CRISIS SINCE WORLD WAR II

INSIDE: Humanitarian emergencies in Ukraine and Afghanistan • The winner of the Les Murray Award • Record-setting bequest • Winter campaign update

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ON THE COVER: UNHCR staff meet refugees crossing from Slovenia into Italy.

© UNHCR/Dario Bosio



WELCOME

In February, everyone all over the world, including in Australia, watched in shock as the conflict in Ukraine unfolded. We've seen communities sheltering in bunkers and subways, children saying goodbye to their fathers at train stations, and long queues of refugees waiting at border crossings – not knowing what will become of their lives.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi has called the Ukraine emergency one of the worst crises he's seen in 40 years, with 16 million people at risk of being displaced in coming months. However, time and again, Australians step up to support men, women and children caught up in conflict. Your generous gifts are providing much-needed protection, cash assistance and core relief items, such as warm blankets and hygiene kits, for the people of Ukraine in their time of greatest need.

Behind the statistics of the millions of those forcibly displaced are human stories of courage and resilience. Part of our role at Australia for UNHCR is to help tell these stories and that's one of the reasons I am very proud to introduce you to the inaugural winner of the Les Murray Award for Refugee Recognition, Danijel Malbasa. In this issue, Danijel, who grew up in war zones and refugee camps in eastern Europe, shares the passion that drives his advocacy, writing and volunteer work.

Also in this issue, we shine the spotlight on one of the most important factors in improving a refugee's chances of achieving safety and security – education.

With your support, Australia for UNHCR is helping more refugees complete higher education and vocational training through the Aiming Higher program. At the moment, just three per cent of refugee students complete tertiary study. In the next 10 years, Aiming Higher aims to increase that to 15 per cent, focusing on providing pathways for women and girls.

I am very grateful to all our donors for their care and support of refugees. This month I wanted to thank the estate of Geoffrey Peacock. Geoffrey was a lifelong supporter of refugees and his final gift will create an incredible legacy for refugee children in Africa's largest resettlement camp, Bidibidi, in Uganda.

Finally, during the holy month of Ramadan, many of our Islamic supporters will be thinking about their Zakat. In this issue, you'll read an interview with one of our generous supporters, Nazley Khan, whose faith has been a major influence on her giving.

I hope you enjoy our first issue of *With You* for 2022. My sincere thanks for your ongoing support during this time of unprecedented humanitarian need.

Naomi Steer

Naomi Steer, National Director



↑
Refugees shovelled snow to prevent water leaking into their tents at this camp near Duhok in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Surviving a deadly winter

“Last winter was very hard on us. We didn’t receive any assistance... At least this year we will be able to buy new blankets and do some repairs to the roof to stop the water leaking.”

Nawal, Syrian refugee



Refugee families endured an extremely harsh winter in the Middle East, with some resorting to burning rubbish or taking on debt to buy wood and fuel, just to stay warm.

When UNHCR launched its Winter Survival Fund, Australians once again opened their hearts and donated \$1.6m to help displaced families survive.

Thanks to you, UNHCR provided cash assistance, thermal blankets, winter clothes and weatherproofing materials to refugees struggling to combat the freezing snow, rain and wind.

Winter caused widespread suffering in Jordan, where many Syrian refugees are living in temporary accommodation such as tents and caravans. Nawal, a mother of four, fled Syria in 2013 but her husband passed away three years later from cancer. Now, she is the sole provider for the family.

“Last winter was very hard on us. We didn’t receive any assistance,” she said. “At least this year we will be able to buy new blankets and do some repairs to the roof to stop the water leaking.”

Thanks to generous donors like you, Nawal is among the 100,000 refugee families in Jordan that received cash assistance so they can purchase winter essentials.

“I always ask God to support us with people who can help,” said Nawal. “As you can see, God sent us good people. Now I can get our winter needs.”

Before winter set in, many displaced Afghans were already facing homelessness and poverty. UNHCR stepped up its assistance for the most vulnerable families, delivering thermal blankets, solar lanterns, insulation kits and cash assistance for people like Gul Khan* and his seven children and grandchildren.

Gul Khan’s family fled their home in Nangarhar province three years ago. They now live in Kabul, where Gul Khan and his son both work as day labourers. The family only eats twice a day – usually fried carrots or potatoes with bread. Every day is a struggle, but winter is the toughest time.

