

Forum: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (GA3)
Issue: Improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons
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INTRODUCTION

Refugees and displaced persons are a minority in most of today's societies. Like almost every other minority, they often receive unfair treatment, live in poor conditions and are not granted equal opportunities in comparison with the majority of the citizens. Most importantly, their human rights are violated. As a result, they suffer from discrimination and are rarely accepted in various economic sectors. Refugees and displaced persons are people that were forced to leave their home or places of habitual residence, in most cases because of wars or natural disasters. That being said, it is widely recognized that their treatment is both intolerable and unfair, since most of them are not terrorists, radicals or they have not committed any crimes in their country before being displaced or in another country after that. While debating this topic, we are going to focus on the inequality of opportunities for the refugees and displaced persons in many sectors of the economy. Thus, not only discrimination and unfair treatment but also modern unemployment and inability to obtain a working position in general will be part of this debate. Considering that the last couple of years we have had some of the highest rates of refugees worldwide in modern history, the problem—a multidimensional and a complicated one—is of utmost importance.



Refugees heading towards Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Delegates will be challenged to find some effective and practical solutions. At the same time, they may propose some legislation changes they consider essential to tackle the problem. In order to be fruitful, this debate requires a lot of background information about modern refugee flows and the impact they have in the economies of the states, as well as a good knowledge of the Human Rights.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Refugee

“Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”¹

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Internally displaced persons (IDPs), according to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border."²

Asylum seeker

An individual seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone, whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the authorities of the country, in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker.³

Displacement

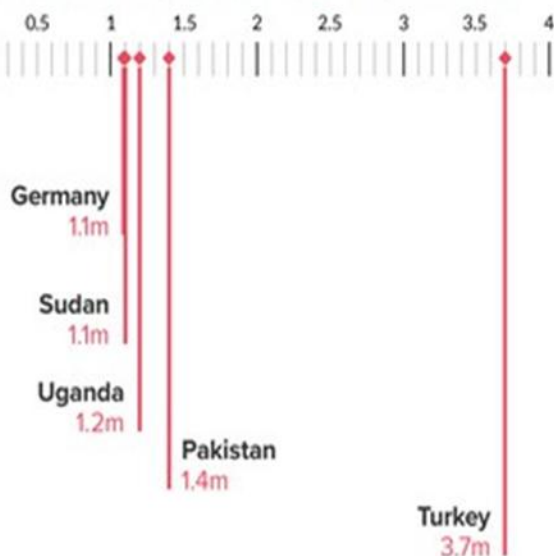
The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights and natural or human-made disasters.⁴

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Refugees nowadays

As mentioned in the Introduction, the rate of refugees and displaced persons worldwide has been very high the last couple of years. In this section there are specific information and statistics about the refugees as presented by the UNHCR. Currently, about 71 million people have been forced to flee their home, most of whom are internally displaced people. About 26 million fall under the category of

Top refugee-hosting countries



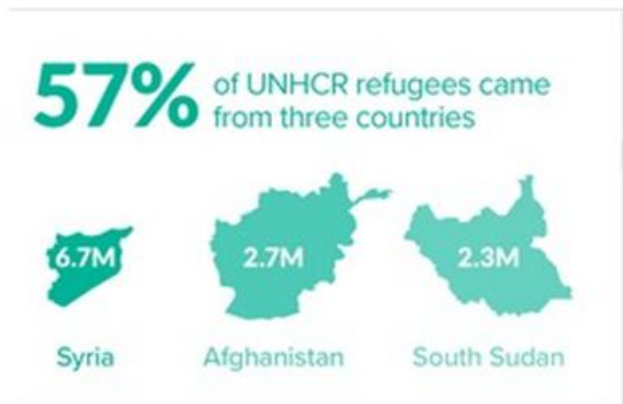
Convention for Refugees, 1951 Refugee Convention.

Convention for Refugees, Master Glossary of Terms (2006).
Principles on Internal Displacement, annexed to United Nations
Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr.
Badr P. Khan, pursuant to Commission Resolution 1997/39, Addendum (11
April 1998/53/Add.2, 5, para. 2 of the introduction.

