



# SOCHUM

Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Committee

## BACKGROUND GUIDE



**Secretary-General**  
**Vijittra Puckdee**

**Director-General**  
**Althea Turley**

**Chiefs of Staff**  
**Alex Burr**  
**Walker Heintz**

**Delegate Experience**  
**Luis González**  
**Merve Karakas**

**Domestic Partnerships**  
**Maura Goss**  
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**Renata Koch**  
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**Internal Affairs**  
**Lia Lee**  
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**Under-Secretaries-General**

**Michael Beeli**  
**Jill Bendlak**  
**Rose Blackwell**  
**Annica Denktas**  
**Rahul Francis**  
**Omar Mufti**  
**Jonathan Packer**  
**Akanksha Sancheti**  
**John Wood**  
**Alisa Wong**

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) for the 2020 National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN). My name is Kevin Cao and I am the Director for Session I. My co-director, Beatriz Circelli, and I have worked tirelessly to provide you with two exciting topics: “Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance” and “Human Rights Violations in Refugee Camps.” Both topics incorporate a plethora of issues that are interconnected; it is imperative to understand the foundation on which these issues are built in order to have a good understanding of the issue at-large. I am excited to see what you all develop in committee.

In terms of my NHSMUN history, this is my second year on staff and my fifth year being a part of the conference. Last year I served as an Assistant Director on the Economic and Financial Committee and had a fantastic experience. Needless to say, I am thrilled to be back. During my time as a delegate, I had the opportunity to attend NHSMUN and debate some of the issues which are brought before you today. My relationship with this conference and MUN has been a transformative one, and I am so happy that each of you are partaking in this journey with me. My advice to you is to take advantage of the amazing opportunities this conference provides and engage with your fellow students, international and domestic alike; the relationships that you will build from these exchanges are as rewarding as the research and the solutions that will be brought forth. I hope that you all take the opportunity to get out of your comfort zone and take advantage of this amazing conference and those who choose to be involved with it.

Originally from South Carolina, I am currently a sophomore at The George Washington University in DC where I am majoring in international affairs with a concentration in conflict resolution and minoring in Chinese studies. Outside of academics, I am a brother for Delta Tau Delta—a social fraternity—and like spending time with friends. In my free time, I enjoy getting lost in the metropolis that is DC and exploring the many cultures that exist within it. Additionally, I am a cooking show enthusiast; but unfortunately, I am not much of a cook myself.

After a dedicated research process, we have chosen two topics that have a large impact within the global community. Racism, xenophobia, and other intolerances are manifested in our communities and extend far beyond them. It is important to understand their regional and global impacts. This background guide will serve as a foundation on which further research will allow you to expand on fundamental concepts. That being said, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments about this background guide or about committee itself. Both Beatriz and I are more than happy to answer any questions that you may have. I wish you all the best. See you in March!

Sincerely,

Kevin Cao

[kevin.cao@imuna.org](mailto:kevin.cao@imuna.org)

Director of SOCHUM

Session I



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**John Wood**  
**Alisa Wong**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2020! My name is Beatriz Circelli, and I have the honor of being the Session II Director for the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), also known as the Third Committee. My Co-Director, Kevin, and I have been working earnestly throughout these past few months to make this conference a rewarding experience for all of you, and we could not be happier to present this Background Guide to you. This research paper is the culmination of months of hard work and diligence, and we hope it can be a useful resource for you, as well as a solid base for your research.

Before going further into the topics, allow me to introduce myself. Even though I am originally from Venezuela, I am currently living in Miami where I am pursuing a degree in international relations at Miami-Dade College and serving as the president for our West Campus chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. I started my NHSMUN journey as a delegate for the World Bank at NHSMUN 2016, and I eventually went on to become an Assistant Director for the Economic and Financial Committee at NHSMUN 2018. I had the opportunity to be the director for the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) during NHSMUN 2019, and I could not be happier to be back as a NHSMUN staff member this year! Both as a staff member and as a delegate, this conference has always been a rewarding and fulfilling experience for me, and I sincerely hope I can make it the same for all of you.

For this year's conference, our topics will be "Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance" and "Human Rights Violations in Refugee Camps." Both were carefully selected and researched prior to writing this Background Guide, and we could not be more excited to share the results of so many people's hard work with you now. Please be advised that both of these topics are delicate issues that affect countless people all over the world and therefore should be regarded with the utmost civility and respect at all times.

Even though this guide will provide thorough explanations on some major aspects of these issues, we encourage all of you to further your research. Ideally, the background guide will not be your sole source of information, as it is imperative for your success at the conference that you are knowledgeable on your country's policies and laws regarding each topic as well. I cannot express how excited I am to see the great work you will all do at the conference, and I hope you can get as much out of the experience as we directors certainly will! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us and ask. I am already looking forward to seeing all of your hard work pay off in committee!

Sincerely,

Beatriz Circelli  
[beatriz.circelli@imuna.org](mailto:beatriz.circelli@imuna.org)  
Director of SOCHUM  
Session II





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## A Note on the NHSMUN Difference

Esteemed Faculty and Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2020! My name is Althea Turley and I am this year's Director-General. Thank you for choosing to attend NHSMUN, the world's largest Model United Nations conference for secondary school students. We are thrilled to welcome you to New York City in March!

As a space for collaboration, consensus, and compromise, NHSMUN strives to help transform today's brightest thinkers into tomorrow's leaders. Our organization provides a uniquely tailored experience for all in attendance through innovative and accessible programming. We believe that an emphasis on *education through simulation* is paramount to the Model UN experience and this idea permeates throughout NHSMUN.

Debate founded on strong knowledge: With knowledgeable staff members and delegates from over 70 countries, NHSMUN can facilitate an enriching experience reliant on substantively rigorous debate. To ensure this high quality of debate, our staff members produce extremely detailed and comprehensive topic overviews (like the one below) to prepare delegates for the complexities and nuances inherent in global issues. This process takes over six months, during which the Directors who lead our committees develop their topics with the valuable input of expert contributors. Because these topics are always changing and evolving, NHSMUN also produces update papers that are intended to bridge the gap of time between when the background guides are published and when committee starts in March. As such, this guide is designed to be a launching point from which delegates should delve further into their topics.

Extremely prepared and engaged staff: The detailed knowledge that our directors provide in this background guide through diligent research is aimed at spurring critical thought within delegates at NHSMUN. Prior to the conference, our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained rigorously through copious hours of both virtual and in-person exercises and workshops in an effort to provide the best conference experience possible. Beyond this, our Directors and Assistant Directors read every position paper submitted to NHSMUN and provide thoughtful insight on those submitted by the feedback deadline. Our staff aims not only to tailor the committee experience to delegates' reflections and research but also to facilitate an environment where all delegates' thoughts can be heard.

Emphasis on participation: The UN relies on the voices of all of its Member States to create resolutions most likely to make a dramatic impact on the world. That is our philosophy at NHSMUN too. We believe that in order to properly delve into an issue and produce fruitful debate, it is crucial to focus the entire energy and attention of the room on the topic at hand. Our Rules of Procedure and our staff are focused on making every voice in the committee heard, regardless of each delegate's country assignment or skill level. However, unlike many other conferences, we also emphasize delegate participation after the conference. MUN delegates are well researched and aware of the UN's priorities and they can serve as the vanguard for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, we are proud to also connect students with other action-oriented organizations at the conference to encourage further work on the topics.

Focused committee time: NHSMUN prohibits the use of any electronic devices during committee sessions. We feel strongly that face-to-face interpersonal connections during debate are critical to producing superior committee experiences and allow for the free flow of ideas. Ensuring a no-technology policy is also a way to guarantee that every delegate has an equal opportunity to succeed in committee. We staff a very dedicated team in our office who type up and format draft resolutions and working papers so that committee time can be focused on communication and collaboration. Please note that the dais is permitted a laptop to communicate with members of Senior Staff and for other administrative needs.

Educational emphasis, even for awards: At the heart of NHSMUN lies education and compromise. As such, when NHSMUN does distribute awards, we de-emphasize their importance in comparison to the educational value of Model UN as an activity. NHSMUN seeks to reward schools whose students excel in the arts of compromise and diplomacy. More importantly, we seek to develop an environment in which delegates can employ their critical thought processes and share ideas with their counterparts from around the world. We always prioritize a dedication to teamwork and encourage our delegates to engage with others in a diplomatic and inclusive manner. In particular, our daises look for and promote constructive leadership that strives towards consensus, as delegates do in the United Nations.

Realism and accuracy: Although a perfect simulation of the UN is never possible, we believe that one of the core educational responsibilities of MUN conferences is to educate students about how the UN System works. Each NHSMUN committee is a simulation of a real deliberative body so that delegates can research what their country has actually said in the committee. Our topics are chosen from the issues currently on the agenda of that committee (except historical committees, which take topics from the appropriate time period). This creates incredible opportunities for our delegates to do first-hand research by reading the actual statements their country has made and the resolutions they have supported. We also incorporate real UN and NGO experts into each committee through our committee speakers program and arrange for meetings between students and the actual UN Permanent Mission of the country they are representing. No other conference goes so far to deeply immerse students into the UN System.

As always, I welcome any questions or concerns about the substantive program at NHSMUN 2020 and would be happy to discuss NHSMUN pedagogy with faculty or delegates.

Delegates, it is my sincerest hope that your time at NHSMUN will be thought-provoking and stimulating. NHSMUN is an incredible time to learn, grow, and embrace new opportunities. I look forward to seeing you work both as students and global citizens at the conference.

Best,

Althea Turley  
Director-General

## A Note on Research and Preparation

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the conference's intellectual and cosmopolitan perspective. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. This document is designed to give you a description of the committee's mandate and the topics on its agenda. We do not intend to represent exhaustive research on every facet of the topics. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to NHSMUN in March. Delegates must be prepared to intelligently utilize your knowledge and apply it to your country's unique policy.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging, but to assist delegates, we have updated our Beginner Delegate Guide and Advanced Delegate Guide. In particular, these guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage—they can help transform a sometimes-overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

An essential part of representing a state in an international body is the ability to articulate a given state's views in writing. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation (the one or two delegates representing a country in a committee) to write a position paper for both topics on the committee's agenda. In delegations with two students, we strongly encourage each student to participate in the research for both topics, to ensure that both students are prepared to debate no matter what topic is selected first. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the NHSMUN Research Guide. To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections, described below.

**I: Topic Background** – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's country. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic background, but rather focus on the details that are most important to the delegation's policy and proposed solutions.

**II: Country Policy** – This section should discuss the delegation's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate here.

**III. Proposed Solutions** – This section should detail the delegation's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the country's policy.

Each topic's position paper should be **no more than 10 pages** long double-spaced with standard margins and font size. **We recommend 2-4 pages per topic as a suitable length.** The paper must be written from the perspective of the country you are representing at NHSMUN 2020 and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for sending a copy of its papers to their committee Directors via [myDais](#) on or before **14 February 2020**. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, a position must be submitted on or before **24 January 2020**. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the dais of each committee and returned prior to your arrival at the conference.

Complete instructions for how to submit position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via the email submitted at registration. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, they should contact us at [info@imuna.org](mailto:info@imuna.org) as soon as possible.

**Delegations that do not submit position papers to directors will be ineligible for awards.**

## Committee History

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, or the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), focuses on issues dealing with fundamental human rights in the international community. SOCHUM was founded in 1948 in reaction to the establishment of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.<sup>1</sup> The Third Committee promotes and enforces basic freedoms and ideals meant to be enjoyed by the entire international community such as the right to life, the expression of cultures, the freedom of political participation, the protection of children's rights, and the promotion of social development, among many others.<sup>2</sup> SOCHUM derives its legitimacy from the original United Nations Charter and operates with the goal of designing peaceful settlements for issues within the large spectrum of social, humanitarian, and cultural complications in the international community. This body does so by initiating studies that encourage the proposal of recommendations for the promotion of international cooperation and fundamental freedoms for all.<sup>3</sup> The past session held by the Third Committee dealt with issues such as the protection of children from bullies, the prevention of torture, and the importance of justice reparation.<sup>4</sup>

The overarching body of the General Assembly is split into six different committees which deal with the basic needs of the international community; SOCHUM is allocated to the social, humanitarian, and cultural issues.<sup>5</sup> All members of the General Assembly vote with the same degree of power as all other states, equating all members of the United Nations.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, the General Assembly differs from some other United Nations bodies—like the Security Council—as it allows each member state to hold equal status and provides an open forum for discussion. While the General Assembly cannot call troops to war or impose economic sanctions, this forum is crucial for the formulation of ideas that can later be suggested to other UN bodies. While the resolutions passed in the Third Committee are non-binding, this committee is useful for states to bring any discussion of international security to the floor.<sup>7</sup>

As social issues are inherent to almost all other issues that the UN encounters, solutions formulated by the Third Committee often encompass the work of other, more specialized United Nations bodies or committees. These committees include not only those in the General Assembly, but also bodies operating under the different organizations of the United Nations. These include committees such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Human Rights Council.<sup>8</sup> The Third Committee also works closely with other United Nations organizations, such as those included in the Economic and Social Council. These bodies include the Commission on the Status of Women and the World Health Organization.<sup>9</sup> Other committees that work in conjunction with the Third Committee include the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and the United Nations Environment Programme. Through cooperative work with more focused bodies such as these, resolutions passed by the Third Committee can be implemented with a greater degree of success and efficiency.

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1 *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Geneva: United Nations General Assembly, 1948).

2 "59th General Assembly Session: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural / 3rd Committee," *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*, accessed 13 May 2018, <http://www.un.org/ga/59/third/responsibilities.htm>.

3 "Charter of the United Nations: Chapter IV: The General Assembly," *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*, accessed 13 May 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter4.shtml>.

4 "Social Humanitarian, and Cultural," *United Nations*, accessed 25 June 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>.

5 "General Assembly of the United Nations," *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*, accessed 13 May 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/maincommittees/index.shtml>.

6 "Charter of the United Nations: Chapter IV: The General Assembly."

7 *Ibid.*

8 "Human Rights Council - Homepage," *OHCHR Homepage*, accessed 13 May 2018, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/>.

9 "UN Economic and Social Council," *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*, accessed 13 May 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/subsidiary.shtml>.



## Simulation

This simulation at NHSMUN 2020 will allow all delegates to participate equally in a vibrant debate. Delegates must thoroughly familiarize themselves with their country's policies so that they can accurately represent them when the committee discusses each topic. The goal of this committee will be to build a consensus to support and pass a resolution that thoroughly addresses the topics under discussion, while also respecting the differing goals and opinions of all member states. With this goal in mind, delegates should develop and support resolutions that align with their country's policies. Each country must work towards finding compromises without abandoning their own country's goals in favor of the resolution. The resolutions should, therefore, aim to improve the situation while allowing each country to stay on policy and accomplish what their government believes is important.

To start committee, after delegates have been introduced to the dais, they will first debate the setting of the agenda and then progress to substantive debate, which will deepen and progress throughout the following sessions. There will be two main forms of discussion in this committee: formal debate and caucusing. Formal debate consists of delegates adding themselves to the speakers list to be formally recognized before the rest of the committee for a specified length of time. When delegates appear before the committee, it is their opportunity to give an overview of their country's position. It is imperative that all delegates remain respectful of others during this time and observe all procedural rules in order for delegates to be heard and for the speaker's list to flow smoothly. The chair will move down the speakers list, allowing each country who has volunteered their name to speak for a set amount of time and present their concerns to the committee.

Caucusing can be done in one of two ways: moderated and unmoderated. The speakers list will be suspended for both types of caucuses. Moderated caucuses flow similarly to formal debate, but delegates' speaking times are often shorter, and each caucus has a specific topic that delegates must discuss in their comments. A moderated caucus will allow more speakers to address the assembly without having to wait for their turn to come on the speakers list. Unmoderated caucuses suspend formal rules of debate for a designated period of time during which delegates are free to move around the room and informally discuss policy and potential solutions with one another. The majority of writing for working papers and draft resolutions will occur during these unmoderated caucuses.

The topics in this committee are challenging and will require a great deal of research. Because NHSMUN emphasizes compromise and innovative problem solving, pre-written resolutions are not allowed at this conference. While your delegation may have some informal ideas about possible solutions before committee begins, you may not bring them to the conference in resolution form; this would defeat the purpose of the committee, which is to work together and compromise. Working papers and resolutions are collaboratively created by starting with solutions, first just as a set of ideas. These solutions are formatted into a working paper, then voted upon as draft resolutions, and finally presented as resolutions in plenary if passed in committee. Throughout this process and the debates, the dais staff will be available at all times to help delegates with any concerns or questions they may have. The dais is always happy to help delegates not only with substantive questions related to the topics under discussion, but also with adjusting to the procedural aspects of Model UN.

During the conference, the chair will be moderating the committee and setting up a general direction for the flow of debate. However, it is truly up to the delegates to decide how the committee proceeds, and it is up to the delegates to make the conference and committee the best that it can be. Delegates are welcome to contact the dais at any time for help, both before and during the conference, as they are there to answer any questions. They will help to make sure the committee runs smoothly and is a success.



SOCHUM

NHSMUN 2020



## TOPIC A:

# COMBATTING RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Photo Credit: John Owens



## Introduction

On 2 April 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution aimed at combatting acts of terrorism and violence motivated by discrimination of religion or belief.<sup>1</sup> This directive stemmed from the recent attack on two New Zealand mosques, resulting in fifty deaths and fifty additional casualties.<sup>2</sup> The attack, alongside other incidents motivated by intolerance, is part of a broader trend of increased racially charged extremism across the globe.<sup>3</sup> While this issue appears to be geographically isolated, the global ideological impact that racism, xenophobia, and other related intolerances have on society is universally detrimental. In 2017, the UN adopted a resolution emphasizing the necessity of a proactive approach to address modern intolerance.<sup>4</sup> While the conditions that help identify xenophobia and related intolerance have existed prior to the 19th century, the terms themselves have only been around since 1880.<sup>5</sup> It is also important to keep in mind that their impact extends beyond conventional boundaries—such as developed and developing states. In October 2018, the Group of 77, an intergovernmental organization composed of 77 developing countries, released a statement placing concern on the resurgence of “discrimination and intolerance in many parts of the world.”<sup>6</sup> While present crises require immediate attention, it is important to address intolerance with a mindset that not only acknowledges current issues, but also proactively hinders the spread of discrimination and intolerance, especially in developing states.

In 2015, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement acknowledging the impact of five centuries of structural discrimination throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>7</sup> He also recognized the effects of racial discrimination and its deep roots in colonialism and slavery.<sup>8</sup> While indigenous and Afro-descendants constitute 40% of the Latin American population, they disproportionately live below the region’s poverty line.<sup>9</sup> In Bolivia, Nica-

ragua, Panama, and Paraguay, over 60% of indigenous and Afro-descendant people live in poverty.<sup>10</sup> In Panama specifically, 90% of the Indigenous population lives below the poverty line while, 69.5% lives in extreme poverty.<sup>11</sup> Only 30% of the non-indigenous population lives in extreme poverty.<sup>12</sup> A similar trend can be found in Peru, where 34% of Afro-descendants live below the poverty line, compared to 23% of *mestizos*—a term used in Central and South America to de-

1 “Resolution Condemning Violence Targeting Individuals Based on Religion, Beliefs, among Texts Adopted by the General Assembly,” *United Nations*, 2 April 2019, accessed 7 June 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ga12133.doc.htm>.

2 “Christchurch Shootings: How the Attacks Unfolded,” *BBC*, 18 March 2019, accessed 7 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47582183>.

3 Eugene Scott, “New Zealand Reminds Us That Far-Right Attacks Are on the Rise Far and Wide - Including in the U.S,” *The Washington Post*, 15 March 2019, accessed 30 September 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/15/new-zealand-reminds-us-that-far-right-attacks-are-rise-everywhere-including-us/>.

4 A/RES/72/157, “A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action,” 25 January 2017, accessed 27 June 2019, [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/RES/72/157](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/RES/72/157).

5 “The History of the Word ‘Xenophobia,’” *Merriam-Webster*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/a-short-history-of-xenophobia>.

6 Emad Morcos Mattar, “Statement on Behalf of the Group of 77 and China by Mr. Emad Morcos Mattar, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations, on Agenda Item 72: Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance,” *Third Committee of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 27 June 2019, <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=181029>.

7 “‘Racism Is Deeply Rooted in Colonialism and Slavery’ Says UN Human Rights Chief: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,” *UNESCO*, accessed 6 August 2019, [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/brasilia/about-this-office/single-view/news/racism\\_is\\_deeply\\_rooted\\_in\\_colonialism\\_and\\_slavery\\_says/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/brasilia/about-this-office/single-view/news/racism_is_deeply_rooted_in_colonialism_and_slavery_says/).

