



UNHCR

ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

TALMUN'24

Agenda Item: Addressing the Global Refugee Crisis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Welcoming Letters**
 - a. Letter from the Head of Academy
 - b. Letter from the USG of UNHCR
- 2. Introduction to the Committee**
- 3. Introduction to the Agenda Item**
 - a. Difference of Refugee and Immigrant
 - b. Reasons of Refugee
 - i. Wars and Conflicts
 - ii. Violation of Human Rights
 - iii. Environmental Factors
 - iv. Economic Hardship
 - c. Refugee Rights
 - i. Housing Rights
 - ii. Labor Rights
 - iii. Education Rights
 - iv. Health Rights
 - v. Equality in Rights
 - d. Refugee Integration
 - i. Role of Governments
 - ii. Role of UN
 - iii. Role of NGO's
 - iv. Role of Society
 - e. Refugee Awareness
 - i. Racism
 - ii. Xenophobia
 - f. Psychology
 - g. Child Refugees
 - h. Current Situation & Case Studies
- 4. Statements Resolution Should Cover**
- 5. Bibliography**

1. Welcoming Letters

Letter from the HEAD OF ACADEMY

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I extend a warm welcome to each of you participating in this first Tekirdağ Anatolian High School Model United Nations conference. As the Head of Academy, I am thrilled to witness your dedication to global affairs and diplomatic discourse.

As we embark on this diplomatic journey, I urge you to approach the agenda with curiosity and an open mind. Embrace the challenges that lie ahead, for it is through overcoming these challenges that you will truly thrive as delegates. The essence of Model United Nations lies in the exchange of ideas, compromise, and the pursuit of common ground.

I encourage you to engage wholeheartedly, drawing upon your diverse perspectives and critical thinking skills. Remember, the skills you develop during this conference extend beyond the committee walls. MUN not only hones your understanding of global affairs but also nurtures leadership, negotiation, and public speaking abilities.

Wishing you a successful and rewarding Model United Nations experience.

Best Regards,

ECE UMAR

Head of Academy

b. Letter from the USG of UNHCR

As the Under Secretary General of the UNHCR Committee, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you.

Your role in the committee is integral, and I am confident that your perspectives will significantly enhance our discussions. The UNHCR's mission to address global refugee issues provides a platform for engaging with complex humanitarian challenges, and your active participation is crucial to our collective success.

Throughout the conference, our goal is to foster a dynamic and collaborative environment. Engage in discussions, negotiate resolutions, and work collaboratively towards effective solutions on addressing “The Global Refugee Crisis”. I encourage you to approach these discussions with creativity and innovation.

For this conference, I am fully confident that the UNHCR Committee will show its efforts to solve the refugee problem and that its efforts will reach a conclusion. I believe your insights could play a key role in decision-making, forward-thinking, and finding a long-term solution.

Thank you for your tireless commitment to advancing the refugee solution, and I look forward to meeting you and witnessing the valuable contributions you will bring to the UNHCR Committee.

Best Regards,

Masal Naz Çalışkan

Under-Secretary-General

2. Introduction to the Committee

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. They lead international action to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. Their vision is a world where every person forced to flee can build a better future.

Formally known as the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1950 in the aftermath of the Second World War to help the millions of people who had lost their homes.

Today, UNHCR works in 135 countries. They provide life-saving assistance, including shelter, food, water, and medical care for people forced to flee conflict and persecution, many of whom have nobody left to turn to. We defend their right to reach safety and help them find a place to call home so they can rebuild their lives. Long term, they work with countries to improve and monitor refugee and asylum laws and policies, ensuring human rights are upheld.

In everything they do, UNHCR considers refugees and those forced to flee as partners, putting those most affected at the center of planning and decision-making.

3. Introduction to the Agenda Item

a. Difference between Refugee and Immigrant

The terms 'refugee' and 'migrant' are frequently used interchangeably in media and public discourse. But is there a difference between the two, and does it matter?

Yes, there is a difference, and it does matter. The two terms have distinct and different meanings, and confusing them leads to problems for both populations. Here's why:

Refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution. There were 21.3 million of them worldwide at the end of 2015. Their situation is often so perilous and intolerable that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as "refugees" with access to assistance from States, UNHCR, and other organizations. They are so recognized precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they need sanctuary elsewhere. These are people for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences.

Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as well as other legal texts, such as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, remain the cornerstone of modern refugee protection. The legal principles they enshrine have

permeated into countless other international, regional, and national laws and practices. The 1951 Convention defines who is a refugee and outlines the basic rights that States should afford to refugees. One of the most fundamental principles laid down in international law is that refugees should not be expelled or returned to situations where their lives and freedom would be under threat.

The protection of refugees has many aspects. These include safety from being returned to the dangers they have fled; access to asylum procedures that are fair and efficient; and measures to ensure that their basic human rights are respected to allow them to live in dignity and safety while helping them to find a longer-term solution. States bear the primary responsibility for this protection. UNHCR therefore works closely with governments, advising and supporting them as needed to implement their responsibilities.

Migrants choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such impediment to return. If they choose to return home, they will continue to receive the protection of their government.

For individual governments, this distinction is important. Countries deal with migrants under their immigration laws and processes. Countries deal with refugees through norms of refugee protection and asylum that are defined in both national legislation and international law. Countries have specific responsibilities towards anyone seeking asylum on their territories or at their borders. UNHCR helps countries deal with their asylum and refugee protection responsibilities.

Politics has a way of intervening in such debates. Conflating refugees and migrants can have serious consequences for the lives and safety of refugees. Blurring the two terms takes attention away from the specific legal protections refugees require. It can undermine public support for refugees and the institution of asylum at a time when more refugees need such protection than ever before. We need to treat all human beings with respect and dignity. We need to ensure that the human rights of migrants are respected. At the same time, we also need to provide an appropriate legal response for refugees, because of their particular predicament.

So, back to Europe and the large numbers of people arriving in recent years by boats in Greece, Italy and elsewhere. Which are they? Refugees or migrants?

They happen to be both. The majority of people arriving in Italy and Greece especially have been from countries mired in war or which otherwise are considered to be 'refugee-producing' and for whom international protection is needed. However, a smaller proportion is from elsewhere, and for many of these individuals, the term 'migrant' would be correct.

So, at UNHCR we say 'refugees and migrants' when referring to movements of people by sea or in other circumstances where we think both groups may be present – boat movements in

Southeast Asia are another example. We say 'refugees' when we mean people fleeing war or persecution across an international border. And we say 'migrants' when we mean people moving for reasons not included in the legal definition of a refugee. We hope that others will give thought to doing the same. Choices about words do matter.

b. Reasons of Refugee

Refugees are people who have been forced to flee their home country due to various reasons. Refugees often have no other option but to leave their home country due to some factors, which are often outside of their control. They seek safety and protection in other countries, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is an international resource for refugees and countries offering asylum.

The main reasons for refugees seeking safety in other countries are:

i. Wars and Conflicts

Wars and conflicts stand as significant catalysts for the displacement of people, creating a multitude of refugees worldwide. They are one of the significant reasons for refugees fleeing their home countries. Armed conflicts can result in devastating loss of civilian life, massive displacement, and violations of human rights.

Many victims flee their homes to escape violence, persecution, and the devastating consequences of war. Refugees often face challenges such as displacement, loss of livelihoods, separation from family, and exposure to trauma. The ongoing conflicts in Yemen, Syria, and Somalia are examples of how wars and conflicts can lead to refugees fleeing their home countries.

ii. Violation of Human Rights

Violations of human rights can lead to refugees fleeing their home country due to the inability to enjoy basic rights and freedoms. Some examples of human rights violations that may force people to seek refuge in other countries include:

- Arbitrary detention
- Torture and ill-treatment
- Denial of civil and political rights
- Economic exploitation
- Discrimination

These violations can occur in the country of origin or during the process of seeking asylum based on things like ethnicity, religion, or gender. When refugees flee their home country, they often do so to escape these abuses and enjoy the protection of other countries.

iii. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors can also lead to people becoming refugees. Climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation can force individuals to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere.

Environmental stressors can affect people's livelihoods, particularly those in rural areas whose lives depend on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture and fishing.

