

## Upholding Not Undermining International Law

### Civil Society Open Letter to States (December 2025, reissued)

The 301 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 75<sup>th</sup> 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:

11.11.11

Acacia Center for Justice

ACT Alliance

Act for Peace

Advocate Sunil Kumar Manchanda

Al Otro Lado

Alianza Americas

Alliance San Diego

Afrikajom Center

Africa Migration Report Poetry Anthology Series

ALO: Afghanistan LGBTIQ+ Organisation

American Civil Liberties Union

Amnesty International

Amnesty Turku Local Group

Amormigrant.org

ANAR

Angels Refugee Support Foundation (ARSF)

Apatride Network

Apoyo a Migrantes Venezolanos, A.C.

Arrupe Refugee Center

Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network [APRRN]

Asociación de Nicaragüenses en México

Asociación Pop No'j (Guatemala)

ASOCIACIÓN PRO DERECHOS HUMANOS DE ESPAÑA  
Association for Legal Intervention (Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej), Poland  
AsyLex  
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre  
Australia Western Sahara Association  
AVAN Immigrant Services  
AVSI Foundation ETS  
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust  
Bondeko Refugee Livelihoods Center  
Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR)  
Border Criminologies  
Boston University International Human Rights Clinic  
Burke PLLC  
CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development)  
Calais Food Collective  
Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers  
Canadian Council for Refugees  
Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)  
Capital Rainbow Refuge  
Caritas Internationalis  
Casa Luz da Colina  
CCI Ottawa  
CAREF - Comisión Argentina para Personas Refugiadas y Migrantes  
CEDAW Rising  
CEICOS  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for Engagement and Advocacy in the Americas  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law  
Center for Legal Aid Voice in Bulgaria  
Center for Victims of Torture  
Center on Gender and Extreme Sentencing  
Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre)  
Centre for Research and Social Development IDEAS  
Centretown Community Health Centre  
Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad-Dejusticia (Colombia)  
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)  
Centro para la Observación Migratoria y el Desarrollo Social en el Caribe (OBMICA)  
Centre for Peace Studies, Croatia  
Child Rights Law Center, LLC  
Church World Service  
Climate Refugees  
Climate Rights & Justice International Inc  
Climate Rights International

Clínica Jurídica Alaíde Foppa para Personas Refugiadas de la Universidad Iberoamericana  
Ciudad de México  
Coalición por Venezuela  
Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement, CVPD  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Coalition for the Rights of Refugees and Stateless Persons (CRSP)  
CODHES COLOMBIA  
Colegio de Médicos y Cirujanos de Puerto Rico  
Comite dominicano de derechos humanos  
Comissão Episcopal para Migrantes, Refugiados e Deslocados (CEMIRDE)  
Community for Children, Org  
Community Legal Services of Ottawa (CLSO) | Services juridiques communautaires d'Ottawa (SJCO)  
COMMUNITY MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE  
Community World Service Asia  
Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma  
Conselho Indigenista Missionário CIMI  
COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale  
Corporación Humanas Chile - Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género  
Council for Global Equality  
Danish Refugee Council  
Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network  
Desiree Alliance  
Disability Justice Network of British Columbia (DJNBC)  
Disability Justice Network of Ontario  
DISABILITY PEOPLES FORUM UGANDA  
Drylands Learning And Capacity Building Initiative- DLCI  
Dutch Council for Refugees  
East African Centre for Forced Migration and Displacement  
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant  
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)  
Empower Youth Trust  
Encuentros Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes  
Equality Now  
European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)  
Fe y Alegría Venezuela  
Fe y Justicia  
Feminist Task Force  
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project  
Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma  
Foundation for the promotion of rights  
Franciscans International  
Francophonie Canadienne Plurielle (FRAP)  
Freedom Network USA

