



UNHCR

Addressing the Impact of Environmental Changes
on the Future of Displacement

Improving the Security of Refugees
and Humanitarian Workers

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

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Greetings Delegates,

A very warm welcome to the 28th Annual UCI Model United Nations High School Conference! My name is Ashima Seth, and I am looking forward to serving as your Under-Secretary-General for Specialized Agencies. Like you, I have been an active participant in the MUN tradition since high school, with this conference marking eight years of experience attending and organizing conferences. The time spent with my fellow delegation members, delegates and dais members has helped me forge lasting bonds and gain invaluable experience and skills. It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to be a part of your MUN experience and to, hopefully, make it as rewarding as my own has been.

For the last year, I have been working tirelessly with your Secretaries-General, Hana Schlosser and Angie Lo, and the Under-Secretary-General of Mains Committees, Kyle Petersen, in addition to the Directors, Assistant-Directors, and Administrative staff in researching, organizing and preparing all the material you will be seeing in the coming two days of the conference. The theme of this year's conference is "Addressing Global Human Security and its Impacts". I hope to see this theme reflected in the debate as delegates come together in crafting solutions to the topics being discussed in their respective committees. Our committee topics for this year aim to challenge you and your fellow delegates' problem-resolution skills in areas that have either been a source of dissension in international politics in the past or present (Security Council and Concert of Europe, respectively), that have impacted those who are more vulnerable (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), and that have become increasingly worrisome due to their critical nature (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

MUN affords a unique format of debate that not only helps you develop and showcase your skills in research and public speaking, but which also facilitates a dialogue that unites us all in the quest to find effective solutions. To me, a successful committee is comprised of delegates who are well-versed in the subject matter, who have opinions on the said matter, and who voice these opinions in a diplomatic manner, engaging in teamwork to come up with solutions that are in the best interests of everyone involved. I strongly believe that all of you will more than rise to the challenge. I eagerly anticipate seeing you all during the conference and hope that it will be a pleasant and enriching experience for you!

Sincerely,
Ashima Seth
Under-Secretary-General of Specialized Agencies
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Dear Delegates,

My name is Uyen Mai, and it is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to the 28th Annual UCI Model United Nations High School Conference. I will be serving as your director for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This will be my third year working with the UCIMUN Conference Team, and I am also an active member of the UCIMUN Travel Team. I hope that the UCIMUN conference will be as fulfilling an experience for you as it has been for me. I also hope that you will learn to fully utilize your critical analysis, public speaking, and diplomacy skills. Thank you for allowing us to become an integral part of your high school Model United Nations experience.

I am currently a third-year Public Health Sciences major, with minors in Philosophy and International Studies. In the future, I intend to pursue a career in providing medical and humanitarian aid to refugees and underserved communities, as part of an international humanitarian relief agency. Outside of UCI Model United Nations, I am also involved in various humanitarian organizations pertaining to medicine, the humanities, and refugee aid. My involvements also extend to diverse interests, such as immunology and cancer research at the School of Medicine, experimental philosophy and moral cognition research at the Ethics Center. I am also the Editor-in-Chief of a UCI medical humanities publication. In my spare time, I like to travel, explore urban cities and the outdoors, and read for leisure.

In the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Committee, we will be focusing on the following topics: 1) *Addressing the Impact of Environmental Changes on the Future of Displacement*, and 2) *Improving the Security of Refugees and Humanitarian Workers*. In light of this year's theme, "*addressing global human security and its impacts*", we encourage you to find common ground amongst your ideological and cultural differences in order to effectively address the issues as a whole. Focus on creating solutions that not only address governments and the structure of the United Nations, but that also deal significantly with individuals and local communities. The first topic will require both a micro- and macro-level approach to addressing the impending concerns. With worsening conditions of climate change, you will be expected to understand the conversation surrounding climate change, emergency response, and human rights, amongst other concerns. The second topic provides a contrast to the first topic by requiring an analysis of the internal affairs of UNHCR. You will gain a deeper understanding of UNHCR policies, structures, systems, and processes, and be able to take a retrospective look at the security threats of the past in order to propose more effective systems for potential future threats.

