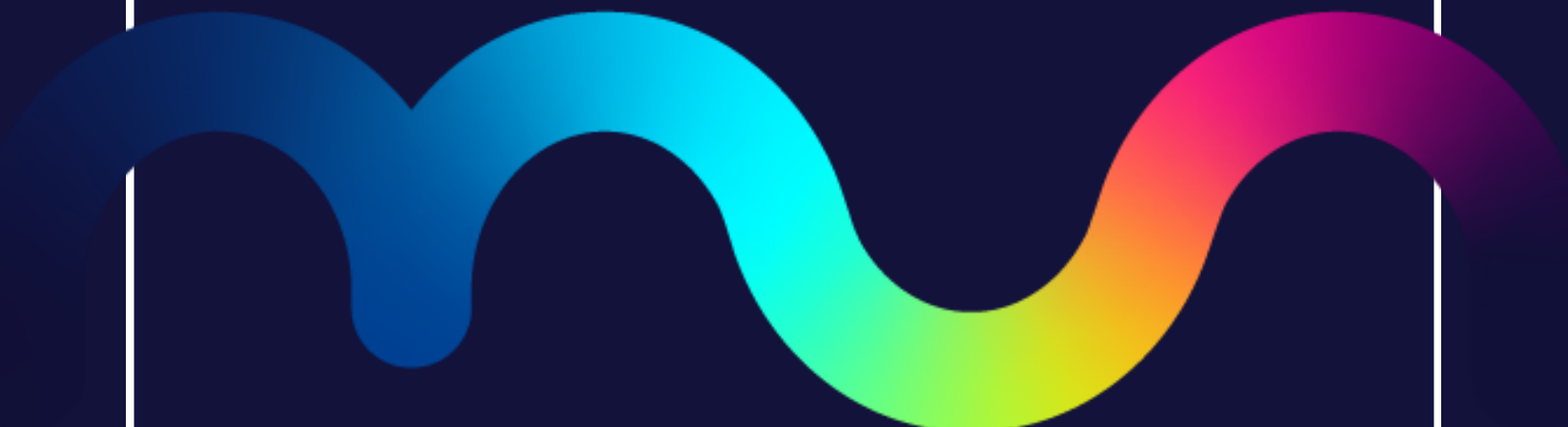




UNHCR



Welcome

We welcome you, delegates, to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Committee (UNHCR). We look forward to your participation in the event. Likewise, we will briefly introduce ourselves; Jimena Abascal Villafuerte, the President; Leire Castrillo Avila, the Moderator and Paulina Patricia Reyes Sosa, the Conference Officer. Finally, we look forward to seeing you doing your best, researching all the information needed about your delegation, and always communicating with great diplomacy to achieve a resolution that benefits all participants present in the quorum.

Firstly, you must know this information about your committee. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14th, 1950 by the General Assembly in the aftermath of the Second World War. Its purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees, for them to exercise the right to find a safe refugee in another State, and return home voluntarily. In order to achieve this, the UNHCR collaborates with governments and other partners to strengthen national laws and systems, and most importantly to support the provision of services on an international level. The main scope of the UNHCR is to supervise the implementation of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

General statistics:

"The scope of UNHCR's work has expanded over the years to include returning refugees, people forcibly displaced within their own country, and stateless people, or who have been denied a nationality." (UNHCR, 2023).

"At the end of 2022, 108.4 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order" (UNHCR, 2022).

"83 % of refugees live in countries with developing or the least developed economies" (UNHCR, 2023).

Topic A: Ensuring job opportunities and financial aid for refugees.

Many countries are concerned that refugees are stealing job opportunities from their citizens, fearing a negative impact on their citizen's income. Hence, refugees are often seen as an economic competence, even when research has proven the contrary. In fact, according to the ICMC (2020, par. 5) "Contradictory to the usual fear that refugees will take away jobs, the evidence shows that they are more likely to create jobs than other migrant groups or native-born citizens."