8 *Ibid.*

9 Judith A. Morrison, “Behind the Numbers: Race and Ethnicity in Latin America,” *Americas Quarterly*, 2015, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/content/behind-numbers-race-and-ethnicity-latin-america>.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

scribe a person of American Indian and European descent—another historically discriminated group.<sup>13</sup>

Recognizing that intolerance exists in many forms is essential to understanding the breadth of this issue. Its nuances manifest in areas such as education, employment, and housing, while its extremes present themselves through various degrees of conflict.<sup>14</sup> Tensions in diverse countries like Myanmar, South Sudan and Nigeria are prime examples of these effects having started to challenge existing political systems. In Somalia, ethnic challenges have posed a threat to the state's political institutions as its dominant clans—the Digil, Darod, Hawiye, Dir, and Rahanweyn—hold a significant number of privileges that the country's ethnic minorities lack.<sup>15</sup> These clan members have easier access to health care, shelter, basic education, and justice compared to their minority counterparts due to a system of customary laws paired with armed force.<sup>16</sup> The political and social issues rooted in the Somalian state should be viewed as one of many instances of a wide-spread and deeply-rooted system of minority exclusion and marginalization. As such, it is important to examine the vast impact of discrimination and intolerance and view this issue understanding that a set of solutions may apply to the challenges examined in Somalia, among other states.

## History and Description of Issue

The nature of intolerance and how it is understood has evolved over the course of centuries. Modern archetypes of intolerance persevere predominantly in the form of islamophobia and anti-Semitism, but are also shown through other phobias like Romaphobia—describing a fear, dislike, or hate of Roma people in Europe—and discrimination towards migrants and indigenous groups.<sup>17</sup> This modern conceptualiza-

tion of intolerance and discrimination encompasses a number of terms which, while related, serve different purposes in understanding the issue as a whole. Where terms such as “discrimination” and “intolerance” help contextualize the issue at large, it is essential that delegates recognize the importance of terms such as Romaphobia to dial in on the very issues that contribute to this widespread phenomenon. It is of the utmost importance that a distinction between these definitions is provided to ensure a more well-rounded perception of the topic.

## Defining Discrimination and Intolerance

According to the UN, racial discrimination, as described in international law, is “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”<sup>18</sup> It is important to keep in mind how discrimination can take a variety of forms. This includes direct discrimination, which is the intent to discriminate against a person or group, and indirect discrimination, which includes the use of seemingly neutral policies or provisions to place representatives from one group at a disadvantage compared to others.<sup>19</sup>

While discrimination may apply to a particular group of society, intolerance is “a lack of respect for practices or beliefs other than one's own.”<sup>20</sup> To contextualize this, the Declaration of Principles of Tolerance defines tolerance as “respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human.”<sup>21</sup> Fostered through openness, communication, free-

13 Morrison, Judith A., 2015, “Behind the Numbers: Race and Ethnicity in Latin America,” *Americas Quarterly*; “Mestizo,” 2013, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 September 2013, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mestizo>.

14 “Eleventh OIC Report on Islamophobia,” *Organisation of Islamic Cooperation*, 2018, accessed 7 June 2019, [https://www.oic-oci.org/upload/islamophobia/2018/11th\\_Annual\\_Report\\_on\\_Islamophobia\\_English.pdf](https://www.oic-oci.org/upload/islamophobia/2018/11th_Annual_Report_on_Islamophobia_English.pdf).

15 “Somalia,” *Minority Rights Group International*, accessed 21 August 2019, <https://minorityrights.org/country/somalia/>.

16 Ibid.

17 “Discrimination and Intolerance,” *Council of Europe*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/discrimination-and-intolerance>.

18 “International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,” *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>.

19 “Discrimination and Intolerance,” *Council of Europe*.

20 Ibid.

21 “Declaration of Principles on Tolerance,” *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, 16 November 1995, accessed



dom of thought, conscience, and belief, tolerance contributes to a culture of peace.<sup>22</sup> A mutual understanding and respect for the principles which make people different, paired with an acceptance of these values, helps define and build tolerance.

In their contemporary forms, discrimination and intolerance are characterized in a number of ways. Racism, xenophobia, and religious intolerances—including islamophobia and anti-Semitism—are some of the most common. Racism, as defined by the UN, “is a theory of races hierarchy which argues that the superior race should be preserved and should dominate the others. [It] can also be an unfair attitude towards another ethnic group [or] violent hostility against a social group.”<sup>23</sup> This differs from xenophobia which, simply put, “is the fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers.”<sup>24</sup> More specifically, it can be identified as the “attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.”<sup>25</sup> While the two often overlap, they are distinct phenomena. Racism focuses more on distinct physical features such as skin color, hair type, and facial features, whereas xenophobia assumes behavior based on the notion that the other is foreign or originates from outside the community.<sup>26</sup>

## Intolerance: A Brief Description of its Origins

Beyond definitions, it is important to construct a foundational

understanding of the causes of intolerance and the circumstances under which they arise. Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, suggested that racism and intolerance correlate with violence, implying that the two were both a cause and consequence of conflict.<sup>27</sup> The history of intolerance and its impact on modern-day society are a result of the past systems that must be considered when attempting to understand intolerance as a whole.

In 2012, the UN released the report, *United Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance*, which came eleven years after the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, acknowledging the political and economic systems that have been dominant contributors to the spread and institutionalization of intolerance.<sup>28</sup> The first among these is slavery and the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave trade. From the 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the transatlantic slave trade was a part of the global slave trade network and describes the second of three stages during which ten to twelve million enslaved Africans were kidnapped and transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas.<sup>29</sup> The practice and economic system is identified for its abhorrent barbarism, as well as its “magnitude, organized nature, and... negation of the essence of the victims.”<sup>30</sup> It is important to acknowledge the role of slavery and the history of the slave trade, especially the transatlantic slave trade, as a major source and manifestation of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

6 August 2019, [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13175&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13175&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

22 Ibid.

23 “Racism: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, accessed August 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/racism/>.

24 Hussein Solomon and Hitomi Kosaka, “Xenophobia in South Africa: Reflections, Narratives and Recommendations,” *Southern African Peace and Security Studies* 2, No. 2 (21 June 2019): 5–30, accessed 6 July 2019, [https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20/sapss\\_22\\_solomon\\_kosaka\\_0.pdf](https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20/sapss_22_solomon_kosaka_0.pdf).

25 “Xenophobia: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, accessed 6 August, 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/xenophobia/>; “Discrimination and Xenophobia,” *Council of Europe*, accessed 6 August, 2019, [http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter\\_5/5\\_4.html](http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter_5/5_4.html).

26 “Xenophobia: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*.

27 “Racism, Intolerance Both Causes and Consequences of Violence, High Commissioner Tells Third Committee, as Debate Opens on Human Rights,” *United Nations*, 6 November 2001, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2001/gashc3655.doc.htm>.

28 “United against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,” *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*, July 2012, accessed 6 July 2019,

[https://www.un.org/en/letsfight racism/pdfs/United%20against%20Racism\\_English\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/letsfight racism/pdfs/United%20against%20Racism_English_web.pdf).

29 Thomas Lewis, “Transatlantic Slave Trade,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 7 September 2018, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transatlantic-slave-trade>.

30 “United against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,” *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*.

ance.<sup>31</sup> In 1781, Africans and crew members on the slave ship *Zong* were dying of infectious disease.<sup>32</sup> Hoping to halt the spread of the disease, the captain commanded that 130 Africans be thrown overboard, later filing an insurance claim on the value of the lost property.<sup>33</sup> The dehumanizing practices committed during this era are reflective of a superior-inferior ideology which allowed for the practice's initial inception. Even today, slavery is still a problem that continues to affect more than 40 million people.<sup>34</sup>

Colonialism is another practice that has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances, and has had a large impact on African, Asian, and indigenous groups around the world.<sup>35</sup> It has resulted in lasting social and economic inequalities that are still present in many parts of the world.<sup>36</sup> Today, states continue to face a number of challenges that can be dated back to their colonial history. While the ongoing political instability cannot solely be identified as being caused by colonialism, the oppressive systems and historical injustices that came as a result of its colonial status have undermined the very "institutions that are expected to nurture democracy."<sup>37</sup> The weakened institutions and much of the political instability examined across African states, such as South Sudan, Somalia, and South Africa, are due in part to the interpenetration of internal and external factors, including the geo-political and economic interests of modern states.<sup>38</sup> In addition to unequal development, poverty, disease, and violence, many of those affected by this former system are threatened by the continued challenges to political and economic stability.<sup>39</sup>

It is important to keep in mind the effects of colonialism, while examining the extent of its impact in affected states. Since 1945, the UN's decolonization efforts have aided in the transition towards self-governance for more than 748 million people.<sup>40</sup> Today, there are fewer than two million people residing in the remaining seventeen non-self-governing territories (NGSTs).<sup>41</sup> On 10 December 2010, the UN adopted a resolution implementing its Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which reiterated the necessity of ending colonialism.<sup>42</sup> However, the challenges in addressing colonialism are also attributed to the ethnic tensions rooted in the marginalization of indigenous populations. New Caledonia, one of the few remaining NGSTs, was first colonized by France in 1853.<sup>43</sup> Following more than a century of ethnic tension, in the 1980s, the situation between the territory's indigenous population, Kanak, and the white population pivoted to violence.<sup>44</sup> To resolve unrest, the Noumea Accord was adopted, timetabling the gradual transfer of responsibilities to the territory, including its most recent referendum for independence on 4 November 2018.<sup>45</sup> It is important that delegates consider the deeper implications of resolving issues such as colonialism. Where self-determination may be sought, the difficulties brought about by its conception have continued to persist.

A famous example of colonial intolerance took root in 1948, when a system of legalized racial discrimination called apartheid was adopted in South Africa. The term is an Afrikaans word meaning "apart-ness," and called for the separate de-

31 Ibid.

32 Thomas Lewis, "Transatlantic Slave Trade," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

33 Ibid.

34 "Over 40 Million People Still Victims of Slavery," *UN News*, 2 December 2018, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1027271>.

35 "United against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance," *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*.

36 Ibid.

37 Antony Otieno Ong'ayo, "Political Instability in Africa Where the Problem Lies and Alternative Perspectives," *The African Diaspora Policy Centre*, 2008, [https://www.diaspora-centre.org/DOCS/Political\\_Instabil.pdf](https://www.diaspora-centre.org/DOCS/Political_Instabil.pdf).

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 "Decolonization," *United Nations*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/decolonization/index.html>.

41 Ibid.

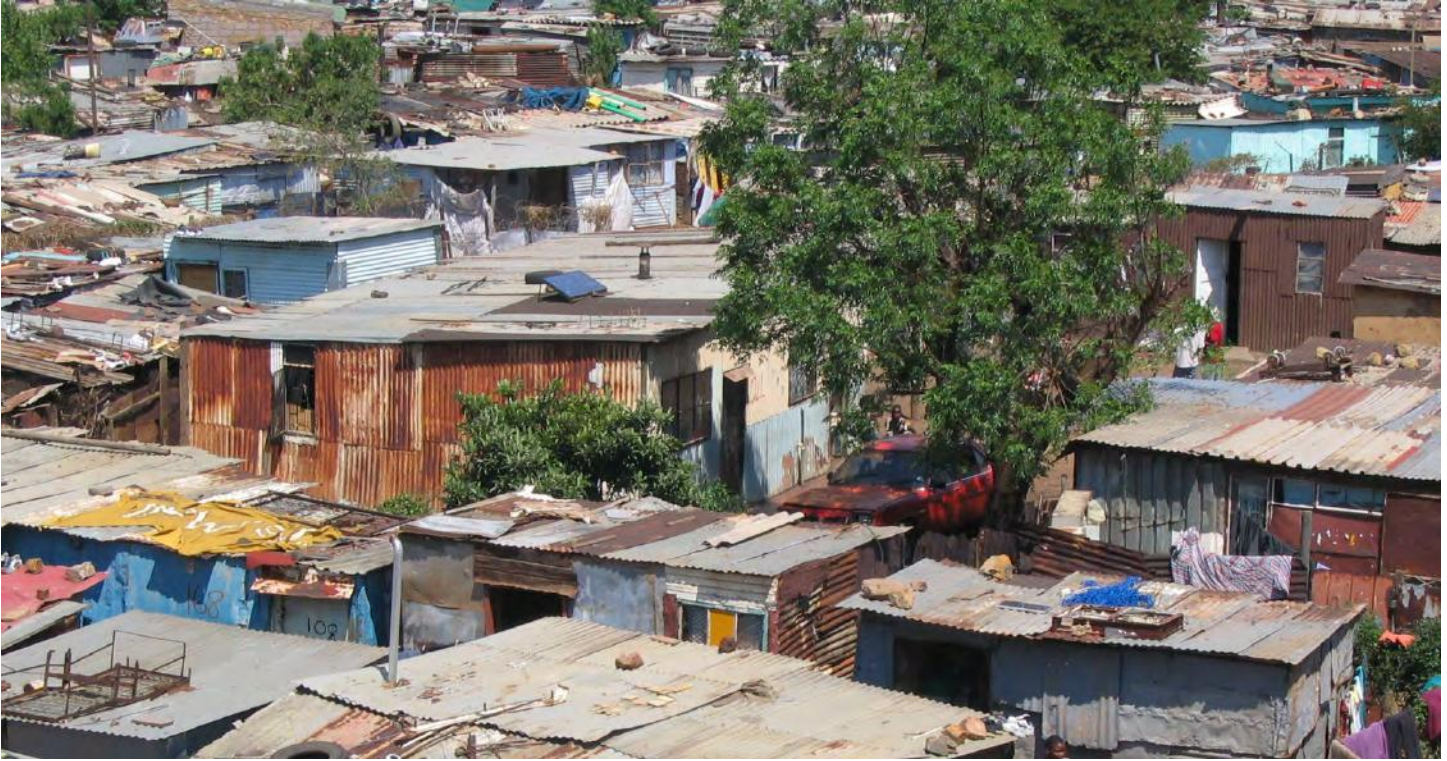
42 A/RES/65/119, "Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism," 10 December 2018, accessed 16 August 2019, [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/119](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/119).

43 "New Caledonia Referendum Leaves Independence Movement Hopeful," *France 24*, 5 November 2018, <https://www.france24.com/en/20181105-france-new-caledonia-referendum-leaves-independence-movement-hopeful>.

44 Ibid.

45 "New Caledonia Profile," *BBC News*, 5 November 2018, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16740838>.





South African homes in a Soweto slum, located west of Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city

velopment of the various ethnic groups in South Africa. Apartheid integrated intolerance into South Africa's political structure, thereby making segregation a part of the law.<sup>46</sup> Legislation such as the Population Registration Act, requiring the registration of peoples based upon race, and the Group Areas Act, which allowed for the physical separation and relocation of races, were among a few of the policies meant to consolidate the apartheid state.<sup>47</sup> While the policies that laid the foundation for an apartheid state have since been removed, the economic disparities brought about by these changes are still apparent today.<sup>48</sup> During its colonial and apartheid periods, South Africa's black population was divided into major ethnic groups, including the Nguni, consisting of Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, and Swazi, and the Sotho people, consisting of those from Northern Sotho (Bapedi), Southern Sotho (Basotho), and Tswana.<sup>49</sup> Today, millions of these black South Africans,

who make up three-fourths of the country's roughly 55 million people, lack the capital needed to start businesses and pursue economic opportunities.<sup>50</sup> Those that do are forced to use unconventional methods.<sup>51</sup> One black entrepreneur, after being told that he would need to pay a government official a 10,000 rand bribe (approximately \$737 USD) in order to receive a government contract, disrupted a construction site, threatening to shake the scaffolding.<sup>52</sup> While radical and forceful, these actions provided him and his partners a number of contracts netting profits of 70,000 rand (approximately \$5,150 USD).<sup>53</sup> This is a reality for many black South Africans. A study conducted at Stellenbosch University, located in South Africa's Western Cape province, showed that "10% of all South Africans—the majority white—own more than 90% of national wealth," with 80% of the population, of which an overwhelming number are black, owning nothing at all.<sup>54</sup> To

46 "A History of Apartheid in South Africa," *South African History Online*, 17 January 2019, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-apartheid-south-africa>.

47 Ibid.

48 Peter S. Goodman, "End of Apartheid in South Africa? Not in Economic Terms," *The New York Times*, 24 October 2017, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/business/south-africa-economy-apartheid.html>.

49 "Race and Ethnicity in South Africa," *South African History Online*, 5 October 2018, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/race-and-ethnicity-south-africa>.

50 Peter S. Goodman, "End of Apartheid in South Africa? Not in Economic Terms."

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

a large extent, apartheid has continued despite its legislative deconstruction and in many regards, patterns of enrichment and impoverishment can still be seen throughout the country today.<sup>55</sup>

While it is important that delegates recognize that discrimination and intolerance have historically been illustrated through systems such as slavery, colonialism, and apartheid, they only display the beginnings of intolerance. Modern manifestations of religious intolerance and ethnic-based conflict, such as the persistent and ongoing Sunni-Shia religious divide, have been observed as early as the Seventh century. Following the death of Mohammed, the founder of the Islamic faith, in 632, a debate erupted revolving around the circumstances of his succession. Some argued that that leadership should be attributed to qualifications, while others argued that legitimacy would only come through Mohammed's bloodline.<sup>56</sup> Early disciples of Islam elected Abu Bakr, one of Mohammed's companions, to be the first caliph, while others favored Ali ibn Abi Tali, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law.<sup>57</sup> This division later evolved into Islam's two main sects: Shias, derived from *shi'atu Ali*, translating to "partisans of Ali," who are devoted to Ali and his descendants, and Sunnis, translating to followers of the *sunna*—or "way" in Arabic—of Mohammed, who are opposed to political succession solely based on bloodline.<sup>58</sup> While these two groups have lived peacefully together for centuries, this departure is often cited as the origin of modern tensions, which continue to plague the Arab world today.<sup>59</sup>

According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, Shias are a religious minority in the Muslim community, only constituting 15% of the 1.6 billion Muslims in 2011.<sup>60</sup>

However, Shia Muslims are either a demographic majority or wield political power in some countries. Iran, for example, is the largest Shia-majority country in the world.<sup>61</sup> In Syria's ongoing civil war, the sitting regime, led by President Bashar al-Assad, is backed by and heavily relies on Alawites, a heterodox Shia sect that accounts for 13% of the population. The group has deep ties within the country's military and secret services, and serve as the backbone of the fighting forces that support Assad.<sup>62</sup> While these religious differences do not define the Syrian Civil War, they must be considered in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of this issue and those like it. In recognizing this, their nature and impact will vary from state to state.

## The Global Impact of Refugee Crises and Their Effects on Intolerance

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are approximately 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.<sup>63</sup> Of that number, just over 25.9 million are refugees while the remaining 44.8 million are internally displaced peoples or asylum-seekers.<sup>64</sup> As defined by the UN, a refugee "is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence."<sup>65</sup> The circumstances that produce refugees are often based on fear of persecution for a wide range of factors, including "race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group."<sup>66</sup> This is often a result of war and ethnic, tribal, and religious conflict which, as seen in the Rwandan Genocide, are immeasurably detrimental.<sup>67</sup> Today, 67% of refugees worldwide come from five countries: Afghanistan,

55 Ibid.

56 "The Sunni-Shia Divide," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed 21 August 2019, [https://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divide/](https://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divide#/).

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 "The Future of the Global Muslim Population," *Pew Research Center*, 27 January 2011, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>.

61 "The Sunni-Shia Divide," *Council on Foreign Relations*.

62 Ibid.

63 "Figures at a Glance," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 19 June 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html).

64 Ibid.

65 "What Is a Refugee?," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.



Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria.<sup>68</sup> In states such as Myanmar, South Sudan, and Syria, remnants of ethnic tension can be examined in ongoing conflict; in some instances these tensions are driven to ethnic-based conflict, which has produced an incredible number of refugees. It is important to recognize the recent and ongoing conflicts that have contributed to this widespread movement of displaced people.

In March 2011, the Syrian government arrested a group of teenagers for writing graffiti in support of the Arab Spring, a movement for democracy centralized in the Middle East and North Africa. Following these arrests, the public held demonstrations that turned into violent clashes and ultimately a civil war. Since then, more than half of all Syrians have been forced to leave due to war, with 6.6 million having left the country and 6.1 million more being internally displaced.<sup>69</sup> The challenges in addressing this issue not only lie in the inherent difficulty in providing basic needs to these individuals, but remain rooted in intolerance.

With over 660,000 Syrian refugees, Jordan hosts the second largest number of refugees per capita in the world.<sup>70</sup> In many ways, the challenges brought about by the Syrian refugee crisis “[have] exacerbated endemic political, economic, and resource challenges in Jordan.”<sup>71</sup> According to the Carnegie Endowment, the Jordanian public focuses largely on the negative impacts of the Syrian refugee influx, while the positive impacts are often overshadowed.<sup>72</sup> In a report released by the International Labor Organization, 85% of Jordanian workers believe that Syrian refugees should not be allowed to enter the

state freely, and 65% believe that they should all live in refugee camps.<sup>73</sup> These sentiments can be attributed to the belief that Syrians do not contribute to Jordan’s economy nor do they enrich its local communities, with 94% of Jordanian workers believing that they are a strain on state resources.<sup>74</sup> 80% of these workers also believe that these individuals pose a threat to national security and stability.<sup>75</sup> In addressing this complex issue, it is important that delegates recognize that the concerns produced by host countries and their people. The strain placed on the infrastructures in which refugees are present arouses fear of loss and in many instances, these individuals hope to find normalcy in uncertain circumstances.

