



## SRMUN ATLANTA 2018

*Our Responsibility: Facilitating Social Development through Global Engagement and Collaboration*

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Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2018 and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – Executive Committee (UNHCR-ExCom). My name is Melissa Nelson, and I will be serving as your Director for the UNHCR-ExCom. This will be my third conference as a SRMUN staff member. Previously, I served as the Assistant Director for the General Assembly Plenary in SRMUN Atlanta 2016 and the Human Rights Council in SRMUN Atlanta 2017. I am currently a graduate student at the University of Leicester, pursuing Human Rights and Global Ethics, and at Texas A&M University pursuing cultural studies. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a minor in International Relations. Our committee's Assistant Director will be Schönn Franklin. This will be Schönn's first time as a staff member, but he has been attending SRMUN for the last two years. Schönn is a student at Savannah State University pursuing a degree in Political Science with concentrations in Constitutional Law and International Affairs.

The United Nation's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the Executive Committee of the Program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1958, and the governing body formally came into existence on 1 January 1959. The United Nations General Assembly resolution (1166 {XII}) had requested that ECOSOC establish an Executive Committee consisting of representatives from UN Member States or members of any of the specialized agencies. It specified that these representatives should "be elected by the Council on the widest possible geographical basis from those States with a demonstrated interest in, and devotion to, the solution of the refugee problem."

By focusing on the mission of the UNHCR-ExCom and the SRMUN Atlanta 2018 theme of "*Our Responsibility: Facilitating Social Development through Global Engagement and Collaboration*," we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

- I. Easing the Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers into Host Societies
- II. Statelessness among Refugee Populations

The background guide provides a strong introduction to the committee and the topics and should be utilized as a foundation for the delegate's independent research. While we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit [srmun.org](http://srmun.org). **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 26, 2018 by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website.**

Hannah and I are enthusiastic about serving as your dais for the UNHCR-ExCom. We wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you in the near future. Please feel free to contact Deputy Director-General Jordin Dickerson, Schönn, or myself if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

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## **Committee History of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – Executive Committee**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – Executive Committee (UNHCR Ex-Com) was formally established on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1959 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in Resolution 672 (XXV).<sup>1</sup> The UNHCR was created in the aftermath of the Second World War and was slated to disband in three years upon the completion of its mission to assist the millions of displaced peoples in Europe.<sup>2</sup> However, its works has grown and currently UNHCR is working to protect refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP), and stateless persons globally, and is committed to mitigating their dire situations.<sup>3</sup> The UNHCR Ex-Com was established to absorb the roles of two bodies within the UNHCR, the Advisory Committee on Refugees and the United Nations Refugee Fund (UNREF) Executive Committee.<sup>4</sup> Originally, under Resolution 672, ECOSOC elects up to 25 representatives from Member States of the United Nations (UN) or of any special agencies to the UNHCR Ex-Com from a wide array of geographical locations and who prioritize refugee issues.<sup>5</sup> However, in 2003, the maximum number of elected representatives increased to 64 Member States who meet the original requirements as mandated by Resolution 672.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, under Resolution 672 and as established under the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/12/ 1166, the UNHCR Ex-Com is entrusted to create programs and general policies to mitigate refugee issues, evaluate the use of funds allocated to the UNHCR, and is responsible to report to the General Assembly annually.<sup>7</sup> The UNHCR Ex-Com was established under ECOSOC, however, it functions as a subsidiary body under the General Assembly and therefore reports directly to the Third Committee of the General Assembly which focuses specifically on social, humanitarian and cultural issues.<sup>89</sup> The responsibilities of the UNHCR Ex-Com include: “to advise the High Commissioner in the exercise of his/her functions, to review funds and programs, to authorize the High Commissioner to make appeals for funds, [and] to approve proposed biennial budget targets.”<sup>10</sup>

The UNHCR Ex-Com meets in Geneva, Switzerland for one week annually, typically in the first half of October, however, the Ex-Com’s Standing Committee meets several times throughout the year.<sup>1112</sup> During session, the UNHCR Ex-Com discusses a provisional agenda which includes all issues proposed by the High Commissioner, Member States within the committee, any subsidiary bodies, and issues discussed in the previous meeting.<sup>13</sup> As refugee problems continued to increase over time, the UNHCR Ex-Com dispersed its duties amongst two Sub-Committees; the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters which focuses on finances and administering the budget, and the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection which focuses on the

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<sup>1</sup> “Executive Committee,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/executive-committee.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> “History of UNHCR,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/history-of-unhcr.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> “History of UNHCR,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> “Background on the Executive Committee,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/announce/3b4f09faa/background-executive-committee.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> “Establishment of the Executive Committee of the Program the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae69eccc.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> “Background on the Executive Committee,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/announce/3b4f09faa/background-executive-committee.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> “Background on the Executive Committee,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>8</sup> “Executive Committee,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/executive-committee.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> “Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee),” The General Assembly of the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> “Rules of Procedure,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/4201eb512> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> “Rules of Procedure,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>12</sup> “Executive Committee,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>13</sup> “Rules of Procedure,” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

protection of displaced persons.<sup>14</sup> Because of the non-political and humanitarian nature of the UNHCR Ex-Com, there are no formal votes, outside of procedural votes, within the committee.<sup>15</sup> Instead, decisions are reached by consensus.<sup>16</sup> Delegates may additionally choose that their individual views be reflected in the report summary; this is commonly utilized after rather contentious discussion.<sup>17</sup> In accordance with this tradition, the Third Committee of the General Assembly adopts UNHCR Ex-Com's reports in the same fashion.<sup>18</sup>