“In summer we only have to worry about food,” said Gul Khan. “But in winter we have to worry about finding fuel to burn, fixing the heating system, falling down on the ice when collecting water.”

Displaced families in Iraq also struggled through a bitterly cold winter, with temperatures dropping to -8°C in the north. With your support, UNHCR provided 64,000 families with cash assistance to meet their winter needs. Meanwhile, in Syria, UNHCR distributed winter relief items, including warm clothing, thermal blankets and sleeping bags, to 122,000 displaced families. Your gifts also helped UNHCR insulate 23,520 tents at 193 sites for Internally Displaced People. ■

*Name changed for protection reasons.

In the News



© UNHCR/Manuel Mbunja

^ Alphonsine presents an information session on the COVID-19 vaccine to refugees in Angola.

» COVID-19 VACCINES

Refugees and other forcibly displaced people have received almost 8.3 million vaccine doses across 68 countries, according to the latest UNHCR data.

In Bangladesh, community health workers are conducting door-to-door awareness campaigns and facilitating transport for refugees unable to reach vaccination sites. In South Africa, UNHCR is piloting a chatbot to reinforce vaccine safety messaging.

Alphonsine Mayamba is volunteering as a health worker in Lunda Norte province, Angola, which hosts 6,800 refugees. Following UNHCR's advocacy work, the government included refugees and asylum seekers in its national vaccination campaign. Alphonsine was among the first in the settlement to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

"Before taking the vaccine, I was very worried about getting COVID," she said. "Part of my job requires regular contact with people. But now that I am vaccinated, I feel more protected."

Alphonsine now provides COVID-19 information and counselling for other refugees in Lunda Norte, including her own uncle, Muanza, who was initially sceptical of the vaccine.

"I gained confidence after receiving clear and accurate information from UNHCR, and also because I saw other refugees, including my Alphonsine, get vaccinated and nothing bad happened to them," he said. ■

» CHAD

Late last year, clashes broke out between herders, farmers and fishermen in northern Cameroon over water resources that are increasingly scarce due to the climate crisis. The fighting spread quickly, leaving 44 dead and 111 injured, and razing 112 villages to the ground.

The violence has displaced more than 100,000 people inside Cameroon and across the border into Chad. UNHCR has registered nearly 36,000 Cameroonian refugees in 31 districts in Chad – 90 per cent women and children – and is providing food, shelter, blankets and hygiene kits.

Many refugees are now finding jobs or starting micro-enterprises to support themselves.

Originally from Kousseri on Cameroon's border with Chad, Issa Hassane, 25, used to earn his living selling second-hand clothes and firewood that he collected.

Since his arrival in Chad, he has switched to repairing mobile phones, which enables him to earn between 1,000 and 1,500 CFA francs (AUD\$2.40-3.60) per day.

"I repair phones of all brands. My clients include both other refugees and Chadians," he said. ■

✓ Issa Hassane earns money repairing mobile phones at a reception site in Oundouma, Chad.



© UNHCR/Aristephane Ngarigouine



© UNHCR/Houssam Hariri

◀ UNHCR and partners renovated Aliyah's house as part of a shelter assistance program for local and refugee families.

» WINTER IN LEBANON

In Lebanon, the crippling economic crisis is creating a housing shortage. Sixty per cent of Syrian refugee families in Lebanon are living in dangerous or overcrowded accommodation, and the situation for Lebanese families is similarly desperate.

During winter, UNHCR and its partners rehabilitated sub-standard homes to help withstand the coldest months of the year. The scheme helps landlords repair roofs, walls, plumbing and electrical systems to provide safer living conditions.

Aliyah, a mother of four, lost her income as a result of Lebanon's economic crisis. She had no money to repair her home, which was crumbling around her. She was also forced to have one leg amputated due to a condition affecting her circulation, and her home was not wheelchair-friendly.

Thanks to UNHCR's building and accessibility improvements, Aliyah can now move around her home and be more independent. "After the rehabilitation of my house, everything is different, everything is better now," Aliyah says.

UNHCR's shelter support reached around 67,000 Lebanese and refugee families in 2020-21. This assistance includes weatherproofing shelters in informal settlements, distributing shelter kits to reinforce homes against the elements, and providing rental subsidies to families at risk of eviction. ■

» INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Last month, we held a special

International Women's Day webinar to raise money for Syrian refugee women and their families in Jordan. Almost 200 guests tuned in to hear from a remarkable panel of women – Gillian Triggs, UN Assistant High Commissioner for Protection; Naomi Steer, Australia for UNHCR National Director; Yalda Hakim, BBC journalist; and Mariam Veiszadeh, CEO of Media Diversity Australia and former Afghan refugee.

