

UNHCR Press Release - 9 October 2024 - Five trailblazing women win UNHCR's Nansen Refugee Awards

Five trailblazing women win UNHCR's Nansen Refugee Awards for their life-changing work

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, October 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Five trailblazing women – a nun, an activist, a social entrepreneur, a volunteer aid worker, and an advocate for ending statelessness – will be honoured as winners of the 2024 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

This year's global laureate, Sister Rosita Milesi, is a Brazilian nun, lawyer, social worker and movement builder who has championed the rights and dignity of people on the move for nearly 40 years. The four others have been named regional winners.

"All too often, women face heightened risks of discrimination and violence, especially when forced to flee," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. "But these five winners show how women are also playing a critical role in the humanitarian response and in finding solutions." Grandi praised their dedication to driving action in their own communities, building grassroots support, and even shaping national policies.

Sister Rosita has personally assisted thousands of people on the move – helping them access legal documentation, shelter, food, health care, language training and access to the labour market in Brazil. As a lawyer, she has also been instrumental in shaping public policy. Her work on Brazil's 1997 refugee law, for example, helped to amplify refugee rights in line with the 1984 Cartagena Refugee Declaration, ensure that it does more to protect, include and empower people forced to flee and aligns with international standards.

"I decided to dedicate myself to migrants and refugees. I'm inspired by the growing need to help, to welcome, and to integrate refugees," said Sister Rosita, 79. "I'm not afraid to act, even if we don't achieve everything we want to. If I take something on, I will turn the world upside down to make it happen," she added.

The four regional winners to be honoured this year are:

- Maimouna Ba (Africa), an activist from Burkina Faso who helped more than 100 displaced children return to the classroom and put over 400 displaced women on a path to financial

independence.

- Jin Davod (Europe), a social entrepreneur who drew on her own experience as a Syrian refugee to build an online platform that has connected thousands of trauma survivors with licensed therapists providing free mental health support.
- Nada Fadol (Middle East & North Africa), a Sudanese refugee who has mobilized essential aid for hundreds of refugee families fleeing to Egypt in search of safety.
- Deepti Gurung (Asia-Pacific), who campaigned to reform Nepal's citizenship laws after learning that her two daughters had become stateless – opening a path to citizenship for them and thousands more in similar straits.

In addition, the people of Moldova will receive honourable mention for acting as a beacon of humanity. Setting aside their own economic challenges, they rapidly transformed their schools, community spaces and homes into sanctuaries for more than one million people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Geneva from 7.30 p.m. CEST on 14 October. Hosted by South African actress Nomzamo Mbatha, the event will showcase the winners' work and feature performances by Goodwill Ambassador Kat Graham, Moldovan soprano Valentina Nafornta and singer/songwriter Emeli Sandé (MBE). It will also be livestreamed.

The awards are made possible through support from the Governments of Norway and Switzerland, IKEA Foundation, and the City and Canton of Geneva. They are named after the Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplomat and humanitarian [Fridtjof Nansen](#).

The Nansen ceremony is open to journalists registered with the Palais des Nations in Geneva. A live feed will be available to broadcasters. For assistance, please contact nansen@unhcr.org.

For broadcasters, news organizations and other media professionals: [link to the media page](#) with b-roll, multimedia content and short bios of the winners.

[This Press Release is available here](#)

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