

UNHCR PRESS RELEASE

Global celebrities join campaign calling on governments to take action for refugees

Video message released today in lead-up to World Refugee Day. Video can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/Jtv4LCXEGEU>

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, today launched a major campaign that asks the world to stand together #WithRefugees. In a stunning video message more than 60 global celebrities join with refugees and aid workers to echo the message, "we stand with refugees, please stand with us." The petition appeals for government action on behalf of the world's forcibly displaced.

The campaign aims to demonstrate public support for families forced to flee against a backdrop of dramatically increased displacement from conflict and persecution on the one hand, and heightened anti-refugee rhetoric and greater restrictions to asylum on the other. The petition will be delivered in advance of September's historic UN High-Level Plenary of the General Assembly on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants.

Specifically, the petition asks all governments to make sure:

- Every refugee child has an education.
- Every refugee family has somewhere safe to live.
- Every refugee can work or learn skills to make a positive contribution to their community.

UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Cate Blanchett, who appears in the video from Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, spoke about her support for the campaign:

"We are in the middle of a catastrophic displacement crisis that has already uprooted millions of innocent families, and seen too many lose their lives trying to reach safety. The ultimate solution is political – we need peace and stability. But whilst we wait for that, we – as people with a voice – can and must play our part. We must demand that all countries take a shared responsibility for ensuring refugees have protection, shelter and the chance to live a productive life. If enough of us stand together, we will be heard."

Fellow UNHCR Goodwill Ambassadors joining Blanchett in the video include author Khaled Hosseini and supermodel and former refugee Alek Wek. Others lending support include UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and faith leaders Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Venerable V.Vajiramedhi and actors Benedict Cumberbatch, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Margot Robbie, Ben Stiller, Dame Helen Mirren as well as singers Juanes, Mika, Maher Zain and Babaa Maal.

"Refugees are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, children, with the same hopes and ambitions as us – except that a twist of fate has bound their lives to a global refugee crisis on an unprecedented scale," said Khaled Hosseini. "Together, in solidarity with refugees, we must demand that world leaders take collective responsibility for finding fair, lasting solutions to this crisis. Together, we must ensure humanity and compassion triumph over fear and intolerance."

The number of people forced to flee their homes by conflict and persecution is now at its highest since the end of the Second World War. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi spoke about why UNHCR was making such a public call to support refugees.

“We are in a period of deepening conflict and turmoil in the world, which is causing many more people to flee their homes than before,” said Grandi. “It affects and involves us all, and what it needs is understanding, compassion and political will to come together and find real answers for the refugee plight. This has become a defining challenge of our times.

“In 2015, millions of people were newly displaced, adding again to the global refugee and internal displacement totals. Overwhelmingly, it was countries of the developing world that were most affected, but Europe too witnessed dramatic scenes, as hundreds of thousands of people crossed the Mediterranean in search of safety and refuge. Thousands died along the way.

“At the same time, there was an extraordinary outpouring of empathy and solidarity, as ordinary people and communities opened their homes and their hearts to refugees, and some countries have welcomed new arrivals even while already hosting large numbers of refugees.

“The #WithRefugees campaign and petition aims to amplify those voices of welcome and show that the world stands with refugees.”

The campaign seeks to mobilize massive audiences, creating the largest-ever petition to support refugee cause. The petition can be signed at <http://rfg.ee/z2bA301bNOn>.

None of the contributors to the video are available for interview.

Notes to editors

The video is also available in the following languages:

- Spanish: <https://youtu.be/TUUsTSe7dnY>
- Arabic: <https://youtu.be/DiAc3KQgxXw>
- French: <https://youtu.be/6MybfrYkqzk>

Images of UNHCR Goodwill Ambassadors Cate Blanchett and Khaled Hosseini available here:

<http://media.unhcr.org/Share/kwun1u332tp2xd1px067gg10ttth3570>.

All photos: © UNHCR/Jordi Matas

For more information on the #WithRefugees Campaign

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About the #WithRefugees Campaign

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency works for a world where every person forced to flee can be protected and build a better future. On World Refugee Day, held every year on June 20th, UNHCR commemorates the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees. This year, World Refugee Day is a key moment for everyone to show their support for families forced to flee. By signing the #WithRefugees petition, people from across the globe can call on governments to work together and do their fair share for refugees.

Full list of high profile contributors to the video and petition.

CONTRIBUTOR & SIGNEES	CONTRIBUTOR TITLE
Patrick Stewart	Actor
Jung Woo-sung	Actor & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Douglas Booth	Actor
Cate Blanchett	Actor & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Benedict Cumberbatch	Actor
Maher Zain	Musician
Mika	Musician
Alek Wek	Model & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Alessandro Gassmann	Actor
Muzoon Almellehan	Syrian refugee & advocate for education
Juanes	Musician
Natalia Lafourcade	Musician
David Morrissey	Actor
John Green	Writer
Rebecca Hall	Actor
Morgan Spector	Actor
Venerable V.Vajiramedhi	Faith leader
Will Ferrell	Actor
Alan Cumming	Actor
Kristin Davis	Actor
Jillian Michaels	TV personality
Khaled Hosseini	Writer & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Barbara Hendricks	Classical Singer & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Baaba Maal	Musician
Fally Ipupa	Musician
Helen Mirren	Actor
John Abraham	Actor & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Neil Gaiman	Writer
Amanda Palmer	Musician
Ash (baby)	
Dianna Agron	Actor
Gavin Rossdale	Musician
Ben Stiller	Actor
Bassem Youssef	Satirist
Neshan Der Haroutiounian	TV presenter
Elena Anaya	Actor

Jesús Vázquez Carlos Vives Cecilia Suárez	TV presenter & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Musician Musician
Chiwetel Ejiofor Simon Pegg Margot Robbie Bryan Adams	Actor Actor Actor Musician
Rokia Traore	Musician & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Scarlett Johansson	Actor
Anoushka Shankar Georgina Chapman Fatima Bhutto Bruna Marquezine Theo James Dan Reynolds	Musician Fashion Designer Poet/Writer Model/Actor Actor Musician (Imagine Dragons)
Melitina Staniouta	Gymnast
Rubén Albarrán Alberto Lati Osvaldo Laport Jose Moreno Brooks	Musician Writer Actor & UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Actor
Katarzyna Bonda Krystyna Czubowna Tomasz Kammel	Writer Journalist TV presenter
Lang Lang Mark Haddon Sami Yusuf The National Parks	Musician Writer Musician Musicians
Gillian Slovo Kamila Shamsie Amanda Palmer Steve Coogan	Writer Writer Musician Actor
Chris Cleave Emi Mahmoud Emma Ferrer Carey Mulligan	Writer Slam Poet Model Actor & War Child Ambassador
Aaron Taylor-Johnson Abbey Lee Kershaw Stanley Tucci Sam Taylor-Johnson Damián Bichir Alfonso Herrera	Actor Actor/Model Actor Artist/Director Actor Actor

Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu	Faith leader
<u>Not featured in the film but signees to the petition</u>	
David Nicholls	Writer
Jeremy Thomas	Film producer
Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens)	Musican
Eugenio Derbez	Actor
Adrian Lester	Actor
Richard Curtis	Producer/Director
Mark Rylance	Actor

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World Refugee Day 20 June