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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND GUIDE
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL (UNHRC)



RAJASTHAN YOUTH CONFERENCE

United We Stand, Model We Set

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CONTENTS

Letter from the Executive Board.....	3
Introduction.....	4
About the Committee	5
Historical Context.....	7
Contemporary Context.....	8
Legal Framework	10
Case Studies.....	11
Future Outlook	12
Parting Note	13



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

DEAR DELEGATES,

Welcome to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). As your Chairperson, I am excited to embark on this critical journey with you, examining the conditions of refugees and migrants in conflict zones. This agenda is both urgent and complex, reflecting the pressing human rights challenges faced by millions worldwide.

Our committee's mandate is to promote and protect human rights globally, with a special focus on vulnerable populations. In recent years, conflict zones have seen a dramatic rise in displaced individuals, whose basic rights and dignity are often compromised. This session will delve into the multifaceted issues affecting refugees and migrants, including access to basic necessities, asylum, humanitarian aid, and the protection of vulnerable groups.

The time frame of our agenda is anchored in the current global context, where conflicts in regions such as Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Palestine, etc. have led to unprecedented displacement. As we examine these situations, we will consider both immediate humanitarian responses and long-term strategies for stability and integration.

I expect delegates to bring forward creative, informed, and viable solutions. Your contributions should be rooted in international law, guided by empathy, and aimed at sustainable outcomes. We will work collaboratively to draft resolutions that uphold the dignity and rights of displaced persons, ensuring that our discussions lead to actionable and impactful results.

As someone deeply passionate about human rights, especially for the displaced, I seek measures that are both just and innovative. I look forward to our collective efforts to address this critical issue with the seriousness and compassion it deserves.

Sincerely,
Avani Dugar
Chairperson, UNHRC



INTRODUCTION

AGENDA:

The agenda "Examining the Conditions of Refugees and Migrants in Conflict Zones" focuses on the urgent humanitarian crisis resulting from ongoing conflicts in regions such as Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, and Palestine. These conflicts have caused unprecedented displacement, forcing millions to flee their homes and seek refuge in often hostile and precarious conditions. The agenda aims to explore both immediate humanitarian responses, such as providing access to basic services, ensuring safety and security, and protecting the rights of refugees and migrants, as well as long-term strategies for stability and integration, including addressing the root causes of displacement, fostering socio-economic inclusion, and creating durable solutions for resettlement. The examination of these conditions is crucial to formulating comprehensive and sustainable approaches to mitigate the suffering of displaced populations and enhance global non-proliferation efforts. Proof/Evidence in the committee:

Evidence or proof is acceptable from sources, with regards to establishing veracity of facts including through points of order. However, that in no way, should deter you from referring to a broad spectrum of resources for your research.

1. NEWS SOURCES

- Reuters: Any Reuters' article that unambiguously makes mention of the fact stated or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by another delegate in the council can be used to substantiate arguments in the committee. (<https://in.reuters.com/news/world>)
- State-operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in support of or against the State that owns the News Agency.
- Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a report being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information.



- Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Report: [https://protocol.un.org/dgacm/pls/site.nsf/files/HoM/\\$FILE/HeadsofMissions.pdf](https://protocol.un.org/dgacm/pls/site.nsf/files/HoM/$FILE/HeadsofMissions.pdf)
- Multilateral Organizations:
 - NATO (<http://www.natolibguides.info/nato-russia/reports>)
 - ASEAN(<http://www.aseansec.org/0>)
 - OPEC (https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/publications/336.htm)

2. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered are credible information for this simulation.

