



# Fourth: SPECPOL

Decolonization of Mauritius and its Consequences

Improving the Conditions of Refugee Camps

UCIMUN 2020



Welcome Delegates,

We are Hana Schlosser and Angie Lo, and we are the Secretaries-General for the UCI Model United Nations 2019-2020 school year. We are honored to serve as part of your Secretariat this year and are excited for everything we have planned for the conference. We truly hope you find our conference to be enjoyable as well as engaging and educational in nature.

Hana is a 4th year Biomedical Engineering major with passions in both biology and politics. This is her fourth year participating as part of the UCIMUN Conference Staff, previously serving as Assistant Director of Ad Hoc on Terror, Director of SOCHUM, and Director-General. She originally joined UCI's MUN program because she wanted to continue intellectual discussions outside of STEM after participating in Speech and Debate throughout high school. Hana truly loves the MUN program at UCI because it allows her to improve upon skills such as public speaking and diplomacy while also providing her a family at UCI. Outside of her studies and MUN, Hana enjoys playing music, cooking, and playing basketball.

Angie is a 3rd year Sociology and Political Science double major. She has been involved in MUN since freshman year of high school, and loved her experiences there so much she wanted to continue it onto college. She served as Secretary-General of her high school MUN club in her senior year and as a part of UCIMUN, has been an Assistant Director and a Director for General Assembly, and Under-Secretary-General of Mains. When not busy with her school, UCIMUN and work, she likes drawing, playing video games and doting on her pet fish.

This year, we really hope for you all to take to heart the paramount nature of coming up with solutions to the topics we have chosen. Our theme this year, "*addressing global human security and its impacts*", was carefully selected because we would like to emphasize the number and severity of global issues which affect everyday people. With your research and your resolutions, we would like you all to delve into ways to benefit as many people as possible, because global issues go beyond nations and governments—they affect all of us.

Our staff's goal, as always, is to provide delegates with high quality debate and an opportunity to immerse themselves in an intellectual discussion of issues that are relevant to the community around them. Please feel free to reach out to us, our USGs, or our Directors anytime between now and our conference. We are here to help you in any way we can.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to seeing you in the Spring!

Sincerely,

Hana Schlosser and Angie Lo

Secretaries-General

UCIMUN Secretariat 2019-20

[ucimunsg@gmail.com](mailto:ucimunsg@gmail.com)



Welcome Delegates!

I am excited to welcome you to our 28th Annual University of California at Irvine, Model United Nations High School Conference. My name is Kyle Petersen and I will serve as you Under-Secretary-General of the Mains Committees. Along with the Secretaries-General, Ashima and I have been working tirelessly to create an incredible conference for you this spring. I am truly excited to see all of the hard work you have put into preparing for this conference.

Outside of Model United Nations here at UC Irvine, I am a 3rd year Business Administration Major specializing in Finance and Management. I have been involved with Model United Nations for seven years now, and it has been an incredibly rewarding experience. Model UN has helped me tremendously in my personal and professional life. It was also one of the major influences to do a year abroad in Milan, Italy, to study international banking and finance at Bocconi University. Model UN has helped shape me to become the person I am today, and I hope it will help you do just the same.

Model UN will help you grow into a better and a more worldly individual. Whether UCIMUN is your first conference or your fifth, take it as a learning experience. Don't be afraid to ask questions and grow. The dais will be there to guide the debate and help facilitate the learning experience; however, the direction in which the committee goes is up to you and your fellow delegates.

You will be tasked with embodying a country and its policy; for some of you, this will be extremely easy because this country's policy matches your own opinions, while for others, this can be quite difficult. No matter the case you will then have to work with delegates whose objectives are the exact opposite of your own. I entrust that each and every one of you will uphold the diplomacy of the United Nations and work together in a professional manner in order to find the best solution to the problem at hand.

I hope that you will have just as much fun as I have in preparing for this conference and I cannot wait to see what your debate has in store. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or your dias, as we will be more than happy to help.

I wish you all the best and cannot wait to see you this April!

Sincerely,  
Kyle Petersen  
Under-Secretary-General of Mains Committees  
UCIMUN Secretariat 2019-20  
[usgmains@gmail.com](mailto:usgmains@gmail.com)



Hello Delegates,

My name is Diana Cortez and I will be one of your Directors of the SPECPOL Committee for UCIMUN's 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference! This will be my third year with UCIMUN where I have previously participated in the Administrative Staff, an Assistant Director, and now I am elated to be one of your Directors.