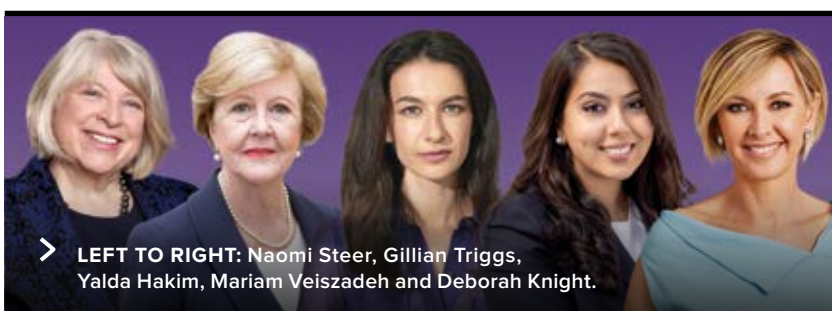
Yalda Hakim, who was reporting from Lviv in western Ukraine, provided extraordinary insight into the humanitarian crisis.

"One of the most eerie, heartbreaking things I've seen is the wave of women and children arriving without the men in their lives," she said of her experience at the Polish border. "The children are weeping because they've just said goodbye to their fathers."

Assistant Commissioner Triggs shared a heartfelt message of thanks for Australian supporters. "The generosity of Australians is very well-known and we really see that here in the Geneva headquarters," she said.

Watch a recording of the webinar on our YouTube channel:

youtube.com/australiaforunhcr ■



➤ LEFT TO RIGHT: Naomi Steer, Gillian Triggs, Yalda Hakim, Mariam Veiszadeh and Deborah Knight.



^ Sarah Saleh performs at Voices for Lebanon.

» VOICES FOR LEBANON

Twenty Lebanese-Australian poets and musicians raised their voices for Lebanon on World Poetry Day in March.

The sold-out event at the Sydney Opera House was organised by Bankstown Poetry Slam and featured performances by Sarah Saleh, Omar Sakr and Bilal Hafda.

Voices for Lebanon raised around \$30,000 to support refugee and Lebanese families dealing with economic crisis, COVID-19 and the aftermath of the Beirut blast.

Charbel Ghattas, Australia for UNHCR Philanthropy Manager, gave a moving speech about the impact of the Beirut blast on his own family and the generosity of the Lebanese community.

"The Lebanese people welcome and host the largest number of refugees per capita in the world, despite having a crumbling economy," he said. "No one chooses to become a refugee, but we can all choose to stand with refugees and those in need. It is thanks to your beautiful hearts and souls... that UNHCR is able to fulfil its duties." ■

Changing the perception of refugees

Danijel Malbasa, a former Yugoslav refugee who is now a powerful advocate, writer and lawyer, is the inaugural winner of the Les Murray Award for Refugee Recognition.

The \$10,000 award recognises an outstanding former refugee who is raising awareness of the plight of forcibly displaced people, and is named after beloved sports commentator Les Murray AM, himself a former refugee from Hungary.

The award was judged by former Ugandan refugee Ann Odong, SBS Director of Language and Audio Content David Hua, UNHCR Multi-Country Representative Adrian Edwards, and Australia for UNHCR Deputy Chair Kate Dundas.

“Danijel Malbasa arrived in Australia as a 12-year-old, malnourished, traumatised and in need of protection,” said Ms Dundas. “He has spent many years examining what it means to be a refugee as well as helping others who have been forced to flee their homes. Danijel has a great deal to teach us – about empathy and prejudice and resilience and the power of our words. Danijel is an incredibly worthy recipient of the Les Murray Award and I hope it gives him a platform to tell his story to a larger audience.”

Danijel says he is thrilled to win the award after growing up with soccer-obsessed brothers who woke up in the early hours of the morning to watch English Premier League games commented by Les Murray.

“I feel very honoured to have won this award. It’s an amazing time for us former refugees to raise their voices,” he says.