For non-Syrian refugees, the effects of intolerance are just as bad, if not worse. Those originating from sub-Saharan Africa are targets of racism and discrimination due to their skin color, making them more identifiable than Syrian refugees.<sup>76</sup> In 2015, Jordan deported 800 Sudanese asylum seekers following protests aimed at addressing the “discrimination in provision of humanitarian assistance and resettlement services.”<sup>77</sup> The challenges faced by displaced peoples deny them equal access to fundamental resources, as seen in areas such as work, education, and healthcare.<sup>78</sup> It is important to acknowledge that these difficulties are not limited to the Syrian refugee crisis, but affect the community as a whole.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Venezuelan refugee crisis has produced one of the largest migrations in recent history.<sup>79</sup> Since 2014, more than four million people have been identified as refugees or migrants from Venezuela.<sup>80</sup> Venezu-

68 Ibid.

69 “Syrian Refugee Crisis: Aid,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/syria/>.

70 “Jordan Fact Sheet,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, June 2019, accessed 1 October 2019, <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Jordan%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20July%202019.pdf>.

71 Alexandra Francis, “Jordan’s Refugee Crisis,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 21 September 2015, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/09/21/jordan-s-refugee-crisis-pub-61338>.

72 Ibid.

73 Svein Erik Stave and Solveig Hillesund, “Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market,” *International Labor Organization*, 2015, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_364162.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_364162.pdf).

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Camille Duprie, “Non-Syrian Refugees ‘Suffer Even More’ since Jordan Compact,” *Jordan Times*, 13 September 2018, accessed 1 October 2019, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/non-syrian-refugees-suffer-even-more-jordan-compact>.

77 “Jordan: Deporting Sudanese Asylum Seekers,” *Human Rights Watch*, 16 December 2015, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/16/jordan-deporting-sudanese-asylum-seekers>.

78 Alexandra Francis, “Jordan’s Refugee Crisis,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.

79 “Venezuela Situation,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html>.

80 Ibid.

ela's ongoing political, socio-economic, and humanitarian crises have compelled a growing number of children, women, and men to leave.<sup>81</sup> Essentials such as medicine, medical supplies, and food are unavailable due to severe shortages, leaving Venezuelans unable to feed their families adequately or access essential healthcare services.<sup>82</sup> Thus, many individuals are forced to travel to neighboring states, with Colombia and Peru being the largest recipients, and others travelling farther to the US, Chile, or Argentina.<sup>83</sup> While many governments have openly accepted these individuals, some countries have seen local populations and populist politicians use fear and prejudice to exacerbate xenophobic attitudes.<sup>84</sup> In Peru, a number of government officials have made a number of xenophobic comments.<sup>85</sup> Henry Lopez, the mayor of Huancayo, openly remarked that he would "free" the city of Venezuelan immigrants and require companies to engage in discriminatory hiring policy, hiring only locals.<sup>86</sup> In last year's election, Ricardo Belmont, a candidate for Lima's mayoral position, incited fears that incoming Venezuelans were a threat to Peruvian's jobs and the public.<sup>87</sup> In June, Peru's Foreign Minister announced that incoming Venezuelans were required to obtain a mandatory humanitarian visa, which would help them secure work legally for 183 days, barring some exceptions for "minors who only have birth certificates and are in transit to Peru to meet up with their parents, adults in transit to meet their families, adults in extremely vulnerable positions, and the elderly."<sup>88</sup> Such actions set a dangerous precedent for later policy and behavior that is especially damaging to vulnerable

groups, such as refugees.

Since 2015, Colombia has taken in 1.2 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees, integrating them into the "local economy and initiating campaigns to combat xenophobia."<sup>89</sup> Despite these efforts, there are still challenges to successfully integrating these refugees. In October 2018, a Venezuelan man was killed after false rumors about Venezuelans kidnapping children quickly spread through social media.<sup>90</sup> The rumors were likely spread in an effort to drive the migrants out of the neighborhood.<sup>91</sup> In looking at these scenarios, it is clear that different regions face different encounters with intolerance. Where the arrival of Syrian refugees produced populist resentment based largely on linguistic, cultural, and religious differences, it becomes difficult to explain the Latin American xenophobia towards Venezuelans.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to understand the impact of refugees in a community and the strain that they place on public resources in order to have an understanding of where xenophobic sentiments arise from. In 1997, the UNHCR released a report defining the social, economic, and infrastructural and ecological impact of accommodating large refugee populations in developing countries.<sup>93</sup> In the short term, refugees compete with locals to attain valuable, scarce resources such as land, water, housing, and medical services.<sup>94</sup> Over time, natural resources, education and health facilities, energy, transportation, social services, and employment are more highly demanded; the sudden and massive demand for natural resources, such as fuel and shelter

81 Ibid.

82 "World Report 2019: Rights Trends in Venezuela," *Human Rights Watch*, 17 January 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/venezuela>.

83 Rocio Cara Labrador, "The Venezuelan Exodus," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 8 July 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/article/venezuelan-exodus>.

84 Dany Bahar, "Latin America Is Facing a Refugee Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, 23 October 2018, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/venezuela/2018-10-23/latin-america-facing-refugee-crisis>.

85 "Prosecutors in Peru Probe Mayor for Discrimination against Venezuelans," *Reuters*, 1 April 2019, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-migration-peru/prosecutors-in-peru-probe-mayor-for-discrimination-against-venezuelans-idUSKC-N1RE02K>.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 Manuel Rueda, "I Get Screamed at in the Streets': Colombia's Patience with Venezuelan Migrants Wears Thin," *Public Radio International*, 10 May 2019, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-05-10/i-get-screamed-streets-colombias-patience-venezuelan-migrants-wears-thin>; Dany Bahar, "Latin America Is Facing a Refugee Crisis."

90 Manuel Rueda, "I Get Screamed at in the Streets': Colombia's Patience with Venezuelan Migrants Wears Thin."

91 Ibid.

92 Dany Bahar, "Latin America Is Facing a Refugee Crisis."

93 "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 6 January 1997, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html>.

94 Ibid.

materials, has long-term effects on their sustainable regeneration.<sup>95</sup> In addition to material depletion, there are a number of cultural and linguistic differences that make it difficult to properly integrate refugees into host communities.<sup>96</sup> Other concerns revolve around complaints that they contribute to security problems in general, with crime rates, theft, murder, etc., being noted in particular.<sup>97</sup> In many cases, discontent, especially in poor communities, is commonly driven by a juxtaposition in treatment as refugees are recipients of a number of services or entitlements that are not provided to them.<sup>98</sup> It is important for delegates to recognize that refugees disrupt a number of facets within society which make it difficult for countries that lack the economic and infrastructural capacities to accommodate them.

While there are persisting impositions in helping refugees, it is necessary that in this process, host countries continue to uphold the standards of international human rights policy, especially as it pertains to vulnerable groups. The abuse and mistreatment faced is far from a recent phenomenon. The 1951 Refugee Convention is the first document to formally define the term “refugee” and outline the rights of the displaced, in addition to the legal obligations of States to protect them.<sup>99</sup> It set a precedent for later documents, such as the 1967 Protocol, which removed the Refugee Convention’s geographical restrictions so that it applied universally.<sup>100</sup>

## Ethnic Tensions and Conflict

The terms ethnic and ethnicity are derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, which describes a community of common descent.<sup>101</sup> In this context, the term ethnic relates to “large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal,

religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.”<sup>102</sup> Using this definition, an ethnic conflict can better be defined as “a form of conflict in which the objectives of at least one party are defined in ethnic terms, and the conflict, its antecedents, and possible solutions are perceived along ethnic lines.”<sup>103</sup> Today, ethnic conflicts are one of the largest threats to international peace and security.<sup>104</sup> In addition to destabilizing provinces, states, and entire regions, ethnic conflicts are often followed by human rights abuses including genocide and crimes against humanity, and political turmoil in the form of state failure, or mass refugee flows.<sup>105</sup> The circumstances leading up to the Rwandan Genocide, and the recent development in South Sudan and Myanmar, will allow delegates to understand the role that ethnic tensions play bringing out conflict.

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide is often cited as one of the worst human rights crises in recent history. Spanning over the course of 100 days, the tragedy resulted in the death of more than 800,000 people, mostly of the Tutsi minority, with an additional two million (mainly Hutus) having been forcibly displaced.<sup>106</sup> Conflict began on 6 April 1994 when a plane carrying Rwandan leader Juvenal Habyarimana, a moderate Hutu, and Burundi’s president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was shot down over the capital city of Kigali. Soon after the Presidential Guard, members of the Rwandan armed forces, and Hutu militia groups, known as the Interhamwe (“Those Who Attack Together”) and Impuzamugambi (“Those Who Have the Same Goal”), set up roadblocks and barricades and began attacking Tutsis and moderate Hutus.<sup>107</sup>

In order to better understand the circumstances leading up to the genocide, it is important to acknowledge the state’s colonial

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 “The 1951 Refugee Convention,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 6 August, 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10).

100 “The 1967 Protocol,” *Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law*, 8 October 2018, <https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/1967-protocol>.

101 Tina Kempin Reuter, “Ethnic Conflict,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1 November 2017, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethnic-conflict>.

102 “Ethnic,” *Merriam-Webster*, accessed 6 August 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnic>.

103 Tina Kempin Reuter, “Ethnic Conflict.”

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid.

106 “Rwandan Genocide,” *History.com*, 14 October 2009, accessed 1 October 2019, [https://www.history.com/topics/africa/rwandan-genocide#section\\_1](https://www.history.com/topics/africa/rwandan-genocide#section_1).

107 Ibid.

origins. After World War I, Rwanda came under the League of Nations mandate of Belgium.<sup>108</sup> Under colonial rule, the Tutsi minority saw preferential treatment over the Hutus.<sup>109</sup> The tension brought about by this treatment resulted in a Hutu revolution in 1959, forcing approximately 300,000 Tutsis to flee the country.<sup>110</sup> Even after its independence in 1962, ethnically motivated violence would continue to affect the political and socio-economic state of Rwanda.

The challenges in dealing with ethnic conflict require preventative action by the international community. On the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide, former-UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon addressed thousands of people in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, acknowledging the failure of the UN in preventing the horrific incident.<sup>111</sup> While states did not act to prevent the genocide, it is an example to inform future generations of the human suffering brought about by ethnic conflict. In the aftermath of the genocide, former-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan commissioned a report inquiring into the actions of the UN during the 1994 genocide.<sup>112</sup> The report described the failure of the UN to prevent, and subsequently, to stop the genocide as a failure by the organization's system as a whole.<sup>113</sup> It cites the lack of resources and political commitment to the developments in Rwanda as the UN's fundamental failure.<sup>114</sup> The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNMIR) was not "planned, dimensioned, deployed or instructed in a way which provided for a proactive and assertive role" in facilitating an already troubled peace process; ultimately, the fundamental capacity problems of UNMIR

contributed to a terrible and humiliating situation in which peacekeeping forces were incapacitated in the wake of one of the worst humanitarian crises humankind has seen in this century.<sup>115</sup> It is of the utmost importance that, moving forward, the UN takes meaningful action to destigmatize matters before they escalate and endeavor to operate in a proactive, purposeful fashion. In many regards, intolerance, especially involving matters of race and ethnicity, is a topic which is invariably impactful today. Therefore, it is important that delegates address and discuss this topic, its manifestations, and those affected with a degree of respect and consideration.

A more recent example of ethnic conflict is the ongoing civil war in South Sudan. Since December 2013, an estimated 383,000 people have been killed and an additional four million people have been internally displaced or forced to flee to neighboring countries.<sup>116</sup> What started as a political struggle between President Salva Kiir and opposition leader and former Vice President Riek Machar violently erupted into an ethnic conflict between the two largest ethnic groups of the Dinka and Nuer.<sup>117</sup> The tensions between these two groups date back to 1944 and has only been exacerbated by the dismissal of Machar, a Nuer, by Kiir, a Dinka, which has functioned as a catalyst for mass violence.<sup>118</sup> During this period, Kiir announced that members of the military, loyal to former vice president Machar, tried to overthrow the government, resulting in the spread of violence throughout the region.<sup>119</sup> Since then, "armed groups have targeted civilians along ethnic lines, committed rape and sexual violence, destroyed property

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 "Rwanda Genocide: UN Ashamed, Says Ban Ki-Moon," *BBC News*, 7 April 2014, accessed 1 October 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26917419>.

112 "Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda - Rwanda," *United Nations*, 15 December 1999, <https://reliefweb.int/report/rwanda/report-independent-inquiry-actions-united-nations-during-1994-genocide-rwanda>.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 Megan Specia, "383,000: Estimated Death Toll in South Sudan's War," *The New York Times*, 27 September 2018, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/26/world/africa/south-sudan-civil-war-deaths.html>; "Civil War in South Sudan," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 6 August 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan>.

117 "Civil War in South Sudan," *Council on Foreign Relations*.

118 "Conflict between Dinka and Nuer in South Sudan: ECC Factbook," *ECC Library*, 15 January 2018, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://library.ecc-platform.org/conflicts/natural-ressource-conflict-south-sudan-dinka-vs-nuer>.

119 "Civil War in South Sudan," *Council on Foreign Relations*; Isma'il Kushkush, "President Says a Coup Failed in South Sudan," *The New York Times*, 16 December 2013, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/17/world/africa/attempted-coup-in-south-sudan-president-says.html>.



and looted villages, and recruited children into their ranks.”<sup>120</sup> While the UN and the international community are taking action to facilitate discussion between Kiir and Machar, ethnic groups continue to suffer as a result.<sup>121</sup>

In Myanmar, there are 135 major state-recognized ethnic groups who live in the seven ethnic minority states, in addition to the seven divisions which hold the Burmese majority, also known as the Bamar.<sup>122</sup> Of these minority groups, the Rohingya—a mostly Muslim minority—is the most persecuted.<sup>123</sup> According to the UNHCR, more than one million refugees have fled Myanmar to neighboring states, such as Bangladesh, to escape the military’s large-scale ethnic cleansing campaign.<sup>124</sup> In Bangladesh, nearly one million Rohingya have successfully established camps with the aid of the World Food Program.<sup>125</sup> The largest refugee camp in Bangladesh has begun to reinforce drainage canals and build bamboo bridges in addition to other basic infrastructure.<sup>126</sup> While the Bangladeshi government has circulated sentiments that the Rohingya are temporary visitors, banning what it refers to as “permanent” homes, aid groups have shifted their approach from short-term to long-term, developing new ways to support refugees.<sup>127</sup> As of August 2019, Myanmar and Bangladesh have made a second attempt to begin repatriation of Rohingya Muslims. According to the UNHCR, the Bangladeshi government has requested aid in verifying 3,450 people who voluntarily signed up to be repatriated.<sup>128</sup> Many refugees are wary of the situation and distrust these promises following the Burmese military’s 2017 counterinsurgency campaign, during which it has committed

a number of human rights violations, “including mass killings, sexual violence, and widespread arson.”<sup>129</sup> Under the Burmese state, the Rohingya have faced decades of discrimination and repression.<sup>130</sup> Basic rights such as citizenship, freedom of movement, and access to basic health care make this one of the most pressing humanitarian crises in recent years.<sup>131</sup>

## Rise of Targeted Religious Intolerance

The effects of intolerance are felt in many areas that often intersect. From the previous section, the topic of Myanmar and the plight of the Rohingya remain important areas of discussion and must be addressed to better understand the topic as a whole. In Myanmar, religious conflicts between Buddhist and Muslim communities have fueled tensions in the Rakhine state—one of Myanmar’s seven ethnic minority states.<sup>132</sup> Authorities in the Rakhine government acknowledged fear as a driving factor for both parties. False ideas of global Muslim power and the perception of Islam as intrinsically violent have contributed to these attitudes.<sup>133</sup> The dangers of these sentiments have largely contributed to the rise of religious intolerance.

Islamophobia has been growing in the West for quite some time, most notably in North America and Europe.<sup>134</sup> This can be attributed to the use of campaigns and public discourse spreading fear of Islam.<sup>135</sup> Muslim mosques, Islamic centers, Islamic attire, and Islam’s sacred symbols have been targeted in a number of incidents and these negative attitudes have spread through Western countries, as shown in the increas-

120 “Civil War in South Sudan,” *Council on Foreign Relations*.

121 Ibid.

122 “Myanmar/Burma,” *Minority Rights Group International*, accessed 7 August 2019, <https://minorityrights.org/country/myanmarburma/>.

123 Ibid.

124 “Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Supporting the Stateless Minority Fleeing Myanmar,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 7 August 2019, <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/rohingya/>; “Rohingya Crisis,” *Human Rights Watch*, accessed 7 August 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya-crisis>.

125 Jason Beaubien, “Rohingya Settle In For The Long Haul, Even As Bangladesh Wants Refugees To Go Home,” *NPR*, 5 April 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/05/709894267/rohingya-settle-in-for-the-long-haul-even-as-bangladesh-wants-refugees-to-go-hom>.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

128 “Myanmar, Bangladesh Trying to Repatriate Rohingya Refugees,” *Time*, accessed 16 August 2019, <https://time.com/5653848/myanmar-bangladesh-repatriation-rohingya/>.

129 “Myanmar, Bangladesh Trying to Repatriate Rohingya Refugees,” *Time*; “Rohingya Crisis,” *Human Rights Watch*.

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

132 Matt Schissler et al., “The Roots of Religious Conflict in Myanmar,” *The Diplomat*, 6 August 2015, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/08/the-roots-of-religious-conflict-in-myanmar/>.

133 Ibid.

134 “Eleventh OIC Report on Islamophobia,” *Organisation of Islamic Cooperation*.

135 Ibid.

ing mistrust of Islam and its followers.<sup>136</sup> Misconceptions of Islam have spread doubt that it is a religion of peace, as more and more people associate Islam with the ongoing global phenomena of extremism and terrorism.<sup>137</sup> Islamophobia, much like xenophobia, is a relatively new term to describe the Muslim community as targets of negative stereotyping and prejudice.<sup>138</sup> According to the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan think tank specializing in opinion polls and demographic research, there were an accounted 307 incidents of anti-Muslim hate crimes in the US in 2016, marking a 19% increase from the previous year.<sup>139</sup> Of these incidents, 127 were reported

to involve aggravated or simple assault, compared to the 91 recorded in 2015.<sup>140</sup> Rhetoric that defines the Muslim community as extremists or terrorists is particularly dangerous, and since 2001, the year of the 11 September terrorist attacks, the average number of attacks against Muslims per year has increased significantly.<sup>141</sup>

The rise of Islamophobia is far from an isolated event, as over the past decade, the international community has seen a rise of anti-Semitism as well.<sup>142</sup> Around the globe, Jewish culture and its institutions have been desecrated, vandalized, and burned.<sup>143</sup> Its adherents have been harassed, spat on, threat-



Supporters at Pittsburgh's Rally for Peace and a Memorial for the Victims of the Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

139 Katayoun Kishi, "Assaults against Muslims in U.S. Surpass 2001 Level," *Pew Research Center*, 15 November 2017, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/15/assaults-against-muslims-in-u-s-surpass-2001-level/>.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

142 "The United Nations and Antisemitism 2008-2017 Report Card," *United Nations Watch*, 2018, accessed 8 July 2019, <https://www.un-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-United-Nations-and-Antisemitism-2008-2017-Digital.pdf>.

143 Ibid.

ened, beaten, raped, and killed.<sup>144</sup> As recently as 2018 in the United States, a man stormed into a Pittsburgh synagogue and killed “at least eleven congregants and [wounded] four police officers and two others.”<sup>145</sup> Acknowledged as one of the deadliest attacks on Jewish people in recent history, the number of anti-Semitic attacks in the United States is growing.<sup>146</sup> In 2015 and 2016, the United States’ Federal Bureau of Investigation found that anti-Semitism accounted for 50% of religious hate crime, despite constituting less than 2% of the population. A similar trend is seen in Europe as numerous governments have been forced to take action to protect these individuals’ rights.<sup>147</sup> In 2016, France provided 800 Jewish institutions with permanent governmental protection.<sup>148</sup> Likewise, the German government provided special protections to Jewish centers, schools, and synagogues.<sup>149</sup> In 2009 and 2014, high numbers of violent anti-Semitic activity were recorded.<sup>150</sup> This came after the Hamas—a militant Islamic Palestinian nationalist movement founded in 1987 that is dedicated to establishing an independent Islamic state in Palestine—and Israel clashed, which produced anti-Israeli incitement.<sup>151</sup>

As outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), all people have the right to “freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change one’s religion or belief, and freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.”<sup>152</sup> The preservation of these freedoms is necessary to achieving equality in all fronts of life. The UDHR is a quintessential

declaration that addresses a core principle of this committee and embodies a fundamental aspect of the UN as a whole. Therefore, its values must be outlined in the policies administered to help aid groups affected by racism, xenophobia, and related intolerances.

