WORLD
REFUGEE
DAY 2025
MABAN, SOUTH SUDAN
EFFORT TO END
GENDER - BASED VIOLENCE
16
DAYS
actea
SOLIDARITY WITH REFUGEES
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

*The winning team receives their trophy with cheers and applause, joined by government, UNHCR, humanitarian partners, and community leaders in celebration of World Refugee Day. Maban, South Sudan. ©UNHCR/Philip Lukudu*

## *WORLD REFUGEE DAY REFLECTION*

Solidarity is not just sympathy; it's standing side by side with refugees, recognizing their strength, turning compassion into real everyday action, and building a shared future where everyone belongs.

Here in Maban, we don't just talk about solidarity; we live it. We work together, rebuild together, and share the challenges and hopes of a common future.

Local authorities, humanitarians, refugees, and the host community stand side by side every day as one united group committed to peace, dignity, and opportunity for all.

Despite its hardships, Maban has become an example, showing that even in the most challenging circumstances, unity, inclusion, and humanity can lead the way.

**SILVA ALKEBEH**
*UNHCR*
*HEAD OF SUB-OFFICE*

# WHEN SPORT BRINGS US TOGETHER

## *Play and Compete for Peace and Solidarity*

What happens when refugees, local community members, and aid workers hit the field together? A heartwarming, high-energy football match bursting with talents, teamwork, and tons of smiles! The friendly game turned into a showcase of serious skill, with one team clinching a well-earned victory and celebrating in style. But the real win? In a beautiful display of solidarity, all the teams came together to share the prize and celebrate as one big, joyful squad. Now that's what we call a true team spirit!

*One field. Many stories. United in Maban on World Refugee Day. Maban, South Sudan.*
*©UNHCR/ Philip Lukudu*

# ART LEADS THE WAY

## *Art for Solidarity*

As the world prepared to mark World Refugee Day 2025, the refugee and host communities of Gendrassa, Batil, Kaya, and Doro camps came together in a vibrant celebration of peace, solidarity, and creativity.

Leading up to the main event, a series of engaging activities fostered unity and gave both refugees and locals a chance to express their hopes for a harmonious future. One of the highlights was a primary school drawing competition, where young artists from refugee and host community schools put their creativity to work.

The theme “Peace, Solidarity, and Coexistence” inspired children to illustrate what unity and harmony mean to them. Their colorful drawings depicted hands joined together, doves in flight, and communities living side by side, reflecting their dreams of a world without division.

The most inspiring artworks were recognized and celebrated during the main World Refugee Day event, showcasing the powerful voices of the youngest members of the community. These activities were more than just fun, they were a reminder that refugees bring resilience, talent, and hope to their host communities.

By fostering creativity and dialogue, events like this help build bridges between people, proving that solidarity can flourish even in the most challenging circumstances. As we celebrate World Refugee Day, let us remember that everyone deserves safety, dignity, and the chance to thrive, wherever they call home.

*Creativity meets community action as teams design posters highlighting vital services in the camp. Maban, South Sudan*

# VOICES OF RESILIENCE

**Zainab Mumen** arrived in 2012 from Damazin, Sudan, fleeing conflict with her seven children, six daughters and one son. “When we arrived, the situation was good and humanitarian aid was available,” she recalls. “Since education is free, I decided to send my children to school, especially the schools provide school supplies.”

As humanitarian aid began to be declined, Zainab took matters into her own hands. “I decided to work in the market selling tea and food to support my children’ education” she says. Her hard work and perseverance paid off: her children have now completed their secondary education, and some are continuing their primary studies. “Education is important for children,” Zainab emphasizes. “I always encourage families in the camp to pursue education.” Her story is a powerful reminder that with determination and love, even the most difficult circumstances can be transformed into a future full of hope and promise.

*Zainab Mumen stands proudly outside her shelter, a symbol of strength and determination, having supported her children’s education through her small tea and food business. Maban, South Sudan. ©UNHCR/Philip Lukudu*

*Freshly made clay water jugs dry in the sun, symbols of resilience and tradition in a new land, made by Masheir Ibrahim Mahmoud in Gendrassa refugee camp. Maban, South Sudan. ©UNHCR/Philip Lukudu*

**Masheir Ibrahim Mahmoud**, a skilled artisan from Damazin, arrived in South Sudan in December 2024, seeking safety and a fresh start for her family. “Before the conflict, I had been making clay drinking water jugs for about five years,” she recalls, reflecting on a craft deeply woven into her daily life. Determined not to let hardship define her future, Masheir resumed her pottery work upon settling in Maban.

