



UN Volunteer Ann Kamunya (Kenya, centre) during her assignment in the Kakuma Camp, Kenya.

From Kenya to Turkey: helping refugees regain hope for a better future

Turkey is the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world, according to UNHCR. Over 3.5 million registered Syrian refugees, in addition to 365,000 persons of concern from other nationalities, are registered with UNHCR. Currently, 37 UN Volunteers are deployed across the country to support people forcibly displaced due to conflict, violence and persecution.

Ann Kamunya is an international UN Volunteer with UNHCR in Ankara, Turkey, where she she joined as a UN Volunteer Associate Refugee Status Determination Officer in December 2016.

This is not Ann's first volunteer experience. Prior to Turkey, she served with UNHCR as a national UN Volunteer in Nairobi and then in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, delivering for refugees who had been forcibly displaced from their home countries due to war or persecution.

“ *My passion for helping others and making a positive difference in people's lives inspired me to become a UN Volunteer. I have always loved volunteering and previously volunteered with several local organizations in Kenya. Doing something I love and knowing that I am making a difference in someone's life brings me joy and satisfaction. --Ann Kamunya*



In Kenya (right) and Turkey (left), UN Volunteer Ann Kamunya works with refugees on documenting their experiences, determining their status and ensuring their access to services and rights. (UNV, 2016/18)

In her current role, Ann is involved in interviewing asylum seekers from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia and other countries, assessing applicants' cases and determining if a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international law.


Ann's assistance in helping refugees to determine their status is crucial, as


asylum seekers whose status is yet to be determined are always living in limbo, unsure of their future. If a person is determined to be a refugee, he/she is entitled to immediate assistance and/or protection if necessary and assistance in finding a durable solution. People granted refugee status are entitled to resettlement, for example, and have the right not to be sent back to their country of origin.

In 2017, with the support of Ann and other UN Volunteers, UNHCR Turkey issued refugee status determination decisions for 16,743 persons, bringing hope back into their lives.

“ The Refugee Status Determination operation in Turkey is large and complex, with asylum-seekers from over 70 nationalities, and with considerable number of asylum-seekers with vulnerabilities and special needs. UN Volunteers are an extremely valuable resource in our team, particularly considering that they bring such competencies and values as solidarity, compassion, professionalism and genuine commitment towards the principles of volunteerism. --Muhammad Harfoush, Associate Refugee Status Determination Officer

Ann and other UN Volunteers in Turkey will continue to support UNHCR and selflessly give their service to people who need it most: refugees and asylum seekers, forcibly displaced due to conflict, violence and persecution.

 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/videos/2017/2/58b3f4714/which-countries-host-the-most-refugeesquest.html>

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