

<b>Forum:</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>Issue:</b>	Providing economic and social services for victims of conflict of internally displaced persons and refugees
<b>Student Officer:</b>	Sofia Kopsachili
<b>Position:</b>	Deputy President

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## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Dear delegates,

My name is Sofia Kopsachili and I feel really honored to be appointed as a Deputy President in ECOSOC. I attended last year's PS-MUN conference as a delegate and because of that, I am even more excited about attending this year's conference. It will give me a different perspective as a student officer and I am really looking forward to the experience with you all.

I am a student in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of the German School of Athens and the reason I feel challenged by this upcoming conference, is because I believe that this is the time to expand our views and knowledge. If not now, then when? So, I strongly think that in this particular committee we all have a lot to win, learn, give and take.

As your Deputy President, I am here to help you with your preparation and also guide you through the conference. I hope that my first task is completed with this study guide and it provides you the maximum help it should provide you with. But you should not base your preparation only on this study guide, because you get more general information about the topic and it does not focus on your country's policy. That is your task to fulfill with your research, through which you can always use the web pages (the links are in the Bibliography) I've used through mine. I am always open to answer any questions you may have, in order to achieve the better possible preparation for the conference.

I am really looking forward to meeting you all at the conference,

Regards,

Sofia Kopsachili

## INTRODUCING TOPIC

Refugees and internally displaced persons are two minority groups that are of a great concern nowadays. During periods of social unrest and armed conflicts people are forced to move away from their houses. They are obligated to, because of their religion, participation in a political group or party, or nationality. They are called to rebuild a whole new life.

What actually separates a refugee from an internally displaced person is the fact that he has passed international borders.

Refugees are living abroad and they are protected by the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and internally displaced persons.

An internally displaced person lives inside the borders of his country, but he is not protected by any Declaration, as there is no official legal explanation for this term. Despite that, he might lack better care than a refugee, given that as a citizen of that country, he is protected by his own government.

### Challenges

Among others, there are three basic factors that prevent a solution to be given, as far as refugees are concerned. They basically are:

- Twenty-five countries, which are open to host the refugees are only able to settle, 10 per cent of which UNHCR has recognized as in need of protection. Considering that the identified refugees are 800.000 and that approximately half of the refugees that UNHCR is responsible for, have been in exile for more than 5 years, we understand how much work is still needed.
- The mentioned “shrinking of humanitarian space” as UNHCR calls it, which describes the inhospitable and dangerous environment, the people willing to settle in another country and obligated to work in. Such conditions cause a huge problem, because the people contributing to the eradication of this problem are already few. What would have happened if they also had to take such a risk, by losing their lives?? The number of them will be immediately decreased.
- Not only refugees are asking groups or minorities, like immigrants, asylum-seekers etc. Due to that, asylum is way more difficult to be given and even when that is resolved, xenophobia and racism will already be increased by that entire process.

### Protection of refugees

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has built a global emergency response capacity. Specialized scientists are constantly monitoring the worldwide situation, in order to inform and mobilize everyone all over the world, in case of an emergency, in the timeframe of 72 hours. In the specially built capacities, which serve

for the protection of people during times like that, UNHCR has positioned aid kits, stockpiles of food, water and clothing everywhere.

In addition, UNHCR has created the 10-Point Plan as a response and solution to the mixed movements. In this plan, special training of the refugees, like intensive lessons of rapid learning of the language or the traditions of the country is proposed, in order for them to easily adjust to the new environment. It also provides specific instructions for the surveillance of the borders, so that each hosting country will be ready and prepared to respond to asylum applications and know which ones will be accepted.

### Protection of internally displaced persons

Since UNHCR and UNRWA are occupied with protecting and defending refugees' rights, several UN bodies are trusted with protecting internally displaced persons. This is called cluster approach, the use of which began in 2005.

It is based on a UN goal of a more consistent and systematic assistance for internally displaced persons. In cases the country is not able or willing to provide the necessities to the IDP's, those UN bodies will make an effort to cover their needs, by giving them shelter, food, water, health, camps etc.

The protection they are called to provide them covers almost all the aspects of their human nature and rights that even according to the law should be respected.

- They are called to protect everyone's rights as individual human beings.
- Include their civil and political rights, such as vote and equal participation in politics, in the necessary rights, which seek of protection. In addition to those the economic and cultural rights are equally defended.
- The UN bodies have also targeted to improve as much as possible the living in the camps, in which most frequently internally displaced persons are settled, by facilitating the access of the victims to justice, minimize the victims of sexual abuse in camps, promote and encourage economic self-reliance and reduce child mortality.



## KEY TERMS

### Refugee

Refugee is defined as a person who has left his country, has passed international borders and does not have the ability to return, due to the fear of prosecution because of religion, race, political beliefs or nationality.

-According to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, by which they are protected, a refugee is defined as a person who:

*“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 or return there because there is a fear of persecution...”*

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/studyguides/refugees.htm>

### Internally displaced person

An internally displaced person is defined as someone who was forced to move from his home because of armed conflicts, general social unrests, violation of human rights or human made disasters, but have not passed any international borders. They are not protected by any convention.

-According to a United Nations report entitled The Guiding Principles on Internally Displacement (UN, 1998) an internally displaced person is defined as:

*“Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, the situation of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border”*

<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2616700.html>

### UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the agency legally allowed to take position in most refugee situations and help the country protect the refugee. Their main purpose is to make sure that no human rights are being violated, everyone has the right to *asylum* and the refugees have the option of returning to their countries or going to a third country safely.

### UNRWA

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) focuses more on the protection of Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory.

### Asylum seeker

Asylum seeker is a term used to define someone who has left his country and is asking for asylum, holds the title of refugee in the hosting country.