Danijel was born in a country that no longer exists. The Yugoslav Wars upended his family’s idyllic life in Croatia, and Danijel spent six years

of his childhood in camps for Internally Displaced People (IDP) and refugees, supporting his mother and three siblings after his father was killed by a landmine.

“In 1995, we fled our enclave in Croatia and were housed in a refugee camp in Serbia on the outskirts of Kosovo,” said Danijel. “It was a large sewing factory. They removed the sewing machines and put down mattresses on the floor. That’s where we lived for about five years with 800 people sharing one bathroom, one hot plate. It was a really difficult situation.”

In 1999, Danijel’s family received a humanitarian visa and resettled in Adelaide. Danijel was 12 and didn’t speak any English. Despite facing many challenges, including a backlash against Serbians at the time, Danijel says he and his siblings thrived in their new country.

Today, Danijel is an employment and industrial relations lawyer. Outside his day job, he is a passionate advocate for refugees. His writing has appeared in *The Guardian* and he is Deputy Chair of the Forcibly Displaced People Network – Australia’s first LGBTIQ+ refugee network. He also sits on the steering committee of the National Refugee-led Advocacy and Advisory Group.

Danijel volunteers as a migration agent with Refugee Legal, where he helps asylum seekers apply for Temporary Protection Visas.



“UNHCR was there for us. They really saved my life. They saved our lives, for all my family members, by giving us the opportunity to find asylum through the UNHCR system and the Refugee Convention, and the opportunity to come to Adelaide.”

He is the only volunteer who is a former refugee, helping him build trust with his clients.

With the war in Ukraine escalating, Danijel is urging Australians to support the millions of refugees seeking safety – not just in Europe, but around the world.

“Anybody can be a refugee and it’s really just a matter of circumstances,” he says. “I’m very happy that countries like Moldova and Slovakia and Poland and Hungary are receiving refugees with open arms. But at the same time, we also have to acknowledge that many Syrians were pepper-sprayed and beaten. Barbed wire fences were erected all over Europe to keep them out. It’s a difficult discussion to have, but we have to ask ourselves, why is that? Why is it that we can’t treat refugees with decency and fairness, regardless of their origin, regardless of their skin colour?” ■

Danijel will be appearing at our World Refugee Day event on Thursday 16 June. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit unrefugees.org.au/worldrefugeeday

Malbasa Mr. Danijel
Zadar, 0 [REDACTED]



- ^ ABOVE: Danijel's humanitarian visa, 1999.
- > TOP RIGHT: Danijel's writing and photography appears in publications amplifying refugee voices.
- └ BOTTOM RIGHT: Danijel outside the Supreme Court.



Les Murray AM, who passed away in 2017, was a former refugee who fled Hungary in 1956 and settled in Australia a year later. He became a household name as a football broadcaster with SBS.

“

Our father was a passionate and compassionate person,” said his daughter Natalie. “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. ”



Images courtesy of Danijel Malbasa

Ukraine Emergency

THE WAR IN UKRAINE HAS TRIGGERED A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS, WITH MORE THAN 10 MILLION PEOPLE DISPLACED.

The conflict has forced more than 3.6 million refugees to flee across the border while at least 6.5 million more are internally displaced.

Ordinary civilians are bearing the brunt of the conflict. In Lviv, people are hiding in bunkers that haven't been used since World War II, while in Kharkiv, families who have lost their homes are sleeping in underground train stations. The temperatures are freezing, but many are cut off from heating, electricity or water. Despite the desperate need for basic supplies, such as food,

water, medicine, shelter materials and generators, humanitarian access is extremely limited.

Australia for UNHCR launched an emergency appeal immediately following the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine. With your support, UNHCR is now providing life-saving relief items and safe shelter for displaced people, both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. However, as the conflict continues to escalate, many more people need urgent assistance.

"We are looking at what could become Europe's largest refugee crisis this century," said Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

"While we have seen tremendous solidarity and hospitality from neighbouring countries in receiving refugees, including from local communities and private citizens, much more support will be needed to assist and protect new arrivals." ■

To support people forced to flee the conflict, visit unrefugees.org.au/ukraineaid





I never thought I would have to leave my home. That I would have to flee just to save my life.

Valentina, a kindergarten teacher from Kharkiv, is staying at a Polish reception centre with her baby nephew Andrii, her sister, and her eight-year-old daughter.

© UNHCR/Valerio Muscella



UNHCR prepares to send an emergency aid shipment from its global stockpile in Dubai.



