

FORUM: Special Conference on Ethos vs. Progress (SPECON)

QUESTION OF: Revisiting the right to asylum in the light of geopolitical tension and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa

STUDENT OFFICER: Paraskevi Panagiotopoulou

POSITION: Deputy President

INTRODUCTION

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been plagued by multifaceted geopolitical conflicts and evolving tension in the past decade. Multiple occurrences, such as wars and economic disparities, have been facilitated by the region's complicated history and the democratization and modernization efforts of multiple governments. The ongoing war in Ukraine, which brought about rising energy costs, has also greatly influenced the situation. These conflicts, which involve local, regional, and global actors, have destabilized the region both financially and ethically and are considered the root cause of a plethora of food, energy, and debt crises, inhumane living conditions and human rights violations, exposing its citizens to grave risks.

Due to the humanitarian restraint present, the number of refugees who seek to escape these extreme circumstances has risen dramatically in recent years. In fact, an estimated 7.6 million refugees, around 2.7 million of whom are hosted in the MENA region, and 12.4 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have been fleeing the region's protracted conflict zones as of 2020, with numbers only rising.¹ These statistics undoubtedly hint at the severity of the issue, especially from a humanitarian standpoint, as a multitude of individuals find themselves facing dire situations, having to flee their homes and wondering if they will be granted the basic right of being provided with a safe haven.

¹*Borgomeo, Edoardo, et al. EBB and FLOW.*, <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1411/files/documents/9781464817465.pdf>

The right to asylum often fails to be recognized by sovereign governments, even though it has been classified as a human right in Article 14 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)².

Furthermore, under the rule of international law, specifically the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, every refugee is entitled to a group of fundamental rights including housing, work, and education while displaced with the purpose of their “rehabilitation, protection and the preservation of their dignity”.³ Due to multisectoral factors such as political instability and corrupt governments, as well as religious tensions, differentiating viewpoints, and the rise of the far-right movement throughout the European Union (EU), extremist ideologies are spreading rapidly. Thus, more countries refuse to accept the integration and ensure the smooth transition of refugees from their home country to their host or are often unable to support such, both within and outside the MENA. The phenomenon of countries denying their citizens the right to flee due to unfit circumstances regarding their status and citizenship has also become increasingly common.

Taking into consideration this year’s theme, namely “ Ethos vs. Progress”, it is crucial to draw on the economic disparities within the region. As some More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) and major oil exporters within the MENA continue to evolve, other energy importers suffer major losses while attempting to keep their economies stable⁴, and thereby become unfit to provide sufficient lives for their citizens. This has sparked multiple fruitful discussions regarding the balance of ethics and economic advancements. However, to conclude, it is crucial to aid refugees in need not with the purpose of improving any state’s economy but rather to provide humanitarian assistance. The right to asylum is fundamental precisely because the psychological and physical impacts displacement can have on individuals shall not be morally undermined.

² United Nations. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” OHCHR, 1948, www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.

³“The 1951 Refugee Convention | UNHCR.” UNHCR, 2019, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention.

⁴ “Misfortune to Marginalization: The Geopolitical Impact of Structural Economic Failings in Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon.” Carnegieendowment.org, carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/01/misfortune-to-marginalization-the-geopolitical-impact-of-structural-economic-failings-in-egypt-tunisia-and-lebanon?lang=en&er=middle-east.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Civil war

Civil war refers to “a war fought by different groups of people living in the same country.”⁵

Democratization

Democratization refers to “ the process of making countries or organizations use democratic ways of making decisions. “⁶

Geopolitics

Geopolitics refers to the “ analysis of the geographic influences on power relationships in international relations.”⁷

Inflation

Inflation refers to “a general, continuous increase in prices.”⁸

Marginalization

Marginalization refers to “the act of treating someone or something as if they are not important”, under this context referring to undermined peoples.”⁹

Populist

Populist refers to “attempting to achieve popularity with ordinary people and to represent their ideas and opinions.”¹⁰

⁵ *Civil War* | *English Meaning* - *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/civil-war. Accessed 22 July 2024.

⁶ *Democratization* | *English Meaning* - *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/democratization. Accessed 22 July 2024.

⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*, www.britannica.com/search?query=Geopolitics. Accessed 22 July 2024.

⁸ *Inflation* | *English Meaning* - *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/inflation. Accessed 22 July 2024.

⁹ *Marginalization* | *English Meaning* - *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/marginalization. Accessed 22 July 2024.

¹⁰ *Populist* | *English Meaning* - *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/populist. Accessed 22 July 2024.

Proxy war

Proxy war refers to “ a war fought between groups or smaller countries that each represent the interests of other larger powers, and may have help and support from these.”¹¹

Refugee

Refugee refers to “ Any uprooted, homeless, involuntary migrant who has crossed a frontier and no longer possesses the protection of his or her former government.”¹²

Sovereignty

Sovereignty refers to, “ in political theory, the ultimate overseer, or authority, in the decision-making process of the state and in the maintenance of order.”¹³

The non-refoulement principle

The non-refoulement principle is a “ core principle of the 1951 Convention, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.”¹⁴

The right to asylum

The right to asylum refers to “ In international law, the protection granted by a state to a foreign citizen against his own state.”¹⁵

¹¹ *Proxy War | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/proxy-war. Accessed 22 July 2024.

¹² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/search?query=refugee. Accessed 22 July 2024.

¹³ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com:443/. Accessed 22 July 2024.

¹⁴ “The 1951 Refugee Convention.” *UNHCR*, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention. Accessed 22 July 2024.

¹⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/search?query=the%2Bright%2Bof%2BAsylum. Accessed 22 July 2024.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Displacement

Displacement can occur in various forms and is defined by the involuntary fleeing of individuals while facing persecution and conflict leading to human rights violations¹⁶. Asylum seekers are oftentimes displaced due to their home country posing an immediate threat to their health, as well as not adequately protecting their fundamental human rights. Even though displacement is extremely common, with more than 100 million¹⁷ people around the world having been forced to flee their homes due to war and crises, it can have devastating impacts on individuals' physical and psychological well-being.

