



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Tokyo, June 10 2008

Refugee Film Festival (RFF)
20-27 June 2008

Tokyo, June (UNHCR) – The UNHCR Office in Japan and Japan for UNHCR announce the launch of the **Third Annual Refugee Film Festival** beginning on World Refugee Day, **June 20th**, in Tokyo. **“Refugees – the human side”** is the theme of both World Refugee Day and the festival.

Following the success of the second festival last year, which received more than 7000 visitors, the Refugee Film Festival 2008 showcases an expanded line-up of over forty award-winning documentaries, features, and short films.

This year’s festival, playing between **TICAD and the G8 Summit**, will focus on **Africa and the ongoing conflict in Iraq**. The festival opens with the Academy Award nominated film **War/Dance**, portraying the lives of displaced children in a Ugandan refugee camp as they energetically prepare for the national music competition. Other internationally acclaimed documentaries, fiction films and a diverse selection of short films with stories of resilience and inspiration of people forced to leave their homes due to war and persecution will be presented. Among **several Japan premieres** is **Heart of Fire**, a film featured at the Berlin Film Festival whose cast members are themselves Eritrean refugees. A special retrospective of three films by French – Algerian filmmaker **Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche** will include the Japan premiere of **Dernier Maquis**, selected this year for Cannes’ prestigious Directors’ Fortnight.

Screenings will be free of charge at **five venues**: L’Institut Franco-Japonais de Tokyo, Goethe-Institut Japan, Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Tokyo, Institute Cervantes de Tokio, and NHK Fureai Hall. They will be followed by Q&A sessions. **Several directors from overseas and Japanese director of Nakba, Ryuichi Hirokawa, will be available for interviews with the media.**

The Refugee Film Festival is part of UNHCR’s year-round commitment to raising awareness for the plight of the world’s **33 million refugees**. It gives voice to seldom-heard stories of hope, despair, and courage, and aims to inspire the involvement of the general public in making a difference. **Sadako Ogata**, the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, has expressed her support by stating: *“The Refugee Film Festival screens films which portray refugees, not as people of misery, but as human beings with rights and dignity. I hope these films will deepen our understanding of people who come to Japan to seek asylum and protection.”*

RFF films will be travelling to Kyoto in June and Nagoya in September, and are also being shown in Hong Kong, Bahrain, Australia, and France.

For further information on the UNHCR and RFF, please contact:
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For a complete list of films, screening times, and special events, please visit the official Refugee Film Festival website, www.refugeefilm.org.

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UNHCR activities in protecting and assisting refugees are supported by the generous support and voluntary contributions from various organizations and individuals. To make a donation, please contact Japan Association for UNHCR, the national association in support of UNHCR.

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