United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Study Guide

5th Annual ShoreMUN Conference

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Committee Directors’ Note

Aqib Khalique

I am Muhammad Aqib Khalique and I will be your chair for this committee. I am an alumnus of the Southshore School for A Level Studies and am currently a student at the University of London’s external programs pursuing a degree in law. I have done more than 10 Model United Nations conferences and won most of them while having chaired six conferences. I am also currently the president of Karachi Youth Productions which has organized more than two editions of Karachi Youth Model United Nations. I have also trained various schools such as Haque Academy and River Oaks Academy for the purposes of public speaking. I am looking forward to having a great time with all of you this year at ShoreMUN. Happy Researching!

Ehsn Ahmed Suri

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Ehsn Ahmed Suri and I will be serving as your co-committee director for the UNHCR at this year’s edition of ShoreMUN. I am currently a sophomore at the Institute of Business Administration and alumnus of the Southshore School for A Level Studies. I have been debating for the last three years, having attended multiple conferences and having the pleasure of chairing three of them. I hope to see a good level of debate in the committee and wish all of you all the best.
Introduction to the Committee:

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), also known as the UN Refugee Agency, was established by the United Nations General Assembly following World War II to address the high number of Europeans that were displaced due to the war. At its creation, UNHCR functioned with a 34-member staff. At present, UNHCR employs over 8,600 national and international staff members working in over 126 countries, including in Geneva, Switzerland, where UNHCR’s headquarters is located. Additionally, UNHCR has increased its budget from $300,000 in its first year to over $3.59 billion in 2012, and it now addresses the needs of over 43 million people worldwide. UNHCR falls under the United Nations Programmes and Funds, reports directly to the General Assembly (GA), and is governed by the Member States that make up its Executive Committee (ExCom).

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, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and asylum seekers. A refugee is someone who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.” IDPs are defined as individuals who have had to flee their homes, but have crossed an international border. An asylum seeker is “someone who is seeking international protection but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined.”

UNHCR provides humanitarian aid in a variety of forms including food and nutritional supplements, basic shelter, first aid, cash assistance, and legal services. The agency is also involved in efforts to reintegrate those who can return to their original home and resettle those who cannot. UNHCR works closely with other agencies to address the needs of individuals who have been displaced due to natural disasters, as was the case in 2010 with both the floods in Pakistan and the earthquake in Haiti. Further, UNHCR is concerned with the plight of stateless individuals, who lack an official nationality due to discrimination, state succession, or conflicts between states.
Topic A: Strengthening the Rights of Refugees

Introduction
In any refugee crisis, and particularly in prolonged refugee crises, people forced to migrate may encounter difficulties in accessing basic amenities and exercising basic rights. Those needs and rights may be concrete, such as food, water, medicine, and shelter; they may also be abstract rights and liberties, such as the right to manifest religious or political beliefs or to live in accordance with familiar cultural norms. Even when they have resettled permanently in a new country, refugees encounter barriers to these rights, all of which are protected under international law.

Refugees, many of whom have already endured human rights abuses, may suffer again while living in refugee camps. Crowded conditions, shortages of food and water, and poor sanitation can lead to a deterioration of health. Furthermore, the challenges for women and girls in refugee camps are exacerbated by the prevalence of sexual violence; many women report having been raped while doing necessary work, such as collecting firewood. Generally, there is little access to adequate health care, and virtually no access to more than the most basic educational opportunities. Further, the need for rights protection systems is extenuated in protracted crises where refugees are unable to return to their countries of origin for many years or in some cases decades.

Similarly, when refugees cannot return to their home countries within a reasonable period of time, and are resettled in a third country, they may face legal difficulties with attaining public benefits, discrimination in schools and places of employment, and language and cultural barriers, among other challenges. While this may be preferable to an extended stay in a refugee camp, they still face a lack of access to services and realization of rights. International law protects the civil, political, and socioeconomic rights of all people including refugee and displaced populations. Unfortunately, as a vulnerable population, they are at risk of having these rights violated. Therefore, it is within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), other UN agencies, civil society, and national governments to take certain measures to protect refugee’s rights.

It is important to note that refugees are defined as populations living outside of their countries of origin in camps, urban areas or those who have been repatriated or resettled in a third country. While internally displaced persons (IDPs) share many of their struggles with refugees, they still reside within the borders of their countries of origin. Because of the sensitivity and concern for violating national sovereignty, internal displacement is not within the original mandate of UNHCR. However, because of the increasing need to assist these populations, UNHCR has provided protection and assistance to IDPs in the past with the on.
Key Definitions

- **Protection**: Includes activities aimed at ensuring that human rights are respected, preventing harm and abuse, and ensuring that conditions are conducive to these goals.

- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**: Internal displacement occurs when people are forced to move within their home countries as a result of conflict, natural disaster, or other reasons; internally displaced persons are distinct from refugees, as they remain in their countries of origin.

- **Refoulement**: To return a person residing outside of her home country to that country; “non-refoulement” is a requirement of certain refugee-related treaties, such as the *Convention against Torture*.

- **Resettlement Country (or Third Country)**: A resettlement country is any country where refugees who cannot be repatriated reside permanently.

- **Repatriation**: To return refugees to their countries of origin at the end of the situation that caused them to leave.

International and Regional Frameworks

While the *Convention and Protocols Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)* provides the groundwork for defining the legal status “refugee” and the rights attached to that status, they are by no means the only international legal instruments that may be of help in understanding and protecting the rights of refugees. There are several human rights treaties applicable to all human beings that may be invoked in the discussion of the rights of refugees. These include, notably, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*. Each raises a separate set of obligations for Member States and a separate set of rights for individuals. Besides the fact that each Covenant relates to different spheres of human rights, each imposes a different duty. While the ICESCR requires states to take steps to fulfill rights to needs such as health care and education, it only requires that they do so to the maximum extent of their available resources. The ICCPR, on the other hand, which deals with the right to hold and manifest religious beliefs, among other liberty rights, sets a higher standard in place, requiring states to “respect and ensure” the articulated rights and to “give effect” to those rights through legislation and other appropriate means. This distinction is important to understand in the context of the refugee crisis, particularly considering the strain on a country’s resources when dealing with forced migration on a large scale.

*International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*

Member States that have ratified these two Covenants take on certain responsibilities with respect to individuals within their territory. In
the case of the ICCPR, which enjoys slightly broader ratification than the ICESCR, these responsibilities relate to the following civil rights, among others:

- Equal treatment of all persons “without distinction of any kind” based on race, sex, language, nationality, religion, political opinion, or membership in some other class or group;

- Protection against the arbitrary deprivation of life, including by death penalties imposed for less serious offenses;

- Protection against arbitrary arrest and detention;

- Equality before the courts;

- The right to hold political opinions and to freely associate with others;

- The right of children to be registered after birth and to acquire nationality; and

- The right to form community with others of similar language, culture, and ethnicity.

*International Covenant on Cultural, Social, and Economic Rights (ICESCR)*

The ICESCR, a “sister covenant” to the ICCPR, entails a less rigid duty for its signatories, but the rights included in the ICESCR are difficult for some countries, particularly developing countries, to fulfill, as they require a certain level of commitment of economic and material resources. These rights include:

- The right to work, including the right to freely choose or accept work and the right to work under safe and fair conditions;

- Families’ entitlement to protection and assistance;

- The right to an adequate standard of living, including food and shelter;

- The right to the “enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”;

- The right to an education, including the right of parents to choose schools for their children in accordance with their beliefs and convictions; and

- The right to benefit from scientific and cultural development, including the right to retain ownership over one’s own intellectual property.

**Role of the International System**

*The United Nations System*

UNHCR’s global field work has been instrumental in ensuring that the rights of refugees are protected. UNHCR provides emergency assistance at the start of refugee crises, which generally includes access to basic resources such as clean drinking water, blankets, emergency health care, and household items. This is only the first step in UNHCR’s response; afterwards, UNHCR may become involved with the administration of refugee camps, where it helps to register refugees and assist them with determining what their next steps will be. For those who are able to return to their countries of origin, UNHCR may also assist with refugees’ reintegration into their communities and, to a certain extent, with rebuilding the lives they left behind. While third country resettlement is one very visible aspect of UNHCR’s operations, this is where the agency’s involvement with the protection of the rights of refugees generally ends. After
resettlement, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community organizations become responsible for assistance.

Although UNHCR is the central UN agency for refugees, it is by no means the only entity within the UN system that works to protect the rights of refugees. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with its focus on women’s and maternal health, has been crucial in addressing the struggles faced by female refugees and in particular those who are pregnant or who may become pregnant. The rights of female refugees may be undermined by a perception that reproductive health is secondary and should not be prioritized as other areas of care, but the UNFPA, by establishing standards of care and engaging in on the ground clinic operations in areas hosting refugee populations, has advanced the cause of gender-responsive health care and protection services. The involvement of the UN system in reproductive health (and health care generally) in areas of need such as these is crucial, as it is often the case that refugees will not have other means of obtaining that care, either because it is too dangerous to leave the camps or due to discrimination they face in the surrounding communities.

