

World Refugee Day 2026

MCO PANAMA IN ACTION



Each year, **World Refugee Day** celebrates the strength, resilience, and contributions of people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes in search of safety. In 2026, the global observance held special significance under the theme **"Until Everyone is Safe"**, marking the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, a landmark commitment to protecting those forced to flee.

MCO Panama organized a series of activities in Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Panama that brought together refugees, asylum-seekers, host communities, authorities, partners, and advocates. Through dialogue, sports, and cultural exchanges, these events fostered inclusion, strengthened solidarity, and renewed calls for collective action to uphold refugees' rights and advance solutions to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.



Until Everyone is Safe – Photo Exhibit

In commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR, the Ministry of Government, and the National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR) launched a **photo exhibition** celebrating the Convention's legacy and Panama's commitment to refugee protection. More than 80 government officials, diplomats, UN representatives, partners, and refugees attended the opening ceremony at the Government Palace, where personal testimonies and cultural performances underscored the importance of solidarity with people forced to flee. The exhibition remained open until 19 July, allowing students and the general public to discover its content firsthand.



In **Darien**, UNHCR participated in a community event in Vista Alegre to provide information on international protection, refugee status, and documentation pathways. The activity also included sports and community engagement initiatives to promote peaceful coexistence, reaching approximately 350 participants.

The Panamanian Red Cross, the City of Knowledge Foundation, and UNHCR organized the World Refugee Day annual **community fair** in Panama City. During the event, refugees were able to connect with opportunities for inclusion through key partners, including HechoXRefugiados, the National Vocational Training Institute for Human Development (INADEH), the Coursera Initiative, and the Companies with Refugees Platform. Reaching more than 200 refugees and asylum-seekers, the annual event also featured cultural performances, sports activities, and community engagement initiatives.





In **Belize**, UNHCR partnered with St. Michael School in the Las Flores host community to organize a sports day, bringing together over 200 students and teachers. The Agency donated school bags and stationery sets, as well as sports equipment to support inclusive recreational activities. In collaboration with the Office of the City Mayor, the Refugees Department, and Humana People to People, UNHCR organized an awareness-raising fair in Belize City under the theme “Until Everyone is Safe.” The event featured interactive activities simulating aspects of forced displacement and reached 100 participants.

In **Cuba**, an event to celebrate the World Refugee day and the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Convention was organized and attended by over 30 participants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, government authorities, the Cuban Red Cross, Diplomatic corps and UN agencies. The event promoted awareness of refugee protection and featured refugee testimonies highlighting experiences of integration and access to rights in Cuba.

UNHCR joined UNICEF, ILO and IOM in issuing a joint opinion piece highlighting the importance of ensuring access to education for refugee and migrant children in Trinidad and Tobago. The initiative highlighted the need to expand access to national education systems while reaffirming the role of humanitarian actors in supporting refugee children despite resource constraints.



UNHCR **Haiti** organized a conference on forced displacement at the Faculty of Ethnology of the State University, engaging approximately 80 students. The Agency also hosted a screening and discussion of the film *The Swimmers* at the Brazil–Haiti Cultural Center, creating a space for reflection among around 70 participants.

In the **Dominican Republic**, UNHCR hosted an academic event with the Technological Institute of Santo Domingo (INTEC), bringing together some 50 students and participants to discuss UNHCR's work in the country and key findings from the 2025 **Global Trends Report**, fostering dialogue on international protection.



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