UNHCR IS WORKING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES, OTHER NGOS, HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS AND DISPLACED COMMUNITIES TO:

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi meets with local officials at the Medyka reception centre in Poland.

- Airlift supplies from its global stockpiles to Ukraine and neighbouring countries

- Help authorities identify and register refugees and displaced people so they can access support services

- Establish and operate transit centres to process and shelter those forced to flee

- Provide cash assistance so the most vulnerable families can buy the basics

- Distribute core relief items, such as shelter repair materials, blankets and water jerry-cans

- Strengthen support for particularly vulnerable people, including children, people with special needs and survivors of gender-based violence.



© UNHCR/Valerio Muscella

Hunger crisis in Afghanistan

IN THE WAKE OF THE TALIBAN TAKEOVER, ALMOST NINE MILLION AFGHANS ARE ON THE BRINK OF FAMINE.

Eight months after we witnessed the desperate scenes at Kabul airport, Afghan citizens are facing a new emergency.

Afghanistan is in the grip of a spiralling food crisis. A devastating combination of conflict, drought and economic collapse has pushed 23 million Afghans – 55 per cent of the population – into extreme hunger.

“People are selling their organs,” says Ramiz Alabkarov, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan. “They are desperate. They are hungry. And the situation is very, very dire.”

Food security has long been a problem in Afghanistan, but international sanctions, rising food prices and plummeting incomes have pushed the population to the brink of starvation. At the same time, the health care system is collapsing and struggling to treat cases of malnutrition.

In the Ataturk Children’s Hospital in Kabul, 22-year-old Najiba* cradles her baby son, Roshan. At just six weeks of age, Roshan is suffering from severe malnutrition. He is seriously underweight: his baby cheeks are hollow and his limbs are painfully thin. Like many Afghan mothers, Najiba has struggled to breastfeed because she herself is undernourished. Her son is among the 1.1 million children who are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition during this crisis.

With your help, UNHCR has supported over one million displaced Afghans in the last year alone. But as starvation spreads across the country, we need you to stand with us once again. Your gifts can provide emergency cash assistance, support health clinics and deliver nutrition programs to Afghans on the brink of famine. ■



Please provide emergency assistance by donating at unrefugees.org.au/emergency-response/afghanistan-emergency

*Name changed for protection reasons.

> Najiba* comforts her baby son, Roshan, who is suffering from malnutrition.





© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell



© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

“

The cash assistance is very important... We need it to buy food and also warm clothes for the children.”

Mullah Ahmed* and his family are among the 700,000 Afghans displaced since 2021.

HOW UNHCR IS HELPING



UNHCR has reached over one million people with emergency aid and cash assistance in the last year, and is rapidly expanding its operations to provide further cash assistance so families can buy food, medicine and other essentials.



20,000 internally displaced families in the central region, which includes Kabul, are already receiving cash assistance – a ten-fold increase on last year. However, another 22 million people need urgent humanitarian aid.



UNHCR is increasing livelihood support for rural farmers so they can continue to produce food for their own households.



Women and children are often the first to go hungry during a food shortage. UNHCR's nutrition programs are prioritising pregnant and lactating women as well as children under five. UNHCR is also supporting health facilities so they can deliver emergency care to malnourished children.



“I was born a refugee; I don’t want to die a refugee.”

WITH SUPPORT FROM UNHCR DONORS, THIS SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT HAS COMPLETED A BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN ECONOMICS AND IS NOW PURSUING HER MASTER’S, WITH HER EYES SET ON BECOMING AN ACCOUNTANT.

As a Rwandan refugee growing up in Chad, Faïda felt like an outsider and didn’t know if she would ever have the opportunity to pursue her dreams.

“I grew up not knowing what a refugee was,” she said. “My dad had always ensured we got as much as anybody else. But in high school, I realised that things are difficult for our community. I understood that I was different. I was told that I did not belong.

“As I was about to graduate from high school, I was not sure what to do next.

My father was already financing my sister’s higher education and could not afford to support mine.”

Faïda had begun to lose hope of entering university when she heard the good news – she had won a UNHCR DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship. DAFI scholarships offer refugee students a chance to earn an undergraduate degree in their country of asylum. The program also supports students who have returned to their home country. So far, the DAFI

program has helped over 18,500 young refugee students around the world access higher education.

