

World Refugee Day 2014

Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, Uganda

“1 Family Torn Apart by War is Too Many”



Refugee youth help commemorate World Refugee Day in Kyangwali refugee settlement, Uganda. ©UNHCR/D.Munyasia

Acknowledgement

UNHCR Hoima extends its appreciations to all stakeholders and individuals who contributed to the successful hosting of the national celebrations of World Refugee Day in Kyangwali refugee settlement in Hoima District on 20 June 2014. We say THANK YOU for braving the early morning downpour and muddy paths!!

Special appreciation is extended to the Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, the Honourable Musa Ecweru, who was our Guest of Honour, UNHCR Deputy Representative, Ms Sakura Atsumi, foreign dignitaries, government officials, UN and NGO representatives, Hoima District local leaders, members of the organizing committee from AAH-U, ARC, DRC-DDG, FRC, OPM, UNHCR, WVI-Uganda, the host community, and most of all to the refugees of Kyangwali settlement.



World Refugee Day in Kyangwali settlement. ©UNHCR/G.Katende

The **theme** was “**1 Family Torn Apart by War is Too Many**” with special emphasis on refugee youths to celebrate the important role they play in our future, the contributions they make to society, the resilience they show when rebuilding their lives in a new country, and the role they will play as future leaders of their communities and nations.

World Refugee Day 2014 coincided with the 40th anniversary of the coming into force of the 1969 OAU Convention governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa that builds on the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

The OAU Convention expands the definition of a refugee to include victims of conflict and generalized violence. The two conventions have ensured the safety of millions of people fleeing war and persecution from their countries and seeking asylum in other countries including all Persons of Concern in Uganda and elsewhere.

The occasion was marked by the enthusiastic participation of all. Activities included a procession led by a youth brass band from OPM's premises in Kasonga to Kagoma reception centre where the ceremony took place. Guests also visited Rwenyawa Health Center and a new water pump in Kagoma. As well, there was an official opening of new classroom blocks in Malembo Primary School; speeches by guests and refugees; cultural dance, songs, a sports competition, an award ceremony for the Finish Refugee Council's Refugee Woman of the Year and exhibition of products by refugees and UNHCR partners in Kyangwali settlement.

Message from the Guest of Honour, Hon. Musa Ecweru



Minister Ecweru talks to refugee children on World Refugee Day. ©UNHCR/D.Munyasia

Hon. Musa Ecweru shared the following messages:

- that wars and disasters have forced many people to flee their countries of origin due to violence and persecution;
- the number of refugees in Uganda stands at more than 400,000 in the settlements around the country;
- WRD is an occasion to reflect on our obligations and reaffirm our commitment and respect for treaties related to refugee protection and management;
- that stakeholders had contributed generously to enable the Government and its partners to provide protection and assistance to persons of concern;
- the Government continues to provide security, land for integration, education, health and water to both refugees and host communities;
- OPM's goal of pursuing a development approach aimed at rebuilding and rehabilitating refugee hosting areas;
- protection of refugees had been consolidated through the Refugee Act of 2006 that has become operational and the Government's plan to formulate the Uganda Refugee Policy;
- gratitude to refugee hosting districts, the host communities, partners, donors (USA, UK, the EU) in enabling the Government of Uganda to meet the protection needs of refugees;
- and finally the Guest of honor donated UGX. 200,000 to the choir of Destiny International Secondary School for their wonderful song of encouragement to refugees and youth in Uganda and promised facilitation to enable them to attend similar functions and share the same message with others.

