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Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Background Guide 2019

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2019 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This year's staff is: Director Caitlin M. Hopper and Assistant Director Miranda Coleman. Caitlin has a Bachelor's degree in International Studies and currently works at the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, DC. Miranda has a Bachelor of Arts in History, with an emphasis on human rights violations in the twentieth century, and a Bachelor of Education. She is currently an educator in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

The topics under discussion for UNHCR are:

- I. Addressing the Crisis of Internally Displaced People and Refugees in Latin America
- II. Economic Integration of Refugees and Internally Displaced People

UNHCR works to safeguard the rights of over 70 million people displaced worldwide. Guided by the principles of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, the UNHCR works with partners and communities to help provide protection, shelter, healthcare, and education to refugees, returnees, stateless people, internally displaced people, and asylum-seekers. The UNHCR is led by the High Commissioner for Refugees and an Executive Council under the governance and oversight from both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to conduct additional research, explore your Member State's policies in-depth, and examine the policies of other Member States to improve your ability to negotiate and reach consensus. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will use their research to draft and submit a [position paper](#). Guidelines are available in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

The [NMUN website](#) has many additional resources, including two that are essential both in preparation for the conference and as a resource during the conference. They are:

1. The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not discuss the topics or agenda with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretary-General Daniel Sweeney at usgdaniel.dc@nmun.org or Secretary-General Chase Mitchell at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,
Caitlin Hopper, Director
Miranda Coleman, Assistant Director



Committee Overview

Introduction

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) primary purpose is the protection of the welfare and rights of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).¹ It was established by the General Assembly in 1951 after World War II and initially had a three-year limited mandate to address the high number of Europeans who were displaced due to the war.² Since its initial mandate, UNHCR has expanded to address refugee crises around the globe and continues to protect the welfare of refugees.³ Due to the necessity of UNHCR's continued work, the General Assembly repeatedly extended the mandate every three years until 2003, when it decided to prolong the mandate indefinitely.⁴

UNHCR's functions have evolved over time and as shifts in the dialogue surrounding the situation of refugees have occurred.⁵ From 1945 to 1985, UNHCR focused mainly on the resettlement of refugees; however, after this period, as the causes of displacement varied, the agency shifted towards the concept of repatriation as a possible solution.⁶ In 1993, the idea of providing refugees with the possibility to return safely to their homes by offering temporary protective measures, including providing the basic necessities of life, was solidified.⁷ From the mid-1990s, the number of cases related to refugees seeking to return home expanded, as measures to resolve Cold War conflicts increased.⁸ As a result, UNHCR's role in reintegration evolved to include infrastructure and community development, as well as a focus on the importance of reconciliation and peacebuilding in affected communities.⁹

Most of UNHCR's resources are dedicated to supporting operations at the field level, in order to address the needs of specific groups, such as refugees, IDPs, and asylum seekers.¹⁰ A refugee is "a person who, reasonably fearing persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political conviction, has left the country of their nationality or habitual residence," and are unable to or, because of such fear, are not willing to return to the sovereign territory of the country they fled.¹¹ IDPs are defined as individuals who have had to flee their homes, but have not crossed an international border.¹² Asylum seekers are those who look for protection in a different country, but whose claim for refugee status has not been ascertained; at the end of 2018, 3.3 million asylum seekers were awaiting confirmation or rejection of their application for asylum.¹³

UNHCR provides humanitarian aid in a variety of forms, including food and nutritional supplements, basic shelter, as well long-term accommodation such as camps or other forms of housing, cash assistance, and legal services.¹⁴ The agency is also involved in efforts to integrate refugees into their host state, and, if refugees are able to return, to resettle and reintegrate them into their state of origin.¹⁵ UNHCR also works closely with other agencies, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to address the needs of individuals who have been displaced

¹ UNHCR, *What We Do*, 2017.

² UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Stateless Persons (A/RES/319 (IV))*, 1949; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2017.

³ Ibid.

⁴ UN General Assembly, *Implementing actions proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to strengthen the capacity of his Office to carry out its mandate (A/RES/58/153)*, 2003.

⁵ Chimni, *From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation*, 2004, p. 54.

⁶ Ibid, p. 54.

⁷ Ibid, p. 54.

⁸ Macrae, *Aiding Peace...and War: UNHCR, Returnee Reintegration, and the Relief-Development Debate*, 1999.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ UNHCR, *Executive Committee*, 2019.

¹¹ Ibid; UNHCR, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967; Ibid.

¹² UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2017.

¹³ UNHCR, *UNHCR 2017 Global Trends, Forced Displacement*, 2018.

¹⁴ UNHCR, *Protection*, 2017.

¹⁵ UNHCR, *Public Health*, 2017.

due to natural disasters.¹⁶ An additional area of concern are stateless individuals, who lack an official nationality due to discrimination, state succession, or conflict.¹⁷

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UNHCR employs over 16,700 national and international staff working in 128 Member States, requested a budget of \$7.508 billion in 2018, and addresses the needs of over 68 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide.¹⁸ UNHCR is mandated within the United Nation's (UN) Programs and Funds, reports directly to the General Assembly, and is governed by the 102 Member States that make up its Executive Committee (ExCom).¹⁹ The ExCom approves the agency's annual program priorities and budget.²⁰ Member States are elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to become members of the ExCom, and are selected according to equitable geographic allocations.²¹ The ExCom reports directly to the General Assembly Third Committee and must follow directives issued by either the General Assembly or ECOSOC.²² The ExCom meets once per year, usually in October, to review financial matters for the coming year, to give advice to the High Commissioner, to authorize appeals for funds, and to approve biennial targets.²³ The High Commissioner, the leader of UNHCR, is elected by the General Assembly to serve 5 year terms.²⁴ In 1995, the ExCom created a Standing Committee, which meets three times per year to discuss the work of the body as a whole, and any new situations to be addressed.²⁵ In January 2016, the General Assembly elected High Commissioner Filippo Grandi to serve a five-year term.²⁶ Grandi works in close collaboration with the Deputy High Commissioner and the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and Operations to oversee the work of the agency's secretariat and its regional offices.²⁷

