

AG/RES. 1214 (XXIII-O/93)

LEGAL SITUATION OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES, AND DISPLACED PERSONS  
IN THE AMERICAN HEMISPHERE

(Resolution adopted at the ninth plenary session,  
held on June 11, 1993)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

BEARING IN MIND the continuous cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS); and

CONSIDERING:

That through resolutions AG/RES. 774 (XV-O/85), AG/RES. 838 (XVI-O/86), AG/RES. 891 (XVII-O/87), AG/RES. 951 (XVIII-O/88), AG/RES. 1021 (XIX-O/89), AG/RES. 1039 (XX-O/90), AG/RES. 1040 (XX-O/90), AG/RES. 1103 (XXI-O/91), and AG/RES. 1170 (XXII-O/92), the General Assembly expressed its concern for those who, as refugees, returnees, or displaced persons, have received protection and humanitarian assistance throughout the Hemisphere;

That twenty-three countries in the region are parties to the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees and that some other governments are studying the possibility of accession to these international instruments;

That, consequently, several countries in the region have amended or promulgated laws establishing mechanisms for determining refugee status and ensuring respect for the rights and obligations of persons recognized as refugees;

That some countries continue to seek effective solutions to the problems of refugees and displaced persons in a number of countries, guided by the principles embodied in the 1984 Declaration of Cartagena de Indias, which contains a legal framework for the treatment of refugees in the region;

That although democratic processes in Latin America have brought about a significant decrease in outflows of refugees in the region, there are countries where large numbers of internally displaced persons continue to require special attention and that this problem because of its magnitude and complexity calls for concerted international action on behalf of the affected persons;

That governments in the region are showing an increasing interest in refugee matters, particularly by cooperating with the High Commissioner for Refugees in the promotion and dissemination of refugee rights and human rights and stressing the importance of such activities in

preparation for emergent situations as well as in facilitating the attainment of solutions to, and prevention of, refugee problems;

That significant repatriation movements have continued to take place in 1992 not only in Central America but also in South America within the framework of tripartite commissions;

That important steps have been taken by some governments in the region to improve the legal status of refugees who have chosen not to return voluntarily to their countries of origin, by adopting measures to facilitate their local integration;

That, despite economic difficulties, some countries of the region continue to admit and accommodate a large number of refugees and asylum-seekers in their territory;

That during the present decade certain countries have taken significant steps towards the consolidation of a firm and lasting peace, thereby encouraging the return of many refugees and displaced persons to their areas of origin in safety and dignity;

That in the Central American region, Mexico, and Belize, CIREFCA has been an exemplary process which has achieved outstanding results in the area of international protection and assistance to refugees, returnees, and displaced persons as well as in promoting lasting solutions; and

That important progress has been made in the ongoing program of cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization of American States which consists of a joint research project to study the legal rights of refugee children in Central America and Mexico.

**RESOLVES:**

1. To urge those countries in the region that have not yet done so to accede to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol related to the status of refugees.
2. To recommend to those member states that have not yet done so that they adopt the necessary legislation and/or administrative regulations to implement the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol concerning refugees, particularly the establishment of procedures for the determination of refugee status.
3. To express its approval of the member states' support for the principles of international protection embodied in the 1984 Declaration of Cartagena de Indias on Refugees, and to recommend to the member states that have not yet done so that they consider the possibility of strengthening their national legislation for the protection of refugees.
4. To call upon all states to take the necessary measures to ensure respect for internationally recognized principles for the protection and humanitarian treatment of refugees and

asylum-seekers and to reaffirm the need for states to cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner in the exercise of its international protection function.

5. To emphasize the need to identify at international and regional levels the causes that give rise to the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as innovative solutions to this problem.

6. To recommend to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that it intensify its activities in the area of promotion, dissemination, and training in refugee law, human rights, and humanitarian law in order to sharpen awareness of protection principles in the Hemisphere, given the close link between violations of human rights and situations giving rise to refugee flows.

7. To commend those countries that have adopted measures to facilitate the local integration of refugees while reaffirming the importance of supporting the Office of the High Commissioner in its efforts to attain lasting solutions to refugee problems, notably voluntary repatriation under conditions of safety and dignity, and reintegration in the country of origin.

8. To stress the need to continue providing assistance and improving the situation of refugee women and children who because of their vulnerable situation are exposed in many instances to threats and violations of their personal security that affect their physical and legal protection as well as their psychological well-being.

9. To reassert the support of member states to the CIREFCA process, which has not only strengthened the application of emerging legal principles and criteria in the area of protection and refugee law but has also identified lasting solutions to the situation of uprooted persons in Central America as an effective contribution to the pacification process.

10. To renew its support for continued cooperation between the Organization of American States and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in matters of mutual concern, and to instruct the Secretary General to report on the progress of these activities to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth regular session.