



L'École Chempaka  
International



## L'École Chempaka International MODEL UNITED NATIONS

---

### BACKGROUND GUIDE



**UNGA:SOCHUM**  
Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee

# *Agenda: Ensuring the Safety of Asylum Seekers*

---

## INTRODUCTION

Hello delegates,

We hope all of you have prepared or have started to prepare for LCIMUN International 2023, and to aid you in that endeavour, we are providing you this background guide which contains the basic information as well as some tips which are of utmost importance.

This guide has been provided to complement your preparations. Nevertheless, you must undergo further research and use other sources of information, before the MUN, to face any challenge. Please do not focus only on the guide, but also use news agencies, the official government sites (of both the country you are representing and others) and other credible sources (please do restrict heavy usage of WIKIPEDIA). We emphasise the word ‘credible’ because some information obtained may not be true. Do verify the sites you are collecting information from.

### LCIMUN

While the topic (Ensuring the safety of asylum seekers) is an issue that a good majority of countries face, make sure the country you are representing can gain something more. Make sure that none of the points made will have any negative effects on your country, or allies, and always try to put your enemies at a disadvantage, since it is every delegate for themselves. Hence the reason countries have alliances which only benefit themselves.

Each delegate will be marked/graded on different criteria, such as the speeches, diplomacy, points raised during the course of the committee, the way you present yourself, your country (foreign policy), and more. The more research you do, the better you perform, as it provides you with confidence and arms you with the most powerful weapon a delegate can have, information. This, combined with the mentality of the Executive Board, that all countries are equal in the council, means that you can indeed wreak havoc on any country in the committee no matter the size or importance, as long as it deems relevant.

The following information are the phases that each delegate must go through to understand and prepare for the upcoming MUN, as well as gain a basic grasp of the agenda, to allow for a smooth committee session.

---

## PHASE ONE OF PLANNING: KNOWING YOUR GOVT. FOREIGN POLICY

This is arguably the most important phase of the research and planning the delegate must do. Each country has its own specific policy which it follows, and the Executive Board will question the delegates if they feel as if they have not followed the government policy. This may lead to a reduction in the points of that particular delegate.

The government's foreign policy is not usually a single document but a series of statements that the government has made; its views, allies, and enemies. For example, the American view on the south China sea may not necessarily be the same as the British one. So, please research the foreign policy of the country you are representing, which is usually provided on the Internet.

This research is particularly important because this defines who your enemies and allies are. It is very crucial when giving a speech, and the delegate will lose many marks if they do not follow their foreign policy.

---

## PHASE TWO OF PLANNING: EXTRA INFORMATION

This is the phase after the government policy in which further research on the general agenda of the committee is done. The agenda is “Discussing ways to reduce human trafficking and immigrant smuggling caused by armed conflict,” and how the current situation can be reduced/halted/banished from the acting civilisations of these nations and countries. Delegates can check out Resolutions/Articles for which the links will be provided towards the end of this document.

**Definitions:** A refugee is defined as someone who has been forced to flee persecution, war or violence and has crossed an international border to find safety in another country. They have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Refugees are afforded international protection by other countries because it is too dangerous for them to return home. An asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed. Once asylum seekers are recognised as refugees, they can receive legal and material assistance from the host country government.

Ensuring the safety of asylum seekers is a vital global concern driven by humanitarian principles and human rights considerations. It underscores the urgent need for international cooperation to address the following key aspects:

First, the humanitarian imperative demands offering a safe refuge for asylum seekers fleeing perilous conditions, such as conflict and persecution. Upholding principles of compassion and solidarity is at the core of global relations. Moreover, prioritising the safety of vulnerable groups like women, children, and minorities is essential to shield them from exploitation, trafficking, and abuse during their journey and while awaiting resolution of their claims.

