

REFUGEES, RIGHTS AND REALITY

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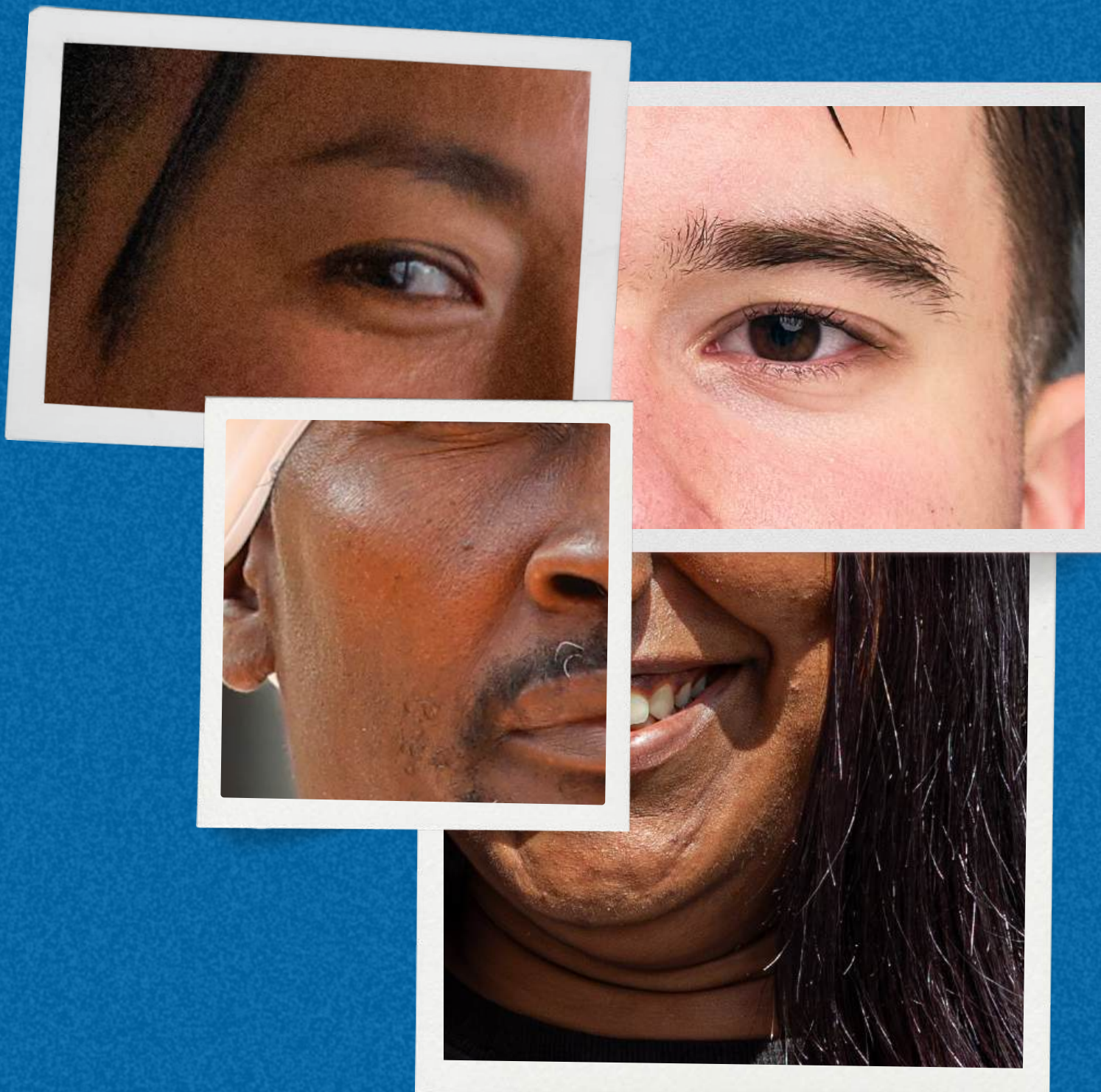


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# WHO IS A REFUGEE?

**The definition:** Under international law, refugees are people who are forced to flee their countries of origin because of conflict, violence or persecution, and who are in need of international protection.

**The truth:** *Anyone can become a refugee. There is no single face, background, or story that defines a refugee.*



# DOES EVERYONE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEEK SAFETY?

Yes. Everyone has the right to seek protection and safety. Most people do not choose to leave their homes; they flee because staying is no longer safe for reasons of war, violence, or persecution.

## HOW DID THIS RIGHT BECOME A REALITY?

- After the Second World War, countries came together to adopt the 1951 Refugee Convention, a landmark agreement that established the internationally recognized definition of a refugee and the rights refugees are entitled to.
- At its core is the principle of non-refoulement: no refugee should be returned to a country where their life or freedom would be at risk.
- Seventy-five years later, that promise remains as important as ever. The right to seek safety was never meant for a select few. It is a right that belongs to everyone. Learn more [here](#).



# WHY DOES THE RIGHT TO SEEK SAFETY MATTER?

Displacement is often seen as something that happens “somewhere else.”

However, displacement is not distant. More than **1 in 70 people** on Earth has been forced to flee.

Over the past two decades, the number of refugees, internally displaced people and asylum-seekers has steadily risen, a reminder that displacement is no longer a distant issue affecting only a few, or following only one story. **For some, it begins with the sudden loss of home; for others, displacement is all they have ever known.**

*Seeking safety is a human right, not a privilege. Learn more from the next page.*



## Ukraine



At 23, Julianna was forced to abandon her bakery business and flee Ukraine in 2024, the second time war had uprooted her after her family escaped Crimea when she was a teenager.

## Syria



Syrian refugee and DAFI scholar Rasha was forced to flee Dara'a with her family after war broke out in Syria, seeking asylum and rebuilding their lives in Jordan's Azraq camp.

## Sudan



Born in Darfur and displaced across Sudan and South Sudan from an early age, 20-year-old Nura has had her education repeatedly disrupted by conflict and constant movement.

# ARE THE **STEREOTYPES** ABOUT REFUGEES ACTUALLY TRUE?

*The truth:* No. Refugee experiences are diverse and shaped by different circumstances, as displacement can affect anyone.

~~No return  
desire~~

~~Certain type  
of people~~

***“I am glad to be going back”***

~~Burdens~~

***“I was just a very normal nine-year-old.”***

***“I’ve dedicated my adult life to advocating for Syria”***



Burundian refugee Mirera Zawadi prepares to return home through a UNHCR-supported voluntary repatriation process.



Nour Jarrouj is a prominent Syrian refugee advocate and humanitarian leader whose work has championed refugee inclusion



Golriz Ghahraman fled Iran with her family at the age of nine. She was sworn in as an MP in New Zealand in 2011.

# WHAT CAN WE DO TO **SUPPORT** REFUGEES?

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REFUGEE  
VOICES

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INFORMATION

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CHALLENGE  
HATE-SPEECH  
WHEN YOU HEAR  
IT

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SUPPORT  
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BUSINESSES

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KEEP  
LISTENING AND  
LEARNING

*And always remember, being a refugee is only one part of a person's journey, not their entire identity.*

**Start here, share now**