



SHISHUKUNJ MUN

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# Study Guide

United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees

Agenda: Sustainable Rehabilitation of  
Refugees in the Host Countries

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## Index

1) Letter from the bureau.....	2
2) Committee Background .....	3
3) Key Notes .....	4
4) Introduction to the Agenda.....	5
5) History of the Topic.....	7
6) Obstructions to Rehabilitation of Refugees.....	8
6.1 Provision of humanitarian aid to the refugees.....	8
6.2 Accommodation facilities .....	10
6.3 Economic Problems .....	11
6.4 Political Problems .....	13
6.5 Social and Cultural Inclusion of Refugees .....	15
6.6 Special Provisions for Children and Women.....	16
8) Conclusion .....	19
9) Relevant organizations.....	20
10) Questions a Resolution Must Answer.....	22
11) Bibliography .....	23



## Letter from the Bureau

Dear delegates,

It is our utmost pleasure and honor to welcome you to the Shishukunj MUN 2021. We cannot wait to begin what is sure to be one of the most stimulating and fun conferences ever!

The agenda for the committee, “Sustainable Rehabilitation of Refugees in the Host Nations”, has been set to allow delegates to become advocates, facilitators, diplomats and leaders to address this crucial issue through focus and wise decision making. In committee, rather than only prioritizing your geopolitical blocs and your individual countries, we would like all of you to be diplomatic and pave the way for solutions which help the committee arrive at a consensus.

Through the following pages, we aim at providing you with a general overview of the agenda taken up. As such we expect you to keep your research based on, but not limited to this guide. This guide is the beginning of your research and you shouldn't depend entirely on it. The one thing that we would like to emphasize upon the most is the importance of participation in the committee. We can have an interesting bustling committee only if the delegates are willing to make it so.

Delegates must also ensure the authenticity of their own analysis and should make no compromises in diplomacy. The delegates must refrain from plagiarism. We are looking forward to comprehensive solutions that are devised inclusively, respecting international law as well as the respective needs of the member states. Delegates should ensure that the resolution is adopted by consensus. The UN4MUN procedures are adopted for the sole purpose of promoting the idea of consensus and inclusiveness, as you will see during the proceedings of the committee.

We would like delegates to keep in mind that the case studies mentioned throughout this guide are for better understanding of the problem, and are not to be discussed as separate topics during the conference.

We are very excited to meet all of you and are sure that our committee will be fun and successful. All the best!

Regards,

Avni Kanodia, Co-Chair

Hrishubh Zatakia, Co-Chair

Nishka Kankaria, Rapporteur

## **Committee Background**

The founding statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was ratified by the UN General Assembly in 1950. Its headquarters are located in Geneva, Switzerland. It was created with a mandate to “lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.” This statute was meant to last only 3 years, primarily to deal with European refugees post World War II. UNHCR had a very small budget, making it almost completely dependent upon the volunteer contributions of donor countries, thus limiting its power and scope to aid refugees. However, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees provided rights to refugees like never before, including provisions that guaranteed at least on paper, a refugee’s right to employment, courts, education etc.

The UNHCR has expanded prominently in the past 60 years. The agency has become more institutionalized and has established itself as an actor with humanitarian authority, giving it a lot more power in the refugee crisis. It is the premier refugee agency of the UN and reports to both the General Assembly of the United Nations as well as to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The executive body of the UNHCR is a representative body of around 80 nations that are pertinent to refugee situations in some way. It meets once a year to approve the High Commissioner’s programs and discuss its budgeting.

UNHCR’s mandate is built on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which clearly states the rights of individuals to seek asylum in another state. In the Statute of the Office of the UNHCR, the founding document of the agency, UNHCR’s mandate is defined as, on a humanitarian and non-political basis, “providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting governments and private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities.” Above all, the commission is characterized by innovation and expansion, due to its own efforts as well as the efforts of the greater international community.

## KEY NOTES

**Refugee** - According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

**Rehabilitation** - The process of restoring a refugee into the host society in terms of housing, employment, education, basic humanitarian needs etc.

**Sustainable** - Here, sustainable means finding out durable and long-term solutions for rehabilitation along with keeping the present situation in mind.

**Host Countries** - In UNHCR, a host country is the one which accepts refugees.

**Vulnerable Groups** - This term is applied to groups of people (children, pregnant women, elderly people) who, due to factors usually considered outside their control, do not have the same opportunities as other, more fortunate groups in society.

