

Committee Overview:

On December 14, 1950, the General Assembly established the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the UNHCR works to support and protect refugees. It advocates for the rights of the refugees, such as their ability to seek asylum or voluntary repatriation, and assists in their resettlement and/or repatriation. The committee is also involved in humanitarian efforts relating to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The majority of the staff works in the field in areas that are often difficult and extremely dangerous to live in.

The UNHCR was first established as a short term method for dealing with the refugee crisis in Europe following World War II. However, as more and more situations arose that required their assistance, the UNHCR was no longer a fix for a short term problem, but an integral part of the United Nations. Since its establishment in 1950, the UNHCR has grown substantially from a staff of 34 people with a budget of USD300,000 to a staff of 6,650 with a budget of more than USD 3 Billion that work in over 110 countries worldwide.

In 2010, the UNHCR marks their 60th anniversary. It currently deals with 14.4 million internally displaced people, 10.5 million refugees, 2 million returnees, 6.6 million stateless people and more than 800,000 asylum seekers.