Swiss Refugee Council expresses concerns about Federal Council's decision on safe regions in Ukraine

The Swiss Refugee Council (OSAR) expressed concerns about the Swiss Federal Council’s decision to limit the scope of protection status S for Ukrainian refugees.

While OSAR welcomed the extension of the status until March 2027, it condemned the classification of seven Ukrainian regions as 'safe', calling the move politically motivated and detached from on-the-ground realities.

According to OSAR, security conditions across Ukraine remain unstable, making any reliable distinction between safe and unsafe areas impossible. The organisation pointed out that the EU makes no such differentiation and emphasised that protection should only be lifted once the war has ended, a peace agreement has been signed and international bodies can ensure safety.

OSAR also noted that Russia’s intensified drone and missile attacks since 2024–2025, including in the 'safe' regions, make the new restrictions especially unrealistic. The group criticised the decision to apply the new rules retroactively to refugees whose applications are still pending and argued they should only apply to those filed after 1 November 2025.

While OSAR welcomed the continued protection programme, it opposed new restrictions on the freedom of movement, specifically reducing the permitted stay in Ukraine for S-status holders from 15 days per quarter to 15 days per half-year, saying such measures hinder family connections and voluntary return efforts.

Source(s)

- Swiss Refugee Council | Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe | Organisation suisse d’aide aux réfugiés (8 October, 2025), Pas de régions sûres en Ukraine : l’OSAR dénonce une décision erronée du Conseil fédéral [No safe regions in Ukraine: the Swiss Refugee Council condemns a wrong decision by the Federal Council], https://www.osar.ch/communique-de-presse/pas-de-regions-sures-en-ukraine-losar-denonce-une-decision-erronee-du-conseil-federal

Related development(s)

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Switzerland extends temporary protection status (status S) for Ukrainians until 2027

Date of development

08.10.2025

Country

Switzerland

Thematic area(s)

Temporary Protection

Development type

Legislation

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