

Ben Stiller's new role, more about hope than humour, as he's named Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR

The United Nations refugee agency ([UNHCR](#)), announced on Monday that the actor, director, producer and philanthropist Ben Stiller, is to become its latest [Goodwill Ambassador](#), as he issued an appeal for action on behalf of those forced to flee their homes around the world.

"With over 68 million displaced people around the world today, there has never been a more [compelling reason](#) or greater urgency to show solidarity and support for refugees," said the Hollywood star, who is best known for high profile comedy and satirical blockbusters such as the Meet the Parents trilogy, and Zoolander.

In underscoring UNHCR's tireless work in helping those fleeing war, terror and persecution globally, Mr. Stiller expressed his enormous pride in taking on this latest role.

"I for one will do what I can as a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, to advocate for refugees and encourage others to join me," he said.

The announcement came as Mr. Stiller concluded a trip with UNHCR to Guatemala, where he met some of the people from northern Central America who have been forced from their homes because of violence.

In recent years a growing number of people across El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have fled extraordinary, unchecked violence at the hands of organized criminal groups – including murder, rape, abduction and forcible recruitment of children into gangs.

The majority of those parents who have endured forced separation at the border of the United States from their children in recent weeks, hail from these three countries, said UN human rights experts in June.

Mr. Stiller spent time in Guatemala meeting refugees including unaccompanied children and seeing how UNHCR, with the Government and its partners, is working to support and protect them.

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"Here in Guatemala, the families, including children, that I met experienced fear and violence back home that is beyond imagination. They are vulnerable and have suffered immensely," he observed, adding that "they need help."

Filippo Grandi, [UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#), commented: “Ben will be a great Goodwill Ambassador. I have witnessed personally his commitment to the world’s refugees and his extraordinary capacity to talk about the complicated issue of displacement in a manner that is clear, passionate and convincing.”

The role of Goodwill Ambassadors is to raise awareness, generate support and give a voice to those who have been forced to leave their homes.

UNHCR works with governments and partners on the ground in locations all over the world to support, protect and help refugees build better futures. UN agencies have coordinated a comprehensive regional response, including working across Guatemala.

Mr. Stiller has been supporting UNHCR since early 2016, having met with refugees in Germany and Jordan, and plays a key role in UNHCR projects, including the [#withrefugees](#) campaign, said the agency.

Most recently, he marked World Refugee Day in a film entitled “Homemade Chicken Shawarma, As Made By Ben Stiller and Ahmed Badr”.