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UNHCR Somalia stands in solidarity with millions forced to flee

Mogadishu, 20 June- On the occasion of World Refugee Day, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Somalia pays tribute to the millions of people forcibly displaced all over the world.

World Refugee Day is marked on 20 June each year to highlight the courage and resilience of millions of people forced to flee war, conflict and persecution. The day is also an opportunity to express gratitude to governments and host populations that offer asylum, support and protection to refugees.

The theme for 2019 is “inclusion; inclusion of refugees, IDPs and stateless people”. This year, UNHCR is also rallying people around the world to honour the resilience and determination of displaced people in a global movement dubbed, “[Step With Refugees](#)”. The campaign invites people to step in solidarity with refugees by either walking, running, dancing, swimming or cycling. Regional organizations are also taking note of the crisis. The African Union declared 2019 as the year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

Globally, the displacement crisis in recent years has been unprecedented. At least one person is forcibly uprooted from their homes around the world every two seconds. In total, 70.8 million have been forced to flee their homes globally - among them 25.9 million refugees.

“We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record; and host countries need to ensure the active inclusion of refugees and other displaced families in their countries’ development agenda. Refugees and others in similar situations bring with them great skills and can make meaningful contributions in their communities. Giving them equal opportunities to use their skills also promotes self-reliance and empowerment.” said Takeshi Moriyama, UNHCR Acting Representative.

Somalia is at the epicentre of the refugee and displacement crisis. The country remains one of the top five refugee producing countries in the world with most of its nationals seeking asylum in neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen. More than 2.6 people are also internally displaced mainly due to conflict, drought, floods and evictions. The majority of the internally displaced are located in Banadir, Bay, Sool, and Gedo and Bari regions.

Despite its own internal challenges, Somalia is generously hosting over 34,000 refugees and asylum seekers largely from Ethiopia and Yemen. They mainly live in Woqooyi Galbeed, Bari and Banadir regions. Somali nationals have also been returning home spontaneously from countries of asylum as well as through the UNHCR supported Voluntary Repatriation (Volrep) and the Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) Programs. UNHCR has received more than 126,000 returnees from 12 countries including Kenya, Yemen, Djibouti, Libya, Sudan, Eritrea, Tunisia, Angola, Gambia, Pakistan and Cambodia.

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