



MACMUN
2019

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN, CULTURAL COMMITTEE

BACKGROUND GUIDE



The following content was developed by members of the McMaster Model United Nations conference planning team for the sole purpose of framing delegate discussions and debate at the conference and does not represent any official position of the University or anyone engaged in preparing the materials. Delegates should use this information to guide their research and preparation for the conference but should not assume that it represents a complete analysis of the issues under discussion. The materials should not be reproduced, circulated or distributed for any purpose other than as may be required in order to prepare for the conference.

Hello Honourable Delegates!

Your SOCHUM chairs just wanted to say a quick hello and welcome to what will be an unforgettable conference. We are so incredibly excited for MACMUN this year, and getting to meet and work with each one of you. We have worked hard on this Background Guide and on researching the committee's two topics, and are excited to be going in-depth into such interesting and complex issues. Both of our topics are extremely relevant to world politics today, and we feel lucky to be able to discuss issues in MUN that we are seeing in the headlines every day.

Here's a bit about ourselves so you can get to know us before the conference!

Rhea Murti is a second year Arts & Science student, and serving on the MACMUN Exec as the USG Committees for this year's conference. As this is her second time chairing SOCHUM at MACMUN, it is a committee very dear to her heart. She has been doing MUN for about 5 years, and the intensity of debate, and excitement of crises never fail to fascinate her. While not MUN-ing, Rhea is likely to be found sipping tea at Paisley Cafe or on a picnic blanket on BSB Field.

Fawziyah Isah is in her third year of Political Science and Sociology. Her love for debate and political discussion encouraged her to become involved with MACMUN. She's previously attended MACMUN as a delegate of the Human Rights Council, as well as CANIMUN as a delegate of the Security Council. She hopes all SOCHUM delegates enter the conference hopeful to engage in a positive and insightful Model UN experience. Her goal is to help facilitate and create an exciting conference for both new and experienced delegates!

Rahul Kapur is currently in his third year of Health Sciences. He first started MUN in high school, with his very first committee ever being SOCHUM as the delegate of the DPRK (a very interesting/funny first experience). He has since then participated in and thoroughly enjoyed the role-playing and drama of historical crisis committees at both SSUNS and MACMUN (obviously suited for him, a theatre nerd). Rahul hopes to facilitate a learning and awareness of current events and injustices with the SOCHUM delegates, just as he has been able to do so.

We cannot wait to talk to you in person at the conference. Please feel free to approach us any time with questions, or even if you just want to chat. We are here to help and support you in any way; to make this experience as non-intimidating and fun as possible. We hope you will feel comfortable to step a little out of your comfort zone, and hopefully solve political extremism and the refugee crisis while you're at it! See you soon,

Your Honourable Chairs,
Rhea, Fawziyah, Rahul
sochum@macmun.org

Committee Overview

Mandate and Function of the Committee:

On January 10, 1946, representatives from 51 nations gathered in London for the first General Assembly (GA) of the United Nations. Initially formed to set standards for international law to maintain peace among different nations, the GA now holds a central position as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations.

Over the course of its existence, the GA has initiated political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal actions that have affected the lives of millions throughout the world. Particular actions of note include the Millennium Declaration of 2000, 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, all of which reaffirm the GA's commitment to global peace and prosperity.

The GA has six main committees, each of which focuses upon different issues. The Third Committee, known as the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), deals with international matters such as “the advancement of women, the protection of children, Indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination.” In addition, the Committee addresses important social development questions, such as issues related to youth, family, aging, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.

The responsibilities of the GA, as stated under the Charter of the United Nations, are as follows:²

1. Consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States;
2. Elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General;
3. Consider and make recommendations regarding general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament;
4. Discuss any questions relating to international peace and security (except when a dispute or situation is being discussed by the Security Council);
5. Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation which might harm the friendly relations among nations;

6. Discuss and make recommendations regarding the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations;¹
7. Request studies and make recommendations to promote international cooperation, the development of international law, the protection of human rights, and international collaboration on economic, social, cultural, educational and health issues;² and
8. Receive and discuss reports from the Security Council and other UN organs.

Simulation Style/Composition of the Committee

The GA will be composed of three designated Chairs who will moderate the debate and ensure it adheres to the appropriate Model UN rules and procedures. The Chairs will open and close each meeting, recognize any points or motions on the floor, set the agenda, manage the list of speakers, and facilitate the discussion. In addition, the Chairs are given the final rule on any disputed points, and will declare when motions are to be voted on by the body. It is also the decision of the Chairs to pass any draft resolution to be introduced for debate.

