The 6th Houssam Hariri High School Model United Nations Conference
UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Topic: Addressing and Adopting Measures to Restrict the Violations of the International Law Pertaining to the Rights and Status of Refugees.

Presidents: Rasha Shayto and Maryam Jouzou

Chairs: Leen Fawaz and Hassan Arabi
I. Description of the committee:

   Founding:

   By the end of two atrocious world wars and with the establishment of the United Nations Organization, the world’s new beacon of hope and peace, humanity expected to finally enjoy the intrinsic “freedom from fear”. However, the rigorous cold war that occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union following Mao Zedong’s triumph in China and the Korean War along with the rise of revolutions, civil strife and fights for independence, equality and justice worldwide further disclosed on the fact that mankind is still far from realizing a liberal and peaceful life. Thus, the eruption of a conflict in a certain region in the world has caused the displacement of refugees to another. The international community recognized that the problem of refugees was no longer temporary and with each new emergency will result in more and more refugees. As a result, the United Nations General Assembly communicated the need of establishing a new UN body to be specifically devoted to deal with the needs, status, rights and protection of refugees. Consequently, the UNHCR was established on the 14th of December 1950. This committee was identified for two major roles: to supply worldwide security for refugees and to develop enduring resolutions to resolve refugee issues.

   1956 witnessed the first intervention of the UNHCR, for the Soviet Union’s application of authoritarian rule over Hungary resulted in the influx of masses of Hungarians to safer havens in Europe. In effort to handle the dilemma, the UNHCR collaborated with several notable NGOs acting in Europe such as the International Red Cross Committee. By doing so, the UNHCR managed to secure, protect and assist Hungarian refugees fleeing to Austria and Yugoslavia. Seeing the massive efforts, the UNHCR dissipated to control this crisis drove the General Assembly to realize and officially recognize the issue of refugees as a major universal problem and to establish an Executive Committee to direct and monitor the High Commissioner’s Programme. Moreover, the heroic accomplishments of the UNHCR in protecting and securing Hungarian refugees highlighted its shift from a miniature UN body with undersized tasks into a larger organization with advanced responsibilities, status and worldwide importance. Even though the UNHCR is not permitted to discuss peace agreements, it is responsible to aid governments to smooth the progress of deliberate redemption and the hosting of refugees.
Defining a Refugee:

In simple context, a refugee is a vulnerable human being who is not capable of availing himself the protection of his state due to a series of problems and issues. The 1951 Refugee Convention and the follow-up 1971 and 1967 protocols are the most binding legal framework pertaining to the status, rights and protection of refugees internationally. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as:

*A person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of that country, or to return there, for fear of maltreatment.*

Once an individual chooses to return to his own country, integrate or naturalize in the host country, the refugee status is removed. The closing clauses of the convention outline six qualifications in which a country puts to use or induces the cessation of the refugee status. The principal of non-refoulement* is the most vital part of the Convention, held in Article 33, which implies that a refugee should not be deported to a country where his freedom or life might be threatened. The rights of housing, education, work, access to courts, freedom of movement within the territory, and the right of issued identity and travel documents are also important rights aggrandized by the 1951 Convention. In short, a person who is granted the title of a “refugee” enjoys the guarantee to adequate life conditions and a legally binding access to all basic human rights.

*Non-refoulement: is a basic principle of the international law pertaining to the protection of refugees. Refoulement comes from the French verb “refouler” meaning “to expel”. Thus, the principle of non-refoulement dictates that host countries cannot under any circumstance expel refugees to other countries where their safety might be endangered and their rights might be violated.*
Introduction:

I. Background:

In the short span of 6 years, an approximate of 250,000 Syrians lost their lives while another 11 million abandoned their homes as a result of a rigorous civil war that paralyzed the entire nation. In the 6th year of the Syrian civil war, 13.5 million Syrians inside the country including the 6.6 million internally displaced are identified as vulnerable human beings in need of massive humanitarian support. For the 4.8 million Syrians who have fled to neighboring countries, the situations in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq are not much better. In the meantime, approximately one million Syrian have sought refuge to Europe. In Germany and Sweden, Europe’s top receiving countries, refugee applications have accumulated to 300,000 and 100,000 respectively. (Salamonska, July 2016).

