

UNHCR Honorary Advocate
Jung Woo-sung with refugee
children from Bhutan at
Nepal's Beldangi camp.

Celebrity Support





In 2014 UNHCR continued to benefit from the support of high-profile individuals, who dedicated their time and energy to raising awareness about the plight of refugees and stateless people worldwide. These personalities, moved by the heartbreaking stories of refugees forced to flee their homes and inspired by refugees' strength and resilience, have used their influence and popularity to spread awareness of UNHCR's work, raise funds for its operations and convey essential advocacy messages.

This chapter recognizes the many ways in which goodwill ambassadors and other high-profile individuals supported UNHCR's work in 2014. Their efforts included going on missions, providing media and social media support, making films, backing UNHCR campaigns, staging events and endorsing fundraising initiatives, including emergency appeals. ●●●

Enhancing visibility and awareness

In a year of unprecedented challenges for UNHCR, the voices of celebrities proved extremely valuable in garnering support for the refugee cause. Thanks to their extensive audience reach, goodwill ambassadors and other high-profile supporters were able to carry UNHCR's key messages to people who may otherwise never have heard of UNHCR and its work.

In the Republic of Korea, for example, actor Jung Woo-sung supported a variety of activities

to raise public awareness about UNHCR, including providing a video message to mark World Refugee Day, recording a TV spot to encourage donations, and travelling on a mission to Nepal to meet refugees from Bhutan awaiting resettlement.

Also in the Republic of Korea, a clip from the acclaimed movie *The Grand Budapest Hotel* introduced by its director Wes Anderson provided a unique means of helping to explain the plight of refugees.

Goodwill Ambassador and acclaimed author Khaled Hosseini travelled to Iraq with UNHCR in May 2014. On his return, he wrote a powerful opinion piece in *The New York Times* on the future of Syrian children, the 'lost generation' – including the fact that for many,

education has become a luxury rather than a right. He shared further reflections on the Syria crisis in other key media outlets, including *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *La Repubblica*, reaching a total estimated audience of more than 57 million. ■

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I am a father of two children. I cannot imagine what it would do to them, to see such grisly things. Yet that is happening every day in Syria. A whole generation of children, witness to the unfolding catastrophe, is unable to attend school, their lives shaped by violence, grief and displacement.

– UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador
Khaled Hosseini

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In May 2014, Goodwill Ambassador Yao Chen travelled to Lebanon with UNHCR to meet with Syrian refugees. Her mission was covered extensively by Chinese media, including *China Daily*, *People's Daily Online*, *Sina English* and *Want China Times*. She also regularly posted photos and messages on her Weibo account throughout the

mission, spreading the message about challenges for refugees to her 68 million followers. Yao Chen later made a documentary about her mission, which she screened on World Refugee Day to an audience of high-profile attendees from governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media. ■

Audience reach via media generated by high-profile supporters grew to **920 million**.



For a number of UNHCR campaigns and special events, including World Refugee Day and the Nansen Refugee Award, social media activity by high-profile supporters was the **largest percentage driver** of web traffic and user engagement.



Videos by high-profile supporters accounted for eight of the **top-10 most viewed videos** on UNHCR's YouTube platform in 2014.*

*These include videos of UNHCR Special Envoy, Angelina Jolie Pitt

Backing major campaigns

UNHCR's high-profile supporters have added significant weight to the organization's advocacy efforts, drawing on their personal experience of displacement or expertise on refugee and statelessness issues. Their support increased the audience reach of key campaigns and special events, and helped to keep the spotlight on the humanitarian consequences of the crisis in Syria, as well as displacement situations and statelessness challenges in other parts of the world.

