



UNHCR / J. JUREZ - J. TANNER



The Nansen Refugee Award

In October 2012, in recognition of her tireless work to empower Somalia's displaced women and girls, including many who have fled war, persecution and famine, a former refugee who opted to return to her war-torn homeland of Puntland, Somalia, was chosen to receive the 2012 Nansen Refugee Award.

Ms. Hawa Aden Mohamed's visionary efforts have transformed the lives of thousands in a country battered by decades of violence, conflict and human rights abuses.

Formerly called the Nansen Medal Award (in honour of the first High Commissioner for Refugees, Norwegian explorer, scientist and humanitarian, Fridtjof Nansen), the programme was relaunched in 2009 by UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) as the Nansen Refugee Award. In partnership with the Governments of Norway and Switzerland, UNHCR and the NRC embarked upon a long-term plan to develop the programme as a platform to reach out to larger audiences and to increase awareness of the terrible impact of forced displacement for tens of millions of people across the world.

Over the past four years, the dignified and moving award ceremony, held annually in Geneva, has re-positioned the Nansen Refugee Award as a flagship advocacy event for UNHCR. With the addition of a Nansen panel discussion at the University of Geneva, the annual programme has become a valuable communications vehicle for bringing the predicament of refugees and the international humanitarian efforts led by UNHCR to help them to the attention of people who can influence funding decisions and the general public at large.

To learn more about Mama Hawa and the Nansen Refugee Award Programme, visit www.unhcr.org/nansen.

“HAVING BEEN A REFUGEE IN KENYA,
THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA,
I WAS ENCOURAGED BY SEEING WOMEN
ALL OVER THE WORLD
PARTICIPATING IN BUILDING THEIR
COUNTRIES. I WANTED THE SAME FOR MINE.
I JUST COULDN'T SIT DOWN
AND FOLD MY HANDS.”

Hawa Aden Mohamed
2012 Nansen Refugee Award Laureate

On behalf of her sister
Hawa, Shukri Aden
Mohamed accepts the
2012 Nansen Refugee
Award Medal at a moving
ceremony in Geneva.