The effects of climate change can exacerbate challenges such as limited access to clean water, food scarcity, and agricultural degradation, which in turn can become significant push factors in human migration patterns.

While climate change may not be the sole factor prompting migration in all cases, it is increasingly recognized as a contributing factor to displacement, particularly in vulnerable populations.

iv. Economic Hardship

Economic hardship is another reason that can lead to people becoming refugees. Economic refugees are individuals who leave their home country in search of better job prospects and higher living standards elsewhere.

Some factors contributing to economic hardship as a reason for refugees include:

- Limited economic opportunities
- Poverty
- Inflation
- Food insecurity
- Lack of access to basic services

These economic factors often force people to leave their homes and seek refuge in other countries, where they hope to find greater opportunities for growth and advancement.

c. Refugee Rights

i. Housing Rights

People on the move, whether they are refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), or migrants, face increased vulnerability to a range of human rights violations. The right to adequate housing is at the center of these violations. This population is particularly vulnerable to discrimination, racism, and xenophobia, factors that further undermine their ability to establish durable and adequate living conditions. Refugee and IDP camps around the world, especially in protracted displacement scenarios, often show signs of deterioration

and overcrowding, resulting in substandard shelter and services. Due to practical constraints or restrictions on their legal status, many are unable to secure adequate housing through renting, forcing them to endure overcrowded and unsafe living conditions. In urban areas, migrants often live in precarious and unsafe dwellings, with employers sometimes requiring migrant domestic or factory workers to live in their workplace.

ii. Labor Rights

Ensuring refugees' labor rights goes beyond mere employment opportunities; it's about providing individuals with the means to support themselves and contribute positively to the communities that host them. Ensuring these rights involves more than access to jobs; it requires ensuring fair and equitable employment practices, creating opportunities for skills development, and eliminating any discriminatory practices that impede the integration of refugees into the workforce. This includes efforts to provide vocational training, recognition of foreign qualifications, and language support to enhance employability. Empowering refugees through meaningful work not only promotes economic independence but also fosters a sense of self-worth and dignity, enabling them to contribute their talents and skills to society.

iii. Education Rights

Education is not only a fundamental human right but also a beacon of hope for refugee children and youth whose lives have been disrupted by conflict or displacement. Ensuring access to education means more than providing classrooms; it requires creating inclusive learning environments that meet the diverse needs of refugee populations. Overcoming language barriers, addressing trauma through specialized support, and providing pathways to academic recognition are essential components. Education not only provides knowledge but also cultivates resilience and offers a sense of normalcy in the midst of chaos. It is an investment in the future that empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty, promote social inclusion, and make a positive contribution to society.

iv. Health Rights

In line with the principles of the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR prioritizes the fundamental right to health of refugees. The agency works closely with national ministries of health and partner agencies to facilitate access to health care in a range of situations, from emergencies to stable conditions. A core element of UNHCR's strategy is to advocate for the integration of refugees into national health systems, providing essential guidance, infrastructure, and financial support for diagnostics, drugs, and medical equipment.

In the area of primary health care, UNHCR places great emphasis on community health initiatives and the training of community health workers. These dedicated individuals play a vital role in the diagnosis, treatment, and referral of common illnesses, as well as in ensuring the continuity of care for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, newborn babies, and people with chronic illnesses. In addition, UNHCR is actively addressing the challenge of

noncommunicable diseases by integrating care into primary health care services, strengthening health infrastructure through construction or rehabilitation, and providing critical training and resources to local health workers.

v. Equality in Rights

Upholding the principle of equality of rights for all refugees, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other social identity, is fundamental. This principle requires not only legal recognition but also active efforts to eliminate systemic prejudice and discrimination within societies and institutions. It requires the creation of policies and environments that embrace diversity, promote inclusiveness, and actively combat prejudice and stereotyping. By advocating for equal rights, we not only ensure fair treatment for refugees but also foster a more cohesive and compassionate global community where everyone can thrive without fear of discrimination or exclusion.

d. Refugee Integration

Refugee integration is a multifaceted process involving the assimilation of refugees into their host communities. It goes beyond the efforts of governments and organizations, necessitating active engagement from the society itself. Successful integration relies on fostering welcoming attitudes, facilitating language and cultural exchange, providing employment opportunities, and encouraging educational initiatives.