“At first I was mostly relieved about getting financial support and being independent,” Faïda said. “Later, I realised that it was actually about building my future.”

In 2019, Faïda was among the student delegates at ‘The Other 1 Percent’ – a conference in Berlin focusing on how to create more tertiary education opportunities for refugees. Just one per cent of refugees participate in



That opportunity gave me confidence and I started telling myself that I was entitled to more. Being a refugee should no longer be a limitation in my life.”

◀ DAFI scholarship alumna Faïda is studying a Master's degree at HEC-Tchad in N'Djamena.

Goals of Aiming Higher:

- With the support of generous Australians, Aiming Higher has already helped an extra 488 students access DAFI scholarships and aims to reach a total of 1,800 refugees by 2023.
- The project aims to raise the level of refugee participation in higher education to 15 per cent over the next 10 years.
- The Aiming Higher project seeks to level the playing field for women and girls, who are often excluded from secondary and higher education. Education has enormous potential to lift women out of poverty: women with a secondary school education earn twice as much as those without formal education, while women with a higher education may earn three times as much.
- Aiming Higher will continue to invest in vocational training opportunities for refugee and displaced students in fields such as electrical engineering, hotel management, manufacturing and agricultural sciences.

higher education, compared to 37 per cent of young people worldwide.

UNHCR's Aiming Higher project is helping to grow the one per cent by providing more DAFI scholarships for students like Faïda.

“It was a turning point for me,” said Faïda. “After Berlin, I started reaching out and helping others. That opportunity gave me confidence and I started telling myself that I was entitled to more. Being a refugee should no longer be a limitation in my life.”

With the scholarship, Faïda earned her undergraduate degree. She then applied for a Master's scholarship program supported by the French Embassy in Chad, and was one of the few students selected.

“I want to write a new story for myself and my children, to start afresh. I was born a refugee; I don't want to die a refugee.” ■

To find out more, visit unrefugees.org.au/appeals/young-refugees-in-crisis

© UNHCR/Antoine Tardy

Giving Syrian women the power of choice

MEMBERS OF THE LEADING WOMEN FUND ARE PROVIDING LIFE-CHANGING CASH ASSISTANCE TO SYRIAN WOMEN LIVING IN JORDAN.

“Families no longer have to choose between food and sending their children to school. They can feel more secure in the present and begin to focus on the future.”

As a single mum, Hanaa has always been careful with money. She was forced to flee Syria in 2013 after her husband was killed in a bomb blast. Every month, she scrapes together the rent on her two-room flat in Zarqa. Any money left over goes towards food, other essentials and, very occasionally, a small treat for her daughters, Joudy and Lojain.

However, when the pandemic struck, many refugees families were plunged even deeper into poverty. UNHCR's cash assistance was the only thing keeping Hanaa afloat.

“Last year, I was infected with COVID and fell very sick,” says Hanaa. “Thankfully I recovered, but I worried constantly about affording rent. It was impossible to find work and debt was piling up. I was being very careful about using the cash assistance to only buy the things we needed the most.”

In Jordan, wages are low compared to the cost of living. Refugee women struggle to obtain work permits or

earn a regular income while juggling family responsibilities. That's why the Leading Women Fund provides cash assistance to refugees – giving women like Hanaa the freedom to choose how to support their families.

“Cash assistance is the most effective way to empower these women to make the financial choices to best serve their needs,” says Naomi Steer, National Director of Australia for UNHCR and founder of the Leading Women Fund. “Families no longer have to choose between food and sending their children to school. They can feel more secure in the present and begin to focus on the future.”

Since the start of the Syrian conflict, over 650,000 refugees have fled to Jordan and over 80 per cent live in urban areas. They need money for rent and food, rather than more traditional aid.

While lockdowns have lifted in Jordan, Hanaa still relies on cash assistance to survive. “I have no choice but to live simply, to make something out of nothing,” she says. For now, her main focus is her daughters, who are in secondary school.

“Last year they attended school online. My oldest, Joudy, used a smartphone to attend classes and submit her homework, and she loves creating online content and publishing it on her YouTube channel. Her dream is to become a journalist. I hope she fulfils her dreams.” ■

For more information on the Leading Women Fund visit unrefugees.org.au/get-involved/leading-women-fund

Interview with Nazley Khan

Nazley Khan is committed to a variety of social causes, from supporting refugees caught up in conflict, to helping free women from financial abuse. In this interview, the commercial lawyer and Principal Solicitor of Blackstone Legal in Sydney explains why her faith is central to her philanthropy.