Although the topic synopsis is an important starting point for committee preparation, each delegate is expected to come to the conference with a thorough understanding of his or her country's positions and history. A delegate that prepares well and engages in careful and thoughtful research outside of the topic synopsis will be able to work to their fullest potential, actively participate in debate and discussion, and create innovative solutions. Give yourself enough time to work on your position paper, and make sure to turn it in on time. As a reminder, you should be receiving a receipt email once you have turned in your position papers.

As conference weekend approaches, I am excited to hear your unique opinions and approaches with regards to these topics. I come knowing that I will learn as much from all of you as much as you will all learn from each other. I look forward to meeting you soon, and good luck with your preparatory work! Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at any time.

Best Wishes,

Uyen Mai

Director

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Topic A: Addressing the Impact of Environmental Changes on the Future of Displacement

Introduction

Due to the impending concern of rapid climate change and environmental degradation, an alarming rate of refugees have been displaced by environmental factors. In 2017, a record number of 18.8 million people were displaced due to disaster-related concerns (Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2018), ranging from floods to tropical storms, droughts, and melting glaciers, amongst others. Although environmental changes have always been a major driver of migration, the movement of people will continue to be affected by environmental changes. Scientists warn that climate change is projected to increase displacement in the future, both internally and across borders. Climate change predictions for the 21st century indicate that even larger populations of people are expected to be displaced as weather-related disasters such as extreme temperatures and precipitation become more frequent and intense (Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2018).

As of recent, the term “environmental refugee” or “climate refugee” has often been used in the news and social media, however, these terms have no legal basis in international refugee law, and growing consensus among concerned agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), agree that their use is to be avoided (IOM Institutional Engagement on Migration, Environment and Climate Change, 2015). These terms can be misleading and could possibly undermine the international legal structure for refugee protection. To date, there are no internationally accepted definitions for people on the move due to environmental reasons, but the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has proposed a



broad working definition to capture the complexity of the issues at stake: “*Environmental migrants* are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.” In the case that the emphasis is on the forced nature of the movement, the term *environmentally displaced person* is used.

Description

Present international law does not provide a right to admission and stay for those fleeing to another country based on the basis of environmental concerns. Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, a “refugee” in international law is based on a “well-founded fear of being persecuted” (The 1951 Refugee Convention, 1951) and it would be difficult to obtain international agreement that climate change impacts can constitute “persecution”. A “persecutor” has been understood to be a “State agent”, but can be extended to non-State entities; however, it always requires an identifiable entity, which climate change has not been labeled as. Rewriting the 1951 Refugee Convention has been heavily debated, with some experts deeming it impractical to redefine climate migrants as “climate refugees” and to make them a part of the refugee convention (Beeler, 2018). However, it is to be noted that in some contexts, the definition of a refugee extends to “persons fleeing events seriously disturbing public order,” which can be applied to the contextual basis of environmental displacement (Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, 1984).

There is a tendency to assume that migration can be linked causally to environmental “drivers” such as climate change, and that such movements are predominantly of a “forced”



nature. However, it is not always possible to establish clear causality between climate change and migration, which is a concern when it comes to the working definition of environmental migrants and the role of UNHCR in addressing their needs. Climate change cannot always be designated specifically as the cause of disaster-related displacement, although most scientists will agree that climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of natural disasters (IOM Institutional Engagement on Migration, Environment and Climate Change, 2015). In the case of progressing processes of environmental degradation due to climate change, it is the impacts of climate change in combination with structural, social, and economic factors that will most heavily affect the level of migrating and displacement. An example of a combination of these factors is the effect of rising sea levels, which can be more clearly attributed to climate change. People will most likely move due to their homes and fields being flooded, or even move before these circumstances occur, as their livelihoods are at risk of quickly becoming unsustainable.

Marginalized populations, such as ethnic and religious minorities, may also experience discriminatory harmful impacts related to climate change, such as food and livelihood insecurity. In this case, some protections can be provided on behalf of one of the five Convention grounds of international refugee law. In the case that a government discriminates in the provision of protection or resources from climate change impacts, then those fleeing from these conditions may be identified as refugees. If a state is unwilling or unable to provide protection for those experiencing persecution in a region affected by climate change, then the affected populations would also be recognized as refugees because protection is provided based on the discriminatory acts, not climate change (Beeler, 2018).

UN Involvement



For those who are internally displaced within their own country due to natural or human-made disasters, there are some protections under international human rights law, laid out in provisions in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. However, these provisions are contingent on the extent to which a country has adopted Guiding Principles. There have been recent efforts to create frameworks to take environmental degradation and climate change as drivers of migration into account, although some have been met with opposition from member States.