The GA will consist of 85 delegates representing their assigned Member States. Delegates are expected to research the committee topics, submit a position paper, and be prepared to debate in accordance with their country's global stance and foreign policy.

Two pages will be present during the meetings to pass notes between delegates. Pages will be screening notes to ensure appropriate content and to maintain a professional environment.

Recent Activity (2016-2018)

Preliminary topics assigned and discussed in this Committee include social development, crime prevention and criminal justice, international drug control, advancement of women, promotion of children's rights, and rights of indigenous peoples.² Recently, an important part of SOCHUM's work has been focusing on the examination of human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (HRC). SOCHUM also works and interacts with special rapporteurs, independent experts and chairs of working groups as mandated by the HRC as of October 2016.

The SOCHUM committee approved 68 draft resolutions from 15 October 2017-21 November 2017, including:

- A resolution on the girl child, urging states to improve the situation of girl children living in poverty, acknowledge the different needs of girls and boys, and make adaptive investments aware of the changing needs;

¹ "United Nations, Third Committee, Social, Cultural & Humanitarian, Main Body, Main Organs, General Assembly." United Nations, General Assembly of the United Nations, 18 Sept. 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third>.

² "United Nations, Functions and powers of the General Assembly" United Nations, General Assembly of the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third>.

² "United Nations, Functions and powers of the General Assembly" United Nations, General Assembly of the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third>.

- A resolution on human rights defenders championed by Norway and encouraging non-discrimination; and
- Additional resolutions on migrants, globalization, and the human right to safe drinking water and sanitization.

Forming Resolutions

Resolutions represent the consolidated opinions of the United Nations body and act as proposed comprehensive solutions to the issues at hand. They are a final result of the discussions and negotiations regarding the topics, and detail recommended courses of action. These papers are composed of **preambulatory clauses** (*reasons* for addressing this issue) and **operative clauses** (*solutions* to the issue). A resolution is first considered a draft resolution prior to being voted on by the committee.

During the course of debate, delegates may work individually or collaborate with others to write a draft resolution. At the end of the debate, many draft resolutions can be submitted to the Chairs, and the Chairs will proceed to read all the draft resolutions until the delegates vote and pick the final resolution(s). The delegates writing the resolution are deemed the “sponsors” and states that support seeing the resolution presented are signed on as “signatories.” Signatories are simply members who want to bring the resolution to debate; they do not have to necessarily support the resolution.

The SOCHUM Committee requires 1-3 sponsors and 18 signatories on a resolution. The draft resolutions are open to amendments suggested by other delegates. Once brought to debate, amendments can be made until the final resolution is voted on by the committee.

For detailed instructions on how to write resolutions, including a list of preambulatory and operative phrases, and a sample resolution, please refer to <https://www.macmun.org/resources> on our website.

Instructions for Writing Position Papers

The position paper is a detailed essay of your country’s policies and position on the topics that are going to be discussed in the committee. This will help you to organize your thoughts and successfully engage with the committee. You are required to submit a paper to be eligible for any conference award, and the writer of the best position paper in each committee will be given the Book Award.

A strong MACMUN position paper should include the following:

1. Discussion of the topic in general.
2. How your country is affected by the issues.
3. Your country’s policies with respect to the issues.
4. Quotations from your country’s leaders about the topics.
5. Actions that your country has taken with regard to the issues.
6. What your country believes should be done to address the issues.

7. What your country would like to accomplish in the committee's resolution.
8. A description of your relationship with other countries as it relates to the issues at hand.

Include your name, assigned country, and committee. Please do not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders.

Length: 1 page per topic.

Format: Times New Roman, size 12, single-spaced.

Citation style: Your choice (please include a reference page; not counted in page limit).

Due date: Sunday, February 3, 2018 at 11:59pm to sochum@macmun.org

For detailed instructions on how to write a position paper, including a template and sample paper, please refer to <https://www.macmun.org/resources> on our website.

Where to Start Your Research

This website gives a general overview of the SOCHUM Committee.

<https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/index.shtml>

This website compiles all recent news reports and meeting on SOCHUM proceedings.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/content/third-committe>

This directs you to the archives of SOCHUM documents of each committee session from 1998-2017. Draft resolutions relevant to the topics of refugees and corruption can be found under each session by clicking Documents → List of draft resolutions.