### Immigrant

A term used to describe a person moving to another country by his own decision in order to settle.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The issue of refugees and internally displaced persons has long occupied the international interest, because of its effects and the huge number of refugees and IDPs all over the world.

In order for a solution to be found and the problem to be eradicated, many conventions and measures have been taken over the years:

- 1) In 1948, the first declaration recognizing the right of asylum because of execution, at an international level took place.
- 2) The Geneva Convention in relation to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War in 1949, provides the necessary protection of refugees in times of war, by stating that they should not be faced as enemies.
- 3) The Convention related to the Status of Refugees, in 1951, which covered the most important fundamental points of their lives, defined the term refugee officially and was signed by 141 countries.
- 4) The Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, in 1967, “erases” the geographical and time limits that were written in the Refugee Convention.
- 5) The Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, in 1969, expands the meaning and the definition of a refugee, as someone who was compelled to leave his country not only as a result of persecution but also owing to: external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order.
- 6) The Convention against Torture And Other, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1984, according to which the protection of the refugee is achieved through his right of not being forced to go back to the place, in fear of prosecution.

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/studyguides/refugees.htm>

### Further previous energies

In 1946 the United Nations established the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), with the vision of it being a body of the UN that would provide protection, a defence of their rights and general necessities to the refugees. Due to fundamental problems

however, this organisation was followed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This new organisation was supposed to exist for only 3 years, but the UN recognised it as a permanent body of the General Assembly. To date, the UNHCR is one of the most active, if not the most active, organisations supporting refugees. Characteristically, in 1997, it provided help to approximately more than 12 million refugees and 4.4 million internally displaced persons. In 2009 the UNHCR made an effort to resettle more than 128.000 refugees. Before that, they have established the “cluster approach” mentioned above, which has saved millions of IDP’s lives.

But, since internally displaced persons have been an increasing issue, in 1998 the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRG) established the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC). That happened because most of the organisations dealing with this issue focus on refugees. However, this organisation’s main goal and reason of creation is for the protection of internally displaced persons. Today, it leads to a body of international expansion, dealing with internal displacement all over the world.

Lastly, in 2009 an African Union Special Summit adopted the Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, something that was truly a beneficial move, since it has brought great progress.



## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1946: The United Nations established the International Refugee Organisation
1948: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1949: The Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War
1951: The Convention related to the Status of Refugees
1954: UNHCR wins a Nobel Peace Prize
1956: UNHCR provided help to the refugees and the internally displaced persons in the Hungary uprising
1967: The Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees
1969: The Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa
1981: UNHCR wins a Nobel Peace Prize
1984: The Convention against Torture and Other, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
1997: UNHCR provided help to more than 12 million refugees and 4,4 million internally displaced persons, approximately.
1998: The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRG) established the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC)
2002: The Convention related to the Status of Refugees was signed by 141 countries
2009: An African Union Special Summit adopted the Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa

## COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS MAINLY INVOLVED

### UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner Refugees is, as mentioned before, one of the most active organisations on the issue of refugees. Among the many actions it has

taken, its goals for the refugees are repatriation, when the circumstances allow it, integration in the first country, or in case that is not possible, asylum in a third country.

### Colombia

Colombia is one of the countries with the highest number of internally displaced persons. There are a number of more than 5.7 million internally displaced persons in Colombia and that is the reason it uses so much of the country's budget to eradicate it. However, because of the global economic crisis the 2015 budget has been decreased to 31.6 million.

### Democratic Republic of Congo

Democratic Republic of Congo is estimated to host approximately 2, 7 internally displaced persons and a huge rate of refugees. In August of 2014 alone, 70,000 refugees from Central Africa got hosted and assistance from DRC. So the budget of DRC for 2015 is up to 216, 3 million, because of the increasing number of refugees from Central Africa.

### Iraq

Iraq does not only have a high rate of refugees, but also a rapidly increasing number of Iraqis sent to other countries. The planned budget of Iraq for 2015 stands at 230, 5 million, but it is likely to increase in order to cover the needs of the internal displacement due to the ongoing conflict, will cause.

### Pakistan

Pakistan has a high number of both refugees and internally displaced persons. In August 2014, a number of 714, 548 registered as internally displaced people. In addition, Pakistan hosts many Afghan refugees, but with the efforts of UNHCR, 3.8 million have gone back to Afghanistan since 2002. The budget allotted to Pakistan to fight the problem for 2015 is up to 137.1, approximately 10 million less than last year.

### Sudan

Sudan has a tradition of hosting refugees and asylum-seekers with, only in the near past time, 167,000. With the political instability, south Sudanese refugees are allowed to walk around freely through the country. UNHCR's budget given to Sudan for 2015 has been set to 130.6 million.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- First of all, when it comes to internally displaced persons, cooperation with the country should be achieved, because on the one hand, those people are living in their country, but on the other hand, not in their homes. So to begin with, the country should recognise the existence of internal displacement in its own borders.
- For both IDPs and refugees, a permanent solution should be found, so they are either going to organise programs of “come backs” or create job positions in order for the refugees/ IDPs to be able to adjust to the environment.
- The cooperation with both international and local NGO’s should be achieved, in order for the IDPs that leave under awful circumstances and camps to get provided with important necessities, like medical care, access to drinkable water and nutrition.
- In order for all nations and countries to be legally obligated to recognise the internally displaced persons, an official and legal definition of the term should be given, as it happened in 1951 with the term “refugee”.
- Lastly, a procedure should be found, in order for the future of refugees and internally displaced persons to be given multiple options within their hosting countries, so that they will not be discriminated, because of their religion most of all; this being one factor that can be predicted.

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