

# UPrep Model United Nations 2024



# UNHCR

## United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



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# Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at UPrepMUN 2024! It is with great enthusiasm that we gather to delve into the critical issue of Refugee Displacement and Relocation. Our discussions will focus on creating sustainable solutions for refugee crises, addressing the root causes of displacement, and ensuring the humane treatment of all refugees. We will explore the complexities of international cooperation, the role of governments and NGOs, and the impact of policy decisions on the lives of refugees.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing these pressing global issues. We anticipate a productive and insightful session.

All the best,

Anousha Mukherjee, Chair

Amelia Lipton & Halle Hollon, Assistant Directors

# Committee Overview

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in 1950 to protect forcibly displaced and stateless people. UNHCR has worked with more than 100 countries to ensure the rights of refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. The core principle of the committee is to protect human rights and prevent refoulement, the forcible return of refugees to their country of origin where they are susceptible to persecution. Through partnerships with host countries, UNHCR hopes to build better futures and long-term solutions for displaced people. In this committee, delegates will assess the effectiveness of current policies and initiatives addressing displaced persons and evaluate challenges host countries face in providing support through education, healthcare, employment, and legal rights. Additionally, delegates will work to address issues and pass resolutions to improve the lives of refugees around the globe.

# Topic A:

## Refugee Displacement and Relocation

# Topic Introduction

Assessing the economic consequences of refugee influx on host nations is crucial for developing policies that balance the advantages and burdens of refugee protection. By understanding the potential economic impacts of refugee arrivals, governments can design targeted solutions. They can invest in education and job training programs to help integrate refugees into the labor market, as well as provide financial assistance to local governments and communities to alleviate pressure on public services.

Refugees can bring significant economic benefits to their host countries, such as filling labor gaps, creating new businesses, and contributing towards overall economic growth through their consumption and investment. For instance, a report by the World Bank found that Syrian refugees in Germany contributed to a 2.2% GDP increase in 2015 by the initiation of new businesses, closure of gaps in the job market, and increasing demand for goods and services. Similarly, a study by the German Economic Institute found that refugees could contribute to Germany's long-term economic growth by addressing the country's aging population and labor shortages. The study estimated that refugees could help increase Germany's GDP by up to 0.25% per year over the next few decades.

However, the influx of refugees can also cause significant economic burdens on host nations. Refugees may diminish substantial public resources to provide for their basic needs, such as housing, healthcare, and education. They may also compete with local workers for jobs, leading to downward pressure on wages and increased unemployment. In some cases, the arrival of large numbers of refugees can pressure public services and infrastructure, leading to social tensions and political instability. For example, Uganda is currently hosting over 1.5 million refugees, and while the government has implemented a progressive refugee policy that allows refugees to work, start businesses, and access public services, the influx of refugees has placed significant pressure on public services and infrastructure.



# Past Action

After WWI, millions of people were displaced from their homelands to seek refuge. These numbers increased drastically during WWII. Governments responded to this international refugee crisis by providing travel documents, assembling a set of guidelines for protecting basic human rights, and insuring proper treatment of those forced to flee conflict. These initiatives began under the League of Nations in 1921, and finished with the 1951 Refugee Convention. The convention allowed refugees to access numerous rights: non-discrimination, housing, land and property, education, freedom of religion, justice, freedom of movement within the territory, social protection, decent jobs, and anti-refoulement.

The UNHCR later hosted the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. This convention was crucial migrants outside of Europe. Previously, the 1951 Refugee Convention protected refugees in the aftermath of “events occurring before 1 January 1951”. This document was widely understood to only include “events only occurring in Europe”. The 1967 Protocol helped remove geographic and time-based barriers and increased access globally for refugee protections. Countless of migrants from Syria, Congo, and Myanmar benefited from this protocol.

In July 2019, UNHCR launched the Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (GCR 3). In 2020, the COVID-19 crisis impacted the ability of refugees to access resettlement and complementary pathways. Many refugees cannot return home because of continued conflict and cannot remain in their asylum country because specific needs are not met. Resettlement allows refugees to settle in a third country. This program is overseen by UNHCR, who ensures refugees are safely transferred and eventually admitted permanent residence in a new country. The GCR3 also introduced complementary pathways, which are alternative strategies for refugees in host countries. These include humanitarian admission programs, medical evaluations, family reunification, private sponsorship, and opportunities for labor and education.

# Current Situation

The global refugee crisis has become a critical issue, with millions of people displaced from their homes due to various reasons such as conflict, persecution, and natural disasters. According to UNHCR, as of 2024, there are more than 130 million people displaced worldwide. As refugees seek safety in their new countries, it is essential to assess the economic consequences of their arrival. Evaluating the benefits and setbacks of refugee influx can help policymakers and national governments develop effective strategies to support both refugees and host communities.

The committee works in more than 130 countries total, protecting millions of people with necessary support, safeguarding fundamental human rights, and helping them build a better future. Eight major places of focus for UNHCR are Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sahel, Bangladesh, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Venezuela. For example, in Mali, the arrival of forcibly displaced populations has contributed to waste-management issues and expanded landfills.