<https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/archives.shtml>

Examples of relevant SOCHUM draft resolutions on the topic of rights of refugees:

<http://undocs.org/A/C.3/72/L.61> → Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

<http://undocs.org/A/C.3/72/L.57> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Topic #1: Political Extremism

“Just because you do not take an interest in politics does not mean politics won't take an interest in you.” - Pericles

Introduction

The term political extremism encompasses an array of different ideologies. Through varying forms, the defining quality of political extremism is a firm and at times radical dedication to a particular group, message or ideology. Through political extremism, both state and non-state groups are able to become key players in the political landscape.

In 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in support of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. This plan provides an array of recommendations to nations in an effort to combat acts of extremism within their borders.

Despite ongoing efforts, extremist policies have risen extensively throughout the last decade. Mirrored in the actions of both state and non-state actors alike, extreme politics has raised many questions about the future of democracy and globalization. As a pushback from rising social and economic inequality at the hands of neoliberal policy, right-wing populist and nationalist sentiments have surged in popularity around the world. Influencing economic and social policy, neoliberalism encompasses a free market capitalist ideology that promotes small government and privatization of public resources. Populism, a form of political strategy, is defined as rhetoric where political leaders craft their policies and political platforms surrounding the needs and wants of the ordinary people. This usually comes at the expense of groups that do not fit in a popular identity, becoming an ‘other’ that populist leaders can act against.

In Europe, right-wing populism has gained significant traction. Over thirteen European countries have elected right-wing populist governments in their most recent elections, and many more right-wing parties rank within the top three of their country’s popular vote.³ In Asia, leaders are increasingly adopting inflammatory political views, with populism overshadowing existing democratic norms and institutions. Countries in Latin America have had previous surges in populism, and their current economic and political conditions show signs that they could be susceptible to similar populist politics in the future.

Mirroring these changes in state politics, the world has also seen a rise in political extremist views. Although political extremism occurs on both left and right ends of the political spectrum, in particular the rise in right-wing political extremism among governments has happened quickly and simultaneously with the rise in right-wing sentiments among people. The Alternative Right movement, colloquially known as the Alt-Right, has gained political traction in the Western

³ Europe and Nationalism: A Country-by-Country Guide. (The UK: BBC, 2018) n.p.

world. The Alt-Right is defined as a white nationalist movement, emerging into the mainstream at the turn of the decade.⁴ This ideology is supported by organized groups, but also finds its roots in individuals who believe that white supremacy should be upheld in the modern age. Much of the Alt-Right movement connects online, and strategic aspects of the movement have been made public. These public shows usually come in the form of rallies⁵. There have been rallies in the United States such as 'Unite the Right,' rallies held in Greece by supporters of far-right political party 'Golden Dawn,' as well as neo-Nazi sentiments trickling out around Europe.

In Africa and the Middle East, extremist politics is characterized by a plurality of groups, ideologies and religious affiliations. Right-wing Islamist politics has found a home in southern Asia, the Middle East, and much of Eastern and Western Africa. The defining characteristic tends to be an intent on eliminating many forms of Western ideology, norms and beliefs. In Nigeria, the Islamist group Boko Haram aims to create an Islamic state within the country.⁶ In the Middle East, ISIS aims to claim land and power as they move through Syria and surrounding countries.⁷ The military might and expansion within Islamist and rebel groups is beginning to rival sovereign governments.

Current Situation

Every continent has been touched by political extremism. Poverty, economic insecurity, and political isolation are just a few conditions that make governments, regions, and people more susceptible to extremist politics. Currently, over half of the world's population lives in absolute poverty, where households are unable to afford basic necessities. 80% of the world lives on less than \$10 USD a day.⁸ These conditions have led to anger and discontent among the masses and created large power vacuums that political opportunists are able to enter, taking the form of radical political leaders, terrorist groups, and online movements.

Currently, populist governments account for over 25% of western governments, with European nations making up the largest portion.⁹ Simultaneously, a populist movement in Asia has allowed for the establishment of populist leaders, as well as a long list of supporters who feel their needs are being heard through populist rhetoric. The ability for populist leaders to communicate large-scale issues, such as economic inequality, through incredibly simplistic and one-dimensional terms leaves people feeling that they can understand the issues without either verifying the information or acquiring further research. Author Kirk Hawkins explains that supporters believe populist leaders embody the will of the people, and as a result, people support the roll-back on political checks and balances.¹⁰

⁴ David Neiwert. The Terrifying Trend of White Men Radicalized Online Becoming IRL Terrorists. (Montreal: Vice, 2014) n.p.

⁵ David Neiwert. The Terrifying Trend of White Men Radicalized Online Becoming IRL Terrorists. (Montreal: Vice, 2014) n.p.

⁶ Sven Pohle. Islamist Terror Groups in Africa and the Middle East (DW, 2014) 5-16.

