

**Oral NGO statement on International Protection for the 76th Executive Committee
Plenary Session**

Dear Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

This statement is being delivered on behalf of a global and diverse range of NGOs, including organisations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

Today, we are witnessing multiple challenges across the world. The landscape of displacement is more complex and precarious than ever before, demanding both, our unwavering resolve and concerted, collective action.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol have protected millions of people from persecution, and yet, much of today's mass displacement overwhelmingly stems from the failure of States to address root causes and adhere to human rights and humanitarian conventions and international law. It is a failure to protect people fleeing from violence, climate emergencies, and conflict.

Conflict is not the only threat to people in search of safety. The global rise of 'anti-migrant' nationalistic discourse, hate speech, and misinformation is fuelling the rise in xenophobia and increases the risks of violence against refugees, and asylum seekers.

Dear Excellencies, dear Chair,

Today we are also witnessing an alarming global trend of states attempting to undermine or implement restrictive policies that are in clear violation of the internationally recognised right to seek asylum, and the absolute obligation to uphold the principle of *non-refoulement*. Policies that violate the right to seek asylum, such as pushbacks, and the externalisation of asylum processing, must cease.

Although time does not allow us to mention the pushbacks taking place, the gravity of the situation should concern us all. So too, must the rise of policies that externalise responsibility for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers. Practices that shift burdens and avoid responsibility, are inconsistent with global solidarity and responsibility sharing.

Mass expulsions and forced returns are increasing. It places groups already at heightened protection risk, particularly women, children, people with disabilities, and older people, at even further risk of exploitation, malnutrition, illness, or worse.

And, finally, durable solutions that provide much-needed protection to people fleeing conflicts are in steep decline. Resettlement quotas for 2025 at their lowest since 2003, with major programmes paused indefinitely.

With recognition of all these challenges, we call on States to:

- Renew their commitment to international protection and adherence to international human rights and refugee law, urging an end to forced displacement, pushbacks, and externalisation of asylum processing that undermine basic human rights, and adhere to the principle of *non-refoulement*;
- Uphold their obligations under International Human Rights Law and refugee law by ensuring asylum procedures are equitable, efficient, and available to all without discrimination. This means guaranteeing access to territory and asylum procedures, providing clear information, and not subjecting asylum seekers to arbitrary or prolonged detention;
- Urgently scale up resettlement, based on humanitarian and protection needs, as well as other third-country solutions, such as humanitarian corridors, community sponsorship, and humanitarian visas. These are the only viable options for many of the most at-risk refugees and are a life saving protection tool;
- Advance other complementary pathways like those based on education, labour mobility, and family reunification;
- Actively and directly combat xenophobia, racism, discrimination, hate speech and misinformation and promote positive, evidence-based narratives about asylum seekers and refugees;
- Recognise that displaced populations are not a homogeneous group. Women, girls, children, youth, people with disabilities, and LGBTQI + individuals face specific and heightened risks. The responses must adopt age, gender, disability, and diversity approaches to ensure equal access to justice, protection, and services;
- Prioritise legal aid to asylum seekers and refugees, especially those from at-risk and marginalised groups, to help them navigate complex legal systems and achieve their legal rights;
- Respect non-refoulement obligations for climate-displaced people and invest in policies and pathways for those forced to move due to climate impacts;
- Honour the pledges made under the Global Compact for Refugees;

- Reverse recent funding cuts to humanitarian assistance to alleviate and prevent further suffering of forcibly displaced populations and other vulnerable communities; and
- Invest in durable solutions for safe and dignified returns and work to ensure permanent peace in contexts that drive displacement.

Let us work together to build a world where all displaced people are treated with protection, dignity, and hope.

This statement is available on icvanetwork.org.

Thank you.