



Forum:	Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural)
Question of:	Investigating the challenges and opportunities of protecting and assisting refugees at borders through a human rights framework
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Position:	Main Chair

I. Description of the Issue

By May 2024 120 million people were forcibly displaced, including 43.3 million refugees, making migration one of the most prominent challenges of our modern society. When forced to cross borders refugees themselves often face difficult challenges impeding their human rights. Examples of such include, but aren't limited to;

- Human trafficking
- Dangerous routes leading to casualties
- Inhuman detention conditions (in refugee camps e.g.)
- Long waiting procedures for asylum
- Violence by authorities (during pushbacks e.g.)
- Etc.

The subjects mentioned above clearly restrict valuable human rights which must be defended, such as the right to a standard of living that allows health and well-being, the right to asylum, and the right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman treatment, just to name a few.

This is why there needs to be a debate on how to tackle these issues and challenges faced by migrants, as well as challenges caused by migration, to work on creating a productive human rights framework.

II. Definition of Key Terms

Push backs

Push backs can be defined as measures taken by states to force migrants or applicants for asylum back into their country of origin or the country in which they attempted to cross an international border without asylum or access to international protection.



Human trafficking

Human trafficking includes acts such as transfer, transportation of people through force, fraud and deception with the aim of gaining profit. Refugees are highly at risk of falling victim to human trafficking schemes because of their vulnerability.

Migration

The Movement of a singular person or group of people from a region, area, country etc. to another.

Asylum seeker

Someone who has migrated to another country and is awaiting an asylum claim usually for political reasons, persecution in their country of origin or serious human rights violations or war there.

Asylum

Asylum is the protection granted by a country to foreign nationals who have fled their own country due to persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. It means the legal permission to stay in the host country, safeguarding them from being returned to their home country where they face dangers.

Refugee

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee from their home to seek safety elsewhere.

III. Background information

The dangers faced by refugees

Refugees face a multitude of severe dangers that profoundly impact their safety and well-being. Many flee from conflict zones, where they are at risk of physical violence, bombings, and targeted persecution based on ethnicity, religion, or political views. As mentioned prior, according to UNHCR data from mid-2024, there are approximately 32.5 million refugees globally, many of whom are displaced by ongoing conflicts and violence.



During their journeys, refugees often endure dangerous conditions, including sea crossings and hazardous terrains. This exposes them to risks such as drowning, accidents, and exploitation by smugglers or traffickers. The UNHCR reports that in 2023 alone, over 5,000 refugees and migrants lost their lives or went missing while attempting dangerous sea crossings.

Upon arrival in host countries, refugees may face inhumane conditions in detention centers, characterized by overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and insufficient medical care. They are also at risk of physical and psychological abuse.

Many refugees struggle with a lack of access to basic needs such as food, clean water, and healthcare. The UNHCR's 2023 Global Trends report indicates that nearly 20 million refugees live in countries where access to essential services is limited or unavailable. Legal and administrative barriers further complicate their situation, including restricted access to asylum processes, bureaucratic delays, and the threat of deportation to unsafe areas.

Social exclusion, discrimination, and xenophobia in host countries can hinder refugees' ability to integrate and access essential services. The UNHCR reports that more than 10 million refugees face significant challenges related to social integration and legal status, impacting their ability to secure employment, education, and social support.

To add to this, psychological trauma can be another significant danger. The experiences of conflict, displacement, and instability can lead to severe mental health issues such as depression and PTSD. Specific groups, such as children, women, and disabled individuals, face additional vulnerabilities.

These figures from the UN underline the urgent need for comprehensive and humane responses to address the complex challenges faced by refugees and to provide the necessary protection and support.

Opportunities

Migration offers numerous opportunities for both individuals and host societies, fostering a range of economic, social, and cultural benefits. Economically, migrants contribute to growth by filling labor shortages, starting businesses, and driving innovation. According to the



OECD, migrants are often more likely to become entrepreneurs than native-born citizens, further stimulating local economies.

Culturally, migration enriches societies by introducing diverse perspectives, which can enhance cultural vibrancy and broaden local understanding. This diversity can foster greater tolerance and inclusivity within communities. Additionally, migrants help address demographic challenges in developed countries with aging populations by increasing the working-age population and contributing to social security systems.

Migrants bring unique skills and knowledge that diversify the workforce and enhance educational environments. They also create global connections by facilitating international trade and investment and sending remittances that support development efforts in their home countries. Their resilience and adaptability can add value both personally and professionally, while their involvement in community-building activities and cross-cultural exchanges strengthens social cohesion.

In conclusion, human rights frameworks taking on challenges caused by migration not only strengthen individual human rights but allow diverse opportunities for societies.

IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved

IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a leading global agency that assists people who are migrating, including those fleeing persecution, conflict, or disaster. The IOM provides critical support such as safe transportation, emergency assistance, and resettlement services. It also works alongside governments and communities to manage migration effectively.

UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a global organization dedicated to protecting and supporting refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless people. The UNHCR provides support, including shelter, food, water, and medical care, and works to ensure safe asylum and durable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, resettlement, or integration into host communities. The



organization also advocates for refugee rights and coordinates international efforts to respond to refugee crises.

Greece

Greece is known for having overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in its refugee camps, especially on the Aegean islands. The country has also faced accusations of conducting illegal pushbacks of migrants at its borders, often returning them to Turkey without allowing them to seek asylum.

Italy

Italy has faced backlash for its treatment of refugees, particularly for engaging in pushbacks to Libya, where migrants face severe abuse. The country has also been condemned for harsh immigration policies, poor conditions in reception centers, and the criminalization of NGOs conducting rescue operations.