**Integration** - To mix with and join society or a group of people, often changing to suit their way of life, habits, and customs.

**Refoulement** - Sending a person back to a country where they face a threat to their life or freedom is called refoulement.

**Asylum Seekers** - An asylum-seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim.

**IDP (Internally Displaced Persons)** - IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement.

**Statelessness** - According to the 1954 Convention, it establishes the legal definition of a stateless person as someone who is "not recognized as a national by any state under the operation of its law." Simply put, this means that a stateless person is someone who does not have the nationality of any country.

**Genocide** - It is defined as a mass extermination of a particular group of people.

## Introduction to the Agenda

States are responsible for protecting the fundamental human rights of their citizens. When they are unable or unwilling to do so, individuals may suffer some serious violations of their human rights due to which they may have to leave their homes, their families and their communities to find refuge in another country. Since, by definition, refugees are not protected by their own governments, the international community steps in to ensure their safety, security, and protection.

Since the beginning of the decade, the world has seen an enormous increase in the number of refugees. Reports generated by the UNHCR state that the number has doubled since 2010 and is higher now than it has ever been. At the end of 2020, there were 82.4 million forcibly displaced people in the world, of which 20.7 million were refugees under UNHCR's mandate. Just five countries produce 68% of all refugees displaced abroad: the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. The top five host countries, where these displaced people are currently located are: Turkey, Colombia, Germany, Pakistan, and Uganda.



Once the refugees flee from their home countries and are accepted by the host countries, the major task is to integrate them into the host country. The integration of refugees is a two-way process which requires efforts by all parties concerned, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population. The process of integration is complex and gradual, comprising distinct but interrelated legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions, all



Shishukunj Model United Nations 2021  
October 10-11, 2021

of which are important for refugees' ability to integrate successfully as fully included members of the host society.

Important note: The delegates shall refrain from discussing the ways to integrate the IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and asylum seekers as they do not fall under the mandate of UNHCR.



## History of the Topic

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are pivotal documents that form the mandate of the UNHCR. It's main principle is 'non-refoulement', that is the obligation of a host country to not send a refugee back to their country of origin where they face threats to their life or freedom. The UNHCR ensures that all rights and obligations mentioned in the Convention are followed by all party nations.

### The 1951 Convention

Formation:

The Refugee Convention was adopted at a United Nations conference on 28 July 1951 and became legally binding on 22 April 1954. It was originally designed to respond to the needs of European refugees in the years following World War II. At first, it applied only to persons who had become refugees as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951.

Importance of the Convention:

The 1951 Convention contains several rights, including the right to work, the right to education, and right to freedom of religion. It highlights the obligations of refugees towards their host country. The cornerstone of the 1951 Convention is the principle of non-refoulement contained in Article 33. According to this principle, a refugee should not be returned to a country where he or she faces serious threats to his or her life or freedom. This protection may not be claimed by refugees who are reasonably regarded as a danger to the security of the country, or having been convicted of a particularly serious crime, are considered a danger to the community.

### The 1967 Protocol

The 1967 Protocol broadens the applicability of the 1951 Convention. The 1967 Protocol removes the geographical and time limits that were part of the 1951 Convention. These limits initially restricted the Convention to persons who became refugees due to events occurring in Europe before January 1, 1951. When a country accedes to the convention and the protocol, it helps UNHCR to mobilize international support for the protection of refugees and gives refugees a possibility to find safety. With a country's help, UNHCR can also mobilize international support.

Important Note: The Convention and the Protocol have only been given for the better understanding of the topic. During the course of the committee, the delegates shall only refer to them and refrain from discussing them.



## Obstructions to Rehabilitation of the Refugees

### 1) Provision of humanitarian aid to the refugees

Humanitarian aid is the material and logistical actions undertaken to help people in need. Refugees are some of the most desperate people for this aid. Many organizations along with the UNHCR endeavor to provide this aid, but there is surely room for improvement.

#### Food and Water

The right to food and water is considered as one of the highest standards of healthcare. Ensuring that refugees are adequately nourished is essential for their welfare and security. In times of crisis, UNHCR works with the World Food Programme to provide food and water to refugees desperate for it. The organizations together deliver a food basket that is balanced and culturally acceptable.