Challenges, such as racism and xenophobia, may arise, but education and awareness campaigns play a vital role in overcoming these obstacles. Ultimately, refugee integration is a shared responsibility that, when approached inclusively and compassionately, contributes to building stronger, more cohesive societies for everyone.

Every part of the community plays a role in refugee integration such as:

i. Role of Governments

The role of governments in refugee integration is paramount in fostering social cohesion and ensuring the successful assimilation of displaced individuals into their new communities.

Governments play a crucial role in creating and implementing comprehensive policies that address the multifaceted challenges faced by refugees, including access to education, healthcare, employment, and housing. By developing inclusive and culturally sensitive programs, governments can facilitate language proficiency, vocational training, and job placement for refugees, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to their new societies.

Additionally, governments must promote community engagement and awareness initiatives to foster understanding and acceptance among the host population. Adequate legal frameworks and protection mechanisms are also essential to safeguard the rights of refugees, ensuring their dignified treatment and access to essential services. In essence, the active involvement of governments is indispensable in building a supportive environment that enables refugees to rebuild their lives and become integral members of their host communities.

ii. Role of UN

The United Nations (UN) assumes a pivotal role in addressing the challenges of refugee integration, working diligently to ensure that displaced individuals become integral parts of their new communities. The UN's focus encompasses key areas crucial for successful integration:

Education and Skills: The UN places a high priority on education, providing refugees with essential knowledge and skills to rebuild their lives and actively contribute to their new societies.

Healthcare and Services: UN agencies work diligently to ensure that refugees have access to vital healthcare and essential services. This includes addressing unique health challenges and overall improvements in living conditions.

Community Engagement: Fostering understanding within host communities is a core objective of the UN. Strategic community engagement initiatives are employed to promote social cohesion and inclusivity.

Legal Protection: The UN actively champions legal frameworks aimed at safeguarding the rights of refugees. This includes preventing discrimination and violence and creating a secure environment for those seeking asylum.

In summary, the UN's strategic approach, focusing on education, healthcare, community engagement, and legal protection, underscores its indispensable role in advancing global efforts toward the effective integration of refugees.

iii. Role of NGOs

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are instrumental in facilitating the integration of refugees into new communities.

Key Contributions that NGOs provide;

Education and Skill Development: NGOs provide language courses and vocational training, empowering refugees with the knowledge and skills needed for self-sufficiency and socio-economic contribution.

Healthcare and Well-being: NGOs address refugees' healthcare needs, offering medical services and mental health support to enhance overall well-being.

Community Engagement: NGOs foster understanding and acceptance through cultural exchange programs, community events, and support groups, contributing to the formation of inclusive communities.

Legal Assistance and Advocacy: NGOs actively advocate for refugee rights, providing legal assistance and raising awareness about their unique challenges on the global stage.

Housing and Livelihood Support: NGOs collaborate to secure housing solutions and employment opportunities, addressing fundamental needs for stability and self-reliance.

In summary, in the ongoing effort to address the refugee crisis, NGOs play a pivotal role in promoting successful integration. Through their dedication to education, healthcare, community engagement, legal advocacy, and livelihood support, NGOs contribute to creating environments where displaced individuals can rebuild their lives and actively participate in their new communities. The role of NGOs remains indispensable in fostering a more inclusive and compassionate world amidst the complexities of forced migration.

iv. Role of Society

The integration of refugees into new societies is a shared responsibility that extends beyond government and non-governmental efforts. Society itself plays a crucial role in creating an inclusive environment that fosters understanding, acceptance, and support for refugees.

Welcoming Attitudes: A welcoming attitude from members of the host society is fundamental. Simple acts of kindness, such as offering a friendly greeting or helping with everyday tasks, go a long way in making refugees feel valued and accepted.

Language and Cultural Exchange: Societal engagement in language and cultural exchange promotes communication and understanding. Language exchange programs and cultural events create opportunities for meaningful interactions, bridging gaps between different communities.

Employment Opportunities: Providing employment opportunities to refugees is essential for their economic independence and integration into the workforce. Openness in the job market and fair hiring practices promote the self-sufficiency of refugees.

