**4.4 World Refugee Day: The Refugee Convention (1951)**

<http://www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/background.shtml>

**Every minute, 20 people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution or terror.**

There are several types of **forcibly displaced** persons:

**Refugees**

A refugee is someone who fled his or her home and country owing to “a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationalit, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”, according to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention.

Many refugees are in exile to escape the effects of natural or human-made disasters.

**Asylum seekers**

Asylum seekers say they are refugees and have fled their homes as refugees do, but their claim to refugee status is not yet definitively evaluated in the country to which they fled.

**Internally Displaced Persons**

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are people who have not crossed an international border but have moved to a different region than the one they call home within their own country.

**Stateless Persons**

Stateless persons do not have a recognized nationality and do not belong to any country.

Statelessness situations are usually caused by discrimination against certain groups. Their lack of identification — a citizenship certificate — can exclude them from access to important government services, including health care, education or employment.

**Returnees**

Returnees are former refugees who return to their own countries or regions of origin after time in exile.

Returnees need continuous support and reintegration assistance to ensure that they can rebuild their lives at home.

**The rights for refugees contained in the 1951 Refugee Convention include:**

* The right not to be expelled from a country they have taken refuge in, except under certain, strictly defined conditions;
* The right not to be punished for illegal entry into a country they have escaped to;
* The right to work;
* The right to housing;
* The right to education;
* The right to public relief and assistance;
* The right to freedom of religion;
* The right to access the courts;
* The right to freedom of movement within the host territory;
* The right to be issued identity and travel documents.

**Not all countries give all these rights to refugees.**