In regards to this issue, UNHCR's role lies in raising awareness about the effects of climate change on displacement and the need to protect those affected by environmental disasters. This includes legal guidance to provide support and protection to those displaced, policy and action, research on operational and policy work, and field-based work to address internal and cross-border displacement (Climate change and disaster displacement, 2020). UNHCR is the Lead Agency in the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), which was established in 2005 as the main inter-agency forum at the global level to provide support and protection response in complex and natural disaster humanitarian emergencies. UNHCR facilitates the development of policies, standards, and operational tools to improve protection in humanitarian response, and to ensure that the response is timely, of high quality, and relevant to the issue. The GPC itself is responsible for: child protection through the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), gender-based violence through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), housing, land and property through the National Registrar of Citizens (NRC), and mine action through the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Global Protection Cluster: What We Do, 2019).



UNHCR also takes part as a standing invitee to the Steering Group of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This is a State-led initiative focused on the implementation of the Nansen Initiative's Protection Agenda, which provides States with skills to better prevent and prepare for displacement, as well as better respond to situations when people are forced to find refuge, whether within their own country or across international borders. Because people crossing borders due to disaster-related concerns and effects of climate change have limited protections when arriving in another country, the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda supports the integration of effective practices by States and regional organizations into their own normative frameworks, rather than calling for a new binding international convention on cross-border disaster displacement (Disaster Displacement: Our Response, 2020). This allows for stronger partnerships between policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, creating a conducive environment for discussion, policy, and development. Along with the IOM, UNHCR plays a central role in implementing the PDD strategy and in supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, which addresses the need for protection of people displaced across borders in the context of disasters, including the impacts of climate change.

In July 2018, following the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). This text recognizes that climate change, disasters, and environmental degradations are drivers of migration, compelling States to commit to actions that minimize such drivers and better protect people pressured to leave their homes due to disasters. This non-binding cooperation framework expresses a common set of commitments, on the basis of 23 objectives, allowing states to



respond to the issues surrounding contemporary international migration, and sets up room for implementation, follow-up, and review. However, this document has remained controversial, due to its suggestion that countries work together to plan for environmentally displaced migrants, and stating the need for States to address the root causes of climate change so that people are not compelled to migrate due to climate change. As a result, more than half a dozen countries from the European Union (EU) joined the United States and Australia in opting to not adopt the document. However, a total of 164 countries still remained to sign the document (Environmental Migration Portal, 2020).

In December 2018, UNHCR recognized the dire consequences of climate change for refugees and others of concern in the Global Compact on Refugees, which was formally endorsed by the UN General Assembly (Global Compact on Refugees, 2018). This document, also originating from the New York Declaration, focuses on refugees, while the global compact on migration focuses on migration. It is important to note the distinction between “refugee” and “migrant”. Although not legally binding and providing no legal basis for a “climate refugee”, this document does recognize that in certain situations, the external forced displacement may result from sudden-onset natural disasters and environmental degradation, encouraging future actions to address environmental challenges.

On another note, due to the recent wave of nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment across Europe and the United States, encouraging member States to follow existing refugee protocol has been difficult. Therefore, trying to expand the refugee protocol to provide protections for a new set of refugees, specifically “climate refugees”, is even more unlikely. According to some experts, trying to negotiate legal protections may be fruitless and undermine



the current refugee convention (Tower, 2017, p. 9-29). As of now, there are little to no legal protections for climate migrants, even though research predicts that their numbers are expected to increase.

Case Studies

In 2004, the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami was a pivotal event to encourage the international community to recognize the role that climate change and environmental degradation play in migration. This natural disaster affected various populations differently. For thousands of migrants from Myanmar who worked in agriculture along Thailand's coast, they were afraid of asking their local government for assistance out of fear of repatriation. Some of the population were unable to re-establish their legal identity or recover permits to stay in Thailand, and the majority of Myanmar migrants were also unable to receive compensation provided by the Thailand government for deceased relatives (Naik, et al., 2007). In general, there was a lack of support and protection provided for migrants affected by the earthquake and tsunami. However, there are actions that can be taken to mitigate the diaspora and migration out of countries affected by natural disasters. For example, in Sri Lanka, skilled workers working internationally decided to return home in order to provide medical relief and support to their communities. This speeds up the disaster-response process by skipping the hurdles often faced in the presence of bureaucracy, and reducing costs of providing personnel and supplies. Going forward, better contingency planning and disaster response mechanisms can be set up to reduce casualties and speed up reconstruction.