STATELESSNESS

UNHCR's Global Campaign to End Statelessness, launched in 2014, benefited from the support of a number of influential individuals. Honorary Lifetime Goodwill Ambassador Barbara Hendricks travelled to Côte d'Ivoire in June 2014 to learn more about the issues and challenges surrounding statelessness. She subsequently wrote a poignant op-ed that featured in *La Libre Belgique* and *Libération*. Along with British journalist AA Gill, Ms. Hendricks also travelled to The Hague to chair plenary sessions at the first Global Forum on Statelessness, in association with Tilburg University.

Influential signatories of the Open Letter to End Statelessness and its

online petition included Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassadors George Dalaras, Muazzez Ersoy, Barbara Hendricks, Khaled Hosseini, Osvaldo Laport, Aidos Sagat, Jesús Vázquez and Alek Wek.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Goodwill ambassadors and high-profile supporters once again made a significant contribution to World Refugee Day in 2014, reaching out to diverse audiences across the globe. Public service announcements were filmed with 38 high-profile individuals in a variety of languages, while 24 personalities filmed story-telling videos. Celebrity media was amongst the largest drivers of traffic to the World Refugee Day website. The most popular videos included those made by American film director Wes Anderson, actresses Kristin Davis and Kat Graham, British broadcaster Emma Freud, Italian Singer Giorgia, Greek singer-songwriter Alkinoos Ioannidis, Colombian musician Juanes, Canadian singer-songwriter Chantal Kreviazuk, German actress and model Diane Kruger, Nigerian footballer John Obi Mikel, British actress Emma Thompson and her adopted son and former refugee Tindy Agaba, and Lebanese musician

Maher Zain. Their videos reflected the truly global nature of World Refugee Day.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai made a story-telling video to share the experience of Mazoun, whom she met when visiting Zaatari refugee camp in February 2014. Like Malala, Mazoun is just 16 years old and has great dreams for her future despite immense challenges in accessing education.

Other diverse supporters on social media included Judd Apatow, Paulo Coelho, Coldplay, Luol Deng, Stephen Fry, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Juanes, Annie Lennox, Edward Norton, Simon Pegg and Shonda Rhimes. These personalities shared a public service announcement or refugee story video, promoted the World Refugee Day website,

publicized an event and shared pieces of World Refugee Day-related media.

NANSEN REFUGEE AWARD

At the 2014 Nansen Refugee Award ceremony in Geneva, Lebanese musician Maher Zain, Mexican guitar duo *Rodrigo y Gabriela* and Malian singer Rokia Traoré gave passionate performances in honour of the inspirational Nansen Refugee Award laureate from Colombia, known as the *Butterflies* (see special feature on *Nansen*).

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We should take action,
and make sure that no person
on this earth becomes a refugee.

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– Nobel Peace Prize laureate
Malala Yousafzai

Spotlighting crises

High-profile support throughout 2014 was key in focusing public attention on the Syria crisis. Goodwill ambassadors and other high-profile individuals used their influence on social media to amplify UNHCR advocacy following tragic milestones, including the rise in the total number of Syrian refugees to over 3 million and the loss of refugees' and migrants' lives at sea.

In addition to missions undertaken by the High Commissioner's Special Envoy, Angelina Jolie Pitt (see article on the work of the *Special Envoy*), British actor David Morrissey travelled to Jordan while Goodwill Ambassador Osvaldo Laport and high-profile supporter Maher Zain visited Lebanon to highlight the plight of Syrian refugees.

In May 2014, high-profile supporter Neil Gaiman, accompanied by fashion designer Georgina Chapman and her husband, film producer Harvey Weinstein, travelled to Jordan with UNHCR to draw public and media attention to the ongoing crisis in Syria. Following his trip, he wrote a powerful article for *The Guardian* and undertook interviews with *CNN*'s Christiane Amanpour and the *BBC World Service*, among others. He also produced a short video in which he described his experience and his meetings with refugees in Jordan. The video's soundtrack, written

by his wife, musician Amanda Palmer, was made available for download, with the profits going to UNHCR. This video was one of UNHCR's most viewed in 2014. Celebrities who promoted the video included Russell Brand, Penn Jillette, Sir Ian McKellen and Salman Rushdie. Neil Gaiman also produced a graphic novel re-telling the fairy story *Hansel and Gretel* drawing on Syrian refugees' experience, and supported a partnership with restaurant chain Chipotle, in which his words about refugees were carried on coffee cups. ■