UNHCR and WFP have joined forces numerous times to provide thousands of refugees with food baskets.

It is well known that poor quality diets and vitamin and mineral deficiencies contribute to delayed childhood development, causing irreparable damage. In the past 5 years, malnutrition has been the cause of over 60% deaths in refugee camps. In these camps, water supply is very inefficient and inconsistent. The water supplied here is often not distributed equally and is of poor quality. In one Ugandan refugee camp, children were forced by their families to participate in water collection, to

ensure they had adequate water supply. As a result, 42% of these children could not attend school as they needed to collect water.

## Healthcare, Sanitation and Hygiene

Health is a fundamental human right for all, including refugees. Making it possible for refugees to access healthcare is a top priority for UNHCR. The public health programme of the UNHCR works with governments and non-state organizations to provide emergency healthcare and to integrate refugees into their host nations' national healthcare plans. Unfortunately, this is not enough.

Refugees do not have access to primary and secondary healthcare, skilled medical staff, medical equipment and medicines. Countries with slow medicine production find it difficult to cater to the needs of refugees, prioritizing their own citizens.

Also, refugees are likely to reside in places with lack of sanitation facilities like toilets, making their residence contaminated. Without soap and other hygiene products, germs can spread in households and communities.



The standard of medical care on Naru, Australia is poor; specialized medical equipment and staff are not available on the island, and refugees and asylum seekers report long delays in receiving appropriate treatment for serious conditions.

## **CASE STUDY:**

### **Greece**

At the Moria refugee camp on Lesbos, the largest of the island facilities, the Government of Greece has mobilized the Hellenic Army, the land force of Greece, and humanitarian partners to establish an emergency facility to provide shelter to the homeless. All partners involved in the refugee response on Lesbos, including national and local non-governmental organizations have been working around the clock to ensure that all the refugees received immediate assistance, shelter and core relief items. But refugees still face problems such as inadequate supply, high prices and inferior quality of food. Migrants wait in snaking lines for up to eight hours a day to get their meals. They wait for breakfast, come back to their shelters for an hour or two, and soon head off to wait for lunch. In some of the centres, medical supplies were so limited that only basic pharmaceutical products such as painkillers were available.

## **2) Accommodation facilities**

International migration has had a critical impact on the capacity of the housing sector to deliver adequate and affordable housing for all. Access to medium and long-term housing solutions is essential for rehabilitation of refugees. With governments working to meet the housing needs of the local population, refugees are often blamed for putting extra pressure on public facilities like housing.

One of the important aspects of accommodation is to improve the understanding of the wide range of needs and aspirations amongst refugees- concerning, for instance, their living conditions, social life and labor market access. Frequent changes of place of residence exacerbate instability and hinder active participation of children at school. Also, the safety standards are not maintained. Negative attitudes among real estate agents, landlords and other housing providers were seen to have a significant impact on the capacity of people seeking refuge and people from refugee backgrounds to secure housing.



Bad housing facilities for Rohingya refugees



## **Rural Refugees**

These refugees reside in areas where accommodation is cheap but not very easy to find. The housing in these areas is categorized by temporary housing facilities which often lack basic facilities and are not sustainable. Providing these rural refugees accommodation with proper facilities like water, electricity, proper washrooms etc. would be one step further in their integration process.

## **Urban Refugees**

These refugees seek shelter in cities, where housing is very expensive. After struggling to migrate from one country to another and often being unemployed, refugees are unable to pay these prices. This puts them in a situation where they have to live on streets along with their families or in a place that does not have adequate and sustainable conditions, which does not help in their rehabilitation.

## **CASE STUDY II: Rehabilitation and accommodation facilities in Turkey**

Turkey hosts some 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees along with close to 330,000 refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities. Temporary accommodation centers were established to host the refugees. 98% of the refugees live across the 81 provinces and only 2 % live in the temporary accommodation centers. UNHCR has appreciated Turkey as the number of these centers is reducing and UNHCR has also intervened by providing funds to these refugees for facilitating their settling in the host community. Rural refugees working in agricultural fields are often forced to work late at night, longer than recommended working hours. They receive limited supply of electricity and running water. They also face the problem of inadequate sewage facilities. The urban refugees face problems such as infrastructure, education, housing, and employment. Turkey along with the World Bank has improved their lives to a limit and helped them to be settled in both urban and rural areas.

