



81st Session of the UN General Assembly

High-level Panel Discussion: 75th Anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention

New York, ECOSOSC, 23 September 2026, 10:00-11:30

Swiss Statement

Your Excellency, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Barham Salih,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like to express my gratitude to all UNHCR staff – those serving worldwide, often in dangerous conditions, and those who have recently left the organization. Thanks for their dedication and courage.

The 1951 Refugee Convention has a special meaning for Switzerland. We are the host country of UNHCR and have a long humanitarian tradition.

Seventy-five years after the adoption of this fundamental text, however, the challenges are growing: record levels of displacement, mixed migration flows, long-term crises, and increasing pressure on asylum systems.

The Convention remains essential. But the context in which we apply it has profoundly changed.

It is our responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. At the same time, we must address the root causes of displacement and find lasting solutions.

Switzerland therefore strongly supports UNHCR's "50 by 35" vision:

To reduce long-term displacement and dependence on humanitarian aid, we need locally led solutions and the effective participation of refugees in economic and political processes. Thanks to Swiss expertise, UNHCR has launched the operational guidelines for localization in 2026 and deployed 4 Experts for durable solutions and localization to UNHCR in Switzerland, Afghanistan and Senegal.

But ultimately, without peace, displacement will continue.

Switzerland will therefore continue to invest further in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. For example, Switzerland is the Chair of the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees. In 2026, Switzerland has contributed 8.2 Mio CHF to the UNHCR response to the Afghanistan Situation.

And you can count on my country's financial support for UNHCR. I call on all Member States to do the same.

Switzerland stands ready to uphold the Convention, advance solutions and strengthen peace efforts – so that fewer people are forced to flee, and more can rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.