Education and Skill-Sharing: Encouraging educational opportunities and skill-sharing programs help refugees adapt to their new environment. By sharing knowledge, society contributes to the empowerment of refugees.

Community Involvement: Inclusive community involvements, such as joint projects and events, create spaces for collaboration and friendship. This involvement fosters a sense of belonging for refugees.

While society's role in refugee integration is crucial, challenges like racism, fears(xenophobia), and prejudices may arise. Education and awareness campaigns can address these challenges, promoting a more informed and empathetic society.

e. Refugee Awareness

Racism and xenophobia are interconnected social discomfort that fuels discrimination and hostility based on perceived differences.

Racism, rooted in prejudice against individuals or groups due to their racial or ethnic identity, perpetuates systemic inequalities and prejudices.

Xenophobia, on the other hand, targets those perceived as foreign or culturally distinct, often leading to exclusion and mistrust. Both aspects share the common thread of fostering an "us versus them" mentality, promoting division and hindering social unity. Combating racism and xenophobia necessitates a multifaceted approach, including education, awareness, and policy changes that promote inclusivity and celebrate the richness of diversity, fostering a society that embraces unity over division.

i. Racism

Racism is a deeply entrenched social issue that involves the prejudiced belief in the inherent superiority of one race over another, leading to discrimination or antagonism directed against individuals or groups based on their perceived racial or ethnic identity.

Rooted in historical, cultural, and economic contexts, racism manifests itself in various forms, ranging from explicit acts of hate and violence to subtle, systemic biases ingrained in institutions. It perpetuates social disparities, limiting opportunities and access to resources for marginalized communities.

Racism has profound and lasting effects on individuals' mental and physical well-being, contributing to a cycle of inequality that can persist across generations.

Addressing racism requires not only acknowledging its existence but also challenging the structures that sustain it. This involves education, open dialogue, policy reforms, and collective efforts to promote inclusivity, diversity, and social justice. The fight against racism is an ongoing commitment that calls for a dedication to equality and the recognition of the essential worth and dignity of every individual, regardless of their racial background.

ii. Xenophobia

Xenophobia is a complex and deeply rooted societal issue characterized by fear, distrust, or dislike of individuals who are perceived to be foreign or different from the majority within a particular community.

It can manifest on various levels, from personal prejudices to institutional discrimination. Xenophobia often stems from a lack of understanding, cultural ignorance, economic insecurities, or political motivations. It can have far-reaching consequences, leading to social exclusion, discrimination, and even violence against those perceived as outsiders.

Tackling xenophobia requires concerted efforts at both individual and societal levels, including education to promote cultural awareness, policies that emphasize inclusivity, and fostering open dialogue to challenge and dismantle stereotypes. Addressing xenophobia is crucial not only for the well-being of targeted individuals but also for the overall health and unity of diverse societies.

f. Psychology

Mental healthcare for refugee patients¹ is an issue of international concern and is growing in importance as the number of displaced people worldwide is rising and now exceeds 79.5 million. Refugees are very heterogeneous and becoming and being a refugee is not of psychological, but of socio-political nature. However, many studies find higher prevalence rates of mental disorders in refugees in comparison to the general population of host countries. For instance, rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been found to be up to 10 times higher in refugees than in the general population. Elevated rates of depression and anxiety² have also been described in refugees. These findings can be explained by the psychological impacts of pre-flight exposure to war, persecution, and violence, the displacement experience, and post-migration struggles in host countries. Displaced persons may fear that they will experience their trauma again, worry obsessively about their home or children, or see danger around every corner. Anxiety can interfere with daily activities and make life incredibly challenging. Depression can be equally debilitating. Many refugees lose interest in activities they once enjoyed, and even the people closest to them can't make them feel better.

