

20 June: World Refugee Day [B1]

Il World Refugee Day, che si celebra ogni anno il 20 giugno, è la data istituita dall'ONU per ricordare la forza e il coraggio di coloro che sono stati costretti ad abbandonare il proprio Paese d'origine per sfuggire a conflitti bellici, persecuzioni, o alle conseguenze di disastri naturali.



Celebrated each year on 20 June, World Refugee Day was established in 2001 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Signed by 149 states, the convention was the first to legally define a refugee as: "Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." Today, a refugee can also be someone who is displaced because of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis.

SEMANTICS OF LEAVING

There are an estimated 281 million migrants in the world, of which one hundred million are refugees. 'Migrants' is an umbrella term referring to

people who leave their homes for all kinds of reasons: social, economic, for employment or study, or to join family. Although migrants are not all refugees, this does not mean that they leave home **out of choice**: over four thousand people die every year trying **to reach** a new country. People who want the legal protection to stay in another country are called '**asylum seekers**'. This means that they have begun the legal process to become a refugee.

HARD BORDERS

Today, major refugee crises are occurring in Syria and Ukraine, as well as in Afghanistan and South Sudan. However, some people see the number of migrants as too high for the countries they arrive in to **to handle**. Many travel illegally and are met with strict immigration controls. In the UK, the government is trying to **pass** a new law to stop small boats crossing the English Channel. The controversial **bill** says that those who arrive in the UK without permission will have their asylum **claims dismissed**, whatever their circumstances. They will then be deported, possibly to a third country such as Rwanda. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is "profoundly **concerned**" by the **bill**, which is a "clear **breach** of the refugee convention".

EMPATHY AND RESPECT

No one wants to leave home. World Refugee Day is an occasion to build empathy and understanding and to recognise the resilience of those who have to **regardless** of the status they have in the country they moved to. The day is marked by a variety of events and activities that amplify the voices and experiences of refugees and **displaced** people. It brings them together with government officials, host communities, companies, celebrities and the general public.

Glossary

- **to reach** = raggiungere
- **asylum seekers** = richiedenti asilo
- **claims** = richieste
- **unwilling** = non disposto
- **displaced** = profugo, dislocato
- **umbrella term** = termine generico (lett. ombrello)
- **pass** = approvare
- **bill** = legge
- **breach** = violazione, infrazione
- **owing to** = a causa di
- **out of choice** = per scelta
- **to handle** = gestire
- **concerned** = preoccupata
- **regardless** = a prescindere da
- **unable** = impossibilitato
- **dismissed** = respingere