

# 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol to the Convention

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention.

## **A Personal Appeal from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees:**

Refugees are among the most vulnerable people in the world. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol help protect them. They clarify the rights of refugees and the obligations of the 148 States that are party to one or both of these instruments. Universal accession to the Refugee Convention is a valid and achievable goal. In this anniversary year of the Convention, I appeal to all non-signatory States to accede to it and pledge the full support of my Office to governments to help implement its provisions.

António Guterres  
UN High Commissioner for Refugees  
September 2011

In July 2001, UNHCR published a special edition of its [Refugees Magazine dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of the Convention](#). It discussed: **“Why is the Convention important?”**

“It was the first truly international agreement covering the most fundamental aspects of a refugee’s life. It spelled out a set of basic human rights which should be at least equivalent to freedoms enjoyed by foreign nationals living legally in a given country and in many cases those of citizens of that state. It recognized the international scope of refugee crises and the necessity of international cooperation, including burden-sharing among states, in tackling the problem.

## **Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 14:**

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.