How did you first become involved in charitable giving?

I've been supporting charitable causes since an early age by donating to various organisations, both here locally and overseas, and through private donations as well.

I'm from a Pakistani background, so one of the earliest donations I made was to a hospital built by the current Pakistani prime minister, Imran Khan, to provide free treatment for those in need, particularly cancer patients.

Why is philanthropy important to you?

My giving is rooted in my Islamic faith. One of the most important fundamentals of our faith is that we are supposed to serve and help others. There's always different ways and opportunities to contribute and it's always been very important within my own family to help people and support causes.

It's not only about money, but about providing your time and skills as well. I'm a lawyer by profession, so I've always asked myself, 'How can I help people with the skills I've been granted and that I'm grateful for?'. I've undertaken pro bono and voluntary work with community legal centres and free legal clinics. I also try to assist with pro bono cases for select clients.

How did you become involved with Australia for UNHCR?

The refugee issue is such an important one. I became more involved with UNHCR through Peter Gould, Australia for UNHCR's Islamic Philanthropy Ambassador. I know and admire Peter, so his passion really inspired me. The projects

that UNHCR supports have really caught my attention as well. Every humanitarian crisis is important. Afghanistan was very concerning. There's also a crisis in Yemen and the Rohingya emergency is ongoing. It's important that we don't forget.

How would you encourage other Australians to support the refugee cause?

As Australians, we can donate to the causes we care about, but we can also raise awareness among our family, friends and community about what is happening and how we can help. I think most people want to help, but aren't sure how.

We should always try to think of ways to help people. There's a saying in our faith by the Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him): 'Even smiling is a form of charity'. We can all do small acts that can be a form of charity.

We're currently in the Holy Month of Ramadan, which is when many Muslims will be giving their Zakat. Can you explain why that's important?

Zakat is a pillar of Islamic faith. It's an obligatory payment that comes out of your income that goes to people in need as a form of social welfare. This is an obligation incumbent upon every Muslim with sufficient means.

With Zakat, 100 per cent of funds need to go to those in need, rather than getting caught up in administrative expenses. It's important for us to look at where that money is going so it serves its intended purpose and we fulfil our obligation properly. ■



It's not only about money, but about providing your time and skills as well... so I've always asked myself, 'How can I help people with the skills I've been granted and that I'm grateful for?'. ”

Donate to Australia for UNHCR's Zakat fund to provide life-saving assistance for refugees forced to flee their homes: unrefugees.org.au/zakat

✓ Sophie, a South Sudanese refugee, loves studying Biology at her secondary school in Bidibidi refugee settlement, Uganda.

Record-setting bequest transforms children's lives

A single generous benefactor has provided Australia for UNHCR's first contribution to a major education and community safety project in Africa's largest refugee camp.

THE LATE GEOFFREY PEACOCK

was a long-term supporter of refugees, and his bequest – the largest ever received by Australia for UNHCR – will transform the lives of children in Bidibidi settlement in north-west Uganda.

More than 230,000 refugees – mostly from South Sudan – will benefit from the three-year project, which will upgrade school facilities, cover teachers' salaries and develop new infrastructure, including safe spaces, alternative energy sources and environmentally-friendly lighting.

Geoffrey's bequest will help students like Sophie, 19, who fled South Sudan with her aunt, some clothes and her science book.

"I carried the book because I love sciences and I wanted the book to keep me focused," said Sophie.

Sophie is now in Senior 4 – the equivalent of Year 10 in Australia.

"I am in school because I want to acquire knowledge for a better future; probably be a leader in South Sudan in the future," said Sophie. "Being in school saves me. I want to be a doctor because in my motherland these opportunities are mostly left for the men.

“ I feel good and loved that there are people out there who are willing to sacrifice and give us the education we get here. I appreciate them for the great work done. ”

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UNHCR estimates that just one in three refugee students are enrolled in secondary school.

"Denying refugees a secondary education is like removing an entire section of a bridge that leads to their future," says UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. ■

By leaving a gift to Australia for UNHCR in your Will, you can create a life-changing legacy for the millions of displaced children who are missing out on education. To find out more about leaving a gift in your Will, visit unrefugees.org.au/bequest or call Aylin Salt, Planned Giving Manager, on 02 9276 6871.