

Global compact on refugees

5 December 2018

The **global compact on refugees** (GCR) is a new international agreement to forge a stronger, fairer response to large refugee movements and protracted situations. It grew out of the historic [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) of September 2016 and its comprehensive refugee response framework, followed by two years of intensive consultations with UN Member States, international organizations, experts, civil society, and refugees.

The compact translates the idea of responsibility sharing into practical, concrete measures. It's a blueprint to guide the refugee response so host communities get the timely support they need, that refugees are better included (with access to health, education and livelihood opportunities) and can lead productive lives, and that solutions to the plight of refugees are sought from the start. It will help make responses more systematic, and galvanize action and resources at the local and international level.

Key aims

The four key objectives of the refugee compact are to:

- 1) Ease pressures on countries that host refugees;
- 2) Build self-reliance of refugees;
- 3) Expand access to third countries for refugees through resettlement and other pathways of admission;
- 4) Support conditions that enable refugees voluntarily to return to their home countries.

Process for adoption

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees was invited by the UN General Assembly to put forward a proposed global compact to be considered at its 73rd session in conjunction with its annual resolution on UNHCR. This process is distinct and separate from the process to develop a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

On 13 November 2018, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural (Third) Committee of the UN General Assembly approved the resolution which affirms the refugee compact with overwhelming majority and has sent the text to the General Assembly plenary for adoption, scheduled for the morning of 17 December 2018.

The full text of the compact is here: http://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf

Relationship to the 1951 Refugee Convention

The compact builds upon, not replaces, the existing international legal system for refugees – including the 1951 Refugee Convention and other international legal instruments on refugee, human rights and humanitarian law. The [Refugee Convention](#) focuses on rights of refugees and obligations of states. The global compact on refugees reaffirms those standards and principles, and focuses on increasing international cooperation for a fairer, more systematic and comprehensive response so refugees and those hosting them can rely on robust support.

The compact is a non-binding operational tool which aims to broaden the base of support available to refugees and the communities which host them. It does not create new legal obligations, nor does it modify the mandate of UNHCR.

Monitoring and support systems

The compact includes a series of built-in systems to monitor progress, maintain political momentum, and rally support to address refugee situations. These include a Global Refugee Forum at ministerial level every four years, starting in 2019, at which governments will report and pledge on a range of measures like funding, resettlement places, and practices to support the inclusion of refugees, etc.

In between the Global Refugee Forums, there will be high-level officials meeting every two years at the mid-point between Forums. There will also be situation-specific ‘support platforms’. These will all help monitor the implementation of the compact, alongside existing fora and reports on refugees.

The two compacts

While both compacts were set in train by the [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#), the [global compact on refugees](#) is separate and distinct to the [global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration](#). Each addresses different categories of people.

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<https://www.unhcr.org/a-new-deal-for-refugees.html>