By the year 2017, there were 18.8 million new displacements of people across 135 countries, with weather-related hazards being a major cause. Floods accounted for 8.6 million of



those displacements, and tropical cyclones accounted for 7.5 million. Whether or not these patterns were directly affected by climate change and environmental degradation, it is likely that the impacts of climate change have exacerbated these conditions (Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2018). These figures are concerning, because people who have been displaced are a highly vulnerable population. For refugees and migrants displaced for reasons other than climate change and natural disasters, such as war and conflict, often reside in geographic regions that are susceptible to climate change. Thus, they are prone to secondary displacement. In recent years, climate change has extended the length and increased the intensity of the monsoon season in certain areas such as Bangladesh, of which the Rohingya refugee camps are impacted by the heavy rains and require more safeguards against them. Additionally, climate change influences whether or not refugees can return to their home residences. In some cases, they cannot return safely because their homes have been disparaged by the impacts of climate change.

Those living on island nations can clearly see the effects of climate change with rising sea levels, as their coastline continues to disappear. In the Maldives, migration is being considered as one of the adaptive responses to climate change, in addition to construction efforts. It is important to note that Maldivians and other island state inhabitants do not perceive climate change as the major driver of migration, however. Migration has been a constant for the islanders, typically for social and work-related reasons (Stojanov, et al., 2017). Although no planned relocation has occurred, some of the immediately threatened island States have begun to explore policy options such as looking into the purchase of land (IOM Institutional Engagement on Migration, Environment and Climate Change, 2015).



A 2018 World Bank study states that Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America will find that climate change will drive tens of millions of people, or 2.8% of the population in these regions, to forcibly migrate from their homes in order to escape the impacts of climate change by the year 2050 (Rigaud, 2018). Areas that are the poorest and most vulnerable to the climate will be most impacted by rising sea levels and natural disasters. Impacts of climate change include drought and desertification, which can cause resource constraints. As a result, competition over resources can lead to increased conflict, and possibly ending in migratory action. For example, the Lake Chad Basin Crisis, which has already displaced more than 2.4 million people, is further falling into conflict and increased movement due to the impacts of climate change in the last five decades. With the size of the lake diminishing, increasing difficulty in subsistence farming, and competition over resources, these conditions are creating worsening conditions of poverty and economic instability. If this continues, it is possible that additional millions of people may be forcibly displaced in the next few decades.

Bloc Positions

European Union (EU)

States from the European Union have been accepting many refugees in the past decade. Since 2018, European Union States have received a total of over five million first time asylum applicants (Asylum and first time asylum applicants, 2020), although the proportion of protection status granted by each state differs. In 2016, most of the asylum seekers in the European Union originated from Syria, followed by Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. However, some Eastern European states may be opposed to the mandatory quotas to accept refugees, coming from reasons such as the economic burden of accepting refugees, and reflecting a growing



anti-immigrant sentiment. As of 2019, European Union data has shown that the number of first-time asylum seekers declined for the fourth straight year. The source of asylum seekers continues to grow, but far-right and populist parties have resulted in state governments tightening rules for immigration and declining approval rates of asylum seekers (585,800 first-time asylum seekers registered in 2018, down by 11% compared with 2017, 2019).

Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group

The LDC group consists of 47 of the poorest countries in the world that contribute the least to climate change, yet disproportionately suffer from its impacts (Wangdi, 2020). The majority of these countries come from Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Caribbean, all of whom are committed to playing an integral part of intergovernmental negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Many people from these regions have already started to migrate due to environmental concerns (refer to case studies), which is a concern for both the state of origin and the surrounding states that have to accept the environmentally displaced persons. The LDC Group has been working on the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which will provide a way for UN agencies (UNDP, UNEP, etc.) to assist countries that are vulnerable to climate change, bring attention to long-term climate change adaptation, and secure funding (UNDP Climate Change Adaptation, 2020).

