



***United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees***

**Committee Mandate**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1950 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly with a specific three-year mandate to address the significant number of displaced persons after World War II.<sup>1</sup> The UN General Assembly extended the mandate of UNHCR every five years until 2003, when the organization was established as a permanent body of the UN.<sup>2</sup> In Article 1.1 of the Statute of the Office of the UNHCR, this organization is mandated to “assume the function of providing international protection... to refugees... and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments and... private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities.”<sup>3</sup>

UNHCR has expanded its work to 136 countries, providing humanitarian care, long-term assistance, and capacity-building strategies for transitional, host, and home Member States.<sup>4</sup> Over 32 million refugees currently fall under the protection of UNHCR’s mandate, along with 72.1 million internally displaced persons, 8 million asylum seekers, and 5.8 million others in need of international protection.<sup>5</sup> The main documents that drive UNHCR’s work include the 1951 Refugee Convention Related to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 protocol, the 2017 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the Global Compact for Refugees, and the UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026.

*Membership and Reporting*

The UNHCR reports directly to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).<sup>6</sup> The Executive Committee (ExCom) meets annually in Geneva to “review and approve the agency’s programmes and budget, advise on international protection and discuss a range of other issues with UNHCR and intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.”<sup>7</sup> Members of this committee are elected by ECOSOC and take geographical representation into account.<sup>8</sup> Their funding comes primarily from Member States, corporations, intergovernmental organizations, foundations and other generous donors who seek to support the UNHCR’s mission.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/media/implementing-actions-proposed-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees-strengthen-capacity>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/media/statute-office-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/where-we-work>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/governance-and-oversight>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/governance-and-oversight/executive-committee>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/our-partners>