I am a third-year Political Science major with passions in social justice, community service, and music. I was in a choir during my first year and I enjoy playing guitar during my free time, as well as reading books every now and then. I've also had the wonderful opportunity of volunteering within my community by helping at Orange County food drives, doing beach cleanups, and visiting an orphanage in Mexico to donate basic necessities to kids in need. My interest in social justice and global issues makes me thrilled to have the chance to work with you all for this year's conference.

The two topics for the SPECPOL Committee are (A) Decolonization of Mauritius and its Consequences and (B) Improving the Conditions of Refugee Camps. As an Island in the Indian Ocean off the coast of East Africa, Mauritius needs full decolonization of its country by demanding that the United Kingdom return the Chagos Archipelago Islands that once belonged to Mauritius. Previous inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago have been relocated and forced to leave the islands, suffering from impoverishment and poor conditions. Chagossians and refugees have been stripped of their homeland and it is imperative that they are given aid and treated humanely. These topics are significant because they acknowledge the struggles of Chagossians and the need for decolonization from the UK to return the illegal land taken from Mauritius, which follows the theme for this year's conference: *"addressing global human security and its impacts."*

As a reminder delegates, the Topic Synopsis is only a starting point for the topics that are being covered for the Fourth Committee this year. We encourage you all to further research additional details, events and important sub-topics to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topics. Having a greater background of Mauritius, the Chagos Islands, and the relations between them and other countries will benefit you by being engaged and allowing a greater flow of committee.

With that being said, I am very much looking forward to meeting you all! I am sure that you all will be prepared to participate in active discussion, ask thought-provoking questions, be engaged, and bring great energy to the conference. We encourage you all to come prepared and do not fear participation—after all, you want to make sure you enjoy your time in the committee as well. Feel free to email us if you have any questions and we are happy to help.

Sincerely,

Diana Cortez  
Director, 4th: SPECPOL  
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Dear Delegates,

My name is Mary Lee and I will be one of your Directors of the Fourth Committee (SPECPOL) for UCIMUN's 28th Annual Conference! This will be my second year with UCIMUN where I worked as an Assistant Director last year and had an incredibly rewarding experience. This year, I am very much delighted to serve as your director during the conference.

To briefly introduce myself, I am a second-year Criminology, Law, and Society major at UCI. I have a huge passion for raising awareness of education, particularly in terms of the criminal justice system of the United States. Outside of UCIMUN, I serve as a director of a networking organization where I am in charge of fostering relationships among students, alumni, and university. Furthermore, I participate in various childcare activities such as volunteering and tutoring for children in need.

This year, the Fourth Committee (SPECPOL) will concentrate on the decolonization of Mauritius and numerous issues concerning refugee camps. Mauritius is a small island nation located in the Indian Ocean and was coerced to split the Chagos Archipelago from its territory by the United Kingdom in 1965. The expulsion of the Chagossians was conducted in an extremely inhumane manner since the right of people from Mauritius and the Chagos Archipelago was not properly taken into account during the process of expulsion. Although the United Nations recently acknowledged the accountability of the UK on this matter and has overwhelmingly demanded for the decolonization of Mauritius, it is highly imperative to safely return the indigenous people to their homes from refugee camps, compensate for the wrongful acts that have been done to them, and protect their human rights in the process of decolonization. Most importantly, remember the main goal of our conference as a whole is to advance upon the global issues of our community for the sake of humanity.

Even though the Topic Synopsis will be a very helpful guide for you all to understand the topics, I highly encourage you to research further as my co-director Diana already mentioned above. I also recommend gaining a comprehensive understanding of the topics not only from your bloc position but also from other bloc positions.

Lastly, I want to thank every delegate who will be participating in this year's conference. I am extremely thrilled to meet each and every one of you and can't wait to see enthusiastic, intriguing, and passionate discussions among everyone. Also, remember to be respectful to one another during the committee in order to make sure that everyone ends up gaining a fulfilling experience at the end of the conference. Finally, please contact us if you have any questions, we are more than willing to help.

