



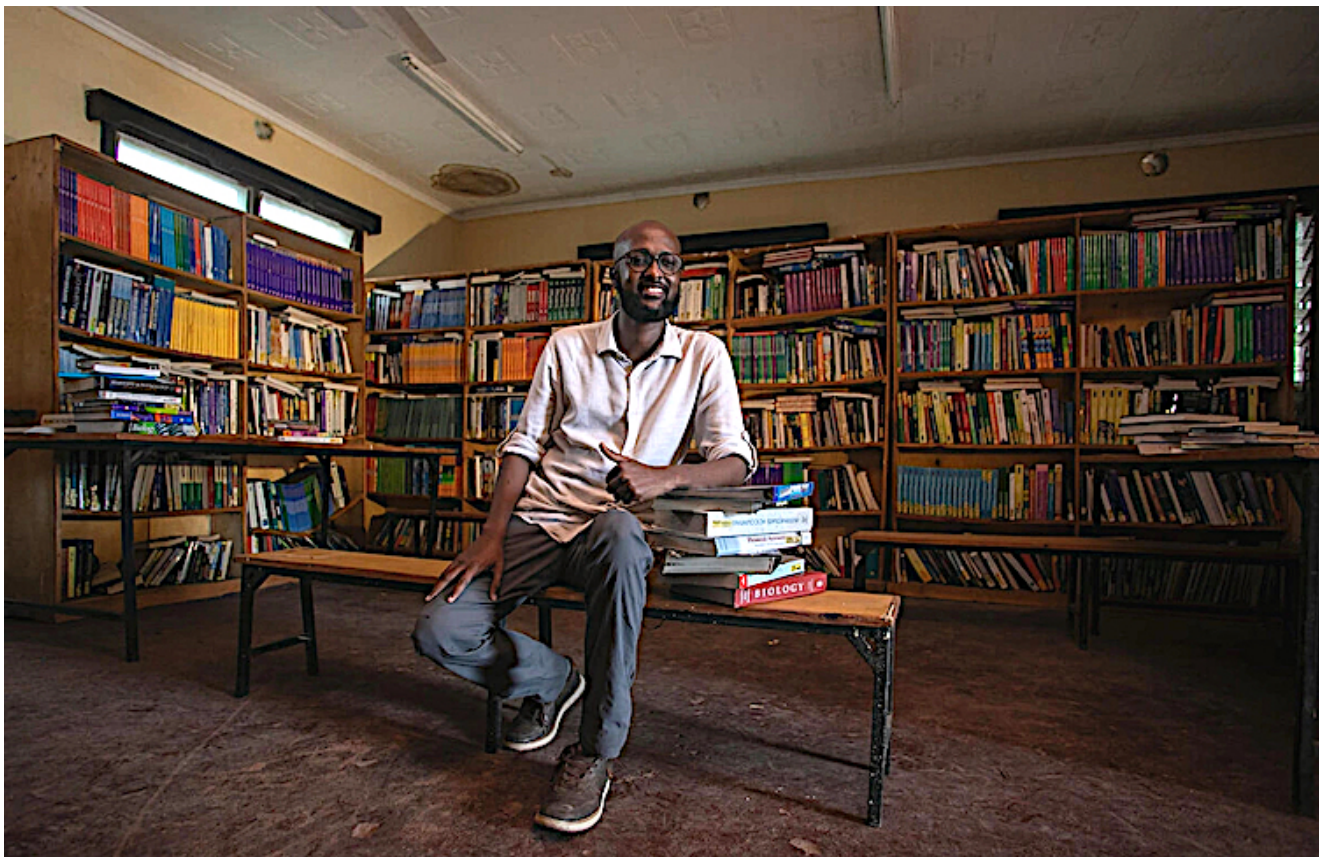
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Goal 4



Somali Youth Educator Bags Major UN Refugee Award

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By Lisa Vives, Global Information Network

NEW YORK | 29 November 2023 (IDN) — Abdullahi Mire, a former child refugee from Somalia, is this year's United Nations Nansen Refugee Award winner.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recognized the 36-year-old Mire for providing 100,000 books to Somali refugees in camps in Kenya.

Filippo Grandi is the president of the UNHCR. He said Mire is living proof that “transformative ideas” can emerge from displaced communities.

“He has shown great resourcefulness and tenacity in strengthening the quality of refugee education,” Grandi said.

Mire was born in southern Somalia in 1987. In 1991, his family fled the country because of Somalia's civil war.

“I fled from Qoryooley in the Lower Shabelle region in 1991 with my mother and grew up and lived in the Dadaab refugee camps for 23 years,” Mire told the VOA news agency.

Today, the Dadaab complex in northeastern Kenya has a population of more than 240,000 refugees, most from Somalia. Over half of the camp's population are children.

Mire finished elementary and secondary schooling while living in the camp. He went on to earn a college degree in public relations and journalism from Kenya's Kenyatta University. He said his mother gave him help and support to become, in his words, “a voice for my vulnerable population.”

Mire got a job with the United Nations International Organization for Migration in Somalia. He worked in Mogadishu and the southern cities of Baidoa and Kismayo.

He said his childhood in Dadaab and his professional experience taught him the importance of his education. So, he dedicated his professional life to helping his fellow refugees.



The 2023 Nansen Refugee Award winner, Abdullahi Mire, distributes books to students at Hagadera secondary school in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp on 25 October 2023. © UNHCR/Anthony Karumba

In early 2018, he started an organization called Refugee Youth Education Hub. The organization centers on refugee education and youth development.

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After a brief spell living in Norway, he returned to Dadaab to help. "I had a yearning to serve my community that drew me back to the camp," he said.

A refugee woman studying medicine in Dadaab inspired him to collect books for refugee camps. "She told me that 20 girls normally shared one biology book. That inspired me to use social media for a book collection and donation campaign till we reached 100,000 books."

The award is named for the Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplomat and humanitarian, Fridtjof Nansen. [IDN-
InDepthNews]

Photo: The 2023 Nansen Refugee Award winner Abdullahi Mire, 36, in one of the libraries he founded in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp. © UNHCR/Anthony Karumba

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