Committee Goals

Delegates will be expected to engage in substantive debate and propose solutions that address both the current and future aspects of environmental changes on forced migration, with a focus on preparing for future concerns. When drafting resolutions, delegates should seek to incorporate an understanding of the past history of environmentally displaced migrants, contingency



planning, rights and protections for environmentally displaced persons, and discuss the international legal structure for refugee protection in relation to environmentally displaced migrants. Of course, these are a few important subtopics to focus on, but delegates are not limited to just these subtopics and may discuss other relevant subtopics. Collaboration is of utmost importance for this agenda, seeing that different member states address climate change in various manners. Delegates will be rewarded for working in a comprehensive manner to find creative and feasible solutions that address both short and long-term components of this issue.

Research Questions

1. What are some past and current efforts to address the nature of environmental changes on displacement, and how can this knowledge be used to develop new strategies?
2. What reforms need to be developed in international humanitarian and refugee law to ensure the protection of refugees displaced by climate change and other environmental issues?
3. What is your country's policy towards climate change and refugee protection, and how can you work together with other countries that may have similar policies to address these concerns?
4. What is your country's involvement in refugee protection and addressing the concerns of climate change, and what can you do to be more effectively involved in this matter?
5. What possible future consequences can climate change and environmental degradation have on the refugee crisis, and what kind of contingency planning can be done to ameliorate these circumstances?



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Topic B: Improving the Security of Refugees and Humanitarian Workers

Introduction

Refugees have many reasons to escape their homes, and their driving factors include escaping war zones, ethnic cleansing, torture, rape, physical attack, among others. But even after escaping, many new dangers arise and continue to persist, and refugees are at high risk of safety due to concerns such as human trafficking, crossing seas and borders, terrorism, and lack of security. The movement of refugees across borders also poses a profound impact on international security, which may impact the viability of refugee protection. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners remain devoted towards addressing these security concerns, but security threats and insecure environments weaken the ability of UNHCR and humanitarian agencies to help and protect refugees and their basic human rights. UNHCR has become heavily involved in security issues and acknowledges its importance in refugee protection, especially because they affect ongoing operations. However, recent legal and operational changes have been made at both the inter-state and intra-state level to improve security measures. The discussion surrounding refugee protection and security will place heavy emphasis on the interconnectedness of the refugees, the states, and global security.

Refugees are not the only people who are at high stakes due to security concerns in refugee camps and operations. Humanitarian workers have also suffered dire consequences while working, sometimes even intentional and violent death. In general, many refugee camps are places of danger and insecurity, and can destabilize the living conditions of those living in close proximity to the camps. Although the security risk to the individual humanitarian worker has



decreased due to the increase in humanitarian aid workers overall, they still continue to face many challenges on the job (Addressing Refugee Security, 2020, p 63-87).

Description

With a majority of refugees escaping in order to avoid conflict as a by-product of war, refugee flow across state borders have become a concern due to the potential fear of conflicts crossing over the borders along with the refugees. In this case, UNHCR highly emphasizes the recognition of asylum for refugees as a neutral, non-political act. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention also contains a set of checks and balances that addresses states' security concerns (Division of International Protection of the UNHCR, 1997), which serves to provide protection to refugees and relax potential interstate tension. However, there has been a rise in xenophobia and a fear of those seeking asylum in many countries, which portrays refugees as perpetrators of insecurity rather than also being victims themselves. As a result, their journey towards seeking asylum and crossing borders has become much more difficult, as many states have increased barriers to entry and may even participate in extensive detention, all of which pose security risks to refugees (Addressing Refugee Security, 2020, p. 64-69).

Forces posing threats to the physical security of refugees may present themselves through a variety of sources, such as organized crime, offending military and police forces, and anti-government militants. Due to the vulnerability of refugees, in which they have little-to-no resources and poor access to family and community, they are most vulnerable in the face of those posing a physical security risk. Most of all, violent risks such as armed combatants and militia groups can often be hard to track down and present them before the law. There have been many cases in which armed groups have diverted humanitarian aid from refugee camps, whether



through theft or ‘taxation’. As a consequence, refugees have suffered malnutrition and violent attacks at the hands of violent and unethical actors. Refugees may also be forcibly recruited into these armed groups, or take over the refugee camp as a means of shelter. The presence of these groups in camps inevitably leads to an increase in attacks on refugee settlements as a means of power and control. For example, after the 1999 East Timor crisis, pro-Indonesian militiamen manipulated and prevented refugees in West Timor from going back home through the use of violence and misinformation (Addressing Refugee Security, 2020, p. 67-87).

