



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



Addressing The Situation Of
Internally Displaced in South Asia With
Emphasis on Afghanistan

DIPLOMACY

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DELIBERATION

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DISCUSSION

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear delegates, The Executive Board of SSNMUN-2022 welcomes each one of you. For many, it may be the first-ever MUN conference in your educational experience, and we strongly encourage you to go through the study guide that has been prepared for you as a part of the conference in order to get an in-depth understanding of the issue that will be discussed in the committee. However, there is a lot of content available beyond the study guides too. You are expected to research, collate, list down possible points of discussion, questions, and plausible responses and be prepared to enjoy the intellectual energy in the group. At the same time, it is not only about speaking and presenting, but very importantly it is also about the ability to listen, understand viewpoints and learn from each one's perspectives. Wishing all of you a great learning experience. Looking forward to having you all with us.

Good luck & Godspeed.

Regards,

The Executive Board.

Introduction to the United Nations Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office in Geneva. The term of each seat is three years, and no member may occupy a seat for more than two consecutive terms.

The General Assembly can suspend the rights and privileges of any Council member that it decides has persistently committed gross and systematic violations of human rights during its term of membership. The suspension process requires a two-thirds majority vote by the General Assembly. When electing members of the Council, Member States shall consider the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments made. The members elected to the Council are expected to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Mandate of UNHRC

The mandate of the Human Rights Council was established by resolution 60/251. It states that the Council shall be responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner. Its mandate, among other things, is to:

- a) Promote human rights education and learning as well as advisory services, technical assistance, and capacity-building, to be provided in consultation with and with the consent of Member States concerned.
- b) Make recommendations to the General Assembly for the further development of international law in the field of human rights.
- c) Undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfillment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments in a manner that ensures universality of coverage and equal treatment with respect to all States.
- d) Contribute, through dialogue and cooperation, towards the prevention of human rights violations and respond promptly to human rights emergencies.
- e) Work in close cooperation in the field of human rights with governments, regional organizations, national human rights institutions, and civil society.

Agenda

Addressing the situation of Internally Displaced Persons in South Asia with special emphasis on Afghanistan. Key terms relating to the agenda:

a.MENA region: MENA stands for the Middle East and Northern Africa, referring to the countries between Iran in the East and Tunisia and Morocco in the West.

b.MENAP region: MENA region along with the Greater Middle East, which also includes the South Asian countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

c.Internally displaced persons (IDPs): According to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, IDPs are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border."

d.Refugee: A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country

Introduction to the Agenda

The problem of the world's internally displaced people is an increasingly alarming issue that the international community has ever faced. Internally displaced persons are defined as persons or groups of persons who have left their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internally recognized state border. There were 55 million internally displaced people across the world at the end of 2020, mainly coming from nations that experience internal uprisings or strife. Internationally, internal displacement has come to the fore as one of the more pressing humanitarian, human rights, political, and security issues facing the global community. Millions of persons worldwide are forcibly displaced within the borders of their own countries by conflict and human rights violations. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan calls the problem "one of the great human tragedies of our time". Conflict and displacement not only disrupt the lives of the individuals and families concerned but whole communities and societies. Both the areas left behind and the areas to which the displaced flee often suffer extensive damage. In many cases, socioeconomic systems and community structures break down, impeding reconstruction and development for decades. Nor do internal conflicts and displacement remain confined within borders.

Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find sanctuary and therefore have remained within their own home countries. A person becomes a refugee only once he or she crosses an international border, whereas an internally displaced person remains within his or her home country. Although IDPs outnumber refugees nearly 2 to 1, displaced persons usually lack better care or protection, since as citizens they are under the protection of their own government, even if that government might be the cause of their flight. Internally displaced persons are within their own countries, and their governments have primary responsibility for their security and well-being. But in most cases, their governments are unable to provide for their protection and assistance or sometimes deliberately cause the displacement and obstruct international efforts to reach those uprooted.

