



The UN refugee agency, in its 60th year, marks World Refugee Day with a rich and varied programme of events in locations worldwide and the launch of a new global awareness campaign (see separate story).

The Italian capital of Rome will be the focus of this year's events on World Refugee Day itself (June 20), with High Commissioner António Guterres due to present UNHCR's annual statistics report on the number of people of concern to the agency.

He will also preside over a special commemorative event that will be attended by Italy's President Giorgio Napolitano and six refugees, including a Polish survivor of the Holocaust in World War II.

Rome's ancient Colosseum will again be bathed in UN blue, one of many monuments around the world to be spotlighted to mark the occasion, including the iconic Empire State Building in New York.

From light shows to food bazaars

Activities and special events will not be restricted to June 20, but will start in the week ahead of the special day. Guterres, for example, will be going to Italy's Lampedusa Island on June 19 to meet some of the thousands of people – including refugees and asylum-seekers – who have risked their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea on overcrowded vessels from Libya.

UNHCR activities on World Refugee Day include a wide range of activities, including light shows, film screenings, lectures, panel discussions, food bazaars, fashion shows, cultural

performances, concerts and sports contests.

There will also be competitions, tree planting, speeches, poetry recitals and photography exhibitions.

The agency's partners, including governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, Angelina Jolie and our other Goodwill Ambassadors, will be doing their part to help.

Football tournaments

Several European countries – **Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy and Portugal** – will be holding special football tournaments between citizens of the host countries and refugees and asylum-seekers in cooperation with local partner organizations. A number of countries in Europe will also hold umbrella parades, symbolising protection, including the United Kingdom and Austria.

In the French capital, **Paris**, UNHCR and several partners will on June 27 organize a WRD-linked writers' conference on exile, asylum and identity. It will bring together a number of writers who are, or have been, refugees or exiles in France.

Reading a refugee

In Belgium, UNHCR has decorated the tram that runs along the country's coastline until the end of November. A series of tents is depicted on the outside of the tram, with the written message: "Yeah, holidaaaaay! Nope, a refugee camp."

UNHCR's office in **Strasbourg**, meanwhile, will on June 20 open a three-day "living library" in the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe. This will gather refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people who can be borrowed by the public, like a library book, for a limited period of time, during which the "reader" finds out about their history. A

similar event will be organized by UNHCR on June 21 in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Britain will hold its traditional Refugee Week with hundreds of events planned around the country. There will be a Celebrating Sanctuary Festival beside the River Thames in London, where a UNHCR tent will be pitched. On June 20, as part of a Simple Acts campaign, Home Secretary Theresa May will invite a group of refugees to afternoon tea.

Sweden's largest and busiest railway station – Stockholm Central will host a large live event. There will be a miniature refugee camp built from tent-shaped cards, and a big UNHCR tent inside the station. TV monitors will show UNHCR films and messages.

UNHCR's **Athens** office will be staging a multicultural event that will bring together young Greek people and refugees and help to spread awareness about the forcibly displaced and understanding for their plight in a country where racism and xenophobia are problems. Special guests will include UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador George Dalaras and prizes will be awarded to a UNHCR-run contest on social integration and the promotion of coexistence.

See more on UNCHR activities in Western-Europe on these websites: **UNHCR in Western Europe:**

- Belgium (French/Dutch)
<http://www.unhcr.be/>
- Denmark (English/Danish)
<http://www.unhcr.dk/>
- Finland (English/Finnish)
<http://www.unhcr.fi/>
- France (French)
<http://www.unhcr.fr/>
- Germany (German)
<http://www.unhcr.de/>
- Greece (Greek)
<http://www.unhcr.gr/>
- Iceland (English/Icelandic)
<http://www.unhcr.is/>
- Ireland (English)
<http://www.unhcr.ie/>
- Italy (Italian)

- <http://www.unhcr.it/>
- Malta (English)
<http://www.unhcr.org.mt/>
- Netherlands (Dutch)
<http://www.unhcr.nl/>
- Norway (English/Norwegian)
<http://www.unhcr.no/>
- Portugal (Portuguese)
<http://www.acnur.org.br/>
- Spain (Spanish)
<http://www.acnur.org/>
- Sweden (English/Swedish)
<http://www.unhcr.se/>
- United Kingdom (English)
<http://www.unhcr.org.uk/>