The UNHCR Ex-Com last met from October 2<sup>nd</sup> to October 6<sup>th</sup> of 2017. During this meeting, the body devised its "Shared Solutions," which are its core directives for the next five years.<sup>19</sup> These Shared Solutions are as follows: protect, respond, include, empower, and solve. The purpose of this platform is to create a cooperative international effort amongst Member States to protect displaced persons and to protect their rights as recognized under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Convention, and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.<sup>20</sup> The UNHCR Ex-Com is currently facing the highest levels of displacement since World War II.<sup>21</sup> According to the UNHCR's most recently published Global Trends, there are currently 65.6 million people who have been forcibly displaced; 22.5 million are considered refugees (17.2 million under UNHCR mandate and 5.3 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA), 40.3 million IDPs, and 2.8 million asylum seekers.<sup>22</sup> 51 percent of current refugee population consists of children under the age of 18.<sup>23</sup> 84 percent of all refugees, or 14.5 million, are hosted in developing regions, the least developed countries host 28 percent of all refugees, or 4.9 million, and the largest populations of refugees are currently hosted by Turkey (2.9 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), and Lebanon (1 million).<sup>24</sup> The primary source countries of displaced persons are Syria (5.5 million), Afghanistan (2.5 million), and South Sudan (1.4 million).<sup>25</sup> With these staggering figures in mind, the primary objective of the UNHCR Ex-Com is to find solutions to these problems and ultimately assist displaced people in rebuilding their lives.<sup>26</sup> These solutions can take the form of voluntary repatriation, integration, resettlement, or education and material support.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, it is the duty of the UNHCR Ex-Com and all Member States, as directed by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1967 Protocol, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to protect and seek solutions for all refugees, IDPs, and stateless people.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Background on the Executive Committee," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/announce/3b4f09faa/background-executive-committee.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> "Background on the Executive Committee," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>16</sup> "Background on the Executive Committee," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>17</sup> "Background on the Executive Committee," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>18</sup> "Background on the Executive Committee," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>19</sup> "2017 Executive Committee Session," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/2017-executive-committee-session.html?query=shared%20solutions> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> "Filippo Grandi, 68th session of UNHCR Executive Committee," UN Web TV, <http://webtv.un.org/search/filippo-grandi-68th-session-of-unhcr-executive-committee-/5592217984001/?term=executive%20committee&sort=date&page=1> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>21</sup> "Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2015," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>23</sup> "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>24</sup> "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>25</sup> "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>26</sup> "Solutions," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/solutions.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

<sup>27</sup> "Solutions," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>28</sup> "Protection," The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection.html> (accessed March 25, 2018).

## I. Easing the Integration of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers into Host Societies

*“Considering that the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of a humanitarian character is a purpose of the United Nations as defined in its Charter and that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees recognizes that a satisfactory solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation.”<sup>29</sup> - UNHCR Executive Committee*

### Introduction

The highest refugee concentrations are created in some of the most impoverished areas of the world. According to a new United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) study, the majority of the 3.2 million driven from their homes in the first half of 2016 found shelter in low-or middle-income Member States.<sup>30</sup> Refugees are not the only reason for such an increasing number of large-scale influx situations as asylum seekers also contribute to the situation. In addition, victims of external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part of, or the whole of their country of origin or nationality, are compelled to seek refuge outside that country.<sup>31</sup> Such an extensive influx of people coming into a low-or middle-income Member States can thwart the pre-existing economic, environmental, and social conditions, and, at times, political structures due to the perception of refugees becoming a weakness to, or risk jeopardizing, the development efforts of the host Member State.<sup>32</sup>

A refugee, according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Chapter 1 General Provisions Article 1, has a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”<sup>33</sup> An asylum-seeker is someone “who has moved across borders in search of protection, but who may not fulfill the strict [refugee] criteria laid down by the 1951 Convention.”<sup>34</sup> The main difference is that an asylum seeker asks for protection after arriving in the host Member State; a refugee asks for protection and is granted this protected status outside of the host country.<sup>35</sup>

War, human rights violations, underdevelopment, climate change, and natural disasters are the leading causes of people vacating their homes – half of them children.<sup>36</sup> More than 60 million individuals have fled violence or

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<sup>29</sup>UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, “Conclusion on International Cooperation and Burden and Responsibility Sharing in Mass Influx Situations No. 100 (LV) – 2004,” October 8, 2004, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/exconc/41751fd82/conclusion-international-cooperation-burden-responsibility-sharing-mass.html> (accessed June 15, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> UNHCR Staff, “Poorer Countries Host Most of the Forcibly Displaced, Report Shows,” February 27, 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/2/58b001ab4/poorer-countries-host-forcibly-displaced-report-shows.html> (accessed June 13, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, “Protection of Asylum-Seekers in Situations of Large-Scale Influx No. 22 (XXXII) – 1981,” October 21, 1981 (accessed June 14, 2018).

<sup>32</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, “Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries EC/47/SC/CRP.7,” January 6, 1997, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html) (accessed May 7, 2018).

<sup>33</sup> “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10> (accessed July 27, 2018).

<sup>34</sup> “Asylum Seeker,” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/asylum-seeker/> (accessed June 14, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> “Asylum Seeker,” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (accessed June 14, 2018).

<sup>36</sup> Ban Ki-moon, “Refugees and Migrants: A Crisis of Solidarity,” United Nations Secretary-General, May 9, 2016, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/2016-05-09/refugees-and-migrants-crisis-solidarity> (accessed May 10, 2018).

persecution and are today considered as refugees and internally displaced persons.<sup>37</sup> An additional 225 million are migrants who have left their countries in search of better opportunities or to merely survive.<sup>38</sup>

An influx of individuals in host Member States is not an issue solely affecting those migrating or neighboring Member States; this affects the global community. Nearly 90 percent of the world's refugees are being hosted in developing Member States.<sup>39</sup> Eight Member States host more than half the world's refugees.<sup>40</sup> Just ten Member States provide 75 percent of the entirety of the United Nations' (UN) budget to ease and resolve this predicament.<sup>41</sup>

### ***Current Situation***

Syria is currently the world's largest source of refugees with 5.5 million people due to the seven-year civil war.<sup>42</sup> During this period, 400,000 refugees have been killed and more than 1 million injured.<sup>43</sup> In addition to the 5.5 million refugees, an additional 13.1 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including 6 million children.<sup>44</sup> Since the beginning of this crisis, Syria has become the largest displacement crisis in the world with a total of 6.6 million people internally displaced, 4 million people registered as refugees in neighboring nations; 4.53 million people in hard to reach placed and overwhelmed locations.<sup>45</sup> Neighboring nations includes Turkey which currently hosts over 3.3 million Syrians.<sup>46</sup>

