Under the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees a person must demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution for following reasons:

Membership in a Social Group:

- Membership in a social group may also be used as a ground of persecution for refugee status under the 1951 Convention. It is considered to be a catch-all provision, which may include any group of persons, or an individual associated with a particular group, who demonstrate common characteristics (e.g., similar backgrounds, sexual orientation, habits or social status). These common characteristics must be immutable and fundamental to a person's identity such that the person should not be able to change it. A 'particular social group' may also refer to a person's family, trade union, social organisation, sexual orientation, or gender.

Political Opinion:

- Political opinion refers to opinion on any matter in which the machinery of the State, or government, is engaged. Government's persecution based on political opinion occurs when that opinion is viewed as an actual or perceived threat to that government or its institutions. A situation may also arise where the refugee does not have a political opinion in opposition to the government or State entity, but is imputed to hold such views. This concept of imputed behaviour is accounted for in the refugee definition. An example of political opinion persecution is found in Tibetan refugees in India, who faced both political and ethnic persecution by the Chinese government, forcing them to flee the region they had regarded as autonomous.

Persecution by Non-State Agents:

- The 1951 Convention is not limited to those who fear persecution from State agents alone. It also includes persecution by non-State agents due to the non availability of State protection. Governments are oft en unable to suppress large scale human rights violations, or are reluctant to do so because they are colluding with those responsible, for political and diplomatic reasons. Where protection is unavailable, persecution within the convention may result.