With a majority of the world’s refugees residing in developing nations, where economic growth and employment rates can be quite low, refugee populations may present themselves as competition to the surrounding host communities. Refugees are often perceived as a threat to the host community’s economic prosperity, social stability and cultural identity (Yaxley, 2019). Even in areas where the local population initially welcomes refugees, if the refugees stay longer than needed or increase strains on local resources and social services, their extended stay becomes unwelcome. In some cases, there have also been examples of refugees resorting to illegal means in order to survive, but increasing crime rates may not be solely at the fault of refugees. With conflicts occurring across borders, the refugees themselves may not be the sole culprit of increased crime rates, since it can also be attributed to political instability and other violent actors that caused the refugees to migrate in the first place. Additionally, refugees’ efforts to breach restrictions on the host country’s rules governing their freedom of movement and economic activity are also sometimes labelled as crimes. As a result, these conditions may present themselves as an increase in xenophobia and intolerance towards refugees, in which the



local population often blame refugees for increased crime and generally view them with suspicion and mistrust.

For example, Côte d'Ivoire was a relatively stable and vibrant country before 2002. Liberian refugees flooded into Liberia around 1989 and were greeted with hospitality, social benefits, and many individual freedoms. However, a civil war erupted in 2002 due to an attempted coup against the president, and surrounding countries, such as Liberia, were accused of being involved in the attempted coup. Ivorian politicians and news media treated the Liberian refugees as scapegoats and accused them of being rebels - putting them into a position of vulnerability to violence and conflict. Although UNHCR tried to protect the refugees, many still suffered from torture, murder, and forced recruitment into the military (No Escape: Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, 2003).

Humanitarian Workers

The humanitarian assistance system's viability has also been compromised in the face of violent attacks and other risks that come with conflict-ridden environments where refugee camps can sometimes be located. These risks present many dangers to the humanitarian workers assisting refugees, and there has been an increase in the number of attacks on these workers. Many UN agencies and non-profit organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF), have been the victims of such attacks. The number of incidents continues to increase every year, and the UN has stressed the importance of guaranteeing the safety of humanitarian aid workers, especially because they bring much-needed assistance to refugees and other populations of concern (Major attacks on aid workers: Summary statistics, 2020).



From 2008 to 2018, the number of major attacks on aid workers grew from 165 to 226, with 405 reported as killed, injured, or kidnapped, and most humanitarian workers who die on the job are intentionally killed (Yaxley, 2019). Local staff are more likely to be killed than internationals, which may be due to the vulnerability of local aid workers to be used for political reasons. These numbers only reflect reports from the UN, international NGOs, various organizations of the Red Cross, and the Red Crescent Society, so the concern for aid worker attacks may be much more widespread than reported. These numbers reflect an ongoing pattern over the past decade, in which roughly 300 aid workers have been seriously affected by violent attacks every year. Outside of violence, aid workers are presented with other problems, such as theft of office property and vehicles, ransacking of warehouses, and the hijacking of relief convoys.

These violent incidents happen in a small number of conflict countries, but these are also places in which the local population desperately needs emergency assistance - and humanitarian aid is much needed to fulfill that role. Countries like South Sudan, Syria, and Afghanistan, Central Africa Republic, and Nigeria happened to be some of the most dangerous places for aid workers to be in 2017, due to the ongoing intensity of the internal conflicts (No Escape: Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, 2003) . The means of violence range from gunfire to bomb threats, as well as under-reported methods such as rape and sexual assault.

Since the 1990s, humanitarian workers have been increasingly involved in the front lines of the conflicts, and military forces and militias violated international humanitarian law by attacking the civilian populations without respecting the Red Cross and Red Crescent symbols. With their security and safety at stake, humanitarian aid agencies became more dependent on



international military forces and UN peacekeeping to fulfill the need for security. With the political element of humanitarian aid becoming more prevalent, the neutrality of humanitarian aid started to erode, and allying with international agencies increased the tension between the need for security and the principle of neutrality.