The presence of a significant refugee population will have large effects on the Host Member State's economy.<sup>47</sup> Refugees and asylum seekers may alter the flow of goods and services within the society. With the additional resources needed, the local economy might become overburdened in attempting to maintain infrastructure initiatives.<sup>48</sup> The presence of large refugee populations in rural areas means a strain on local administrations and infrastructure.<sup>49</sup> National and regional authorities within host Member States turn away considerable resources and manpower from the pressing demands of their own development to the urgent task of keeping refugees alive, alleviating their sufferings, and ensuring community security in its entirety. Some host governments are reluctant to pay, as a price for giving asylum, the cost of additional infrastructure that may be needed in these communities to accommodate refugees.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the governments of low-income developing Member States are often times unprepared to administer necessary economic assistance as simple loans or quickly reallocate funds to programs that become necessary due to the large numbers of refugees on their land.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, the economic impact of refugees and asylums seekers are not always negative. Economic incentives are usually created by the presence of refugees and may lead to the opening of the development of regions. In addition, economic activity occurs through "...local purchases of food, non-food items, shelter materials

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<sup>37</sup> Ban Ki-moon, "Refuges and Migrants: A Crisis of Solidarity."

<sup>38</sup> Ban Ki-moon, "Refuges and Migrants: A Crisis of Solidarity."

<sup>39</sup> "Refugee Statistics," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/statistics/> (accessed September 12, 2019).

<sup>40</sup> Ban Ki-moon, "Refuges and Migrants: A Crisis of Solidarity."

<sup>41</sup> Ban Ki-moon, "Refuges and Migrants: A Crisis of Solidarity."

<sup>42</sup> "Refugees," United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/> (accessed May 9, 2018).

<sup>43</sup> "Refugees," United Nations, (accessed May 9, 2018).

<sup>44</sup> "Syrian Emergency," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html> (accessed September 12, 2018).

<sup>45</sup> "Syrian Emergency." United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>46</sup> "Syrian Emergency." United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries EC/47/SC/CRP.7," January 6, 1997, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html) (accessed May 7, 2018).

<sup>48</sup> "The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: A Development Challenge," World Bank Development Report 2011, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTWDR2011/Resources/6406082-1283882418764/WDR\\_Background\\_Paper\\_Refugees.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTWDR2011/Resources/6406082-1283882418764/WDR_Background_Paper_Refugees.pdf) (accessed September 12, 2018).

<sup>49</sup> "While 'Host' States Shoulder Burden of Massive Refugee Influx Delegates Tell Third Committee Resources are not Unlimited, Long Term Solutions Needed," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gashc4150.doc.htm> (accessed September 12, 2019).

<sup>50</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries EC/47/SC/CRP.7," January 6, 1997, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html).

<sup>51</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."



by agencies supplying relief items, disbursements made by aid workers, the assets brought by refugees themselves, as well as employment and income accrued to local population, directly or indirectly, through assistance projects for refugee areas".<sup>52</sup> The presence of refugees also contributes to the creation of employment benefiting the local population, both directly and indirectly.

In terms of the social impact, if refugees and asylum seekers are from the same cultural and linguistic group as the local population, there is often identification and empathy for the refugee's situation.<sup>53</sup> However, due to developmental projects aimed at repairing or improving a host's country influx of refugees, it has become known that different ethnicity can cause problems amongst nationals of a host society.<sup>54</sup> This can arise due to a failure of communication abilities and understanding resulting from the language and cultural barrier.<sup>55</sup> In some cases, the presence of one ethnic group of refugees may affect ethnic balances within the local population and aggravate conflicts.<sup>56</sup> There are common complaints that the addition of so many people created security problems such as thefts, murder, rape, and other general crime.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, other social problems, such as prostitution and alcoholism, are also claimed to rise in the refugee areas, which is often due to enforced idleness particularly for individuals who are not meaningfully occupied.<sup>58</sup> Incidence of crime may rise no more than would be expected in a population group of the new size, but in a remote and previously quiet area, these acts would not go unnoticed.<sup>59</sup> Another common source of discontent from the locals is that they believe refugees and asylum seekers are receiving services and entitlements which are unavailable to them.<sup>60</sup> Refugees and asylum seekers may have access to services such as education and healthcare while local people do not.<sup>61</sup> However, the UNHCR as a matter of principle, strives to promote an integrated approach to human services which respect the local policies.<sup>62</sup> Refugees and asylum seekers can also bring assets to the hosting area including skills and knowledge that can be utilized to the benefit of local people.<sup>63</sup> For example, refugees have introduced swamp land rice in Guinea, making use of previously vacant land and introducing new agricultural techniques.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Actions Taken by the United Nation***

The UN Committee on Relations with the Host Country was established in 1971 by General Assembly Resolution 2819.<sup>65</sup> At present, the Committee is composed of 19 Member States.<sup>66</sup> The Committee addresses a range of issues concerning the relationship between the host Member State and the UN community including: the security of the missions and their personnel; visas, immigration and customs procedures, and taxation; diplomatic indebtedness; housing, transportation and parking; insurance, education and health matters; public relations issues with the host country.<sup>67</sup>

The response from the global community on refugee populations and their impact on host societies has been irregular.<sup>68</sup> The answers have been based on the different incentives and advances each Member State's wishes to gain. However, within the conceptual framework, the UNHCR sought to organize a response that was more of a general approach in thinking in how to provide refugee aid and development assistance. Beginning in the 1980s, the

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<sup>52</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>53</sup> "The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: A Development Challenge," World Bank Development Report 2011.

<sup>54</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>55</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>56</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>57</sup> "The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: A Development Challenge," World Bank Development Report 2011.

<sup>58</sup> "The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: A Development Challenge," World Bank Development Report 2011.

<sup>59</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>60</sup> "The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: A Development Challenge," World Bank Development Report 2011.