Second, safeguarding the safety of asylum seekers is deeply rooted in international legal obligations outlined in significant agreements like the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Complying with these legal frameworks is crucial to maintaining the credibility of the global refugee protection system and reinforcing the commitment to upholding human rights. Neglecting their

safety can contribute to instability in host regions, creating social tensions and exacerbating existing challenges.

In conclusion, focusing on the safety of asylum seekers is not only a matter of immediate humanitarian concern but also a means to foster global cooperation, protect human dignity and rights, and achieve long-term benefits for both host countries and asylum seekers, including economic growth, cultural diversity, and social enrichment.

## 1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

- A. Evolution of Refugee and Asylum Policies: The evolution of refugee and asylum policies reflects a complex interplay of historical events and changing attitudes towards displaced populations. The aftermath of World War II witnessed the establishment of the United Nations, which recognised the need for international cooperation in addressing refugee crises. Over time, nations began to develop formal frameworks to provide protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers.
- B. Major International Agreements and Conventions: Several key international agreements and conventions have shaped the landscape of refugee and asylum policies, solidifying the commitment to safeguarding displaced individuals. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, under the auspices of the United Nations, established the foundation for defining refugee status and outlining the rights and responsibilities of states towards refugees. These instruments introduced the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits returning refugees to situations where their lives or freedoms may be at risk.

Additionally, regional agreements like the 1969 OAU Convention and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration expanded protection to refugees in specific geographic contexts. These agreements emphasised the need to consider broader factors, such as armed conflict and generalised violence, when determining refugee status. Over time, the global community has worked to reinforce these agreements, adapting them to evolving challenges and circumstances.

These international agreements and conventions collectively underscore the importance of addressing the safety and well-being of asylum seekers and refugees, serving as a testament to the ongoing commitment to protecting those in need of international protection.

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION

### A. Global statistics

By the end of 2022, 108.4 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations. This includes:

- 35.3 million refugees
- 62.5 million internally displaced people
- 5.4 million asylum seekers
- 5.2 million people in need of international protection, a majority from Venezuela

As of May 2023, more than 110 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide. This marks the largest ever single-year increase in forced displacement in UNHCR's history, propelled by the war in Ukraine and other deadly conflicts.

## B. Key regions and countries affected

The refugee and asylum seeker crisis has had a significant impact on various regions and countries around the world. Some of the key regions and countries affected include:

### 1. Middle East and North Africa:

- Countries Affected: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Sudan
- Many of these countries have experienced ongoing conflicts and political instability, leading to large numbers of displaced individuals seeking safety in neighbouring countries or beyond.

### 2. Sub-Saharan Africa:

- Countries Affected: South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Eritrea, Central African Republic
- Conflicts, violence, and humanitarian crises in these countries have resulted in substantial refugee flows within the region and to other parts of the world.

### 3. Europe:

- Countries Affected: Germany, Greece, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Sweden
- The European refugee crisis saw significant numbers of asylum seekers arriving by land and sea, primarily from conflict zones in the Middle East and Africa.

### 4. Americas:

- Countries Affected: United States, Canada, Colombia, Venezuela
- The Americas have experienced both incoming and outgoing refugee and asylum seeker flows, including individuals from Central America seeking refuge in North America, as well as Venezuelans fleeing political and economic instability.

### 5. South Asia:

- Countries Affected: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar
- The Rohingya crisis resulted in a massive influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh, fleeing violence and persecution in Myanmar.

### 6. Southeast Asia:

- Countries Affected: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia
- These countries have been transit points for refugees and asylum seekers, particularly from countries like Myanmar and the Rohingya crisis.

### 7. Oceania:

- Countries Affected: Australia, Papua New Guinea, Nauru
- Asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia by sea have faced challenges and controversies regarding detention and processing.

These regions and countries highlight the diverse range of challenges and circumstances that refugees and asylum seekers face worldwide. Addressing the crisis requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach involving international cooperation, policy development, and humanitarian assistance.