UNHCR's program budget is determined by four pillars: refugees, stateless people, reintegration programs, and IDPs.²⁸ Funding comes almost entirely from voluntary donations by Member States, intergovernmental institutions, corporations, foundations, and individuals.²⁹ As a means of acquiring these donations, UNHCR releases an annual Global Appeal that provides detailed information regarding the major areas of concern for UNHCR, as well as supplementary appeals that address specific situations worldwide.³⁰ Included in this budget are contributions from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which provides funding in the case of situations that require an immediate response, such as a natural disaster or violent conflict.³¹ UNHCR is facing unprecedented challenges with growing displacement and migration and unmatched increased resources that are resulting in the ever-rising funding gap.³²

The expected final budget for 2019 is \$7.352 billion and UNHCR's 2019 projected global resettlement needs include 1.4 million refugees that will need to be resettled next year.³³ One of the most recent addition to the structure of UNHCR's budget is the Strategic Directions 2017-2021 and the Global

¹⁶ UNHCR, *UN Sister Organizations*, 2017.

¹⁷ UNHCR, *Ending Statelessness*, 2017.

¹⁸ UNHCR, *Figures at a glance: Statistical Yearbooks*, 2018; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2018-2019*, 2017; UNHCR, *Fact Sheet: Global Forced Displacement*, 2016.

¹⁹ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016, p. 264.

²⁰ UNHCR, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 1950, p. 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²² UNHCR, *ExCom Membership*, 2018.

²³ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *ExCom Structure and Meetings*, 2017.

²⁴ UNHCR, *The High Commissioner*, 2017.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ UNHCR, *Governments and Partners*, 2017.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ UNHCR, *Donors*, 2019; *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Partnerships*, 2017.

³⁰ UNHCR, *The Global Appeal and Supplementary Appeals*, 2016; *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² UNHCR, *Needs and Funding Requirements*, 2019.

³³ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2019*, 2018.

Strategic Priorities.³⁴ The Strategic Directions align UHNCR's goals of joining development and humanitarian concern through integrated solutions.³⁵

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The basis for UNHCR's mandate is Article 14 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), which specifically recognizes the right of all individuals to seek asylum in another country.³⁶ The founding document of UNHCR is General Assembly resolution 428(V), known as the *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (1950).³⁷ That resolution defines UNHCR's mandate as: "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."³⁸

Other foundational documents for UNHCR include the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which defines the term "refugee", as well as the rights and obligations of refugees, and the 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which expanded the 1951 Convention and UNHCR's mandate to include refugees from conflicts occurring after 1951.³⁹ UNHCR's mandate also includes other groups, such as stateless people, as defined in the 1954 *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, and the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*.⁴⁰ While its mandate does not extend specifically to IDPs, UNHCR's expertise in displacement has resulted in the gradual inclusion of IDPs in its work.⁴¹ The 1998 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, adopted by ECOSOC, outline the rights and protections for IDPs.⁴² In 2007, after a series of inter-agency consultations, the ExCom adopted the policy framework and implementation strategy titled *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response to situations of internal displacement*.⁴³ This framework emphasizes the agency's primary responsibility to refugees and stipulates that aid to IDPs must be given in collaboration with national governments, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other UN agencies.⁴⁴ The mandate of UNHCR was further expanded in the 2011 ExCom report entitled *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response for the protection of persons affected by natural disasters*.⁴⁵ The report emphasizes UNHCR's primary focus on conflict-related disasters, and that its role in natural disaster relief should be limited to pre-existing refugee or displacement operations.⁴⁶ Notably, this report draws attention to the framework's implications for state sovereignty, particularly when it comes to natural disasters.⁴⁷

In recent years, partnerships have become more central to the organization's activities and priorities.⁴⁸ UNHCR was involved in multiple thematic and regional consultations leading up to the Summit with key messages to the international community and partners echoing an inclusive humanitarian system, the imperative need to bridge the humanitarian-development divide, and restructuring how the humanitarian

³⁴ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2018-2019: Financial Requirements*. 2017.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, 1954; UNHCR, *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*, 1961; Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² UN ECOSOC, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/53/Add.2 (1998))*, 1998.

⁴³ UNHCR ExCom, *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response to situations of internal displacement: Policy framework and implementation strategy (EC/58/SC/CRP.18)*, 2007.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ UNHCR ExCom, *UNHCR's role in support of an enhanced humanitarian response for the protection of persons affected by natural disasters*, 2011.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UNHCR ExCom, *Strategic partnerships, including coordination and the World Humanitarian Summit*, 2016.

field meets its financial needs.⁴⁹ It was at the Summit where the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was discussed in the context of providing a framework to overcome the humanitarian-development divide.⁵⁰ UNHCR continues to play a role in advocating for the inclusion of displacement issues in national development priorities and for people of concern to be included in the policy framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda.⁵¹

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UNHCR held its 69th ExCom session between 1-5 October 2018.⁵² The ExCom focused mainly on budgetary concerns while giving special attention to the inclusion of development and investment in humanitarian efforts.⁵³ The High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, spoke extensively about the *Strategic Directions*' core elements: protect, respond, include, empower, and solve.⁵⁴ UNCHR's *Strategic Directions 2017-2021* outlines the political, social, and economic contexts of different regions within the understanding of conflict.⁵⁵ The outline gives detailed information on what UNHCR's role is, stating that providing aid and managing long-term humanitarian concerns are UNHCR's mandate.⁵⁶ In 2016, the *New York Declaration* was adopted by global consensus and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) was created, leading to further discussion of international efforts to address displacement.⁵⁷ CRRF has been implemented in a dozen Member States and will likely continue to expand.⁵⁸

UNHCR has been at the forefront of assisting Member States in overcoming the effects of internal state conflicts that have turned to global emergencies in recent decades.⁵⁹ In Syria and Yemen, political turmoil continues to cause displacement and prevents those who have fled from returning.⁶⁰ UNHCR remains an active force in providing medical care, educational initiatives, and integrated development with its partners and other UN agencies⁶¹.