<sup>61</sup> "The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: A Development Challenge," World Bank Development Report 2011.

<sup>62</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>63</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>64</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

<sup>65</sup> "UN Committee on Relations with the Host Country," <https://usun.state.gov/about/6632/6643>, (accessed June 15, 2018).

<sup>66</sup> "UN Committee on Relations with the Host Country," <https://usun.state.gov/about/6632/6643>, (accessed June 15, 2018).

<sup>67</sup> "UN Committee on Relations with the Host Country," <https://usun.state.gov/about/6632/6643>, (accessed June 15, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations."

UN created what was called the “refugee aid and development” strategy.<sup>69</sup> This approach stressed the need for relief to be development-oriented from the outset.<sup>70</sup>

The “refugee aid and development” goal was to move refugees towards self-sufficiency and a durable solution to their situation: local integration.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, this strategy sought to compensate for some of the adverse economic and social impacts of refugees on the host country, as previously stated.<sup>72</sup> An adopted document, *Principles for Action in Developing Countries* (Annex 2), at the Pan-African Conference concerning refugees in 1979 states that:

*Developmental projects aimed essentially at repairing or improving a host country’s economic or social infrastructure to help it cope with the presence of refugees, but which do not directly benefit significant numbers of refugees, should as a rule be handled by UNDP and/or other developmental organizations including NGOs. Where such projects provide durable income-earning opportunities for refugees UNHCR could contribute to their financing in proportion to the number of refugees among beneficiary.*<sup>73</sup>

Another action that the UN took is the adoption by the General Assembly of the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants Today*, which charts a course towards a joint, rights-based response to record displacements around the world.<sup>74</sup> As outlined in the Declaration (A/71/L.1), such a course would be of crucial importance in providing growing numbers with desperately needed assistance.<sup>75</sup> This Declaration provides an opening for constructive discussion, the creation of a comprehensive refugee response framework in different situations, and the development of a global impact on refugees in 2018.<sup>76</sup> Working with key host Member States such as Uganda, Ethiopia, and Somalia, the UN is building a groundwork of current best practices to develop comprehensive refugee responses.<sup>77</sup> The Declaration recognized that in 2015 alone, the number of migrants surpassed 244 million, in addition to roughly 65 million forcibly displaced persons, more than 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum seekers, and over 40 million internally displaced persons.<sup>78</sup> By the Assembly underlining the importance of working collectively, this work would have mutual and profound benefits for humanity. The Declaration’s two annexes outlined two main objectives: a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, and a comprehensive refugee response framework.<sup>79</sup>

Overall, the Executive Committee of the UNHCR states that the voluntary return, local integration, and settlement are the traditional durable solutions; all remain worthwhile and important responses to refugee situations.<sup>80</sup> Restating that voluntary return in times of safety and dignity, where and when feasible, remains the more preferred solution in

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<sup>69</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, “Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations.”

<sup>70</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, “Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations.”

<sup>71</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, “Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations.”

<sup>72</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, “Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations.”

<sup>73</sup> UNHCR Standing Committee, “Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations.”

<sup>74</sup> United Nations General Assembly Plenary, Seventy-first session, *General Assembly Adopts Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, as *United Nations, International Organization for Migration Sign Key Agreement*, GA/11820, September 19, 2016, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11820.doc.htm> (accessed May 8, 2018).

<sup>75</sup> United Nations General Assembly Plenary, seventy-first session, *General Assembly Adopts Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, as *United Nations, International Organization for Migration Sign Key Agreement*, GA/11820 (accessed May 8, 2018).

<sup>76</sup> Volker Türk, “Statement to the 69<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme - Agenda Item 2: International Protection,” June 28, 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/admin/dipstatements/595386c97/statement-69th-meeting-standing-committee-executive-committee-high-commissioners.html> (accessed June 16, 2018).

<sup>77</sup> Volker Türk, “Statement to the 69<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme - Agenda Item 2: International Protection,” June 28, 2017, (accessed June 16, 2018).

<sup>78</sup> United Nations General Assembly Plenary, Seventy-first session, *General Assembly Adopts Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, as *United Nations, International Organization for Migration Sign Key Agreement*, GA/11820, September 19, 2016, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11820.doc.htm> (accessed May 8, 2018).

<sup>79</sup> United Nations General Assembly Plenary, Seventy-first session, *General Assembly Adopts Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, as *United Nations, International Organization for Migration Sign Key Agreement*, GA/11820, September 19, 2016, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11820.doc.htm> (accessed May 8, 2018).

<sup>80</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, “Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104 (LVI) – 2005,” October 7, 2005, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/exconc/4357a91b2/conclusion-local-integration.html> (accessed June 15, 2018).

the majority of refugee situations.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, one should note that a combination of solutions, more general approach as well as taking into account specific circumstances of each refugee situation, helps achieve a lasting solution.<sup>82</sup> The UNHCR agrees that local integration is a sovereign decision and an option to be exercised by states guided by their treaty obligations and human rights principles when local integration is to be considered.<sup>83</sup> Local integration must be undertaken in a manner that sustains the feasibility of local communities affected by the presence of refugees and that a failure to do so may result in an unreasonable burden being placed on host countries.<sup>84</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

Currently, nearly 20 people are forcibly displaced every minute because of conflict or oppression, meaning the work of the UNHCR-ExCom is more crucial than ever.<sup>85</sup> 55 percent of refugees worldwide come from three Member States: South Sudan (1.4 million), Afghanistan (2.5 million), and Syria (5.5 million).<sup>86</sup> Where are the world's displaced persons are being hosted: 30 percent Africa, 26 percent Middle East and North Africa, 17 percent Europe, 16 percent Americas, 11 percent Asia and Pacific.<sup>87</sup> The top hosting countries: Turkey 2.9m; Pakistan 1.4m; Lebanon 1.0m; Islamic Republic of Iran 979,400; Uganda 940,800; Ethiopia 791,600.<sup>88</sup>

The price that host Member States must pay in providing asylum to refugees and asylum seekers is becoming commonly recognized. However, the idea of international solidarity is not always matched in support when addressing the negative impacts that large-scale refugee movements have on host Member States.<sup>89</sup> The best solution to relieving these Member States of a heavy load is to eradicate refugee's situations. Nevertheless, when these situations do arise it is the responsibility of the international community to lessen, to whatever extent possible, the negative impact of such influxes.<sup>90</sup>

## ***Committee Directive:***

The purpose of the committee is to evaluate current policies in place and the measures that are in place to assist host Member States in assimilating refugees and asylum seekers. However, if current policies are not as effective as governments have hoped, then new plans must be created. New policies and measures may be more effective in catering to such a vast influx of individuals, rather than having systems that are being overwhelmed. Lastly, more Member States should become more willing to work together and to protect people who are refugees, asylum seekers, and those who may not be welcome by nationals of whatever country they are residing.