Increasing fundraising efforts

High-profile supporters used various means to enhance fundraising efforts for UNHCR in 2014. In addition to donations for emergencies driven by celebrity social media, there were specific efforts to raise funds for protracted and worsening crises, in particular the Syria situation. Italian actors Francesco Pannofino and Lorena Bianchetti, Korean actor Jung Woo-sung, and Hong Kong actor Tony Hung all filmed fundraising TV spots on behalf of UNHCR in 2014.

UNHCR's operations benefited from direct donations by goodwill

ambassadors, high-profile supporters and their networks, with funds being given personally or through foundations. This was testament to the deep personal commitment to the cause of stateless people, refugees and other forcibly displaced people demonstrated by UNHCR high-profile supporters. In addition to generating directly attributable fundraising revenue, goodwill ambassadors and high-profile supporters also helped to cultivate valuable new supporter relationships through their activities. ■

Rokia Traoré visits Malian refugees

This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story

21 JUNE 2014

Malian singer-songwriter Rokia Traoré visited Burkina Faso's Goudoubo camp in June 2014 | The camp hosts around 10,000 Malian refugees who had fled a conflict that erupted in January 2012 between a rebel group and government forces. This is what she had to say...



UNHCR/H. CAUX

Rokia with Malian refugees, Izata and daughter Aminata, in Goudoubo camp.

“Being involved with the UN Refugee Agency feels simply like the right thing to do – to have an opportunity to shine a spotlight and help in whatever way I can is a natural reaction that all humankind has for each other. What makes this particular situation so right is that Mali is my home and I too have felt the impact of this crisis, which forced me to also change my life – though not to the extent of the refugees. It feels like I am about to visit relatives who are in some sort of trouble – I find it unbearable to know the ongoing misery that affects so many of my people. I want to hear what people have to say and learn about what has happened to them and try to show that we are all one. I want to try to bring their voices to decision makers who can change their lives.

We drive from Ougadougou to Dori, in northern Burkina Faso and I am greeted at the entrance to the refugee camp in Goudoubo by a line of elders and partner organizations. We walk slowly up the line shaking hands with everyone and suddenly I am overcome – one man, Mohammed, reaches out and we hug –

there was something so symbolic about this – I can't explain. A linking of north and south and we immediately all felt more at ease – the whole group.

We headed to a child's safe play area where kids were singing and learning new songs. I couldn't help myself when they handed me the drums and we jammed for a while with the kids echoing my words and everyone joining in. It felt good to us all to be able to sing and smile.

We then visited Izata, a 32-year-old woman who had fled from Gao with her husband in 2012. He had then returned to Mali and been killed. She is now on her own with just her two children – Aminata and Mohamed, struggling to get by and deal with her grief and isolation. She tells us that she had been given everything we saw in her tattered shelter – the bedding, the mats, the pots, pans and even the clothes she was wearing – as when they fled they had absolutely nothing on them and they had walked for five days to get to safety. It was so sad to hear her stories and sit in her shelter where she has been for the past

two years without any hope, at this point, of returning home.

So, at the end of the day – I took time to reflect...

I came to hear and understand the stories of the refugees.

I came to ask for peace.

I came to ask governments, aid agencies and individuals not to forget about the Malian refugees: there are still 167,000 of them between Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger.

I came to see if I can help to support refugees – this crisis is a forgotten one and the funding is only at 28 per cent of what they really need.

In a world where we spend vast amounts of money on cosmetics, toys, electronics – and people here have nothing I find it hard to believe that if the rest of humanity saw their situation they would allow for this to carry on.” ◯