



**H·I·S**  
HARARE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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# ZIMUN XI

## *The Cost of Innovation:*

*Navigating the Ethical Responsibilities of Technological  
Advancements and Societal Change for Inclusive, Sustainable  
Development in a Globalised World*



*United Nations High Commission for Refugees*

*Empowering displaced people and long term-refugees to improve  
self-reliance and break the cycle of dependence on humanitarian aid*

**Committee:** United Nations High Commission for Refugees

**Issue:** Empowering displaced people and long term-refugees to improve self-reliance and break the cycle of dependence on humanitarian aid

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**Position:** Co-chair

## INTRODUCTION

“By the end of 2022, there were a total of 35.3 million refugees globally, with 29.4 million under United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate, and 5.9 million refugees registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The increase in the number of refugees between 2021 and 2022 is the largest yearly increase recorded as a result of the refugees from Ukraine fleeing the Russian Federation’s full scale of invasion. At the end of 2023, the number of refugees, asylum seekers and other people in need of international protection reached 47.8 million. Low and middle income countries hosted 75 percent of refugees and other people in need of international protection. (Development Solutions For Countries Hosting Refugees : page 2).

Refugees and displaced people cross international borders fleeing war and social instability within their home countries, fleeing from violence and disasters. These refugees and internally displaced people are frequently exposed to extreme suffering, catastrophic family losses, trauma, xenophobia and fear, tensions over limited resources, exclusion from society and economy as well as access to healthcare and are subjected to gender based violence. As they flee from their homes, they lose documents, assets and incomes which results in them depending on humanitarian aid and being heavily reliant on international aid for their food, healthcare services, education, protection as well as any other needs.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Displaced People** - someone who has been forced to leave their home, either within their country or across an international border.
- **Refugees** - people who have fled their countries to escape conflict, violence or persecution and have sought safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of their beliefs, who they are or because of armed conflict.
- **Self reliance** - the quality of depending on yourself and your own abilities for things instead of relying on others.
- **Humanitarian aid** - the support given to people to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies. It includes relief and assistance, protection, support services and material assistance like food and medical supplies.
- **Empowerment** - authority or power given to someone to do something.
- **Livelihood programs** - initiatives that extend a helping hand to vulnerable individuals and communities facing socio-economic challenges.
- **Social integration** - the process of including people into a community or group in order to make a unified society.
- **Resettlement** - the act of helping someone move to another place to live because they are no longer allowed to stay in that area.
- **Local integration** - a process with three interrelated dimensions including the legal process whereby refugees are granted a progressively wider range of rights and entitlements by the host state, including permanent and the acquisition of citizenship at a later stage.
- **Economic inclusion** - creating equitable access to financial resources, opportunities and support systems that enable individuals and communities to participate fully in society without any discrimination.

## BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

The existence of refugees and internally displaced people is a representation of conflict and ongoing war in the world. Refugees and Internally Displaced people are vulnerable economically, socially and psychologically. The UNHCR reports that only 22% of refugees live in tented camps whilst the other 78% live in cities and other housing. However, many still struggle to find affordable and adequate accommodation.

## CURRENT CONTEXT

- Of the refugees under the UNHCR's mandate as of 2022, the top 10 countries of origin include the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Eritrea, accounting for more than 87 percent of the total refugee population.
- “The Russian Federation's 2022 invasion of Ukraine resulted in one of the largest displacement crises since the Second World War. Around 5.7 million Ukrainians were forced to flee their country by the end of 2022, making Ukraine the second largest country of refugees in the world after the Syrian Arab Republic.”

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATION INVOLVED

73% of all refugees and other people in need of international protection come from 5 countries: Afghanistan, Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine and Sudan.

- “**Syria**: is the world's largest refugee crisis as of 2024, representing nearly 25% of the total global refugee population. As of mid 2023, 6.49 million Syrians sought refuge primarily in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Türkiye. As there are no formal camps in Lebanon, over 1 million Syrians live across 2 000 communities, often in overcrowded temporary shelters.”

- “The ongoing crisis in Afghanistan has made it one of the top countries of origin for refugees. One out of every six refugees originated from this country and over 6.1 million Afghans are internationally displaced largely in Pakistan and Iran.”
- “**Sub Saharan Africa:** at the end of 2022, the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region hosted nearly 5 million refugees at the end of 2022. The region hosts 20 percent of the global refugee population and almost 85 percent of all refugees in the region living in Chad (592, 000), Cameroon (473,900) and Niger (255,300).”
- “**Central America and Venezuela:** The number of internationally displaced and Venezuelans displaced abroad grew in 2021, reaching 5.2 million by the end of the year and by the end of 2022, an estimated 968,300 people from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were internally displaced or sought asylum in neighboring countries.”
- “**Ukraine:** Due to the war and unrest in Ukraine, more than 5 million Ukrainians displaced within their country and an additional 6.3 million displaced across borders as of June 2023 with more than 17 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance within Ukraine.”

## TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

- **1930s:** “The League of Nations established the first ever High Commissioner for Refugees. The League of Nations office ran refugee camps, issued passports to the stateless and helped to provide visas, jobs, medicine and food. This was all done under Fridtjof Nansen who introduced the Nansen Passport to facilitate refugee work and mobility.”
- **1950s: The 1951 Refugee Convention** formally adopted on July 28 1951. The convention revised the definition of a refugee as ‘someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.’ The agreement also concluded that no state can expel or return a refugee to a territory where their life or freedom would be threatened.

- **1970s:** “As a result of the Geneva Conference in July 1979, Britain agreed to take 10,000 refugees from camps in Hong Kong and more refugees were accepted as part of the UNHCR’s Orderly Departure Programme.”

## RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES, & EVENTS

- **The 1951 Convention** relating to the Status of refugees complemented by its 1967 Protocol ([The 1951 Convention](#))
  - “To ensure the international recognition of some basic rights and of certain minimum standards of treatment for persons forced to flee their country in order to escape persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.” ([New York Declaration](#))

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- **Inclusion of refugees within society and the economy** A significant social barrier for refugees' successful integration into society is that host states do not fully recognize or grant refugees the permission to work although this is embedded in the 1951 Refugee Convention. This leaves most refugees with no access to financial services, which means they are not able to access good healthcare services or earn a living by themselves and this hinders them from growing and successfully integrating into society.
- **Granting refugees and displaced people with access to education and government facilities and healthcare** “Refugees in many parts of the world face discrimination when it comes to education, according to the UNHCR, 3.7 million refugees do not have the right to be in school.” Whilst education allows these refugees to recover their sense of purpose and dignity after the trauma of displacement, several host states do not recognize or grant refugees this right and this hinders refugees from entering the labour market and

becoming self-sufficient which in turn results in the continuous cycle of dependency and social exclusion.

- **Legal services and Policy Reforms** “In January 2019, Ethiopia’s parliament revised its refugee law to enable refugees to obtain work permits, access primary education, obtain drivers licenses, legally register life events and access financial services.” Governments can revise their laws to be more inclusive of refugees in their society to relieve them from humanitarian aid and dependency.

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