⁷ Sven Pohle. Islamist Terror Groups in Africa and the Middle East (DW, 2014) 5-16.

⁸ Anub Shah. Poverty Statistics and Facts. (Global Issues, 2013) n.p.

⁹ Europe and Nationalism: A Country-by-Country Guide, n.p.

¹⁰ Amnesty International Annual Report 2016/17. (Amnesty International, 2016) n.p.

This introduces much of the danger. Amnesty International warns against populist rhetoric, citing that the “‘us vs them’ ideology is creating a more divided and dangerous world.”¹¹ In their 2016-2017 report *The State of the World’s Human Rights*, Amnesty International worries that the push towards populist rhetoric, which allows for widespread xenophobic, racist and nationalist sentiments, is causing a global pushback against human rights.

Political opportunism and the capitalizing of discontent among populations further extends to online radicalization carried out by extremist groups. Social media facilitates quick communication, which allows for the creation of communities online. Radical groups use social media hubs in an effort to recruit people to their ideological groups.¹² The ability for groups to easily extend their reach and quickly radicalize individuals has manifested itself through the phenomenon of terror attacks in a wide array of public spaces. In the West, radical right-wing and Islamist groups have taken responsibility for the majority terror attacks.¹³

Bloc Analysis

The Situation in the Global North

Anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, and strong nationalist sentiments are being found all across Europe. The surge in nationalism comes in a post-Brexit era, where countries within Europe are rejecting the European Union (EU) and neoliberal policies. In 2016, the United Kingdom held a referendum for Britain to exit the EU.¹⁴ The political effect that has followed has seen European leaders continually adjusting their stances on border control and deportation in an effort to appease sentiments across their populations.

Many right-wing political parties have made it their mandate to create niche political platforms to appeal to a xenophobic, nationalistic ideology, marketed as a solution to working class struggles. Germany, Italy, Austria and Sweden have a mix of far-right, populist, and nationalist political parties gaining popularity every election cycle. Austria’s far-right populist party, the Freedom Party, won 51 out of 183 seats in the country’s most recent general election. After forming a coalition government with the centre-right People’s Party of Austria, the leader of the Freedom Party was named Vice-Chancellor of Austria. Germany’s far-right party, the Alternative for Germany, is also soaring in popularity.¹⁵ The party has been found to have neo-Nazi roots and encourages strong anti-Islam, anti-immigrant sentiments. While many European countries are experiencing a resurgence of nationalistic and populist politics, not all parties have had success stories. France’s far-right National Front party and Greece’s neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party have continued to slide down the polls.

¹¹ Amnesty International Annual Report 2016/17. (Amnesty International, 2016) n.p.

¹² David Neiwert. *The terrifying Trend of White Men Radicalized Online Becoming IRL Terrorists*. n.p.

¹³ Luiz Romero. *Terrorism is surging in the U.S., fueled by right-wing ideologies*. (New York: Quartz, 2018) n.p.

¹⁴ *Europe and Nationalism: A Country-by-Country Guide*, n.p.

¹⁵ *Europe and Nationalism: A Country-by-Country Guide*, n.p.

North America has also seen its fair share of nationalist, populist rhetoric. The 2016 United States Presidential election of Donald Trump followed textbook right-wing populism. Donald Trump entered as an unlikely candidate into the US political realm and ran a platform that emphasized the ‘other,’ including Mexican immigrants, Democrats, the US media and the political process itself.¹⁶ By appealing to America’s southern states, as well as as a consistent rhetoric focusing on the forgotten middle class, Donald Trump was able to push nationalist ‘America first’ sentiment.¹⁷ By garnering additional support from right-wing groups, Donald Trump was able to win the US presidency.

The sentiments mirrored within state governments and political parties, as well as in recent election results, also point to the growing online community of extremist politics and views. The West, particularly the US, has been targeted at the hands of online radicalization.¹⁸ The effects of online extremist groups, ranging from Islamist to Alt-Right groups, have been fatal in many instances. Attacks on innocent civilians by such groups have shaken the Western world. Underground online forums are used as hubs for many radical online groups, as mainstream social media platforms have largely banned radicalized rhetoric.