“When I arrived in Maban, I continued this profession to provide income for me and my children,” she says. Her hands, once shaping clay in Damazin, now mold the same vessels in a new land a symbol of resilience and continuity. “My work not only sustains my family but also brings a sense of continuity and pride,” Masheir shares. Through her dedication, she has turned a traditional skill into a lifeline, proving that even in the face of adversity, hope and purpose can be shaped one jug at a time.

# DANCE FOR SOLIDARITY

## *A Celebration of Resilience in Maban*

The celebration was vibrant with hope, resilience, and the incredible spirit of community. Throughout the day, the location transformed into a lively hub of cultural expression, where traditional dances, musical performances, and beautiful crafted handmade brought the rich heritage and talents of both refugees and host communities to life.

One of the most impactful moments was the powerful drama “Stories That Unite Us,” performed by the Peace Committee.

Through compelling storytelling and emotional performances, the play highlighted how empathy, dialogue, and cooperation can lead the way to peace and solidarity.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, the square echoed with the music, laughter, and heartfelt applause.

The shared joy left behind more than just memories it serves as a powerful reminder that even in the face of adversity, unity and shared humanity can light the path forward.

The presence of humanitarian organizations and local authorities standing in solidarity with the communities further underscored a collective commitment to inclusion, dignity, and hope for all.

*A vibrant celebration of culture and community spirit, showcasing traditional dances and local music by refugees and host communities. Maban, South Sudan. ©UNHCR/Philip Lukudu*

# ART MEETS ADVOCACY

This year's World Refugee Day celebrations in Maban carried a special significance as refugees from the four camps Gendrassa, Batil, Kaya, and Doro.

Transformed into artists and advocates through a vibrant poster design challenge. Held in the weeks leading up to the June 20th.

The competition invited refugee-led sector committees to creatively showcase available services and design banners that captured the spirit of resilience and solidarity. The challenge brought together a wide range of community groups, including the Peace Committee, Health Committee, Education Committee, Community Watch Group, Women's Committee, Youth Committee, Social Welfare Committee, and persons with disabilities.

Each group was tasked with creating posters that highlighted along with their sector's services and a banner reflecting the theme of World Refugee Day 2025 theme. The result was a powerful display of creativity and community engagement. The posters were colorful, informative, and deeply meaningful, telling stories of health awareness, inclusive education, gender equality, and the everyday strength of displaced communities.

*These artworks not only raised awareness but also amplified refugee voices, proving that art can be a powerful tool for advocacy and change.*

# STUDENT DEBATE

## *Solidarity over Charity: Youth Voices Rise in Kaya*

*Youth from Kaya Camp present compelling arguments under the theme 'Solidarity is More Important Than Charity'. ©UNHCR/ Philip Lukudu*

On June 25, 2025, students from Batil and Kaya Secondary Schools came togehter for a powerful debate on the theme “Solidarity is more important than Charity” as part of the World Refugee Day celebrations.

The event showcased the intellectual depth and lived experiences of refugee youth. With passionate arguments on both sides, the debate highlighted how solidarity fosters long-term solutions while charity provides essential, immediate support in times of crisis.

More than just a debate, the event became a platform for youth advocacy, especially empowering young women to speak up and lead. It reinforced the transformative power of education and the importance of creating spaces where refugee youth can engage critically with the world around them, reminding everyone that when youth voices rise, they can shape a more just and united future.

*Proposers from Kaya Refugee Camp advocate for solidarity over charity during the World Refugee Day debate. ©UNHCR/ Philip Lukudu*

*Celebrating resilience and solidarity, government, UNHCR and humanitarian organizations stand with local leaders during the WRD 2025 trophy ceremony. ©UNHCR/Philip Lukudu*

# Trophy Time: Celebrating Talent and Togetherness in Maban

During the vibrant celebration of World Refugee Day 2025 celebration in Maban, joy and excitement filled the air as prizes were awarded to the winning teams of the football tournament, and to the talented artists who demonstrated their amazing talents in the art and drawing competitions.

The event was more than just a day of fun, it was heartwarming celebration of unity, resilience and shared humanity. Refugees, the host community, and humanitarians came together to laugh, cheer, and celebrate as one.

As smiles lit up faces and trophies were proudly raised, the spirit of solidarity came alive in the most beautiful way.