However, even though the statistics of attacks against aid workers show that the conditions are becoming worse, there are also examples of good practices that improve the security of aid workers. In Afghanistan, although the state of insecurity remains high and the conflict remains complicated, the occurrence of aid worker attacks has significantly decreased in the past seven years, ever since its peak in 2013. This might be due to aid workers spending less time in dangerous and the neediest places, and to the efforts to negotiate with the parties of conflict at both the regional and local levels. As a result, the Taliban's tactic of kidnapping aid workers and committing other humanitarian crimes have been reduced - negotiating doesn't always work and the Taliban still continues to be a security threat - but investing in organizational and operational methods of going through negotiations is a vital part of ensuring the security of victims and aid workers (Major attacks on aid workers: Summary statistics, 2020).

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Although most internally displaced persons and refugees face a variety of concerns, women are particularly vulnerable to different forms of violence, such as sexual exploitation, harassment, female genital mutilation, and other issues. Even if they manage to escape and find refuge in refugee camps, these camps do not guarantee safety for women. Since they are separated from the security that they might have had within a close network of family, friends, and their community, women and young girls - especially unaccompanied - are at high risk of



being sexually exploited. Poorly planned camps may not realize that in many cases, food and other necessities are often distributed at the hands of men, and rations can sometimes be low. The likelihood that these women will be sexually exploited for resources is much higher. There have been many cases in the past in which humanitarian workers and peacekeepers have acted unethically and abused their power (Refugee Protection and Sexual Violence No. 73, 1993).

Starting in the 1990's, UNHCR supported initiatives that would address sexual and gender-based violence, and published the UNHCR *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women* in 1991 (Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women, 1991). This stressed the dependency between protection and assistance, and how security played an important role within the provision of aid to refugees. UNHCR also subsequently laid out guidelines that increased awareness about sexual and gender-based violence, how to prevent these issues, and how to establish support for women and young girls. For example, UNHCR supported the CARE-Kenya project in 1993, which created walk-in centres that allowed women to report sexual violence. UNHCR efforts have been made in other countries to collaborate with NGOs on increasing awareness on women's issues, in addition to the provision of legal, medical, and psycho-social resources for women who were victims of sexual violence (Addressing Refugee Security, 2020).

UN Involvement

Since the early 1990's, security issues became more concerning in refugee assistance, and the United Nations sought to address the security and neutrality of refugee camps through resolutions and other forms of action. In the 1998 and 2000 Security Council resolutions, a legal framework was established to authorize action under the UN charter, such as deploying international military forces to increase security within refugee camps (Security Council



Resolution 1208, 1998). These resolutions also sought to stress the need for refugee-hosting countries to develop institutions and procedures to implement international refugee law, and bring together humanitarian, political, and military forces to address the issue of insecurity. In the 2002 General Assembly *Conclusion on the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum* (Conclusion on the civil and humanitarian character of asylum, 2002), the UN highlighted the responsibility of States to ensure the safety of refugee camps and settlements against violent actors; respect the right for refugees to seek asylum; prevent the recruitment of refugees by government armed forces, and to enhance collaboration in order to evaluate security threats and consider appropriate practical responses. In particular, an important emphasis that should be noted is the call to develop mechanisms to ensure the demilitarization of refugee camps. For States receiving a mixed flow of refugees and combatants, UNHCR recommended that they take measures to disarm those entering refugee camps and settlements; and identify, separate, and intern non-affiliated combatants from the refugee population. Under international humanitarian law (IHL), refugee law, and the law of Neutrality, States are also required to: determine those who should be eligible to ask for asylum (excluding combatants), protect refugees (as civilians) from being mixed up in dangerous situations with combatants, and respect the institution of asylum (Global Compact on Refugees, 2018). All of these resolutions were developed especially after the crises in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, in which the UN was unable to respond to the humanitarian crises in a timely and efficient manner.

In a UNHCR report from the Department of International Protection, UNHCR outlines the primary responsibility of host governments to address the issue of separating combatants from refugee populations, and proposes strategies and mechanisms which include, but are not



limited to: a) the establishment of a Task Force on Internment, which would be composed of related government authorities and international agencies (especially UNHCR) to deploy the proper resources and needed assistance to governments in need of refugee assistance, b) a call for the need to designate of a lead or responsible international agency to assist host governments, and c) the availability and timely mobilization of humanitarian security officers (HSOs) to provide assistance in assessing the situation and providing solutions to improve the security of the refugee camps and settlements that have been militarized (Costa, 2004, p. 1-65). In the case that the host State is unwilling or unable to address security issues and refugees and humanitarian workers are vulnerable to harassment or infiltration by armed actors, this situation would need to be brought to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