Message from UNHCR Deputy Representative, Ms Sakura Atsumi



Hon. Musa Ecweru accompanied by Ms Sakura Atsumi and officials inspect piped water system at Kagoma in Kyangwali refugee settlement. ©UNHCR/D.Munyasia

UNHCR Deputy Representative, Ms Sakura Atsumi:

- expressed condolences about the tragedy on Lake Albert that claimed the lives of many Congolese refugees who were intending to spontaneously return home to the DRC;
- re-echoed UNHCR's strong commitment to ensure that the return of refugees takes place in safety and dignity while working together with the Government of Uganda;
- shared the importance of WRD which coincides with the 40th anniversary of the coming into force of the 1969 OAU Convention which governs Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa;
- stated how the human consequences of war are often not told and shown only as statistics. Amongst the consequences are loss of lives and property, injuries from torture, rape and physical abuse, separation of children and trauma which takes long to heal;
- commended the courage, strength and resilience of victims of war, persecution and violence who have been forced to flee their homes;
- assured all of UNHCR, its partners and the Government's support to protect all persons of concern until they decide to voluntarily return home in safety and dignity;
- dedicated WRD to youths who comprise 31% of Uganda's refugees and encouraged skills building and education so they become productive citizens and future leaders;
- resonated UNHCR's youth empowerment programmes to harness their potential in creative and positive ways, and applauded Government' support to primary education;
- appealed to stakeholders to give more support to secondary, tertiary and vocational skills that can easily be accessed by youth;
- and expressed UNHCRs' appreciation to the Government of Uganda and its people for their generous contribution to refugees, and the organizations' commitment to work with the Government and the entire international community in finding durable solutions to the refugee plight.

Message from the Commissioner for Refugees, OPM, Mr Apollo Kazungu



Ms Atsumi and Commissioner Kazungu have a light moment with officials during WRD visit in Kyangwali settlement. ©UNHCR/D.Munyasia

The Commissioner for Refugees, Mr Apollo Kazungu:

- appealed to humanitarian and development partners to continue supporting initiatives geared towards saving lives;
- urged stakeholders to act frugally by reducing overhead costs by appreciating the use of local NGOs and expertise;
- advised persons of concern (PoC) to appreciate and respect the rules and regulations that govern refugee and migration management;
- reported that his Department had embarked on developing a Refugee Policy to supplement the existing Refugee Act of 2006;
- announced that his Department secured the land titles for Kyangwali, Nakivale, Kyaka and Kiryandongo refugee settlements;
- thanked all partners for ensuring the existence of acceptable standards for all PoC;
- advised the remaining Kenyan refugees to prepare to return home, and advised Congolese refugees intending to return to the DRC to register and handover their documents to the settlement authorities;
- assured guests that his Department had embarked on addressing the office and staff accommodation challenges by building a three-storied headquarters, renovating staff accommodation in Kyangwali and Kiryandongo, and connecting Kiryandongo to Umeme electricity grid.

Messages from the Resident District Commissioner, OPM Refugee Desk Officer and Representatives of the Refugee Community



Refugee women exhibited their agricultural products in Kyangwali. ©UNHCR/D.Munyasia

The following messages were presented by Hoima and Kyangwali stakeholders:

- extended appreciations to OPM, UNHCR and its partners for providing an enabling and conducive environment to refugees and the host community;
- pledged to continue providing security to all the refugees and host communities and their properties;
- requested stakeholders to expedite the process of improving staff welfare including accommodation and office space within the settlement;
- expressed thanks to all stakeholders for providing and promoting a harmonious coexistence between refugees and the host community;
- appealed to stakeholders to address challenges regarding access to basic services including improvement of the road from Kabwoya to Kyangwali, avail opportunities for higher education and ensure adequacy of medicines at health facilities;
- appealed for support in the fabrication and supply of mobility appliances for persons with a disability and ensure easy access to infrastructures for physically challenged persons;
- and finally expressed appreciation to guests who ensured that the occasion was successfully and joyously celebrated, and invited guests and refugees for refreshments.



Hon. Musa Ecweru presents the Finish Refugee Council's 'Refugee Woman of the Year' award to Ms Zawadi Gahima from Kyangwali refugee settlement for her work in improving the lives of refugees. ©UNHCR/D.Munasia