This action must come with the recognition that the impact of hosting large numbers of people creates new and unforeseen challenges that must be met mainly by developmental assistance.<sup>91</sup> The response of development assistance would be a concrete expression of solidarity aimed at easing the burden on the Member States that have

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<sup>81</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104"

<sup>82</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104"

<sup>83</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104"

<sup>84</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104"

<sup>85</sup> "Refugees," United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/> (accessed May 9, 2018).

<sup>86</sup> "Refugees," United Nations.

<sup>87</sup> "Refugee Statistics," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>88</sup> "Refugees," United Nations.

<sup>89</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on International Cooperation and Burden and Responsibility Sharing in Mass Influx Situations No. 100 (LV) – 2004," October 8, 2004, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/exconc/41751fd82/conclusion-international-cooperation-burden-responsibility-sharing-mass.html> (accessed June 15, 2018).

<sup>90</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on International Cooperation and Burden and Responsibility Sharing in Mass Influx Situations No. 100 (LV) – 2004," October 8, 2004, (accessed June 15, 2018).

<sup>91</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on International Cooperation and Burden and Responsibility Sharing in Mass Influx Situations No. 100 (LV) – 2004," October 8, 2004, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/exconc/41751fd82/conclusion-international-cooperation-burden-responsibility-sharing-mass.html> (accessed June 15, 2018).



received large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, especially in developing Member States with limited resources.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Conclusion on International Cooperation and Burden and Responsibility Sharing in Mass Influx Situations No. 100 (LV) – 2004," October 8, 2004, (accessed June 15, 2018).

## II. Statelessness Among Refugee Populations

*“Statelessness is a profound violation of an individual’s human rights. It would be deeply unethical to perpetuate the pain it causes when solutions are so clearly within reach.”*<sup>93</sup>

- António Guterres, former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, current Secretary-General of the United Nations

### Introduction

As asserted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), every person has the right to work, education, healthcare, equality, as well as the right to nationality.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, as stated in Article 15 of the UDHR, “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality, nor denied the right to change his nationality.”<sup>95</sup> However, many stateless people are still deprived of these fundamental human rights. Stateless people live without a nationality and lack many of the rights granted to those with citizenship, such as the right to travel, access to education, employment, ability marry, and access to healthcare.<sup>96</sup> Stateless people are not afforded these rights because no government is willing to grant them citizenship and ensure their rights.<sup>97</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that upwards of ten million people are considered stateless worldwide.<sup>98</sup> Stateless peoples are marginalized and face many insecurities because they lack any formal governmental institution, outside of the UNHCR, to protect and provide for them.<sup>99</sup> Increased attention was brought to the issue of statelessness in 1994 when the UNHCR Executive Committee noted the prevalence of statelessness and subsequently called upon the UNHCR to “strengthen its efforts in this domain, including promoting accession to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, training for UNHCR staff and government officials, and a systematic gathering of information on the dimension of the problem, and to keep the Executive Committee informed of these activities”<sup>100</sup> Additionally, according to the mandate of the UNHCR, there is a need to “identify, prevent and reduce statelessness and protect stateless persons” and “provide relevant technical and advisory services about the preparation and implementation of nationality legislation.”<sup>101</sup> For this reason, it is the duty of all Member States to protect to rights of stateless people and to coordinate international efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness.

### History

The United Nations (UN) established the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.<sup>102</sup> The 1954 Convention is significant not only because it was the first convention passed by the UN focusing specifically on statelessness, but because it created an internationally recognized definition of statelessness.<sup>103</sup> The Convention

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<sup>93</sup> “Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/statelessness/54621bf49/global-action-plan-end-statelessness-2014-2024.html> (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>94</sup> “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” The United Nations General Assembly <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>95</sup> “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” The United Nations General Assembly, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>96</sup> “Ending Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018)

<sup>97</sup> “Ending Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018)

<sup>98</sup> “Ending Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/stateless-people.html> (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>99</sup> “Ending Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>100</sup> “Current UNHCR activities on behalf of stateless persons Current UNHCR activities on behalf of stateless persons EC/1995/SCP/CRP.6” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/scip/3ae68ccf4/current-unhcr-activities-behalf-stateless-persons.html> (accessed July 29, 2018).

<sup>101</sup> “Note on the Mandate of the High Commissioner For Refugees and His Office” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/basic/526a22cb6/mandate-high-commissioner-refugees-office.html> (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>102</sup> “Text of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/statelessness/3bbb25729/convention-relating-status-stateless-persons.html> (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>103</sup> “Text of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

defines a stateless person as an individual “who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law.”<sup>104</sup> To clarify, the terms citizenship and nationality are used interchangeably by the UN and in international law.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, the Convention further defined the rights of stateless persons and established an international framework to protect stateless people.<sup>106</sup> This Convention also standardizes the treatment of stateless people and requires they be afforded the same rights as citizens, in regards to freedom of religion and the education of their children.<sup>107</sup> The Convention also protected stateless people’s rights of association, right to be employed, and right to housing.<sup>108</sup>