In addition, other countries with less income are worried about new refugee arrivals, for it will lead to a lack of resources. However, as refugees find a stable place where they can reside, they bestow significantly the tax revenue, the economy's stimulation, the productivity's rise, the improvement of local worker wages, the boost of innovation, and the generation of international trade. (LIRS, 2022, par. 6)

Furthermore, there are countries where it's an obligation by law or by other UN agreements (The 1951 Refugee Convention, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc.), for refugees to work. Nonetheless, many refugees are denied jobs, resulting in various concerns about labor market distortion and limited capacity to absorb new labor, the crowding of certain sectors, availability of jobs for citizens, reduction in wages, and decline in working conditions. (Zetter, R., 2018, par. 2)

In addition, other countries only allow refugees to work in certain sectors. For example, according to the International Organization of Migration (2018) "in many European countries, refugees who are able to secure employment are overrepresented in sectors with a large incidence of unskilled low-paid employment, such as agriculture, construction, cleaning services, hotels and restaurants, and retail trade." (p. 6)

Since so many refugees are denied formal job opportunities, they may end up in the informal sector, which only increases their chances of suffering from exploitation, job insecurity, discrimination, and overall lack of rights, as they are not protected by law, creating a greater competition for all. Besides, allowing refugees unrestricted access to the labor market can actually reduce the impact on wages and create fiscal benefits for

the government. (Peace, F., 2018, par. 3)

Furthermore, the lack of education and academic preparation can be a factor as to why employers decide not to hire refugees. According to the UNHCR (2018), the educational certification of refugees is often lost during the chaos of flight, or it may not be recognized for entry into an institution in another country. On top of that, on numerous occasions, they are required to pay higher international student rates. (p. 2)

On the other hand, a significant factor to consider is the limited access to financial services among many refugees. For instance, they don't have access to banks and other mainstream financial services. "This creates an enormous hurdle on their way to self-reliance and economic independence. Because without a bank account, they lack a safe place to save and receive money, and have much fewer options to make payments or access loans." (UNHCR, 2023, par. 1)

In addition, a big percentage of refugees tend to be entrepreneurs, given that it's easier for them to start their own business than to be employed by someone else. This occurs even in places where this type of activity is not legally allowed. As a result, they can face challenges such as lack of local legal regulations, language barriers, issues with taxes, among many others.

Statistics according to the UNHCR (2023):

- "75% of refugees have access to work in law, fully or partially. However, 62% of refugees live in countries with restricted access to employment in practice."
- "UNHCR's 2022 Education Report shows that only 37% of refugees are enrolled in secondary school (as opposed to over 80% worldwide) and only 6% are enrolled in higher education."
- "33% of refugees live in countries with restricted freedom of movement (the right and ability to move)"
- "According to UNHCR, 59% of refugees live in countries with restricted access in practice to registering and operating a business."
- Türkiye is the largest host to refugees, receiving 3.6 million people. The Islamic Republic of Iran is second with 3.4 million. In third place is Colombia with 2.5 million.

On the other hand, over half of the refugees under UNHCR's remit come from just three countries which are: Syrian Arab Republic with 6.8 million, Ukraine with 5.7 million and finally Afghanistan with the same amount as Ukraine.

Present Solutions:

As a present solution, The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol are being respected, since they're the only legal instruments that have the purpose of protecting refugees. Along with them, The Global Refugee Forum, made by the UNHCR, is the world's largest refugee gathering, and it offers an opportunity for States and stakeholders to propose new solutions and reach agreements.

Additionally, the Global Compact has been pursued as stipulated due to the fact that it's an international settlement whose purpose is to "Alleviating pressures on host countries, Promoting the self-sufficiency of refugees, Expand access to solutions involving third countries, Encourage in the countries of origin circumstances that favor a return in dignified and safe conditions" (UNHCR, 2023). Additionally, this agreement works along with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the World Refugee Forum

For instance, some Governments have also taken action, like Jordan in 2021, where 62,000 work permits were given to Syrian refugees, allowing them to work in the country. There are also independent organizations, such as the Tent Partnership for Refugees, which works with businesses to help find opportunities for refugees to integrate into the economy.

