

What is a refugee?



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Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.

They often have had to flee with little more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind homes, possessions, jobs and loved ones.

Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The [1951 Refugee Convention](#) is a key legal document and defines a refugee as:

“someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”

By the end of 2017, there were 25.4 million refugee men, women and children registered across the world.

[Learn more about refugees.](#)