

Title of Event: Building Bridges: Advancing Refugee Protection in a Divided World

Notetaker: Wade Radmore, uOttawa Refugee Hub Knowledge Team

Host of Event: UNSW Sydney and UNSW Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law

Date: 23-10-2025

Toplines:

- Daniel Ghezelbash introduces the 2025 Kaldor Centre Conference as occurring during a crossroads where more people than ever are displaced, but public attention and support are not evenly provided.
- These opening remarks focus on the number of recent challenges of populist rhetoric, refugee scapegoating, and erosion of international refugee frameworks.
- It calls for more leaders to build common ground for understanding between refugees' lived realities and policymakers.

Welcome Address

Presenter:

- **Daniel Ghezelbash**, Professor of Law & Director, Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law

Circulated Materials: [Full Conference Live-stream](#) (Opening remarks begin at 0:23:00)

Key Points:

- The conference aims to serve as a **catalyst for action, fostering dialogue, debate, and evidence-based change** to advance refugee protection globally.
- Frames the event as a crossroads moment for refugee protection, noting record levels of global displacement—122 million displaced people, including 31 million refugees.
- Conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Myanmar, and Venezuela have driven this crisis, yet public attention and support remain uneven.
- Challenges include:
 - Escalating populist rhetoric and declining international financing.
 - Scapegoating of refugees as proxies for economic and security anxieties.
 - Erosion of international refugee frameworks.
- These challenges create an architecture of exclusion.
- Even those granted access face overstretched systems, denied fair hearings, and slow/inconsistent processing.
- Cautions that reopening or renegotiating the Refugee Convention would be a “catastrophic error.”
- Instead, calls for:
 - Good-faith implementation of existing principles.
 - Rebuilding trust, cooperation, and fairness among states.
 - Honest and effective communication on problems affecting the refugee system.

- Reframing refugee protection as a shared obligation.
- Concludes by calling for **refugees to be empowered as leaders in shaping future solutions.**