Further, the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), which includes monitoring bodies and/or complaints procedures for many of the major international human rights treaties, also takes steps to ensure that refugees’ rights are protected. The HRC contains the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the ICCPR and the ICESCR, respectively. The HRC’s special procedures provide for independent experts to undertake country visits to monitor human rights situations; some are thematic experts, and some are assigned to particular countries. The Special Rapporteur for the rights of migrants, François Crépeau, has recently focused on the labor rights of migrants and potential for labor exploitation.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

The IASC is a forum for UN agencies under the leadership of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)’s Emergency Relief Coordinator to coordinate of humanitarian efforts. The objectives of IASC are aimed at ensuring consistency across the involved agencies, which include UNHCR, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and several others as full members, and the UNFPA, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other agencies, as well as representatives from NGOs, as “standing invitees” in a capacity comparable to the role of members. Within the IASC, UNHCR works with other partners to protect refugees during reintegration or resettlement and assists with providing protection to refugees living in camps and in urban areas. iv

Civil Society

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs are essential partners in efforts to protect and ensure the rights of refugees and UNHCR partners with NGOs to offer approaches that are more comprehensive in this regard. Regional, national, and local organizations are able better to reach remote areas where UNHCR finds it difficult to provide crucial support for refugees. UNHCR also hosted its annual consultations with NGOs in June 2014 to develop strategies for increasing funding and delivering aid on civil, political, and socioeconomic rights included mental health
and psychosocial support, livelihoods and self-reliance, housing, land, and property, girls’ education, and detention.

One of the many NGOs represented at the 2014 consultations was the Refugee Law Project. This is only one of many nationally-based organizations working to protect the legal rights of refugees worldwide, but it is a prime example of a smaller-scale NGO whose work is focused on promoting access to justice, equitable applications of laws to refugees, and other, related services. In addition to legal work, the Refugee Law Project recognizes the importance of mental health to the full enjoyment of rights and as such, includes a sizeable counseling component in its repertoire of services. The Refugee Law Project is only one of many legal services providers like it across the world, as one may notice upon viewing the list of participants in this year’s consultations with NGOs, and the work of smaller-scale operations such as these is crucial, particularly because refugees may not otherwise have access to legal redress for violations of rights.

**NGOs in Camps/Protracted Situations**

Other NGOs have focused their operations on protecting the rights of refugees in camps. Another example of an organization giving legal advice is the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), though this organization differs from the Refugee Law Project in that it provides advice and advocacy from within the camps. The LAC has operated in camps in Thailand since 2006. Since then, workers for the organization have educated residents of refugee camps as to the rights and protections to which they are entitled under Thai law. A major component of the LAC’s legal services operations includes education and advocacy related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The organization works with the Thai government to disseminate information, and it also provides paralegal training so that residents of the camps may become advocates on behalf of their fellow residents.

**Citizenship and Nationality**

In theory, under the ICCPR, these rights apply to any person in a state’s territory without respect to that person’s national origin. Unfortunately, in practice, certain rights are not always given effect by ratifying states, notably protections against arbitrary detention, the right to acquire a nationality, and the right to enjoy one’s own culture.

With regard to citizenship and nationality, for instance, birthright citizenship is not the norm worldwide, and in countries where it is the norm, it is not uncommon to find xenophobic activists who oppose the policy. In the United States, one of only a small number of countries taking on refugees for resettlement, and the country with the highest rate of resettlement, a child born to a refugee may obtain citizenship by birthright. In Europe, on the other hand, not a single country will give automatic citizenship to such a child. Instead, that child may be born a citizen of a country that she has never known and to which she likely cannot return, enjoying none of the rights and privileges attached to citizenship of the country in which her parents have resettled.