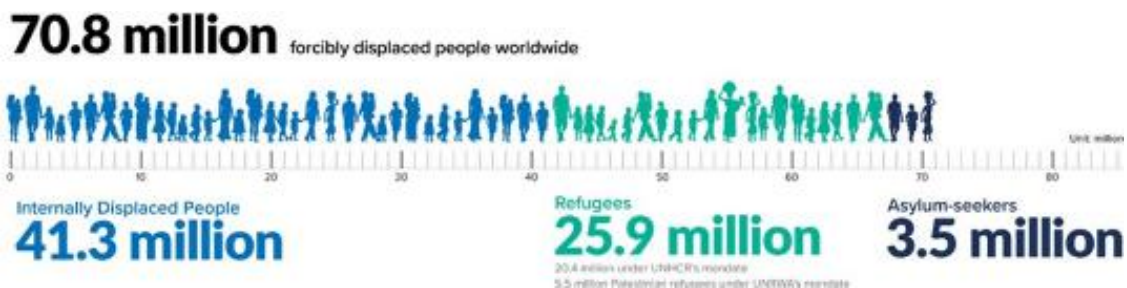
refugees, whereas about 3, 5 million people are asylum seekers.

*UNHCR | Figures at a glance
Countries hosting most refugees worldwide.*

A vast majority of the refugees are hosted by a neighboring country, and currently the countries, where most refugees come from, are Afghanistan, South Sudan and Syria — three countries with a heavy war background. At the same time, the countries that host most refugees are Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan and Germany. On a daily basis, about 37,000 people become refugees and almost 100,000 people are being resettled to their original location.



*UNHCR | Figures at a glance
Countries, where most refugees came from.*



*UNHCR | Figures at a glance
Estimates of Internally Displaced People, Refugees, Asylum-seekers.*

There are many remarkable global events to which the current migratory flows are linked. First of all, the COVID-19 pandemic affects 134 refugee hosting countries putting pressure both to their economies and their national healthcare systems. As a result, they have difficulties accommodating them, let alone find them a stable working position. Furthermore, the adverse economic and socio-political situation in Venezuela has caused the displacement of 4, 5 million people. South Sudan is affected from the largest refugee crisis in Africa with over 2, 2 million people having fled the country. More than 2 million refugees, as of 30 April 2018, come from Iraq, which has been plagued by armed conflicts for the past couple of decades. The war in Syria has not only caused millions of refugees but also about 7 million internally displaced persons. Other countries, where thousands of refugees come from, are Myanmar, Yemen, Central African Republic, Congo, Nigeria and Burundi. Meanwhile, many refugees end up dying for various reasons during the displacement, with a telling example being the refugees travelling to Europe by sea.

Historical presence of refugees

It is widely known that immigration has had huge impact on global history over the centuries and shaped the world as we know it today. In this section, there is information about modern refugees whose displacement has greatly influenced the receiving countries as far as the socio-economic and cultural structure of our world is concerned. As delegates, it is very important to learn a bit about some historical events starting off with the World War I which forced many people to abandon their homes. In Russia, during the October Revolution around 8 million people were displaced, most of whom were Germans, Jews, Poles and Latvians living in Russia who were thought to be enemies of the tsarist autocratic state. In 1915, at the aftermath of the Balkan wars, a large number of Armenians were displaced by the Ottomans. Moreover, many people were forced to leave their place of origin after the World War I when the borders of several countries were redrawn, such as those between Greece and Turkey which, under the Treaty of Lausanne, compelled to exchange entire populations —Christians moved from Turkey to Greece and Muslims from Greece to Turkey. World War II brought the next huge wave of refugees causing the displacement of 60 million people within Europe. At the same time, there were refugees coming from South Asia and Palestine. In 1949, the Chinese Communist Revolution resulted in the proclamation of People's Republic of China which led to the displacement of around 90 million people. Many people also became refugees because of Nazi Germany's and the Soviet Union's policies to move people internally. Then, at the end of the British rule in India (1947), indigenous political leaders created two new states, India and Pakistan, resulting in the displacement of many populations. During the Cold War the Hungarian Revolution (1956) against the communist regime caused a massive wave of 200,000 immigrants who fled to Austria.

Refugees' impact in countries' economies

In general, refugees have always been beneficial to the economies of the receiving countries as they have proven to be strong men and women with aspirations and capabilities, although native people tend to look down on them. A study published in *Science Advances* on 20 June 2018 shows that refugees and migrants reinforce the

receiving country's economy. Apart from that, another study shows that refugees pay more in taxes than what they get in benefits in countries, such as the United States of America. They also open their own businesses, thus creating jobs which boost exponentially the economy. In Turkey, Syrian refugees have invested more than \$300 million into Turkish economy with more than 10,000 Syrian-owned businesses employing an average of 9, 4 workers. Furthermore, refugees receive less payment than native workers who end up in higher working positions because of their language advantages. In the aforementioned research, there is information about countries that received flows of refugees — France from Algeria (1962), Miami from Cuba (1980), Israel from the former Soviet Union (1990s) and the rest of Europe from the Balkans (1990s). Each of these events brought a sudden flood of new workers. That being said, it becomes clear that countries accepting refugees benefit simultaneously the refugees and their own economy.



