# World Refugee Day 2025

## MCO PANAMA IN ACTION

Each year, people around the world come together to commemorate **World Refugee Day,** a day to honor the courage and resilience of those forced to flee war, violence, and persecution in their home countries. Led by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, this global observance highlights the rights and aspirations of refugees and asylum-seekers, while mobilizing support across their host communities.

In 2025, under the theme **'Solidarity With Refugees'**, UNHCR's Multi-Country Office in Panama, also covering Aruba, Curaçao, Belize, Cuba, and Trinidad and Tobago, organized a series of impactful activities focused on refugee protection and public advocacy. These events brought together forcibly displaced people, host communities, local authorities, and decision-makers, creating spaces for dialogue and integration.

## PANAMA

PUENTES DE ESPERANZA *(BRIDGES OF HOPE)*

Cohosted by UNHCR and the City of Knowledge Foundation (FCDS), young refugees, asylum-seekers, and local dancers from Fundación Espacio Creativo's Enlaces Programme performed a powerful contemporary dance performance. Through movement, they honored stories of forced displacement and celebrated the strength found in rebuilding their lives.

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO

Through the initiative 'Con Amor Desde Panamá' (With Love from Panama), UNHCR brought together refugees, asylum-seekers, and host community members to share messages of solidarity through personal letters. Guided by a creative writing workshop, participants expressed their hopes and dreams while advocating for refugee integration. UNHCR distributed nearly 1,000 copies of these letters to leaders across sectors, including ambassadors, authorities, lawmakers, civil society organizations, and private companies. The initiative received warm responses and the letters were also distributed in Ecuador, as part of a joint action.

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO

Refugee entrepreneurs joined cultural events through an **open bazaar,** where they showcased their products, fully recovered their investments, and generated profits. Beyond sales, the event fostered meaningful connections, including with authorities. One refugee joined a social media influencer for a **cooking session**, sharing her journey with over half a million Instagram followers. UNHCR also joined a community fair attended by over 400 people, inviting participants to share messages of solidarity on a collective **mural.** Coca-Cola, FEMSA and FCDS co-hosted "Building Bridges," a webinar that brought together 86 participants to explore private sector engagement in refugee inclusion. Additionally, UNHCR and Ecocinema launched a community film tour across Panama, screening **'Flow'**, an Oscar-winning animated film on forced displacement, in solar-powered outdoor cinemas throughout July.

**In Belize, UNHCR** organized an open-air cinema in Belmopan in partnership with partner the City Council, and a local cable provider. The Agency also joined the initiative "With Love from Belize," with a letter written by Galen University's Dean, which highlighted the journey of refugees pursuing higher education in the country. To mark World Refugee Day, UNHCR partnered with Bella Vista High School and HUMANA People to People to host a football tournament, promoting the integration of refugee and asylum-seeking students through mixed teams. To highlight solidarity with forcibly displaced people, UNHCR participated in the morning talk show "Sun Up at 7" along with the principal of Bella Vista Government Secondary School.

**In Aruba and Curaçao,** UNHCR marked World Refugee Day with the screening of the documentary "Hidden Life," drawing nearly 100 participants across both islands, including authorities, civil society, and forcibly displaced individuals.

**In Aruba,** the screening was preceded by a high-level roundtable that brought together the Vice Prime Minister, Parliament members, and the country's first Ombudsperson. UNHCR also partnered with government ministries to illuminate the **Bestuurskantoor** building in blue for the first time, symbolizing solidarity with refugees worldwide.

UNHCR, PADF, the Red Cross Aruba, FCVR, the Crisis Management Office, the Colombian Consulate, and local health providers hosted a community fair offering medical checkup, hygiene kits, legal counseling, and consular services to 87 forcibly displaced individuals.

**In Cuba,** UNHCR hosted an event with refugee and local students from the Spanish Educational Center in Havana, promoting cultural exchange and solidarity through games and art. UNHCR also held a workshop on international protection with **Cuban Red Cross volunteers,** who actively support refugees and asylum-seekers on the island.

**In Trinidad and Tobago,** UNHCR joined a radio program to explain the refugee definition, share insights on the refugee population, and highlight the Agency's work in collaboration with government and NGO partners.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Australia | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | the European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | the Republic of Korea | The Kingdom of the Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | the United States of America | World Food Programme | Private donors in the Republic of Korea, and Australia for UNHCR, the Dutch Postcode Lottery, España con ACNUR, and Japan for UNHCR.

**For more information:**
**Margarida Loureiro, Deputy Representative, loureiro@unhcr.org**
**Benedetta Pignatti, External Relations Officer, pignattb@unhcr.org**