The civil unrest in South America and Latin America has continued to cause thousands to flee their homes, with over 5,000 Venezuelans fleeing the country daily.⁶² Over 3 million refugees and migrants are from Venezuela and 375,000 asylum-seekers have fled Venezuelan conflict.⁶³ In effort to address the growing instability in the region, UNHCR has been working with host governments to secure key areas and supply humanitarian aid.⁶⁴ Another recent crisis which has taken priority began in August of 2017, over 700,000 Rohingya were displaced from Myanmar's Rakhine State into Bangladesh.⁶⁵ UNHCR has since been in Bangladesh, serving the needs of refugees and planning for a response plan.⁶⁶ The Rohingya, a stateless Muslim minority in Myanmar, fled into Bangladesh after violence broke out in Myanmar's Rakhine State.⁶⁷ The 2019 *Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis* was

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁵² UNHCR, *2016 Executive Committee Session, 2016*; UNHCR, *67th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, 2016*

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ UNHCR, *Filippo Grandi's Opening Statement at 69th session of ExCom*, 2018.

⁵⁵ UNHCR, *Proposed Strategic Framework for the Period 2018-2019*, 2016.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ UNHCR, *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework*, 2019.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ UNHCR, *Venezuela situation; What is UNHCR doing to help?*, 2018.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ UNHCR, *Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis January – December 2019*, 2018.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ UNHCR, *Rohingya emergency*, 2018

released in 2018 with detailed framework regarding the next year of humanitarian efforts in Bangladesh that have stemmed from the original displacement of nearly three fourths of a million people.⁶⁸

During the ExCom meeting in 2018, Member States discussed the need for preventative measures regarding conflict.⁶⁹ During her address, Chief Executive Officer of the World Bank, Kristalina Georgieva, called for the inclusion of additional education and develop initiatives needing to be integrated on the state level.⁷⁰ Institutions such as the World Bank have equipped UNHCR financially and continue to play a significant part in the abilities and reach of UNHCR's work.⁷¹

Conclusion

As complex situations involving refugees, IDPs, asylum seekers, and stateless people increase and change, the international systems, and especially the UNHCR, will continue to be challenged.⁷² UNHCR often works to ensure that these groups are kept in mind in efforts to achieve the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its goal to "leave no one behind."⁷³ The UNHCR will likely continue to push for refugees, 'to thrive, not just survive. . .' and to bring international attention to refugees' issues and the need for additional resources.⁷⁴

Annotated Bibliography

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (1950). *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* [Report]. Retrieved 20 May 2017 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c39e1.html>

This document contains not only the Statute of UNHCR, but also a helpful introductory note on UNHCR's history and membership. Delegates should begin their research by reviewing the Statute, as it contains integral information in regard to the function of the committee. The Statute details the rules of procedure for UNHCR, its mandate and functions, and the structure of the organization. Through this source, delegates will gain a better understanding of why this body was created, as well as the intended work of the body and the constraints within which it must function.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). *Executive Committee* [Website]. Retrieved 20 May 2017 from <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c83.html>

This Website provides a detailed explanation of ExCom, its history, and its role. It also provides links to all major forms of documentation produced by ExCom, including documents that have been submitted by the Standing Committee. In addition, it provides a better understanding for delegates of the process Member States must undergo to become members of ExCom, as well as of the role of observers in the annual meeting. Delegates should use this resource as a means of better understanding the current work being done by ExCom, as well as a source of documentation regarding the topics discussed.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2018). *UNHCR 2017 Global Trends, Forced Displacement* [Report]. Retrieved 29 March 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>

The 2017 Global Trends report tracks forced displacement each year and will give delegates an updated look at what is currently being done in this field. The report shows 2017 recording the highest number yet, 68.5 million people displaced and highlights the dire situations in Syria, Afghanistan, and Myanmar. Delegates will be able to determine

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Wilton Park, *Forum on new approaches to protracted displacement*, 2016.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

the main priorities that UNHCR will encounter in the coming years and gain a better understanding of the Committee as it gives a broad overview of the work of the body.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Executive Committee. (2016). *Proposed Strategic Framework for the Period 2018-2019* [Report]. Standing Committee, 65th meeting. Retrieved 20 May 2017 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/56dedef366/unhcrs-programme-united-nations-proposed-strategic-framework-period-2018.html>

The Strategic Framework outlining the work for UNHCR for 2018-2019 will be complementary to the biennial plan for 2016-2017. In this framework, UNHCR's work will continue to incorporate the larger goals of 'international protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees' as detailed in the Strategic Framework for 2016-2017. A notable difference from the previous Strategic Framework is that 2018-2019 will be presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC); then the CPC will issue a report with conclusions and recommendations (A/71/6) for approval by the General Assembly. Delegates will also note that this framework will include progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals as well as follow up on relevant recommendations from international conferences and other humanitarian and development organizations.

Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. (2017). *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*. Retrieved 29 March 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/5894558d4.pdf>

This document can be used by the delegates to gain an understanding of UNHCR's priorities and goals within a recent context. The Strategic Directions gives a brief history of the growing number of displaced persons, the changing methods of overcoming humanitarian crisis', and how each ExCom member can be a part of the solution. The Strategic Directions outlines how UNHCR plans to achieve its goals through 6 core elements: protect, respond, include, empower, and solve. The core elements can be used by delegates to understand their assigned Member State's policy.

