



World Refugee Day June 20, 2026

WHEREAS, World Refugee Day is an annual commemoration adopted by the United Nations to honor the courage, resilience, and contributions of refugees and to raise awareness of their rights, needs, and dreams; and

WHEREAS, forced displacement remains one of the great moral and humanitarian challenges of our time, with an estimated 117.3 million people worldwide forcibly displaced as of mid-2025 due to persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations; and

WHEREAS, refugees are people who have fled their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, and who cannot safely return home; and

WHEREAS, refugee resettlement is a life-saving protection pathway for people who cannot return home and cannot safely remain in the country to which they first fled, and those admitted to the United States have historically undergone extensive security vetting, medical screening, and legal review; and

WHEREAS, communities across the United States are marking World Refugee Day at a time of heightened fear and uncertainty for many immigrant and refugee families, as federal refugee admissions have been suspended, refugee processing has been disrupted, humanitarian parole pathways have been terminated or narrowed, Temporary Protected Status has been revoked or placed at risk for multiple populations, and federal immigration enforcement has intensified; and

WHEREAS, in moments such as these, local communities have a special responsibility to uphold the values of dignity, due process, neighborliness, and welcome, and to reject fear, scapegoating, and dehumanization of people seeking safety; and

WHEREAS, the City of Harrisonburg is a welcoming community that celebrates the growing diversity of its residents and recognizes that refugees, immigrants, and other newcomers strengthen the cultural, civic, and economic life of our city; and

WHEREAS, Harrisonburg is home to refugees and immigrants from many parts of the world, including families who have rebuilt their lives here after fleeing war, persecution, and instability, and whose presence continues to enrich our schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, houses of worship, and civic life; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the City of Harrisonburg aspire to live up to our highest values of acceptance, equality, and shared humanity by treating newcomers with decency and respect and by helping build a community where all people can live in safety and hope.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MAYOR DEANNA R. REED, CITY OF HARRISONBURG, do hereby proclaim June 20, 2026, as World Refugee Day, and I encourage all residents to recognize the strength and contributions of refugees, to stand in solidarity with families seeking safety and belonging, and to renew our commitment to being a welcoming city for all.

GIVEN under my hand this 9 day of June, 2026.

BY: Deanna R. Reed
Deanna R. Reed, Mayor

ATTEST: Pamela Ulmer
Pamela Ulmer, City Clerk