- UN Bodies:
 - UNSC (<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>)
 - UNGA (<https://www.un.org/en/sections/general/documents/index.html>)
- UN Affiliated bodies:
 - International Atomic Energy Agency (<https://www.iaea.org/>)
 - World Bank (<https://www.worldbank.org/>)
 - International Monetary Fund (<https://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>)
 - International Committee of the Red Cross (<https://www.icrc.org/en>).
- Treaty Based Bodies:
 - Antarctic Treaty System (<https://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>)
 - International Criminal Court (<https://www.icc-cpi.int/>)

3. Subsidiary Organs of the UN

- Peacebuilding-Commission (<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/peacebuildingcommission>)
- International Law Commission: (<http://legal.un.org/ilc/>)

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations. Established by the UN General Assembly in 2006, the UNHRC replaces the former UN Commission on Human Rights. It is tasked with investigating and making recommendations on human rights abuses, promoting human rights education and awareness, and engaging in



dialogue and cooperation to prevent and resolve human rights crises. The Council meets at the UN Office in Geneva and is composed of 47 member states elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms. Membership is based on equitable geographic distribution, and members are expected to uphold the highest standards of human rights. The UNHRC also conducts Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) to assess the human rights situations in all UN member states and can create special procedures to address specific country situations or thematic issues. Through its work, the UNHRC plays a crucial role in addressing human rights challenges, supporting victims of violations, and fostering international cooperation to enhance global human rights standards.

Mandate of the UNHRC

According to its mandate, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has the following purposes:

- To promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people, without distinction of any kind.
- To address situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.
- To promote the full implementation of human rights obligations undertaken by states and follow up on human rights commitments and recommendations.
- To serve as a forum for dialogue on thematic issues related to human rights and to enhance cooperation among states in this area.
- To conduct the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the human rights records of all UN member states.
- To promote human rights education and learning, as well as technical assistance and capacity-building.
- To provide a platform for individuals, civil society organizations, and national human rights institutions to participate in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Introduction to the Agenda of the Committee

The conditions of refugees and migrants in conflict zones present a profound challenge to global human rights and humanitarian efforts. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has a crucial role in addressing this issue by promoting the protection of human rights, ensuring the provision of essential services, and advocating for the rights of displaced individuals. This report will provide an overview of the current state of refugees and migrants in conflict



zones, followed by case studies on the Syrian conflict, the Rohingya crisis, etc to illustrate the severe hardships faced by these vulnerable populations.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Definition and Importance

- **Refugees:** According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. This definition is crucial as it establishes the legal status and protections that refugees are entitled to under international law.
- **Migrants:** Migrants are individuals who move from one place to another, often across international borders, for various reasons including economic opportunities, family reunification, or better living conditions. Unlike refugees, migrants are not necessarily fleeing persecution or conflict and do not receive the same legal protections under international law.
- **Conflict Zones:** Conflict zones refer to areas where there is ongoing armed conflict, which can include wars between countries, civil wars, or insurgencies. These zones are often characterized by widespread violence, destruction of infrastructure, and severe disruption to normal life, leading to mass displacement of people.
- Understanding these terms is important for grasping the scope and nature of the challenges faced by displaced populations and for developing appropriate responses to their needs.

Historical Background

- **World War II and the Establishment of the Refugee Framework:** The devastation of World War II and the massive displacement it caused led to the establishment of the modern international refugee protection regime. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol were created in response to the refugee crises that followed the war, setting the foundation for international refugee law and protection.
- **Cold War and Refugee Movements:** During the Cold War, numerous conflicts and political upheavals resulted in significant refugee flows, particularly from Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America. These movements highlighted the need for robust international mechanisms to manage refugee crises and protect displaced individuals.



- **Post-Cold War Conflicts and Ethnic Cleansing:** The end of the Cold War saw the emergence of new conflicts, often rooted in ethnic and sectarian divisions. The wars in the former Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda are notable examples where conflict led to massive displacement and humanitarian crises. These events underscored the complexities of modern displacement and the need for comprehensive international responses.
- **21st Century and Contemporary Crises:** In the 21st century, conflicts in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, and Myanmar have produced some of the largest displacement crises since World War II. The Syrian conflict alone has resulted in millions of refugees and internally displaced persons. These crises have strained international response systems and highlighted gaps in the protection and assistance provided to refugees and migrants.
- **Globalization and Mixed Migration Flows:** The increasing interconnectedness of the world has led to mixed migration flows, where refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants often move along the same routes. This has complicated the task of distinguishing between different types of displaced persons and ensuring that each group receives the appropriate protections and assistance.