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I. Addressing the Crisis of Internally Displaced People and Refugees in Latin America

Introduction

As of 2018, over 68 million people were displaced worldwide, with Colombia having the greatest amount of internally displaced people (IDPs) internationally.⁷⁵ IDPs are people who have been forced to flee their homes, typically under the same circumstances as refugees, but have not left their country of residence.⁷⁶ Due to extreme humanitarian and economic crises in the area, Latin America is expected to face one of the most severe migration challenges to date and already hosts over three million refugees and over eight million IDPs.⁷⁷ In 2016 alone, 220,000 people in El Salvador became displaced due to violence, the vast majority of which stayed within their borders.⁷⁸ For fear of reprisal and to avoid detection, IDPs often do not report violence which caused their displacement or violent acts perpetrated after displacement.⁷⁹ Colombia's 7.5 million IDPs suffer from chronic displacement and often move between settlements for years.⁸⁰ IDPs and refugees are also particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation, especially in refugee hosting countries that do not allow working privileges to refugees or grant them visas.⁸¹

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that by 2020 there will be over 5 million refugees from Venezuela alone.⁸² In 2018, more than 10% of Venezuela's population crossed into neighboring states as refugees.⁸³ Colombia currently hosts approximately two million Venezuelan refugees, despite also having over 7.5 million IDPs.⁸⁴ Refugee-hosting states that neighbor Venezuela receive an average of 5,000 refugees daily, their resources are often limited, and the refugees they host may face exclusion and xenophobia.⁸⁵ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) has made the situation in Latin America a priority as the region faces its largest refugee crisis to date.⁸⁶ This has involved not only developing partnerships that meet the immediate needs of refugees, but also creating and improving policies that protect their rights.⁸⁷

International and Regional Framework

In 1950, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, which laid the foundation for the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*.⁸⁸ This document defined the term refugee and outlined the necessity of non-refoulement, a principle that forbids the returning displaced persons to return to their state of origin when they will likely face persecution and discrimination.⁸⁹ The *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, a key legal framework for the rights of refugees, was adopted in 1967 after the adoption of the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR).⁹⁰ ICESCR describes the right

⁷⁵ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2018.

⁷⁶ UNHCR, *What is a Refugee*, 2018.

⁷⁷ Oner, *Latin America is facing its worst refugee crisis in its history. Will it repeat the EU's mistakes regarding Syrian refugees?*, 2018.

⁷⁸ Norwegian Refugee Council & Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement - 2017*, 2017.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ UNICEF, *Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela*, 2019.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Graca, *Internally Displaced Persons in Colombia*, 2018.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ UNHCR, *Regional Summaries: The Americas*, 2017.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/428 (V))*, 1950; UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ UNHCR, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

to an adequate standard of living for all peoples, including the meeting of basic needs such as healthcare, food, clothing, and shelter.⁹¹ Although previous documents outlined some basic rights of displaced persons, the rights of IDPs became expressly distinguished in 2004 in the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* which defines the term IDP and provides a voluntary framework to ensure their basic rights are being met.⁹²

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted in 2015, states that refugees and IDPs are to be given special consideration for the removal of barriers of access and to promote the inclusion of addressing the unique needs of refugees and IDPs in national sustainable development frameworks.⁹³ In 2016, the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 71/1, the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* which includes commitments on the protection of human rights, prevention of gender based violence, and the condemnation of xenophobia.⁹⁴ The *New York Declaration* also called for the creation of a *Global Compact on Refugees*, which was developed by UNHCR as a comprehensive guide for the mitigation of mass migration of refugees and IDPs and adopted by the General Assembly in 2018.⁹⁵

In 1984, 10 Latin American Member States established the *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*, expanding the definition of refugee from the 1951 Convention to include those fleeing because of economic crises, violence, disease, and food insecurity.⁹⁶ At a follow-up conference in 1994, the Latin American community adopted the *San José Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Persons*, which encouraged Member States to further share the responsibility of refugees and to minimize conditions that lead to internal displacement and mass exodus.⁹⁷ In 2004, the *Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees in Latin America* was adopted.⁹⁸ Building on the previous frameworks, the 2014 *Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action* calls for Latin American states to cooperate to maintain the highest international protection laws and principles in order to pioneer inventive solutions for refugees and other displaced people.

Role of the International System

UNHCR's mandate is to meet the needs and protect the rights of displaced persons through the creation of framework documents and on the ground partnerships.⁹⁹ In 2018, UNHCR launched the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) to meet the needs of displaced Venezuelans.¹⁰⁰ In Colombia, UNHCR partnered with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to create the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI) which provides cash-based aid and security to seventeen IDP settlements to decrease economic dependence.¹⁰¹ The UNHCR has partnerships with over 130 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), including the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR).¹⁰² MERCOSUR is a South American intergovernmental trade organization that also does limited work on the protection of stateless persons, IDPs, and refugees, as has established refugee and migrant responsibility-sharing mechanisms.¹⁰³ The IOM has focused on collecting data regarding the growing number of IDPs and Refugees in Central America as well as the gaps in documentation and access to humanitarian aid.¹⁰⁴

⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966, p. 4.

⁹² UN OCHA, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 2004.

⁹³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016.

⁹⁵ UNHCR, *Global Compact on Refugees*, 2018.

⁹⁶ UNHCR, *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*, 1984.

⁹⁷ Regional Refugee Instruments, *San José Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Persons*, 1994.

⁹⁸ UNHCR, *Brazil Declaration*, 2018.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ IOM, *Emergency Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela Launched*, 2018.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Some initiatives have been created that aim to address Latin America’s crisis.¹⁰⁵ A partnership between UNHCR, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Central American Integration System (SICA), and 6 Latin American stakeholders, led to the creation of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), which was adopted as a regional application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).¹⁰⁶ The objective of MIRPS is to support existing regional commitments through action based policy and the promotion of new comprehensive initiatives that address and mitigate displacement.¹⁰⁷ MIRPS accomplishes this by prioritizing national action plans, recommending cross border programs, and providing financial assistance.¹⁰⁸ This regional approach strengthens the cooperation between countries of origin, transit, and host states, while including Member States outside of Latin America as stakeholders to the displacement crisis.¹⁰⁹

