Who are Refugees?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her home due to persecution – for reasons of race, religion, ethnicity, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group – war, or violence.\textsuperscript{1, 2} Since they cannot return home or are at risk if they try, they require international protection.

While there is no universal definition, a migrant is an individual who leaves his or her home, either moving across international borders or internally displaced within their country, irrespective of their legal status. A migrant is a migrant regardless of whether their movement is voluntary or involuntary or the length of their stay/displacement.\textsuperscript{3} A migrant may leave their home for many reasons, including natural disasters and climate change, demographic instability, unmet needs in the labor market, or growing inequalities. Unlike a refugee, a migrant is protected under his or her own government.

Migrants and refugees are at risk of being trafficked for the purpose of exploitation.

\textsuperscript{1}UNHCR: Refugee Facts
\textsuperscript{2}1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
\textsuperscript{3}IOM: Who is a Migrant
GOARCH’s Advocacy Points

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America has been involved in the negotiations for the global compacts advocating for the following:

- The protection of all migrants, regardless of their status, from *refoulement* and arbitrary or collective expulsions, and that States ensure returns are rights-based, safe, and dignified.
- The right to basic services for all refugees and migrants, which must be expanded to include mental health services and legal aid.
- An explicit reference of the fundamental right to religious freedom for all migrants and refugees.

What you can do

Educate yourselves, families, friends, and communities about refugees and migrants.

Take Action by becoming an IOCC Parish Representative.

Volunteer with a local refugee resettlement agency – such as Church World Service or International Rescue Committee – to make a difference.

Call and write your representatives encouraging them to propose legislation in line with international laws and standards regarding migrants and refugees.

Where to learn more

- **The Global Compact on Migration**
  [refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact](http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact)
- **The Global Compact on Refugees**
- **The NGO Committee on Migration**
  [ngo-migration.org](http://ngo-migration.org)
- **International Organization for Migration**
  [iom.int](http://iom.int)
- **The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)**
  [unhcr.org/en-us/](http://unhcr.org/en-us/)
- **I Am a Migrant**
  [iamamigrant.org](http://iamamigrant.org)

About Us

The Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations is tasked with cultivating professional relationships with faith-based organizations, academic institutions, and NGOs. It coordinates the ecumenical and interfaith dialogues of the Archdiocese on a national level and is responsible for pan-Orthodox activities through the Office of the Chairman of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA.

Programs at the UN

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is accredited through the United Nations Department of Public Information (UN DPI) and has General Consultative Status under the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC). The Archdiocese has been actively working at the UN for nearly 40 years.