The UNHCR later established the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness as an extension of the 1954 Convention to further define the rights of stateless people and create an international framework for Member States to follow regarding stateless individuals within their borders.<sup>109</sup> The 1961 Convention defines non-withdrawal and conferral of citizenship in efforts to prevent Member States from revoking the citizenship of their citizens.<sup>110</sup> The 1961 Convention also determined that Member States maintain sovereign control of their laws concerning citizenship and nationality, but must abide by international rules and norms and avoid policies that induce or increase statelessness.<sup>111</sup> The 1961 Conventions aims to prevent, “statelessness at birth by requiring States to grant citizenship to children born on their territory, or born to their nationals abroad, who would otherwise be stateless.”<sup>112</sup> Beyond targeting early life occurrences of statelessness, the 1961 Convention also focuses on prevention due to the withdrawal of citizenship whether it is through deprivation, renunciation, or loss of nationality altogether by more specifically defining the rights of stateless people.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, the 1961 Convention focuses on statelessness caused by the transfer of territory.<sup>114</sup>

### ***Current Situation***

According to the UNHCR, there are currently over ten million people experiencing statelessness worldwide.<sup>115</sup> This population, as of the end of 2016, primarily resides in Myanmar, Thailand, Côte d’Ivoire, the Syrian Arab Republic, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Sweden in descending order.<sup>116</sup> Beyond this, there is little information regarding stateless populations and their demographics. This is because one of the primary challenges of mitigating statelessness is the lack of data collection.<sup>117</sup> It is difficult to collect data and accurately assess statelessness, due to the nature of statelessness itself. Stateless individuals lack nationality which

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<sup>104</sup> “Text of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>105</sup> “Nationality and Statelessness: A Handbook for Parliamentarians” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>106</sup> “Text of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>107</sup> “Text of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>108</sup> “Text of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>109</sup> “Text of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/wp-content/uploads/1961-Convention-on-the-reduction-of-Statelessness\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/wp-content/uploads/1961-Convention-on-the-reduction-of-Statelessness_ENG.pdf) (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>110</sup> “Text of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>111</sup> “Text of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>112</sup> “Text of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>113</sup> “Text of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>114</sup> “Text of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>115</sup> “Ending Statelessness” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>116</sup> “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends/s2016/> (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>117</sup> “Reporting on statelessness? Advances in 2015 data” Data Driven Journalism, [http://datadrivenjournalism.net/news\\_and\\_analysis/reporting\\_on\\_statelessness\\_advances\\_in\\_2015\\_data](http://datadrivenjournalism.net/news_and_analysis/reporting_on_statelessness_advances_in_2015_data) (accessed May 10, 2018).

causes them to be ineligible to participate in national censuses.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, identifying stateless people can be difficult because stateless individuals may be unwilling to identify themselves due to their legal status.<sup>119</sup> Another challenge lies in their homes; many stateless populations live on the fringes of society where data collection is increasingly difficult.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, this data is invaluable to the global community in understanding and mitigating statelessness.

Outside of data collections, identifying and combating the various situations resulting in statelessness is a powerful tool in working towards reduction. One cause of statelessness is the laws that fail to account for all residents within the borders of a nation-state.<sup>121</sup> Rules that are not written with specificity and executed with precision can lead some groups to be excluded from citizenship.<sup>122</sup> An individual may lose citizenship by moving shortly after birth or by being born in a foreign country.<sup>123</sup> Similarly, an individual might become stateless if their country of origin does not allow citizenship to pass from mother to child.<sup>124</sup> Children may additionally be denied citizenship by discriminatory laws usually based on ethnicity, religion, race or the citizenship of their parents.<sup>125</sup> In 27 nation-states, laws prevent children from receiving nationality from their mothers and some nation-states may discriminate and deny nationality by race and ethnicity.<sup>126</sup>

An additional cause of statelessness is the dissolution of states or the creation of new states, which may exclude communities within the newly defined territories.<sup>127</sup> Statelessness may also occur when borders are redefined.<sup>128</sup> Districts and individuals often have trouble proving their connection to the region of a newly established Member State or within new borders and subsequently become stateless.<sup>129</sup> Additionally, statelessness can occur through deprivation of nationality.<sup>130</sup> Laws in some Member States may deprive citizenship if an individual has resided outside of the country for an extended period.<sup>131</sup> Denial of citizen may also be purposeful in that States may create exclusionary laws which discriminate against particular racial, religious, or ethnic group which can render entire populations and communities stateless.<sup>132</sup>

### ***Actions Taken by the United Nations***

The UNHCR initiated several campaigns, goals, and plans of action to fulfil the commitments made by the UN in the 1954 and 1961 Conventions to prevent statelessness. In 2014, the UNHCR established the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness, which aims to end statelessness in ten years or by 2024.<sup>133</sup> The Global Action Plan works to end statelessness through prevention, the resolution of current situations of statelessness, and through the identification and protection of stateless people.<sup>134</sup> The UNHCR strongly recommends that the Member States take one or more of the ten Actions they have outlined in the Global Action Plan to end statelessness. The First Action is the most broad; Member States should resolve existing significant situations of statelessness.<sup>135</sup> Member States can achieve this goal by implementing laws and policies which grant citizenship to stateless populations within their territory or that simplify and expedite the process by which stateless people may be allowed citizenship.<sup>136</sup> For example, statelessness can be dramatically reduced if Member States decrease the required years of residency or if Member States reduce application fees needed to give citizenship to stateless people.<sup>137</sup> In regards to the First Action, the

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<sup>118</sup> "Reporting on statelessness? Advances in 2015 data" Data Driven Journalism, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>119</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>120</sup> "Reporting on statelessness? Advances in 2015 data" Data Driven Journalism, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>121</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>122</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>123</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>124</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>125</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>126</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>127</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>128</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>129</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>130</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>131</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>132</sup> "Ending Statelessness" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>133</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>134</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>135</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>136</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>137</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

UNHCR aims to have laws, policies, and administrative reforms introduced and implemented to provide nationality to stateless people in ten of the 20 significant statelessness situations by 2017 and five more of the substantial statelessness situations by 2020.<sup>138</sup> Member States can implement the First Action by creating legislation which grants citizen to those born within their territories, or who have lived there for a certain amount of time, or by granting citizenship to children and grandchildren of individuals who meet those requirements.<sup>139</sup>