Meeting the Basic Needs of Internally Displaced People and Refugees

Latin America is facing its greatest displacement crisis to date.¹¹⁰ Almost 90% of Venezuelans are living in poverty and over 50% suffer from severe food insecurity, which has led to the displacement of over 4 million people.¹¹¹ Colombia has taken in over one million Venezuelan refugees despite already being home to over 7.5 million Colombian IDPs, 80% of which live in poverty.¹¹² Most IDPs lack the education and skills that are essential to escaping poverty, especially in large urban centers.¹¹³ Many are already part of marginalized groups – indigenous and African Colombians make up less than 15% of the population in Colombia, but account for 74% of Colombia’s IDPs and are disproportionately represented in poverty and crime statistics.¹¹⁴ In the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA), made up of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, there has also been an increase in refugees, but with large gaps in data and monitoring, statistics on displaced peoples in the region are relatively unreliable.¹¹⁵ This lack of data makes it more difficult for local authorities to support citizens, further exacerbating the invisibility of IDPs among state governments.¹¹⁶

Working with local governments and the IOM, UNHCR is gathering data to better meet the needs of Latin American refugees and IDPs.¹¹⁷ UNHCR has also strengthened its presence at the Venezuelan borders to provide additional support to refugees such as potable water and protection to unaccompanied children.¹¹⁸ IOM and the UNHCR have been confronting xenophobia in host states through awareness campaigns, which outline the economic and social benefits of hosting refugees.¹¹⁹ UNHCR has been working with the Brazilian government to open 13 temporary shelters along the Venezuela border, hosting over 6,000 refugees, as well as working towards relocation services that offer more income opportunity for Venezuelans.¹²⁰ With support from UNHCR, Honduras established the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of People Displaced by Violence in 2013, which paved the way for legislation that criminalized gang-related violence leading to displacement in 2018.¹²¹ At the forefront of the Interinstitutional Commission is the collection of IDP data to understand the root causes and scope of

¹⁰⁵ Marco Integral Regional para la Protección y Soluciones, *The Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework*, 2017.

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR, *MIRPS: A Regional CRRF Application*, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Mercy Corps, *Quick facts: Venezuela’s humanitarian crisis*, 2019.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Internal Displacement Global Reports, *Northern Triangle of Central America: A Reluctant and Fragmented Response*, 2018.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ UNHCR, *Venezuela Situation*, 2019.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

internal displacement as well as monitor trends and better protect displaced persons from violence.¹²² In Colombia, the government is providing cash-based aid to IDPs through the Colombia Victims Unit.¹²³ This initiative has compensated more than 500,000 IDPs in four years, making up only 10% of eligible IDPs in need of economic support.¹²⁴

Protecting Women and Girls

Displaced women and girls are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, human trafficking, sexual abuse, and violence, due to organized crime and instability.¹²⁵ In Latin America, criminal groups often congregate near borders of states in crisis, blocking passage of refugees and perpetrating theft, sexual violence, trafficking, or other criminal activities.¹²⁶ Displaced women are often traveling with children and are more likely to share their limited resources even with children who are not their own.¹²⁷ Unaccompanied girls are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and gender-based violence (GBV).¹²⁸ There have been reports that to feed and medicate themselves and children, women in Venezuela have had to resort to the selling of their hair.¹²⁹ Many women have also been forced into sex trafficking for safety, food security, and shelter.¹³⁰ Rates of sexual exploitation have increased dramatically since 2016, particularly around the Venezuelan borders.¹³¹ Women in NTCA have reported that they are targeted for sexual violence by organized crime groups so frequently that women they are constantly relocating.¹³² In a 2015 study conducted by UNHCR on displaced Central American survivors of sexual violence, it was found that only 60% reported to local authorities, but that none felt the authorities were able to fully protect them due to a lack of police capacity or resources.¹³³ Displaced transgender women in NTCA and Mexico have reported an even greater frequency of attacks.¹³⁴ Most internally displaced women in NTCA have been forced to risk border crossing as a result of forced transiency, often being extorted by human smugglers, or coyotes.¹³⁵ Instances of GBV and rape during transit has become so common that most women trade what little money or resources they have for contraception before beginning their journey with smugglers.¹³⁶

In 2001, the UNHCR published the *UNHCR Commitments to Refugee Women*, which highlights meaningful participation, individual registration and documentation, food and non-food items management and distribution, economic empowerment, and prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence.¹³⁷ The Women's Refugee Commission published a report in January of 2019 on the experiences of Venezuelan refugee women in Peru and Ecuador showing that most women lacked access to documents needed for visas. This has led to an increase in informal and undocumented border crossings, increasing their risk exploitation and GBV.¹³⁸ The report also found that many more girls have been traveling without their guardians, increasing their likelihood to be abused and exploited.¹³⁹ Separate humanitarian transport and shelters are available for highly vulnerable persons, including pregnant women and children, but women traveling alone do not have access to separate women-only

¹²² Joint Internally Displaced Persons Profiling Service, *Honduras*, 2019.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Sanchez, *In Venezuela, women sell hair as another way to get by*, 2019.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ UNHCR, *Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls*, 2006.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ UNHCR, *Women on the Run: First Hand Accounts of Refugees Fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico*, 2015.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Commitments to Refugee Women*, 2001.

¹³⁸ Women's Refugee Commission, *The Time to Act Is Now: Addressing Risks of Exploitation for Venezuelan Women and Children Seeking Refuge*, 2019.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

accommodation, further increasing their risks.¹⁴⁰ The Women's Refugee Commission has made recommendations to the UNHCR which include prioritizing young women traveling alone for access to safe women-only spaces and transport.¹⁴¹ UNHCR has also made recommendations to NTCA states and Mexico to create legal avenues for asylum, as well as refraining from detention of women as a deterrent from border crossing, to combat the use of smugglers.¹⁴²

Conclusion

Displaced people in Latin America face unique displacement as border crossings typically have even greater risks than living transiently in hubs of organized crime and violence.¹⁴³ Displaced women in Mexico and NTCA are particularly vulnerable as they face sexual and GBV from gang members as well as local authorities.¹⁴⁴ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 10.7 states that Member States are to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies."¹⁴⁵ UNHCR has been working extensively with Member States in Latin America to support refugees and IDPs by collecting data, providing cash aid, secure settlements, and addressing the root causes of displacement.¹⁴⁶

Further Research

Moving forward on this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: How can UNHCR further support IDPs in Latin America? How can Member States and IGOs ensure secure and safe borders, particularly in Mexico and NTCA states? How can UNHCR empower women refugees? How can states in Latin America minimize instances of GBV and sex trafficking? What can the international community do to support them in their efforts? How can the international community increase access to documentation? What can UNHCR do to support states in stopping to use of smugglers and other forms of transit extortion? How can states and IGOs support local authorities to improve their ability to protect displaced persons?