## Outsourcing Hate Speech: The Methods and Modes of Communicating Hate Speech

Since the creation of the Internet in 1990, the number of users with web access worldwide has skyrocketed.<sup>153</sup> In 1995, there were a recorded 44 million users, but by 2016, the global total number of internet users reached an astounding 3.4 billion.<sup>154</sup> As of January 2019, there are nearly 4.4 billion users, a 10,000% increase over the course of almost two and a half decades.<sup>155</sup> Including the number of unique mobile users, this amount rises to 5.11 billion.<sup>156</sup> In many regards, digital technology, including the Internet and social media platforms, have “become an essential and central component of people’s everyday lives all over the world.”<sup>157</sup> The Internet and social media platforms have increasingly become a primary source of information and means of communication around the globe.<sup>158</sup> However, in recent years, these developments have aided in the spread of hate speech and the growth of hateful movements, including neo-Nazism and associated ideologies.<sup>159</sup>

According to a recent UN resolution addressing the *Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related*

144 Ibid.

145 Campbell Robertson, Christopher Mele, and Sabrina Tavernise, “11 Killed in Synagogue Massacre; Suspect Charged With 29 Counts,” *The New York Times*, 27 October 2018, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/27/us/active-shooter-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting.html>.

146 “The United Nations and Antisemitism 2008-2017 Report Card,” *United Nations Watch*.

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 Ibid.

151 “The United Nations and Antisemitism 2008-2017 Report Card,” *United Nations Watch*; “Hamas,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 17 January 2019, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hamas>.

152 “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” *United Nations*, accessed 7 August 2019, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

153 Julia Murphy, and Max Roser, “Internet,” *Our World in Data*, 14 July 2015, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://ourworldindata.org/internet>.

154 Ibid.

155 Simon Kemp, “Digital 2019: Global Internet Use Accelerates,” *We Are Social*, 30 January 2019, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://weare-social.com/blog/2019/01/digital-2019-global-internet-use-accelerates>.

156 Ibid.

157 A/RES/72/312, “Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,” 7 August 2018, accessed 9 July 2019, <https://undocs.org/A/73/312>.

158 Ibid.

159 Ibid.



intolerance, “Online communities can function as safe harbours for groups that espouse racial superiority and intolerance, allowing them to disseminate their ideology, organize meetings and violent protests, and fundraise and engage in other activities that would be more difficult in the real world.”<sup>160</sup> The increase in the number of groups and individuals engaging in the spread of these hateful ideologies can be viewed as a direct result of this.<sup>161</sup> Platforms such as Facebook bridge this gap as hate groups use dangerous rhetoric to target groups located around the world. In recent years, Micronesians—people from a country in the west Pacific, the Federated States of Micronesia—have received a number of comments calling for them to be killed, hunted, purged, and cleansed.<sup>162</sup> While these platforms can be used to spread positivity, it is equally important to recognize the harm that they have in spreading hate-speech online, and to consider how to minimize the negative uses the advent of the Internet has produced so far.

It is important to recognize the disproportionate effect that hate speech has on minority groups in society; especially the Jewish community, which remains especially vulnerable to anti-Semitic attacks online.<sup>163</sup> In 2016, the World Jewish Congress found that an anti-Semitic post was uploaded to social media every 83 seconds.<sup>164</sup> Online forums and video-sharing websites such as YouTube have been used to share neo-Nazi and other hate music videos celebrating events such as the Holocaust and advocating for the mass killings of Muslims, Jews, and other groups.<sup>165</sup> With an audience of more than 1.5 billion viewers a month and 400 new hours of video uploaded every minute, YouTube, alongside Facebook and Twitter,

are different forms of media that disseminate and broadcast hate groups’ propaganda.<sup>166</sup> These groups often rely on these types of platforms to recruit new members and coordinate action between existing members. Twitter, a site of approximately 126 million users, is often used for coordination and to keep these groups up-to-date on relevant activities.<sup>167</sup> On Facebook, neo-Nazi supporters are able to create groups and organize events.<sup>168</sup> The Internet and social media platforms have seen a rise, as reports of hate speech have extended to nearly every continent, making this a global issue that requires a collective effort.<sup>169</sup> Delegates should examine the impacts that hate speech has on social media in their own states and take into account measures that have been taken in the past as well as those which are currently being discussed.

## Current Status

### Rise of Intolerance in Europe

In recent years, Europe has seen a growth in xenophobic, Islamophobic, and other discriminatory attitudes.<sup>170</sup> While many European countries have provided protection to about one million Syrian refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violent circumstances, the challenges brought about by these protections include discrimination and manifestations of racism and xenophobia.<sup>171</sup> This growth in intolerance continues to threaten security in the diverse societies seen across many European countries.<sup>172</sup> Incidents that are violent in nature have been recorded across the European Union (EU), as physical

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid.

162 Kate Lyons, “#BeingMicronesia: Online Hatred Spurs Positive Fightback,” *The Guardian*, 5 October 2018, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/06/beingmicronesia-online-hatred-spurs-positive-fightback>; Sophie Foster and Francis X. Hezel, “Micronesia,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 4 December 2018, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Micronesia-republic-Pacific-Ocean>.

163 A/RES/72/312, “Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.”

164 “An Anti-Semitic Post Is Uploaded to Social Media Every 83 Seconds, WJC Research Finds,” *World Jewish Congress*, 24 March 2017, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/an-anti-semitic-post-is-uploaded-to-social-media-every-83-seconds-wjc-research-finds-3-5-2017>.

165 A/RES/72/312, “Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.”

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

169 Zachary Laub, “Hate Speech on Social Media: Global Comparisons,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 7 June 2019, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/background/hate-speech-social-media-global-comparisons>.

170 “Xenophobia and Discrimination against Refugees and Migrants in Europe,” *Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor*, June 2018, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/2467/Xenophobia-and-Discrimination-against-Refugees-and-Migrants-in-Europe-2018>.

171 Ibid.

172 Ibid.



attacks, arson, and murders “have become the sad reality of progressively more diverse societies.”<sup>173</sup> Other forms of discrimination have been seen in the restriction of free movement outside of camps, unequal employment rights, and the denial of expression of religious identity, such as wearing hijabs. One explanation for this is rooted in the fear that refugees take jobs away from those in EU host countries.<sup>174</sup> While the adversity brought about by the recent refugee crisis has produced an outpouring of intolerance, it is important that delegates recognize that intolerance towards groups viewed as inferior or unlike has existed long before the Syrian refugee crisis and those like it.

The Roma people migrated from India to Europe in the early part of the second millennium.<sup>175</sup> Today, an estimated 8 million to 10 million live throughout the European continent, with large concentrations in central, eastern, and southern Europe, making them Europe’s largest minority.<sup>176</sup> A survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found that they are also among the most likely to be victims of prejudice, intolerance, and discrimination, even towards those whom are EU citizens.<sup>177</sup> On 8 April 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on Minorities called upon governments to fulfill their “international human rights obligations to protect and promote the rights of the Roma people.”<sup>178</sup> Deeply rooted bigotry and stereotypes that individuals hold towards these groups sometimes act as catalysts to perpetrate heinous acts against them.<sup>179</sup>

Europe’s recent influx of refugees has brought with it a number of problems that have begun to affect the politics of European countries. In recent years, the continent has seen the revival of militant extremist groups, networks, and incidents;



Syrian and Iraqi refugees arriving at Skala Sykamias Lesvos Greece

with it has followed a surge of anti-immigration, xenophobic, and Islamophobic violence, as well as attacks on the government, political opponents, ethnic minorities, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.<sup>180</sup> According to the France National Human Rights Commission, in 2015, France saw a massive increase in Islamophobic attacks with more than a 223% increase compared to the previous year.<sup>181</sup> This can be attributed to the many terrorist attacks that took place during that year.<sup>182</sup> Many nativist parties used these events to spread anti-immigration rhetoric placing blame on migrants and refugees.<sup>183</sup> One instance can be seen in the 2017 French presidential elections, during which National Front party leader Marine Le Pen used Islamophobic rhetoric to gain votes, including warnings of the dangers of Islam and “Islamic fundamentalism,” as well as calls for more restrictions on Muslims in addition to those already imposed on hijabs, veils, face covers, and burkinis.<sup>184</sup> The emergence of groups such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) Party pose a challenge to states’ political systems, as the nationalist and nativist messages they provide are able to appeal to a larger audience.<sup>185</sup> According to the

173 Ibid.

174 Ibid.

175 Erika Schlager, “The Roma-Europe’s Largest Minority,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 31 December 2005, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Roma-Europes-Largest-Minority-The-1105088>.

176 Ibid.

177 “Roma,” *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights*, accessed 8 August 2019, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/roma>.

178 “Praising Roma’s Contributions in Europe, UN Expert Urges End to Rising Intolerance and Hate Speech,” *UN News*, 8 April 2019, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1036291>.

179 Ibid.

180 Daniel Koehler, “Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe - Current Developments and Issues for the Future,” *PRISM* 6 No. 2 (18 July 2016): 85–99, [https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism\\_6-2/Koehler.pdf?ver=2016-07-05-104619-213](https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_6-2/Koehler.pdf?ver=2016-07-05-104619-213).

181 “Xenophobia and Discrimination against Refugees and Migrants in Europe,” *Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor*.

182 Ibid.

183 Ibid.

184 Ibid.

185 Ene Bayraklıs, Farid Hafez, and Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı Siyaset, “European Islamophobia Report 2017,” *SEN4*, 2018,



Anti-Brexit marchers show their support for the European Union, with some chanting “Baguettes not regrets”

Information and Forschung Institute for Economic Research, a Munich-based organization dedicated to informing thorough policy advisory and research, the rise of nativist political movements throughout Europe can be attributed to the rapid rate of immigration.<sup>186</sup> This can be observed in states such as Austria and Hungary which, over the course of four elections (2002-2017), have seen the vote shares of nativist parties increase from 10.01% to 24.04% and 4.6% to 20.22%, respectively.<sup>187</sup> It is important for delegates to consider the implications of immigration and the impact that the growing numbers of these groups have on vulnerable members of society.

The recent vote by the United Kingdom (UK) to leave the

EU, often referred to as “Brexit,” is an extreme materialization of this phenomenon. In 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron promised a national referendum on EU membership as a means of settling a long-standing debate.<sup>188</sup> The vote occurred on 23 June 2016, during which topics like migration, fueled by the Syrian refugee crisis, played an overwhelming role in the country’s decision to leave with 52% of the vote.<sup>189</sup> Former Prime Minister Theresa May, who oversaw negotiations, resigned on 24 May after three unsuccessful attempts to pass the plan negotiated with the EU for the departure.<sup>190</sup> The exit date has been postponed twice, and the 31 October 2019 deadline quickly approaches, which now also seems likely to be extended.<sup>191</sup> In the aftermath of the 2016 Brexit

accessed 7 June 2019, [https://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/EIR\\_2017.pdf](https://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/EIR_2017.pdf).

186 Ibid.

187 Ibid.

188 Benjamin Mueller, “What Is Brexit? A Simple Guide to Why It Matters and What Happens Next,” *The New York Times*, 23 July 2019, accessed 2 October 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/world/europe/what-is-brexit.html>.

189 Ibid.

190 Ibid.

191 Ibid.



referendum, Britain has seen the emboldening of right leaning groups with nativist sentiments, especially in its politics.<sup>192</sup> Rhetoric utilized by these groups revolve around the “us” vs “them” argument, which frames a narrative that politicians work against their own people.<sup>193</sup> Many have claimed that UKIP, the United Kingdom Independence Party, stoked fears about the besiegement of immigrants to motivate citizens to vote to leave the EU.<sup>194</sup> On 16 June 2016, just days before the referendum, Jo Cox, a sitting member of Parliament for the Labour party, was killed by an extremist shortly after preparing a report to Parliament on the rise of Islamophobia and nationalism.<sup>195</sup> Since then, a number of members of Parliament have received threats after implicating pro-EU stances, keeping tensions especially high.<sup>196</sup> The dangers of extreme nationalism are a reality as the country prepares to exit in the coming months.

## Recent Action and Possible Solutions

In 2001, the UN passed the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) in Durban, South Africa. The DDPA is a comprehensive, action-oriented document that embodies states’ commitment to tackle racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances.<sup>197</sup> In a follow-up, countries met in Geneva, Switzerland between 20 and 24 April 2009 for the Durban Review Conference to evaluate progress towards the initial goals set by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in 2001.<sup>198</sup> Since its adoption of this land-

mark resolution just under two decades ago, the DDPA has been regarded as one of the most important documents to address intolerance as a whole. Just last year, on 22 December 2018, the UN adopted a resolution reiterating the need for concrete action to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance as it relates to the comprehensive implementation of the DDPA.<sup>199</sup> It is important that strides are made to address contemporary forms of intolerance as they relate to the technologies and circumstances of today. Racism and xenophobia are noted to have been on the rise worldwide as the resurgence of prejudice and derogatory perceptions of superiority, dating back to the era of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade, are visible in the media and political rhetoric.<sup>200</sup> It is important to recognize the measures that intergovernmental and international organizations such as the UN and the EU are currently taking or suggest states implement.

In October 2018, in the UN General Assembly’s Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee, an EU representative delivered a statement outlining the organization’s commitment to addressing and combatting racism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination and intolerance.<sup>201</sup> This is made possible by its solid legal framework that implements policies such as the Racial Equality Directive, an anti-discrimination policy that provides protections in a number of areas, such as “employment, social protection, including social security and healthcare, and social advantages, to education and ac-

192 Francis Wade, “In Britain, Far-Right Rhetoric Is Overheating - with Potentially Dangerous Results,” *The Washington Post*, 29 April 2019, accessed 5 October 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/04/29/britain-far-right-rhetoric-is-overheating-with-potentially-dangerous-results/>.

193 Ibid.

194 Ibid.

195 Harry Cockburn, “Jo Cox ‘Was Preparing Report on Far-Right Groups and Islamophobia,’” *The Independent*, 20 June 2016, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/jo-cox-was-preparing-report-on-far-right-nationalists-a7090981.html>.

196 Francis Wade, “In Britain, Far-Right Rhetoric Is Overheating - with Potentially Dangerous Results.”

197 “Durban Review Conference, 20-24 April 2009, Geneva,” *United Nations*, accessed 8 August 2019, <https://www.un.org/en/durbanreview2009/ddpa.shtml>.

198 Ibid.

199 A/RES/73/262, “A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action,” 22 December 2018, accessed 18 August 2019, [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/262](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/262).

200 “Racism, Xenophobia Increasing Globally, Experts Tell Third Committee, amid Calls for Laws to Combat Hate Speech, Concerns over Freedom of Expression,” *United Nations*, 1 November 2016, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gashc4182.doc.htm>.

201 “EU Statement – United Nations 3rd Committee: Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,” *Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations*, 29 October 2018, [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/52953/eu-statement-united-nations-3rd-committee-elimination-racism-racial-discrimination\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/52953/eu-statement-united-nations-3rd-committee-elimination-racism-racial-discrimination_en).

cess to and supply of goods and services which are available to the public, including housing.”<sup>202</sup> In addition to legislation, the European Commission works to bridge EU agencies with international organizations, civil society organizations, and private actors through the exchange of effective practices and regular expert group meetings.<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, initiatives on diversity management and countering illegal hate speech online are also used to prevent and fight against racism, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance.<sup>204</sup>

During SOCHUM’s 71<sup>st</sup> Session in March 2017, Secretary-General António Guterres joined global leaders in addressing the rising xenophobic behavior and violence towards migrants, emphasizing a need to do more to protect their rights.<sup>205</sup> The Assembly President, Peter Thomson, a Fijian diplomat, encouraged political leaders to foster more tolerant and respectful attitudes towards migrants, emphasizing the need for education as an incredible resource to cultivate a respect for diversity and a better understanding for the positive cultural and economic contributions made by refugees and migrants.<sup>206</sup> Mechanisms such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, DDPA, and UDHR have laid the foundation upon which states can stand up against racism, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance as they appear.<sup>207</sup> During this process, Thomson continued, it will be pivotal that the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are met to attain a safe, more sustainable and prosperous future.<sup>208</sup>

In recent years, much of this intolerance has been directed to online platforms.<sup>209</sup> This can be seen most notably in the use of the Internet, especially social media, as a means to spread

hate speech and recruit members to their causes.<sup>210</sup> During its 73rd session, the UN recognized the dangers of these online communities, calling upon states to take action against these hate groups. The use of initiatives, as examined in the EU, have been successful in tackling racist hate speech online.<sup>211</sup> Another method utilized is the introduction of laws aimed at prohibiting the spread of such speech, requiring social media platforms to remove content that violates national hate speech legislation within 24 hours.<sup>212</sup> In addition to strict media standards, the formation of multilateral partnerships between states and social media platforms has proven successful, as seen in the EU’s campaign countering illegal hate speech online.<sup>213</sup> In May 2016, platforms such as Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter, and YouTube agreed to a “Code of conduct of countering illegal hate speech online.”<sup>214</sup> Since then, between 2018 and early 2019, increasingly popular apps such as Instagram and Snapchat have announced their intention to join.<sup>215</sup> While these policies are important in implementing hate speech regulation, it is important to keep in mind that these policies should not be used as a pretext for censorship and other abuses which may infringe upon basic freedoms and rights.

## Sustainable Development Goals

2015 marked the end of the Millennium Development Goals and a renewal to the commitment for peace and prosperity for the planet.<sup>216</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development fosters these essential values through its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call upon states—developed and developing—to recognize and address global

202 Ibid.

203 Ibid.

204 Ibid.

205 “Amid Rising Xenophobia, Violence, States Must Do More to Protect Migrants’ Rights, General Assembly Hears on International Day for Ending Racial Discrimination,” *United Nations*, 21 March 2017, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/ga11895.doc.htm>.

206 Ibid.

207 Ibid.

208 Ibid.

209 A/RES/72/312 “Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.”

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid.

212 Ibid.

213 “Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online #NoPlace4Hate,” *European Commission*, 18 March 2019, [https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item\\_id=54300](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=54300).

214 Ibid.

215 Ibid.

216 “Sustainable Development Goals,” *United Nations*, accessed 8 August 2019, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>.



issues.<sup>217</sup> At the same time as striving to end poverty and other deprivations, it is important that these solutions “go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth,” while also keeping in mind the impact of climate change and the importance of preserving the world’s oceans and forests.<sup>218</sup>

In late April 2019, a major summit was held at the UN offices in Geneva to counter hate speech.<sup>219</sup> Discussions included a warning against a resurgence of ultra-nationalist groups and parties, as they “legitimized violations” by propagating narratives of minorities as a threat to culture and identity.<sup>220</sup> On a global scale, there are an unprecedented number of hate crimes and rising levels of violence. In Sri Lanka, numerous attacks on churches and hotels claimed hundreds of lives.<sup>221</sup> If these concerns are not immediately addressed, there is a high risk of escalation to a point where atrocity crimes could be committed.<sup>222</sup> As hate speech and violence continue to reach different parts of the globe, it becomes more evident that collective efforts are urgent and necessary. Through its seventeen SDGs, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development hopes to shift attitudes in regard to how issues such as these must be approached. Therefore, it is important that delegates consider a number of SDGs which are extremely relevant to the discussion of this topic.

SDG 4: Quality Education addresses concerns surrounding the provision of an essential service which is important to informing vulnerable groups, as well as those groups which continue to harass and vindicate them. By 2030, the UN hopes to ensure equitable, quality education and access to education to youth and adults through the provision of affordable technical, vocational, and tertiary education, as well as primary and

secondary education.<sup>223</sup> These targets hope to achieve literacy and numeracy, thus leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, and includes the substantial increase in the supply of qualified teachers.<sup>224</sup> Education should be viewed as an indispensable tool in the fight against intolerance and as an opportunity for refugees, asylum seekers, and other persecuted and underprivileged groups to learn relevant skills that will help them better succeed in life.

SDG 8: Decent work and Economic Growth promises economic development around the globe. This can play an important role in circumventing misconceived sentiments such as those which argue that refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, are the singular cause for the absence of jobs within a community. In addition to providing basic opportunities to all people, the SDG hopes to reduce youth employment, while also eradicating forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, issues such as workplace discrimination are being addressed, as the UN continues to work for equal treatment and pay of women and men, including youth and people with disabilities, for work of equal value.<sup>226</sup> It is important that countries work to build their economic capacities through job creation and sustainable per capita economic growth, as those affected by racism, xenophobia, and other intolerances continue to search for normalcy.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities strives to tackle intolerance at its roots through the empowerment and promotion of social, economic, and political “inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status.”<sup>227</sup> This will be accomplished by adopting policies, especially those relating to the government, that progressively achieve greater equality.<sup>228</sup> This includes those address-

217 Ibid.

218 Ibid.

219 “Hatred ‘a Threat to Everyone’, Declares Guterres Calling for Global Effort to End Xenophobia and ‘Loathsome Rhetoric,’” *UN News*, 29 April 2019, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1037531>.

220 Ibid.

221 Ibid.

222 Ibid.

223 “Goal 4 : Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform,” *United Nations*, accessed 27 June 2019, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>.

224 Ibid.

225 “Goal 8 : Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform,” *United Nations*, accessed 27 June 2019, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>.

226 Ibid.

227 “Goal 10 : Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform,” *United Nations*, accessed 27 June 2019, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg10>.

