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# REFUGEE STUDENT LEADERS

AT THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S  
DIALOGUE ON PROTECTION  
CHALLENGES

# Inclusion of refugee voices

This year, UNHCR's Tertiary Education Team organized a delegation of 10 refugee youth leaders to the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges. Students and graduates spoke in spotlight and plenary sessions, side vents and innovation labs. The value of their strong participation was recognized by the High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner, the UK, Australia and other member states.

Delivering on the objective of the Global Compact on Refugees, which calls for meaningful participation of refugees in global fora and inclusion of their perspectives on decisions that affect them, the refugee delegation at the HCD reflects an ever-increasing effort to include more refugee voices in high-level conferences and decision-making.

In order to optimize the quality and impact of the participation of refugee and student leaders, the Education Section in the Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS) runs periodic leadership and advocacy training programmes to prepare youth leaders to improve public speaking, understand topical issues and processes and hone their messaging.



**“It is important for our voices to be heard, as we are the ones on the battlefield every single day.”**  
Adriana, TRSN's Latin America Leader

More information on how you can help to increase refugees' representation in global and regional events can be found in these [SOPs](#).

Contact person for student engagement:  
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# Intervention highlights

## Overview

In every session of the HC Dialogue, one or more refugee youth leaders spoke forcefully on a variety of issues, including the challenges of voluntary return, the role of faith in their refugee journey, student-led initiatives to respond to Covid-19, climate action, work with the private sector, economic inclusion and livelihoods and a global peer-to-peer solutions advisory network. To use the words of the Canadian representative: "Their expertise and lived experience changed the dynamic and depth of our discussions for the better and reminds us of the essential value of meaningful refugee participation."



Watch Abdinasir's speech [here](#).

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"Its essential that refugees and other displaced people like me are part of the development agenda from start; they can contribute with their talent, skills and vision."

## Special session on the 2023 World Development Report

Having fled Syria for Lebanon, then to Ukraine and finally to Germany, Nour has learned 5 languages and attended 6 schools. Nour's priority recommendations for the international community are: (1) facilitate speedy family reunification, (2) recognize foreign diplomas, and (3) provide long-term solutions in host countries.



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"103 million lives, dreams, stories, passions - but these 103 million stories cannot end at the moment they leave their home country. They need to be integrated [...] not as refugees but [...] as citizens. And that is where local governments' and communities' responsibilities are."

### Spotlight session 1: Investing in the resilience of local governments and communities as first responders

Adriana Costero, the Latin America leader of the Tertiary Refugee Student Network, stressed the need for local action to effectively address forced displacement. A successful initiative of refugee integration in her adopted hometown of Monterrey, Mexico illustrated the mutual benefits of locally driven action.

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"Education for us refugees is a lifeline that can never wait."  
Zura Mustafa Abdallah

### Spotlight session 3: Supporting voluntary sustainable returns and (re)integration

After living in Uganda for more than 20 years, Zura Abdullah Mustafa now works as a WFP logistics assistant in her home country South Sudan. Zura credits her education through the DAFI scholarship programme with playing a key role in her decision to return and seek employment in her country of origin. Zura directed four appeals to the audience: (1) Provide access to quality higher education; (2) prioritize access to decent work as part of re-integration; (3) offer repatriation grants; and (4) address root causes to prevent future displacement.

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"Forced displacement is truly an emergency but the lack of inclusion and integration of refugees in the national system is also an emergency."  
Dr. Oneshore Murishi

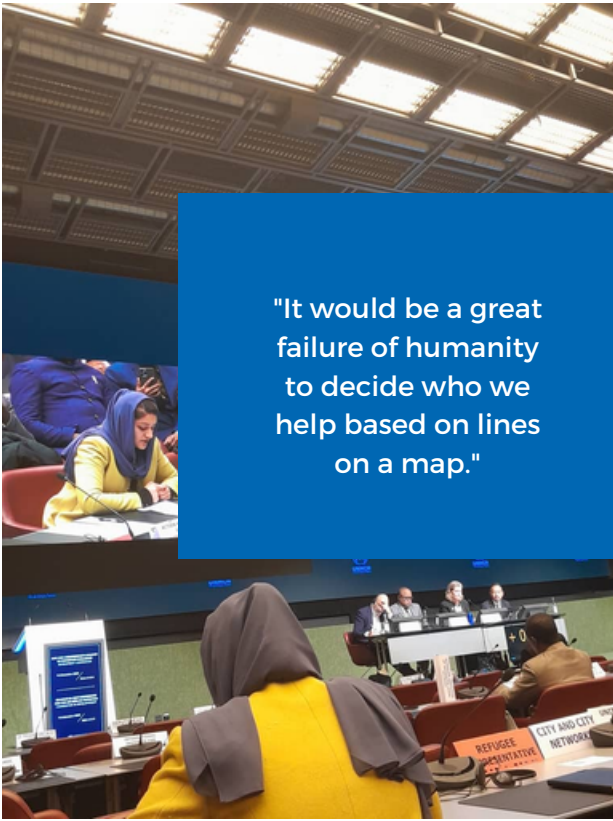
## Spotlight session 5: Promoting inclusion in forced displacement contexts

Emergency response must always go hand in hand with medium and long-term planning and creating conducive policy environments, in which refugees are, for instance, given the right to work and freedom of movement.

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## Special session on development cooperation to address internal displacement

"While refugees like myself are protected by international law if they seek safety in another country, IDPs must rely on their own government for protection from violence and persecution. [...] We need long-term, constructive, fundamental solutions which address the root causes, not just the symptoms. In emergency situations, yes, we need humanitarian aid but when continuously displaced people do not have access to jobs, do not have access to education, when societies are fractured and government services [...] are non-existent, the cycle of dependency, poverty and displacement will continue."



"It would be a great failure of humanity to decide who we help based on lines on a map."

# The student delegates



**ABDINASIR H. ABDILAH**  
DAAD Leadership  
for Africa Scholar



**ADHIEU ACHUIL DHIEU**  
Executive  
Director  
MonyQudow



**ADRIANA ELIZABETH COSTERO**  
TRSN Latin  
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Leader



**AISHA KHURAM**  
Former UN Youth  
Envoy, TRSN



**BAHATI MYNACI**  
Founder of  
Change Agents  
Advocacy



**BENJAMIN FAROUK ABDALLAH**  
DAFI scholar and  
medical student



**EHAB BADWI**  
Founder and Chief  
Executive Officer,  
Syrian Youth  
Assembly



**NOUR ALHOUDA KHASHOUF**  
Refugee Student  
Advocate, Syrian  
Youth Diaspora



**Dr. ONESPHORE MURISHI**  
DAFI alumni and  
senior doctor



**ZURA MUSTAFA ABDALLAH**  
DAFI alumna and  
WFP logistics  
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Click [here](#) for their full bios.

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