In other cases, there is no government at all. Regional and international attention becomes essential. The United Nations Security Council has become preoccupied in recent years with the impact of internal conflict and displacement on both regional and international peace and security. This is not surprising since it is called upon increasingly to intervene, or to authorize the dispatch of regional forces when situations get out of hand and troops are needed to reach displaced persons at risk.

It is understandable to be overwhelmed by the sheer numbers—and potentially put off by the violence, political situations and other complexities often involved. However, here is the challenge: those who have been displaced—even within their own nation's borders as IDPs—can face unimaginable humanitarian hardships. And when it comes to IDPs in particular, there is no binding international law or agency with the full authority/formal responsibility to ensure they receive the assistance they need. It is especially challenging for those internally displaced due to conflict rather than natural disasters. In some cases, the ruling government could be responsible – directly or indirectly – for the displacement, and actions they take may continue to perpetuate ongoing displacement and further movement.

Aspects of the Agenda

What is the difference between an internally displaced person and a refugee? According to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, a "refugee" is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

A crucial requirement to be considered a "refugee" is crossing an international border. Persons forcibly displaced from their homes who cannot or choose not to cross a border, therefore, are not considered refugees, even if they share many of the same circumstances and challenges as those who do. Unlike refugees, internally displaced people do not have a special status in international law with rights specific to their situation. The term "internally displaced person" is merely descriptive.

Current Situation

Millions of people are forced to flee their homes or places of habitual residence each year, including in the context of conflict, violence, development projects, disasters, and climate change, and remain displaced within their countries of residence.

Millions more live in situations of protracted displacement or face chronic displacement risk. As of the end of 2020, 55 million people were living in internal displacement because of conflict, violence, and disasters. These numbers show that internal displacement is a crisis of enormous proportion and yet, the world is largely unaware.

Afghanistan faces one of the world's most acute internal displacement crises as it suffers protracted conflict and insecurity as well as recurring disasters, including droughts, floods, storms, and earthquakes. Displacement has become a common coping strategy for many Afghans and, in some cases, an inevitable feature of life for multiple generations. Humanitarian needs are high, and the situation is further complicated by widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services. Over 404,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in 2020, and there were 3.5 million people internally displaced as a result at the end of the year. This latter figure is an 18 percent increase compared with 2019 and the highest figure in more than a decade. Disasters throughout 2020 triggered more than 46,000 new displacements, with most displacements caused by flooding in March, May, and August, particularly affecting the eastern provinces.

Problems faced by IDPs

People forced to flee or leave their homes - particularly in situations of armed conflict - are generally subject to heightened vulnerability in a number of areas. Displaced persons suffer significantly higher rates of mortality than the general population. They also remain at high risk of physical attack, sexual assault, and abduction, and frequently are deprived of adequate shelter, food, and health services. The overwhelming majority of internally displaced persons are women and children who are especially at risk of abuse of their basic rights. More often than refugees, the internally displaced tend to remain close to or become trapped in zones of conflict, caught in the crossfire, and at risk of being used as pawns, targets, or human shields by the belligerents.

With even support from the government and other stakeholders, there is an inadequate supply of food, shelter, and healthcare, not to talk of other amenities which they require. Women and children are the most vulnerable, they faced a series of abuses, sometimes they suffer attacks and, or relocation from one IDPs camp to another. Some of these children came to these camps without their parents. "Most of them came especially the children had eye diseases, malaria, fatigue, hungry and traumatized". Women came to the camps with either pregnancies or are being raped; there is acute job opportunity and inadequate school to cater to the population.

This is not to say that IDPs do not have legal protections. Despite the absence of a specific international legal framework, IDPs are protected by International Human Rights Law and domestic law at all times, and in armed conflict, benefit from the protections that any civilian is entitled to under International Humanitarian Law. This is the basis for the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which, without creating new legal obligations, identify the clear and existing responsibilities of sovereign states to respond to the needs of IDPs.

