



**Oasis International School Model United Nations**

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Guiding Package

Topic 2: The protection and maintenance of refugee rights

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## **Abstract**

*“Refugees have been deprived of their homes, but they must not be deprived of their futures.”*

*- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon*

Refugees are one of the principal global issues we are facing nowadays. In fact, until this day, we are struggling in order to find a conceivable solution that would put an end to the violation of the refugee’s human rights. The only thing this Council is able to provide is help, but in some cases it is not sufficient to offer humanitarian aid or equipment. Today we are faced with the Syrians who are refugees everywhere in Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and several nations in Western Europe, due to their ongoing civil war. Similarly, Palestinians have been refugees for decades as a consequence of the conflict with Israel and the Palestinian diaspora. A few years ago it was the case of Somalia during the insurrection of the Al Shabab terrorist group, where people died of famine and refugees departed anywhere in order to survive. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has interfered and has been providing help since 1950, but still we can not find a possible solution to put an end to this aggravating situation. The 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees sets a undeviating definition to the term refugee. The 1967 New York Protocol the geographical limits inflicted refugees in the 1951 refugee convention.

## **I. Introduction:**

Each year we are faced with a large number of refugees as a result of diverse political, social and economic events such as wars, famine and disease. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is a person who is “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”. Essentially, when people contemplate about the refugee crisis, the first and simplest solution they come up with is to provide them with humanitarian aid and equipment. However, this is not a long-term solution. Moreover, the United Nations Human Rights Council has offered protection and assistance to tens of millions of refugees, finding long term solutions for the majority of them. Global migration has become increasingly complex nowadays, involving not only refugees, but also millions of economic migrants. Migrating to Developed nations in order to make a living. Most Refugees come from Less Developed Countries (LDCs) escaping the critical financial situation present in these nations. Whilst, refugees and migrants, even if they often travel in the same way, they are fundamentally different, and for that reason they are treated very differently under modern international law. Refugees escape their homeland in order to save their lives and preserve their freedom. They have no protection from their own state; in fact, it is often their own government that is intimidating to persecute them. If the foreign countries do not let them in, and do not provide them with help once they are in, they may be condemning them to death, or to an intolerable life without sustenance and without rights.

These refugees are living in horrendous circumstances, some of them die of hunger as a consequence of drought and lack resources.. Some of them settle down in the camps provided by the UN, but some others settle in different countries. Theses refugees can have a huge impact on the countries in which they settle. For instance, they create economic problems; the prices tend to augment, and take away job opportunities from the citizens. The populations that are mainly affected are; Palestinians (4.8 million),

Syrians (3.8 million) , Afghans (2.9 millions) , Somalis (700.000) , Congolese (456.000) and many more nations.

## **II. Background information:**

### **a) Historical Background**

During World War I, 250 000 Belgian refugees migrated to the United Kingdom. In consequence, the United Kingdom was severely affected in diverse socio-economic issues . By the end of World War II, was set the largest population of refugees in European history. Millions of Germans were expelled from Eastern Europe. Hundreds of thousands of Jews, after their survival of the genocides orchestrated by the Nazis, were offered with homes more secure than their native Homeland. Germans who were expelled from Eastern Europe reached 11.5 million after the Second World War.

### **b) The 1951 refugee convention:**

This convention is a treaty that defines the term refugee. This convention has also set the term “asylum” which is a juridical concept that proclaims the humanitarian support that a foreign or sovereign country might offer to a citizen that gets persecuted by his own land or his place of residence in some cases.

### **c) Protocol relating to the status of refugees (The New York Protocol):**

This is a key treaty in international refugee law, that resulted in the removal of the geographic restrictions that were inflicted in the 1951 refugee convention.

## **III. Definition of Key Terms:<sup>1</sup>**

**Refugees:** a refugee is a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being

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persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country

**Persecution:** Unfair or cruel treatment during a long period of time caused by race, religion or political beliefs.

**Drought:** A long period without rain, having no access to water.

**Resources:** Something that you own and you can use.

**Settle-down:** To live in a certain place for a period of time

**Job opportunities:** Chances of having a job, to make a living.

**Human rights:** basic rights that every person should have according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**Migrants:** A person who moves from one place to another in order to find work or better living conditions.

**Humanitarian assistance:** the aid and action designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.

#### **IV. UN Involvement:**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: (UNHCR) is an agency established by the General Assembly on December 14, 1950. This agency is required to take international action in order to help and protect the refugees. It is mainly responsible for solving the refugee problems worldwide, with a purpose of preserving the rights and health of these people. For six decades, this agency has contributed in saving millions of people and helping people restart their lives from scratch. In 2010, the UNHCR was responsible of 10.4 refugees, in which 4.7 million were Palestinian.

Syrians, the most recent refugees around the world today; they count of 3,800,101 whom are directly affected by the violence in Syria due to the civil war for those past 4 years. The UNHCR are currently trying to provide them with all the possible help.

**V. Major Countries Involved:**

*The following nationalities have the highest number of recorded refugees in modern history:*

Palestinians (4.8 million), Syrians (3.8 million), Afghans (2.9 millions) ,  Somalis (700.000) , Congolese (456.000)...

**VI. Possible Solutions:**

- Provide these refugees with job opportunities
- Provide the refugee kids with schools in which they could get educated
- Call upon each country to take in a specific amount of refugees

**VII. Guiding Questions:**

- Is it sufficient to provide the refugees with humanitarian aid and equipment?
- Who is going to fund the humanitarian aid and equipment?
- How can we provide the refugees with sufficient materials?
- How can interventions be functional, useful and supervised?
- Where in the world can we find the vastest majority of refugees and how can we help them depending on their geographical placing?
- How are you going to provide these refugees with their human rights?
- What actions could the Human Rights Council possibly take?
- How can we provide education to the refugee children ?
- How can we find possible solutions to help these people without depriving

them from their human rights?

**VIII. Useful Links:**

- <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/refugees/>
- <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/refugees/index.shtm>
- <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/studyguides/refugees.htm>
- <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html> <http://english.alkhbar.com/node/23119> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/syria.php>

**IX. Bibliography:**

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- **THE GUARDIAN.** *Refugees-* © 2015 Guardian News and Media Limited or its affiliated companies. All rights reserved. Consulted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October.