Arbitrary detention is also a major concern for refugees living in a new country, despite the protections the ICCPR ostensibly provides. “Administrative” detentions, whereby individuals are seized and detained without regular criminal procedure, are of particular interest. In some instances, simply being “out of status,” as may be the case for irregular migrants or asylum seekers, can lead to administrative detention. For refugees with
legal immigration status, the government may make arrests based on pretext in order to exert the authority to detain a person. In Lebanon, for example, Syrian and other refugees who have crossed the Lebanese border in an “irregular” manner may face criminal charges for doing so and, after facing a criminal sentence, they may be transferred to an administrative detention facility. Although Lebanon is not party to the Refugee Convention, it is party to the ICCPR.xi

Detainment of Refugees
Not allowing a refugee to be forced back to a home country is called ‘non refoulement’ and is one of the most fundamental principles in international refugee law. This principle is laid out in Article 33 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which says that no state "shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (HREA).

Asylum-seekers may have already suffered imprisonment and torture in the country from which they have fled. Therefore, the consequences of detention may be particularly serious, causing severe emotional and psychological stress. Article 31 of the Refugee Conventionvii says that refugees should not be penalized for having entered a country illegally if they have come directly from a place where they were in danger and have made themselves known to the authorities. Therefore, asylum-seekers should not be detained for being in possession of forged identity papers or for destroying identity or travel documents (HREA).

The right for an individual to seek refuge in a country, other than his or her own, is a basic, well-established right, initially founded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, the implementation of this right is not always observed. In fact, not only are there issues with the implementation, but there are also even horrible situations that break basic human rights by means of ignoring the right to seek asylum.

The use of detainment in a detention as a tool to regulate unwanted migration and refugees in Europe is becoming a popular trend. Detention is used during the asylum procedure and has become useful in attempts to enforce asylum-seekers to return home. The maximum duration of detention provided for by national legislation varies considerably among EU Member States from 32 days in France to 18 months in Malta.viii

Often tired, scared and innocent asylum seekers are thrown into a jail-like detention centers once they have crossed the border into a country in which they want asylum. Inside these detention centers persons do not have freedom or rights to do as they please. They are treated as prisoners instead of people needing protection.

UNHCR urges host countries not to detain asylum-seekers but due to the large amount of asylum-seeking persons, they are placed in detention centers while their asylum applications are being processed. During this period officials are trying to discover who is a real refugee and who just wants to migrate there. Also, countries hope the long detention period will convince refugees to not seek asylum in their country.

Very often there is confusion between refugees and economic migrants and illegal migrants, which leads to wrong conclusions and bad reactions. Refugees flee because of the threat of persecution and cannot return safely to their
homes in the prevailing circumstances. An economic migrant normally leaves a country voluntarily to seek a better life. Many illegal migrants try to cross the region of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine to get to Western Europe. They are not necessarily refugees — only a few of them have well-founded reasons to seek asylum from persecution and are refugees, and only these people should get international protection and support (HREA). Using detention centers are a method to take out the illegal migrants.

"Detention is generally an extreme measure taken to counter irregular migration. There is no real evidence that the threat of being detained discourages irregular migration or discourages people from seeking asylum," said Erika Feller, UNHCR’s Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. "Threats to life or freedom in someone’s country of origin are likely to be a greater reason for a refugee than any problem created by detention policies in countries of asylum."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to liberty and protection from needless detention. Article 31 of the UN Refugee Convention specifies that countries should not impose penalties or unnecessary restrictions on movements of refugees entering their territory without authorization.

"It is not a crime to seek asylum. Detention must therefore be a last resort, and its necessity based on individual situations and persons," said Alice Edwards, a senior legal coordinator for UNHCR. "The failure of many governments to provide for or systematize alternatives to detention can put their detention policies and practices into direct conflict with international law.”

Based on the situation is that asylum-seeking persons are being punished and put in detention centers because they are not being separated from illegal immigrants and persons who just want to move into these host asylum countries.

In addition to the human rights and legal rights, detention also causes health, social and financial costs. Being contained for a long period of time can cause serious psychological and physical health problems, and even lead to self-harm or suicide. There have been many reports of human rights being abused inside the detention centers including unsanitary living conditions and physical and mental abuse.

