

The Republic of Korea

Positions for the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees

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

The Republic of Korea (R.O.K) has endorsed the vast effort of UNHCR and commitment to helping some of the world's most vulnerable people. The world's new and continuing crises are presenting challenges that contribute to the continuation of the refugee and asylum seeker plight. It is our duties as member states representing UNHCR to step forward and continue efforts as well as create new, imperative initiatives. The refugee population around the world is vast, more than 60 million people are considered refugees and are fleeing persecution. As well as over 225 million peoples leaving their homes in search of survival or better opportunities. We recognize that a vast influx of refugees into our society will cause problems, and it is best to accept refugees and asylum seekers in a conservative manner over an extended period of time, after having a thorough settlement plan and welfare work system. **Domestically**, R.O.K. recently did their Pilot Resettlement Program from 2015-2017, and then launched a second Pilot Resettlement Program from 2018-2019, doubling our annual quota. In our *Republic of Korea: Law No. 11298 of 2012, Refugee Act*, Section 3 has already taken measures to help ease the integration of refugees. We have articles on subjects like, support for living expenses, medical services, and education. **Regionally**, R.O.K. has donated thousands to the Rohingya refugee crisis. As well as this, the R.O.K. has funded several UNHCR initiatives. **Internationally**, The Republic of Korea has had membership in the UN Refugee Convention and accepts refugees. R.O.K. has been donors in multiple refugee initiatives. As well as donating to various UN projects on Humanitarian Aid and refugee projects. Our goals for the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the host society, and the acceptance from the host society are detailed below, as well as how we plan to achieve these goals. R.O.K. strives to have our host country accept differences and value the refugees and seekers, seeing as though they can be just as capable, clever, and crucial to society's improvement. We also aim for: appropriate employment opportunities, speak/are learning to speak our native language, take part in civic, community, and social activities, have access to appropriate housing, healthcare, and educational opportunities, establish social networks, and feel safe expressing their ethnic identity in our host community. Ways to ease the Refugee and Asylum seeker integration is through the amelioration of national opinion. Establish the need to recognize the impact of coexistence between communities and refugees, and development projects to foster this. Make sure to enhance understanding of what refugees go through in host education. Try to develop programs that promote the engagement of youth in both groups through sports, language learning, educational and cultural activities. Overall, with these goals R.O.K. has come up with a potential way to see the integration, **H.E.L.P.** Starting with **Healthcare** and **Housing**, to ensure the health and living conditions of admitted refugees. **Educational** opportunities must be implemented to allow the children to continue to grow and have social interactions with the host countries. Lastly, **peaceful**

coexistence between the community and refugees is highly stressed, to avoid hostilities and backlash.

II. Statelessness among Refugee Populations

The Republic of Korea recognizes the issue of statelessness amongst displaced persons pursuing asylum and seeks to find proactive solutions in attaining peace for all involved parties. According to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own,” while Article 14 states that “everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” (UNHR). The R.O.K. has a history of providing safe refuge for those in need, demonstrated by their long-standing membership within the UN Refugee Convention. Defectors from the Democratic Republic of Korea are granted citizenship through a successful promotion and generous resettlement support act. In fact, the R.O.K. grants substantial humanitarian and developmental aid and research for the citizens of the DPRK itself. According to the Human Rights Watch Report of 2018, the R.O.K. is “research[ing] and act[ing] as an archive of North Korean human rights violations for possible use in future prosecutions,” demonstrating a clear dedication to the promotion of social justice (HRW). Similarly, the Jeju province, an island located in the Korea Strait, offers a 30-day visa-waiver program for various nationalities; this program was established in 2002. As of 2018, Jeju is credited with accepting approximately 500 refugees fleeing from the civil war in Yemen. Numerous studies suggest that accepting refugees in a conservative manner over a longer period of time is more beneficial than accepting a sudden influx, especially in maintaining domestic stability and reducing socio-cultural tensions. The Republic of Korea emphasizes screening periods and rigorous assessments to ensure the safety of all refugees and of all Korean citizens. The Republic of Korea’s policies reflect the state’s desires to observe sovereignty while still supporting human rights. In accordance with citizen interest, the vetting process is to be revised and re-examined to reassure the utmost level of security. Asylum applicants are “evaluated fairly” according to the R.O.K.’s Department of Justice, with special consideration of each applicant’s home country and evidence of persecution. Asylum seekers of some of the visa-waiver approved nations are restricted from leaving the Jeju province in order to maintain national security based upon political, social, and economic relations with said states; regardless, these individuals are well-supported with humanitarian aid and employment opportunities from the government, under the guidance of a 2013 law which provides political protection, offers jobs in underemployed work sectors, and bans unjust deportation.

Historically, the R.O.K. has enacted numerous policies to ensure that the rights of the displaced are protected. The R.O.K. is an active contributor to various UN agencies concerned with serving the rapidly growing displaced persons population. Likewise, the R.O.K. is eager to collaborate with other nations who observe the same conservative humanitarianism, and are dedicated to finding long-term economic, social, and political solutions for asylum seekers, not just temporary fixes. The R.O.K. has been tirelessly working to create a functional resolution. The S.A.F.E. Refugee Framework is a potential proposal: Secure background checks and vetting processes, Attention towards vulnerable populations (women and children, the sick and elderly,) Follow ups

to provide reassurance for asylum seekers, and Employment training/education and relocation within the nation. The R.O.K. relentlessly seeks to assist the international community in relieving statelessness among refugees and is simultaneously dedicated to respecting state sovereignty.