The heavy influx of Syrian Refugees to Middle Eastern and European countries has several social, political and economic implications on the host states. (Fakih and Marrouch, 2015) illuminate on the fact that the Kingdom of Jordan has been incubated with 81.4 million USD for enrolling Syrian refugee students in Jordanian public schools and with 257 million USD to initiate infrastructural and constructional projects to accommodate Syrian students in local educational institutions. Jordan has also devoted 168 million USD for providing health and nutrition services for refugees. Moreover, the increasing demand on running water, power, road maintenance inter alia municipal services has been quantified to be worth 62 million USD annually…The latter expenditures are only a kernel of what hosting 650,000 refugees really cost, as the expense of guaranteeing refugees the adequate resources they are in need of has been found equal to 35% of the national Jordanian Budget as a whole.
(IRC, 2015) discussed as well the status of Syrian refugees residing in neighboring Middle Eastern countries. The IRC speaks of the abuse of refugee workers to work in indecent and harsh circumstances, in addition to several cases of child labor. The IRC reports that: “Syrian refugees are highly vulnerable to labor exploitation. Child labor is dramatically on the rise in host countries, driven largely by an increasing number of Syrian refugee child workers.” In Jordan and Lebanon, Syrians are not entitled to the same labor rights as nationals and legal migrants, for they don’t profit from monetary compensation and health coverage. The ILO has recently found out that refugees in Lebanon receive a total monthly income 40% less than the minimum wage. Likewise in Jordan, refugee workers earn no more than 10 JD per day while refugee child laborers earn 5 JD per day at most. In Iraq, the situation is not much better, as 12% of refugee families residing in refugee camps have absolutely no source of daily income and hence rely on relief packages to survive. The IRC affirms that such a tragic situation results in a wave of social and political crises in the country, starting off by poverty, hunger, child labor, human abuse, theft, murders and fatalities and escalating to the formation of gangs, mafias, illegal smuggling, terrorism and mass riots in the host states. UNICEF and Save the Children have announced that their regional reports affirm the rise of child laborers in the Syrian host countries, as employers tend to prefer hiring children, as they are less paid, easily controlled and silenced and are less conspicuous to the authorities than adults. In the Kingdom of Jordan, the employers interviewed by UNICEF in collaboration with the national and municipal authorities admitted that children refugees (under the age of 18) have constituted 84% of the total refugees hired. The ILO has also disclosed on cases in North Lebanon where children refugees who are less than 6 years old of age have been found working for only 4 US dollars per day.
Similarly, in Turkey, Save the Children has revealed Syrian girls and boys as old as 8 years are working in waste collection and recycling processes.

(Yu, 2016) wrote a very touching article entitled “Schools aren’t meant for people like us. We need to work to survive”. In this article, the Brenda Yu speaks of the struggling of a Syrian refugee family composed of a widowed mother with her 9 children and one grandchild. The family has been struggling for so long. Working in the fields in the Beqaa, borrowing from co-workers and receiving aid packages was still not enough to send off her two boys to school, provide proper nutrition for the children and the medication needed as well. The mother is desperate. She has no one to resort to, yet can’t show weakness in front of her children. Her daughters have left school ever since they left Syria, while the boys alternate between going to schools and going to work. In their first winter in Beqaa, they didn’t have money for fuel, wood or coal. They even didn’t have enough clothes to put on to warm themselves up. They relied on themselves to do so. Ola, the 19 year old daughter has passed 6 years of her life not attending school and uneducated. When asked about school, she replied: “Schools aren’t meant for people like us. We are poor…We need to work to survive”.

On a more positive note, the IRC has also explained the positive economic implications the flow of Syrian refugees had on some host countries. Benefitting from the resettlement of Syrian businessmen and investors in Turkey, the World Bank has affirmed that nearly 26% of the recently registered businesses in Turkey were of Syrian capital. In Jordan, hundreds of job opportunities have been provided to Syrians and Jordanians in 2014 by Syrian investors in the country. Aside from the resettlement of humanitarian agencies and their own consumption and demand on resources, the humanitarian aid packages injected in
the country have a crucial job in surging the market. In Lebanon, out of the 800 million USD package, 44% of was spent on Lebanese local products and good purchases. In addition, the UNDP and the UNHCR revealed that the humanitarian monetary packages provided to refugees, such as the e-cards have a multiplier effect on the host country’s economy. Each 1 USD donated to refugees multiplies 1.6 USD to the Lebanese economy and 2.3 USD to the nation’s GDP. According to the statistics provided by the World Bank, the Lebanese economy has witnessed a 2.5% growth, the highest since 2010. Both Jordan and Tukey have also experienced a similar result despite the heavy refugee diaspora.