**Age, Gender and Diversity Approach**

UNHCR institutes an Age, Gender, and Diversity Policy whereby the agency acknowledges each of these as areas of difference giving rise to areas of unique concern. By prioritizing the needs of certain refugees who otherwise might not receive the correct help, UNHCR broadens its ability to protect and assist all refugees. This is a part of an effort across the United Nations system to mainstream age, gender, and other areas of diversity so that particular needs are addressed at the outset of each new program or action. UNHCR, as well as other UN agencies, now examine the exaggerating or shifting of gender roles in times of crisis, the epidemic of enslavement and exploitation of women and children, the heightened challenges facing individuals with disabilities who are forced to leave home, and other concerns. UNHCR now ensures that staffs are aware of differences that give rise to needs they might not have otherwise considered, and the Annual Program Review is established to ensure compliance with the Age, Gender, and Diversity Policy.
Basic Needs and Services

The largest portion of UNHCR’s budget goes towards providing for basic needs such as food and shelter. Major areas of assistance in terms of basic needs include nutrition, water and sanitation, and health care. Assistance with basic needs often takes the form of immediate intervention at the outset of a refugee crisis but may also be a component in plans for more durable solutions. These provisions do not end when refugees return home; UNHCR attempts to give repatriated refugees extra assistance even after they leave temporary settlements or camps.

Immediate needs such as food and shelter are visible components of UNHCR’s assistance programs. UNHCR also coordinates and partners with the World Food Program (WFP) and other agencies and NGOs to optimize the implementation of plans to improve nutrition. At the outset of any refugee situation, there is concern over acute malnutrition and food instability, but in the long-term, UNHCR also assists with capacity-building and ensuring self-reliance so that food security may become a reality. The Strategic Plan for Nutrition and Food Security outlines the approaches and goals of UNHCR in this area, as well as indicators of success.

In terms of health care, UNHCR focuses both on physical and mental health. Trauma and stress are areas of concern for many refugees, particularly those who have been survivors of torture or other violence. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in its many forms is a problem that UNHCR seeks to address as a component of its protection function, and UNHCR assists with managing the mental health repercussions of this type of violence. Mental wellness among the refugees UNHCR serves is also bolstered by the provision of services for physical health, as good physical health reduces stress and creates conditions more conducive to mental health.

Access to Education and Livelihoods

UNHCR works to empower refugees by providing ways to develop skills they already possess and access resources to enhance or learn new skills for employment and livelihood generation developed before fleeing their home countries and by helping them access the resources they need to do so. UNHCR operates livelihoods projects in many of its camps, providing refugees with training, capital (often in the form of microloans), and guidance. UNHCR also recognizes education as not a luxury, but a right, and one to which refugees should have access. Notably, UNHCR has partnered with Germany to provide scholarships to refugees, while other programs and partnerships focus on primary and early childhood education. The 2012-2016 Education Strategy is the guiding document for UNHCR’s education programming.

Case Studies: Myanmar, Thailand and the United States

Thailand has hosted refugees from Myanmar in camps along its border for more than two decades. The camps were always intended to be a form of temporary assistance for civilians fleeing oppression in Myanmar. However they have become permanent residences due to unresolved ethnic violence in Myanmar. Additionally, the stability of these camps has been threatened with the 2014 military coup in Thailand. Notably, is not party to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, therefore is not subject to the obligation of non-refoulement (the duty not to return immigrants to countries in which they might be tortured or killed). Now, there are threats that
refugees may be returned to Myanmar despite their claims that they will be persecuted upon their return. Many of those who have left the refugee camps over the years have travelled to the United States with the help of non-profit organizations and religious organizations, such as the Church World Service, many of which receive grant funding from the government to provide this service. At all phases of this process, whether refugees remain in camps in Thailand, return to Myanmar, or leave refugee camps for the United States, there are concerns for the protection of the rights of these refugees.

Inside the camps, there are obvious concerns related to safety, sanitation, and nutrition, but there are more complex problems with the legal status of refugees. In an attempt to prevent more refugees from coming to Thailand, the Thai government stopped registering refugees fleeing Myanmar in 2005. This has left many people ineligible for resettlement, but also ineligible to work or live in Thailand legally. Moreover, the futures of children who were born in the camps are uncertain, especially for those whose births were not registered. There are limited prospects for education and job training in the camps, and residents are unable to leave to seek employment or education in other parts of Thailand.

When it became apparent that this refugee crisis would not be quickly resolved, resettlement in countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States emerged as an option. Recently, the United States has called an end to its resettlement program for refugees from Myanmar, having taken in over 70,000 individuals since 2005. While the rights of refugees are better protected there than they were in the camps, refugees from Myanmar may face poverty, although refugees do qualify for some public assistance; separation from their families, as legal remedies for family reunification only extend to unmarried children and spouses; employment discrimination, despite the fact that refugee status confers employment authorization in the United States; and language and cultural barriers to education. These difficulties are exacerbated in parts of the country where there is insufficient access to organizations working to assist resettled refugees. Moreover, the organizations that do exist face constant threats to their funding as anti-immigration activists gain influence over the legislature.