### 3. CHALLENGES TO SAFETY

#### A. Pushbacks:

Many countries carry out the dangerous practice of “pushbacks” and forced returns, where they turn asylum seekers away at the border or force them to return to where they came from, without allowing them to apply for refugee status. For example, this could be forcing a boat to turn around before reaching shore, or a border guard forcing someone to turn back. However, according to the Refugee Convention, people can't be forced to return to a country if their life or freedom would be at risk in their country of origin. One common travel route for asylum seekers is to pass through Türkiye, and travel by boat to Greece. UNHCR reported recording almost 540 incidents of pushbacks by Greece since 2020, according to a note from February 2022.

#### B. Closed Borders:

It is important to remember that in order to claim their right to seek asylum, people forced to flee must first cross an international border. However, sometimes countries close their borders, so people cannot cross and claim asylum. During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, many countries closed their borders and restricted entry for public health reasons, preventing people from seeking asylum. Sometimes, authorities also close safe access points: this forces asylum seekers to take more dangerous routes. This happened in 2015 when Hungary built a border fence.

#### C. Dangerous Routes:

While seeking safety, many asylum seekers go through dangerous routes. A majority stay in a neighbouring country, but some travel through several countries, sometimes crossing the desert or the ocean. We often hear in the news about people crossing the Mediterranean sea. Between 2014 and 2021, more than 24,400 people lost their lives or went missing trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. According to internal law, masters of ships have a responsibility to rescue and disembark asylum seekers to a place of safety (you can learn more [here](#)). When fleeing from danger on such dangerous routes, family separation may occur accidentally, or deliberately when children are given by parents to the care of other individuals, in an attempt to ensure their children's survival.

#### D. Smuggling and Trafficking

Human Trafficking means that human beings are abducted and exploited against their will. People who are forced to flee can be an easy target for traffickers who prey on the precariousness of their situations to exploit them. Smuggling is voluntary, in the sense that people go to smugglers to help them travel to a new place, but it can become trafficking if the victims are exploited, for example by being held for ransom or to pay off a debt through forced labor. The threat of sexual violence increases significantly for displaced girls. In July 2021, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres affirmed that more than half of the 40,3 million victims of human trafficking globally are migrants and refugees. It is estimated that two of the principal smuggling routes - leading from East, North and West Africa to Europe, and from South America to North America - generate about \$6,75 billion a year for criminals.

#### E. Detention

An important part of the right to humane treatment is that countries should not force asylum seekers to stay in detention (or prison-like) facilities only for the reason that they are asylum seekers. Unfortunately, in some countries, asylum seekers are detained for indefinite periods of time, or are forced to stay in prison, in poor conditions, while their case is processed.

In Europe, UNHCR and partner organisations recently released a short report condemning the detention of migrant and refugee children across 27 European countries. Australia is known for processing asylum applications in offshore gated facilities that don't allow asylum seekers to leave. Although they closed their facility in Papua New Guinea at the end of 2021, this practice continues on the island of Nauru. In Libya, the situation is particularly concerning as refugees and migrants are routinely detained in terrible conditions across about 20 official and unofficial facilities.

#### F. Discrimination

People forced to flee should not be discriminated against at borders, and all applications for refugee status must be given fair consideration, regardless of race, religion, gender and country of origin. In the context of Ukraine, incidents have been reported of people being turned away or detained due to the colour of their skin.

Even after crossing the border, discrimination is still a major challenge for asylum seekers. Misinformation about asylum seekers is very common, and sometimes host communities are scared of newcomers. This can lead to host communities being unwelcoming towards asylum seekers, or even worse, cases of harassment or abuse.

#### F. Extended wait times

In some situations, making an asylum claim is very quick. In others, it can take months or years for asylum seekers to find out if they will be awarded refugee status. This is extremely stressful for asylum seekers. Most of the time, asylum seekers have the right to move around within the country while they wait. Sometimes, they are forced to wait in a detention centre - see section 5. Additionally, during this waiting period, in many countries asylum seekers cannot work, go to school, or access government services.