Guiding Questions:

- How do the laws in host countries affect the accessibility for refugees to get a job?
- What is the situation of the delegation regarding refugees?
- What are the laws and regulations of the delegation regarding the topic? Are they truly being implemented?
- Is the delegation an accepting country for refugees? How many live in the country? Do they face discrimination?
- Has the delegation taken action on the topic? What solutions can be proposed based on that?

Supporting Link Suggestions Topic A:

- UNHCR. (2023). *Financial inclusion*. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/livelihoods-and-economic-inclusion/financial-inclusion>
- UNHCR. (2023). *Refugees' Access to Jobs and Financial Services – Background Guide Challenge 3*. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/media/refugees-access-jobs-and-financial-services-background-guide-challenge-3-0>
- UNHCR. (2023). *Refugee Data Finder*. Retrieved June 14, 2023, from <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>

Topic B: Democratic Republic of the Congo: dire living conditions forced by internally displaced people as a result of armed groups.

The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has reached devastating levels as violence has increased by armed groups. Women and children have unfortunately been the main victims, making the UNHCR and other humanitarian partners deeply concerned regarding the increase in gender-based violence. In the meantime, displacement continues to impact millions of vulnerable civilians. As an example, in early 2023, communities in South Kivu experienced a catastrophic flooding, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people and the destruction of over 3,000 homes, further worsening the already dire situation in the DRC.

Many of these refugees are living in settlements which are a "safe place" to live in compared to living in the actual place where the conflict is going on. However, this doesn't assure any kind of official security to the refugees, who don't live in adequate conditions. Likewise, the reduction of food rations and other essential services in the camps and settlements, caused by the shortage of funds, has aggravated the situation, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

Statistics according to UNHCR (2023), Relief Web (2022), Center for Preventive Action (2023), Internal Displacement Monitoring center (2023):

- An estimated 6.2 million DRC internally displaced people in urgent necessity.
- In 2023, only 29% of the \$233 million required to cover the humanitarian needs of the displaced in the country has so far been provided to UNHCR. As a result, The UN has had to suspend air deliveries of aid to certain eastern provinces in the face of attacks on its convoys.
- By 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to be one of the countries in the world with the most internal displacements.
- Approximately 27 million people are severely food insecure (over 1/4 of the population) as a result of the upsurge of violence, armed conflict and the instability in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the World Food Program, an estimated of 2.8 million children are acutely malnourished, and they have found themselves in a suffering situation from acute malnutrition.

- In neighboring countries, there are more than one million refugees from the DRC. Emphasizing that the countries which have received the largest amount of Congolese refugees are Rwanda and Burundi.
- Based on the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview, the humanitarian situation is not expected to improve in 2023 or 2024

Present Solutions:

France has urged the European Union to support peace talks in DRC and sanction Rwanda for its support of M2. The reason for these punishments that the country has applied to Rwanda was the accusations that compromised the DRC of using the conflict for political purposes, along with "fabricating" a massacre of at least 131 civilians.

Furthermore, according to the UNHCR, it is hoped that resettlement will also be a contributing factor to strengthening and widening the protection environment for remaining refugees, as well as advancing other durable solutions in countries of asylum. Two countries that are very present in the external relations of the country are France and Italy. However, both nations are very interested in the oil commerce inside the country since both have oil companies working in the country, TOTAL and ENI.

Guiding Questions:

- Are Congolese refugees well respected in other states? Or are they suffering from mistreatment?
- What are the reasons other states haven't helped the current situation of displacement in the DRC?
- What are the current laws that protect the rights of refugees and ensure that they live in adequate conditions?
- Which NGOs are actively working to improve the living conditions of internally displaced people in the DRC? What achievements have they obtained?
- How does it affect refugees psychologically, not being able to pursue their careers in another state?

Supporting Link Suggestions Topic B:

- Center for Preventive Action. (2023). *Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Retrieved July 20, 2023, from <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo>
- European Commission. (2023). *Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Retrieved from https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/democratic-republic-congo_en
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- World Vision. (2023). *DRC conflict: Facts, FAQs, and how to help*. Retrieved August 7, 2023, from <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/drc-conflict-facts>

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