

Upholding Not Undermining International Law

Civil Society Open Letter to States (September 2025)

The 267 faith-based, non-governmental, and other civil society organizations listed below call on UN Member States to uphold, preserve, strengthen, and celebrate international refugee, human rights, and humanitarian treaties and reject efforts to [undo](#) or undermine legal norms.

In recognition of the inalienable human dignity of each person, States built a rules-based system to maintain peace and security and to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. Multilateral refugee, humanitarian, and human rights treaties are central to the objectives enshrined in the UN charter, and essential to preventing and deterring conduct that harms people and threatens global stability and peace. Adherence to treaties has saved lives, upheld human dignity, and protected millions of people from persecution, torture and other human rights abuses.

Human rights treaties play a vital role in helping people live safely and protected where they are, reducing the conditions that lead to forced migration. The Refugee Convention, its Protocol and other agreements provide a foundation for states to host refugees and provide critical protection, thereby reducing onward displacement. Indeed, the substantial majority—over two-thirds—of refugees are already [hosted](#) in neighboring states and nearly three-fourths are hosted in low- and middle-income states.

Treaties and norms that protect people from persecution and other human rights abuses are more necessary than ever. Many of us have witnessed, day in and day out, how international treaties and law save lives and protect people from return to persecution, torture, and other serious human rights abuses. Indeed, the Refugee Convention and its Protocol have protected millions of people from persecution. The sad reality is that today's global crises and mass displacements often stem from, or are exacerbated by, the failure to adhere to international human rights, refugee and humanitarian conventions and law.

We call on States to:

- Sign and/or deposit instruments of ratification or accession to human rights, refugee, and humanitarian treaties, and encourage other states to do so – including by welcoming those that do so during the UNGA Treaty Event and by marking the upcoming 75th Anniversary of the Refugee Convention through acceding to the Refugee Convention and Protocol and encouraging other states to do so.
- Celebrate and affirm support for such treaties, and explain the ways they benefit people and states.
- Share steps taken to fulfill and honor commitments under treaties – such as enactment of implementing legislation, celebrating treaty commitments, measures taken in response to treaty body recommendations or UPR, or creating a national human rights institution. With respect to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, share steps taken to

strengthen asylum systems, support rights protection capacities, or increase cooperation through expanded resettlement and/or aid that helps enable other countries to host large numbers of refugees.

- Should there be any denunciations, withdrawals, or attempts to reject, “reform,” and/or replace such treaties with frameworks that deny people protection from persecution and human rights abuses, we call on states to express strong disagreement, reiterate support for such treaties, explain their benefits to human lives, peace, and stability, emphasize the negative impacts of actions that undermine such treaties, and urge reversal of such efforts.

Many people now safely living in countries around the world are the children and grandchildren of people who fled persecution and found refuge in other countries. Conversely, before states came together to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights treaties and the Refugee Convention and Protocol, millions were abandoned to suffer horrific fates. Too many continue to suffer due to the failures to uphold human rights and humanitarian norms.

At this critical crossroads, we call on states to work together and with civil society to strengthen—and reject efforts to undermine—the treaties and norms that protect people from persecution and other human rights abuses.

Signed:

1. 11.11.11
2. Acacia Center for Justice
3. ACT Alliance
4. Act for Peace
5. Advocate Sunil Kumar Manchanda
6. Al Otro Lado
7. Alianza Americas
8. Alliance San Diego
9. American Civil Liberties Union
10. Amnesty International
11. Amnesty International Australia
12. Amormigrant.org
13. ANAR

14. Apatride Network
15. Apoyo a Migrantes Venezolanos, A.C.
16. Arrupe Refugee Center
17. Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network [APRRN]
18. Asociación de Nicaragüenses en México
19. Asociación Pop No'j (Guatemala)
20. ASOCIACIÓN PRO DERECHOS HUMANOS DE ESPAÑA
21. Association for Legal Intervention (Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej), Poland
22. AsyLex
23. Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
24. Australia Western Sahara Association
25. AVAN Immigrant Services
26. AVSI Foundation ETS
27. Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
28. Bondeko Refugee Livelihoods Center
29. Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR)
30. Boston University International Human Rights Clinic
31. Burke PLLC
32. CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development)
33. Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers
34. Canadian Council for Refugees
35. Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)
36. Capital Rainbow Refuge
37. Caritas Internationalis
38. Casa Luz da Colina