On an institutional level, UNHCR has undertaken different strategies to address specific refugee problems, formulate guidelines, and disseminate them among UNHCR staff and partners throughout the world for implementation. These efforts include training programs, field directives, workshops, and improving reporting measures. No single set of guidelines has addressed personal security, but refugee protection guidelines are outlined in the following documents: *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (1982)*, the *1988 Guidelines on Refugee Children*, and the *1991 Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women* (The personal security of refugees, 1993). UNHCR has also increased the presence of staff and UNHCR personnel, especially along borders, to ensure the safety of refugees crossing international borders and to prevent incidents of mistreatment. Other practical measures can also be taken at the camp level to improve the security of refugees, such as improving the location, design, and administration. Locating camps in safer areas or more defensible sites, and sourcing the camps near natural



resources, is important for the long-term wellness and safety of inhabitants of the camp (Operational Protection in Camps and Settlements, 2005). Lastly, UNHCR has participated in activities to combat xenophobia and raise awareness of the realities of refugee lives. This includes work with NGOs, trade unions, and conducting seminars, exhibitions, and film shows. In some countries, one practical measure that happens to be particularly helpful in countering xenophobic movements has been the publication of outspoken statements by popular and well-respected public figures in countries dealing with xenophobia. Overall, addressing the issue of refugee security requires collaborative work between UN agencies, NGOs, host governments, relief agencies, and many others to become more effective with their goals. It will require the efforts of these actors to implement a safety-first, rights-based strategy to address the serious and widespread concerns about security concerns associated with refugees and humanitarian workers (Jacobsen, 1999).

Bloc Positions

Funding Bloc

This bloc is technically composed of all member countries, since all U.N. members contribute to the UN Regular Budget. However, some major contributors are the U.S.A., the European Union, and Canada. Countries from this bloc are more likely to express an interest in drafting and passing a resolution that takes into account the operational costs concerning security for refugees and humanitarian workers.

(Developing) Host Countries Bloc

This bloc is composed of countries receiving refugees escaping war and persecution, and other factors that compromise their individual liberties. About 80% of the world's refugees reside in



developing countries, with a third of refugees residing in the poorest countries (The world's refugees in numbers, 2020). Many of these host countries are located in the Middle East and North Africa, where violence, insecurity, persecution, shortages of food, medicine and other basic amenities have prompted millions of people to flee. Many of these host countries also have to deal with a majority of security threats to refugee protection, so delegates from these countries may be interested in passing a resolution that pertains to mobilizing operational measures to increase security, funding for refugee protection programs, and collaborating together to address intrastate concerns affecting refugee safety.

Bloc of Countries with Security Concerns

Although a small majority of high-income countries host refugees, there are some states in Europe and North America that have granted asylum to many of the world's refugees. However, many of the wealthier states in the world are adopting policies that deter people from seeking asylum and coming to their country altogether. These states may be interested in drafting a resolution that addresses the rise of xenophobia in many of these countries and considers the level of responsibility each country plays in the refugee protection regime (UNHCR Manual on Security of Persons of Concern, 2011).

Bloc of Countries of Refugee Origin

This bloc consists of countries producing large populations of refugees, and often have to deal with internal security concerns (seeing that these are the reasons for large populations of citizens to escape their country). These countries may be interested in actions that can reduce the amount of violence and conflict within their own state, as well as ensuring the safety of their citizens when they arrive in other countries.



Committee Goals

To best address the refugee protection regime, delegates should conduct quality research in order to understand the social, legal, administrative, and financial limitations of ensuring refugee security. Although many countries may have different approaches to this topic and contribute to refugee protection and security in various ways, it is important to highlight the collaborative nature of this topic and uphold the multilateral framework of the United Nations. Delegates will be rewarded for working in a team to build a comprehensive resolution, utilizing their lobbying skills, and having a thorough understanding of the topic at hand as well as their country policy and involvement.

Research Questions

1. What are some examples of past efforts to address refugee security concerns, and how can it be emulated in current issues?
2. What is your country's involvement and approach to refugee protection, and what other countries share your stance on this topic?
3. What type of reforms need to be made concerning refugee law, administrative conduct, and operational measures to improve the refugee protection regime?
4. How can states work together to ensure the accountability of governments to address security threats and guarantee safety for refugees and humanitarian workers?
5. What kind of actions can your country or other countries from your bloc undertake to increase involvement in this matter?



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