Statistics

Regionally, the IDMC reports the following new displacements for each region:

- Sub-Saharan Africa – 7.4 million for conflict and 2.6 million for disasters. Millions of people were forced to flee their homes as a consequence of ongoing and new conflicts and violence, as well as droughts, floods, and storms. Internal displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa was higher than in any other region. Africa is the only region with a convention protecting the rights of IDPs.
- Middle East and North Africa – 2.1 million for conflict and 214,000 for disasters. Conflict and violence continued to drive internal displacement in the region, with more than 2.1 million new displacements in 2018. Almost 11 million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of that year, accounting for more than a quarter of the global total.
- East Asia and Pacific – 236,000 for conflicts and 9.3 million for disasters. Over a third of the total new global displacements were recorded in the region; most were triggered by disasters. From highly exposed countries such as the Philippines, China, Indonesia and Japan, to small island states and territories such as Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and Vanuatu, the impacts varied significantly across the vast region.
- South Asia – 544,000 for conflict and 3.3 million for disasters. Large-scale displacement in South Asia was once again triggered by a series of floods, storms and droughts, as well as unresolved conflicts and violence. Nearly 14 percent of global internal displacement was recorded in this region.
- The Americas – 404,000 for conflict and 1.7 million for disasters. Weather-related disasters once again impacted several countries in the Americas in 2018. In addition, unresolved conflict, criminal violence and social and economic crises continued to push people to flee.

- Europe and Central Asia – 12,000 for conflict and 41,000 for disasters. A total of 53,000 new displacements were recorded across this region in 2018. In addition, almost 2.9 million people were living in internal displacement as of the end of that year, the result of old and unresolved conflicts and territorial disputes in several countries.

Facts

- Much progress has been made in ensuring care for IDPs in recent years; the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, for example, was a strong start. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre has been at the forefront of collecting statistics and keeping track of the protection and assistance needs of IDPs throughout the world.
- In attempting to help those displaced, lack of access can be the biggest issue. IDPs typically are located outside of camps in either remote or urban areas, making them harder to reach and assist. In addition, if the conflict is involved, they may be in areas that are considered unsafe.
- If conflict is involved, humanitarian assistance may need to remain fluid. This means funders must be more flexible since they will likely need to put more trust in partnering nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) than they are accustomed to doing. Programs may be managed remotely and therefore may be less transparent.
- Those who are displaced are often the poorest or most vulnerable from the outset. This is especially true with IDPs; the more money available, the farther travel is possible including to another nation, where refugee status may help with access to services.
- Roughly three of four people who are displaced are women and dependent children. As a result, issues such as health care, nutrition and education must remain at the forefront.

- Acute natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods are often the cause of displacement. But slow-onset natural disasters, such as persistent drought and rising sea levels, on the rise due to climate change, are bringing new questions about assistance for those affected. Many governments are already contemplating and implementing measures to move vulnerable populations out of harm's way. However, the relocation of at-risk populations to protect them from disasters and the impacts of environmental change, including the effects of climate change, carries serious risks for those it is intended to benefit, including the disruption of livelihoods and loss of cultural practices.
- Displacement may result in major population shifts. After a disaster, even when an area is inhabitable again, people may choose to continue living in their new location, especially if housing or job prospects are minimal in their place of origin. Gentrification following disasters may make their original home unaffordable. IDPs in international contexts (e.g., Syria, Venezuela) may be displaced for years.

Conclusion

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) go through severe stress due to their plight, which implies that if measure is not taken to address the situation it could lead to serious social and health problems. The peace building process of Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction are the most crucial component to resettlement of these vulnerable people. Therefore, consultation by government is necessary and should be widely sought so that experts can render advice on grey areas in order to come up with a more workable solution to this issue of displacement.