The Second Action aims to end statelessness at birth. This action is the primary means by which the UNHCR intends to prevent statelessness.<sup>140</sup> Member States must reevaluate legislation that prevents children from attaining citizenship once they are born in that state.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, the UNHCR encourages Member States to review legislation which discriminates by gender and prohibits citizenship from being inherited matrilineally or solely allows patrilineal inheritance of citizenship.<sup>142</sup> The Third Action similarly addresses the prevalence of gender inequality and discrimination in nationality laws.<sup>143</sup> As mentioned previously, discriminatory laws may prevent mothers from passing down their nationality to their children.<sup>144</sup> If a child's father is stateless, unknown, or unwilling to pass down his citizenship by completing administrative requirements or obtaining documentation for his child, then the child will become stateless.<sup>145</sup> Member States can enact Action Three by abolishing these discriminatory laws and retroactively grant citizenship to individual left stateless due do these circumstances.<sup>146</sup> The Fourth Action intends to end statelessness through preventing the discriminatory denial or deprivation of nationality.<sup>147</sup> Again, the UNHCR recommends that Members States review legislation to ensure that nationality is not being denied by ethnicity, religion, race, disability or language.<sup>148</sup>

The Fifth Action focuses on preventing statelessness due to state succession. As stated in the UNHCR Global Action Plan, "620,000 people remain stateless as a result of State succession within the last 30 years."<sup>149</sup> Statelessness due to succession occurs as a result of transfers of territory, the formation of a new state, and the dissolution of a nation.<sup>150</sup> Member States can prevent statelessness in these situations by coordinating their efforts in transitional periods to ensure that the entire population of an emerging State or new territory is granted nationality.<sup>151</sup> The Sixth Action's objective is to protect migrants who are stateless and guide them on a path towards naturalization.<sup>152</sup> The stateless migrant population is comprised of individuals who have left their countries of origin either freely or as a refugee and who are now at risk of prolonged or repeated destitution and detentions as well as a violation of their human rights.<sup>153</sup> To mitigate this issue, Member States must first establish a path toward naturalization for stateless migrants and stateless refugees.<sup>154</sup> The Seventh Action is similar to the first and second in that it highlights the importance of documentation of citizenship at birth to prevent statelessness.<sup>155</sup> Member States can decrease the prevalence of statelessness by accurately and adequately registering the birth of their citizenry.<sup>156</sup> Similarly to the Seventh Action, the Eight Action focuses on ensuring that individuals who are entitled to citizenship can acquire the proper documentation.<sup>157</sup> Though statelessness may occur due to an individual's inability to acquire papers, this issue is usually due to the purposeful denial of papers as a form of discrimination against different groups of people.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>139</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>140</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>141</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>142</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>143</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>144</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>145</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>146</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>147</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>148</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>149</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>150</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>151</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>152</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>153</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>154</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>155</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>156</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>157</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>158</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.



This is one of the leading causes of statelessness and it can be mitigated if Member States must create affordable, simplistic, accessible, and non-discriminatory systems of documentation in order to further prevent statelessness.<sup>159</sup>

The Ninth Action recommends that all Member States accede and fully comply with the 1954 and 1961 conventions regarding statelessness.<sup>160</sup> By 2020, The Global Action Plan hopes that out of 193 Member States, 120 Member States will have become party to the 1954 Convention and that 103 Member States will be party to the 1961 Convention.<sup>161</sup> The Global Action Plan aims to increase these numbers to 140 Member States being party to the 1954 Convention and 130 States being Party to the 1961 Convention.<sup>162</sup> Finally, the Tenth Action emphasizes the importance improving data collection regarding stateless persons. By 2020, the Global Action Plan's goal is for 120 Member States to be able to provide quantitative data and for at least 100 Member States to provide qualitative data on statelessness.<sup>163</sup>

The UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom), as the governing body of the UNHCR, annually approves the budget of the UNHCR for initiatives such as the Global Action Plan to end statelessness. UNHCR additionally serves as an advisory body to the High Commissioner on budgetary decisions as well as the various issues under the domain of the UNHCR and other NGOs and IGOs, including the prevalence of statelessness.<sup>164</sup> The UNHCR is supported by the ExCom as it continues to combat and prevent statelessness and, more broadly, forced displacement on a global scale. The ExCom assists in the procurement of resources and funding for the activities and initiatives of the UNHCR such as the work done by the #IBelong campaign and the goals set forth by the Global Action Plan.<sup>165</sup>

### ***Case Study: Mitigating Statelessness in Thailand***

In recent years, Thailand has been making great strides in granting its nationals the citizenship they are entitled to. Statelessness in Thailand is primarily due to changes in national borders and the governments limited access to remote regions where many people belonging to "hill tribes" have lived for generations without government documentation.<sup>166</sup> As of 2017, there are 400,000 Stateless people living in Thailand.<sup>167</sup> However, in 2011 the Thai government, the UNHCR, and other NGOs began efforts to grant citizenship to stateless people and since then 27,000 stateless people have obtained Thai citizenship.<sup>168</sup> Stateless people in Thailand have been unable to receive higher education and stateless women in Thailand are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. The Thai government is unique in that they have recognized and begun the address the problem of statelessness with in Thailand's borders.<sup>169</sup> By 2024, the government aims to have zero cases of statelessness in Thailand.<sup>170</sup> The Thai government plans to achieve this by first granting either permanent or temporary legal status to all eligible stateless students.<sup>171</sup> This could benefit upwards of 65,000 students who would otherwise be unable to receive higher education.<sup>172</sup> The Thai government has also been working with the UNHCR to establish more service points for stateless people to submit applications for citizenship, permanent residency, birth registrations, and identity documents.<sup>173</sup> Through these efforts, Thailand has been able to significantly decreases statelessness within their

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<sup>159</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>160</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>161</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>162</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>163</sup> "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>164</sup> "Executive Committee" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/executive-committee.html> (accessed July 29, 2018)

<sup>165</sup> "Current UNHCR activities on behalf of stateless persons Current UNHCR activities on behalf of stateless persons EC/1995/SCP/CRP.6" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/scip/3ae68ccf4/current-unhcr-activities-behalf-stateless-persons.html> (accessed July 29, 2018)

<sup>166</sup> "Resolving Statelessness in Thailand" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/resolving-statelessness-in-thailand/> (accessed July 29, 2018).