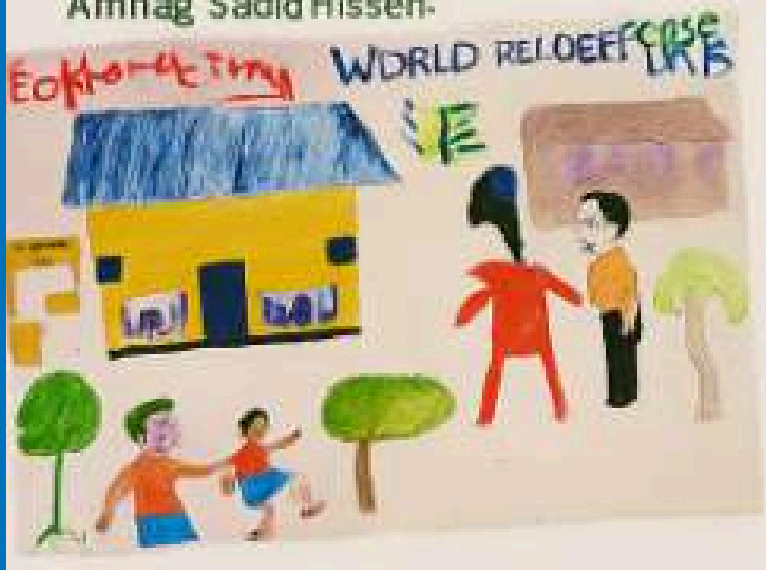
These shared moments of happiness reminded everyone that, despite different backgrounds and journeys, we are stronger and better together.

'At the 2025 World Refugee Day Celebration. I felt excited and truly emoyed participating in the football games.

*Jakson Mawa, Team Coptain Humanitarian Football Team*

"Celebrating World Refugee Day for the second time in the camp has been truly inspiring. I witnessed refugees and host com munities coming together as one, united in joy and solidarity.

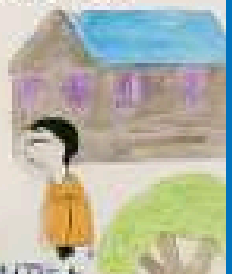
Amnag Sadia Hissen.

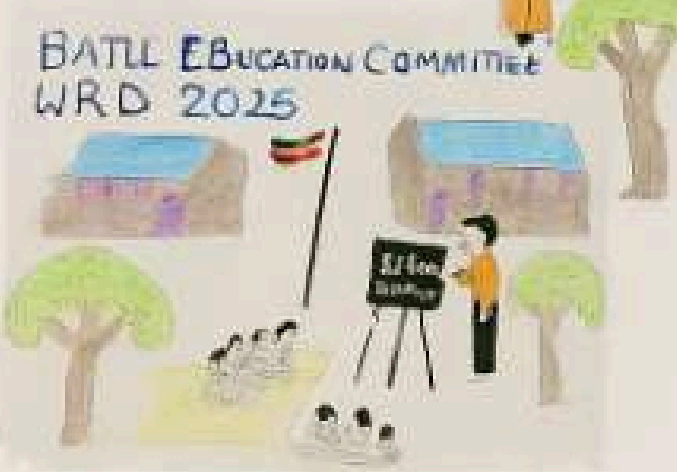


"Imly enjoyed World Refugee Day fed vibrant cultural dances shared by both host and refugee communities. The activities made me feel that we are one people, there was no diserimination, only the overwhelming joy of fetter-gethness.'"

'The celebration positioned me as a role model. and placed me as a bridge between refugee community and the host popnlation. It reminded me that being a refugee is not the end of the road. it sparked a renewed hope in me to rebuild my future."

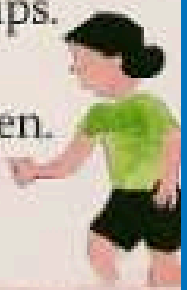
*Kamal Sadiq Minur*






Sports have the power to bring people together, and this spirit of unity should continue between host-refugee communities. Organizing regelar sports events can help strengthen relationships. and promote lasting peace among the messen.

Martina, Women Rep: resentative in host



# #WRD2025

The celebration was made even more special thanks to the collaboration of many partners who joined hands with the community to make it all happen. Their contributions helped create a space where joy, creativity, and community spirit could thrive, proving once again that when we stand together, we all rise.

Organizations like Action Africa Help International (AAHI), African Initiative for Relief and Development (AIRD), Community Engagement Network (CEN), Humanitarian Development Consortium (HDC), Inkomoko, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Relief International (RI), Samaritan's Purse, Save the Children International, and World Food Programme (WFP) played a key role in supporting the activities and helping create a joyful, inclusive space where everyone could shine.

Special thanks also go to the Commissioner for Refugee Affairs (CRA), the executive committees of the refugee camp, and the sectoral committees for their leadership, coordination, and unwavering commitment to making this celebration a true reflection of community spirit and collaboration.