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Current Scenario

The global displacement crisis is at an all-time high, driven by ongoing conflicts, persecution, and human rights violations. As of 2024, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide has surpassed 100 million, including refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This unprecedented level of displacement presents significant challenges for international and national agencies tasked with providing protection and assistance to affected populations. Conflict zones, such as Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, and Myanmar, continue to generate large numbers of refugees and IDPs, straining the capacities of host countries and international organizations.

Recent Events and Issues

- **Syria:** The conflict in Syria, now in its thirteenth year, remains one of the most significant sources of global displacement. Over 6.7 million Syrians are internally displaced, and 5.6 million have fled to neighboring countries and beyond. The humanitarian situation is dire, with ongoing hostilities, economic collapse, and limited access to basic services.



- **Yemen:** The war in Yemen has led to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with over 4 million people internally displaced and 24 million in need of humanitarian assistance. The conflict has devastated the country's infrastructure, leading to widespread food insecurity and a cholera outbreak.
- **South Sudan:** Continued violence and instability in South Sudan have displaced nearly 4 million people, with 2.2 million seeking refuge in neighboring countries. The situation is compounded by severe food shortages and economic instability.
- **Myanmar:** The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar has resulted in the forced displacement of over 740,000 Rohingya Muslims to Bangladesh following military crackdowns in Rakhine State. The majority remain in overcrowded refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, facing uncertain futures.
- **Ukraine:** The conflict in Ukraine has caused significant displacement within Europe, with millions of Ukrainians fleeing to neighboring countries since the escalation of hostilities in 2022. The crisis has resulted in a substantial humanitarian response, with international efforts focused on providing shelter, food, and medical care to those affected.

Statistical Data

- **Global Displacement Figures:** As of 2024, over 100 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide. This includes 30 million refugees, 5 million asylum seekers, and 65 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- **Host Countries:** The top refugee-hosting countries include Turkey (3.7 million), Colombia (1.7 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.3 million), and Germany (1.2 million). These countries bear a significant burden in providing for the needs of refugees.
- **Regional Displacement:** The Middle East and North Africa region hosts the largest number of displaced persons, primarily due to conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. Sub-Saharan Africa is the second most affected region, with significant displacement in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia.
- **Duration of Displacement:** Many refugees and IDPs face protracted displacement. On average, refugees remain displaced for over a decade, with limited prospects for return, local integration, or resettlement.
- **Funding and Assistance:** Humanitarian funding remains insufficient to meet the growing needs of displaced populations. The UNHCR's 2023 Global Appeal highlights a significant funding gap, with only 51% of



required funds received, impacting the ability to provide essential services and protection.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

International Laws and Conventions

1. 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol:

Overview: The 1951 Refugee Convention is the cornerstone of international refugee law, defining who is a refugee, their rights, and the legal obligations of states. The 1967 Protocol expanded the scope of the Convention beyond the initial post-World War II context to address global refugee issues.

Significance: It establishes a legal framework for the protection of refugees and obligates signatory states to provide asylum and support.

2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

Overview: Adopted in 1948, the UDHR outlines fundamental human rights to be universally protected, including the right to seek asylum from persecution.

Key Provisions:

Article 14: The right to seek and enjoy asylum.

Significance: It provides a foundational human rights framework that informs and supports specific refugee protections.

3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):

Overview: These covenants, part of the International Bill of Human Rights, protect a wide range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights for all individuals, including refugees and migrants.

Key Provisions:

- Right to life, liberty, and security.
- Right to work, education, and an adequate standard of living.

Significance: They ensure comprehensive human rights protections for displaced individuals.



Note: While the legal frameworks mentioned here provide foundational protections for refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), it is important to note that numerous other international and regional agreements exist. These frameworks vary in scope and application, addressing specific aspects of displacement, human rights, and regional cooperation. Delegates are encouraged to explore additional legal instruments and frameworks relevant to their specific contexts and issues, as they play a crucial role in shaping policies and practices related to displacement globally. Understanding these diverse frameworks enhances comprehensive approaches to addressing the challenges faced by displaced populations worldwide.

