

Welcome

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



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“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, let me extend you the warmest welcome to the 11th edition of CENMUN; we are deeply honored to have you interested in joining this committee, where your passion and commitment will be essential in addressing some of the most pressing global challenges nowadays.

In the next few days, you will not only be representing your delegation but becoming advocates for those who cannot speak for themselves; be aware that each of you is responsible for exploring complex global issues related to refugee protection, human rights, and international solidarity.

This model is where your ideas, words, and teamwork can lead to meaningful changes. I am confident that you will develop critical thinking and enhance your understanding of global challenges and your sense of empathy.

From now until the day of the model, I encourage you to think critically and creatively about the global challenges that this committee addresses, to listen respectfully to everyone's perspectives, and to seek innovative solutions to the committee topics; remember that your best allies will be negotiation and understanding.

Embrace this opportunity with courage, passion, and commitment to a better world; the world needs leaders like you; we look forward to witnessing your performance in this model, which we believe will be outstanding!

Sincerely,

Sofía Ramos Cruz

President of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

About the Committee

The definition of a refugee is a person who is forced to leave their place of residence due to persecution and violence based on the religion, race, nationality, and membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

At the end of June 2023, 110 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced from their homes due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events that seriously disrupt public order. Among them, there were 62.1 million internally displaced people, 6.08 million asylum seekers, and 5.6 million Venezuelan refugees in need of international protection. Additionally, Millions of stateless people were denied nationality and access to fundamental rights such as education, healthcare, employment, and freedom of movement.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes. Established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1950 in the aftermath of the Second World War to assist millions of people who had lost their homes, UNHCR is a global organization that works to improve the lives of people forced to flee their homes.

Today, UNHCR works in 136 countries, providing life-saving assistance, including shelter, food, water, and medical care. For 73 years, the UNHCR has been safeguarding the rights of refugees. UNHCR also supports former refugees who have returned to their home country, people displaced within their own country, and people who are stateless or whose nationality is disputed.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the critical legal documents that protect refugees and outline the minimum standard for their treatment.

UNHCR supports the Government of Mexico's efforts to safeguard the rights and well-being of people forced to flee their home countries.

Delegations List

Plurinational State of Bolivia
Canada
People's Republic of China
Arab Republic of Egypt
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
French Republic
Federal Republic of Germany
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island
Republic of India
Islamic Republic of Iran
State of Israel
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Republic of Kenya
Republic of Lebanon
Kingdom of Norway
State of Palestine
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Republic of South Africa
Kingdom of Spain
Kingdom of Sweden
Syrian Arab Republic
Republic of Turkey
Republic of Uganda
United Mexican States
United States of America

Topic A: Should Palestinian refugees have the right of return to their lands in Israel?

Introduction

The international issue of Palestine and Israel is one of the greatest threats to world peace and prevails even after the United Nations has continued to do its utmost to bring these nations together.

Between 700,000 and 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes, lost their land, and became refugees in neighboring Arab countries, or displaced in Gaza and the West Bank. Nowadays the number of refugees has exponentially increased to over five-million victims. Even so, the Resolution 194 recognizes the right of return and compensation for Palestinian refugees, as well as their descendants. Seventy-three years later, the resolution remains unfulfilled.

Since 2002, Israel has erected a series of walls, blockades, borders, crossing points and restricted areas to separate Gaza and West Bank from Israel. Furthermore, Gaza has been under the Hamas regime, which is considered a terrorist organization by multiple countries and international institutions such as the European Union.

Background

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to 1947, shortly after the creation of the United Nations, which is one of the key actors in this conflict. After the end of World War I, Palestine was put under British administration until it achieved the status of an independent nation. This development was obstructed by the poor judgment of the British government. In which Palestinian desires were not complied with.

The regime set ties with a Zionist Organization which sought the establishment of a national home for the Jewish People. This organization based its claims on a historical connection, as their ancestors had lived in Palestine two thousand years before dispersing. The autochthonous population of Palestine felt this designation was a

violation of their natural rights and independence guarantees given by the Allied Powers to Arab leaders in exchange for their support during the war.