Very Sincerely,

Mary Lee  
Director, 4th: SPECPOL  
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## **Topic A: Decolonization of Mauritius and its Consequences**

### **Introduction**

Although civilization has concluded that the concept of colonization is fundamentally immoral and inhumane, unfortunately, there are still many colonies around the world today. For example, the Chagos Archipelago, or Chagos Islands, is a group of seven atolls comprising more than 60 individual tropical islands in the Indian Ocean and has been occupied by the United Kingdom for more than five decades. The sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago legally belongs to Mauritius and has been home to Chagossians for more than a century and a half. However, in 1967 the United Kingdom unlawfully colonized a specific island of Chagos Archipelago, called Diego Garcia, and detached it from Mauritius to allow the United States to build a military base there. This new colony is known today as British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).

Within days of receiving the news, all Chagossians had become homeless and jobless, and have suffered from this agony for about a half a century. Although the world has just begun to pay attention to the expulsion of Chagossians as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) recently called for the UK to return the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius and to withdraw its colonial administration, there is an urgent need to compensate for the 54 years of Chagossians who never agreed to give up their home without being offered any informed consent from the UK. The International Court of Justice officially remarked that Mauritius was coerced into giving up the Chagos Archipelago to the UK before it fully reached independence, an act that is illegal under the United Nations Resolution 1514 (Wilkins, 2019).



This topic is especially salient today especially because there are still people around the world like the Chagossians who are being expelled to neighboring countries without having any agreements. Some Chagossians were also “gassed to death with exhaust fumes from [the] US military” just because they refused to leave their homeland (Wilkins, 2019). Sadly, the pain doesn’t end even if they end up leaving their homeland; they have been subject to poverty, discrimination, and other blatant maltreatment in foreign regions such as Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius (Wilkins, 2019). The Chagossian people must be able to return to their homeland and granted reparations for the unlawful eviction of the Chagos Islands that rightfully belong to Mauritius. It is only then that Mauritius can be decolonized and reach the full independence that it should have been granted in 1968.

## **Description**

### **Consequences of Colonization and Decolonization of Mauritius**

Although Mauritius was supposed to be decolonized by the United Kingdom in 1968, its independence has not fully been achieved since the sovereignty of Chagos Archipelago has ceaselessly been disputed between the UK and Mauritius. On May 22, 2019, the International Court of Justice endorsed that the separation of Chagos Archipelago was complicit and called for the UK to return the islands to Mauritius within six months, and to withdraw its colonial occupation of Chagos Archipelago. Furthermore, the Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth strongly remarked that decolonization of the former British Empire will not be completed unless all the Chagossians are returned to the island. It is only a matter of time until the UK completely surrenders the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius, but first and foremost, it is extremely imperative to pay particular attention to a variety of consequences that have been



made to Chagossians as a result of colonization of Mauritius, as well as the conflicts that will be generated as a result of the complete decolonization of Mauritius.

Socio-economic consequences are the direct influences on Chagossians due to the colonization of Mauritius. In 1968, the United States requested the UK to occupy Diego Garcia, the largest of 60 islands comprising the Chagos Archipelago, to build a military base in the Indian Ocean. Between 1968 and 1973, every Chagossian was coerced into exile without any regard to the will of the people from Mauritius, nor the Chagos Archipelago. All of the Chagossians at that time unintentionally became homeless and jobless in Mauritius and Seychelles where they have frequently been subject to extreme poverty, discrimination, and other forms of human violations. For example, some Chagossians who used to speak a patois with an accent that is unique to Diego Garcia have often been discriminated against in Mauritius because of their “alien language”. It is also not completely guaranteed that they can earn citizenship and safely stay in those foreign lands. Moreover, some regions are also refusing to accept them as refugees and threatening to deport them despite the legitimate evidence of their citizenship. Although the UK has not completely ended their colonization of Mauritius, they have not provided the depopulated Chagossians with proper aid and support that can help them at least settle in foreign lands.

Political consequences due to the decolonization of Mauritius are also significant to note because the post-colonial political system in the Chagos Archipelago is currently at stake. The politics of Chagos Archipelago is a complicated matter as it involves several prominent countries on the international stage, such as the Americans at the base and the British in charge of all the administrative aspects such as the police, the court system, as well as work and entry permits.