A plethora of humanitarian crises cause the displacement of individuals around the globe in this day and age, impacting different sectors of life and its preservation. Resource scarcity can be deemed one of the most influential ones, as it destabilizes nations' economies while also endangering their citizens' health and wellbeing. The MENA region has been acknowledged as the most water scarce region in the world, with sixteen of the twenty five most water insecure countries being located within it according to relevant data from the year 2019.¹⁸ The dry, arid Middle Eastern and North African climate causes massive droughts and other natural disasters, which, in turn, take an unfortunate toll on the local population. Energy debate between MEDCS and LEDCS has also influenced the situation, as well as multiple adamant food shortages within the region. When intense power gaps occur between the region's socioeconomic divisions, inflation takes place. This phenomenon refers to a rapid increase in prices that eventually leads to currency losing its initial worth. Inflation has greatly affected multiple nations' economic structure, leading to citizens not being able to afford food and less food being produced by states due to minimal resources and overreliance on food exporters, thereby resulting in food shortages.¹⁹

¹⁶ Merriam-Webster. "Definition of DISPLACEMENT." Merriam-Webster.com, 2019, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/displacement.

¹⁷ ---. "UNHCR - the UN Refugee Agency." Unhcr.org, 2023, www.unhcr.org/.

¹⁸ Mahmoud, Mohammed. "The Looming Climate and Water Crisis in the Middle East and North Africa." Carnegieendowment.org, 19 Apr. 2024, carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/04/the-looming-climate-and-water-crisis-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa?lang=en.

¹⁹ "Breaking the Cycle: How Can the MENA Region Tackle Food Insecurity?" Middle East Council on Global Affairs,

This resource struggle often leads countries to resort to drastic measures, such as making agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other MEDCS with the purpose of keeping their economy afloat. However, due to structural economic disparity within their constitutions that fails to be targeted, many countries are unable to pay back large sums, and thus spiral in extreme debt, further complicating their situation and distracting political leaders from ensuring the provision of human rights and crisis management. When countries engage in war and violence is prominent, resources are also impacted on a great extent. Furthermore, with different forms of violence, including violence inflicted by civilian's own authoritarian government or another government, bombings, air strikes, mass murder and multicides being present during these tensions, individuals are forced to seek asylum in order to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Oftentimes, displaced persons are able to flee and rebuild their lives in a secure environment in another state. However, due to some countries' policy and political foundations, displaced persons are denied the right to asylum and thus become exposed to dangers outside or their control. As a result, they become further deprived of their rights to protection from discrimination, freedom of religion, identity and travel documents, work, housing, education and freedom of movement and find themselves unable to reintegrate into society²⁰.

Displacement conditions are harsh since asylum seekers are forced to leave their past lives behind, traveling without access to shelter, clean water, food, and other basic resources necessary for survival on a daily basis. While on route, displaced persons are vulnerable to exploitation, including the sexual exploitation of women and children, and may even become separated from their families or witness a family member lose their lives. Traveling by boat to reach the European borders is extremely dangerous as well, adding to the uncertainty of

mecouncil.org/publication/food-insecurity-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/#:~:text=The%20MENA%20region%20is%20characterized%20by%20water%20scarcity%2C.

²⁰ *RIGHTS on the MOVE Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, Migrants and the Internally Displaced*, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/pol330012004en.pdf#:~:text=Whether%20in%20purpose-built%20camps%2C%20in%20settlements%20or%20in>

their situations. In 2022, nearly 3,800 people died on migration routes within and from the MENA region, the highest number since 2017, when 4,255 deaths were recorded.²¹

Thus, the provision of humanitarian aid to displaced persons remains a priority. Humanitarian aid consists of “emergency assistance to prevent or reduce suffering and death in crises”²², and is usually delivered by volunteers and workers of the United Nations’ subsidiary bodies, as well as Non-governmental and nonprofit organizations. At the core of all humanitarian actions lie the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), humanitarianism’s key aims are to save lives, alleviate suffering, preserve human dignity, ensure solidarity, responsibility, and the protection and long term recovery of vulnerable populations.²³ Through the five step Humanitarian Programme Cycle, which consists of the UNOCHA’s crisis and aid delivering procedure management, humanitarian aid is effectively distributed across all regions of the world. Seemingly small actions such as delivering resources and providing shelter ensure the safety and wellbeing of countless individuals. Thereby, the significance of humanitarian aid shall not be undermined.

Case Studies

Israeli - Palestinian Conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict has a deep-rooted history of colonialism and continues to destabilize the MENA region through various means. The geopolitical rivalry between the two governments began in November 1917, when Britain’s then foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour, wrote a letter addressed to a figurehead of the British-Jewish

²¹ “A Boat Carrying 750 Migrants Capsized in the Mediterranean. The Tragedy Reflects a Worldwide Refugee Crisis.” *America Magazine*, 20 June 2023, www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2023/06/20/world-refugees-mediterranean-capsized-trawler-migrants-greece-245523.

²² Solis-Moreira, Jocelyn. “What Is Humanitarian Aid? Peanut Butter, WiFi, and Other Life-Saving Supplies.” *Popular Science*, 31 Oct. 2023, www.popsci.com/health/what-is-humanitarian-aid/.