Fakih and Marrouch explain that in the case of European host societies and states, the influx of Syrian labor and youth holds vast potential to further boost the economic situation in the country. Ali Fakih and Walid Marrouch take the example of both Sweden and Germany. In both industrialized European States, industrialists have highly encouraged their governments’ tendencies and acts of hosting refugees despite the apprehensiveness of those nations’ populations. The integration of Syrian youth is integral for fulfilling the needs of those states of human resources in the nation’s fast-developing industrial sector. German and Swedish policy makers thought of this trade-off as a win-win situation for both the second host state and the third one. As European societies are concerned with issue of the rapidly ageing society, and as the number of students enrolled in career-oriented training and vocational education has significantly dropped in comparison to the rise of those pursuing higher degrees and education, the influx of refugee youth, ready to learn and work, comes as the perfect remedy to the situation in Europe. Sweden had already initiated programs for language and vocational training for hundreds of refugees belonging to the age group of 18-25 years.
On the other hand, the response of other European states wasn’t as welcoming as the German and Swedish. (Calamur, 2015) discusses in his article “The European Refugee Crisis: A ‘Systematic’ Violation of Human Rights” the unchallenged violation of human and refugee rights in the Czech Republic. To support his claim, Calamur resorted to a number of internationally renounced and credible human rights and UN organizations. In Geneva, it was issued that the Czech Republic is committing a systematic violation of human rights against refugees and migrants rather than a coincidental one. Various sources, including the UNHCR, have reported cases where refugees have been searched for money to be confiscated by Czech forces to cover up the fee of having refugees locked up. As some have spent 40 days in detention, other periods lasted to 90 days during which they were charged 10$ per day. When interviewed, many refugees speak of the ill-treatment they are receiving on behalf of the European nations. Furthermore, Anna Šabatová, the Czech ombudsman, has explicitly announced that how refugee and migrant children are treated within the Czech territories contradicts with the ratified principles of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Czech Republic was very apprehensive concerning the flow of Muslim refugees and migrants into their country in particular. Former Czech President Milos Zeman has said: “The newcomers will impose Shariah law in the Czech Republic. We will lose women’s beauty because they will be covered head to toe in burqas, with only a fabric net over the face.” His announcements served as cuttingly contradictory to the principles of the UN and the vision of the shared international community and the universal value of respect for human rights and dignity. The UNHCR raised global awareness pertaining to what the former Czech President said.
Moreover, (Amnesty International, 2015) has disclosed in its report what has been going shamefully on in Europe. The agency asserts that the EU migration systems are terribly flawed, as they fail to host and protect refugees. Gauri Van Gulik, The Deputy Director for Amnesty International for the European and Central Asian region has said: “Refugees fleeing war and persecution make this journey across the Balkans in the hope of finding safety in Europe only to find themselves victims of abuse and exploitation and at the mercy of failing asylum systems.” As the number of migrants crossing the Serbian border has risen by 2500% from 2,300 migrant in 2010 to 60,602 in 2015, Van Gulik also commented on the flawed migration system the EU has saying: “Serbia and Macedonia have become a sink for the overflow of refugees and migrants that nobody in the EU seems willing to receive.” The agency has also highlighted that the migration routes in and to Europe are not completely safe, as 24 refugees were killed on train railways and nearly 4,000 have drowned. Comments from refugees were shocking and unprecedented in Europe ever since the despotic rule of the Soviet Union. As only 1 asylum seeker was granted refuge in Serbia and 10 in Macedonia in 2014, it is clear that the refugee system in Serbia and Macedonia are majorly flawed. To this end, Van Gulik said: “Serbia and Macedonia have to do much more to respect migrants and refugees’ rights. But it is impossible to separate the human rights violations there, from the failed EU migration system.”

The problem facing the refugee system in Europe is the flawed Dublin regulation which dictates that asylum seekers obtain refuge in the EU if the EU member state to which he has first arrived declares him a refugee with correspondence to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the 14th Article in the UDHR. Thus, with the majority of refugees first arriving in Italy or
Greece, these nations are receiving an excess of 1 million asylum application collectively and during very short time intervals. Though it is illegal to haphazardly deny asylum application in an attempt to decrease the mass number of refugees, the meticulous and proper examination of the application and its rebottle require so much time, effort and resources which Greece and Italy amid their own economic difficulties can’t solely provide. Even if the monetary resources for the examination of applications were to be provided by the EU, the time necessary to meticulously study the applications to ensure a fair and impartial judgement can’t be shortened, thus asylum seekers must be entitled to temporary protection until the decision is passed and rebottled, which is also another hindrance down the road. In addition, in 1989, the International Monetary Fund has found out that the amount of money transferred from migrants in host countries as remittances was 65 billion USD, 45 billion USD more than the 20 billion USD donations for humanitarian assistance which proves the liability and weak immunity of the system towards deception on behalf of thousands of “ferrymen” disguised as refugees (Millbank, 2000). To this end, it is highly crucial that refuge application is cautiously examined so that neither the interests of the host states nor those of refugees would be harmed.

Discussions between scholars, international agencies and media organizations have been held to see whether the EU has lived up to its responsibilities relative to its abilities. As Germany has welcomed nearly 1 million refugees and has already started integration processes, France and the UK, the other two European superpowers, has been reluctant to do the same. The rise of theft and crime in Germany following the Cologne New Year Sex Assaults has discouraged Europe to welcome refugees. However, the majority of states have agreed to give priority to 120,000 extreme Syrian, Iraqi and Eritrean refugee cases. Slovakia and Hungary have expressed concern of the demographic
balance hosting these refugees will implicate especially between the Christian and Muslim populations in Europe. The Czech Republic, Greece, Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria are signatories to the 1951 Convention and supposedly adherents to the principle of “Non-Refoulement”, hence they fear devastating economic effects which hosting and protecting destitute refugees will leave on the nation’s economy, labor market, budget and development index.