## **3) Economic Problems**

After migrating, refugees typically face harsh economic problems, often due to the fact that their savings are all used up in migration and they have no way of earning a livelihood. They do not have the education and skills to work in their host countries and even if they do, they are often not

recognized. Another big issue is that many host countries deny refugees the right to work, prioritizing their own citizens' need for employment.

The right to work is set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and various other regional and international instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights. Despite this, refugees are not allowed to work in around 50% of asylum countries.

Refugees are often cast as an economic burden for host countries although research provides ample evidence that they are not. Ensuring that refugees are economically stable would in turn reduce the burden on host countries and make them more open toward accepting refugees. However, this would be possible only if refugees have the access to education and employment opportunities. Even after employment, refugees are often discriminated against in terms of wages and working hours.



New UN report reveals millions of refugee children 'missing out' on education

### **Rural Refugees**

These refugees reside in rural areas which have very little demand for jobs, the main occupation being agriculture, handicrafts etc. where revenue is not as high as in the technical sector. Even the jobs that are available pay them daily wages and prove to be incompetent in fulfilling their needs. They often do not have access to labour markets and transportation facilities.

### **Urban Refugees**

These refugees have access to jobs that require higher education which is pretty uncommon in refugees. This makes it difficult for them to get sufficient paying jobs in the city. Unavailability of proper jobs causes them to resort to unfair and illegal means of income. Working in the illegal

environment or in the unorganized sector, these refugees may be at particular risk of detention, deportation, exploitative and hazardous employment.

### **CASE STUDY III: Sudan**

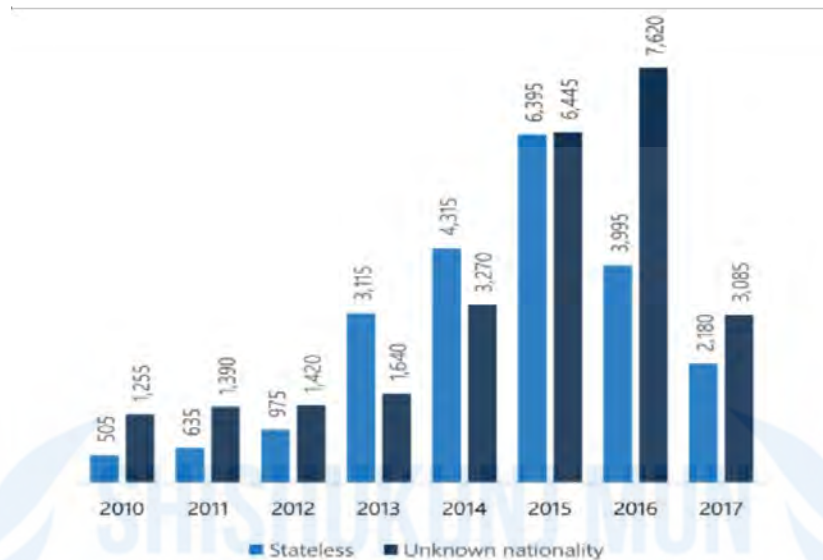
Sudan is hosting one of the world's most protracted refugee populations, with thousands of Eritrean refugees who have fled their country since independence still living in exile in Sudan, as well as a sizable residual pre-1991 Ethiopian refugee population. Though the Regulation of Asylum Act 1974 allowed refugees to work, their employment was subject to certain restrictions. Refugees are required a work permit from the Department of Labour before being able to engage into any economic activity. When applying for a work permit, refugees are asked to present their qualifications and supporting documents. But the reality is far from what the legislation calls for. The refugees usually do not have these documents. Work permits are usually granted for one year, with no promise of renewal. The prohibition on ownership of land by refugees is an additional legal barrier to refugees' economic integration and possibilities of self dependence decreases. Ethiopian and Eritrean women are most at risk of working overtime while being underpaid. Restrictions on freedom of movement make it difficult for refugees to access the labor markets, which are mostly in urban settings such as Kassala and Khartoum.

## **4) Political Problems**

### **Statelessness and Citizenship**

Statelessness has numerous root causes, but for the sake of this conference, we'll be looking into statelessness faced by refugees due to lack of formal recognition in their host country.





