

[How to stay in shape and step up support for refugees](#)

At a time of year when many resolve to get fit, the UN refugee agency, [UNHCR](#), has launched a campaign to raise awareness of the huge distances many are forced to cover to escape persecution, in search of a better life far from home.

The [1 Billion Miles to Safety](#) campaign calls on people around the world to collectively cover the approximate distance travelled by refugees every year, using fitness apps or the campaign website – www.stepwithrefugees.org – to log their contribution towards the global total.

UNHCR estimates that in 2016, Syrian refugees travelled more than 240 kilometres to reach Turkey, South Sudanese refugees travelled more than 640 kilometres to reach Kenya, and Rohingya refugees in Myanmar travelled approximately 80 kilometres to reach Bangladesh.

“Every day, we are inspired by the acts of kindness from people who are doing their very best to improve life for refugees: the activists, the communities hosting refugees, businesses, donors, volunteers” said UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements. “This campaign will encourage people to support refugees through something they are already doing – walking, cycling, running,”

Ms. Clements added that it is vital to be reminded of the real and dangerous journeys that refugees are forced to take, especially when there are many misconceptions routinely shared about them. As the Secretary-General [said](#), on the adoption of the UN’s [Global Compact for Migration](#) on December 10, 2018, “There are many falsehoods about the world’s migrants. But we must not succumb to fear or false narratives. We must move from myth to reality.”

The campaign [Website](#) contains several stories of those forced to flee their homes, such as [Opani](#), who covered 60 miles with her infant daughter to escape her village in South Sudan, which was threatened by war and violence, arriving at a UNHCR registration centre in Uganda 7 days later.

As an example of how you can show solidarity with refugees without straying far from home or enduring the life-threatening journeys they undertake, take a look at this [article](#) by UNHCR web editor Tim Gaynor, who trekked 128 miles across France on the Camino de Santiago.