228 Ibid.

ing wage and social protection policies, and enhancing the representation of developing countries in decision-making processes in global international economic and financial institutions, thus making these institutions more effective, credible, accountable, and legitimate.<sup>229</sup> These targets play an important role in giving all people from all states a facilitator role in addressing global issues and undermine persisting notions of superiority on which racism and related intolerances are based.

The violence and inequalities produced hinder states' abilities to reach the goals outlined in 2030 Agenda, as seen in SDG, SDG 8, and SDG 10.<sup>230</sup> If the state of hate violence continues to rise as it has in the past decade, it will become more difficult for the international community to fulfill these obligations.

## Bloc Analysis

### Point of Division

Racism, xenophobia, and related intolerances are present in many areas of the world and it is difficult to gauge the degree to which these intolerances prevail. Therefore, for the purposes of this committee, countries are divided based on a state's experience with intolerance. Intolerance persists in a variety of forms and can best be navigated by examining the political systems and cultures that exist within these countries. While these blocs are split by types of intolerance, it does not necessarily mean that these issues are geographically isolated. It is important to note that countries are not restricted to one category; as the nature of intolerance continues to develop, it is entirely possible that the severity of developments within a given country between the publishing of this background guide and the conference itself can demand a shift in identifying category. Delegates should be familiar with their own

countries' experience with intolerance and its effect on the region. For larger continents, such as Asia, identify sub-regional impacts and how intolerance within one's country has affected others.

### Countries with Weaker Institutions and a Colonialist Past

While it is difficult to outline what constitutes "limited" within the constraints of intolerance, countries experiencing limited intolerance can be identified as those which have persisting demonstrations of racism and intolerance. In Latin America, for example, these demonstrations have not disappeared, rather appeared in new ways.<sup>231</sup> The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean reported 92% of Afro-Caribbean descendants are impoverished and under-represented in politics.<sup>232</sup> Compared to whites or mestizos, "they are 2.5 times more likely to live in chronic poverty," and more likely to have fewer years of education and be victims of crime and violence.<sup>233</sup> One explanation for this may be rooted in colonialism and the unequal distribution of resources including land, the most important, and political power, which largely resided in the hands of the Spanish and Portuguese.<sup>234</sup> While these systems have been deconstructed to a degree, their remnants can still be found throughout the region. In Colombia, despite attempts at political inclusion, the implementation of positive discrimination and quotas in Universities, and the Afro-movement in the region, those of a white complexion have an advantage in society.<sup>235</sup>

Ethnic tensions have produced a number of conflicts throughout the African continent. In Nigeria, Boko Haram, an Islamist militant group, has claimed the lives of thousands and forcibly displaced millions more.<sup>236</sup> Many attribute the formation and persisting campaign of the group to longstanding religious and ethnic divisions, political corruption, and widening eco-

229 Ibid.

230 "Sustainable Development Goals," *United Nations*.

231 Audrey Duc, "The Persisting Impact of Racial Construction in Latin America," *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, 4 May 2018, <http://www.coha.org/the-persisting-impact-of-racial-construction-in-latin-america/>.

232 Ibid.

233 "With More 'Afro' Visibility, Latin America Redefines the Color Black," *The World Bank Group*, 29 August 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/08/29/afrodescendants-in-latin-america>.

234 Ibid.

235 Ibid.

236 Claire Felter, "Nigeria's Battle With Boko Haram," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 8 August 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/background/nigerias-battle-boko-haram>.

conomic disparity in Nigeria.<sup>237</sup> Under British rule, Nigeria saw its territories and peoples merged.<sup>238</sup> Comprised of nearly 350 ethnic groups, many of the individuals had little in common other than geographic proximity.<sup>239</sup> There are currently two major religious groups that roughly split the country in half: the Muslim-dominated north and the Christian-dominated south.<sup>240</sup> While the militancy of groups such as Boko Haram may continue to terrorize the region for reasons unrelated to those which encouraged its formation, it is important that delegates recognize these trends. In addressing this, it becomes easier to end a vicious cycle.

On 11 February 2019, the UN condemned Belgium's role in fostering racial discrimination rooted in its colonization of Congo and called upon the state to apologize for its crimes and make reparations.<sup>241</sup> Belgium's colonization of the Congo is cited as one of the worst examples of colonial abuse.<sup>242</sup> The African continent has a long and widespread history with colonization, and with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia, a vast majority of the African continent has withstood colonization. As these states continue to move away from the impact that these systems had on their political structures and economies, the discrimination first introduced by them continue to exist today.

A majority of the countries will fall within this category, and many which identify in this group must consider the cause and continued prevalence of such sentiments. It is important that persisting issues of discrimination and relatively "minor" manifestations of xenophobia are addressed before the nature of these intolerances worsen. Delegates should look towards fiscal policy, as well as previous social and economic solutions,

especially relating to education, as an example for future solutions.

## Countries Experiencing Moderate Intolerance

Countries in this bloc not only experience persisting demonstrations of racism and intolerance but may also be seeing a sharp rise of hate-groups, Nazism and fascism, and violence. In the past decade, Europe has undergone a number of changes that have contributed to an environment of increased discrimination and intolerance. While much of this growth can be attributed to the influx of refugees, many of which come from Syria, there are groups such as the Roma who have faced and will continue to face discrimination until relevant solutions address these issues. In recent years, political discourse, as seen in Brexit, has also contributed to this growth.<sup>243</sup> According to the UN special rapporteur, the United Kingdom has seen an increase in racial discrimination and intolerance since the landmark vote to leave the EU.<sup>244</sup> A growth in "explicit racial, ethnic, and religious intolerance" has been noted, as extreme views have gained ground in mainstream political parties on both sides of the aisle.<sup>245</sup>

Throughout the EU, people of African descent continue to face widespread and entrenched discrimination in a number of areas, including housing and employment.<sup>246</sup> In a recently conducted survey, almost a third of people of African descent state they have experienced racial discrimination in the last five years.<sup>247</sup> According to the EU's agency for fundamental rights, "the highest rates of racist violence were recorded in Finland at 14%, Ireland (13%), and Austria (13%), while the lowest were found in Portugal (2%) and the UK (3%)."<sup>248</sup> Of

237 Ibid.

238 Ibid.

239 Ibid.

240 Ibid.

241 Raf Casert, "UN: Belgium Must Apologize for Colonialism, Face Its Racism," *The Associated Press*, 11 February 2019, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.apnews.com/ce9234aaabbd4fd5ac1aff4148cfac32>.

242 Ibid.

243 Damien Gayle, "UK Has Seen 'Brexit-Related' Growth in Racism, Says UN Representative," *The Guardian*, 11 May 2018, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/may/11/uk-has-seen-brexit-related-growth-in-racism-says-un-representative>.

244 Ibid.

245 Ibid.

246 "Racism against Black People in EU 'Widespread and Entrenched'," *BBC*, 28 November 2018, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46369046>.

247 Jennifer Rankin, "People of African Descent Face 'Dire Picture' of Racism in EU," *The Guardian*, 28 November 2018, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/28/people-of-african-descent-face-dire-picture-of-racism-in-eu>.

248 "Racism against Black People in EU 'Widespread and Entrenched'," *BBC*.



this group, it has been noted that younger people reported worse discrimination than older respondents.<sup>249</sup>

In parts of Asia, xenophobic and racist attitudes have made tasks as essential as finding suitable housing difficult for foreigners.<sup>250</sup> A recent survey released by the Japanese Justice Minister reported that 40% of foreigners seeking rent accommodations were rejected because they were not Japanese.<sup>251</sup> In Singapore, South Asians and mainland Chinese faced similar difficulties with renting apartments. In some instances, this xenophobic behavior is explicit, where one website had a large



New Zealanders paying tribute to those who lost their lives in the Christchurch Mosque shootings

number of postings stating that Indians and Chinese were unwelcome.<sup>252</sup> This is, in part, due to a fear that foreigners will be unable to communicate in times of conflict and will violate rules regarding noise and living arrangements due to cultural differences.<sup>253</sup> While there are anti-discrimination policies set in place in many Asian countries to avoid this type of behavior, there is a disparity in their terminology and enforcement.<sup>254</sup> For instance, Singapore's constitution protects citizens from discriminatory practices, however, this leaves non-citizens such as Indians and mainland Chinese unprotected.<sup>255</sup>

Many of the issues that can be examined in the Americas are rooted in previous systems that served both economic and political purposes, such as slavery and repartimiento, more commonly referred to as *mita* in colonial Spanish America,—a system through which the crown granted privileges to colonists to recruit indigenous peoples for forced labor.<sup>256</sup> In the United States and Canada, there has been a rise of Islamophobic and related intolerances.<sup>257</sup> According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization that is dedicated to combatting hate and bigotry in the United States, between 2014 and 2018, the number of hate organizations grew significantly, rising from 784 to 1,040.<sup>258</sup> In 2017, the US saw anti-Muslim hate crimes rise 15%.<sup>259</sup> In the same year, Canada saw hate crimes reach an all-time high.<sup>260</sup> This comes after the attack on the Quebec City mosque, one of the most devastating incidents the country has seen in recent years, with hate crimes rising to 50% in the months after the mass shooting.<sup>261</sup> Since 2012, hate crimes against Muslims have been on the rise, with a notable increase of 253% between 2012 and 2015.<sup>262</sup>

249 Jennifer Rankin, "People of African Descent Face 'Dire Picture' of Racism in EU."

250 Xiaochen Su, "Racism and Apartment Hunting in East Asia," *The Diplomat*, 29 August 2018, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/racism-and-apartment-hunting-in-east-asia/>.

251 Ibid.

252 Ibid.

253 Ibid.

254 Ibid.

255 Ibid.

256 "Repartimiento," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 25 January 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/repartimiento>.

257 Jasmin Zine, "Islamophobia and Hate Crimes Continue to Rise in Canada," *The Conversation*, 6 February 2019, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://theconversation.com/islamophobia-and-hate-crimes-continue-to-rise-in-canada-110635>; "U.S. Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Rose 15 Percent in 2017: Advocacy Group," *Reuters*, 23 April 2018, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-islam-hatecrime/u-s-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-rose-15-percent-in-2017-advocacy-group-idUSKBN1HU240>.

258 Heidi Beirich, "The Year in Hate: Rage Against Change," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, February 2019, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2019/year-hate-rage-against-change>.

259 "U.S. Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Rose 15 Percent in 2017: Advocacy Group," *Reuters*.

260 John Rieti, "Hate Crimes Reached All-Time High in 2017, Statistics Canada Says," *CBC News*, 29 November 2018, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/statistics-canada-2017-hate-crime-numbers-1.4925399>.

261 Ibid.

262 Amy Minsky, "Hate Crimes against Muslims in Canada Increase 253% over Four Years," *Global News*, 13 June 2017, accessed 7 October

In Australia, islamophobia has embedded itself into politics. In 2019, Australian Senator Fraser Anning suggested that the recent attacks in Christchurch had a strong correlation with Muslim immigration.<sup>263</sup> Since then, Anning has brought into question a system which categorizes groups based on religion, suggesting that Islam is intrinsically different and the “religious equivalent to fascism.”<sup>264</sup> While the policies and statements of Anning do not represent Australia’s people as a whole, the rhetoric plays an equally dangerous role in normalizing hate speech in society. Prime Minister Scott Morrison does suggest that while Islamophobia does exist in Australia, it does so in a more nuanced form rooted in an unfamiliarity with Islam.<sup>265</sup> While the modern state is a conglomeration of multiple cultures, its history of racist behavior towards the indigenous population, Asians, and more recently, Muslims should be noted.

In the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque shootings, one of the worst Islamophobic-based shootings in recent history, New Zealand implemented policies placing strict restrictions on semi-automatic and “military-style” semi-automatic weapons.<sup>266</sup> In addition, on 24 April 2019, New Zealand, in conjunction with France, publicly announced a joint-effort to unite countries and tech companies in a bid to eliminate social media as a platform to organize and promote terrorism and extreme violence.<sup>267</sup> While this could be identified as an isolated event, this proves that it is possible for states to experience radical and unexpected instances of violence and, therefore, must implement policies which address intolerance before circumstances deteriorate extensively. Countries in this category will have a more difficult time addressing these issues as they continue to extend into a number of facets of society, such as politics itself.

## Countries Experiencing Extreme Intolerance and Conflict

Countries in this category are experiencing consistent abuses of minority groups which include: the state-sponsored persecution of individuals on the basis of ethnicity, race, and religious identity, extreme ethnic or religious conflict, and the commission of genocide. In China, there is an ongoing “campaign of mass internment, intrusive surveillance, political indoctrination, and forced cultural assimilation against the region’s Uighurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups,” affecting an estimated one million people.<sup>268</sup> Muslim ethnic groups in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) face extreme prejudice and surveillance following the adoption of the discriminatory “Regulations on De-Extremification” in March 2017.<sup>269</sup> The policy’s restrictions target the Muslim community, including open or private displays of religious and cultural affiliation, the wearing of a veil or headscarf, the growing of an “abnormal beard,” regular prayer, fasting or avoidance of alcohol, or possessing materials regarding or relating to Islam or Uighur culture; under this regulation the aforementioned can be considered “extremist.”<sup>270</sup> Alongside these restrictions includes the close surveillance of all people, regardless of age or gender, including the routine monitoring of messages on social media apps such as WeChat, which does not utilize end-to-end encryption.<sup>271</sup> Those that use alternative messaging apps with encryption are subject to questions and are at-risk of being sent to a “re-education camp.”<sup>272</sup> In these detention centers, commonly referred to as “re-education camps,” detained individuals are “forced to sing political songs and study speeches of the Chinese Communist Party”; communication was restricted, with the exception of a chant recited before meals: “Long live Xi

2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3523535/hate-crimes-canada-muslim/>.

263 Connor McLaughlin, “The Islamophobia Epidemic in Australia,” *The Diplomat*, 29 March 2019, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://the-diplomat.com/2019/03/the-islamophobia-epidemic-in-australia/>.

264 Ibid.

265 Ibid.

266 “New Zealand Outlines Strict New Gun Controls,” *Deutsche Welle*, 1 April 2019, 7 October 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/new-zealand-outlines-strict-new-gun-controls/a-48143616>.

267 “New Zealand, France Announce Bid to End Violent Extremism Online,” *New Straits Times*, 24 April 2019, accessed 7 October 2019, <https://www.nst.com.my/world/2019/04/482443/new-zealand-france-announce-bid-end-violent-extremism-online>.

268 “Up to One Million Detained in China’s Mass ‘Re-Education’ Drive,” *Amnesty International*, accessed 8 August 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/china-up-to-one-million-detained/>.

269 Ibid.

270 Ibid.

271 Ibid.

272 Ibid.



This is an image of a protester wearing a mask painted with Xinjiang's flag with tears of blood in Brussels in 2018

Jinping.”<sup>273</sup> These only describe some of the abuses faced by these individuals, and a number of deaths have been reported inside the facilities, including suicides by those who could not bear the mistreatment.<sup>274</sup> These camps bring attention to more extreme forms of prejudice, discrimination continues to persist throughout the country and serve as a reminder to the atrocities committed toward minority groups. Delegates must consider these camp initiatives, and those similar to it, as an outright denial of the basic, and fundamental, rights outlined in the UDHR.

Other countries and conflicts outlined earlier, such as the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Sunni-Shia divide, should also be acknowledged in this group. Countries in this bloc must consider the short- and long-term implications of conflict and formulate their solutions to meet these needs. Solutions should be focused on addressing the root of the issue, while also giving attention to persecuted groups. Each conflict is unique and must be treated as such. Therefore, it is important to examine the history of these events and look at what has or has not worked.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> “Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee),” *United Nations*, accessed 23 June 2019.

## Committee Mission

SOCHUM’s role in the UN system is to address matters concerning “the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, [and] the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination,” placing the discussion of contemporary forms of racism, xenophobia, and related intolerances within the mandate of this committee. Therefore, it is important that delegates consider the breadth of this topic.<sup>275</sup>

In their present forms, racism, xenophobia, and related intolerances continue to persist beyond basic human rights violations. In some cases, the issues in resolving these intolerances are exhibited in their historical roots. It is important that delegates recognize the impact of past systems and acknowledge that, in many ways, the issues brought about by them are systematic and, in some cases, are ingrained into the political and social systems that exist today. The nature of intolerance has and will continue to shift as the attitudes of peoples and societies do.



Today, the mass-displacement of individuals across the globe presents a plethora of challenges merely outlined by the social and economic implications of immigration. In some instances, the discussion and acceptance of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers have become politicized. Immigration as a whole has become viewed as a contentious issue in politics, as examined in Brexit and across many elections, ranging from gubernatorial to presidential. During this process, these individuals are dehumanized and can often be viewed as a political instrument to attain seats.

Due to the complex and multi-faceted nature of this topic, the concepts, and information presented throughout this background guide should be viewed as interconnected, and as such, the solutions created should reflect these areas. Delegates are encouraged to view the sub-topics as a tool to attain a more holistic understanding of the topic at-large. While it is important to consider the format of the background guide when approaching these issues, the challenges in addressing this topic are not limited to the information provided in this paper. Delegates should take the time to further research in order to grasp a deeper awareness of the magnitude of this topic.

In the Third Committee, it is essential that the solutions brought forth adhere to the committee's powers and abilities. While the committee does not have the ability to implement policies, it does have the ability to promote positive social change. Take into consideration actions that have been taken by the UN and regional organizations such as the EU and examine their impact in a given society or region. Over the next few months, it will be important to keep up with current events and stay updated with this ever-changing topic.



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## TOPIC B: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN REFUGEE CAMPS

Photo Credit: Mstyslav Chernov



## Introduction

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is any person fleeing from persecution, war, or violence.<sup>1</sup> The UNHCR or the UN Refugee Agency, which was originally created in 1950 after the World War II refugee crisis, is in charge of aiding refugees.<sup>2</sup> While the UNHCR was meant to fulfill its three year mandate and disband, it continued to work after the adoption of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.<sup>3</sup>

The total number of displaced people is at an all-time high—with over 70 million people having fled their homes and nearly 26 million refugees living worldwide.<sup>4</sup> This has created a pressing refugee crisis, with millions of people migrating to new countries after having escaped their own. Every day, it is believed that 37,000 people are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, adding even more strain on host countries and deepening issues in refugee camps, such as overcrowding and food shortages.<sup>5</sup>

As more people find their way into new countries and establish themselves in camps and settlements, human rights violations and improper living conditions unfortunately become more common. Since camps are meant to be temporary settlements, most of them are not built to last a long time, causing them to decay.<sup>6</sup> Camps also lack certain accommodations such as schools, shops, or places of worship.<sup>7</sup> Unemployment is a pervasive issue, as most camps are placed far away from urban areas, making it difficult for refugees to find paying jobs.<sup>8</sup> This, coupled with the existence of “closed camps,” where refugees are not legally allowed to go past a certain perimeter, makes it nearly impossible for them to acquire economic freedom or independence, further preventing refugees from settling down and building steady futures.<sup>9</sup>

In other camps, these issues pose a threat to refugee health and safety, as they face food and water shortages, overcrowd-

ing, deportation raids, and physical abuse from camp workers or residents.<sup>10</sup> These violations, as well as the consequences they have on refugees, are long-lasting and concerning, as life in refugee camps proves to be a struggle. Accounts of physical fights over food that result in death, contaminated water and lack of sanitation facilities causing disease, and physical hazards such as dampness, mold, poor ventilation, and a lack of protection from mosquitoes are not uncommon, leading to aches, digestive disorders, respiratory tract infections, and poor mental health.<sup>11</sup> The human rights violations perpetrated in refugee camps not only constitute a threat to residents, but also show the lack of dignity and humanity with which they are viewed and treated. To truly deliver the purpose of having refugee camps and aiding these displaced people, it is imperative to stop these violations and recognize the struggles of living in these facilities, especially as their numbers continue to grow by the day.

## History and Description of the Issue

With displacement numbers being the highest they have ever been, the situation faced by refugees continues to be outrageous and inadequate, and camps are no exception to this treatment.<sup>12</sup> Problems such as food shortages, threats of violence and assault, unsanitary conditions, and countless other factors inhibit the growth and endanger the lives of refugees,

1 “Refugees,” *United Nations*, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/](http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/).

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 “Figures at a Glance,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html).

5 Ibid.

6 Elizabeth Cullen Dunn, “The Failure of Refugee Camps,” *Boston Review*, 28 September 2015, accessed 22 June 2019, [bostonreview.net/editors-picks-world/elizabeth-dunn-failure-refugee-camps](http://bostonreview.net/editors-picks-world/elizabeth-dunn-failure-refugee-camps).

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 “Module 3: Food, Water, Sanitation, and Housing in Refugee Camps,” *Unite for Sight*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.uniteforsight.org/refugee-health/module3](http://www.uniteforsight.org/refugee-health/module3).

11 Ibid.

12 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Figures at a Glance.”





Picture of the Taung Paw Camp in Rakhine State, Burma

preventing them from starting new lives away from the issues they survived in their home countries.<sup>13</sup> These complications also vary greatly from camp to camp and thus affect each individual differently, as they can range from unfit living conditions to actual deportation raids.