39. CCI Ottawa
40. CEDAW Rising
41. Center for Constitutional Rights
42. Center for Engagement and Advocacy in the Americas
43. Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
44. Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law
45. Center for Legal Aid Voice in Bulgaria
46. Center for Victims of Torture
47. Center on Gender and Extreme Sentencing
48. Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre)
49. Centre for Research and Social Development IDEAS
50. Centretown Community Health Centre
51. Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad-Dejusticia (Colombia)
52. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
53. Centro para la Observación Migratoria y el Desarrollo Social en el Caribe (OBMICA)
54. Church World Service
55. Climate Refugees
56. Climate Rights International
57. Coalición por Venezuela
58. Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement, CVPD
59. Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
60. Coalition for the Rights of Refugees and Stateless Persons (CRSP)
61. CODHES COLOMBIA
62. Colegio de Médicos y Cirujanos de Puerto Rico
63. Comité dominicano de derechos humanos

64. Community for Children, Org
65. Community Legal Services of Ottawa (CLSO) | Services juridiques communautaires d'Ottawa (SJCO)
66. COMMUNITY MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE
67. Community World Service Asia
68. Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma
69. Conselho Indigenista Missionário CIMI
70. COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale
71. Council for Global Equality
72. Danish Refugee Council
73. Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network
74. Desiree Alliance
75. Disability Justice Network of British Columbia (DJNBC)
76. Disability Justice Network of Ontario
77. DISABILITY PEOPLES FORUM UGANDA
78. Drylands Learning And Capacity Building Initiative- DLCI
79. Dutch Council for Refugees
80. East African Centre for Forced Migration and Displacement
81. East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
82. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
83. Empower Youth Trust
84. Encuentros Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes
85. Equality Now
86. European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
87. Fe y Alegría Venezuela
88. Fe y Justicia

89. Feminist Task Force
90. Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
91. Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma
92. Foundation for the promotion of rights
93. Franciscans International
94. Francophonie Canadienne Plurielle (FRAP)
95. Freedom Network USA
96. Fundación Crea Tu Espacio
97. Fundación Refugiados Unidos
98. Gargaar Relief and Development Organization (GREDO)
99. Global Birthing Home Foundation
100. Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights
101. Global Detention Project
102. Global Justice Center
103. Global Justice Clinic, Western New England University School of Law
104. Global Refuge
105. Global Strategic Litigation Council
106. Groupe d'Appui au Développement et à la Démocratie (GRADE)
107. Grupo Articulador de Organizaciones Lideradas por Personas Refugiadas y Desplazadas Forzadas en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (GARLOS)
108. Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA
109. Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
110. Healing Bridges
111. Help Himalayan Youth Foundation Inc
112. HelpAge International
113. Hemispheric Network for Haitian Migrants' Rights (Rezo Emisferik pou Dwa Migran Ayisyen)

114. HIAS
115. Higgins Brothers Surgicenter for Hope
116. Ho'opae Pono Peace Project
117. HOST International Aotearoa New Zealand
118. House of Welcome
119. Human Rights Cities Alliance
120. Human Rights House Foundation
121. ILGA World
122. Immigrant Defenders Law Center
123. Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
124. Independent Diplomat
125. Insan Association- Defending Human Rights
126. Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti
127. Institute for the Sustainable Development of Lenca Women in Honduras (IDESMULH)
128. Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI)
129. Instituto Brasileiro de Direitos Humanos
130. International Association for Human Rights Advocacy in Geneva (IAHRAG)
131. International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
132. International Commission of Jurists
133. International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
134. International Detention Coalition IDC
135. International Mayan League
136. International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
137. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
138. International Service for Human Rights

139. Ipas US
140. Islamic Relief Kenya Office
141. Jesuit Refugee Service
142. Jesuit Social Center (Tokyo)
143. Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice
144. JFCS East Bay
145. Journey Home Community Association
146. Just Detention International
147. Justice for Refugees SA
148. Justice in Motion
149. JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF)
150. Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
151. Kilómetro 0
152. Kinbrace Community Society
153. La Ruta del Clima
154. Last Mile4D
155. Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
156. Latin America/Caribbean Committee - Loretto Community
157. Lawyers for Good Government
158. Le Centre de Réfugiés / The Refugee Centre
159. Lutheran World Federation
160. MADRE
161. Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
162. Matthew House Ottawa
163. Mazwi Foundation