The establishment of the new government and other logistics in the Chagos Archipelago is pivotal to Chagossians when they eventually have to return to their home from the scattered regions. If the UK initiates to return the depopulated Chagossians sooner or later, the proper communication between Mauritians, Chagossians, and the British is essential. Additionally, potential corruption should be prevented within the Mauritian government under strict scrutiny while receiving the compensations for Chagossians as the Mauritian government withheld the money that was meant to be given to the affected Chagossians families due to the separation in 1978. As the United Nations has emphasized the responsibility of the UK on behalf of Chagossians, it is vital to scrutinize their process of restoring the lost country as well.

### **United Nations Actions and Policies on Decolonization**

In adherence to fully decolonizing Mauritius, there have been several resolutions and policies that the United Nations has passed. On May 22, 2019, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed A/RES/73/295 in support of an International Court of Justice Opinion that occurred in February of this year. The resolution was to prompt the decolonization of Mauritius by “demanding” that the United Kingdom promptly cease its “colonial administration” from the Chagos Archipelago that belongs to Mauritius within six months (“General Assembly Welcomes International Court of Justice”, n.d.). It was a remarkable step in pursuing the efforts to decolonizing, with 116 countries voting in favor of the General Assembly’s resolution, six against, and 56 abstaining. Mauritius, with the Court’s opinion, highlights the need for decolonization until the Chagos Archipelago territory is returned lawfully to Mauritius and its sovereignty is exercised so that the country can truly achieve its independence.



The International Court of Justice, in its February opinion, additionally asserted that the country has a right to self-determination, even as non-self governing territory (“Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago,” n.d.). The ICJ specifically cited the UN General Assembly resolution 2625 that calls for other countries to follow the guidelines of the United Nations in recognizing the principle of self-determination, although it did not highlight its peremptory nature (Allen, 2019). The Court’s main opinion did not mention reparations for Mauritius but this does not indicate that the Mauritian government has not considered them. Moreover, the United Nations resolution passed in May earlier this year was seen as a “symbolic victory” given that the matter was referred to the International Court of Justice. However, it may prove costly and lead to other unintended consequences, such as having Mauritius fall under “neocolonialism” even after the Chagos Islands are rightfully returned to them (Thorpe, 2019).

### **Finding Redress for Mauritius**

With the continued efforts to fully grant Mauritius the independence it needs, the Prime Minister of the country, Pravind Jugnauth, has discussed matters about a resettlement program as redress for the seizing of the Chagos Archipelago. He demands this type of remedy for the Chagossians who were stripped of their birthplace, rather than monetary compensation for them, as the United Kingdom proposes (“General Assembly Welcomes International Court of Justice”, n.d.). The United Kingdom has also mentioned creating a \$50 million support package instead of resettlement for Chagossian communities who were evicted to Mauritius and neighboring countries such as the United Kingdom. The country grew in support of this alternative option due to “feasibility, defense and security interests and costs” (“General Assembly Welcomes



International Court of Justice”, n.d.). Even if the UK had been in favor of resettlement, it remains nearly impossible. The islands “lack any infrastructure to support a population” and they have suffered from the dangers of climate change, which can soon make the islands “uninhabitable” (Thorpe, 2019). The United Kingdom must also ensure that the Chagossians in Diego Garcia who are interested and qualified to work in defense are given a contractor job, along with monetary aid from the proposed support package (Thorpe, 2019).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Chagossians have “pushed for redress” for many years now, but their concerns have not always been addressed (“ICJ: U.K. Rule Over Chagos,” 2019). For example, in 2012, the European Court of Human Rights turned down a complaint made by Chagos Islanders addressing their removal from the island, emphasizing that Chagossians can no longer be considered victims because they accepted financial compensation for settling elsewhere “prior national-level litigation” (“ICJ: U.K. Rule Over Chagos,” 2019). At the very least, the United Nations General Assembly and the International Court of Justice have now demanded the United Kingdom withdraw from the Chagos Archipelago to grant Mauritius the full independence it should have received in 1968.

## **Bloc Positions**

### Supporters of the Complete Independence of Mauritius

These countries are in favor of decolonizing Mauritius, including post-colonial countries that are encouraging Mauritius to seek redress for the occupation of the Chagos Archipelago. Countries in East Africa, for example, voted in favor of the May 22nd General Assembly resolution to ensure immediate decolonization of the country and the United Nations has since



overwhelmingly demanded the UK to withdraw their occupation of the Chagos Archipelago. Past countries that have recently been decolonized also are more likely to follow in their support of Mauritius for decolonization (Thorpe, 2019).