The harsh reality of abuse and discrimination is especially true for vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, children, and the elderly, who are more vulnerable to refugee camp conditions.<sup>14</sup> For example, for every three children living outside their birth country one is a refugee, and approximately one in every 200 children in the world is believed to be a refugee.<sup>15</sup> As for children, the consequences of living in camps

include the lack of proper education, as well as devastating impacts from food shortages, which hinders growth due to a lack of nutritional supplementation.<sup>16</sup> Insufficient housing conditions have also been known to have detrimental effects on the younger refugees, such as the children and newborns who have died from hypothermia.<sup>17</sup> The same applies to pregnant women who have specific nutritional needs and require access to medical examinations and procedures that are rarely offered in refugee camps, therefore putting them and their unborn children at risk.<sup>18</sup>

For all refugees, the issues they face in camps have negative consequences not only to their physical health but their men-

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "WHO concerned over critical health situation in Al-Hol camp, Al-Hasakeh," *World Health Organization*, 31 January 2019, accessed 6 July 2019, [www.emro.who.int/syr/syria-news/who-concerned-over-critical-health-situation-in-al-hol-camp-al-hasakeh.html](http://www.emro.who.int/syr/syria-news/who-concerned-over-critical-health-situation-in-al-hol-camp-al-hasakeh.html).

<sup>15</sup> "Uprooted: The Growing Crisis For Refugee And Migrant Children," *UNICEF*, September 2016, accessed 6 July 2019, [www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Uprooted.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Uprooted.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "WHO concerned over critical health situation in Al-Hol camp, Al-Hasakeh," *World Health Organization*.

<sup>18</sup> "Pregnancy," *Refugee Health*, accessed 6 July 2019, [refugeehealthta.org/physical-mental-health/health-conditions/womens-health/pregnancy/](http://refugeehealthta.org/physical-mental-health/health-conditions/womens-health/pregnancy/).

tal health as well.<sup>19</sup> For example, the trauma they often experience in their home countries is left untreated, contributing to the numerous cases of suicide attempts.<sup>20</sup> In some camps such as those in Nauru—an island country in Micronesia—the living conditions and abuses are so severe that they have brought about serious mental health consequences for the children living there, with reports of suicidal behavior, suicide attempts, and self-harm in children as young as eight years old.<sup>21</sup>

Alongside the many aforementioned violations, there remain countless more that refugees face in these camps and settlements. Various forms of abuse and neglect continue to go unreported and unaddressed, and even more vulnerable groups are victims of the unfit living conditions. For refugees, who have left all of their possessions behind, it is imperative to have a support system after arriving in a new country. Refugee camps are meant to provide a safe haven to start new lives and recover from the trauma of conflict, but today's camps instead add to the trauma and struggles faced by refugees as a result of neglect, abuse, and discrimination. Simply put, the violations faced in refugee camps go directly against refugee laws and what the facilities themselves stand for, hindering the success and well-being of already disadvantaged people; therefore, finding a solution to these issues is vital for the respect, dignity, and safety of refugees.

## Definition and Common Profile of Modern Refugees

To fully understand the struggles faced in refugee camps, it is vital to comprehend particular aspects of the issues, such as the definition of a refugee, the reasons they flee from their home countries, and the difference between groups such as refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people. Furthermore, becoming familiarized with refugee needs and be-

ing aware of the struggles they face in their home countries not only facilitates a general understanding of the topic, but also emphasizes the urgency of putting an end to the neglect and abuse they face.

As defined by the UNHCR, a refugee is a person who has fled their country as a result of war, violence, persecution, or other threats to their safety and well-being.<sup>22</sup> These threats can stem from different factors like race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.<sup>23</sup> More often than not, refugees are unable to return to their home countries due to safety concerns, as they would face the unsafe and unsuitable conditions from which they originally escaped.<sup>24</sup> For instance, those fleeing the Syrian civil war recount experiencing bomb attacks from an early age, even losing family members in the process. These raids are still happening, and refugees escaping from states like Venezuela fled the same conditions, including food and work shortages, that have only worsened with time.<sup>25</sup>

Even though the term “refugee” is often interconnected with “asylum seekers” and “internally displaced peoples,” each of these terms have a different meaning and each of these groups faces unique issues. A major contrast between refugees and internally displaced people is that the latter never cross international borders and should therefore still be under the jurisdiction and protection of their home countries, rather than agencies that aid and protect refugees such as the UNHCR.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, while asylum seekers cross international borders and reside outside of their birth country, they differ from refugees in that they must legally apply for asylum, which can be granted or denied.<sup>27</sup>

Currently, the refugee population is the highest it has ever been, as more than 70 million people have been displaced from

19 Olivia Coletta, “Refugee Camps: Poor Living Conditions and their Effects on Mental Health,” 27 March 2018, accessed 6 July 2019, [sites.duke.edu/refugeementalhealth/2018/03/27/refugee-camps-poor-living-conditions-and-their-effects-on-mental-health/](https://sites.duke.edu/refugeementalhealth/2018/03/27/refugee-camps-poor-living-conditions-and-their-effects-on-mental-health/).

20 Ibid.

21 Virginia Harrison, “Nauru refugees: The island where children have given up on life,” *BBC News*, 1 September 2018, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45327058](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45327058).

22 “What is a Refugee?,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 7 June 2019, [www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/](http://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/).

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Chris Huber and Kathryn Reid, “Forced to flee: Top countries refugees are coming from,” *World Vision*, accessed 28 July 2019, [www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/forced-to-flee-top-countries-refugees-coming-from](http://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/forced-to-flee-top-countries-refugees-coming-from).

26 “What is a Refugee?,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*.

27 Ibid.



their homes, with roughly half being children.<sup>28</sup> The country of origin for refugees is also significantly disproportionate, as two thirds come from the same five states: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia.<sup>29</sup> On that same note, these people are often hosted in low and middle income countries, as they receive over 85% of the world's refugees.<sup>30</sup>

The struggles faced by refugees do not begin in camps because most have faced and survived unfavorable conditions prior to fleeing their country of origin. In their home states, refugees can face traumatic events such as war, hunger, or extreme poverty, and for those fleeing as a result of discrimination, this can include hate crimes as a result of their religion, gender, race, or sexual orientation, among others.<sup>31</sup> These experiences, however, are not universal as the issues faced by refugees and will vary greatly depending on their home country. For refugees fleeing the Syrian Civil War, for instance, these past experiences include having their homes destroyed by bullets and bombs, while refugees and migrants fleeing Venezuela may have faced food shortages and an extreme lack of healthcare.<sup>32</sup>

It is important to remember that the experiences of each refu-



A Venezuelan child, displaced by the violence in her home country

gee group are not universal. While some witnessed different issues in their home state, they will also face different struggles in refugee camps depending on factors such as the geographical position, size and number of refugees it's intended to house, number of refugees staying in the camps, and personal factors such as race, ethnicity, and age, amongst others. Camps are meant to assist refugees in their time of need, and it is therefore vital to accommodate these groups and be informed of their past experiences and current needs to properly house them. In order for refugee camps to successfully fulfill their purpose, an understanding of these groups and their varying necessities is imperative.

## Purpose of Refugee Camps

With all the disparities and issues faced by refugees before they even leave their home countries, it is clear that camps serve a vital purpose in the international community. Having fled their country with few possessions and no place to call home means refugees are likely to rely on these facilities for aid, necessary accommodations, and comfort. In order to understand how important these camps can be for refugees, as well as how they can best serve them, it is necessary to comprehend the purpose of refugee camps as well as what obligations they have to the residents.

Refugee camps are temporary accommodations intended to house those displaced by conflict or persecution.<sup>33</sup> They are meant to provide immediate shelter, as well as basic needs such as water, food, and medical aid, all of which are vital for those escaping from war zones or otherwise conflicted living arrangements.<sup>34</sup> Camps are meant to provide them with a place to reside while they have nowhere else to stay.<sup>35</sup> The time of stay in refugee camps can vary greatly, as after becoming a refugee, the average time spent displaced is nearly two

28 "What is a refugee? Facts, FAQs, and how to help," *World Vision*, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/what-is-a-refugee-facts](http://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/what-is-a-refugee-facts).

29 Ibid.

30 Dana Sleiman, "UN Refugee Chief urges Security Council for firm response to record-high displacement," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 9 April 2019, accessed 8 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/uk/news/latest/2019/4/5cad10c74.html](http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/latest/2019/4/5cad10c74.html).

31 "The World's Refugees In Numbers: The Global Solidarity Crisis," *Amnesty International*, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-facts/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-facts/).

32 "Syria emergency," *UNHCR USA*, accessed 8 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html); "Venezuela emergency," *UNHCR USA*, accessed 8 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html).

33 "What is a Refugee Camp?," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 7 June 2019, [www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/](http://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/).

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.



decades.<sup>36</sup> This leaves entire groups of people with no place to go, making refugee camps the only type of accommodation they can count on for safety, comfort, and shelter.

Currently, refugee camps are home to about 2.6 million refugees across the world.<sup>37</sup> This is particularly alarming, considering the effects that overcrowding has on refugee camps and their residents. For instance, the al-Hol camp in Hassakeh, Syria, was originally meant to house five thousand refugees but is now holding between eight and ten thousand.<sup>38</sup> Another example is the Moria refugee camp in the Greek island Lesbos, which houses nine thousand refugees in a facility originally built for little over three thousand.<sup>39</sup> When refugee camps become overcrowded, the living conditions deteriorate drastically, as there is not enough space for everyone, and necessities such as food and water become even more rationed and limited than they already were.<sup>40</sup> In order to support refugees as sufficiently as they are intended to, camps should be built not only to accommodate all the residents they take in, but also make changes to their system and infrastructure to avoid issues that stem from overcrowding.

Ideally, refugee camps should provide their residents with more than just the minimum aid and accommodations; they should also prepare refugees for a life outside of camps and shelters. These preparations include education, training, and job skills meant to help them transition into the workforce.<sup>41</sup> This way, they can find steady income and move towards a stable, independent life, all in a culture which has evolved differently than their own.<sup>42</sup> Failing to deliver these services could potentially result in refugees being unable to become self-sufficient and independent because they will lack the preparation and necessary skills to find proper employment. This is

alarming, considering that employment is a critical need that refugees have after leaving their country.<sup>43</sup>

However, it is still difficult for many refugees to obtain the permits required to legally work in the various countries they often find themselves in, so while they are still in the refugee facilities, they will likely depend on the camp to provide basic necessities such as food and sanitation.<sup>44</sup> Since many refugees come to the camps already malnourished and in need of proper nutrition, food is an important aspect of what the camps are meant to provide.<sup>45</sup> This also includes cooking and cleaning supplies, as refugees do not often carry these with them as they leave their countries and they are necessary for them to feed, clothe, and clean themselves and their families.<sup>46</sup>

Other aspects, such as newborn materials, hygiene items, and clothing are also basic necessities that refugees often cannot bring with them when they leave their countries.<sup>47</sup> While these might appear to be luxuries, lack of proper clothing and hygiene can often lead to disease and other complications, especially for those who are malnourished or have existing health conditions. Refugee children also have different needs, as they will likely arrive at camps without the opportunity to complete their education. School supplies, stuffed animals, books, and soccer shoes are small examples of what young children in refugee camps need in order to continue with their education and adapt to their situation as smooth as possible.<sup>48</sup>

Seeing all these issues, it becomes clear that refugee facilities are not simply a space for residents to be hoarded or detained. These camps serve a vital purpose and they also have the opportunity to positively impact or even save the lives of countless refugees, giving them a second chance after surviving the

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 "Overcrowded refugee camp coping with up to 100,000 mothers and children in Syria," *CBC*, 2 April 2019, accessed 8 July 2019, [www.cbc.ca/news/world/syria-al-hol-camp-overcrowding-red-cross-humanitarian-crisis-1.5082150](http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/syria-al-hol-camp-overcrowding-red-cross-humanitarian-crisis-1.5082150).

39 "Greece to ease overcrowding in Lesbos refugee camp," *Al Jazeera*, 18 September 2018, accessed 6 July 2019, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/greece-ease-overcrowding-lesbos-refugee-camp-180918181232295.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/greece-ease-overcrowding-lesbos-refugee-camp-180918181232295.html).

40 Ibid.

41 "What do refugees need after leaving everything behind?," *Mercy Corps*, accessed 7 July 2019, [www.mercycorps.org/photoessays/greece-iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria/what-do-refugees-need-after-leaving-everything-behind](http://www.mercycorps.org/photoessays/greece-iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria/what-do-refugees-need-after-leaving-everything-behind).

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

conditions of their home countries. Refugees, like any other group, have rights and necessities that must be met, and it is the obligation of the camps, built and funded with the purpose of housing them, to treat refugees with respect, complying with the laws and regulations put in place to protect and aid those in their time of need.

## Rights of Refugees

Much like international human rights laws, modern refugee legislation originated from the aftermath of World War II.<sup>49</sup> After being confronted with a refugee crisis, laws, and rights were put in place to ensure the protection and well-being of those displaced or otherwise forced to flee their countries; one such law is article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to seek and be granted asylum.<sup>50</sup> Currently, there are numerous conventions, declarations, and documents detailing the rights and obligations of refugees, which are vital to understand and elaborate upon refugees' rights as well as what can be done to help them. Among all of the aforementioned documents, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees remains the controlling international convention on refugee law.<sup>51</sup>

According to the 1951 Convention, refugees have a set of laws and obligations they must follow, along with rights protecting them in the country in which they have chosen to reside.<sup>52</sup> First and foremost, refugees are required to conform to the laws and regulations of their country of residence, as well as to abide by any measures put in place to maintain public order and peace.<sup>53</sup> The 1951 Convention also specifies that it does not apply to individuals who have committed crimes against peace, war crimes, serious non-political crimes, and other acts contrary to the purpose of the United Nations.<sup>54</sup>

As a key legal document for refugee law, the 1951 Convention is based around the principle of non-refoulement, which states that refugees should not be sent back to countries where they have reason to fear prosecution.<sup>55</sup> The Convention also has a non-discrimination article, where it affirms States must apply the provisions within the convention to all refugees regardless of factors such as race, religion, or country of origin.<sup>56</sup> On that same note, the Convention has a clear emphasis on the freedom of refugees, with multiple articles highlighting their rights to freedom of religion and other forms of expression. For instance, refugees must be given the same rights as citizens to practice their religion and must have the freedom to religiously educate their children as they please, while also having the rights to their intellectual and creative property.<sup>57</sup>

From a legal standpoint, refugees have defined rights when it comes to the acquisition of movable and immovable property, with the convention specifying that these must be equal to those normally granted to aliens in the country.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, refugees have the right to associate with non-political and non-profit-making associations and trade unions.<sup>59</sup> They also have a right to freely access courts of law and must be given the same treatment a citizen would be given, including legal assistance and exemption from payment.<sup>60</sup>

These are only some of the articles found in the Convention, with more going into detail regarding employment, education, and other issues. When it comes to wage-earning employment, for instance, the convention states that refugees must be given the same rights as any other national of a foreign country would be given.<sup>61</sup> This can be complicated, as in some states it means they cannot legally work. These same regulations apply for self-employment and liberal professions.<sup>62</sup> As for education, the Convention states that refugees by law must

49 "Asylum & The Rights Of Refugees," *International Justice Resource Center*, accessed 23 June 2019, [ijrcenter.org/refugee-law/](http://ijrcenter.org/refugee-law/).

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," *UNHCR*, 1951, accessed 7 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10).

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 "The 1951 Refugee Convention," *UNHCR*, accessed 6 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/1951-refugee-convention.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/1951-refugee-convention.html).

56 "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," *UNHCR*.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 "The 1951 Refugee Convention," *UNHCR*.

61 "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," *UNHCR*.

62 Ibid.

be given the same rights to elementary education as any citizen would be given, and their rights to higher education must be the same as those given to any other alien.<sup>63</sup> Once again, these are only some of the rights and laws found in the 1951 Convention, as the document goes into further detail regarding different aspects of refugee law and how countries are to treat their refugees.

Another vital part of refugee law is the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, as the original 1951 document had restrictions related to those displaced by World War II.<sup>64</sup> The 1967 Protocol removed certain restrictions, making the 1951 Convention more inclusive and therefore applicable to countless other refugees.<sup>65</sup> This was not the only document that came in place after the 1951 Convention: documents highlighting the laws of refugees were being written, but at the same time refugees were also being mentioned in numerous conventions and declarations such as the International Declaration of Human Rights, the Cartagena Declaration, the American Convention on Human Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights among others.<sup>66</sup>

While these are the official rules and regulations, it is important to remember they are not always followed. Issues such as deportation raids in refugee camps, which were experienced by Syrian refugees in Lebanon, directly violate the concept of non-refoulement, a key aspect of refugee law.<sup>67</sup> The issue of education is also alarming, as the 1951 Convention gives refugee children the right to primary education, yet children still face issues such as child labor, enrollment requirements, language difficulties, and a lack of affordable transportation which prevent them from attending school.<sup>68</sup> As a result, there are four million refugee children currently not receiving an education, and nearly two thirds of refugee children who at-

tend primary school stop before reaching secondary school.<sup>69</sup>

Overall, while the international laws surrounding refugees varies greatly depending on the issue they cover, a thorough understanding of them, as well as who they protect and under what circumstances they do so, is vital for the understanding of the debate topic. Similarly, it is vital to remember that these currently existing laws and regulations are not always followed, as seen by the numerous issues present in refugee facilities. Camps have the obligation to respect and uphold the laws and rights granted to refugees, and any possible solution to the problems faced in refugee camps must therefore keep in mind said laws and rights.

## Daily Life Inside Refugee Camps

With thousands of people living in refugee camps and staying for generations, countless refugees have fallen into routines to work around the issues faced in these facilities and seek normalcy in the mistreatment and negligence they are confronted with in their daily lives. The different lifestyles found in refugee camps are often born out of necessity and the experience of each refugee can vary greatly even within the same camp.

In Kutupalong, a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, millions of refugees have found new lives.<sup>70</sup> In an area of 26 square kilometers hosting 34 sub-camps, the residents live in houses built from bamboo sticks and plastic tarpaulins.<sup>71</sup> While these materials may not have the greatest structural integrity, the government does not allow them to use materials such as stones or bricks to build their houses in hopes that they will return to their country of origin as soon as possible, even though this would be unsafe and counterproductive.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, children born here are not allowed to attend school,

63 Ibid.

64 "Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees," *United Nations*, 1967, accessed 7 July 2019, [www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolStatusOfRefugees.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolStatusOfRefugees.aspx).

65 Ibid.

66 "Asylum & The Rights Of Refugees," *International Justice Resource Center*.

67 Anchal Vohra, "Syrian refugees panic as threat of deportation rises in Lebanon," *Al Jazeera*, 25 July 2019, accessed 16 August 2019, [www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/syrian-refugees-panic-threat-deportation-rises-lebanon-190725102745367.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/syrian-refugees-panic-threat-deportation-rises-lebanon-190725102745367.html).

68 "Education for Syrian Refugee Children," *Human Rights Watch*, accessed 18 August 2019, [www.hrw.org/tag/education-syrian-refugee-children](http://www.hrw.org/tag/education-syrian-refugee-children).

69 "Four million refugee children go without schooling: UNHCR report," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 18 August 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2018/8/5b86342b4/four-million-refugee-children-schooling-unhcr-report.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2018/8/5b86342b4/four-million-refugee-children-schooling-unhcr-report.html).

70 Patrick Rohr, "Life In The World's Biggest Refugee Camp," *SWI*, 20 June 2019, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss-aid\\_life-in-the-world-s-biggest-refugee-camp/45038296](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss-aid_life-in-the-world-s-biggest-refugee-camp/45038296).

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.