As EU interior Ministers met to decide on a new action plan, they have decided to strengthen the EU’s role in hosting asylum seekers and agreed to resettle 120,000 migrant across the entire continent in the next two years, with the priority for Syrians, Iraqis and Eritreans. The EU members have conceded except for 4 states, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. The EU leaders have also reached to the conclusion that the only party capable of curbing the intensity of the conflict is Turkey. The EU has agreed to meet Turkey’s monetary demands to uphold both the humanitarian needs of refugees and security, stability development the Turkish host community and state.

Refugees have become a posing concern in our current era and a topic that is discussed on worldwide basis. We hold you as delegates responsible towards realizing the gravity of such an issue that violates basic human rights. You are held accountable towards finding valuable and realistic resolutions that may be legislations, suggestions, projects, or anything that can actually help all those fleeing their homes and taking asylum in different host countries.

II. Sample Subtopics:

- Food and nutrition
- Living supplies and hygiene kits
• Shelter and rent assistance
• Medical support
• Livelihoods support
• Formal and informal educational support such as counseling for children
• The Social, economic and political drawbacks of hosting refugees
• The possibility of profiting from refugees
• Discrimination between refugees based on religious affiliations
• Facilitating the Flow of Refugees within Europe
• Terrorism and Refugees

(Note that these are only sample subtopics and delegates may suggest any other subtopic during the conference)

III. Hints and Tips:

A. What to focus on when searching:
   • **FOCUS:** the topic is concerned with hosting countries (in the Middle East and Europe).
   • When searching don’t type the topic as it is rather try breaking it into ideas and search about every idea separately (e.g. medical/nutritional/educational support for Syrian refugees in …)

B. Suggested sites:
   • [file:///C:/Users/acc/Downloads/TCM-Protection-Syria.pdf](file:///C:/Users/acc/Downloads/TCM-Protection-Syria.pdf)
   • [https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/syrian-refugees-jordan-confronting-difficult-truths?gclid=Cj0KEQjw2av8BRC7sYeQuMydsq0BEiQAbEX9UJfYOjyoP3gypfKYz0czhuu5L3x33sR_cVXDz82tGJ8aAt_28P8HAQ](https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/syrian-refugees-jordan-confronting-difficult-truths?gclid=Cj0KEQjw2av8BRC7sYeQuMydsq0BEiQAbEX9UJfYOjyoP3gypfKYz0czhuu5L3x33sR_cVXDz82tGJ8aAt_28P8HAQ)

C. Final tips:
• Try using Google scholar as it’s more credible
• Make sure you are using credible sources (.org, .gov, …)
• Be both creative and realistic when writing resolutions

IV. Countries represented:
• Lebanon
• Syria
• Jordan
• Turkey
• Iran
• Qatar
• Yemen
• Saudi Arabia
• Tunisia
• Cyprus
• Iraq
• UAE
• Bahrain
• France
• Germany
• United kingdom
• Italy
• Greece
• US
• Japan
• Norway
• Switzerland
• Egypt
• North Africa
• South Sudan
• Hungary
• Russia
• Austria
• Libya
• Algeria
• Spain
• Belgium
• Bulgaria
• Netherlands
• Denmark
• Sweden
• Romania
• Serbia
• Montenegro
• Macedonia

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VI. References:

- Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Confronting Difficult Truths. (n.d.). Retrieved July 20, 2016, from https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/syrian-refugees-jordan-confronting-difficult-truths?gclid=Cj0KEQjwwry8BRDjsbjMpPSDvagBEiQA5oW0nOP8q9E566tI0ldDLdAzSXUTKfPa_zADCtMgWgDRLpgaAnDB8P8HAQ
- Aid for Syria Crisis Refugees. (n.d.). Retrieved July 20, 2016, from http://www.welfareassociation.org.uk/what-we-do/emergency-humanitarian-relief/aid-syria-crisis-refugees/?gclid=Cj0KEQjwwry8BRDjsbjMpPSDvagBEiQA5oW0nJdGfbwreN_p8GsWIs5NUE0m3yWvqLwWw1EezqELkaAtRg8P8HAQ
- Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Confronting Difficult Truths. (n.d.). Retrieved July 20, 2016, from https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/syrian-refugees-jordan-confronting-difficult-truths?gclid=Cj0KEQjw2ay8BRC7sYequMydsq0BEiQAbEX9UJfYOjyoP3gypfKYz0czhuu5L3x33sR_cVXDz82tGJ8aAt_28P8HAQ