

UN World Refugee Day

Did you know that every day thousands of people leave their homes to escape war or terror? World Refugee Day is a day to support refugees worldwide and help them rebuild their lives.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–j) with the vocabulary (1–10).

Vocabulary

1. currently
2. to settle
3. persecution
4. devastating
5. hatred
6. to flee
7. to raise awareness
8. to seek
9. a landmark
10. fundraising

Definition

- a. to leave somewhere quickly to escape from fear or danger
- b. cruel or unfair treatment over a period of time because of race, or religious or political beliefs
- c. at the present time
- d. to try to find or get something
- e. collecting money for a special purpose
- f. a feeling of extreme dislike
- g. an important or famous building, statue, etc.
- h. to make a place your permanent home
- i. causing a lot of damage or destruction
- j. to make people know that a situation exists and help them understand it

UN World Refugee Day

Across the world there are currently over 100 million people who have had to leave their homes. Some have settled in new countries; many more are living in refugee camps, waiting for it to be safe enough to go home or settle in a different country. The United Nations decided that refugees should have a special day, when we think of them and show our support. The first World Refugee Day was on 20 June 2001, and it's been celebrated every year since then.

Why is World Refugee Day important?

More people than ever before have been forced to leave their countries, and very few of them have been able to return. Every moment of the day, people are leaving everything behind to escape war, persecution or the devastating effects of climate change and natural disasters. A refugee crisis on this scale is difficult to deal with, but the United Nations

Secretary General, António Guterres, reminds us that ‘the problems are war and hatred, not people who flee’.

The aim of World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day helps to raise awareness of the dangerous and difficult situation refugees are in. Safety is a human right, and the message of World Refugee Day is that everyone has the right to seek safety. The aim of the day is to create empathy and understanding, and to get political and practical support to help refugees. It is also a day to recognise the bravery and strength of people who have to face many dangers and difficulties to rebuild their lives.

What happens on World Refugee Day?

There are a lot of events on 20 June in different countries. These events are often organised by, or involve, refugees themselves. Many famous landmarks, such as the Tokyo Tower in Tokyo and the Empire State Building in New York, are covered in blue lights to show solidarity with refugees. In Glasgow, Scotland, people hold hands to form an enormous human chain around George Square, in the city centre, to ‘show the world that Scotland welcomes refugees’. In many places there are film showings, exhibitions and various fundraising events.

What you can do to help

There are petitions worldwide, organised by the United Nations. By adding your name to the list, you are sending the message that every person has the right to seek safety. You can also make donations to charities that support refugees, or write letters to your governments asking them to take action. People are also getting involved in action against climate change and its effects, to prevent more people becoming climate refugees.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Most of the refugees in the world have settled in a new country.	True	False
2. The number of refugees worldwide is at an all-time high.	True	False
3. Conflict and unfair treatment are two reasons why people have to leave their countries.	True	False
4. The main aim of World Refugee Day is to stop wars and weather-related disasters.	True	False
5. World Refugee Day is an opportunity to help people understand how challenging life is for refugees.	True	False
6. Famous buildings are lit up with pink lights for World Refugee Day.	True	False
7. In a square in the centre of Glasgow, people work together to paint a big sign saying 'Refugees are welcome'.	True	False
8. One way to help refugees is to sign your name on a petition.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentence with the missing words.

deal	hold	make	raise
rebuild	seek	settle	show

- Many refugees are still waiting to be able to in a new country.
- World Refugee Day is a day when we can our support for refugees worldwide.
- A refugee crisis on this scale is difficult to with.
- World Refugee Day helps to awareness of the situation refugees are in.
- The message of World Refugee Day is that everyone has the right to safety.
- Refugees have to face many difficulties and dangers to their lives.
- In Glasgow, people hands to form a human chain and show the world that refugees are welcome.
- You can also donations to charities that support refugees.

Discussion

Did you learn anything new from the article?

Answers

Preparation task

1. c
2. h
3. b
4. i
5. f
6. a
7. j
8. d
9. g
10. e

Task 1

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True

Task 2

1. settle
2. show
3. deal
4. raise
5. seek
6. rebuild
7. hold
8. make