#### G. Restrictive asylum rules

Most refugees - 72% - stay in a country neighbouring their own country. Others decide to cross several countries because the first country that they arrive in is not safe either, or to find their families or better opportunities to rebuild their lives. But some countries have created rules which don't allow people to apply for asylum if they have passed through other countries on the way. Countries that put such restrictions on asylum include the US and the UK. This principle is not found in the Refugee Convention and there is no such requirement under internal law. It also undermines global cooperation as States should instead find solutions to share responsibility.

UNHCR remains firmly opposed to arrangements that seek to transfer refugees and asylum seekers to third countries in the absence of sufficient safeguards and standards. Externalisation is when countries shift the responsibility for asylum seekers to other countries. For example, in June 2022 the

UK announced a plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda to be processed. These countries may not have everything asylum seekers need and this may also lead to asylum seekers being trapped and isolated in a country they don't want to be in, which is harmful to their mental health.

## 4. PROTECTION MECHANISMS

### UNHCR's role and initiatives:

UNHCR has been helping people forced to flee since 1950 and ensuring their right to seek safety in other countries. UNHCR upholds the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol and coordinates with countries to safeguard the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless and internally displaced people. While countries have the primary duty of processing asylum cases, UNHCR will process asylum applications in cases where countries are not signatories to the Convention and/or do not have a fair or efficient asylum procedure in place.

### *Bilateral and regional cooperation:*

Bilateral and regional cooperation play pivotal roles as protection mechanisms to ensure the safety of asylum seekers. Bilateral agreements between neighbouring countries can establish shared protocols for identifying, processing, and accommodating asylum seekers, thus preventing them from falling into dangerous situations or the hands of human traffickers. Such agreements also facilitate the swift exchange of information, allowing for timely responses to migration flows. On a larger scale, regional cooperation fosters standardised asylum procedures across multiple nations, curbing irregular migration routes and ensuring a cohesive response to humanitarian challenges. By working together, countries can pool resources, share best practices, and collectively address the needs of asylum seekers, enhancing their safety while maintaining border integrity.

### *Community and civil society involvement:*

Community and civil society involvement are essential protection mechanisms for ensuring the safety of asylum seekers. Local communities can offer invaluable support by providing shelter, resources, and a sense of belonging, which are crucial for the well-being of those fleeing perilous situations. By engaging with civil society organisations, governments can tap into specialised expertise to ensure that asylum seekers receive proper legal assistance, medical care, and psychological support. These organisations also act as watchdogs, advocating for the rights of asylum seekers and holding authorities accountable for their treatment. Community and civil society collaboration fosters a compassionate environment that not only safeguards asylum seekers but also promotes social integration, reducing the vulnerability of these individuals to exploitation and marginalisation.

## 5. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

### *Strengthening border management and cooperation:*

Strengthening border management and cooperation is instrumental in ensuring the safety of asylum seekers by creating a structured and secure process that prevents their exposure to risks while maintaining border integrity. For instance, well-trained border officials can accurately identify asylum seekers and refer them to appropriate channels for protection, such as asylum processing centres. Collaborative agreements between neighbouring countries can establish standardised

procedures, preventing asylum seekers from resorting to dangerous irregular routes. The European Union's Dublin Regulation exemplifies this approach by facilitating the responsible allocation of asylum applications among member states. Moreover, advanced technology, such as biometric systems and secure databases, can enhance the tracking and management of asylum seekers, ensuring their rights and information are protected. Strengthened border management and cooperation thus foster an environment where asylum seekers are shielded from exploitation, receive humanitarian aid, and have access to legal procedures, ultimately enhancing their safety and well-being.