g. Child Refugees

Millions of children are on the move. Some are driven from their homes by conflict, poverty, or climate change; others live in the hope of finding a better life. Far too many encounter danger, detention, deprivation, and discrimination on their journeys, at their destination, or upon return. It doesn't have to be this way. The suffering and exclusion of migrant and displaced children is not only unacceptable but also preventable. A child is a child, no matter why she leaves home, where she comes from, where she is, or how she got there. Every child has the right to protection, care, and all the support and services they need to thrive. Yet, too often migrant and displaced children face numerous challenges in transit, at destination, and upon return, often because they have few - or no - pathways through safe and regular pathways whether on their own or with their families. They may be forced into child labor, pressed into early marriage, exposed to aggravated smuggling, subjected to human trafficking, and put at risk of violence and exploitation. They often miss out on education and proper medical care, and don't find it easy to feel at home in the communities they arrive in; trying to learn a new language and fit into a new culture can make things especially hard. These difficulties have lasting physical and psychological effects and can prevent children on the move from reaching their full potential. In 2018, there were 25.9 million refugees globally - the highest number ever seen over half of these refugees are children. The refugee crisis is a global issue that affects more than any country or region. However, two countries account for nearly half of the child refugees in the world: Syria and Afghanistan. The refugee crisis in Syria began in 2011 and has increasingly become more violent, causing refugees to flee in large numbers. This violence and resulting migration affects all migrants but is particularly detrimental to migrant children. This paper discusses the main challenges that refugee children face during their experience as refugees. These consist of neurological challenges, mental health challenges, and legal challenges. This paper also looks at efforts to help children overcome these challenges. These challenges have serious implications not only for the foreseeable future but also well into future decades. It is important to increase efforts to rehabilitate these children and reintegrate them into their new communities so the effects of the violence and conflict that these children face are mitigated. These efforts must be pursued by more than just a single government or organization. If there is to be a real improvement, the entire international community will need to work together to improve the lives of refugee children, which will benefit society for many generations to come.

h. Current Situation & Case Studies

Current Global Situation:

The global refugee crisis remains a pressing issue, with recent statistics highlighting the urgency and scale of the problem. As of the latest available data, there are approximately 82.4 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including 26.4 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. Ongoing conflicts and crises in regions such as Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan contribute significantly to the increasing number of refugees. The situation is exacerbated by environmental factors, economic instability, and human rights abuses, further displacing vulnerable populations. The international community faces the challenge of addressing this complex crisis and finding sustainable solutions.

Recent Developments and Conflicts:

Recent conflicts and crises have played a pivotal role in the surge of refugee numbers globally. The protracted conflict in Syria, with over 13 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, has led to one of the largest refugee populations worldwide. In Afghanistan, ongoing violence, political instability, and the Taliban resurgence contribute significantly to the displacement of millions. The conflict in Ukraine, particularly the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the ongoing tensions in the eastern regions, has added to the complex landscape. Additionally, the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar and the persecution faced by ethnic and religious minorities in various parts of the world have exacerbated the refugee crisis. These developments underscore the need for comprehensive and coordinated international efforts to address the root causes of displacement.

Global Initiatives and Agreements:

Various regions and countries have grappled with significant refugee challenges, offering valuable case studies for analysis. The European Union's response to the Syrian refugee crisis, particularly the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal, showcases attempts to manage and control migration flows. Uganda's progressive refugee policies, providing refugees with the right to work and access to education, serve as an example of a positive approach. The Global Compact on Refugees, endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, outlines a framework for more equitable burden-sharing and cooperation among nations. However, challenges persist in ensuring the effective implementation of such agreements and fostering international collaboration.

Questions to Ponder

1. In what ways can the international community enhance cooperation to ensure a more equitable distribution of responsibilities in addressing the refugee crisis?
2. How can the international community work together to address the root causes of forced displacement and create sustainable solutions for refugees?
3. How should countries balance the principle of non-refoulement with the need to manage and secure their borders during times of mass migration?
4. How can the international community promote sustainable economic development in countries of origin to address the underlying causes of forced displacement?
5. How should countries balance the preservation of national identity with the integration of diverse refugee populations?
6. Considering the diverse nature of refugee settlements, what types of partnerships can effectively address the different needs?
7. In what way can new technologies be used more efficiently to prevent health diseases for refugees and displaced persons?
8. How can refugees and internally displaced people be involved in mitigating environmental risks?
9. What mechanisms can be implemented for preventing, detecting, and responding to ethnic, religious, and racial profiling of migrants by the public?
10. What measures can be used to educate the local public on other cultures, religions, and opinions and how can an intercultural dialogue be started?

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