<sup>167</sup> "Resolving Statelessness in Thailand" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>168</sup> "Resolving Statelessness in Thailand" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>169</sup> "Overcoming statelessness in Thailand one case at a time" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/11/5836af624/overcoming-statelessness-thailand-case-time.html> (accessed July 29, 2018).

<sup>170</sup> "Overcoming statelessness in Thailand one case at a time" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>171</sup> "Overcoming statelessness in Thailand one case at a time" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>172</sup> "Overcoming statelessness in Thailand one case at a time" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>173</sup> "Overcoming statelessness in Thailand one case at a time" The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

borders overtime. Though there are still many stateless people living within Thai borders, Thailand remains an excellent example a Member States which is making progress in the fight to end statelessness.

### ***Conclusion***

There are main lessons to be learned from Member States such as Thailand in regards to reducing statelessness but perhaps the most important lesson can be learned from the government's willingness to recognize and proactively address statelessness in Thailand. Statelessness is an issue which is often overlooked by comparison to other more urgent cases of forced displacement around the world. Stateless people are so often either unseen or purposefully discriminated against by the governments they live under and they may remain unseen even by the international community. For this reason, it is vitally important for bodies such as the UNHCR ExCom to call attention to the needs of stateless people and to continue funding and supporting the activities of the UNHCR and other NGOs and IGOs to combat statelessness.

### ***Committee Directive***

In solving these issues, delegates should pay close attention to the policies and instances of displacement in their Member States' territory. Delegates should closely consider the primary challenges facing stateless people within their Member State, regionally, and internationally. This committee should work towards the goals set forth by the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024 and in accordance with the UNHCR mandate to prevent and reduce statelessness while protecting the rights of stateless people globally. Delegates should work to improve current data collection and documentation processes and should address discriminatory and exclusive citizenship laws within their Member State. In addition, delegates should work towards answering the following questions: How can this committee improve and expand upon the Global Action Plan? How can Member States further implement the Global Action Plan and reach its goals by 2024? How can this committee improve data collection regarding stateless people? How can this committee prevent gender discrimination and ensure the citizen is passed down equal paternally and maternally? How can Member States abolish discriminatory laws which excluded individuals who are entitled to citizenship? Additionally, this committee should primarily focus on further implementing and improving the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness and ensuring the further implementation on international frameworks such and the 1954 and 1961 Conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## **Annotated Bibliography:**

### **Topic I: Easing the Integration of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers into Host Societies**

UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. "Conclusion on International Cooperation and Burden and Responsibility Sharing in Mass Influx Situations, No. 100 (LV) – 2004." October 8, 2004.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/exconc/41751fd82/conclusion-international-cooperation-burden-responsibility-sharing-mass.html>.

The article provides a deep understanding of the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee in October of 2004. It discusses the achievement and endless possibilities of international cooperation in solving human right problems. It also states how it is a States responsibility to protect not only their citizens, but also respect those who seek refuge in their nation.

UNHCR Staff. "Poorer Countries Host Most of the Forcibly Displaced, Report Shows." February 27, 2017.

<http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/2/58b001ab4/poorer-countries-host-forcibly-displaced-report-shows.html>.

This article is a recent report by the UNHCR of which Member States, or international communities, assist many refugees. Due to the disrupted livelihoods of 3.2 million individuals, low and middle-income countries are the greatest contributors to giving shelter to these individuals.

Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. "Protection of Asylum-Seekers in Situations of Large-Scale Influx No. 22 (XXXII) – 1981." October 21, 1981.

<http://www.unhcr.org/enus/excom/exconc/3ae68c6e10/protection-asylum-seekers-situations-large-scale-influx.html>.

This article discusses how to protect those who are seeking asylum in host countries. It discusses the differences in living situations, from a refugee and an asylum seeker. Even though asylum seekers represent a large-scale influx in these situations, they are usually mixed into the refugee population, which they should not.

UNHCR Standing Committee. "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries EC/47/SC/CRP.7." January 6, 1997. [www.unhcr.org/enus/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html](http://www.unhcr.org/enus/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html).

This article by the UNHCR Executive Committee, discusses the positive and negative effects of refugee immigrations in host countries. Rather than a broad overview, the executive committee digs deeper and focuses on the economic, social and infrastructure that the large-influx of people can have.

## **II. Statelessness Among Refugee Populations**

Population Statistics. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2014.

[http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview#\\_ga=2.30898295.997487117.1523829553400502223.1502993696](http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview#_ga=2.30898295.997487117.1523829553400502223.1502993696).

This database was created by the UNHCR containing data about refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, returnees, stateless people, and other populations of concern and under the protection of UNHCR. The database shows the populations of people with these different statuses around the world over time beginning in 1951 until 2014. This resource is particularly helpful in understanding the broad trends of displacement around the world and allows for a more comprehensive view of the challenges of displacement over time.

Statelessness. Refworld. <http://www.refworld.org/statelessness.html>.

This site contains a plethora of links and documents regarding efforts to combat statelessness internationally, including recent accessions to the 1954 and the 1961 Conventions, legal documents related to statelessness, statelessness policies and doctrines, and reports made by the UNHCR Executive Committee and by the Standing Committee. This site is a comprehensive list of the international legal resources and legislative doctrines which guide Member States in their actions to mitigate statelessness

within their borders. It can be used to gain a better understanding of the frameworks currently in place to combat statelessness and details the implementation of these frameworks within Member States.

Ending Statelessness Within 10 Years. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opensslPDFViewer.html?docid=546217229&query=Special%20Report:%20Ending%20Statelessness%20Within%2010%20Years>.

This is a special report made by the UNHCR which specifically focuses on the issue of statelessness and details through personal accounts and historical record the current challenges stateless people face. This report also details to development of protections for the rights of stateless people since the late 1800's. This report addresses the everyday challenges stateless people deal with and the importance that their right to citizenship is recognized.