Annotated Bibliography

Norwegian Refugee Council & Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2017). *Global Report on Internal Displacement - 2017*. Retrieved 28 May 2018 from: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/599339934.html>

This document is a comprehensive report on the risks and challenges uniquely faced by Internally Displaced Persons. A large portion of the report directly relates to the experiences on Latin Americans, delving into root causes of the massive increase of displacement in Latin America. The document also outlines why IDPs opt to remain within their state of origin and the challenges faced when local authorities are unwilling or unable to protect citizens. Delegates will find this document essential to identifying the gaps and needs of IDPs and providing a thorough understanding of what UNHCR is currently doing to support states in this effort.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. (1984). *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*. Retrieved 27 February 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/45dc19084/cartagena-declaration-refugees-adopted-colloquium-international-protection.html>

The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees was adopted in 1984 to expand the definition of Refugee for a Latin American context. This is an important foundational document to reference for this region as legislation around the status of refugees and IDPs are unique

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

to Latin America. Despite great efforts of Latin American Member States to have more supportive legal frameworks, there are still many gaps in services and protections for those fleeing violence and instability in the region. This document is an essential resource for delegates in understanding the distinct challenges and overall severity of the Latin American displacement crisis.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. (2006). *Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls*. Retrieved 27 February 2019 from: <https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/51689/UNHCR+Handbook+for+the+Protection+of+Women+and+Girls/f26257af-9d66-4eff-af5b-7b0e6ff6424f>

Established by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, this document presents the standard for addressing the unique needs of displaced women and girls. The document provides statistics on increased vulnerability of women and girls and can be used as a guide for gender sensitive services and allocation of resources. The Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls outlines aspects of displacement from the initial conflict to return and reintegration to draw attention the distinctive needs of women and girls that are often not met. Delegates will find useful information in section 5.3, which delves into practices and gaps in preventing gender-based violence and trafficking, and sections 5.7 and 5.8, which address shelter and food security.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. (2015). *Women on the Run: First Hand Accounts of Refugees Fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico* [Study]. Retrieved 5 June 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/publications/operations/5630f24c6/women-run.html>

This document is a comprehensive study undertaken by UNHCR by interviewing displaced women from Mexico and the NTCA, giving delegates a unique perspective. The study outlines the challenges that women face during displacement and transit. There is a large emphasis on the frequency and brutality of sexual and gender-based violence among the Latin American women interviewed. Delegates can use this document to identify gaps in the protection of displaced women, as well as access a list of recommendations that UNHCR has made to address and minimize these challenges.

Women's Refugee Commission. (2019). *The Time to Act Is Now: Addressing Risks of Exploitation for Venezuelan Women and Children Seeking Refuge*. Retrieved 27 February 2019 from: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources-refugee-protection/1716-the-time-to-act-is-now>

This document goes into great detail about the vulnerabilities of women and girls who are refugees or IDPs in Venezuela and the surrounding states. Delegates will find this document useful to identify the gender gaps in UNHCR services. Delegates will find Chapter 3: Gaps in Comprehensive Protection Programming and Chapter 6: Supporting Survivors of Gender Based Violence particularly helpful in understanding the needs Venezuelan women and how UNHCR can better support and protect them.

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I. Economic Integration of Refugees and Internally Displaced People

Introduction

Currently, about 68.5 million people live in forced displacement, including 40 million internally displaced peoples (IDPs), 3 million asylum seekers, and 25.4 million refugees, 19.9 million of which are under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) while the remainder are under the purview of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).¹⁴⁷ Issues relating to xenophobia, discrimination, language barriers, physical barriers, and the significant loss of assets, income, human capital, and social capital that refugees face when they are forcibly displaced create what is often referred to as the “refugee gap.”¹⁴⁸ This refers to the reality that refugees perform worse in labor markets than citizens regardless of language level, education, and previous work experience.¹⁴⁹

The international community has taken great efforts to provide short-term humanitarian services for these populations, but refugees and IDPs frequently stay in their host communities for long periods.¹⁵⁰ The UNHCR works to assist refugees, IDPs, and host communities to promote economic integration throughout the resettlement process in order to promote stability for both displaced populations and host communities.¹⁵¹ Improving the effectiveness of the international community’s medium- and long-term efforts to improve economic opportunities for refugees and IDPs has been a priority for UNHCR, but many programs and initiatives meant to support host communities in short- and medium-term resettlement operations have been ineffective, ill-equipped, and under-funded.¹⁵²

A refugee is defined as a person who has left their home country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or sociopolitical affiliation and is unable or unwilling to return to that country.¹⁵³ Countries in Africa and Latin America expand upon this definition to include those who flee their country due to violence, foreign aggression, or disaster.¹⁵⁴ IDPs are defined as those who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of armed conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, but have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.¹⁵⁵ As with refugees, the African Union (AU) has expanded upon this definition to include individuals who are displaced internally due to development projects or climate change.¹⁵⁶ The most distinguishing factor between refugees and IDPs is whether they cross an international border.¹⁵⁷

International and Regional Framework

The economic inclusion of refugees and IDPs has a basis in international law, primarily through the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*.¹⁵⁸ This convention highlights the importance of gainful employment, including through wage-earning employment, self-employment, and employment in

¹⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016, p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ World Bank Group, *Forcibly Displaced: Towards a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts*, 2017, pp. 1, 81; *Ibid*; UN General Assembly, *In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/59)*, 2016, p. 16; Ott, E., *The Labour Market Integration of Resettled Refugees*, 2013, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 11.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ UNHCR, *The Refugee Perspective*, 2001, p. 6.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 10.

