

Collection

Refugee Status

From [Department of Justice \(/en/organisation/department-of-justice/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-justice/)

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A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence.

A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so.

War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries according to the UN Refugee Agency ([UNHCR \(https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/\)](https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/)).

When someone flees their country they have a right to seek asylum or international protection in a safe country and must be at the border or in that country to do so.

Ireland and many other countries signed the [1951 Geneva Convention \(https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/1951-refugee-convention.html\)](https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/1951-refugee-convention.html), the international law that sets out the rights of those seeking protection and the obligations of States to consider those applications.

The Convention includes those being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Ireland's legislation in this area is set out in the [International Protection Act 2015 \(https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/66/enacted/en/html\)](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/66/enacted/en/html).

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