An aerial shot of Dadaab, the third largest refugee complex in the world

as refugees staying in it are considered “temporarily admitted” and therefore children are legally stateless.<sup>73</sup>

Since Cox’s Bazaar has its own food market, inhabitants have the option to purchase their food and learn to produce it themselves.<sup>74</sup> In an effort to help residents of this refugee camp, The Swiss Helvetia Fund partnered up with local organizations to train women in vegetable gardening and show them how to build climbing gardens around their places of residence.<sup>75</sup> Generally, refugees in this camp rely on the food that is distributed to them, consisting mostly of rice, lentils and oil, but the market as well as the agricultural programs, provide the option to grow their own food or sell it to buy fish and steak.<sup>76</sup>

The quality of life inside camps also varies greatly depending on the size and population of the facility; the refugee camp “Dadaab” in Kenya is a prime example of this. This camp has been hosting some families for as long as three generations, and is one of the largest camps in the whole world.<sup>77</sup> While the it was originally meant to accommodate less than 100,000 refugees as a temporary settlement, it became a permanent home for over 350,000 families and individuals who built a community on it, having come as far as hosting makeshift soccer leagues and cinemas.<sup>78</sup>

Dadaab is led by democratically-elected community volunteers who work with aid agencies and coordinate activities to cover necessities such as sanitation and security.<sup>79</sup> This not

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> “The Refugee Camp That Became A City,” *Africa Renewal*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.un.org/africarenewal/news/refugee-camp-became-city](http://www.un.org/africarenewal/news/refugee-camp-became-city).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

only furthers their leadership skills, but also provides refugees some control over the decisions made and how responsibilities should be shared.<sup>80</sup> While this system has some positive effects, it is important to remember that it was born out of necessity. The concept of youth leaders taking control of the camp came about after the United Nations pulled out of Dadaab following the kidnapping of aid workers and the lack of aid from the government and other agencies, causing the camp's inhabitants to come up with a new system to take the United Nation's place.<sup>81</sup> Even factors such as the soccer leagues and cinemas show the refugee's need for normalcy in their new settlements. Moreover, certain camps have specific regulations that must be met by refugees, such as the Bira shelter in Bihac, Bosnia where refugees will be taken back to their confines by the authorities if they are found outside between the hours of ten at night and six in the morning, preventing them from exerting independence and finding normalcy in their lives.<sup>82</sup>

Children who grow up in camps are also an important demographic when it comes to daily routines. In some cases, they begin living in camps at a significantly younger age, so the refugee camps are all that they have ever known. In the Skaramagas camp in Athens, 1,000 of the total 3,000 refugees who originally entered were children, and a significant amount were so young that they had never been to school before.<sup>83</sup> According to Constantinos Machairas, who is in charge of the camp's daily functions, the first time they ever saw the children smile was when someone threw a ball at a group of them so they could play with it.<sup>84</sup> Even though the facility has accommodations such as a playground and library meant for the children, the swing sets in the playground have no swings on them and the library only offers a very limited supply of books.<sup>85</sup> On a different note, this camp is a member of FC Barcelona's "FutbolNet" social education programme, where children learn respect and values while fostering friendship

and camaraderie between kids of different races and religious groups.<sup>86</sup> Children who participate in the program describe it as a "unique feeling" while coaches claim the children "forget all their problems" and "can't wait for the sessions."<sup>87</sup>

In addition, it is important to remember that these experiences are not universal. For a number of refugees staying in camps, dealing with food shortages is part of their daily routine.<sup>88</sup> Most refugee camps simply do not have enough food to provide for every resident, with the recommended caloric intake for refugees being 2,100 calories per day, while refugees in Tanzanian camps recorded as receiving only between 1,700 and 1,460 kilocalories per person in 2005 and 2006, respectively.<sup>89</sup> For some living in camps, the food shortages are not even the entire issue, as other accommodations are also lacking and therefore it is not strange for refugees to exchange the food they are given for other necessary goods.<sup>90</sup> While food markets and farming have worked in some refugee camps, this is not the case for all of them; some prohibit refugees from partaking in these activities, and others lack the proper conditions for it such as rainfall or water.

Overall, while certain refugees and camps have found their own ways to deal with the issues faced in their daily lives, it is important to remember that these systems were created to work around negligence, abuse, and lack of necessities existing in said facilities. As it stands, a significant part of most refugee's daily routines involves surviving the problems existing in the camps, such as food and water shortages, mistreatment, unsanitary conditions, and living conditions unfit for children. For refugee camps to deliver the necessary aid in a dignified, safe manner, the daily problems faced daily must be examined and eradicated.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Zoran Arbutina and Dragan Maksimović, "Held Back From Eu By Croatia, Refugees Stuck In Bosnia," *DW*, 22 June 2019, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.dw.com/en/held-back-from-eu-by-croatia-refugees-stuck-in-bosnia/a-49250813](http://www.dw.com/en/held-back-from-eu-by-croatia-refugees-stuck-in-bosnia/a-49250813).

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 "Module 3: Food, Water, Sanitation, and Housing in Refugee Camps," *Unite for Sight*.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

## Negligence and Abuse in Refugee Camps

For refugees residing in camps, poor living conditions and other forms of negligence are common. Among other issues, they experience food and water shortages, unsanitary conditions, abuse and assault, improper housing, and lack of commodities such as electricity and education.<sup>91</sup> The severity of these issues can vary, and the effects each issue have on every individual is also not universal, as some refugees are more at risk of facing complications or have different needs than other residents.

Amongst all of the present violations, there have been reports of overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, lack access to health-care, and violent assault.<sup>92</sup> An example of this is the refugee center Fürstenfeldbruck in Germany, where refugees report living in these unfit conditions, leading to numerous complications including suicide attempts.<sup>93</sup> Food shortages are another prominent problem in refugee camps. The Doro refugee camp in South Sudan is an example of the consequences this can bring, as food shortages have caused over 1,200 refugee children to become malnourished as a result of insecurity and fighting between the South Sudan government and rebel forces.<sup>94</sup>

Refugees are also faced with the threat of deportation, as there have been cases of refugees being forcibly taken back to the countries from which they originally fled. In France, over 800 migrant camps have been cleared near the ports of Calais and Dunkirk, with over 803 forced evictions of French refugees recorded between August 2018 and June 2019.<sup>95</sup> The destruction of makeshift camps around Calais has also forced refugees to sleep without shelter or possessions, which is par-

ticularly worrisome considering the fact that 139 out of 500 migrants living near Calais are unaccompanied minors.<sup>96</sup> During these evictions, police are said to establish a security perimeter that prevents refugees from retrieving any of their belongings, with one claim from March stating police attempted to stop a mother from retrieving her child from a tent.<sup>97</sup>

There have also been instances of refugees being pushed back to their countries due to the dire conditions faced in refugee camps, like the case in Deir al-Ahmar, an informal facility in Lebanon.<sup>98</sup> According to reports by Amnesty International, Lebanese authorities had been arranging returns for Syrian refugees, claiming said returns to be voluntary, but research illustrates that refugees were being pushed back to Syria through “a combination of restrictive government policies, dire humanitarian conditions and rampant discrimination.”<sup>99</sup> An attack on Deir al-Ahmar camp was only one of the cited reasons for the returns, with claims of evictions, curfews, mass arrests and raids having an effect of the situation as well.<sup>100</sup> Putting a refugee in a situation where they would rather return to their country of origin and face the violations they originally escaped instead those in a camp clearly shows the camp’s negligence and disdain towards the refugees.

Refugees have even been known to experience abuse at the hands of those intended to help them. According to a report released by the UNHCR and Save The Children UK, there is extensive evidence of refugee children’s sexual exploitation in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, allegedly perpetrated by employees of national and international NGOs, as well as of the United Nations.<sup>101</sup> Workers are said to have used the aid and tools intended to help the refugees as a bargaining tool to

91 Ibid.

92 Ben Knight, “Asylum-seekers left in ‘inhuman’ conditions in German refugee center,” *DW*, 15 May 2019, accessed 7 June 2019, [www.dw.com/en/asylum-seekers-left-in-inhumane-conditions-in-german-refugee-center/a-48592696](http://www.dw.com/en/asylum-seekers-left-in-inhumane-conditions-in-german-refugee-center/a-48592696).

93 Ibid.

94 “Food shortages in South Sudanese refugee camps cause severe malnutrition,” *UNHCR*, accessed 7 July 2019, [www.unrefugees.org/news/malnutrition-a-serious-threat-as-food-shortages-impact-maban-refugee-camps/](http://www.unrefugees.org/news/malnutrition-a-serious-threat-as-food-shortages-impact-maban-refugee-camps/).

95 Mark Townsend, “Record Refugee Evictions At Camps In France To Halt Channel Crossings,” *The Guardian*, 22 June 2019, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/22/refugee-eviction-peak-in-france-bid-halt-channel-crossings](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/22/refugee-eviction-peak-in-france-bid-halt-channel-crossings).

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 “Lebanon: Wave of hostility exposes hollowness of claims that Syrian refugee returns are voluntary,” *Amnesty International*, 12 June 2019, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/06/lebanon-wave-of-hostility-exposes-hollowness-of-claims-that-syrian-refugee-returns-are-voluntary/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/06/lebanon-wave-of-hostility-exposes-hollowness-of-claims-that-syrian-refugee-returns-are-voluntary/).

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

101 “Extensive abuse of West African refugee children reported,” *UNHCR*, 26 February 2002, accessed 7 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2002/2/3c7bf8094/extensive-abuse-west-african-refugee-children-reported.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2002/2/3c7bf8094/extensive-abuse-west-african-refugee-children-reported.html).





A Vietnamese man shielding an elderly refugee from the sun

obtain sexual relationships with minors.<sup>102</sup> While the UNHCR has investigated these claims and implemented measures such as increased security and international presence in camps, this does not take away the traumatic experiences survived by the victims or the inhumane nature of the crime itself.<sup>103</sup> Refugees, especially children, are in a vulnerable position as it is, and often depend on the aid to survive. Using these resources to manipulate or otherwise harm refugees has a myriad of negative consequences for them, such as adding to their trauma and making them reluctant to accept future aid, while also being a cruel and inhumane practice.

The harassment and violence refugees face in camps have

deeply negative effects and bringing even more harm and trauma to an already vulnerable group of people. The aforementioned are still only some of the issues and examples of refugee camps, with more existing problems affecting hundreds of refugees across the world. Similarly, not every refugee's experience is universal, as some groups and minorities can find themselves even more vulnerable and are therefore at a higher risk of facing issues and complications in refugee camps.

### Vulnerable Groups in Refugee Camps

Even though the human rights violations occurring in refugee camps affect all those staying in them, there are certain groups that are at a higher risk of facing issues and complications. These vulnerable groups are the ones that find themselves affected by the problems in refugee camps the most, and they are also at a higher risk of facing complications as a result of said problems. Examples of these groups would be children, the elderly, pregnant women, and disabled refugees, amongst others.

For children, living in refugee camps is a completely different experience than it is for adults. In 2018, the UNHCR counted 138,000 unaccompanied refugee children, which refers to children who have been separated from their families or have otherwise lost them due to conflict, and are now on their own.<sup>104</sup> Some children are brought into refugee camps when they are still so young they cannot fully comprehend the situation they are in, which at times can make them confused and scared.<sup>105</sup> Children also face a lack of education, as refugee camps often lack programs and organized activities required to keep them entertained while intellectually stimulating them, which makes parents worried that their children will grow up without getting an education or opportunities for a brighter future.<sup>106</sup> For these children, this can be heartbreaking; they, just like any other children, have dreams, aspirations, and stories like the 16-year-old girl who cannot access an education, but still dreams of being a doctor to save ill children like the younger

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> "Children shouldn't be victims: The hard life of a child refugee," *ADRA*, accessed 7 July 2019, [adra.org/children-shouldnt-be-victims-the-hard-life-of-a-child-refugee/](http://adra.org/children-shouldnt-be-victims-the-hard-life-of-a-child-refugee/).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

siblings she lost due to a fever.<sup>107</sup>

Every child is affected in a different way, with some unable to receive necessary medicines and treatment, as their parents can't find any help and do not have the resources to obtain it themselves.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, food shortages in refugee camps are an issue for children and pregnant women alike, as their nutritional needs differ from that of other refugees.<sup>109</sup> Pregnant women have their own complications to deal with as well. In most hospitals, refugees will be admitted to give birth; however, if both the baby and the mother are healthy they will be discharged soon after and transported back into the camp.<sup>110</sup>

The elderly are another vulnerable group within the refugee population, as they tend to have urgent needs and can be particularly vulnerable during times of war, conflict, natural disasters, and such.<sup>111</sup> This group faces issues like lack of mobility, limited vision, health complications, urgent need of medicines and chronic illnesses that make access to support necessary for them, while also making their experience at refugee camps all the more difficult.<sup>112</sup> Currently, elderly refugees account for 8.5% of the UNHCR's population of concern, and these numbers are only expected to grow as by 2050, a greater part of the population is expected to be over 60 than under 12.<sup>113</sup> Clearly, issues such as unsanitary conditions, lack of healthcare access, and food shortages can have a strong negative effect on elderly refugees, considering all the issues they already face.

Disabled refugees also have their own set of struggles to face in camps. Currently, it is believed that 15% of the world population lives with a disability, and several million of them are thought to have been displaced.<sup>114</sup> For disabled refugees, their experience in refugee camps varies greatly depending on factors such as their level of mobility, their capacities, and their needs.<sup>115</sup> In times of crisis, it is not rare for people

with disabilities to face violence, exploitation, negligence and a difficulty in accessing health care and support services.<sup>116</sup> In camps, where a lack of health care is not uncommon and conditions are rarely accommodating, the experience of a disabled refugee can be extremely difficult, as all the issues faced in camps can have a more severe effect on them.

While it is significant to remember the struggles faced by refugees in camps are mostly shared, it is also important to keep in mind the existence of certain subgroups with different needs and who are more severely affected by the human rights violations present in refugee camps. For groups such as the elderly, young children, and such, their experience will be completely different as that of other refugees, as they have their own particular set of needs that must be accommodated and their hopes and plans for the future greatly differ as well. In order to understand the struggle of refugees, the importance of relieving them from their burdens, and the possible solutions for these problems, it is vital to keep in mind the existence of these groups and how they can best be served.



Afghan children from an Internally Displaced Persons camp outside of Kabul

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> "Older People," *UNHCR*, accessed 7 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/older-people.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/older-people.html).

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> "People with Disabilities," *UNHCR*, accessed 7 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/people-with-disabilities.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/people-with-disabilities.html).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.



## Current Status

### Present Circumstances for Refugees

For refugees and migrants, dehumanization and negative branding are not only contributing factors for the issues they face, but they also prevent these root issues from being solved.<sup>117</sup> In October 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, expressed to the Third Committee his wish for a “return to dignity, human rights and a sense of shared humanity” when speaking in regards to this matter.<sup>118</sup> In the present day, refugees are branded as threats, which gives way for racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination against them.<sup>119</sup>

In June of 2019, the Third Committee debated responsibility-sharing options, as the hospitality given to refugees by developing countries “should not be taken for granted.”<sup>120</sup> Currently, most refugees reside in developing states and the representatives from these countries have expressed their wishes for international cooperation and the assumption of moral, political, and legal responsibilities.<sup>121</sup> Representatives from countries such as Turkey and Iran, which both take in a significant number of refugees, shared their desires to solve these issues through the Global Compact on Refugees.<sup>122</sup> The Global Compact, a framework for equitable and predictable responsibility sharing, came before the General Assembly in December 2018 with the key objectives of “easing the pressure on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions, and supporting conditions in the countries of origin for an eventual safe return.”<sup>123</sup> This, however, did not have the intended impact on refugees. Issues



A young Rohingya girl, facing the risk of being displaced by the violence and denial of her rights in Myanmar

such as climate change as a factor in forced displacement were left out of the Compact, and refugee’s voices were drastically underrepresented.<sup>124</sup>

The issue of refugee resettlement is constantly growing, and therefore must also be taken into account.<sup>125</sup> According to the UNHCR, refugee resettlement placements dropped by 54% in the year 2018, as states made severe cuts to their quotas.<sup>126</sup> Out of the 1.2 million places that are needed, only 75,188 were given compared to the previous year’s 163,206.<sup>127</sup> The United States, for instance, cut their refugee quota to 45,000 which is the lowest it has been since the Domestic Refugee Act was enacted; and there are plans to drop that number to only 30,000 in 2019.<sup>128</sup>

Governments and agencies have also been known to ignore the issues faced by refugees, or even go to the extent of taking advantage of them. There are existing reports of diversion of aid intended for refugee camps, with petitioners expressing that the message received is “power and wealth are more

117 GA/SHC/4247, “Refugees, Migrants Branded ‘Threats’, Dehumanized in Campaigns Seeking Political Gain, High Commissioner Tells Third Committee, Appealing for Return to Dignity,” 31 October 2018, accessed 7 June 2019, [www.un.org/press/en/2017/gashc4247.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2017/gashc4247.doc.htm).

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

120 GA/SHC/4248, “Hospitality Extended to Refugees Must Not Be Taken for Granted, Host Countries Caution as Third Committee Explores Responsibility-Sharing Options,” 1 November 2018, accessed 7 June 2019, [www.un.org/press/en/2018/gashc4248.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gashc4248.doc.htm).

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 “The Global Compact on Refugees,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 29 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html).

124 “Refugee Rights In 2018,” *Amnesty International*, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/12/rights-today-2018-refugees/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/12/rights-today-2018-refugees/).

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.



important than human dignity.”<sup>129</sup> Taking funds intended for refugee camps is thoroughly inhumane, not only because it involves taking advantage of the suffering and mistreatment of this vulnerable group, but also because of the consequences these issues have on the refugees.<sup>130</sup> The problems faced in refugee camps have been known to drive residents to clandestine activities such as smuggling of arms, people, drugs, and other forms of violence.<sup>131</sup>

With refugee numbers the highest they have ever been, finding an answer to all these issues is more important than ever.<sup>132</sup> Refugees deserve to be treated with dignity and to have their rights respected and the violations present in refugee camps go against both of these beliefs.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, to secure a bright and sustainable future for refugees, it is imperative to find solutions and alternatives to the problems present with the current systems in refugee camps and shelters.

## The Future of Refugees

Seeing all of the issues that refugees face, ranging from food and supply shortages to physical abuse, the urgent need for a solution becomes increasingly clear. The UNHCR, for instance, has adopted a policy regarding possible alternatives to camps, which can vary from country to country depending on legislative, cultural, and national policies.<sup>134</sup> These alternatives are meant for refugees to exercise their freedom, gain independence, make choices about the issues affecting their lives, and contribute to their communities, all in a dignified manner.<sup>135</sup>

This policy on alternatives to camps shows several key aspects

of the issue and its possible solutions, such as the importance of including refugees and host communities in the decision making process, protecting the environment, reinforcing the importance of emergency preparedness, and enabling refugees to build sustainable livelihoods.<sup>136</sup> This policy also aims to transform existing camps into sustainable settlements, allowing refugees to exercise their rights and freedoms.<sup>137</sup> These possible alternatives include creating less restricted settlements where refugees can live with greater independence and dignity, allowing refugees to reside within host communities, and cooperating with national development planning by bringing refugees to national structures.<sup>138</sup>

The UNHCR also recognizes the importance of having refugees living with host communities, stating that if camps are unavoidable, they should have access to the local economy, infrastructure, and delivery systems.<sup>139</sup> Allowing refugees the opportunity to live peacefully and legally within communities supports their independence and ability to take control over their lives, while also benefiting the communities themselves.<sup>140</sup> Refugees, like any other individual, have varied skill sets and assets as well as qualities of perseverance, resilience, endurance, adaptability, amongst others.<sup>141</sup> As stated by the UNHCR, “Refugees who maintain their spirit of independence, use their skills, and develop sustainable livelihoods during displacement will be more resilient and better able to overcome future challenges.”<sup>142</sup>

On a separate note, Human Rights First released blueprints

129 GA/SPD/665, “Petitioners Condemn Corruption, Diversion of Aid Intended for Refugee Camps as Fourth Committee Continues Decolonization Debate,” 11 October 2018, accessed 8 July 2019, [www.un.org/press/en/2018/gaspd665.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gaspd665.doc.htm).

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

132 “Are refugee numbers the highest ever?” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, August 2018, accessed 22 June 2019, [www.unhcr.org/blogs/statistics-refugee-numbers-highest-ever/](http://www.unhcr.org/blogs/statistics-refugee-numbers-highest-ever/).

133 “Asylum & The Rights Of Refugees,” *International Justice Resource Center*.

134 “Alternatives to Camps,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/alternatives-to-camps.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/alternatives-to-camps.html).

135 Ibid.

136 “UNHCR: Policy on Alternatives to Camps,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 28 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/5422b8f09.html](http://www.unhcr.org/5422b8f09.html).

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

139 “Alternatives to Camps,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

with concrete steps to manage the crisis at the United States' southern border, which target four key areas of the issue.<sup>143</sup> This includes tackling the conditions forcing people to flee in the first place, enhancing the capacities of other countries to host refugees and asylum seekers, launching humanitarian initiatives, and fixing asylum and immigration court systems.<sup>144</sup> This type of initiative, although catered to the US, provides valuable insight into how the international community can help alleviate the issues present in refugee camps.

## Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the "2030 Agenda," are seventeen goals created with the purpose of "achieving a better, more sustainable future."<sup>145</sup> Amongst all the issues the SDGs intend to solve, some of them are directly related to the violations present in refugee camps, such as SDG 3: "Good Health and Well-Being"<sup>146</sup> In refugee camps, the issue of unsanitary conditions and the spread of disease is not unheard of, with 30% of refugee camps not having proper waste disposal systems or latrines.<sup>147</sup> The unfit conditions in which refugees are forced to live negatively affect their health and contribute towards the spread of disease in refugee camps.<sup>148</sup> In Bangladesh, for instance, studies showed that refugee camps with adequate sanitation facilities faced cholera rates that were three times lower than those present in camps without these systems.<sup>149</sup> Similarly, a study

of refugee camps in Kenya proved that families which shared latrines with three or more households were at an increased risk of contracting disease.<sup>150</sup>

SDG 2: Zero Hunger, focuses on the eradication of hunger.<sup>151</sup> For refugees living in camps, dealing with food shortages and malnutrition is a common occurrence as there isn't always enough to feed every resident.<sup>152</sup> In 2016, nutrition surveys documented high levels of acute malnutrition, anemia and stunting in refugee sites, with camps in Ethiopia, Chad, Sudan and Djibouti experiencing levels of anemia of over 40%.<sup>153</sup> This can be especially problematic for certain individuals, such as pregnant women, children, or the elderly, who have more extensive nutritional needs.<sup>154</sup> The particular conditions of each state also affect this situation, as most refugees are hosted in lower income countries.<sup>155</sup> Providing appropriate nutrition for refugees is a struggle for countries that commonly experience food shortages, and thus the issue of malnourishment in refugee camps is directly tied to issues such as world hunger.<sup>156</sup> According to the World Food Programme, in some cases the ration cuts have been so severe that refugees were only getting 40% of the recommended amounts of kilocalories per day.<sup>157</sup> Dealing with the chronic hunger present in refugee camps is a necessary step to eradicate hunger worldwide, as refugees make up a significant part of the population and some of them even arrive at refugee camps already show-

143 "Refugee, Human Rights Groups Issue Policy Solutions to Central American Humanitarian Crisis," *Human Rights First*, 17 June 2019, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/refugee-human-rights-groups-issue-policy-solutions-central-american-humanitarian](http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/refugee-human-rights-groups-issue-policy-solutions-central-american-humanitarian).