The Situation in the Global South

Asia has also seen a surge in nationalist and populist rhetoric. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte has led Philippine politics into the realm of nationalism. By detaching himself and his party from previous elite rulers in the Philippines, he won the support of voters across the country.¹⁹ His platform ran on social issues that directly affected working class people, and he prioritized taking out the corrupt elite and beginning a war on drugs. During his Presidency, Duterte has taken to undermining trusted media outlets in the Philippines and consistently calling to ignore established political experts. His war on drugs has resulted in 19,000 deaths, due to his encouraged vigilante justice.²⁰

Turkey is also experiencing a similar rise in populist politics. The country’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, represents peak anti-elite and anti-Western imperial populism. His party, the Justice and Development Party, was bred from the ideology that centrist parties were no longer working for the interests of the people.²¹ Making moves towards a pro-Muslim, nationalist state, the support for Erdoğan’s anti-liberal and anti-Western imperialist agenda has allowed him to scale forward authoritarian policies.

Major media outlets rarely report Middle Eastern and African politics on the left and right of the political spectrum. However, as in any area, radical and centrist parties exist on the left- and right-leaning ends of the political spectrum. Extremist politics in these areas tend to find themselves within far-right religious terror groups and an array of armed rebel groups.²²

¹⁶ David Graham. *The Paradox of Trump’s Populism*. (Boston: The Atlantoc, 2018) n.p.

¹⁷ David Graham. *The Paradox of Trump’s Populism*. (Boston: The Atlantoc, 2018) n.p.

¹⁸ David Neiwert. *The Terrifying Trend of White Men Radicalized Online Becoming IRL Terrorists*. n.p.

¹⁹ A Warning Against Populism: Détente and the Philippine Drug War. (North Carolina: The Carolinian, 2018) n.p.

²⁰ A Warning Against Populism: Détente and the Philippine Drug War. (North Carolina: The Carolinian, 2018) n.p.

²¹ Turkey Election: Erdogan Wins Re-Election as President. (The UK: BBC, 2018) n.p.

²² Sven Pohle. *Islamist Terror Groups in Africa and the Middle East* (DW, 2014) 5-16.

The undermining of sovereign governments through these non-state actors has left power vacuums throughout many areas in the Middle East, North Africa, East Africa and West Africa.

Committee Mission & Focus Questions

As such, it is important for the SOCHUM committee to discuss and create a global standard to deal with extremist movements, and to act accordingly. As a committee with a focus on society, humanitarianism and culture, it is necessary to hold important conversations surrounding the consequences of political extremism on social development. Consider the extent with which extremist politics hinders the lives of individuals and the global community.

Questions to consider include:

- I. Should countries actively combat political extremism, or is it a consequence of free speech and a right to vote?
- II. Should the global community intervene in matters of national political sovereignty?
- III. Does freedom of speech take precedence over combatting populism?
- IV. What are the underlying historical, social, economic, and political conditions that lead to political extremism within nations?

Topic #2: The Rights of Refugees

“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.” - Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*

Introduction

As of June 2018, it is estimated that 68.5 million people around the world have been forced from their homes. Of these, 3.1 million are asylum-seekers and nearly 25.4 million are refugees, with more than half under the age of 18. Almost 10 million people have been denied a nationality and are thus considered stateless, lacking access to basic rights such as healthcare, education, employment, and freedom of movement. These are the highest levels of displacement on record according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).²³

