



Press Release

WORLD REFUGEE DAY: PRESIDENT TEODORO OBIANG NGUEMA MBASONGO, VISITS TSORE REFUGEE CAMP IN ASOSA H.E. AND DONATES USD 50,000 TOWARDS THE BUILDING OF A SCHOOL FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN



Addis Ababa, June, 18 2019: The Champion of the African Union(AU) theme of the year, H.E.Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasongo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea visited Tsore Refugee Camp, Asosa, Benishangul - Gumuz region in the Western part of Ethiopia as part of the activities lined-up visibility to forced to commemorate with with refugees, the 50th Anniversary of the adoption of the 1969 OAU Convention on Refugees.



In his remarks, H.E. Mbasongo, indicated that the visit to the camp was to express the solidarity and full support of the AU towards refugees in this camp as well as all refugees around the world. "This activity that we carry on behalf of the AU marks the sensitivity and capital importance that we attach to the humanitarian situation in Africa particularly in the context of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa, the day is set aside to create awareness in all societies

about the situation of millions of people in Africa who are refugees and needs the aid of the continent" he noted.

He said that issue of refugees must not be taken lightly but must be tackled with all efforts and treated as a priority in on the African continent. "Some one does not become a refugee voluntarily, most of the people living in this camp have been forced to flee wars, hunger, dangers of death and of major natural resources they lack with the intention of achieving a better life". H.E. Mbasongo, used the occasion to thank the AU for appointing him as the Champion for the AU theme of the year during 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Addis Ababa on 10 and 11 February 2019 when they adopted the decision and declared 2019 as *"the Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa."*

The World Refugee Day is commemorated on 20th June of every year. Since 1974, 20th June used to be commemorated as Africa Refugee Day, when the then Organization of



African Unity (OAU), the predecessor of the African Union, took the lead to draw the public's attention, in celebrating the courage and resilience of refugees, asylum seekers, and the internally displaced in Africa who have left their homes due to war, conflict and persecution.

Today the numbers of forcibly displaced persons has reached a high level since world war II with more than 65 million forcibly displaced, of which more than 20 million are refugees. Africa hosts two thirds of this figure. The majority of the displaced populations are women and children that are experiencing a greater risk of violence, exploitation and human trafficking. In particular, many children carry the additional burden of separation from their families, abuse, neglect and forced military recruitment and may also have witnessed or experienced violent acts.

In her speech, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma, on behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission thanked the government and the people of Ethiopia for the open door policy towards refugees, which has continued to welcome displaced persons from Sudan, South Sudan Eritrea, Kenya and Yemen inspite of funding shortfalls. She also extended special gratitude to the local community for hosting refugees in Asosa region despite of their own limited resources.

The Commissioner also thanked the UNHCR and other partners involved in assisting refugees in Ethiopia and other parts of the world, for their continued commitment and support in alleviating the suffering of the refugees and internally displaced persons and encouraged them to continue to do so. She further assured the world of the commitments of Member States in supporting refugees, and encouraged all stakeholders to continue seeking for durable solutions to the plight of refugees as stipulated in the Common African Position.

She also thanked the Champion for his support to the refugees on the continent. “we are proud to have you as a champion for the theme of the year 2019 and we are also aware of the fact that our various governments are working assiduously on plans which will surely provide durable solutions to forced displacements we face in Africa”.

In conclusion H.E. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasongo announced a donation of USD 50,000 to contribute towards the building of a school in the camp for refugee children in the Camp with the aim of keeping children in school. He highlighted that education is the only way of acquiring knowledge and skills that will be useful to the refugees and for their future.

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