USA

The United States has been criticized for its treatment of refugees and asylum seekers at its southern border, including separating families and detaining children in poor conditions. The country has also implemented policies that restrict asylum access, leading to concerns about the violation of international refugee protection norms.

Libya

There has been heavy discussion about the severe mistreatment of refugees and migrants, including widespread abuse, torture, and sexual violence in its detention centers. Many migrants intercepted at sea are forcibly returned to these centers, where they face inhumane conditions and exploitation.

Australia

Australia has faced criticism for its offshore detention centers on Nauru and Manus Island, where refugees and asylum seekers have endured harsh conditions, including inadequate medical care and prolonged detention. The country has also been accused of neglecting the mental and physical well-being of detainees and limiting their access to legal and support services.



Please note, that this is not the entire extent of nations involved, every delegate is encouraged to do further research.

V. Timeline of events

Time	Event
1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted by the United Nations, establishing the right to seek asylum
1951	The 1951 Refugee Convention is adopted, defining who is a refugee and outlining the protections and rights they are entitled to
1984	The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees expands the definition of refugees in Latin America to include those fleeing from violence and generalized disturbances
1992	The European Union introduces the Dublin Convention, determining rules on which member state is responsible for examining an asylum application
2000	The “Agenda for Protection” is adopted by the UNHCR, focusing on key priorities for improving the protection of refugees, including access to asylum and durable solutions

VI. Previous attempts to solve the issue

As Migration is one of the most prevalent issues to date, there have been multiple attempts to solve the issue surrounding human rights violations. Key initiatives include the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which established the legal definition of refugees and their rights, including non-refoulement. The 1979 Refugee Year global initiative aimed to improve refugee conditions and protections,



while the 1984 Cartagena Declaration broadened the definition of refugees in Latin America to include those fleeing generalized violence. Regional frameworks such as the 1990s Dublin Convention sought to streamline asylum processes within the EU, and the 2001 UNHCR Agenda for Protection outlined strategies to enhance refugee protection through better access to asylum and international cooperation. The 2016 EU-Turkey Deal aimed to manage the European migrant crisis by facilitating the return of migrants to Turkey in exchange for EU resettlement commitments.

The 2018 Global Compact on Refugees introduced a framework to improve international cooperation and responsibility-sharing for refugee protection. Humanitarian assistance programs, such as UNHCR resettlement initiatives and NGO-led search and rescue operations, have also played critical roles in providing immediate aid and long-term support.

Ongoing efforts, including Global Refugee Forums and adaptations in response to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, continue to address the evolving challenges in refugee protection and support.

VII. Possible solutions

As the issue is quite multifaceted, there also needs to be a multifaceted approach when thinking of possible solutions. With the many challenges that migration can bring, it's important to highlight the opportunities when embracing the issue. A big issue is that refugees, even when granted asylum, are often not able to perform their former job in their host country. To combat this, an idea would be to set up new international guidelines tackling the issue, or setting up funds that specialize and invest in enabling retraining or access to language learning courses etc. Of course, it's just as important to tackle the human rights violations during pushbacks or in refugee camps, measures could be to reform asylum processes to be quicker and more transparent as well as improve humanitarian aid in refugee camps and near borders.

It's important to mention that migration often stems from natural disasters or conflict, so to invest in conflict prevention and measures against the climate crisis is essential.



VIII. How to prepare as a delegate

To really be able to debate this topic, as a delegate you'll need to do research beyond this research report, tailored to your country's stance on the issue. For orientation you can use the following questions.

- How many refugees receive asylum in my country every year?
- What are the migration policies like? Are they more liberal or strict?
- Have there been reports of inhumane conditions in refugee camps in my country's region? How did the administration react?
- Have there been records of violent behavior from authorities against migrants and refugees?

For your information: All delegates are obligated to write at least one draft resolution and a minimum of two preferably three position papers so that all topics of the forum are fully covered. This requirement also needs to be included in your research report.

Furthermore, remind your delegates that **the deadline to send in the documents is the 21.09.24.** and that after the deadline documents will not be corrected by you as Student Officers. By then all delegates should have send in their document, documents turned in later than that, should not be included in decision-making when it comes to **awards**, (as for that it is important to see how much work the individual delegates put into preparation). It's important to note that this years' time freeze is the **25th of September 2024.**

IX. UN resolutions

- Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (A/77/457)
- Human rights of migrants: prevention and accountability for human rights violations in transit (A/HRC/RES/53/24)

X. Useful links

- Death in the Desert, IOM, MMC, UNHCR,
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/da9df715ef4d40b1bbe257b13bee4ae4/>



XI. Sources

- UNHCR, Refugee Statistics, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/statistics/>
- Amnesty International, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/#:~:text=Some%20people%20risk%20falling%20prey,daily%20racism%2C%20xenophobia%20and%20discrimination.>
- United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- IOM, Report Overview: Migration Continues to Be Part of the Solution in a Rapidly Changing World, but Key Challenges Remain”, <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/what-we-do/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-1/migration-continues-be-part-solution-many-economies-societies-and-families-around-world>
- United Nations Information Service Vienna, Refugees and Migration, <https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/topics/refugees-migration.html>
- UNHCR, Refugees, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugees>
- United Nations, Refugees, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/refugees>
- Protection for persons moving across borders in the context of disasters, https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/pv_guide_rcm.pdf
- IOM, Global Compact for Migration, <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>
- OHCHR, Human rights in transit and at international borders, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/migration/human-rights-transit-and-international-borders>
- UNHCR’s mandate for refugees and stateless persons, and its role in IDP situations, <https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/legal-framework/unhcr%E2%80%99s-mandate-refugees-and-stateless-persons-and-its-role-idp-situations>