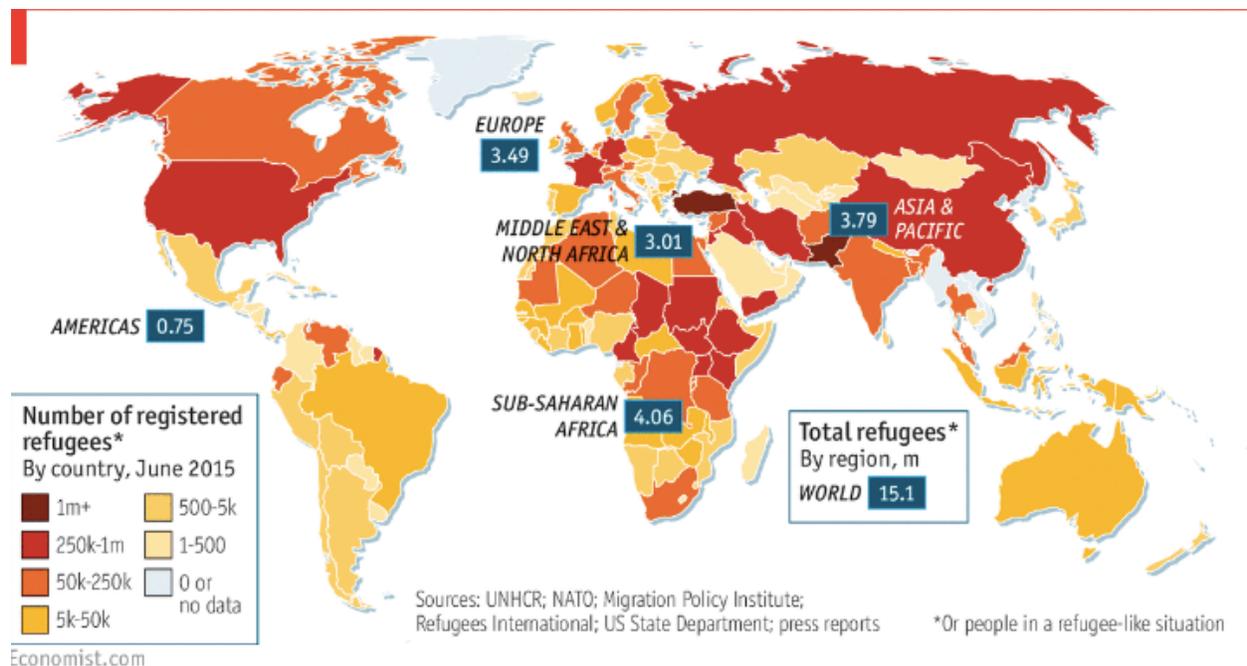


Figure 1: A geographical map portraying migration routes and geospatial data of refugee migration and displacement. Source: United Nations High Commission on Refugees.²⁴

²³ UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency. “Figures at a Glance.” *UNHCR*, 19 June 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

²⁴ “The World’s refugee crisis: past and present.” *The Economist*, 27 May 2016.

The Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (henceforth referred to as “the Convention”) is a UN treaty that defines a refugee as 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.”²⁵ It builds upon Article 14 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), granting any person the right to seek asylum from persecution.

Approved in 1951 and entered into enforcement in 1954, the Convention currently acts as the centerpiece of international refugee protection. It is founded on the principles of non-discrimination, non-penalization, and non-refoulement. 143 states have committed to the Convention and/or the UNHCR, and most recently have reaffirmed their commitment to the Convention in 2001.²⁶

The Convention lays down minimum standards for the treatment of refugees and provides various safeguards against their expulsion. It also stipulates that refugees should not be penalized for illegal entry or presence, and that refugees in search of asylum should not be prosecuted for breaking immigration laws.²⁷ Prohibited penalties include the arbitrary detainment of refugees or convictions of criminal offences on the basis of seeking asylum. However, the Convention does not apply to those who are believed to have committed war or non-political crimes in violation of UN principles, or to refugees under a UN organization other than the UNHCR, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.²⁸

While the Convention, the UDHR, and other instruments grant various rights and protections to refugees, it is up to the state to define whether the individual meets the definition of a refugee and is thus guaranteed these rights. A focus on criminal prosecution, rights of adolescents and minors, separation of families, social support, and living standards is necessary when considering how to protect the rights of refugees once they have fled their homes.

History and Description

Historically, a number of causes have led to the displacement of groups or individuals from their nations. According to the UNHCR, war and persecution have been the primary factors driving people away from their homes since their records began.²⁹ In addition to political or conflict-related causes, auxiliary factors such as economic, ecological, and demographic changes are also believed to impact mobilization of refugees.³⁰

²⁵ UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency. “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.” *UNHCR*, 28 July 1951, goo.gl/eDDs77

²⁶ UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency. “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.”

²⁷ UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency. “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.”

²⁸ UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency. “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.”

²⁹ Edwards, Adrian. “Global forced displacement hits record high.” *UNHCR*, 20 June 2016, goo.gl/mWZDgj

³⁰ Druke-Bolewski, Luise. “Causes of Refugee Problems and the International Response.” *Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees under International Law, 1897*, goo.gl/nQqeCv

Maltreatment and discrimination against refugees in the nations they flee to has been evident through history, regardless of refugees' reason or cause for fleeing their homes. One current example is the prolonged detainment of migrants and asylum seekers in the US, despite a lack of evidence to suggest that they pose a danger to society. In 1996, when the US Congress passed the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, it became mandatory to detain legal immigrants with minor criminal convictions, or those without proper documentation, including refugees. The use of detention against migrants and refugees has grown in popularity since, with the number of individuals detained drastically increasing each year. These people often face cruel, inhumane conditions, are separated from their families, and are given little to no legal resources or assistance.³¹