Refugee Integration.

Violation of Refugees' Human Rights

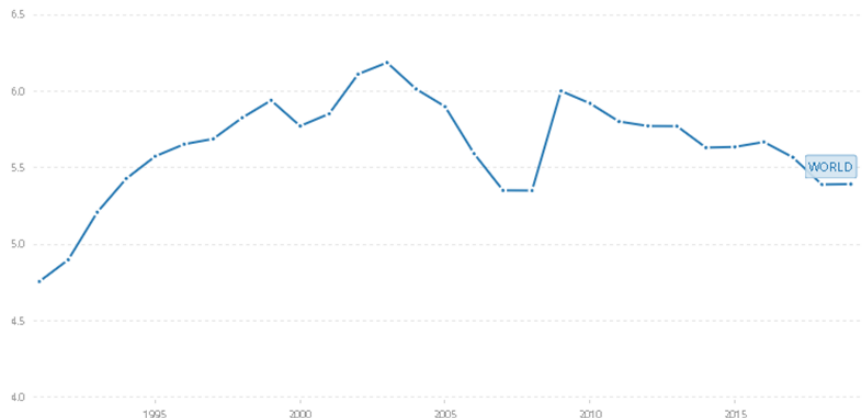
When it comes to refugees and displaced persons, violation of their human rights is a common occurrence. Mass exoduses are very often caused by violations of human rights as, for example, is always the case with wars. Upon arriving in the receiving country, refugees are often regular victims of attacks and abuse, especially if they are sent to refugee camps or settlements where there have been recorded a lot of incidences of violence. Moreover, there is also a chance that refugees, mostly men, are recruited against their will by an armed or guerilla band and forced to fight in armed conflicts, like civil wars. Women, on the other hand, oftentimes fall victims of sexual harassment. Then, there are also the racist and xenophobic aggressions that are preventing them from integrating into society. In general, their rights to liberty and security are violated.

The aforementioned violations have a lot of negative consequences on their employment opportunities. First and foremost, they may prevent them from entering the job market if the violators are employers. Furthermore, the latter, knowing that refugees

are financially dependent on them, might take advantage of this coercing them to work extra hours or offer them a smaller salary than usual. In addition, every kind of harassment has a negative impact on the refugees' mental health which may reduce their productivity once they enter the working sector.

Unemployment nowadays

Unemployment, as a socio-economic phenomenon, is not only referring or restricted to refugees. With an average global unemployment rate at 5, 4% and more than ten countries worldwide having unemployment rate at more than 20%, one can understand the severity of economic situation in many countries. Especially after the global financial crisis (2007-2008) and the Eurozone crisis (2010), unemployment rate has skyrocketed. At the same time, the companies in almost all the sectors of the economy have become very demanding as a lot of people apply for jobs. The requirements are many and skills, such as working at a computer or speaking two or more foreign languages, can decide whether or not one takes a job. In addition, unemployment rate is expected to rise even more for two reasons: first, global population grows at a much faster pace than the job market and second, because of the digitalization of many economic sectors some working positions are about to be occupied by robots and machines in the next couple of years.



*Global Financial Crisis (2007-2008)
Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (modeled ILO Estimate).*

Effect of unemployment on refugees and displaced persons

Since refugees usually arrive in another country unexpectedly, most of them do not even speak the language of the receiving country. Having said that, they can hardly compete with people who are native speakers even if they were really successful before being forced to flee their country. Apart from that, young refugees are at an even greater disadvantage because they do not have enough working experience to claim a job or have difficulties obtaining such an experience on their own as they rarely have any relatives or friends in the receiving countries. At the same time, employers are usually biased against refugees and tend to choose their fellow countrymen for a job, which only makes finding a working position harder for immigrants.

Even when they finally do find a job, they are often being taken advantage of, paid less than usual and forced to do the most exhausting jobs that everyone else avoids as

they know that are helpless and their survival depends on these working positions.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

The UNHCR is the UN specialized agency that deals with refugees, forcibly displaced and stateless people. Its goal is to save refugees' lives, preserve their rights and ensure a better future for them. The UNHCR's policy is mainly presented in the 1951 Refugee Convention which has been ratified by 145 States Parties. It also includes a definition of the word "refugee," as well as the States' obligations when dealing with refugees. Its core principle is non-refoulement, which means that sending back refugees to the country of origin, where their rights and freedoms are violated, is forbidden. In this context, the UNHCR looks after the refugees' health and safety and provides them with shelter and education. Apart from this, it takes care that fair and efficient asylum procedures are observed.