#### Opponents of the Complete Independence of Mauritius

These countries voted in favor of the United Kingdom occupation of the Chagos Islands in the May 22nd General Assembly resolution that called for prompt decolonization of the country (“General Assembly Welcomes International Court of Justice”, n.d.). While the margin was wide, with 116 countries for the resolution, six against, and 56 abstaining, matters of future resolutions and a compromise between the countries are of utmost importance. All the countries that oppose the complete independence of Mauritius should adequately explain why the occupation of Chago Archipelago is essential to the interest of the people from the United Kingdom as well as Mauritius.

#### Neutrals of the Complete Independence of Mauritius

These countries possess no particular stance on the issue of the occupation of the Chagos Islands and therefore abstained to vote for prompt decolonization of Mauritius (“General Assembly Welcomes International Court of Justice”, n.d.). They are primarily from South America, Central America, East Asia, and South Asia. Despite their lack of direct relevance to the issue, the countries in this bloc should balance between the humanitarian crisis in the Chagos Islands and the benefits of occupation of the Chagos Islands, as perceived by their country policy. Additionally, they should nonetheless strive to help those countries that are directly related to the issue come up with an appropriate resolution.





## Committee Goals

By the end of this committee, you should have a comprehensive understanding of the effects of colonization in Mauritius today, as well as the economic, social, and personal costs of trying to compensate the Chagossians for the wrongful eviction of their homeland. You should also have a deeper insight into the policy and legal issues concerning the United Nations in supporting self-determination for countries and ensuring their full decolonization. As a delegate, you will be expected to consider possible solutions and reparations for these salient issues with greater insight into the ongoing battle of the Chagos Islands for full independence of Mauritius. You will be prepared to discuss these matters with other delegates and together find solutions to decolonize Mauritius.

In terms of conduct, we expect all the delegates remain in character by continuously advocating and politely representing the interests and policies. Under no circumstances should you disrespect other delegates due to conflicts with your country's policies or priorities. Additionally, during the conference, you must maintain a professional approach as we expect you to address the committee and chair appropriately and listen attentively to other delegates' speeches.

## Research Questions

1. What are the pros and cons of decolonizing Mauritius and how can decolonization affect a country's social or political climate?
2. Why do non-self governing territories struggle with their political representation more than others, and how is this related to Mauritius?



3. How should neighboring countries respond to addressing the needs of Mauritians and their goals for decolonization? What viable solutions to decolonization can you address with this global issue while you focus on Mauritius?
4. What diplomatic and professional ways can you utilize to address the accountability of the United Kingdom on colonization and Mauritius? How are you going to deal with potential conflicts in the process?



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## Topic B: Improving the Conditions of Refugee Camps

### Introduction

Refugee: typically known as a displaced person who has been expelled or coerced to cross national boundaries and cannot return to their native home safely (Wikipedia). Due to the growing number of refugees around the world for the past decades, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—the main international organization that fights for refugee rights—has created a mandate to provide international protection to refugees who “must not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom are at risk” (UNHCR, 2018). Moreover, they have facilitated ‘refugee camps’ where most refugees—about 20.4 million refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, especially those who remain in low-income and middle-income countries—can safely stay away from life-threatening conflicts temporarily, and eventually return home if possible (UNHCR, 2018). Today, more than 6.6 million refugees live in camps: 4.6 million of them in planned/managed camps and about 2 million of them in self-settled camps (UNHCR).

Despite UNHCR's recognition of the refugee crisis and its efforts to save refugees around the world, many refugee camps have received the world’s attention because of their unsanitary conditions. Refugee camps are extremely crowded and small, 50% of refugees are women and girls, who are also frequently threatened by sexual violence, and children are frequently exposed to infectious diseases such as influenza (UNHCR). As of 2017, there are 70.8 million individuals including refugees who have been forcefully displaced around the world normally because of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations (UNHCR). Unfortunately, hosting



most of these refugees in such dire and horrid conditions has tainted the fundamental reason why refugee camps have been created.

## Description

### The Plight of Refugees

The Chagossians are one of the refugee groups who were banned from their homeland, the Chagos Archipelago when the United States occupied the islands of Diego Garcia for a military base in 1965 (McQue, 2019). They were evicted to surrounding countries such as Mauritius and Seychelles, but only to be treated as second class citizens. In 2018, some Chagossian refugees were also accepted by the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Ireland, Australia, and Canada, yet 89% of Chagossian asylum seekers were rejected after having submitted applications. With little regard for these newly admitted refugees in those foreign lands, many Chagossian refugees were “left uneducated and resided in slums.” They were “dumped on the quays” of refugee camps without help from countries that were not interested in reintegrating them into society (“Our History”).