Rise of Statelessness across Europe

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights unequivocally states that “everyone has the right to a nationality” and that “no-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality”. Unfortunately, many countries deny citizenship to refugees, stating their sovereign right to recognize citizens of their country. This poses a hindrance in the rehabilitation of refugees because it denies them their right to essential aspects like education, employment and healthcare in their host country.

Lack of recognition and absence of paperwork do not allow them to integrate properly. Many times they do not have access to national policies and plans due to lack of recognition and citizenship.



Refugees protesting for basic human rights in Calais

## **Political Inclusion**

Inclusion of refugees in formal political institutions is a matter of constraint when these people lack citizenship of their host country. However, this does not mean that refugees can't participate in non-formal key fora, informal institutions and decision making that directly affects them. For example, in Yemen, UNHCR has created a framework through which refugees can speak to their host governments about any problems they might face. In Malaysia, refugees are given the ability to decide which aspect of their community is in need of the most funding. When refugees feel that their voice is heard in their host countries, they won't require third party organizations to advocate for their rights and it will give them a sense of self-reliance. However, we are still in need of solutions to expand this participation on a national scale.

## **CASE STUDY IV: Syrian Crisis**

Civil war broke out in Syria in 2011. Since then, thousands of Syrians have been killed and countless have fled to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. These Syrians are at the immediate risk of statelessness. Since 2011, ethnic Syrians have given birth to more than 300,000 children in exile. According to UNHCR, 70% of these children are not registered at birth. This happens mainly due to two reasons: some of them have accidentally lost or destroyed their documentation while fleeing their country of origin or they do not approach the authorities due to fear of refoulement. As a result, when these children grow up, they will be denied access to education and primary healthcare.

Another obstacle in access to citizenship faced by ethnic Syrians is the expiration of passports as Syrian passports last only 2 years with it being impossible to renew it during conflict. The lack of recognition and/or expiration of legal documents makes governments of host countries even more reluctant to grant them citizenship.

## **5) Social and Cultural Inclusion of Refugees**

Inclusion of refugees socially and culturally would help in the rehabilitation of the refugees. Role of the national government, local government and religious people needs to be discussed for the same. The role of language as a binding factor should be noted. Further talking of the right to follow one's religion and culture in the host nation is a very huge issue and needs to be addressed. The quality of their social life should also be taken into account and it should be ensured that they do not face any discrimination in a social setting. UNHCR has recently conducted assessments in

several EU countries in which refugee men, women, boys and girls have participated. These assessments have revealed what refugees perceive as key obstacles to integration. Difficulties due to lack of knowledge of local languages and differing cultures in the host nations, discriminatory attitudes towards foreigners and lack of understanding within host societies of the specific situation of refugees are some of the obstacles.

## **CASE STUDY V: Uganda**

Uganda had some of the largest increases in social hostilities related to religious norms. Christians were beaten and three were killed for religious reasons in Muslim-majority areas in 2015. The same year, three children were kidnapped because of their father's conversion from Islam to Christianity. And in 2016, several incidents of violence against converts were reported, including a woman whose husband strangled her to death for leaving Islam. Non-recognition of qualifications, as well as language barriers and discrimination, hamper the efforts of refugees to seek employment, although Ugandan law recognizes their right to work. A minority of single mothers also report having left because of ethnic discrimination.

Provision of education in Uganda has received significant attention in recent years. There is a huge gap between the teachers and learners due to the language barriers.

## **6) Special Provisions for Children and Women**

### **Children**

Children constitute more than half of the population of refugees. Many children are orphaned or are unaccompanied. We need to address the problem of the babies conceived by the refugee women, especially those who are sexually assaulted. These children face more obstacles than children with an immigrant background, including disrupted or minimal prior education. Undocumented refugee children are often pressurized to hide their refugee status, in order to prevent being refouled. This prohibits them from seeking educational, healthcare and employment rights in their host nation. Also, refugee children must deal with disrupted family networks, insecure housing, poverty, and trauma – all while learning a new language and adjusting to a significantly different culture.





## Women

Refugee women are also met with a range of concerning problems, namely discrimination, sexual or gender-based violence and less access to facilities like healthcare, employability, education and accommodation compared to refugee men. These women are also often subjected to forced labour in camps. Men depend on them for physical labour like water collection and filtration, agricultural tasks, cooking etc., while women lie in a traumatizing state. When men are in charge of all legal documents of the family, it makes it even more difficult for refugee women to access judicial systems. Existing legal documents like The United Nations' Human Rights Declaration and Refugee Women and International Protection No. 39 (XXXVI) - 1985 fail to grant us the power to hold the concerned delinquent accountable. Therefore, it is evident that special provisions should be put in place to help women.

