



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Warsaw Human Dimension Conference
“Session 8: Tolerance and Non-Discrimination I”**

Warsaw, 8 October 2024

Distinguished Chairperson,
Dear Participants,

UNHCR is grateful for the possibility to contribute to today’s session on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination and share with you some observations from the perspective of our specific mandate.

UNHCR stands firmly against all forms of discrimination and intolerance. In a world where more than 120 million people are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, and violence¹, it is crucial to foster an environment of inclusion and mutual respect.

Racism, xenophobia, and intolerance are not only drivers of displacement but also significant barriers to the safety and dignity of refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons. These harmful attitudes undermine our efforts to provide protection and support to those in need.

Unfortunately, this year again, we have seen the protection space for LGBTIQ+ persons jeopardized in many places around the world. We continue to witness their struggles as they flee persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, often to be subject to harm and discrimination for the same reasons in countries of transit or destination.

We call on governments, civil society, and individuals to join us in combating discrimination and promoting inclusivity. This involves recognizing and addressing the root causes of intolerance, challenging harmful stereotypes, and fostering understanding across communities and cultures.

A great example of an initiative that promotes tolerance and non-discrimination is the [#WithRefugees Campaign](#): This global campaign encourages cities, organizations, and individuals to stand in solidarity with refugees. Since the launch of the campaign in 2016, over 300 cities worldwide have signed a statement supporting refugees, and more than 500 organizations are part of the coalition, promoting tolerance and respect

¹ UNHCR Global Trends 2023, published in June 2024: <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>
The Global Trends report, released annually in June, analyses changes and trends in forcibly displaced populations in the previous calendar year (from 1 January to 31 December). It provides key statistics on the global numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people and stateless people, as well as their main host countries and countries of origin. The figures on this page are based on the Global Trends report.

for people forced to flee. An impressive number of more than 39 million actions by members of the coalition have taken place so far, still counting.

UNHCR remains committed to upholding a zero-tolerance stance towards racism and discrimination also within our organization and operations. We pledge to continue working with our partners to promote policies and practices that ensure everyone can live free from fear and prejudice.

Together, we can build a more inclusive and compassionate world where every individual is valued and respected, regardless of their background or circumstances.

We invite OSCE participating States to take all measures to protect forcibly displaced and stateless persons from racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance, and to implement policies that rather unite than divide.

Thank you.

*UNHCR Liaison Office to the OSCE
and Vienna-based UN Agencies
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