

# Refugee Glossary

**Asylum Seeker**: A person trying to be recognized as a refugee or to establish a claim for protection.

**Child**: Every human being below the age of 18 years unless, majority is attained earlier.

**Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**: The key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of States; adopted in 1951.

**Economic Migrant**: A person who chose to leave their home due to lack of economic opportunity in order to improve his/her life, and can usually return home.

**Forcibly Displaced Persons**: The umbrella category for anyone forced to flee their home due to war, persecution or terror. Includes refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, stateless persons, and returnees.

**Immigration Detention Center**: Facility where migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, are detained while waiting for their immigration status to be processed.

**Internally Displaced Person (IDP)**: A person who has not crossed an international border to find sanctuary but has remained inside his/her home country. IDPs legally remain under the protection of their own government – even though that government might be the cause of their flight.

**Migrant**: Broad term for a person who moves to a foreign country for a certain length of time, for a variety of reasons, in order to improve their lives. They are fundamentally different from refugees and are treated very differently under international law.

**Mixed Migration**: Involves migrants and refugees, moving between locations. They generally take place without proper travel documentation and are often facilitated by smugglers or traffickers.

**Orphan**: A child who has lost one or both parents.

**Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees**: Document that removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; adopted in 1967.

**Refugee**: A person with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion who is outside his/her country of nationality and is unable or unwilling, because of that fear, to return.

**Returnee**: Former refugee who returns to his/her own country or region of origin.

**Separated Child**: A child outside his/her country of origin and separated from both parents or his/her previous legal/customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. This may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

**Statelessness**: People that do not have a recognized nationality and do not belong to any country. Their lack of identification can exclude them from access to important government services, including health care, education or employment.

**The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**: The agency mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. It was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly.

**Unaccompanied Child**: A child separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.