

Statement by JCAM on World Refugee Day 2026

Together in Solidarity, Stronger in Humanity

World Refugee Day – June 20, 2026

As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Geneva Convention—the landmark international agreement adopted to protect the rights of refugees and affirm the right to seek safety—we proudly reaffirm its enduring message of human dignity, solidarity, and shared responsibility. According to UNHCR, the theme for World Refugee Day 2026 is “*Until Everyone is Safe*,” a call that challenges governments, faith communities, civil society, and individuals to recognize the humanity of every displaced person and to work tirelessly for a world where safety, justice, and hope are accessible to all.

This call strongly resonates with Pope Leo’s recent encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas: The Call to Safeguard Human Dignity*, in which he reminds the world that “human dignity is never lost through displacement, poverty, or suffering.” The Holy Father urges nations and communities to reject indifference and to build societies rooted in compassion, justice, fraternity, and solidarity. He further emphasizes that migrants and refugees should never be viewed as burdens or statistics, but as brothers and sisters whose lives, hopes, and aspirations deserve protection and respect.

The encyclical particularly challenges the global community to recognize forced displacement not only as a humanitarian concern, but also as a moral and spiritual responsibility. Pope Leo calls upon faith communities to become “living signs of hope” by accompanying displaced persons, defending their rights, and promoting pathways toward peace, reconciliation, and integral human development.

The 1951 Refugee Convention, together with its 1967 Protocol and regional African instruments such as the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, upholds fundamental rights that every refugee deserves. These include protection from forced return (*non-refoulement*), the right to seek asylum, freedom from discrimination, access to education and healthcare, the right to work, legal protection, freedom of religion, and the right to identity and travel documents.

Today, the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM) joins the global community in honoring the courage, resilience, and humanity of more than 117 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, many of whom have fled war, persecution, violence, environmental disasters, trafficking, and systemic injustice.

Across Africa, millions of refugees continue to seek safety and dignity despite enormous challenges. In Sudan, the ongoing conflict has forced families to flee into neighboring countries such as Chad, South Sudan, and Egypt, creating one of the continent’s largest humanitarian crises. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, persistent violence in the eastern regions has displaced countless women, children, and vulnerable communities. In Nigeria, insecurity caused by insurgency, banditry, and intercommunal violence has uprooted millions of people, especially in the northeast and central regions, leaving many families in urgent need of protection and humanitarian assistance. In South Sudan, years of instability and climate-related hardships continue to uproot families in search of peace and livelihood opportunities.

At the same time, Africa also offers inspiring examples of solidarity and hospitality. Uganda remains one of the world's leading refugee-hosting countries, recognized for its progressive refugee policies that allow refugees access to land, education, and employment opportunities. In Kenya, refugee communities in Kakuma and Dadaab continue to demonstrate resilience despite difficult living conditions. Meanwhile, countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Ghana have continued to provide refuge and support to thousands fleeing conflict and persecution from neighboring regions.

As people of faith and justice, we are reminded that refugees are not merely statistics or burdens; they are human beings created in the image of God, carrying dreams, talents, cultures, and immense potential. Their stories call us to move beyond fear and indifference toward compassion, advocacy, and action.

On this World Refugee Day, JCAM renews its commitment to walking with refugees, migrants, and displaced persons through accompaniment, advocacy, humanitarian support, and the promotion of social justice. We call upon governments, regional bodies, faith institutions, and international partners to strengthen policies that protect human dignity, address the root causes of forced displacement, and promote peace, inclusion, and sustainable development across Africa and the world.

Together in solidarity, we affirm that humanity grows stronger when every person is protected, welcomed, and given the opportunity to live in dignity and hope.

“Until Everyone is Safe.”

Issued by JCAM

For Human Rights, Justice, Peace, and Inclusion

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