164. Migrant Working Group (MWG)
165. Migration Institute of Australia
166. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI)
167. Mosaic Multicultural Connections
168. MPower Change Action Fund
169. National Refugee-led Advisory and Advocacy Group Australia
170. Nationality For All (NFA)
171. New Women Connectors
172. Newcomer Legal Clinic - Lakehead University
173. Norwegian Refugee Council
174. Oasis Legal Services
175. OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
176. Open Doors
177. Overseas Services to Survivors of Torture and Trauma
178. Oxfam
179. Pacific Migration Partners
180. PacificwinPacific
181. Partners In Health
182. Pax Christi International
183. Pax Christi USA
184. People Serving People Foundation
185. Perkumpulan Suaka Untuk Perlindungan Hak Pengungsi (SUAKA)
186. Personal
187. Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance
188. Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants - PICUM

189. Portland Central America Solidarity Committee
190. Programa Casa Refugiados
191. Promotoras de Derechos en la Migración
192. Puntland Minority Women Development Organization
193. Quaker United Nations Office
194. Quixote Center
195. Rainbow Railroad
196. Rainbow Refugee Society
197. Red Jesuita con Migrantes Latinoamerica y el Caribe (RJM LAC)
198. Refugee 613
199. Refugee Action
200. Refugee Action Campaign Canberra
201. Refugee Advocacy Lab
202. Refugee Communities Advocacy Network NSW
203. Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc
204. Refugee Congress
205. Refugee Consortium of Kenya
206. Refugee Council of Australia
207. Refugee Council USA
208. Refugee Legal
209. Refugee Solidarity Network
210. Refugees as Survivors NZ
211. Refugees in Libya
212. Refugees Platform In Egypt-RPE
213. Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT)

- 214. RefugePoint
- 215. Resilient40
- 216. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
- 217. Rohingya Youth Union-RYU
- 218. Rohingya Youths Support Network (RYSN)
- 219. Rose Lokissim Association
- 220. Rural Australians for Refugees
- 221. Rural Australians for Refugees Southern Highlands
- 222. Safe Passage International
- 223. SAISIA - Saskatchewan Association of Immigrants Settlement and Integration Agencies
- 224. Same Skies
- 225. Santa Clara Law - International Human Rights Clinic
- 226. Save the Children International
- 227. SCALES Community Legal Centre
- 228. Secours Islamique France (SIF)
- 229. Secretariat of the Civil Society Action Committee
- 230. Settlement Services International (SSI)
- 231. Sin Fronteras IAP
- 232. Social Change Institute
- 233. Society of Jesus in Belize
- 234. Somali Diaspora in Deutschland (SOMDID) e.V.
- 235. South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
- 236. STARTTS
- 237. Stichting Vluchteling
- 238. Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service

- 239. Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- 240. Synergies Migrations
- 241. Synergy for Justice
- 242. Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes
- 243. Tahirih Justice Center
- 244. Thailand Migration Reform Consortium (TMR)
- 245. The Alliance for Diplomacy and Justice
- 246. The Global Centre for Social Justice and Advocacy Leadership
- 247. The GOOD Group
- 248. The Legal Resources Centre
- 249. The Tasmania Opportunity
- 250. The Workers Circle
- 251. U.S. Campaign for Burma
- 252. U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- 253. Uganda Eyenkya Development Project Group
- 254. União Social dos Imigrantes Haitianos (USIH)
- 255. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)
- 256. US Citizen
- 257. VECINA
- 258. VOICE
- 259. Voices in Dialogue
- 260. Washington Brazil Office
- 261. Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
- 262. Western States Center
- 263. Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

- 264. Women in Migration Network (WIMN)
- 265. Women's All Points Bulletin WAPB
- 266. Women's Link Worldwide
- 267. Women's National Housing and Homelessness Network
- 268. Women's Refugee Commission
- 269. World's Youth for Climate Justice
- 270. Zambian Civil Liberties Union (ZCLU)
- 271. Zamzam Foundation