²³ “Site Search.” *Unocha.org*, 2024, www.unocha.org/results?q=the+significance+of+humanitarian+aid#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=the%20significance%20of%20humanitarian%20aid&gsc.page=1. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

community, proposing “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,” otherwise known as the Balfour Declaration. Arab and Jewish nationalism became prominent during this period, with the Zionist movement, a movement dedicated to taking action to establish a predominantly Jewish state in Palestine²⁴, gaining mass supporters across Europe. A British Mandate was adopted during the years 1923 to 1941, with mass Jewish immigration taking place across confiscated Palestinian land, especially during Nazi rule. This sparked controversy amongst not only Palestinian civilians, but also other Arab nations that engaged in acts of protest such as the Arab Revolt, which lasted from 1936 until 1939²⁵. As a result of these uprisings, the Arab National Committee was formed to encourage Palestinians to defend their land and sovereignty. Alas, within the timeframe of the Revolt, Palestinian civilians engaged in a multitude of acts, such as going on strikes, boycotting Jewish produce and forming various civil-led resistance movements to turn away allied British and Jewish forces. However, when their attempts were unsuccessful, serious clashes in armed conflict between the groups emerged, leading to the death, wounding, imprisonment and displacement of countless individuals regardless of ethnicity or religious beliefs.

In order to prevent further violence and harmful practices, the United Nations proposed a two-state solution, assigning parts of the region to the two groups. This division was never implemented due to disagreement from the Arab side, leading to the tragic events of the major mass displacement, dispossession and marginalization of Palestinians known as the Nakba (“catastrophe”), which led to the death of more than 15,000 Palestinians, and the escalation of the situation into a full-blown war in 1948. In the present day, thousands of Palestinians continue to become displaced refugees.²⁶ The descendants of these populations live as six million refugees in 58 squalid camps throughout Palestine and its neighboring countries, namely Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

In this case study, displacement was brought about by a phenomenon called genocide. Briefly explained, the term genocide refers to “acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group”²⁷. Palestine’s ethnic population

²⁴---. “Zionism | Definition, History, Examples, & Facts.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 30 Jan. 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism.

²⁵“The Arab Revolt.” *Www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org*, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-1936-arab-riots.

²⁶Alsaafin, Linah. “What’s the Israel-Palestine Conflict About? A Simple Guide.” *Al Jazeera*, 10 Mar. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/9/whats-the-israel-palestine-conflict-about-a-simple-guide.

²⁷What Is Genocide? encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/what-is-genocide.

was harmed and killed by external forces with the purpose of its wipe out and the use of its land by the Israeli peoples.

For the people of Palestine, the Nakba never really ended. Palestinians have obtained an identity of statelessness due to the events of 70 years prior, with Palestine not being officially recognized as a sovereign state any longer. Palestinian civilians have no country to call home, and continue to flee to nearby states, taking shelter in refugee camps located within overcrowded communities. Since the Nakba, 450,000 Palestinian refugees have registered in Lebanon camps, which were designated for the provision of temporary housing²⁸. The graph below details displacement patterns.

Having earned the name “forgotten peoples,” the individuals that have managed to remain within the borders of what was once Palestine have faced mass internal displacement. Internally displaced persons, or IDPs for short, are citizens that have been displaced within their country of origin.²⁹ As the allied forces continued to take over Palestinian land, about 160,000 Palestinians remained in the newly created state, representing somewhere in the region of only 10% of the original population.³⁰



²⁸Anera. “Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon, Gaza, West Bank | Anera.” Anera, 17 Aug. 2023, www.anera.org/priorities/palestinian-refugee-camps.

²⁹UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency. “Internally Displaced People | UNHCR.” UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/internally-displaced-people.

³⁰Darweish, Marwan. “The Nakba: How the Palestinians Were Expelled From Israel.” The Conversation, theconversation.com/the-nakba-how-the-palestinians-were-expelled-from-israel-205151.

Figure 1 :The Nakba³¹

Syrian Civil War

In January 2011, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was asked by the Wall Street Journal if he believed the wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa in 2010 and 2011, otherwise known as the Arab Spring, could affect his own policy during an interview. The Spring had resulted in the fall of multiple authoritarian regimes within the region, powered by civilian led protesters. The political figure denied these claims on sight.³²

However, in March of the same year, Syrian civilians erupted in pro-democracy protests across the nation, demanding an end to the Assad regime, a harsh dictatorship. Assad succeeded his father with his presidency in the year 2000, promising political reform and increased freedom to the Syrian people. Unfortunately, he went on to follow in his father's footsteps, implementing extreme measures such as pervasive censorship and surveillance, brutal violence against suspected opponents of the regime, and even economical alterations to aid his capitalistic allies. The oppressive nature of law enforcement under Assad's command sparked a great deal of controversy. Additionally, natural disasters such as the 2006 drought drove farmers to internal displacement in urban areas and impacted the regime's economy.

The masses protested as means of making their voices heard, and only engaged in peaceful practices. Despite this, Syrian authorities under the regime's command detained protesters using violence resulting in the loss of lives, which fueled their cause. Slowly, more peaceful protests began to arise, creating a sectarian division between the nation's religious groups, the Sunni Muslim majority and Assad's Alawite Muslim minority, with propaganda against the Sunni division spreading rapidly. By September 2011, independent militias were developed with the intent of achieving democratization by restraining Assad's political power. Multiple armed clashes between the two forces continue to take place to this day, with a variety of Western and Arab powers engaging in the conflict. In the year 2013, the number of

³¹Alsaafin, Lintah. "What's the Israel-Palestine Conflict About? A Simple Guide." Al Jazeera, 10 Mar. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/9/whats-the-israel-palestine-conflict-about-a-simple-guide.

³² *The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Syrian Civil War | Facts & Timeline."* Encyclopædia Britannica, Britannica, 6 Dec. 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War.

refugees seeking asylum exceeded one million, with aid being distributed through the United Nations Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) mandate.³³

With air strikes and bombings becoming a common occurrence, the number of displaced persons seeking asylum has risen significantly within the state. Further causes of Syrian displacement include political instability due to the ongoing conflicts involving terrorist groups, human rights violations such as torture and unlawful killings, high levels of unemployment fuelling the creation of poverty stricken regions, proxy wars that further complicate the situation, gender based violence and extreme insecurity.³⁴

Syrian displacement has taken a toll on the MENA region as a whole. With more than 12 million displaced persons³⁵ fleeing, it has led to what is considered one of the most severe human crises recorded in global history. The number of registered Syrian refugees in other countries has also increased significantly, exceeding 4 million by late 2015.³⁶ Alongside causing physical and psychological harm to the Syrian peoples, displacement has also affected minority groups, gender based violence and economic hardships.