#### *Improving reception and integration programs:*

Reception centres serve as initial points of contact for asylum seekers upon their arrival in host countries. These centres should be equipped to provide essential services such as shelter, medical care, psychosocial support, and information dissemination. Emulating successful models like Canada's government-sponsored housing and services for refugees can offer insights into creating dignified and secure environments for asylum seekers. Through proper funding and coordination, reception centres can minimise risks and ensure the safety of vulnerable individuals.

#### *Enhancing public awareness and education:*

By raising awareness about the challenges these individuals face and dispelling misinformation, societies can create an atmosphere of empathy and support. For instance, Australia's "Community Engagement Framework" promotes understanding through public forums, social media campaigns, and workshops, fostering a more inclusive environment. Education initiatives can inform citizens about asylum seekers' rights, the reasons for their displacement, and the benefits of diversity. Norway's "Refugees Welcome" program connects asylum seekers with local families, showcasing the positive impact of integration. Ultimately, informed communities are better equipped to counter discrimination, advocate for improved policies, and offer assistance, thus contributing to the overall safety and well-being of asylum seekers.

## **6. ROLE OF THE UNGA-SOCHUM**

### A. Past resolutions and actions

1. *Resolution A/RES/73/151 (2019):* This resolution addressed the safety and protection of migrants, including asylum seekers. It emphasised the importance of respecting human rights and ensuring access to adequate living conditions, healthcare, education, and legal assistance for migrants, regardless of their migration status.
2. *Resolution A/RES/71/280 (2017):* This resolution focused on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It called for strengthened international cooperation and shared responsibility to protect the rights of refugees and migrants, including asylum seekers, while enhancing their safety and well-being.
3. *Resolution A/RES/69/167 (2015):* This resolution highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of unaccompanied migrant children and child asylum seekers, particularly in terms of their protection, welfare, and integration into host societies.

4. *Resolution A/RES/68/179 (2013)*: This resolution stressed the significance of combating xenophobia, racial discrimination, and related intolerance, which can negatively impact the safety and well-being of asylum seekers and migrants.
5. *High Commissioner's Annual Reports*: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) presents annual reports to the UNGA, which include information on the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, and other displaced populations. These reports often highlight challenges and progress related to the safety of asylum seekers.
6. *Global Compact on Refugees*: The UNGA and UNHCR developed the Global Compact on Refugees, which aims to enhance international cooperation to ensure the safety and protection of refugees and asylum seekers. While it's not a UNGA resolution, it reflects significant international efforts in this area.

## B. Potential resolutions to be discussed

During discussions within the UNGA Third Committee (SOCHUM) regarding the safety of asylum seekers, delegates could explore several key points. These include the need for comprehensive protection measures such as establishing or strengthening reception centres with essential services and expediting processing for vulnerable groups like children and survivors of violence. Additionally, the importance of public awareness and education initiatives to counter misinformation, incorporating asylum seeker-related topics in school curricula, and collaborating with civil society and media for accurate information dissemination could be emphasised.

Delegates might also consider the benefits of regional cooperation through agreements among neighbouring countries to streamline asylum procedures, share resources, and ensure equitable distribution of asylum seekers. Lastly, the potential of digital solutions, like creating platforms for information sharing and utilising secure databases, along with the establishment of a global database for tracking asylum seekers' movement, could be discussed. These points provide a concise overview of the multifaceted aspects that delegates could delve into for formulating effective resolutions that address the safety of asylum seekers comprehensively.

## 7. CONCLUSION

As delegates prepare for the conference, we encourage them to consider the diverse perspectives and interests that exist within the topic. Seek innovative and realistic solutions, while also taking into account the feasibility and practicality of proposed actions. Collaboration, compromise, and consensus-building will be crucial in reaching mutually agreeable resolutions.

Furthermore, we urge delegates to embrace the spirit of diplomacy, respect, and open-mindedness throughout the conference. Engage in constructive dialogue, actively listen to different viewpoints, and aim to find common ground with fellow delegates. Remember that the ultimate objective of MUN is not merely to win, but to reach collective solutions that address the pressing challenges faced by our world today.