

## **World Refugee Day 2012: Commemorative Events**

First marked in 2001, World Refugee Day is held every year on June 20. Tens of thousands of people around the world take time to recognize and applaud the contribution of forcibly displaced people throughout the world. This year, a host of people attended the awareness-raising events planned in Istanbul and Ankara.

UNHCR Istanbul Field Unit in partnership with the Governorate of Istanbul and ASAM organized two concerts starring the singer 'Enzo' and the band 'Yabancı Degiliz'. The live performance took place at a special wagon attached to the famous 'Nostalgic Tram' in Istiklal, the main commercial street in Istanbul. Informative flyers on refugees and the World Refugee Day were also handed out to public in order to raise awareness in Istanbul and the capital city as well.

In Ankara, the past Wednesday June 20th. UNHCR Branch Office jointly with Ankara Metropolitan Municipality organized a 'Mini Refugee Parade' starring the designer Hakan Akkaya. The event was held in KentPark shopping mall where 10 refugee children from different nationalities sang a song in tune while few young volunteer and famous Turkish personalities like Pelin Batu, Erkan Tan, and Hadise modelled on the catwalk holding slogans of famous people who were once refugees.

UNHCR Representative in Turkey, Ms. Carol Batchelor opened the event expressing her thanks to Turkey and its people who have demonstrated a historical tradition of hospitality and asylum over the centuries. She extended her thanks also to the Mayor of Ankara; Mr. Melih Gökçek, to the Representative of the Chamber of commerce in Ankara; Mr. Salih Bezci, and to all those who acted as supporters of this year's WRD activities and of the refugees.

UNHCR took this opportunity also to launch a book collectively written by a group of 10 refugee children from 6-8 years old. Entitled "Tarik and the White Crow", this book is sponsored by UNHCR and Sarigaga Publications and illustrates the perspective of these children who have faced involuntary migration, and the importance they attached to finding safety and a welcoming home.

We hope that these awareness events organized by UNHCR Turkey Office and its supporters has helped people to look refugees from other perspective and to believe that even '1 refugee without hope is too many'.