



Concept Note

High-Level Side Event Commemorating 75 Years of the 1951 Refugee Convention

The year 2026 marks 75 years since the adoption of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the cornerstone of international refugee protection. In today's context of record global displacement and increasingly complex protection challenges, the anniversary offers a timely moment to reaffirm the Convention's relevance, celebrate achievements, and explore how to strengthen refugee protection in a rapidly changing world.

Co-Sponsored by the Permanent Missions/Delegation of:

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- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Chad
- Denmark
- The Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Estonia
- Egypt (logo)
- European Union
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Japan
- Kenya
- Lithuania (logo)
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Mauritania
- Mexico
- Republic of Moldova
- The Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Norway
- The Philippines
- Portugal
- Romania
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Türkiye
- Uganda
- United Kingdom

Objective:

The high-level event aims to:

- **Reaffirm the importance of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol** in guiding contemporary protection efforts.
- **Examine emerging challenges**, including mixed movements, shrinking asylum space, protracted crises and the risk of abuse in the asylum system.
- **Highlight good practices** in inclusion, legal pathways, and responsibility-sharing.
- **Mobilize actions** towards reducing by 50% the number of refugees living in protracted situations and reliant on humanitarian assistance by 2035 through sustainable, development-oriented and economically driven solutions, including by enabling refugees to harness opportunities that generate gains for hosts communities and their economies.

Key Themes / Guiding Questions:

- *The Convention Today*: How has the 1951 Convention shaped global protection norms, and how can we renew commitment?
- *Evolving Protection Needs*: What emerging trends are redefining displacement, and how can States adapt?
- *Responsibility-Sharing*: What models of solidarity and cooperation—including those aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees and as committed by stakeholders at the Global Refugee Forum—are most effective?
- *Future of Protection*: How can innovation, legal pathways, peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian collaboration enhance solutions for refugees?

Event Details:

Date: Wednesday, 23 September

Time: 10:00 – 11:30am

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber

Duration: 90 minutes

High Level Speakers:

- President Emmanuel Macron, France (tbc)
- President William Ruto, Kenya (tbc)
- Ms. Anna Bjerde, Managing Director of Operations, World Bank Group
- Ms. Makhtar Diop, Managing Director, International Finance Corporation (tbc)

Proposed Run of Show:

1. Opening Remarks by HC Salih
2. Keynote Address by Secretary General
3. Convention in Action with Heads of State/Delegation
4. Interventions from Member States
5. Closing Reflections by HC Salih