Another prominent case is exemplified by the surge of right-wing, xenophobic movements in Japan against Koreans and other ethnic minorities. The roots of xenophobia in Japan towards non-Japanese foreigners go far back. This was initiated in the 1970s with grassroots right-wing and nationalist movements, with the next xenophobic and nationalist surge occurring in the early 2000s with the proliferation of the Internet. The government has reflected its stance on this movement by continuing to make immigration difficult with strict laws and discriminating against non-Japanese foreigners.³²

Current Situation

Currently, the fair treatment of refugees and protection of their rights remains difficult to ensure due to growing sentiment against refugees and illegal immigrants. Recent research has demonstrated that people assess policy choices regarding “legal” versus “illegal” immigration very differently, and categorical rejection of immigrants is much higher when the topic is regarding “illegal” immigrants.³³ Reports of “illegal” immigration are commonly used in the media not only in Western countries, but around the world. This use of terminology deliberately and directly implicates the breaking of the law, painting a negative association of morality on the illegal immigration of refugees.

The panic arising from “illegal” immigration is increasingly prevalent in the 21st century, coming with the new framework of legalized migration, which was not present during waves of migration under colonial legal structures in the past. This reaction stems largely from the rigid, moralistic view to adhere strictly to rules or laws without proper judgement, in addition to the heavy influence of different prejudices towards certain attributes, including race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background.³⁴ Together, these factors can exacerbate the global problem of the wrongful criminal prosecution or treatment of refugees.

³¹ Jorgensen, Christian. “Immigrant Detention in the United States Violations of International and Human Rights Law.” *Critique*, 2016, goo.gl/UKv1Nh

³² Yamaguchi, Tomomi. “Xenophobia in Action.” *Radical History Review*, vol. 117, 2013, pp.98-118, goo.gl/pW5ie6

³³ Wright, Levy, and Jack Citrin. “Public Attitudes Toward Immigration Policy Across the Legal/Illegal Divide: The Role of Categorical and Attribute-Based Decision-Making.” *Political Behaviour*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2016, pp. 229-253.

³⁴ Dauvergne, Catherine. “Making People Illegal” Cambridge University Press, 2009, goo.gl/tvoqPk

Additionally, perceived threats to a country's distinctive identity and culture drive much of the current anti-immigrant sentiment and xenophobia around the world. Immigrants are often portrayed in a negative light, especially in regions with larger anti-immigration groups. They are repeatedly associated with a declining economy, overpopulation, depleted social resources, and competition for education or professional work. Studies have demonstrated that this hostile atmosphere, in addition to members of the host culture forcing immigrants to assimilate, causes immigrants to forfeit their right of culture and can lead to diminished psychological adjustment and health.³⁵

The state of refugee camps is a concern as well. For example, a recent report of Greek refugee camps brought up concerns of overcrowding, insufficient living space, internal racism, sexual harassment and rape, violence, poor hygienic conditions, and children attempting suicide.³⁶ Many of these problems are common across refugee camps globally, representing the negligence towards the well-being of refugees.

Recent cases in the United States highlight the lack of fair treatment and protection from deportation of refugees. In April 2018, the US federal government announced a new "zero tolerance" policy towards those crossing illegally from Mexico; over 2,000 children were taken from their parents and held in custody by the federal government. This issue is frequently reported in the media as a result of the federal policy that separates children from their families who are detained at the border. Media coverage also includes how these children are treated.³⁷ However, it is important to note that this topic is far from new and is not limited to the US.



³⁵ Yakushko, Oksana. "Xenophobia: Understanding the Roots and Consequences of Negative Attitudes Toward Immigrants." *The Counseling Psychologist*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2009, pp. 36-66.

³⁶ Nye, Catrin. "Children 'attempting suicide' at Greek refugee camp." *BBC News*, 28 Aug. 2018, [goo.gl/CmFgfg](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-46411111)

³⁷ Vick, Karl. "A Reckoning After Trump's Border Separation Policy: What Kind of Country Are We?" *Time Inc.*, 21 Jun. 2018, [goo.gl/QG6jng](https://www.time.com/time/magazine/2018/06/21/a-reckoning-after-trumps-border-separation-policy/)

Bloc Analysis

Europe

Within Europe, many countries such as Croatia, Austria, Italy, and Poland are beginning to tighten immigration policies and refugee programs due to pressure caused by high levels of immigration. In 2015, over one million migrants and refugees relocated to Europe, and since then, many European governments have begun fortifying their borders to prevent future mass migrations of such size.³⁸ Certain countries, such as Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Serbia, and Poland, have even taken measures to return or expel refugees and migrants.³⁹ Even the United Kingdom halted a program to resettle lone refugee children in order to discourage dangerous travelling by vulnerable children.⁴⁰

