

Do you know that currently Indonesia has not ratified the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol on refugees, on the other hand, the number of refugees entering Indonesia is increasing?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is an institution that must provide international protection for refugees. How does UNHCR protect and handle refugees who enter Indonesia?

A Brief History of UNHCR

The end of World War II in 1945 left many victims who later became refugees in several parts of Europe and Africa. This prompted the United Nations to form the International Refugee Organization (IRO). The IRO is a specialized agency for dealing with refugees.

For approximately 5 years in carrying out its duties as an institution dealing with refugees, in 1952 to be exact, the IRO's duties were no longer continued and then replaced by the United Nations establishing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

UNHCR was formed through a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on December 14, 1950 by the headquarters or headquarters of UNHCR is in Geneva, Switzerland.

Initially, the UNHCR's Mandate was temporary and would continue to be renewed every five years by the UN General Assembly. However, in 2003 this policy was abolished so that problems related to refugees were completely resolved without any time limit.

The Statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees serves as a guide for UNHCR in carrying out its duties. Based on the Statute, UNHCR is a humanitarian, social and non-political institution.

UNHCR has a function as a special agency that is stated in the Statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This function provides protection and finds long-term solutions as well as forms cooperation with the government or other humanitarian agencies in solving problems related to refugees.

In carrying out one of its main functions, UNHCR has long-term solutions, including voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement (settlement in third countries).

In addition to long-term solutions, UNHCR has short-term solutions, including assistance consisting of food, shelter, water, sanitation, and health needs distributed through temporary shelter camps managed by UNHCR.

UNHCR Developments in Indonesia

The existence of UNHCR in Indonesia was formally inaugurated in 1979 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was motivated by the influx of Vietnamese refugees into Indonesia in 1979.

Being among countries receiving large numbers of refugees such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Australia. Indonesia is continuously affected by mixed population movements.

Reporting from unhcr.org, the number of refugees entering Indonesia continued to increase from 2000 to 2002 although it had decreased from 2003 to 2008 and increased again in 2013 to 2014. Until the end of December 2020, the cumulative number of refugees in Indonesia was recorded at 13,745 people from 50 countries and more than half of the population came from Afghanistan.

Considering that Indonesia does not have the authority to handle refugees because it has not ratified the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol on refugees and the increasing number of refugees entering Indonesia.

At the end of 2016, the President of the Republic of Indonesia signed a Presidential Regulation on Handling Refugees from Overseas. The Presidential Regulation contains the main definitions and regulates the detection, shelter, and protection of asylum seekers and refugees.

Although the government is not directly involved in handling refugees, the form of cooperation provided by the Indonesian government is to accept the arrival of the refugees and not force or expel them to return to their countries of origin.

In addition, the Indonesian government also assists in the form of temporary housing facilities for refugees in the Migration Detention Center (Rudenim) which is managed by Indonesian immigrants. Indonesia has 13 Immigration Detention Centers (Rudenim) spread over several areas, namely Semarang, Jakarta, Surabaya,

Balikpapan, Denpasar, Jayapura, Makassar, Manado, Medan, Pekanbaru, Tanjung Pinang, Pontianak, and Kupang. Rudenim is a temporary place for a refugee shelter.

Not only that, but UNHCR also cooperates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration Office, International Organization of Migration (IOM), TNI, POLRI, and several other organizations to process refugees from the discovery process to data collection by UNHCR.

UNHCR regularly conducts outreach with the government and legal practitioners in this case lawyers, NGOs, and university students. This activity includes various developments such as workshops, briefings, roundtable meetings, and other activities that socialize the mandate of UNHCR and international refugee law.