CASE STUDIES

1. Syrian Refugee Crisis:

Overview: Since the outbreak of civil war in 2011, Syria has become one of the largest sources of refugees globally. Millions of Syrians have fled to neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, seeking safety and protection. The crisis has strained host countries' resources and infrastructure, leading to significant humanitarian challenges.

Impact: Over 6.7 million Syrians are internally displaced, and approximately 5.6 million are registered as refugees in neighboring countries and beyond. The crisis has highlighted the need for robust international humanitarian assistance and long-term solutions for refugees.

Response: International organizations such as UNHCR and humanitarian NGOs have provided critical aid, including shelter, food, healthcare, and education, to displaced Syrians. Host countries have shown varying degrees of hospitality and support, with Turkey hosting the largest number of Syrian refugees.

2. Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar and Bangladesh:

Overview: The Rohingya crisis erupted in 2017 when Myanmar's military launched a crackdown in Rakhine State, leading to widespread violence



and displacement of Rohingya Muslims. Hundreds of thousands fled to neighboring Bangladesh, joining existing refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

Impact: Over 740,000 Rohingya refugees currently reside in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh, facing dire humanitarian conditions and limited prospects for return. The crisis has strained resources in Bangladesh and highlighted regional challenges in refugee protection and management.

Response: International condemnation and calls for accountability have accompanied humanitarian efforts to support Rohingya refugees. Bangladesh, supported by international organizations, has provided essential services, but sustainable solutions remain elusive amid ongoing diplomatic and humanitarian efforts.

Note: *The two case studies provided here are merely examples to illustrate the complexities and responses to displacement crises. The entire committee's discussions and resolutions will not be based solely on these examples. Delegates are encouraged to conduct their own research and gather additional information on other relevant case studies and contexts to contribute comprehensively to the committee's deliberations.*

FUTURE OUTLOOK YOUTH CONFERENCE

Looking forward, several key actions and strategies will be essential in addressing the ongoing and future challenges related to refugees and migrants in conflict zones:

- **Strengthening International Cooperation:** Enhanced collaboration between states, international organizations, and NGOs is crucial for providing effective protection and assistance to displaced populations. Shared responsibility and burden-sharing are key principles that should guide international efforts.
- **Comprehensive and Durable Solutions:** Achieving durable solutions for displaced individuals, including voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement, requires sustained commitment and resources. Long-term strategies should focus on addressing root causes of displacement, promoting peace and stability, and supporting socio-economic development in affected regions.





- **Innovative Approaches:** Leveraging technology, data, and innovative practices can improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the protection of displaced individuals. Initiatives such as digital identity systems, mobile health services, and online education platforms can enhance access to essential services.
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** Addressing the impact of climate change on displacement requires integrating climate resilience and adaptation measures into humanitarian and development programs. Proactive strategies to mitigate climate-induced displacement and support affected communities are vital.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Raising awareness about the plight of refugees and migrants and advocating for their rights is essential for fostering a global culture of empathy and solidarity. Continued efforts to combat xenophobia and promote inclusive societies are necessary to ensure the dignity and well-being of displaced individuals.

PARTING NOTE

This Background Guide serves as a foundational resource for understanding the agenda of examining the conditions of refugees and migrants in conflict zones. While it provides comprehensive information and illustrative case studies, it is by no means exhaustive. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a dynamic and multifaceted body, and effective participation requires thorough preparation and critical engagement from all delegates. As you proceed, we encourage you to delve deeper into the issues, explore additional sources, and bring diverse perspectives to the committee. Your active contribution and collaborative efforts will be instrumental in addressing this pressing humanitarian challenge and shaping meaningful solutions.



RAJASTHAN YOUTH CONFERENCE

 <https://rajasthanyouthconference.com>
 info@rajasthanyouthconference.com

Nuh Chakkiwala (Secretary General)

+91 90019 94419

Rakshit Bhargava (President)

+91 92140 36338

Uditi Kalra (Executive Director)

+91 99588 47453

+91 99288 44423

UDITI KALRA (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)