

2015 World Refugee Day in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka was among the 134 countries that hosted events around the globe to commemorate World Refugee Day in 2015. At the Maris Stella school grounds in Negombo, hundreds of asylum-seekers and refugees gathered together to engage in sports activities that momentarily put aside all their day to day worries. The UNHCR team in Sri Lanka together with V-Force volunteers worked hard to make the event a success and to make it enjoyable for all refugees and asylum-seekers in the country.



The participation of government stakeholders and donors in the event also provided them with an opportunity to witness firsthand the talents of both children and adults of concern alike. It provided an opportunity too for the asylum-seekers and refugees to show their gratitude to the government of Sri Lanka for hosting them on their territory and for providing them with international protection. As this year marks the 60th year of Sri Lanka's membership in the UN, UNHCR welcomed the promise of a renewal of the partnership that it has shared with the government of Sri Lanka for the past 28 years. The 'Sports Day' also brought media attention on the plight of refugees and their stories.



In parallel to the 'Sports Day' in Negombo, the UNHCR team in Killinochchi organized an interactive session together with government officials from Divisional and District Secretariates and refugee returnees from India. They engaged in a knowledge sharing session on UNHCR's mandate on refugees followed by a quiz and a local game of "crossing the borders." In Vavuniya, UNHCR commemorated the world refugee day with returnee students. The event was held by bringing together returnee students, parents and staff of a Sinhala school and a Tamil school, where they were provided with school supplies and much needed interaction.



Here you can read:

Message by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon on the World Refugee Day

(<http://www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/2015/sgmessage.shtml>);

Statement by the High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. António Guterres

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlIkQNvInFA&feature=youtu.be>);

UNHCR Sri Lanka Press Release (<http://unhcr.lk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/UNHCR-Sri-Lanka-Press-Release-for-World-Refugee-Day-2015.pdf>).

Following are some of the stories captured around the World Refugee Day on local media. Please note that these are external links:

Spare a thought for refugees (Daily News - <http://www.dailynews.lk/?q=editorial/spare-thought-refugees>)

Record 60 m fled 'out of control' violence in 2014: UN (Daily News -

<http://www.dailynews.lk/?q=world/record-60-m-fled-out-control-violence-2014-un>)

Let us open our hearts to refugees everywhere (Daily FT -

<http://www.ft.lk/article/435179/%E2%80%9CLet-us-open-our-hearts-to-refugees-everywhere%E2%80%9D>)

World refugee number breaks records (News First - <http://newsfirst.lk/english/2015/06/world-refugee-number-breaks-records/100645>)

Channel Eye (Rupavahini News - <http://www.rupavahini.lk/main-news/english-news/7227-2015-06-20.html>) - 9 pm (10:14 onwards)

Prime Time News MTV 9pm 20th June 2015 Clip 12 (News First - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlevBwR2JF0>)

UNHCR, Govt working out plan to deal with IDP, refugee issues (Sunday Times - <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/150628/news/unhcr-govt-working-out-plan-to-deal-with-idp-refugee-issues-154952.html>)