Furthermore, internal displacement continues to plague the region. IDP statistics are rising rapidly, with an approximate of 6 million persons recorded³⁷. Indiscriminate attacks, fear of being targeted, and loss of basic services have led masses towards fleeing to other parts of the country.

Iraq Conflicts

The state of Iraq has faced a high amount of hardships ever since the U.S. invasion took place during the year 2003. The U.S.-Iraqi war was justified by then president George W. Bush following the tragic events of the September 11 attacks, as well as Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction and support of terrorist organizations such as the

³³"Syria Fact Sheet - Timeline and Figures | UNHCR." UNHCR, 2024, www.unhcr.org/media/syria-fact-sheet-timeline-and-figures.

³⁴ *The Context, Causes, and Consequences of Syrian Displacement*. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Chapter-1-4.pdf>.

³⁵"Syria Situation." Global Focus, reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/syria-situation.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

Al-Qaeda, an Islamist terrorist group.³⁸ During the armed conflict period, which lasted until 2011, Iraq faced mass displacement.

Currently, it is estimated that over one million people remain internally displaced, while three million people require humanitarian assistance.³⁹ As Iraq is facing reconstruction difficulties while the current government attempts to revert to the previous president's authoritarian regime, the economy of the country continues to suffer, and the ongoing tension and clashes that continue to occur with neighboring Kurdish groups as the aftermath of Iraq's invasion before the war have destabilized the nation profoundly.

Iraq's displaced persons continue to flee due to sectarian violence, coalition military operations, and general insecurity within the region brought about by the aftermath of the war. Even though the conflict with the United States ended years ago, the possibility of yet another humanitarian crisis arising is more than likely, and its effects continue to haunt the local population.

Adding to recent global concerns, mass displacement in Iraq has taken a toll on the nation. Economic struggles are the least of the issues the structurally weak, corrupt and fragile institution has to tackle: Ongoing clashes, as well as climate change, unemployment and unfit living circumstances complicate Iraq's situation. As masses of refugees arrive at international borders every day, a crisis related to their fair division and housing has become evident. IDP numbers have become alarmingly high within the nation recently. Even though an estimate of 5 million IDPs⁴⁰ have been returned to their homes, they still struggle to reintegrate to society and support themselves as well as their families.

Yemen Civil War

Yemen's Civil War broke out in 2015, after the Shiite Muslim rebel group with links to Iran known as the Houthis took control of the nation's capital city, Sanaa, demanding

³⁸ ---. "Iraq War | Summary, Causes, Combatants, & Facts." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 28 Nov. 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Iraq-War.

³⁹Center for Preventive Action. "Political Instability in Iraq." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Center for Preventive Action, 6 Jan. 2023, www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/political-instability-iraq.

⁴⁰UNHCR. "Iraq Refugee Crisis: Aid, Statistics and News | USA for UNHCR." *Unrefugees.org*, 2018, www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/iraq/.

governmental reform and lower fuel prices. When negotiation attempts between the group and the president at the time, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, ultimately failed in January 2015, the rebels seized the presidential palace, resulting in the resignation of the officially recognized government. The political leader made great efforts to return to his position but was only able to do so from another state, having been detained and banished. Following the invasion, Saudi Arabia launched major attacks on the Houthis alongside other Gulf states. These included economic isolation imposed by sanctions as well as airstrikes, which led to the destruction of the capital and other areas and put innocent civilians' lives at risk.

The conflict had a religious undertone, as Shiite and Sunni Muslims have had various brutal disagreements over time. The majority of both Yemen's and Saudi Arabia's civilian population is made up of the Sunni muslim division, resulting in the Saudi Arabian government feeling indebted to stand against the Shiite Houthis in an attempt to defend the nation's religious beliefs. In later years, when more western powers became involved, fearing the severity of the situation, Yemen's Civil War was at risk of becoming a proxy war. This type of war occurs when the indirect support of one or more third parties in the conflict aims to change its outcome⁴¹ using indirect measures. Ultimately, these powers do not participate in the conflict, but use their influence to guide one or more involved parties to success. Fortunately, the armed clashes between the Houthi rebels and the Saudi Arabian military have subsided in recent years. However, the humanitarian crisis has yet to improve with 21.6 million people being in dire need of aid, including 11 million children, and more than 4.5 million being displaced.⁴²

Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon

The situations in Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon are characterized by the economic disparities and power gaps within the MENA region, which have caused a multitude of interrelated crises. From a political point of view, all three countries are facing structural setbacks in their economies: Currently, the nations are highly indebted to and dependent on More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) as food and energy importers.

⁴¹ Baugh, Sue. "Proxy War | Armed Conflict | Britannica." Encyclopædia Britannica, 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/proxy-war.

⁴²---. "War in Yemen." *Global Conflict Tracker*, Council on Foreign Relations, 5 Mar. 2024, www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen.

All three nations suffered major impacts during the mass Arab protest wave known as the Arab Spring. Before the year 2011, when the wave took place, the nations were ruled by dictators and authoritarian regimes. Tunisian civilians were the first to demand a political reform, creating what is known as Tunisia's Jasmine revolution⁴³. Protesters took to the streets voicing their dissatisfaction with the political leader Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. After multiple violent clashes facilitated by the government, the president stepped down, and Tunisia began its democratization protest. These acts inspired Egyptian civilians, who began Egypt's January 25th revolution⁴⁴, eventually achieving democracy and overcoming tensions. Lebanese masses were also determined to achieve democracy, and ultimately, succeeded in the same manner.

