

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**VIDEO MESSAGE ON THE 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1951 CONVENTION  
RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES AND THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE 1961 CONVENTION ON THE REDUCTION OF STATELESSNESS**

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**Geneva, 6-7 December 2011**

Distinguished heads of State and government,  
Esteemed ministers,  
High Commissioner António Guterres,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we celebrate two treaties that have helped millions of people around the world.

People forced to flee disasters, war and persecution.

People struggling to survive and rescue their children.

People who crossed borders with nothing ... except the dream of a safer future.

These life-saving treaties are based on a simple principle ... which is as true today as ever:

The principle that people should never be forced into harm's way.

Today you have a chance to help us reduce statelessness ... and assist refugees.

Today you can pledge your support for UNHCR.

Your contributions will help people far from their home countries ... struggling against injustice, marginalization and fear.

You can also pledge more than funds. You can commit your solidarity for all refugees in our world.

Earlier this year, I was in Oslo to celebrate the life of Fridtjof Nansen. He was the father of international refugee relief ... the first High Commissioner for Refugees at the League of Nations.

Nansen once said that helping people return home is more important for peace than many political moves.

I have seen the truth of these words.

Help refugees. Contribute to peace.

Thank you.