

# NGO Statement – CRCP 2026

*The Way Forward for Resettlement and Complementary Pathways in Challenging Times*

## Introduction and context

The non-governmental organisations participating in the 2026 Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (CRCP) come together to present our shared analysis, priorities and recommendations at a critical moment for global refugee protection. This statement reflects the collective voice of NGOs working across regions, alongside refugees and host communities, within an increasingly constrained global environment.

We are facing unprecedented pressure on the international protection system. The gap between resettlement needs and available places has widened dramatically. In 2025, the number of refugees resettled through UNHCR referral dropped by 68% from the previous year, to just over 37,000. Today, around 2.5 million refugees require resettlement. Yet, because of declining State commitments, there is little prospect of reaching even half of the collective 2026 goal of 120,000 resettlement places through UNHCR referral set out in the CRCP's Roadmap 2030<sup>1</sup>. Displacement is rising while resettlement quotas and humanitarian funding are being cut, and political polarization and restrictive narratives are shrinking the space for principled protection. These trends are undermining both access to solutions for refugees and the integrity of the international protection framework.

Against this backdrop, we unequivocally reaffirm that resettlement and complementary pathways are essential protection tools, grounded in international refugee law and humanitarian principles. Resettlement must remain robust, predictable, accessible and needs-based, while complementary pathways must remain additional and protection-oriented. Retreating from these commitments has real and lasting consequences for refugees at risk.

Accordingly, we make the following recommendations:

### **1. Resettlement must remain the core protection solution**

Resettlement must remain the primary protection solution for refugees most at risk. As a life-saving mechanism providing safety and legal status, it must be implemented accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> According to UNHCR, an estimated 2.4 million refugees required resettlement in 2024, increasing to around 2.5 million in 2026. In 2024, approximately 188,759 refugees were resettled globally, including 116,528 through UNHCR referral. In 2025, the number of refugees resettled through UNHCR referral fell by 68% to 37,248. Sources: UNHCR Resettlement Factsheet 2025; UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2026; *Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030*.

The NGO community is deeply concerned that the growing emphasis on local integration in host countries, in the context of shrinking resettlement opportunities, risks becoming normalised. While local solutions should be supported where appropriate, this must be accompanied by robust resettlement programmes for those who need them.

States must urgently recommit to maintaining and expanding resettlement in line with global needs. Without such commitments, limited pathways will continue to push refugees towards irregular and dangerous routes, increasing exposure to exploitation, trafficking and abuse.

## **2. Complementary pathways must remain complementary**

Complementary pathways, including community sponsorship, labour mobility and education pathways, help expand solutions, but must remain genuinely complementary to resettlement. They should increase the number of refugees reaching safety in addition to resettlement, not serve as a substitute for core resettlement commitments.

States should strengthen safe and regular pathways, including humanitarian pathways, ensuring they are accessible, predictable and grounded in rights.

Family reunification must be safeguarded as a distinct and essential protection tool, and as a fundamental right. Resettlement and complementary pathways must recognise the needs of the whole family, as family unity is essential to safety, wellbeing, belonging and sustainable integration.

Greater investment is also needed in mental health and psychosocial support across all stages of displacement, resettlement and integration. When left unaddressed, these needs can weaken stability, hinder integration and lead to long-term social and economic marginalisation.

## **3. Civil society and refugee participation must be strengthened**

We underline the critical role of civil society in both service delivery and advocacy for principled, rights-based protection. The CRCP must remain a safe, credible and politically relevant space—not only for coordination, but for honest engagement with current political realities and their impact on refugee protection systems.

Meaningful and sustained refugee participation must be safeguarded and strengthened across planning, implementation and evaluation. Refugees must be included as a distinct constituency, with opportunities to participate independently of government and civil society delegations, and with their perspectives reflected in both discussions and decisions. However, civil society cannot and must not replace States' obligations to provide protection and support to displaced people.

## **Looking ahead**

We are at a defining crossroads for global refugee protection. We cannot allow hesitation, short-term political pressures or shrinking civic space to erode one of the most effective and principled tools available: resettlement. Now more than ever, States must demonstrate—through concrete actions, not rhetoric—that they believe in the purpose, relevance and life-saving potential of resettlement.

The CRCP must continue to serve as a space for shared responsibility, solidarity and strategic cooperation, bringing together States, UNHCR, NGOs and refugees to strengthen resettlement systems and expand safe and regular pathways.

Looking ahead, commitments must translate into action: increasing resettlement places and expanding complementary pathways so that refugees can access safe and durable solutions in practice—not only in principle.