Although the United Kingdom granted the Chagossians refugees the British right to citizenship in the early 2000s, those refugees continue to “grapple with desperate poverty and homelessness” with demands to the London courts for years to prompt their immediate return to their homeland (McQue, 2015). Chagossian refugees have struggled to adapt to the new environment as well, as exemplified by a Chagossian named Dominique Elysee who has lived in exile his whole life. His mother traveled to Mauritius for his birth, but neither Dominique nor his mother have been able to return to the Chagos islands ever since. Dominique, like many other



refugees, always has to travel to the “more developed Mauritius to buy clothes, medical supplies, food and other necessary consumables” (McQue, 2018).

Despite Mauritius having the potential to enhance on their socio-economic development through helping “migrants (refugees) invest, develop small and medium enterprises, and use their newly acquired skills from abroad,” there is more to be done for numerous Chagossian refugees scattered around the world (IOM UN Migration). A Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology from the University of Edinburgh, Dr. Laura Jeffery, also underscored that “the resettlement of the Chagos Archipelago is a matter of human rights” that must be taken into account during the decolonization process (McQue, 2019).

In addition to Chagossian refugees, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Palestinian refugees are the most quintessential refugees who fled, were expelled, or were forced into exile from their home Palestine and were never allowed to return since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 (Wikipedia). It is often claimed that, in 1984, Palestinians left their homes at their own free will or at the behest of Arab leaders. Nevertheless, these claims are not completely supported by the historical record, which shows that the vast majority of the 750,000 Palestinians displaced between 1947 and 1948 fled from their homes as a direct result of targeted violence and threats to their safety (American Friends Service Committee).

Today, there are about 7 million Palestinian refugees scattered around the world. In response to this massive amount of Palestinian refugees, many refugee camps have been created in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. By 2014, approximately 5 million refugees were registered with UNRWA—the



organization that is responsible for providing aids and services to refugees through refugee camps. Nevertheless, the population density in refugee camps continues to grow up to this day and inadequate basic infrastructure of refugee camps has often failed to contribute to improving the living conditions of refugees. Similar to Chagossian refugees, numerous Palestinian refugees are not properly treated in refugee camps; many of them are often neglected and extremely impoverished.

### **Resolutions to the Refugee Crisis**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is also known as the United Nations Refugee Agency which has the mandate to protect refugees, forcibly expelled communities, and stateless people, and assist in their voluntary repatriation—whether it be local integration or resettlement to a third country (UNHCR). UNHCR was founded in 1950 to help millions of Europeans who fled or lost their homes after the Second World War (UNHCR). However, regardless of race, today they fight to defend every refugee’s right to seek asylum and find safe refuge with the option to eventually return home, integrate, or resettle. They have also provided critical emergency assistance in the form of clean water, sanitation, and healthcare, as well as shelter, blankets, household goods and sometimes food, mostly all of this in refugee camps (UNHCR).

Additionally, there is another refugee organization called the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which has been the leading organization that specifically helps Palestine refugees. UNRWA, founded in 1949 mainly for Palestine refugees, is funded almost “entirely by voluntary contributions from the UN Member States” (UNRWA). UNRWA also receives some funding from the Regular Budget of the United Nations primarily for international



staffing costs. When UNRWA began its operations in 1950, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestinian refugees; however, today some 5 million Palestinian refugees are eligible for UNRWA services (UNRWA). UNRWA maintains schools, health centers and distribution centers in areas outside the recognized camps where Palestine refugees are concentrated, such as Yarmouk near Damascus (UNRWA). While most of UNRWA's installations such as schools and health centers are located in the Palestine refugee camps, the Agency's services are available to all registered Palestinian refugees, including those who do not live in the camps (UNRWA).

Lastly, the United Nations has put a considerable amount of effort into addressing and protecting the rights of refugees in response to the increasing needs of refugees. For example, in 2017, the General Assembly adopted the Resolution (A/72/179), which reaffirms that everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law (UN General Assembly). In other words, everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State, the right to leave any country, and the right to return to his or her country in safe conditions. Also in 2016, the General Assembly adopted the Resolution (A/71/167), which particularly protects the rights of women and girls who are more likely to be subject to trafficking in persons. This resolution strongly condemns human trafficking, which “constitutes a serious crime and a grave offense to human dignity and physical integrity” (UN General Assembly).