However, the road to democracy was certainly not easy. As a result of the reform, the constitutions of all three nations remain fraudulent and unstable. Even though they have progressed in the democratic aspect, they still struggle to control their financial affairs and have been left in a weak state due to the aftermath of the tensions. Thus, extreme debt and poverty has stricken the regions, paired with resource scarcity, which has caused severe water and food shortages. Natural disasters have also contributed to the loss of farmland, which has greatly impacted the three countries, as the agriculture sector has become famished. Thus, due to limited resources, wrongfully handled financial affairs, as well major dependence on MEDCs within the region, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, these nations are experiencing dire circumstances. The power gaps between MEDCs within the MENA, who have always had strong governments, and LEDCs is ever increasing, and the inhumane, insecure living circumstances in the three nations have caused millions of people to become displaced⁴⁵.

The impacts of the Ukraine war, which include supply chain disruptions, rising food prices, and restricted access to food, played a decisive role and influenced the crises within

⁴³The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Jasmine Revolution | Tunisian History." Encyclopædia Britannica, 10 Dec. 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Jasmine-Revolution.

⁴⁴ Al Jazeera . "What Happened during Egypt's January 25 Revolution?" Wwww.aljazeera.com, 25 Jan. 2023, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/25/what-happened-during-egypts-january-25-revolution.

⁴⁵ ---. "The Looming Climate and Water Crisis in the Middle East and North Africa." Carnegieendowment.org, 19 Apr. 2024, carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/04/the-looming-climate-and-water-crisis-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa?lang=en.

the MENA greatly. Russia and Ukraine were considered the main nutrition exporters to this part of the MENA region, with over 80% of wheat imports in Egypt originating from both nations⁴⁶, as showcased in the graph below. While oil-exporting countries and MEDCs such as Saudi Arabia benefit from the increase in energy prices, energy importers struggle to balance their economic affairs. Furthermore, due to their fraudulent political structure, they are unable to adapt vastly to changing prices and inflation in currency, resulting in a long-standing food insecurity period.

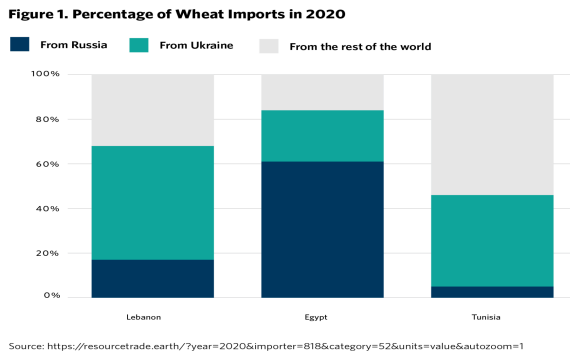


Figure 2: Percentage of Wheat Imports in 2020⁴⁷

Without energy prices being covered, the nations are left to spiral in a cycle of debt. Some have already reached out to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Without food being imported into the country from these influential sources, which are visible in the graph above, food insecurity has become increasingly severe, alongside water scarcity due to the dry climate.

The Right to Asylum

⁴⁶ "Misfortune to Marginalization: The Geopolitical Impact of Structural Economic Failings in Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon." Carnegieendowment.org, carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/01/misfortune-to-marginalization-the-geopolitical-impact-of-structural-economic-failings-in-egypt-tunisia-and-lebanon?lang=en&er=middle-east.

⁴⁷ "Misfortune to Marginalization: The Geopolitical Impact of Structural Economic Failings in Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon." Carnegieendowment.org, carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/01/misfortune-to-marginalization-the-geopolitical-impact-of-structural-economic-failings-in-egypt-tunisia-and-lebanon?lang=en&er=middle-east.

The United Nations Charter ⁴⁸ and the UNGA legal committee's set principles distinctly express Member States' obligation to uphold international law, otherwise known as the global commons. These include independence, impartiality, and decency, or, rephrased, the sustenance of a decent environment able to fulfill citizens' basic needs for survival and wellbeing.⁴⁹ With the signing and ratification of the Charter, the provision of safety and stability for any Member State's civilians becomes a dutiful responsibility.

Despite these legal guidelines, it has become evident that multiple sovereign governments fail to adhere to the principles of international law due to one common factor: fragility. In this political context, fragility can be defined as "the absence or breakdown of a social contract between people and their government."⁵⁰ States become fragile when their governing bodies fail to preserve their populations' rights and lack legitimacy from their citizens' viewpoints. Some fragile and corrupt institutions are unable to cater to the masses due to economic struggles or deformities within their constitutions, while others become fragile because of the rise of dictators and extremist groups that spread populist ideologies and restrict personal liberties. Additionally, crises heavily complicate these states' situations. When geopolitical tensions rise and countries engage in war, armed conflict, face economic difficulties or develop authoritarian regimes, countless individuals' country of origin may become unfit for life to be sustained.

When a country's population is exposed to life-threatening situations, countless human rights violations take place. Civilians are deprived of access to water, food, sanitation, health care, education, shelter or the possession of property, freedom of speech, security of person as well as protection from discrimination and persecution on any grounds, all deemed as fundamental rights in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, specifically Articles

⁴⁸ United Nations. (n.d.). UN Charter | United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

⁴⁹ "States Must Uphold Rule of Law, Fundamental Freedoms When Responding to Global Emergencies, Speakers Stress, as Sixth Committee Continues Debate on Principle | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." *Un.org*, 7 Oct. 2022, press.un.org/en/2022/gal3659.doc.htm#:~:text=The%20primary%20responsibility%20for%20preventing%20the%20gravest%20crimes. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

⁵⁰ "Fragile States Fail Their Citizens and Threaten Global Security." *United States Institute of Peace*, 21 Feb. 2019, www.usip.org/blog/2018/09/fragile-states-fail-their-citizens-and-threaten-global-security#:~:text=In%20fragile%20states%2C%20governments%20lack%20legitimacy%20in%20the

1 until 17.⁵¹ Thus, the masses are forced to give up their homes and flee with only the clothing on their backs, hoping to build a better future for themselves and their families in a foreign state.