Fundación Alfredo Molano Bravo  
Fundación Crea Tu Espacio  
Fundación Refugiados Unidos  
Gargaar Relief and Development Organization (GREDO)  
Global Birthing Home Foundation  
Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights  
Global Detention Project  
Global Justice Center  
Global Justice Clinic, Western New England University School of Law  
Global Refuge  
Global Strategic Litigation Council  
Groupe d'Appui au Développement et à la Démocratie (GRADE)  
Grupo Articulador de Organizaciones Lideradas por Personas Refugiadas y Desplazadas Forzadas en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (GARLOS)  
Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA  
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights  
Healing Bridges  
Help Himalayan Youth Foundation Inc  
HelpAge International  
Hemispheric Network for Haitian Migrants' Rights (Rezo Emisferik pou Dwa Migran Ayisyen)  
HIAS  
Higgins Brothers Surgicenter for Hope  
Ho'opae Pono Peace Project  
House of Welcome  
Human Rights Cities Alliance  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights House Foundation  
ILGA World  
Immigrant Defenders Law Center  
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project  
Independent Diplomat  
Insan Association- Defending Human Rights  
Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti  
Institute for the Sustainable Development of Lenca Women in Honduras (IDESMULH)  
Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI)  
Instituto Brasileiro de Direitos Humanos  
Inter-Free  
International Association for Human Rights Advocacy in Geneva (IAHRAG)  
International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)  
International Commission of Jurists  
International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)  
International Detention Coalition IDC  
International Mayan League  
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)  
International Service for Human Rights  
Ipas US  
Irish Refugee Council  
Islamic Relief Kenya Office  
Jesuit Refugee Service  
Jesuit Social Center (Tokyo)  
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice  
JFCS East Bay  
Journey Home Community Association  
Just Detention International  
Justice for Refugees SA  
Justice in Motion  
JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF)  
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)  
Kilómetro 0  
Kinbrace Community Society  
La Ruta del Clima  
Le Pont - A.P.P.I.  
Last Mile4D  
Latin America/Caribbean Committee - Loretto Community  
Lawyers for Good Government  
Lebanese Center for Human Rights – CLDH  
Liminality Research Consortium  
Lutheran World Federation  
MADRE  
Manchester City of Sanctuary  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Matthew House Ottawa  
Methoria  
Migrant Working Group (MWG)  
Migration Institute of Australia  
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI)  
Mosaic Multicultural Connections  
MPower Change Action Fund  
National Refugee-led Advisory and Advocacy Group Australia  
Nationality For All (NFA)  
New Women Connectors  
Newcomer Legal Clinic - Lakehead University  
Norwegian Refugee Council  
Oasis Legal Services  
OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants  
Open Doors  
Overseas Services to Survivors of Torture and Trauma

Oxfam  
Pacific Migration Partners  
PacificwinPacific  
Partners In Health  
Pax Christi International  
Pax Christi USA  
Pegasus Institute  
People Serving People Foundation  
Perkumpulan Suaka Untuk Perlindungan Hak Pengungsi (SUAKA)  
Physicians for Human Rights  
Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance  
Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants - PICUM  
Portland Central America Solidarity Committee  
Programa Casa Refugiados  
Project Play France  
Protection International  
Pro Iura  
Promotoras de Derechos en la Migración  
Puntland Minority Women Development Organization  
Quaker United Nations Office  
Quixote Center  
Rainbow Railroad  
Rainbow Refugee Society  
Red Jesuita con Migrantes Latinoamerica y el Caribe (RJM LAC)  
Refugee 613  
Refugee Action Campaign Canberra  
Refugee Advocacy Lab  
Refugee Communities Advocacy Network NSW  
Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc  
Refugee Congress  
Refugee Consortium of Kenya  
Refugee Council of Australia  
Refugee Council USA  
Refugee Legal  
Refugee Solidarity Network  
Refugees as Survivors NZ  
Refugees in Libya  
Refugees International  
Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT)  
RefugePoint  
Regroupement des organismes en hébergement pour personnes migrantes (ROHMI)  
Resilient40  
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights  
Rohingya Youth Union-RYU

Rohingya Youths Support Network (RYSN)  
Rose Lokissim Association  
Rural Australians for Refugees  
Rural Australians for Refugees Southern Highlands  
Safe Passage International  
SAISIA - Saskatchewan Association of Immigrants Settlement and Integration Agencies  
Same Skies  
Santa Clara Law - International Human Rights Clinic  
Save the Children International  
SCALES Community Legal Centre  
Secours Islamique France (SIF)  
Secretariat of the Civil Society Action Committee  
Senior Advocacy Network  
Settlement Services International (SSI)  
Sin Fronteras IAP  
Social Change Institute  
Society of Jesus in Belize  
Somali Diaspora in Deutschland (SOMDID) e.V.  
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario  
STARTTS  
Stichting Vluchteling  
Study and Research Centre on Environmentally Displaced Persons (NEPDA)  
Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service  
Sussex Centre for Migration Research  
Sydney Multicultural Community Services  
Synergies Migrations  
Synergy for Justice  
Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes  
Tahirih Justice Center  
Thailand Migration Reform Consortium (TMR)  
The Alliance for Diplomacy and Justice  
The Global Centre for Social Justice and Advocacy Leadership  
The GOOD Group  
The Legal Resources Centre  
The Tasmania Opportunity  
The Workers Circle  
U.S. Campaign for Burma  
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants  
Uganda Eyenkyia Development Project Group  
União Social dos Imigrantes Haitianos (USIH)  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)  
VECINA  
VOICE  
Voices in Dialogue

Washington Brazil Office  
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)  
Welcome Collective (Le Collectif Bienvenue)  
Western States Center  
West African Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Network  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center  
Women in Migration Network (WIMN)  
Women's All Points Bulletin WAPB  
Women's Link Worldwide  
Women's National Housing and Homelessness Network  
Women's Refugee Commission  
World's Youth for Climate Justice  
Zambian Civil Liberties Union (ZCLU)  
Zamzam Foundation