¹⁵³ UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951, p. 14.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ UN OCHA, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 2004, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ African Union, *Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)*, 2009, p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ OHCHR, *Questions and answers about IDPs*, 2019.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 16.

professions that do not center around manual labor.¹⁵⁹ The *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (2016) is the most recent major international document concerning refugees.¹⁶⁰ It highlights the importance of ensuring refugee children receive quality education, supporting transit and host communities through policy development and assistance, condemning xenophobia and discrimination and, strengthening the positive economic and social contributions of refugees.¹⁶¹ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also address the economic integration of refugees and IDPs through the empowerment of vulnerable populations and recognizing the dignity of all people.¹⁶²

In 2017, UNHCR began to develop the *Global compact on refugees*, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2018.¹⁶³ The Compact highlights four key objectives: to ease the pressures of host countries, to enhance refugee self-reliance, to expand access to third-country solutions, and to support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.¹⁶⁴ The Compact contains a Programme of Action that includes sections on burden- and responsibility-sharing and areas that are in need of support such as reception and admission and meeting the needs of host and support communities.¹⁶⁵

There are a number of regional bodies working to assist refugees and IDPs through regional partnerships such as those between the European Union (EU) and AU.¹⁶⁶ The Valletta Summit brought together leaders from both regions to develop an action plan to address issues related to migration and forced displacement and leverage the benefits that migration can have on development.¹⁶⁷ There are also a number of Euro-African dialogues and plans for migration and refugees such as the Rabat Process and the Khartoum Process.¹⁶⁸ South American countries adopted the *Brazil Declaration* in 2014, which holds parties responsible for working together to uphold international and regional protection standards and innovative solutions to help displaced peoples.¹⁶⁹

Role of the International System

The UNHCR works with Member States to ensure access to education, training, and employment; facilitate access to labor markets through freedom of movement; and engage with local actors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to assist refugees and IDPs in their resettlement process.¹⁷⁰ Recently, UNHCR partnered with the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in an effort to expand employment opportunities for refugees.¹⁷¹ This action plan identifies areas for successful labor market integration through a consultative process with Member States, employers, civil society organizations, trade unions, and refugees.¹⁷² The process includes identifying refugees skills and gaps in Member States to make successful matches with employers in host countries.¹⁷³ Successful implementation of this partnership has required legal aid to help private companies navigate legal frameworks regarding employing refugees.¹⁷⁴

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 22-23.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid; UN Refugees and Migrants, *New York Declaration*, 2019.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 3, 7.

¹⁶³ UNHCR, *About Us*, 2019.

¹⁶⁴ UNHCR, *Global compact on refugees (A/73/12)*, 2018, p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 3, 9.

¹⁶⁶ Khartoum Process, *What is the Joint Valletta Action Plan?*, 2019.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ The Rabat Process, *Rabat Process*, 2019; IOM, *EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (Khartoum Process)*, 2019.

¹⁶⁹ UNHCR, *The Brazil Declaration*, 2019.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 6; UNHCR, *The Integration of Resettled Refugees*, 2013, p. 20.

¹⁷¹ UNHCR, *UNHCR and OECD launch action plan to boost refugee employment*, 2018.

¹⁷² UNHCR & OECD, *Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees*, 2018.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

The World Bank has also made a number of recommendations on how to support refugees and IDPs through development.¹⁷⁵ These include preventing forced displacement; strengthening the resilience of populations who were not displaced; supporting host communities; helping the forcibly displaced; and working towards sustainable and durable economic solutions for refugees and IDPs as well as their host communities.¹⁷⁶ The international community has also welcomed the work of NGOs and the private sector to support the efforts to implement the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*.¹⁷⁷

Strengthening Institutions and Capacities of Host Communities

In part due to growing numbers of refugees and IDPs, host communities often act on their own in the initial steps of resettlement.¹⁷⁸ In order to avoid plateaued development of a host community during a refugee crisis and to assist with the economic integration of the forcibly displaced, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General has emphasized the importance of development actors within the international community in assisting host communities in resettling refugees and IDPs.¹⁷⁹ The *Global compact on refugees* encourages states, development agencies, NGOs, and the private sector to contribute resources and expertise in order to promote economic opportunities, decent work, job creation, and entrepreneurship programs for refugees, IDPs, as well as members of host communities with the ability to provide economic opportunities to others.¹⁸⁰ Through the adoption of individualized solutions that work to benefit both the host communities and the displaced populations, the international community can conduct labor market analysis, skill and qualification recognition among refugees and IDPs, and build the capacity of refugees, IDPs, and host communities through training programs.¹⁸¹

Educational institutions, healthcare institutions, and infrastructure within host communities that lack the capacity to handle large influxes of people present an issue for both the existing members of the host community and the newly resettled population.¹⁸² Long-standing development issues are often exacerbated by the influx of forcibly displaced persons to host communities.¹⁸³ After a forced displacement crisis, traditional amounts and types of development aid and support from the international community is no longer sufficient to not only maintain existing conditions, but to improve the business environment and reduce inequalities between refugees and IDPs as compared to their host community counterparts.¹⁸⁴ A recent evaluation of a refugee resettlement program revealed that only 3 of every 71 refugees have taken on paid work in the last 18 months – all of whom were underemployed.¹⁸⁵ Unskilled employment, semi-skilled employment, and underemployment are all issues that refugee and IDP communities face when trying to access financial opportunities in their host communities.¹⁸⁶ This is due to the large amount of variables when trying to access employment opportunities, such as demographic variables, education, pre-settlement employment history, access to community assets, and social capital.¹⁸⁷ For host communities, accommodating forcibly displaced persons means scaling up supplies, developing finance infrastructure, and the maintaining and modernizing existing entities, despite a large influx of people.¹⁸⁸

The World Bank has stated that if refugees and IDPs are not granted freedom of movement throughout their host community, they cannot access to the formal market and job opportunities.¹⁸⁹ Some refugees

¹⁷⁵ World Bank Group, *Supporting Refugees and Internally Displaced Through Development*, 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 11.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, pp 13-14, 75; ILO, *Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market*, 2016, pp. 2-3.