The definition of the right to asylum means that every individual is entitled to being hosted by a foreign state when their home country is unable to cater to their needs and instead exposes them to immediate danger, regardless of race, religious aspirations, or ethnic background.

In accordance with international law, specifically Article 14 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)⁵² and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the right to asylum is a fundamental human right that shall not be undermined in any way, shape, or form. Asylum seekers are legally obliged to be hosted in an environment where their needs, such as education, housing, and personal freedoms, are adequately met.

Additionally, there is a major difference between asylum seekers and refugees: To become a refugee, asylum seekers generally have to apply to the Refugee Admissions Program of their host country or the allocated UNHCR agency office in order to cross an international border. However, Article 14 further states that the right to asylum may not be invoked if the individual is prosecuted due to the enactment of non-political crimes and is considered capable of irreparable harm. This is, under international law, the only exception to the right to asylum.

Moreover, every refugee is entitled to the Non-Refoulement Principle, which states that, once the individual has been safely transported to their host country, they may not, under any circumstance, be returned to their country of origin. Due to the risk of irreparable harm upon return, including persecution, torture, illtreatment, or other serious human rights violations, asylum seekers must remain within the nation they are being hosted in.

Even though international law is dedicated to the perseverance of the right to asylum, many nations have yet to accept it and ensure the smooth integration of refugees in their societies. Nations that are not signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1964 protocol are not legally binded to adhere to its refugee principles, which include ensuring safe and dignified conditions, access to essential needs, mobilizing resources and protecting

⁵¹----. *“Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” United Nations, 1948, www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.*

⁵² Ibid

their environment. Additionally, asylum seekers' battle to receive refugee status remains extremely difficult. According to the UNHCR, refugees are divided fairly across willing host countries' borders due to international cooperation and communication, asylum responsibility sharing amongst states, as well as conferences such as summits that aid in their coordination and resettlement⁵³. However, it has become evident that this is often not the case, as mass refugee influxes ranging from the MENA are often in dire need of resettlement and arrive at neighboring countries. Due to the persecution they face in their home lands, refugees often lack identification documents, which deprive authorities of gaining access to their identities and criminal record. Thus, due to Article 14's exception, they are unable to be granted refugee status, although this largely depends on countries' individual legislation. Ultimately, a mass influx of refugees can greatly impact host countries' economies. Thus, many countries refuse to open their borders. The recent rise of far right extremism has also contributed to this issue, with racism and xenophobia becoming a prominent phenomenon.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Ukraine

The current conflict raging in Ukraine has had a major impact on a variety of MENA states. As one of the major resource exporters within the region, Ukraine plays a crucial role in the balance and crisis prevention of multiple countries. The Russian-Ukrainian war has primarily affected three sectors within the MENA's Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCS); energy, due to unexpected interruptions in global energy flows, agriculture and grain imports, because of multiple failings in the Black Sea Basin and, perhaps the most crucial one, refugees. As these important resources disappear from the already unstable, poverty-stricken region, a humanitarian crisis becomes a likely phenomenon.⁵⁴ Yet another crisis will cause multiple human rights violations, which will then, in turn, become a cause for the need for refuge. As Ukraine is currently under immediate threat because of the war, it is

⁵³ "UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants 2016." *Refugees and Migrants*, 12 Dec. 2014, refugeesmigrants.un.org/summit.

⁵⁴ The. "The Potential Impact of Ukraine-Russia Conflict on the MENA Region." *Middle East Institute*, 2022, www.mei.edu/publications/potential-impact-ukraine-russia-conflict-mena-region#:~:text=There%20are%20three%20key%20areas%20where%20the%20MENA. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

deemed an unfit state to host refugees. The Ukrainian government has even carried out negotiations with MEDCS such as the United States regarding the acceptance of Ukrainian asylum seekers. In the year 2002, Ukraine ratified both the 1951 Refugee Convention as well as its 1967 Protocol, thereby becoming legally binded and obliged to their guidelines. Ukraine has also applied for European Union membership multiple times, aspiring to become part of the Council and gain European asylum benefits.⁵⁵

France

The recent rise of the far-right movement in France has caused international concern regarding the safety, acceptance and well-being of refugee asylum seekers within the European Union. Even though France's borders are open to asylum seekers, extremist far-right groups within the nation and the newly elected far-right party have formed opposing visions. A political reform is feared, especially due to France's significance as a major democratic power in the EU, and veto power in the United Nations Security Council. Multiple reports, such as an examination conducted by the French newspaper *Lemonde*, state the nation's integration and resettlement programs are inadequate, underfunded as well as insufficiently effective, and the homelessness rate for foreign asylum seekers remains extremely high⁵⁶. France is an official signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and thus obligated to adhere to the legislation set within the two legally binding documents.

However, recently, the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) and the National Court of Asylum (CNDA) made modifications to France's asylum law, restricting refugee status to any civilian that committed a crime within or outside the EU, increasing the time frame an asylum seeker may be detained from 45 days to 90, and reducing the time frame for asylum seekers to file for refugee status from 120 days to 90. The additional restrictions they impose on asylum seekers complicate their struggle for refugee status. Far right extremism makes up yet another important aspect to France's stance on the issue: The nation has faced an increase in populist right wing violence, with

⁵⁵ "How Ukraine Helped the US Rethink Refugee Policy." *BBC News*, 23 Feb. 2023, www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-64722764.

⁵⁶ *Monde, Le*. "The Right to Asylum, Everywhere in France." *Le Monde.fr, Le Monde*, 24 Mar. 2023, www.lemonde.fr/en/opinion/article/2023/03/24/the-right-to-asylum-everywhere-in-france_6020538_23.html. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

the National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN) gaining major support. Multiple violent incidents, such as the fatal stabbing of a schoolteacher⁵⁷, and prominent violent protests occurring as a result of racist and antisemitic views⁵⁸ have become common recently. In overview, France's stance on the issue remains undetermined.

