

## TOPIC A.-

### **“Finding Durable Solutions For Refugees”**

*“No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land.”*

26 million refugees worldwide – people have fled their country to escape war or persecution. Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, they have the right not to be returned to the country where they faced threats to their freedom or security. But no one wants to be a refugee their whole life. Being a refugee should not be permanent. Refugees should be able to rebuild their lives as citizens.

Therefore, it is important to advocate for “durable solutions” for refugees. These solutions include: 1) returning home voluntarily if the situation is safe, 2) being resettled to a third country, especially if they are in danger or cannot return home or being admitted in a third country through complementary pathways and 3) integrating and becoming citizens of their country of asylum.

Although refugees are protected under international law, they are often socially and economically excluded in the communities that host them. 86% of refugees live in low- to middle-income countries, which have limited capacity to support them.

As a result, many refugees live in poor urban areas (60% of refugees live in cities) or densely populated camps. Finding long-term solutions is key to sharing the responsibility equally of hosting refugees and helping refugees build better futures.

Examples of durable solutions for refugees committed by the UNHCR, governments and NGOs:

- Voluntary repatriation
- Resettlement
- Local integration

When voluntary repatriation is not feasible and refugees do not qualify for resettlement, a solution is for refugees to integrate in their country of asylum. Local integration is a gradual process which should ultimately lead to refugees gaining the nationality of their host country. Local integration can provide a realistic alternative to living in refugee camps.

Local integration starts with the provision of basic rights for refugees. This includes the right to work, access financial services, go to school, travel freely, etc. Yet, 70% of refugees live in countries with restricted right to work, 66% with restricted freedom of movement and 47% with restricted access to bank accounts.

In countries that have been hosting large numbers of refugees over protracted periods of time, efforts towards local integration are essential to reduce the tensions that can occur between refugees and host communities over resources, land, jobs, and other services.

Once refugees access fundamental rights, States can take steps to facilitate their integration and naturalization (granting of citizenship) of refugees.

According to the 1951 Convention, States are encouraged but cannot be compelled to grant nationality to refugees settled in their territory. UNHCR estimates that, over the past decade, 1.1 million refugees around the world became citizens in their country of asylum.

### Questions to Guide the Debate Useful Resources

- How can States be convinced to invest more in durable solutions?
- How can governments be motivated and urged to expand their resettlement programmes?
- How can citizens be convinced to sponsor refugees through private resettlement schemes?
- How do the resettled refugees be assured to be properly integrated in their new country?
- How can civil society be engaged to support complementary pathways?
- How to make sure that repatriation programs are safe and voluntary?
- How can States be convinced to naturalize refugees who have been in their countries for a long time?
- How can refugees be ensured of their access to health services, housing and work?
- What role can local citizens play to help refugees integrate both in countries of asylum and resettlement countries?

### Useful Resources

General:

- [UNHCR Solutions for Refugees.](#)
- [UNHCR Global Trends.](#)
- [Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern.](#)

#### Resettlement:

- [UNHCR Resettlement numbers.](#)
- [Resettlement Data Finder \(UNHCR\).](#)
- [UNHCR- What is Resettlement?](#)

#### Local Integration:

- [UNHCR | Integration Handbook.](#)
- [UNHCR | Local Integration.](#)
- [The forgotten solution: local integration for refugees in developing countries.](#)

#### Voluntary Repatriation:

- [UNHCR | Voluntary Repatriation Handbook.](#)
- [UNHCR | Returnees.](#)

#### Complementary Pathways:

- [Complementary Pathways for Admission of Refugees to Third Countries: Key Consideration.](#)
- [Three Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways.](#)
- [Complementary Pathways.](#)

*This Background guide is from the MUN REFUGEE CHALLENGE.*