

Over 300 organizations are calling for a shift in thinking regarding refugee protection: There is another way!

On World Refugee Day 2026, a broad German civil society coalition comprising welfare organizations, human rights groups, churches, and civil society is uniting under the slogan “There’s another way! Together for protection and solidarity” against the denial of rights to people seeking protection. Seventy-five years after the adoption of the Geneva Convention on Refugees, they have drafted a memorandum outlining a vision for the future of strong refugee protection that benefits everyone.

Memorandum for strong refugee protection

The Memorandum [“There Is Another Way! Together for Protection and Cohesion”](#), published on June 19, 2026, is issued by Amnesty International, AWO Bundesverband, Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, Diakonie Deutschland, Handicap International, and PRO ASYL, and is supported by over 300 organizations, including 75 national organizations such as the Evangelical Church in Germany. It is still open for [signing](#).

With the adoption of the Geneva Convention on Refugees 75 years ago, the rights of people seeking protection from persecution were enshrined in international law. This means that states must actively assume responsibility and must not impose this obligation on other countries.

In the memorandum, the organizations outline a vision for the future of strong and solidarity-based refugee protection in the 21st century

“Persecuted people find protection. National borders do not stand in the way of an individual’s right to a life of safety and dignity. [...] Refugee protection that lives up to this standard is possible. What must be strengthened to achieve this is what sustains us as a society: solidarity, mutual respect, and the willingness to prioritize what unites us over what divides us. This is the foundation for refugee protection that works for everyone and improves our society as a whole.”

Why our voice matters

Our daily work makes us experts. We rescue people in distress at sea, support refugees through the asylum process and as they settle into society, and operate shelters, kindergartens, and counseling centers. We work on the ground with those seeking protection as well as with the communities they arrive in. Without us, refugee protection cannot succeed.

Every day, we see firsthand that solidarity works. Our counseling centers, social workers, and volunteers - as well as those seeking protection, teachers, businesses, and neighbors - create safety, inclusion, and opportunities. Human rights are not defended in the abstract, but in practice, every day - including through our efforts.

Refugee protection for our time

Major human rights achievements have emerged from experiences of violence, displacement, and crimes against humanity. One such achievement is the Geneva Convention on Refugees, which turns 75 this year. It contains a promise: that people will find protection from persecution, war, or existential danger.

Yet a growing gap exists between this promise and political reality. This is precisely where this memorandum comes in. Across the five areas of action - **global protection, non-violent borders and safe flight routes, fair asylum and judicial procedures and prospects for residency, good starting conditions, participation and co-determination** - we have identified 21 points that represent important steps toward strong refugee protection.

What we want to discuss now:

- ▶ **Abolition of the “safe third country” concept.**
- ▶ **Implementation and expansion of the Global Compact on Refugees, particularly regarding funding for the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and support for countries of first reception.**
- ▶ **Strengthening and expansion of the European Solidarity Mechanism as the first example of a global fair share mechanism.**
- ▶ **Resumption of Germany’s resettlement quota and currently suspended family reunification procedures.**
- ▶ **Fundamental reform of the criteria for determining responsibility within the EU.**
- ▶ **Facilitated mobility for workers from third countries, including through the increased issuance of multiple-entry visas.**
- ▶ **A state-operated maritime rescue operation focused on rescuing everyone.**
- ▶ **Consistent enforcement of the ban on forcibly pushing back refugees by border police, coast guards, or through government cooperation with third countries.**
- ▶ **The decriminalization of irregular entry for asylum seekers under the Residence Act.**
- ▶ **Instead of expedited procedures, such as border procedures and procedures for people from countries of origin classified as safe, every asylum application will be thoroughly reviewed.**
- ▶ **Consistent enforcement by the European Commission of sanctions against member states for treaty violations - especially in cases of pushbacks at borders and the suspension of the right to asylum.**
- ▶ **Needs-based funding for civil society support and counseling services, including independent asylum procedure counseling.**
- ▶ **Asylum seekers are given a fair option to switch to a different residence track during the asylum procedure or within a reasonable period after a rejection.**
- ▶ **A dignified minimum existence level is guaranteed for everyone effectively and without discrimination from the very beginning.**
- ▶ **Government-provided housing is structured not as an obligation but as an option.**
- ▶ **Access to integration courses for everyone from the very beginning.**
- ▶ **Immediate and unrestricted access to the labor market and education for everyone.**
- ▶ **Introducing at least the right to vote in local elections for everyone who has been legally residing in Germany for at least five years.**
- ▶ **Human rights education is standard in schools as well as in training sessions and educational programs for adults.**
- ▶ **Meeting places and space for interaction for everyone are created and prioritized in municipal urban planning.**
- ▶ **Needs-based and long-term funding for federal programs such as “Demokratie leben” and “Gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt.”**