144 Ibid.

145 "About the Sustainable Development Goals, *United Nations*, accessed 20 July 2019, [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/).

146 "Goal 3: Good health and well-being," *United Nations Development Programme*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-3-good-health-and-well-being.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-3-good-health-and-well-being.html).

147 "Module 3: Food, Water, Sanitation, and Housing in Refugee Camps," *Unite for Sight*.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 Ibid.

151 "Goal 2: Zero hunger," *United Nations Development Programme*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-2-zero-hunger.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-2-zero-hunger.html).

152 Ibid.

153 "Severe food shortages hit Africa's refugees hard, UNHCR and WFP warn," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 20 February 2017, accessed 28 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2017/2/58aad5d44/severe-food-shortages-hit-africas-refugees-hard-unhcr-wfp-warn.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2017/2/58aad5d44/severe-food-shortages-hit-africas-refugees-hard-unhcr-wfp-warn.html).

154 Ibid.

155 Ibid.

156 "Food Shortages Affecting Refugees," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 18 August 2000, accessed 28 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/briefing/2000/8/3ae6b8274c/food-shortages-affecting-refugees.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/briefing/2000/8/3ae6b8274c/food-shortages-affecting-refugees.html).

157 "Growing Concern About Impact Of Food Shortages On Refugees In Malawi - UN Agencies," *World Food Programme*, 19 January 2016, accessed 26 July 2019, [www1.wfp.org/news/growing-concern-about-impact-food-shortages-refugees-malawi-un-agencies](http://www1.wfp.org/news/growing-concern-about-impact-food-shortages-refugees-malawi-un-agencies).



A Somali family affected by droughts and famine  
ing signs of undernourishment.<sup>158</sup>

The violations seen in refugee camps can also interfere with the SDGs through the long-term effects they have on refugees. For goals such as SDG 1: No Poverty, the lack of education and financial independence seen in refugee camps poses a clear threat.<sup>159</sup> Not only do refugees have limited possessions and financial means while staying in camps, they also face a lack of preparation which can make their experience in the workforce difficult.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities focuses on reduced inequalities, specifically on income inequality.<sup>161</sup> As with the first goal, this is another case of the long-term effects of violations in refugee camps hindering the process of sustainable development, as the economic hardships created by the camps contributed towards income inequality.<sup>162</sup> For refugees, the lack of independence in camps is not only undignified, but it also keeps them dependent on rations and handouts, preventing them from finding self-sustainable life.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> “Goal 1: No poverty,” *United Nations Development Programme*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-1-no-poverty.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-1-no-poverty.html).

<sup>160</sup> Ibid..

<sup>161</sup> “Goal 10: Reduced inequalities,” *United Nations Development Programme*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-10-reduced-inequalities.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-10-reduced-inequalities.html).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> GA/SHC/4248, “Hospitality Extended to Refugees Must Not Be Taken for Granted, Host Countries Caution as Third Committee Explores Responsibility-Sharing Options.”

<sup>165</sup> Dana Sleiman, “UN Refugee Chief urges Security Council for firm response to record-high displacement.”

<sup>166</sup> “Refugee Rights In 2018,” *Amnesty International*.

<sup>167</sup> Michael Martinez, “Syrian Refugees: Which Countries Welcome Them, Which Ones Don’t,” *CNN*, 10 September 2015, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.cnn.com/2015/09/09/world/welcome-syrian-refugees-countries/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/09/world/welcome-syrian-refugees-countries/index.html)

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

## Bloc Analysis

### Point of Division

For this topic, the division of the voting blocs is based off whether each country welcomes refugees, refuses them, or experiences an exodus. Seeing the constant calls for international cooperation and responsibility-sharing options, the need for collaboration is very clear, but the different obligations of each country--depending on their stance on refugees and their contributions--must be taken into account.<sup>164</sup> Currently, 85% of the world’s refugees are hosted in low income countries, which adds to their already existing burden.<sup>165</sup> This type of situation is a clear example of the power imbalances and disparities present, as high income countries such as the United States continue to lower their refugee quota.<sup>166</sup> The bloc regarding the refugee’s country of origin will also provide a unique perspective, as these are the states where the issue has its roots. Therefore, for countries not experiencing an exodus of refugees, the point of division for this topic will be based on factors such as the country’s stance and legislation on taking in refugees, how many refugees are taken in compared to the amount denied, what the refugee quota is, and whether or not this quota is constantly met.

### Countries That Welcome Refugees

Amidst the current refugee crisis, certain states have been more open to accepting refugees and granting them asylum.<sup>167</sup> For instance, countries such as Turkey, which is seen as the main destination for displaced families, is sheltering over half of all Syrian refugees, of which 14% live in refugee camps.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, Lebanon has taken over a million Syrian refugees,



resulting in a 25% increase in the country's population.<sup>169</sup> Other states, such as Jordan and Egypt, have also taken in hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, mainly as a result of their geographic proximity to Syria.<sup>170</sup> Accepting migrants and refugees is also not an uncommon occurrence for Jordan, as half of the country's population are refugees of Palestinian origin.<sup>171</sup> These are only some of the examples of countries within this bloc, as there are numerous other states who meet fair refugee quotas and welcome refugees stuck at sea or otherwise stranded. In Europe, for instance, countries such as Germany, Luxemburg, Portugal and Romania offered to host refugees stranded at sea as long as Malta opened its docks for them to disembark.<sup>172</sup> Malta accepted the proposal on the condition that the 244 refugees brought to the state by the Maltese Coast Guard were also distributed across whichever countries took in the refugees.<sup>173</sup> In the end, the refugees were divided amongst France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and the Netherlands, despite Italian officials stating, on multiple occasions, their disagreement with this concept.<sup>174</sup>

There is also the case of countries with refugee friendly laws and regimes, such as Ethiopia and its open-door policy, which means refugees are welcomed and given access to humanitarian aid and protection.<sup>175</sup> As a result, Ethiopia hosts nearly 740,000 refugees from countries such as Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan.<sup>176</sup> The open-door policy is a prime example of a welcoming nature towards refugees, as it gives them the opportunity to start new lives in a new country. Similarly,

Uganda grants refugees rights to move freely, own land, and provides them with employment opportunities, showcasing their intent to welcome refugees and give them independent, dignified lives.<sup>177</sup> Because of this, Uganda has been praised by the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection for its "generous refugee law and policy regime."<sup>178</sup>

## Countries That Do Not Accept Refugees

On a different note, other countries have entirely different policies and beliefs when it comes to this issue. In the case of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, for instance, the states were sued by the European Union (EU) for failing to meet refugee quotas in 2017.<sup>179</sup> As a result of the large influx of migrants and refugees in European countries such as Greece and Italy, the EU launched a plan which gave each country a refugee quota to be met.<sup>180</sup> Out of the two thousand asylum seekers the Czech Republic was designated, they only welcomed twelve, while Hungary and Poland each welcomed none.<sup>181</sup> Similarly, Japan accepted 27 refugees in 2015, rejecting 99% of their 7,586 asylum applications.<sup>182</sup> Japan has also been known for its restrictive refugee policies, as seen in 2016 when only 600 non-ethnic Korean refugees were admitted out of the 18,800 applications received by August.<sup>183</sup>

On a similar note, some Persian Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates have not accepted any Syrian refugees, as they did not sign the 1951 Convention and therefore do not have the same legal obligations

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

172 "10 Eu Countries 'ready' To Welcome Refugees Stuck At Sea," *Al Jazeera*, 8 January 2019, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/01/10-eu-countries-ready-refugees-stuck-sea-190108111916044.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/01/10-eu-countries-ready-refugees-stuck-sea-190108111916044.html).

173 Patrick Kingsley, "Stranded Migrants Are Finally Brought to Shore After 19 Days," *The New York Times*, 9 January 2019, accessed 26 July 2019, [www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/world/europe/migrant-refugees-boat-malta.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/world/europe/migrant-refugees-boat-malta.html).

174 Ibid.

175 Sulaiman Momodu, "Africa Most Affected By Refugee Crisis," *Africa Renewal*, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2016-march-2017/africa-most-affected-refugee-crisis](http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2016-march-2017/africa-most-affected-refugee-crisis).

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid.

178 Ibid.

179 "EU to sue Poland, Hungary and Czechs for refusing refugee quotas," *BBC News*, 7 December 2017, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42270239](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42270239).

180 Ibid.

181 Ibid.

182 Katheryn Moon, "Why is Asia MIA on refugees?," *Brookings*, 22 September 2016, accessed 23 June 2019, [www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/09/22/why-is-asia-mia-on-refugees/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/09/22/why-is-asia-mia-on-refugees/).

183 Ibid.

as other states.<sup>184</sup> This is an example of the effect that laws and legislation have on the countries within this bloc, as each country's particular stance on refugees should be analyzed in order to identify its position. According to Amnesty International, even high income countries have been known to refuse refugees.<sup>185</sup> States such as Russia, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea did not offer any resettlement places for refugees, despite Amnesty International's calls for 380,000 people to be resettled.<sup>186</sup> This bloc often is not characterized by a specific level of development but rather on restrictive immigration and asylum policies.

## Home Countries of Refugees

This bloc would include countries from which a large influx of refugees come from. This refers to countries where people are fleeing as a result of prosecution, fear, threats to their well-being, or otherwise unfit living conditions that put them at risk. As such, this would include states like Syria, where the UNHCR counted 6.7 million displaced people during 2018.<sup>187</sup> This would also include countries such as Iraq, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, where millions of refugees are also fleeing from insecurity.<sup>188</sup> Similarly, some refugees from Myanmar are fleeing ethnic discrimination, as the Rohingya, an ethnic minority in Myanmar, face constant violence and have their homes destroyed, with Myanmar even denying them citizenship.<sup>189</sup>

Another example would be Afghanistan, where roughly 2.7 million people have fled and are now living as refugees outside of their country.<sup>190</sup> Similarly, the 900,000 refugees fleeing from Somalia have been living in refugee camps for years, with over 100,000 of them having returned to their country where they face severe droughts and constant insecurity.<sup>191</sup> Refugees

have also been known to flee from South and Central American countries, with El Salvador, Mexico and Guatemala being amongst them. Yemen is facing a "humanitarian catastrophe," as violent conflicts cause individuals all over the country to become displaced.<sup>192</sup>

In their home countries, refugees can face food and water shortages, economic crises, war and conflict, discrimination, and other factors which endanger their lives and threaten their success. Countries within this Bloc should therefore see the importance of improving living conditions and solving the issues present in the refugees' home countries through international cooperation, as this is the root of the issue.

## Committee Mission

As part of its mandate, the Third Committee works to solve issues related to "human rights, advancement of women, protection of children, and the treatment of refugees."<sup>193</sup> For this reason, finding a solution to the human rights violations present in refugee camps is a priority of this committee. The precarious situation present in refugee camps has negative effects on both the physical and mental health of all refugees who live within, but certain groups such as women and children can see themselves particularly affected, and it is therefore crucial to the Third Committee and its mandate that these human rights violations be put to an end.<sup>194</sup>

As refugee numbers continue to grow by the day and the issues they face grows with them, it becomes urgent to solve these problems. Countries should not ignore the severity of each issue, as well as the consequences these have, and should find a solution that allows the refugees to live safely and with dignity. It is also vital to remember the urgency of these viola-

184 Becky Anderson, Ashley Fantz and Schams Elwazer, "Refugee crisis: Why aren't Gulf states taking them in?," *CNN*, 8 September 2015, 28 July 2019, [www.cnn.com/2015/09/08/world/gulf-states-syrian-refugee-crisis/](http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/08/world/gulf-states-syrian-refugee-crisis/).

185 "Facts & Figures: Syria refugee crisis & international resettlement," *Amnesty International*, 5 December 2014, accessed 29 July 2019, [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/12/facts-figures-syria-refugee-crisis-international-resettlement/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/12/facts-figures-syria-refugee-crisis-international-resettlement/).

186 Ibid.

187 Chris Huber and Kathryn Reid, "Forced to flee: Top countries refugees are coming from."

188 Ibid.

189 "Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis," *BBC*, 24 April 2018, accessed 28 July 2019, [www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561).

190 Chris Huber and Kathryn Reid, "Forced to flee: Top countries refugees are coming from."

191 Ibid.

192 "Yemen emergency," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, accessed 27 July 2019, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/yemen-emergency.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/yemen-emergency.html).

193 "Third Committee," *General Assembly of the United Nations*, accessed 27 July 2019, [www.un.org/en/ga/third/](http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/).

194 Ibid.

tions, as they are currently affecting millions of people and, with the current refugee crisis, they are likely to affect even more. For delegates, it will be crucial to remember the reality and severity of these issues, as these are real problems that impact people all over the world. The suffering of refugees should not be taken lightly, and the topic should be regarded with absolute respect. The importance of culture is also relevant, as possible solutions should keep in mind the different origins and ethnic or religious backgrounds that refugees can have. It is vital to preserve their culture, as well as to allow refugees to express themselves and practice their own traditions or religious worship.



## Research and Preparation Questions

Your dais has prepared the following research and preparation questions as a means of providing guidance for your research process. Delegates are **NOT** obligated to formally answer these questions either in committee or in position papers. Rather, these questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

### Topic A

1. Which, if any, ethnic minority, indigenous, or displaced groups are present within your country? How long have they been there? Are there any policies in place to protect them? If so, what are they and what do they address in particular?
2. How, if at all, your country been impacted by refugee crises? What has been done to help integrate them? If nothing has been done, does your country have a policy or plan regarding refugees?
3. How does your country view ethnic populations in other countries? How about ethnic populations within your own country? Does it have a history of intolerance? If so, how have, if at all, these attitudes shifted?
4. What measures are put in place in your country to address the growing presence of hate speech online? Has it worked with any social media platforms or organizations to address these issues? Has it supported or passed any policy that does?
5. Has your country participated in any significant diplomatic discussions or peace talks? If so, what role(s) did they play? What was the result of these conversations?

### Topic B

1. What impact has the refugee crisis had on your country, and what actions has your country taken to face these issues? Is your country a major host country? Or does your country have refugees fleeing from it? Have any actions your country has taken had the desired effect?
2. What are your country's laws and policies regarding refugees, and how have these changed in the last few years? Have these laws and their changes been effective and followed? Are they beneficial to refugees?
3. Is your country collaborating internationally to aid refugees and handle the refugee crisis? How many refugees or asylum seekers does your country host? How many does it turn away per year? Does your country meet refugee quotas?
4. Are there refugee camps within your country, and if so, do they meet UNHCR's standards and regulations? Are there accounts of human rights violations within your country's refugee camps? If there are no refugee camps within your country, what is your country's stance on them? What does your country do to house refugees and manage the refugee crisis?
5. What is your country's stance on refugees? How has your country been involved with UNHCR or other refugee-related organizations? Has your country aided refugees in the past? Has your country participated in any efforts to aid refugees? Or has it ever publicly turned them away?

## Important Documents

### Topic A

A/RES/65/119. “Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.” 10 December 2018. Accessed 16 August 2019. [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/119](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/119).

*This document marks the continuation of a global effort to eradicate colonialism. It mentions the goals of its predecessor, the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and the current agenda for meeting those goals this decade. This document shows that the fight against colonialism and its effects are not over.*

A/RES/72/157. “A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.” 25 January 2017. Accessed 27 June 2019. [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/RES/72/157](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/RES/72/157).

*This resolution is important to understanding the steps taken to reduce racism and xenophobia worldwide. It provides some information on the types of discrimination which are present and the degree to which it calls upon states to address particular issues.*

“International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Accessed 6 August 2019. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>.

*This source documents one of the first UN documents to recognize the impact of intolerance and, therefore, is an important primary source in addressing this issue. Using this document allows delegates to see what has improved and what has not and can build upon this document in committee. This Convention gives the guidelines on how to eliminate racism.*

Koehler, Daniel. “Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe - Current Developments and Issues for the Future.” *PRISM* 6 No. 2 (18 July 2016): 85–99. [https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism\\_6-2/Koehler.pdf?ver=2016-07-05-104619-213](https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_6-2/Koehler.pdf?ver=2016-07-05-104619-213).

*This article shows that extremism and terrorism affect all of Europe and poses the policy challenges this issue causes. This article provides an analysis of trends and provides statistics for specific states such as the United States of America and Germany.*

“Xenophobia: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Accessed 6 August 2019. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/xenophobia/>.

*This article addresses xenophobia, breaking it down to “the fear of foreigners,” while also noting that this is a basic definition that describes centuries of behaviors. Understanding what xenophobia is and what its effects are helps delegates produce solutions under the right context.*

### Topic B

A/73/12 (Part II). “The Global Compact on Refugees.” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Accessed 29 July 2019. [www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR\\_English.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf).

*The Global Compact on Refugees is a recent document detailing the importance of factors such as international cooperation and responsibility-sharing when it comes to taking care of refugees all over the world. It also touches upon certain specific refugee situations, as well as important needs which are yet to be met.*

“The 1951 Refugee Convention.” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Accessed 6 July 2019. [www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10).

*The 1951 Refugee Convention is one of the most important documents when it comes to the rights and obligations of refugees, as it gave the exact definition of a refugee and outlined the laws that refugees as well as the states granting them asylum must follow. This document was created after World War II, as a result of the heavy displacement the world was facing, and it has been a key document ever since.*

“Alternatives to Camps.” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Accessed 23 June 2019. [www.unhcr.org/en-us/alternatives-to-camps.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/alternatives-to-camps.html).

*This source explores the UNHCR’s new policy on possible alternatives to refugee camps. It contains information on different alternatives that have been discovered and analyzes the consequences of living in refugee camps. This is a good guiding source for delegates to look at what has worked in their own country or what their country supports regarding camps.*

“Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.” *United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*. 1966. Accessed 7 July 2019. [www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolStatusOfRefugees.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolStatusOfRefugees.aspx).

*The 1967 Protocol is the document which broadens the definition of a refugee, therefore expanding the range of the 1951 convention and making it applicable to countless more individuals. Since the original 1951 document was written to handle the refugee crisis the world was facing at the time, it left out certain groups who were still displaced and in need of aid, which the 1967 Protocol corrected.*

“What is a Refugee?” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Accessed 7 June 2019. [www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/](http://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/).

*This source provides the basic and necessary information regarding refugees, which is vital in order to understand the topic as a whole. The website allows delegates to understand the situation of refugees compared to other immigrants such as asylum seekers. Learning the basics about refugees is necessary to find solutions.*



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“Charter of the United Nations: Chapter IV: The General Assembly.” *Welcome to the United Nations: It’s Your World*. Accessed 13 June 2018. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter4.shtml>.

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“Social Humanitarian, and Cultural.” *United Nations*. Accessed 25 June 2018. <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>.

*A UN webpage explaining the history and structure of the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural committee.*

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Geneva: United Nations General Assembly, 1948.

*A critical UN document outlining the international regulations regarding human rights.*

“UN Economic and Social Council.” *Welcome to the United Nations: It’s Your World*. Accessed 13 June 2018. <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/subsidiary.shtml>.

*A UN webpage explaining the history and structure of the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural committee.*

## Topic A

### UN Sources

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*This source provides information on the first UN document discussing the rights of refugees, dating the UN’s first commitment to their protection to 1951.*

A/RES/65/119. “Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.” 10 December 2018. Accessed 16 August 2019. [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/119](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/119).

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*Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and the current agenda for meeting those goals this decade.*

A/RES/72/312. "Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance." 7 August 2018.

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*This UN source provides a description of the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance that was adopted on 16 November 1995 and, thus, sets an example for the international community, especially in its treatment of marginalized groups.*

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*Discrimination in all forms seep into various aspects of civil society, including education. Addressing this issue would allow for prosecuted individuals to more easily access these types of services.*

"Goal 8 : Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform." *United Nations*. Accessed 27 June 2019. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>.

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“Hatred ‘a Threat to Everyone’, Declares Guterres Calling for Global Effort to End Xenophobia and ‘Loathsome Rhetoric.’” *UN News*. 29 April 2019. Accessed 7 October 2019. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1037531>.

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*Amnesty International’s views on the current refugee crisis, as refugee numbers keep growing by the day.*

The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

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