Current Problems
In the world today we are faced with refugees’ crises on three major fronts, namely;

- The Syrian refugee crisis
- Rapid migration into Europe
- The British refugee crisis

Syria

The majority of Syrian refugees are living in Jordan and Lebanon, where NGOs have been addressing their needs since 2012. In the region’s two smallest countries, weak infrastructure and limited resources are nearing a breaking point under the strain.
In August 2013, more Syrians escaped into northern Iraq at a newly opened border crossing. Now they are trapped by that country’s own insurgent conflict, and Iraq is struggling to meet the needs of Syrian refugees on top of more than one million internally displaced Iraqis — efforts that we are working to support.

An increasing number of Syrian refugees are fleeing across the border into Turkey, overwhelming urban host communities and creating new cultural tensions. NGOs are working in these areas as well to help families meet their basic needs and find work.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees are also attempting the dangerous trip across the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey to Greece, hoping to find a better future in Europe. Not all of them make it across alive. Those who do make it to Greece still face steep challenges — resources are strained by the influx and services are minimal.

Europe

Since 2013, the region has witnessed a sharp increase in the numbers of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean. In the first seven months of 2014, over 87,000 people arrived in Italy by sea, with the two largest groups coming from Eritrea and Syria.

In an effort to reduce the risks of such journeys, in October 2013 the Italian Government launched the Mare Nostrum Operation, which has rescued over 100,000 people. Increases in arrivals have also been recorded in Greece and Spain.

UNHCR continues to be greatly concerned by forcible returns or barriers placed by some countries preventing the entry of asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as cases of abduction and extradition involving asylum-seekers and refugees. Among those seeking protection in Europe are large numbers of unaccompanied and separated children.

In Italy and Malta alone, some 10,000 unaccompanied and separated children have arrived this year during the first nine months of the year.

Asylum systems in many countries are still not fully in conformity with international standards: poor reception conditions, status determination procedures, low recognition rates, as well as lack of access to durable solutions, are particular challenges.

Britain

Britain is to resettle up to 20,000 refugees from Syria over the next four and a half years, David Cameron has told the commons. He said Britain would take in vulnerable refugees only from camps in the region, and not those who have crossed the Mediterranean into Europe.

He told MPs: “We will continue to show the world that this country is a country of extraordinary compassion, always standing up for our values and helping those in need.”

The acting Labor leader, Harriet Harman, asked Cameron if the pledge to take 20,000 Syrian refugees over the course of this parliament meant just 4,000 this year. 

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)
1. Delegates should consider the following questions: What steps can UNHCR take to protect refugees’ rights while living in camps?
2. How can governments and NGOs work to ensure that refugees outside their countries of origin have access to justice, health, and employment, among other rights?

3. What can be done to protect refugees from exploitation and discrimination while they are waiting for resettlement or after they have been resettled?

4. What sorts of coordination efforts are necessary to ensure that each Member State hosting refugees have the capacity to protect and ensure their rights as articulated in the Refugee Convention, the ICCPR, and the ICESCR?

5. Are there any special considerations that must be made for refugees who are women or girls to ensure that they are protected on equal terms to their male counterparts, in accordance with the UN’s gender mainstreaming efforts?

6. How does hosting refugees negatively affect the asylum countries?

7. How can refugees take control of their own life and not depend on aid agencies in refugee camps for all of their resources?

8. What impact does growing up in a refugee camp have on a child?

9. Which is better- to be detained in a detention center or live in a refugee camp?

Material for Further Reading


3. http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/e06a5300f90fa0238025667800518ca4/169143c3c1009015c1256e830058c441/$FILE/G0413976.pdf


End Notes


iii ICESCR http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf

iv IASC Standing Committee. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/
v Legal Assistance Centers
http://www.legalassistancecenter.org/

vi Refugee Convention
http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html

vii Article 31 of the refugee convention
http://www.unhcr.org/3bcfd164.pdf

viii Refugee Story Project
http://www.jrsmalta.org/content.aspx?id=352327

ix Alternatives to Detention

x Refugee Crisis in Thailand.

xi Fact Sheet on Refugees in Thailand

xii The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Regional and Human Security Implications
http://www.inss.org.il/uploadimages/systemFiles/adkan17_4ENG_7_Berti.pdf