### **Lack of Humanitarian Awareness for Refugees**

Although refugee camps are extremely vital to moderate horrible experiences that refugees have gone through and to provide them with a temporary shelter away from further



threats, its function has been very ineffective mainly due to the lack of humanitarian awareness that has exacerbated the living conditions of refugees. For instance, Chagossian refugees, since their eviction from the Chago Archipelago, have negatively been affected in various ways through “marginalization, discrimination, and grinding poverty” in foreign lands (Kennedy, 2014). The effects of these diaspora communities include overwhelming debt, hunger strikes, and potential suicide, as described by evictees living in Mauritius, along with the means of finding employment.

Likewise, Palestinian Refugees have struggled for decades living in exile from their homeland ever since the Israeli-Palestinian Civil War. More than 600,000 Palestinian refugees are scattered in countries around the Middle East and Western Asia across 59 refugee camps in which a lot of refugees are not living in healthy, safe conditions (Wikipedia). In Lebanon, for example, Palestinian refugees are currently living in old, worn-down “structures separated by dark, narrow alleyways filled with debris, leaky pipes and tangled webs of wires hanging overhead” (Anera, 2019). The lack of humanitarian awareness exists not only outside refugee camps but also inside refugee camps around the world today.

Moreover, many refugees have been susceptible to human trafficking. In response to this serious human rights violation, the International Organization for Migration has been working to strengthen the methods for countering human trafficking (ION UN Migration). Since 2013, the Organization has been grappling to end human trafficking with “trained law enforcement officers, representatives of NGOs and media professionals in Seychelles on Trafficking in Persons (TiP)” (ION UN Migration). In 2016, Mauritius also organized a workshop for trained officers and professionals to enhance their skills in investigations, cases, and means to achieve



international cooperation. Unfortunately, however, many countries that are hosting refugees are still not taking such measures.

These horrible conditions of refugee camps call for immediate actions to be taken by increasing humanitarian awareness. Ensuring that countries take measures to strengthen the personal lives of refugees is exceptionally pivotal to alleviate all the traumatic experiences that they have had and to put an end to their painful journeys in foreign regions.

### **Not Refugee Crisis, but Refugee “Camps” Crisis**

Refugee camps are certainly meant to protect refugees from their native homes where potential threats are present. Refugee camps also allow UNHCR to deliver “lifesaving aid like food, water, and medical attention during an emergency” (UNHCR) Nonetheless, it has lately been acknowledged that most of them often fail to provide appropriate and adequate services. In spite of all the resolutions regarding the Refugee Crisis and the increasing number of refugee camps, the actual conditions within those camps have become serious collateral over the past years and have blurred the ultimate reason why refugee camps have been created in the first place. Many refugee camps have failed to accomplish their humanitarian duties and responsibilities, and resulted in a ‘refugee camps crisis.’

Abuses of power against refugees have recently been highlighted as one of the most concerning problems in terms of refugee camps. For example, during the summer of 2019, the top management of UNRWA was accused of sexual misconduct, nepotism, bullying, and retaliation. Considering that this is not the first time that it has been called on to look into UNRWA, some countries began withdrawing their payments to UNRWA (Irfan et al, 2019).



This scandal has seriously aggravated the living conditions of refugees in refugee camps that already provide awful services.

Additionally, many women and children refugees have constantly been subject to sexual exploitation, life-threatening diseases or other serious forms of human rights violations due to the conditions of refugee camps. For example, Lesbos in Greece runs an EU-subsidized camp and their refugees are frequently maltreated with the overwhelming stench of rotting garbage, urine and feces line every corridor (Kakissis, 2018). Most of the refugees just stay in refugee camps “with no prospects for permanent relocation and the basic necessities for sustaining life in short supply,” waiting for years to find their forever home (Dunn, 2015).