United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is a subsidiary branch of the United Nations dedicated to providing asylum seekers and stateless persons with humanitarian aid, ensuring their safe transportation, integration into their host country's society, their acceptance and the protection of their rights. The UNHCR has made significant advancements across the MENA region, advocating for legal reforms to further accommodate refugees, engaging in successful missions to deliver humanitarian aid across affected nations, and promoting sustainable development. Furthermore, the Agency continues to co-lead the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in response to the Syria crisis, coordinating the work of more than 270 partners in support of national efforts in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye.⁵⁹

Arab League

The Arab League is a political alliance that consists of 11 MENA states. Established in Cairo on March 22nd, 1945, its primary aim, as stated by its founders, is to "strengthen and coordinate the political, cultural, economic, and social programs of its members and to mediate disputes among them or between them and third parties".⁶⁰ Its April 13, 1950 signing served as an expression of the League's coordinated military defense measures. The alliance functions as a Council, with every member gaining one vote. The League's involvement in various conflicts within the region has been evident in recent years. Currently,

⁵⁷ Berlinger, Joshua. "Why Is the Far Right Gaining Ground in France?" *Al Jazeera*, 17 Dec. 2023, www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/12/17/why-is-the-far-right-gaining-ground-in-france.

⁵⁸ Berlinger, Joshua. "Why Is the Far Right Gaining Ground in France?" *Al Jazeera*, 17 Dec. 2023, www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/12/17/why-is-the-far-right-gaining-ground-in-france.

⁵⁹ "Middle East and North Africa." UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/where-we-work/middle-east-and-north-africa.

⁶⁰ *Britannica*. "Arab League | Britannica." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/Arab-League.

the League is determined to reduce the need for refuge and asylum within the MENA by tackling humanitarian crises through cooperation and economic involvement between Arab states. Additionally, MEDCs that are members of the league, such as the United Arab Emirates, are willing to provide financial support to members facing hardships and conflict⁶¹.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
November 1917	Balfour Declaration
28 July 1951	UNHCR Refugee Convention
1967	Refugee Convention Protocol
2003	U.S. led invasion in Iraq
2010-2011	The Arab Spring, a group of democratic uprisings within the MENA that led to the fall of multiple authoritarian regimes across countries
January, 2011	Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution
January 25th, 2011	Egypt’s January 25th Revolution
January, 2011	Lebanese Protests
March, 2011	Syrian Protests
2015	Start of Yemen’s Civil War

⁶¹ “UAE Reiterates Support for Joint Efforts to Ensure Economic & Social Stability of Arab People - Ministry of Economy UAE.” Ministry of Economy UAE, 2023, www.moec.gov.ae/en/-/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B5%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85-%D8%AC%D9%87%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D9%84.

Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

General Assembly Declaration on Refugees and Migrants

The General Assembly Declaration on Refugees and Migrants,⁶² otherwise known as the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, was adopted by consensus in September, 2016, during the High-Level Meeting to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. The term consensus refers to the satisfaction all Member States expressed towards the Declaration's terms and principles, which were adopted through a General Assembly resolution⁶³. The document highlights refugees' basic rights, freedoms, and dignity. It also draws attention to the importance of shared responsibility and cooperation between Member States in order to provide asylum in accordance with international law. The United Nations General Assembly's ethical values and goals for sustainable development through the provision of humanitarian aid are detailed. While the significance of the Declaration as an outline is evident, it is non-binding, meaning that Member States are not legally obliged to uphold its principles. Furthermore, it is not recognized as a treaty under international law, so it is up to Member States to decide how they will implement its regulations and integrate them into their constitutions. Ultimately, the Declaration is not binding in any way, so some countries adhere to its legislation loosely or not at all.

UNHCR Global Report 2022 - Middle East and North Africa

The United Nations Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) 2022 Global Report provides a clear understanding of refugee movements within the MENA region throughout the year, thus aiding in the effective comprehension of the situation. According to the Report, the MENA hosted 2.4 million refugees, 12.6 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 251,800 asylum-seekers, and 370,300 stateless persons as of 2022.⁶⁴ The region faced economic and political instability, an extremely high rise in violence and crime rates, as well as multiple humanitarian security crises. Food insecurity and water scarcity are also deemed as

⁶²"New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants." *International Journal of Refugee Law*, vol. 30, no. 4, Dec. 2018, pp. 715–743, www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_71_1.pdf, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/eez018>.

⁶³Ibid

⁶⁴"Global Report 2022 | UNHCR." UNHCR, 2022, www.unhcr.org/media/global-report-2022.

prominent occurrences within the region, contributing to the ongoing struggles of displaced peoples and multiple asylum seekers' human rights violations. Extreme poverty rates were adamant amongst displaced peoples within the region. In Yemen, 78% of the population was living below the poverty line, making life even more difficult for the 90,700 refugees and asylum-seekers and 4.5 million displaced Yemenis, 75% of which were women and children⁶⁵. Additionally, within the entirety of the region, around 2.2 million forcibly displaced and stateless people were school-aged⁶⁶. The UNHCR made significant advancements within the MENA, offering aid to an approximate 1.5 million people reached through volunteer groups and community centers. Even though humanitarianism was significantly advanced within the MENA, the problems' causes still need to be tackled efficiently.

UNHCR, 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

The 1951 Refugee Convention alongside its 1967 Protocol,⁶⁷ which are overseen by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are considered key legal documents within the international community. These define the term refugee and who can obtain refugee status as well as the fundamental rights every refugee is entitled to, from a moral and legal standpoint. The Refugee Convention was adopted in July, 1951, Geneva, to tackle the refugee crisis within Europe that took place as the aftermath of World War II. The core principle of the Convention is non-refoulement, meaning that involuntary migrants shall not be returned to any environment where their rights are violated and danger is prominent, but rather integrated into their host country's society with access to housing, an education and stability. The 1967 Protocol of the Convention acted as an amendment, so its guidelines could be integrated internationally and not just in Europe, officially deemed universal access. The Convention's principles are further based on Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of human rights. As of now, 145 out of 193 UN Member States are signatories to the Convention, although oftentimes this responsibility is neglected, especially due to

⁶⁵Ibid

⁶⁶Ibid

⁶⁷ "The 1951 Refugee Convention | UNHCR." UNHCR, 2019, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention#:~:text=The%201951%20Refugee%20Convention%2C%20supplemented%20by%20its%201967. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

instabilities within Member States' constitutions as well as the rise of far right ideologies, even though it is a lawfully binding document.

UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants 2016

The UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants,⁶⁸ which took place on 19th September 2016, was held by the General Assembly due to an exceedingly alarming number of refugees being recorded worldwide. On the day of the Summit, all 193 Member States of the United Nations signed the New York Declaration during a high-level plenary meeting, a legally binding document dedicated to sharing responsibility and commitment amongst member states regarding the fundamental right to asylum, as mentioned above. This summit marked the first ever large-scale conference discussing the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. During the summit, the protection of refugees' fundamental human rights was emphasized, the relevant financial and political support host countries should receive was determined, and admirable attempts towards combating xenophobia were made and discussed⁶⁹. Furthermore, two Global Compacts, namely the Global Compact on Refugees, which focuses on responsibility sharing for refugees, and the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, were adopted in December 2018, which have evolved to be two influential legal frameworks in the present. Finally, alongside the recognition of multiple marginalized groups' rights and situations, a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRF) was created, which emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach between governments and organizations, as well as sets various sustainable development goals.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants

As mentioned above, the New York Declaration⁷⁰ is an expression of world leaders' commitment to share responsibility and aid in the humanitarian practice of saving lives by recognizing the right to asylum. This includes protecting all marginalized groups on the move

⁶⁸"UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants 2016." *Refugees and Migrants*, 12 Dec. 2014, refugeesmigrants.un.org/summit.

⁶⁹Ibid

⁷⁰"New York Declaration." *Refugees and Migrants*, 19 June 2017, refugeesmigrants.un.org/declaration.

as well as any violation of their rights across national borders, supporting host countries financially, and thereby working towards eliminating xenophobia.⁷¹ Even though this declaration was signed by all respective representatives present, it has become evident in today's society that some of these goals failed to be implemented due to various ideologies arising among nations, as well as tensions and conflict obtaining the spotlight within the MENA region. Additionally, its non-binding nature undermines its significance.

Refugee status determination

In the past, governments have made a multitude of attempts in order to correctly issue civil documentation and refugee status determination, especially during humanitarian crises. Refugee status determination involves a legal or administrative process to determine refugee status under international, regional or simply national law. The registering of refugees is important in order to sufficiently cater to their needs. However, when crises become pressing and mass displacement takes place, documentation and identity confirmation is lost, or not checked at all. Thereby, the fair distribution of refugees across borders cannot be ensured. This practice is ineffective precisely because not enough technological advancements have been made within the sector and the system is greatly influenced by urgent situations. To conclude, the identification technologies used have been proven to be inadequate due to the scale of the situation.

Global Compact on Refugees

As mentioned in the section above, the Global Compact on Refugees was set into motion in December, 2018. It is a framework dedicated to increasing responsibility sharing between countries which affirms that a community based approach is needed in order to solve this complex issue. Additionally, it provides a blueprint for host governments as well as relevant organizations to adhere to regarding the division of refugees and the support of host countries to ensure their smooth integration into society. The four key objectives of the Global Compact include easing the pressure on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to LEDC solutions and supporting the conditions of their country of origin in order to prevent any further displacement. Even though the Global

⁷¹Ibid

Compact's guiding principles, which are detailed upon in the Comprehensive Refugee Response framework⁷², are essential, they often fail to be implemented due to the document's nonbinding nature.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Support to relevant authorities in issuing civil documentation

In order to promote the right to asylum and ensure the future of countless refugees, it is crucial to equip governments with adequate information regarding asylum seekers' identities. This can be achieved by ensuring adequate refugee documentation, which can be implemented through an international, secured database dedicated to the restoration of civilians' identities, criminal record, and the prevention of identity loss and theft. Moreover, in order to distribute refugees fairly across borders, records of refugees' whereabouts are necessary. More organized border control measures that remain efficient during emergencies are fundamental. Overall, this measure could sensitize governments and reassure them that they would be obliged to integrate a fair amount of refugees into their countries.

Capacity-Building

Capacity-Building is a crucial aspect of preserving refugees' fundamental rights. It can be defined as the act of fostering improvement within a workforce or organization. In this case, strengthening UN based operations within the MENA region, such as those of the UNHCR or the United Nations International Childrens' Emergency Fund (UNICEF), ensuring humanitarian aid is inclusive, covers individuals' needs and is available to everyone in need and improving the quality of refugee camps is essential to ensure asylum seekers' and displaced persons' wellbeing. Furthermore, more studies should be conducted informing evidence based interventions and databases with the purpose of affirming where crises are

⁷² "The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR." UNHCR, 2024, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/global-compact-refugees#:~:text=The%20Global%20Compact%20on%20Refugees%20is%20a%20framework. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

taking place in due time and delivering aid efficiently. The help of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can greatly contribute to this cause.

Advocacy

Finally, advocacy and raising awareness of refugees' struggle can help sensitize the public and alleviate their struggles, as well as sensitize governments into fully accepting the right to asylum and integrating it into their policies. Advocacy on the reformation of constitutions and the creation of stability within corrupt governments will prevent crises from emerging. A collective approach should be prioritized for action during humanitarian crises. This means that involvement from Member States and relevant organizations is crucial. Moreover, through advocacy campaigns, the wider public can educate themselves about this issue and alter their viewpoints, thereby eliminating potential acts of extremism, xenophobia and racism. By capitalizing on refugees' struggles and humanizing them instead of allowing their treatment as outsiders, the future of refugees will be one step closer to ensured.

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