In the city of Timbuktu, severe sanitation issues have been created in the past few years following the influx of refugees. UNHCR's program Association Gouna-Thieré works to clean up the living environment. They have created a cash-for-work system to collect plastic waste and recycle it into items such as artwork and paving stones. In Lithuania, refugees are mostly excluded from startups and the entrepreneurship economy. UNHCR's Talent Together initiative facilitates market-driven skills, entrepreneurial development, and innovative partnerships. The program is embedded into existing networks and initiatives at the local and regional level.



# Case Studies

## **SINGAPORE**

Migrant workers in Singapore have contributed a lot to society, through their labor and resilient spirit. However, mainstream media has influenced the public's view on migrant workers, increasing the stigma directed towards them. Many migrant families in Singapore are confined by the Kafala system. The Kafala system is a set of laws and policies for migrant workers primarily in the Middle East, but also in some parts of Southeast Asia. Migrants under the Kafala system are often exploited for their labor. They cannot leave the country or change their job without the consent of the Kafala employer, called the *Kafeel*. Singapore is working towards better working conditions for migrants and better societal recognition for their effort.

## **DENMARK**

Denmark has nearly 49,000 migrants, most from Poland, Ukraine, and Romania. Despite this large number, Denmark has recently introduced harsh immigration policies in the last decade. One of the laws allows migrants arriving in Denmark to immediately be transferred to asylum centers in a partner country. On September 26th, 2012, Syrian refugees held a protest against Denmark's "temporary removal of protection" for Syrian refugees. Some were forced back to Damascus after the government ruled the return as "safe". The protesters claim they have no access to human rights in Denmark as guaranteed by UNHCR. On the other hand, private organizations in the country are creating projects for vulnerable children and youth, integrating them into the public.

## **KENYA**

Kenya is home to some of the largest groups of migrants and hosts some of the world's largest refugee camps (Kakuma and Dadaab). Refugees in Kenya lack access to basic needs and services. Many struggle with transportation and access to work. These refugees come from Somalia, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Burundi. On July 26th, 2023, Kenya passed a bill that created private agencies who would regulate the recruitment of workers inside and outside Kenya. The bill safeguarded the rights of the migrants. There has also been an increase in people leaving Kenya. These emigrants have migrated mainly to the United States and Canada.

# Bloc Positions

## **High-Income Countries: Prioritizing Sustainable Development**

United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, Singapore, Australia

These countries prioritize sustainable integration and development for refugees. Their goals are adaptive long-term solutions that are environmentally-friendly. They also build infrastructure and transportation for refugee communities.

## **Middle-Income Countries: Prioritizing Jobs and Economic Growth**

Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Thailand, Spain

These countries focus on maximizing economic opportunities. They will create jobs and support entrepreneurship for both refugees and their own citizens. However, these countries place a strong emphasis on safety and cultural cohesion, featuring strict migration policies.

## **Middle-Income Countries: Prioritizing Education and Social Integration**

Colombia, Philippines, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Kenya, Bangladesh, Romania

These countries highlight education and social integration. They will work to remove stigma and cultural bias in their society. They will provide equal access to education through the creation of new schools and universities.

## **Low-Income Countries: Prioritizing Basic Needs and Resources**

Venezuela, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nepal, Uganda, Honduras, Guatemala, Cameroon

These countries place an emphasis on the distribution of essential resources such as food, clothing, and shelter. They prioritize the protection of human rights for refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. They advocate for policies that ensure access to healthcare, non-discrimination, and freedom of movement.

# Guiding Questions

1. What policies should host countries create to be welcoming and inclusive for refugees?
2. What rights are refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers guaranteed?
3. How can host countries integrate refugees into the public workforce?
4. What are the economic benefits of refugees? The economic disadvantages?
5. How can education and training help refugees to rebuild their lives in the host country?
6. What sustainable and environmentally-friendly solutions can host countries create for refugees?
7. How can the host country address housing problems for refugees in urban areas?
8. What measures can be taken to prevent the exploitation of refugee workers?
9. How can a nation support the entrepreneurial efforts of a refugee community?
10. What infrastructure can be built to support a refugee community?

# Further Research

UNHCR website - <https://www.unhcr.org/us/>

Economic impacts -

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/news/new-report-reveals-refugees-profound-economic-contributions-and-integration-united-states>

Brazil - <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/unhcr-supports-brazils-response-to-devastating-floods/>

Uyghurs -

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/investigations/2024/05/02/un-declined-offers-assist-uyghur-asylum-seekers-detained-thailand>

Bangladesh -

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/rohingya-ap-indonesia-bangladesh-unhcr-b2517175.html>

Germany -

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-italy-milan-unhcr-italian-b2507959.html>

Refugees on Work and Study Permits -

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/announcements/more-refugees-entering-oecd-countries-work-study-and-family-reunification>

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