Contrarily, a number of European (in addition to a few non-European) countries are included in a list of countries with the most refugee and migrant-friendly policies. According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index, these countries, in order, are: Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Canada, New Zealand, Belgium, and Norway.⁴¹

North and South America

In North America, the Canadian and US governments have taken different stances on refugees and migrants. While the US had the highest number of migrants in the world in 2016, it has accepted far less refugees and migrants under the new administration.⁴¹ Canada, while having one of the most open immigration policies in the world, is also facing certain struggles in accepting “irregular” migrants from the US border. Irregular migrants are those who cross the border somewhere other than at an official crossing station, and are apprehended by police forces.⁴² Latin American countries, although having a well-earned tradition of welcoming refugees, have begun to cut back on the number of migrants and refugees accepted, while an increasing number of refugees have begun to flee from countries like Venezuela due to political crisis and violence.⁴³

³⁸ Vonberg, Judith. “How some European countries are tightening their refugee policies.” CNN, 22 Feb. 2017, goo.gl/B9xgWg

³⁹ Ministers want to send refugees back to Germany and Belgium to discourage travel.” DutchNews.nl, 30 Mar. 2018,

⁴⁰ Nye, Catrin. “Children ‘attempting suicide’ at Greek refugee camp.” BBC News, 28 Aug. 2018, goo.gl/p9Dqiq

⁴¹ “Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015.” MIPEX, 2015, <http://www.mipex.eu/play/#/filter-countries>.

⁴² Ballingall, Alex. “Is Canada in the midst of a refugee crisis? Experts say it’s important to keep things in perspective.” The Star, 21 Jul. 2018, goo.gl/p6vhib

⁴³ Muggah, Robert. “Europe’s refugee crisis is making headlines, but Latin America’s is just as alarming.” World Economic Forum, 27 Mar. 2017. goo.gl/fg5L1Z

Middle East, Africa, and Asia

Through the late 20th century, Middle Eastern countries, specifically Oman and the U.A.E, accepted a high number of migrants from Asian countries for low-skilled labour positions.⁴⁴ Additionally, Africa is currently hosting more refugees than any region in the world. For example, just three countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda—collectively host 2.8 million refugees, more than all refugees accepted in the EU’s 28 member states from 2015-2016.⁴⁵

The most prominent refugee crisis occurring in Southeast Asia is the Myanmar Rohingya crisis. Nearly 700,000 Rohingya people have fled their homes to refugee camps in Bangladesh and other surrounding countries due to persecution and genocide, creating the world’s fastest growing refugee crisis.⁴⁶ The state of these refugee camps is poor, lacking in sanitation, and putting refugees at risk for physical and sexual abuse.⁴⁷

Committee Mission & Focus Questions

It will be important to consider the injustices towards the treatment and rights of refugees, and create a solution for these injustices. Further consideration must also be given to how best to balance a nation state’s ability to take in and protect refugees, while also considering the negative outcomes if we do not: family separation, child abandonment, and more. In arriving at resolutions, the ethics of illegal immigration, xenophobia within nations, and the rights of asylum seekers and refugees to receive fair treatment and safety from deportation must be emphasized.

Questions to consider include:

- I. How can a nation accept and/or support refugees without imposing social, health, and/or economic consequences? Is it possible to foster a symbiotic solution into a nation’s policies?
- II. How does the United Nations framework on refugees apply, or not apply, to current global situations today? Are nations aligning with this framework?
- III. How can governments and NGOs work to ensure that refugees outside their countries of origin have access to justice, health, and employment, among other rights?
- IV. What can be done to protect refugees from exploitation and discrimination while they are waiting for resettlement or after they have been resettled?
- V. What sorts of coordination efforts are necessary to ensure that each Member State hosting refugees have the capacity to protect and ensure their rights as articulated in the Refugee Convention.
- VI. Are there any special considerations that must be made for refugees who are women or girls to ensure that they are protected on equal terms to their male counterparts, in accordance with the UN’s gender mainstreaming efforts?

⁴⁴ Besharov, Douglas. “Adjusting to a World in Motion: Trends in Global Migration and Migration Policy.” Oxford University Press, 14 Dec. 2015.

⁴⁵ Betts, Alexander. “What Europe could learn from the way Africa treats refugees.” The Guardian, 26 Jun. 2018, goo.gl/14GdDS

⁴⁶ “Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis.” BBC News, 24 Apr. 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561>

⁴⁷ Wright, Teresa. “Rohingya women and girls face renewed risks, harms in refugee camps: Oxfam.” National Post, 11 Sept. 2018, goo.gl/bvhaLy



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