

### **NGO Statement on International Protection**

Dear chair,

NGOs wish to express their sincere condolences for the Israeli and Palestinian lives lost, as well as for those affected by the earthquake in Afghanistan.

Conflict remains the predominant root cause of forced displacement, but natural disasters and climate change are increasingly drivers and compounding factors, as is statelessness. Protracted forced displacement will likely persist.

To address the intricate nature of global displacement a unified, holistic approach is crucial. Solutions should encompass local integration, voluntary return, resettlement, and right to nationality. Engaging more deeply to tackle root causes and adopting complementary strategies remains crucial.

Despite notable efforts, progress towards achieving durable solutions remain modest. Returning home is not an option. Resettlement opportunities are extremely limited. Formal legal or social integration in host communities often remains a distant prospect.

Today, we wish to spotlight two major crises in Asia.

Two years after the Taliban de facto authorities took over, the economy remains in a dire state, humanitarian needs intensified, and food insecurity increased. Concurrently, Afghans face numerous protection challenges, such as discrimination against women and girls. These challenges hinder an environment conducive to returns.

We urge UNHCR and states to continue supporting humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan and to uphold the UNHCR non-return advisory for Afghanistan. We appeal to the members of the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to champion principled responsibility-sharing. It should also drive resource mobilization and long-term support for displaced Afghans, ensuring access to fundamental rights. The Global Refugee Forum will be a pivotal moment to increase third country solutions and for the Support Platform Core Group members to synchronize their resources and strategies, maximizing impact and support.

For decades, Rohingya and other minority groups in Myanmar have faced persecution and systematic discrimination. They have encountered protection issues, and their rights denied. Due to compounding factors of statelessness and political turmoil in Myanmar, affected populations are compelled to undertake perilous journeys in pursuit of safety.

We encourage UNHCR and the international community to spearhead the establishment of a Support Platform for the Rohingya Response, drawing inspiration from the successes of other Support Platforms. Its goal should be to encourage regional strategies for displaced Rohingya and increase international support, particularly within Bangladesh and as well as focusing on transitional solutions, in addition to durable solutions.

NGOs call on UNHCR and Member States to take immediate action to address the ongoing challenges faced by civilians within Myanmar and Afghanistan. Ensuring accountability, promoting the release of individuals detained for their political beliefs, and facilitate access to humanitarian assistance, emphasizing support for internally displaced persons is essential.

Dear Chair, I underscore here key issues to foster durable solutions:

**First**, ensure proper and quality education, so displaced and stateless persons can acquire the skills needed to rebuild their lives and contribute to their host communities.

**Second**, transitional solutions need to prioritize livelihood **programmes** encompassing the right to work, vocational training, microfinance initiatives, and entrepreneurship opportunities. Host states should recognize and support these endeavours and recognize the economic and social benefits of empowering displaced and stateless persons.

**Third**, displaced and stateless people often grapple with trauma, making robust psychosocial support services indispensable. Integrated activities including legal aid, child protection, prevention and response to gender-based violence, community engagement, and advocacy efforts, remain essential. Investment in awareness-raising and first-response efforts is a pressing requirement.

**Fourth**, displaced and stateless persons are at the forefront of decisions regarding their futures. The international community has a responsibility to respect and support these decisions with a refugee-centered approach. Building bridges between displaced and host communities for promoting social inclusion is a responsibility for all.

As the GRF approaches, the viability and importance of complementary pathways for displaced persons is pressing. While these pathways should never replace asylum obligations or resettlement, they offer additional avenues for displaced persons. Examples include labour mobility, education pathways, and community sponsorship programs. Additionally, expanding family reunification visas and ensuring that statelessness determination procedures are developed and lead to residency and citizenship can further support and enhance these goals.

To conclude, long-term humanitarian and development assistance, aligned with core humanitarian principles, is of utmost importance. Assistance must remain free from political influences.

Solely relying on humanitarian assistance is not sufficient to achieve lasting solutions. Constructive diplomatic engagement is needed. To ensure the continuation of inclusive policies, the international community must champion effective and principled burden-sharing to guarantee access to essential services and protection.

Ahead of the GRF, we call upon States to commit to durable solutions, broaden complementary pathways, and champion transitional solutions. We are poised to work in tandem with UNHCR, States, and all relevant stakeholders to transform these principles into tangible actions.

A more detailed version of this statement will be available on [icvanetwork.org](http://icvanetwork.org)

Thank you.