¹⁸² Ibid, pp. 70-71.

¹⁸³ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 15.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, pp. 19-20.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 2017, p. 8.

and IDPs face segregation and discrimination that often limits their ability to leave settlement camps to seek work.¹⁹⁰ In his 2016 report, the UN Secretary-General has implored Member States to ensure that forcibly displaced people have full freedom of movement and access to basic services, labor markets, education, and opportunities to improve their livelihood.¹⁹¹ This is also in line with the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, which enumerates the right to work for all displaced peoples.¹⁹²

Investing in Education, Skills, and Job Training

The World Bank has emphasized that forcibly displaced persons need economic opportunities to avoid falling into poverty, dependency, and systemic unemployment and underemployment.¹⁹³ The self-reliance of refugees not only includes security of basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, and clothing, but includes the ability and desire to contribute to the development of host communities through legal employment wherever possible.¹⁹⁴ Skills and capacities of refugees and IDPs often go unutilized, despite their potential to contribute to their host communities' economies and work to secure their own financial independency and security.¹⁹⁵

On top of devastating loss of resources and assets, refugees and IDPs also experience a gap in literacy and language when resettled into a host community.¹⁹⁶ Generations of refugee children are susceptible to lifelong instability due to a lack of skills and knowledge to adapt to their host environment, in addition to a lack of access to education.¹⁹⁷ The World Bank has suggested that Member States invest in skills and education that are in demand within their labor market in order to fill existing gaps and not endanger the security of the host community's labor force.¹⁹⁸ This would also enable refugees and IDPs to take advantage of short- and medium-term opportunities and empower them to invest in long-term opportunities in their origin communities.¹⁹⁹ Language training is also vitally important for refugees and IDPs, especially at the early stages of resettlement, in order to allow for basic integration that will allow them to thrive.²⁰⁰ Best practices have shown that efforts to promote inclusivity, including language and cultural orientation, work best immediately after the arrival of refugees and IDPs and improves their ability to access education, health care, and employment opportunities.²⁰¹

Conclusion

The development of coherent national, regional, and global policies and strategies can work to the advantage of both displaced populations and their host communities.²⁰² Development actors continue to work together in order to help reduce and eliminate economic vulnerabilities of forcibly displaced people in order to implement specialized poverty reduction efforts that benefit both displaced populations and host communities.²⁰³ Rhetoric on the importance of integrating refugees and IDPs into labor markets has taken root in the international community, but there is poor data collection and the issue is often neglected.²⁰⁴ The international community continues to work towards focusing their efforts not only on

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 86.

¹⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *One humanity: Shared responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/709)*, 2016, p. 23.

¹⁹² UN General Assembly, *In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/59)*, 2016, p. 19.

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 9

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 19.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 19.

¹⁹⁶ Ott, E., *The Labour Market Integration of Resettled Refugees*, 2013, p. 11.

¹⁹⁷ The World Bank Group, *Forcibly Displaced: Towards a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts*, 2017, p. 10.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 10.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 16.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p. 16.

²⁰² Ibid, pp. 16-17.

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 1.

²⁰⁴ Ott, E., *The Labour Market Integration of Resettled Refugees*, 2013, p. 3.

short-term humanitarian relief for forcibly displaced people, but in consideration of the medium- and long-term economic ramifications of large populations of the forcibly displaced.²⁰⁵

Further Research

Moving forward with this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: What developmental factors within Member States have the potential to exacerbate forced displacement issues? To help solve forced displacement issues? How can the international community assist host communities in achieving economic integration of refugees and IDPs? In what ways can the UNHCR bolster support for the economic integration of forcibly displaced peoples?

Annotated Bibliography

Ott, E. (2013). *The Labour Market Integration of Resettled Refugees* [Report]. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Retrieved 2 March 2019 from:

<https://www.unhcr.org/5273a9e89.pdf>

This document explains the UNHCR's approach to labor market integration. It provides thorough data on the economic integration of refugees. It also provides current best practices, explains roadblocks for both refugees and host communities, and offers recommendations for the consideration of the international community. Delegates can look to this resource for examples of best practices for their consideration.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2016). *In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/59)*. Retrieved 2 March 2019 from:

<http://undocs.org/A/70/59>

This report not only explains the current refugee situation and it fully details the current work of the international community in regards to refugees. The Secretary-General also provides recommendations for the international community to consider in regards to the current refugee crisis. Reports of the Secretary-General are an excellent resource for delegates to gain a comprehensive view of the issues, precedents, and best practices involved with a topic.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*. Retrieved 2 March 2019 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/1>

As the outcome document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants in September 2016, this document outlines the most recent commitments agreed upon by Member States to respond to the increasing global movements of refugees. The declaration defines the scope of the problem and recalls relevant refugee response frameworks and instruments of international law. It also clearly states the importance of addressing the global crisis in a way that is consistent with the principles of the 2030 Agenda.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2018). *Global compact on refugees (A/73/12)*.

Retrieved 10 April 2019 from: https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf

The Global Compact on Refugees is a very recent initiative by the UNHCR to address the issue of refugees. It contains guiding principles, objectives of the international community, and addresses the importance of preventing the root causes of forced displacement. The Programme of Action within the Compact lays out multiple measurable and actionable initiatives that Member States can take in order to sufficiently address a refugee issue within their country.

World Bank Group. (2017). *Forcibly Displaced: Towards a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts* [Report]. Retrieved 2 March 2019 from:

²⁰⁵ The World Bank Group, *Forcibly Displaced: Towards a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts*, 2017, p. 1.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25016/9781464809385.pdf?sequence=11&isAllowed=y>

This report from the World Bank for the UNHCR offers a comprehensive picture of the current crisis of forced displacement. It also offers different prevention and preparedness measures and outlines sources for host communities, tactics to reduce vulnerabilities of displaced populations, and utilizing development to assist forcibly displaced persons and their host countries. Delegates can look to this report for recent facts and figures on the current forced displacement crisis and the international community's current approach towards these issues.

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