## **Bloc Positions**

### East Africa and The Middle East Blocs

These countries, primarily from East Africa and the Middle East, are home to the world’s largest refugee camps and they have implemented strategies to host millions of refugees, including those that have fled since the Civil War in Sudan that began in 2013 (Raptive, 2018). Due to the increase in the acceptance of refugees, the population in these countries is also exponentially growing today. Refugee camps from these regions additionally have accepted millions of people who fled from continuous violence, including refugees that fled from the Democratic Republic of Congo. This bloc should look at what methods have been used in the past to grant millions of refugees the aid they need, the costs that are required to accept more refugees, and how to convince other countries to continue to accept them as well. These countries are to serve as an influence for others to understand the gravity of dire living conditions



for refugees, and ultimately make an initiative to alleviate the pain and grief they endure their whole life.

#### South America and Central America Blocs

Countries in this bloc are primarily from South America and Central America, and they are the places that most refugees move to for resettlement. The United Nations describes resettlement as “the selection and transfer of refugees from a State” that has requested their protection to a third state to accept refugees with a permanent resident status (UNHCR, 2019). Refugees are thus moved to another country if it is considered by the United Nations as the best possible solution, after going through a resettlement program and ensuring the refugees' services, benefits, and even hopes of naturalization in the resettlement country that they are moving to. Countries under this bloc should determine whether the conditions of refugee camps improve when refugees qualify for resettlement. This bloc should additionally consider what further steps can be taken to reintegrate refugees into society after resettling.

#### Western Asia and The Middle East Blocs

Hosting thousands of Palestinian refugees today, these regions are home to 59 different refugee camps that have accepted refugees since the outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian Civil War in 1948 (Anera, 2018). They are all in favor of helping refugees, although the conditions in these refugee camps are frequently insufficient or inhospitable. The United Nations has underscored the dire conditions of Palestinian refugee camps, specifically describing the Gaza Strip territory as “unlivable” due to the food and medical supplies shortages, inability to move in and out of Gaza without permits, and the conditions for the refugees as a whole (Anera, 2019). It is a question of whether this bloc can improve the conditions for Palestinian refugee camps as soon



as possible for the sake of their humanity. These countries should ensure the safety and security of the hospitality of Palestinian refugees among millions of others.

### Europe and North America Blocs

As of December 2017, UNHCR had counted over 1,000,000 asylum applications in 37 European countries including both European Union members and non-members. Likewise, North American countries have accepted 3 million refugees typically from Central and South America since 1975. Despite the availability of their hosting countries, however, many European and North American countries are not entirely content with the idea of hosting refugees. With this lack of unity, many of their refugee camps often ended up providing horrible conditions. For example, Lesbos in Greece runs an EU-subsidized camp and their refugees are frequently maltreated with the overwhelming stench of rotting garbage, urine and feces line every corridor, threats from drug dealers (Kakissis, 2018). Furthermore, families fleeing from violence and conflict move to Europe to “further their education, find respect for their rights and get ahead in life,” but these expectations are seldom met (UNICEF, n.d.). Both European and North American blocs must acknowledge the ineffectiveness of some of their refugee camps and settle a dispute by mutual concession to fix the current issues within the camps while respecting each country’s policies and principles.

### **Committee Goals**

For the duration of this committee, you should be able to think critically about the possible solutions to improving the conditions of refugee camps around the world, while considering the drastic, long-term effects on refugees fleeing from their homeland. In contemporary society, civil war and political violence have been a prominent cause of millions



of refugees fleeing elsewhere for safety and security. This committee should introduce you to the impact of refugees on the social, political, and economic aspects of other countries.

Furthermore, delegates should know of the best strategies that allow countries to collectively agree on how to improve the conditions of refugee camps, even with opposing views on the topic. Looking at past strategies to host refugees and reintegrate them into society can also contribute to finding possible solutions. Engaging discussions with compatible compromises among countries are encouraged for creating a progressive move for the sake of millions of refugees continuing to live in poverty and violence. Delegates should work together, discuss the most effective strategies for helping refugees, and decide upon future solutions on an international scope.

### Research Questions

1. What should countries take into account when determining whether they should accept refugees fleeing from political conflicts or violence? What are the strategies that they use?
2. Looking at the statistics, why do certain countries implement more progressive strategies than others to improve refugee camps?
3. How can countries with opposing ideas/values agree to improve the lives of refugees collectively? How can this tie into the plight of Chagossians?
4. What is the greatest setback to improving refugee camps around the world? Why is it difficult to overcome this setback?
5. How are refugees affected socially and mentally after they flee from their home country?



6. What are the solutions or strategies that countries have used in the past to aid refugees, and how can these same strategies be applied today?



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