

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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 High Commissioner: Mary Robinson
 (Ireland)

In 1993 the General Assembly created the position of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the aim being to promote and protect the full exercise

by all individuals of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development. The High Commissioner is also responsible for all UN human rights activities, including the Commission on Human Rights.

The High Commissioner co-ordinates all activities in this sphere by organizations in the United Nations system, tries to prevent infringements on basic rights, investigates those that do occur and works with governments to remedy such situations.



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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 High Commissioner: Sadako Ogata
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The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in 1950 and began operating on January 1, 1951, taking over from the International Refugee Organization. The UNHCR was mandated to assist people who had been uprooted from their homes during and after the Second World War. Thanks to the adoption of the Convention on the Status of Refugees in July 1951, UNHCR was able to help refugees find safe havens and offer them the opportunity

to rebuild their lives. Before the Convention, such people at most could apply to emigrate to another country. If they were refused, they had no recourse and no way of ensuring their own safety.

UNHCR's work is humanitarian and non-political. Its main functions are to offer refugees international protection, seek lasting solutions to their problems and provide them with material assistance in the form of food, shelter, medical assistance, education and other social services.

The Office of the High Commissioner seeks to help refugees wishing to return to their country of origin and become re-integrated into their communities. When this is unfeasible, UNHCR tries to assist them in their country of refuge or to find them a new host country.