Several organizations referring to refugees or aiming at their development

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are some of the organizations that are involved and could be called upon during the debate since their main goals could definitely interest us.

Central African Countries

Central African countries have gone through a lot of civil wars, terrorism etc., and therefore have huge numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. Since the majority of these countries are LEDC's (Less Economically Developed Countries), the situation in the region is in every aspect critical and welcoming refugees a very tough task.

European Countries

Europe has always been a desirable destination for displaced persons as the possibility of being integrated and ending up having an economically stable and decent life is higher than in most of the countries around the world. Furthermore, refugees from Africa or the Middle East can access it through the Mediterranean Sea. Consequently, there have been many waves of refugees over the centuries which have influenced Europe in many ways.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
24 October 1945	Official creation of the United Nations.
20 April 1946	Establishment of the IRO by the United Nations General Assembly.
14 December 1950	Establishment of the “UNHCR” by the United Nations General Assembly starting to take over the IRO operations.
28 July 1951	The UNHCR Refugee Convention.
30 September 1953	The IRO was disestablished.
5 November 1955	The UNHCR wins Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts throughout the Hungarian Revolution.
11 December 1981	Second Nobel Peace Prize award for the UNHCR.
11-12 September 2012	UNHCR-ILO workshop on Labor Mobility for Refugees in Geneva.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The 1951 Refugee Convention

Key legal document of the UNHCR. It defines the term “refugee” as well as the

countries' legal obligations to protect him/her. One of the core principles is non-refoulement, which means that sending refugees back to the country they came from, where they are liable to be subjected to persecution or even to be killed, is forbidden.

UNHCR —Engaging with employers in the hiring of refugees

A 10-point multi-stakeholder action plan for employers, refugees, governments, and civil society. It is a project by the UNHCR and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the main goal of which is assessing and supporting the economic and social integration of displaced persons.

UNHCR-ILO workshop on Labor Mobility for Refugees, Geneva 11-12 September 2012

In this workshop, states, international organizations, members of civil society and academics discussed whether and how labor mobility—the process of moving around within the economy and between different economies— could increase employment opportunities and freedom of movement for refugees.

A/74/322 - Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. Report of the Secretary-General

IA United Nations resolution signed on 21 Aug 2019. It concerns refugees in Africa.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

Since its creation, the United Nations has always tried to assist immigrants. One year after its creation, it established the International Refugee Organization (IRO), which was later replaced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This specialized agency, also referred to as “The UN Refugee Agency,” has had a very important role over the years. It is praised for its efforts in Europe, including the Hungarian Revolution (1956), Africa (1960s), Asia and Latin America in the 20th century and the Middle East in the 21st century. It was the first United Nations organization to be awarded twice the Nobel Peace Prize (1955 and 1981). Because of it, around 100,000 people have been resettled, assisted financially and put into stable working positions. However, people are becoming constantly refugees and measures, such as helping financially huge numbers of them, are short-termed solutions.

Countries, such as Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, have tried to assist refugees with the help of the UNHCR, by providing them with financial aid and facilities in order to facilitate their integration into the new environment. In Iran, a lot of the internally displaced persons, mainly Afghan refugees, were registered in order to be able to apply for a job. A plan in Central Europe included the improvement of general conditions for the socio-economic and cultural assimilation of refugees through schools, various integration programs etc.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Throughout the debate, the delegates should be stressing the importance of cooperation, since more or less every country is affected by this problem and acknowledges refugees as people who are treated unfairly. Assistance could be provided through various funding agencies that would bring great relief to refugees and displaced persons. Delegates should also focus on the coordination of all those relief agencies which have undertaken the task of assisting refugees.

However, financial or humanitarian aid should not be the main concern of the committee, since it is just a short term measure. The delegates should also propose practical and creative ideas that would make a difference on the issue and ensure refugees a stable working position. There are many sustainable strategies on the table. The so-called Special Economy Zones, i.e. special business areas created by countries that can provide suitable working positions for refugees are one of them. Thus, refugees would avoid difficulties, such as finding an employer or joining a working team with people not speaking their language and probably not accepting them. The new working environment would fulfill them, and thus the country would benefit a lot since refugees would be way more productive and effective.

The education of refugees should also be a matter of discussion, since many of them are initially not able even to speak the language of the receiving country. Through education, they can become active citizens able to assist in various aspects the economy of their new home, including that of becoming one day employers themselves.

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