## CASE STUDY VI: Rohingya crisis

In August 2017, a deadly military attack by Myanmar's army on Rohingya Muslims sent hundreds of thousands fleeing across the border into Bangladesh and India. By mid-2021, Bangladesh was hosting more than 880,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Children comprise 60% of these refugees. These children face problems with malnutrition, diseases and inadequate education. The government requires Rohingya refugees to live in camps, and bars Rohingya children from enrolling in schools in local communities outside the camps or taking national school examinations. The Bangladesh government is violating its international obligations by denying refugee children a formal, certified education; secondary-school-level education; access to Bangladeshi schools outside the camps; instruction in the Bengali language; and adequate school buildings. Girls and women are at prominent risk of sexual and gender

based violence in such a situation. They are forced into early marriage and denied access to schools. Many women say they have been told not to work outside the home.



## Conclusion

As stated throughout this guide, rehabilitation of refugees is not only a question of humane and compassionate treatment towards refugees themselves, but rather a complex situation characterized by political, social, economic and logistical problems. The international community has already taken steps, at least nominally to handle this issue but there is still room for improvement. Today, there are more strategies and management tools available than ever before. Innovation and flexibility are increasingly being utilized when handling refugee crises. In the contemporary world, challenges like funding and political influences, among many others, compete for attention. However, there are numerous individuals and organizations, including UNHCR across the world who are determined to curate a better future for refugees, as well as the countries that host them. We look forward to delegates being passionate about devising elaborate solutions for this cause.





## **Relevant Organizations**

The UNHCR does not partner solely with state governments and administrations but also works largely with non-state and independent organizations. Some of its most prominent partners are other UN organs such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), or intergovernmental agencies like the International Organization for Migrants. All other partner organizations bring a variety of viewpoints and supplemental efforts to aid the refugee situation.

### **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

The UNHCR and UNDP have collaborated since the 1960s to successfully aid refugees. They work together to implement the Global Compact on Refugees, check peacebuilding, and monitor livelihoods. They've also collaborated in 2017 for the Global Joint-Action Plan.

### **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

The ICRC is a neutral organization with a mandate “to prevent and alleviate human suffering and to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being”. It collaborates with the UNHCR in any areas for provision of humanitarian aid and to protect civilians.

### **Refugees International**

Due to the independent nature of this organization, it rejects funding from both the government and the UN. Its goal is to help displaced and stateless persons and also advocates for peacekeeping attempts of the persons under its mandate.

### **Burma Refugee Organization (BRO)**

The BRO was initiated by a Burmese refugee who felt that he received inadequate support along with his other fellow refugees. Part of the organization's efforts are funded by the UNHCR, which include aiding refugees stuck in prisons or hospitals, advocating on behalf of refugees, cheap

Shishukunj Model United Nations 2021  
October 10-11, 2021

education for children and provision of temporary identification cards to refugees not yet formally recognized by the UNHCR.



## Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1. How can aid and resources be shared equitably amongst refugees? Should the UNHCR deliver aid to refugees by itself, or shall it use local parties and NGOs to do so? How can we provide WASH services in remote and overcrowded camps?

2. How can we ensure that providing accommodation facilities to refugees doesn't affect the citizens of the country? How can we provide cheap housing with essential facilities to both urban and rural refugees?

3. What can UNHCR do in the economical aspect for the refugees in countries where there is no right to work and education for them? How can skill training programs and educational schemes be provided in the crowded and remotely situated camps? What can countries do to provide access to the labour market to the refugees? How can formation of new laws be put in place for reservation of educational and employment opportunities?

4. How can the barriers posed by recognition and absence of documents be removed? How can refugees be placed in formal/non-formal political institutions? Should children who are born stateless be granted citizenship?

5. What is the role of the national government, local government, and eminent religious personalities to integrate refugees socially and culturally? How can inter-social communities encourage social participation of refugees?

6. How can children be effectively educated in their host nations? How can we stop discrimination towards refugee women? How can forced women and child labour be discouraged?



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