The plight of these vulnerable people deserves the attention of the international community. Addressing the drivers and causes of internal displacement, as well as the often-long-term needs of IDPs, will ultimately assist in tackling not only the refugee crisis, but also help progress towards and achieve sustainable development. As such, if a Global Compact on internally displaced persons is unlikely, the international community should make the most of existing processes and frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, in integrating IDPs concerns and ensuring that truly no one is left behind.

Case study: The Syrian Civil war

a. Background

The Syrian civil war is the epitome of a health and humanitarian crisis, as highlighted by recent chemical attacks in a Damascus suburb. After 7 long years of war, more than 6 million people are internally displaced within Syria — the largest displacement crisis in the world — and more than 5 million registered Syrian refugees have been relocated to neighboring countries. Syrian internally displaced persons (IDPs) are individuals who continue to reside in a fractured Syrian state now comprising a patchwork of government- and opposition-held areas suffering from a breakdown in governance.

Though Syrian refugees and IDPs face similar difficulties in relation to healthcare access in a time of conflict and displacement, their specific challenges and health needs are distinctly different, as IDPs lack the same rights guaranteed under international law as refugees, and refugees have variations in access depending on their circumstances. Specifically, there are gaps in access to medical care and medicines for both the internally displaced and refugees, whether it be in Syria, in transit countries (including services for refugees living in camps versus those living near urban cities), or in eventual resettlement countries.

b. Health crisis

Refugee and internally displaced women and children face health challenges in conflict situations, as they are often more vulnerable than other patient populations, with pregnant women and children at particularly high risk for poor health outcomes that can have significant short-term, long-term, and inter-generational health consequences. Shared challenges include a lack of access to healthcare and MCH services, inadequate vaccination coverage, risk of malnutrition and starvation, increased burden of mental health issues due to exposure to trauma, and other forms of exploitation and violence such as early marriage, abuse, discrimination, and gender-based violence.

c.Risk for women

A 2016 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report estimated that 360,000 Syrian IDPs are pregnant, yet many do not receive any antenatal or postnatal care. According to estimates by the UNFPA in 2015, without adequate international funding, 70,000 pregnant Syrian women faced the risk of giving birth in unsafe conditions if access to maternal health services was not improved. By contrast, during pre-conflict periods, Syrian women enjoyed access to standard antenatal care, and 96% of deliveries were assisted by a skilled birth attendant

d.Risk for children

For most Syrian internally displaced and refugee children, the consequences of facing lack of access to essential healthcare combined with the risk of malnutrition (including cases of severe malnutrition and death among children in besieged areas) represent a life-threatening challenge. Pre-crisis, 90% of Syrian children received routine vaccination, with this coverage now experiencing a dramatic decline to approximately 60%. A consequence of lack of adequate vaccine coverage is the rise of deadly preventable infectious diseases such as meningitis, measles, and even polio, which was eradicated in Syria in 1995, but has recently re-emerged. Syrian refugee children are also showing symptoms of psychological trauma as a result of witnessing the war.

e.Response to the crisis

In direct response to the acute needs faced by Syrian internally displaced women and children, we describe the establishment, services provided, and challenges faced by the Brotherhood Medical Centre, which opened its doors to patients in September 2014. In addition to the Centre, there are multiple healthcare centers and field hospitals serving Atimah and surrounding areas that cover most medical specialties. These facilities are largely run by local and international health agencies including Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Medical Relief for Syria, and Hand in Hand for Syria, among others.

f.Conclusion

A primary challenge is the myriad of logistical difficulties faced by local medical humanitarian organizations operating in conflict zones. Specifically, the Center continues to experience barriers in securing a reliable and consistent supply of medical equipment and materials needed to ensure continued operation of its clinical services. Despite these challenges, it is clear that different types of medical humanitarian interventions deployed in the midst of health crises have their own unique roles and contributions. However, the success of the Center and other initiatives working to end the suffering of Syrians ultimately relies on macro-organizational and political issues outside Atimah's border. This includes better coordination and cooperation of aid and humanitarian stakeholder.

**Good Luck And
May The Force Be With You!**