This led to a significant increase of violence and resistance to the government that plagued Palestine until the end of World War II. The Resolution 181 (II) emerged after a United Nations intervention that followed more than a quarter of a century of an unlawful and unjust Mandate. This resolution proposed the partitioning of Palestine into two independent states, one Arab Palestine and one Jewish, leaving Jerusalem Internationalized.

Rather than bringing peace, this resolution left the Palestinian population displeased and led to a Middle East war. The Jewish state proclaimed its independence in 1948 as Israel, and after a series of wars, ended up occupying 77% of Palestinian territory, including the west of Jerusalem. The Gaza Strip remained under Egyptian control, and was controlled by the Jordan domain, West Bank (including East Jerusalem).

The Palestinian independent state was never established on the World's map. Since then, Palestinians have struggled with their lost national identity, facing constant exile, violence and roughness that has lived within them. The United Nations has not been able to come to grips with the Palestinian Question yet.

Current Situation

On the morning of October 7, 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in the occupied Gaza Strip launched a surprise attack on Israel. They fired thousands of rockets into southern Israel and crossed the border, attacking several towns, carrying out summary executions and abducted more than 200 people, mostly civilians. According to the Israeli Ministry of Health, at least 1,200 people were murdered and nearly 3,500 injured.

The response of the Israeli authorities to these events was swift, as they launched airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, shortly after the prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu

officially declared an armed conflict between Israel and Palestine. Since then, Israel located and killed top Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar

This was followed by other drastic measures, such as a total blockade on Gaza and an order to evacuate the north of the Strip. Since then, Israel has imposed a complete siege on Gaza, cutting off electricity, fuel and food supplies, worsening an already dire humanitarian crisis for the more than 2.2 million people trapped in its territory.

Since then, Israel's relentless attacks on the Gaza Strip, including on hospitals, refugee camps, markets and many other civilian facilities, have reportedly killed more than 42,000 Palestinians, including over 11,000 children, and injured 96,000 others. To escape these attacks, at least 90% of

The population has been internally displaced. Israel's deliberate deprivation of food, water, medical care and humanitarian aid threatens the survival of all those trapped in Gaza. Amnesty International asserts that there is irrefutable evidence that these practices constitute war crime.

In addition, the crisis has expanded to neighboring countries, such as Lebanon and Iran, where clashes between Israeli armed forces and other countries have resulted in thousands of casualties and injuries. The Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned the attack, describing it as a clear violation of international law and stating that the country has the right and obligation to defend itself.

Questions to Consider

- *What measures should the UN take regarding the non-compliance with multiple resolutions imposed on Israel?*
- *What criteria should be considered for the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel?*
- *How can international cooperation prevent future conflicts similar to those experienced in countries with high numbers of refugees?*
- *How can the situation regarding Hamas be addressed while ensuring the welfare of refugees in Gaza?*
- *What type of humanitarian aid can your delegation provide to Palestinian refugees in case they are not allowed to return to their lands?*
- *With which international organizations does your delegation currently collaborate to support Palestinian refugee rights?*
- *What mechanisms could be put in place to ensure the fair distribution of humanitarian assistance?*
- *What protection measures can be implemented to ensure the safety of women and children refugees?*
- *What economic impact will arise from the return of refugees?*

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Topic B: International cooperation support regarding the increasing arrivals in Uganda

Introduction

By the end of December 2023, Uganda hosted over 1.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from South Sudan. Burundi is the country hosting the most refugees in sub-Saharan Africa. Over 80% of refugees are hosted in 13 districts in the North and South-Western regions and in the capital, Kampala, where they live in settlements. The UNHCR is working closely with the government to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees in Uganda.

Currently, Uganda offers refuge to over 1.7 million people, mainly fleeing from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, and South Sudan. Unfortunately, this number continues to grow, with approximately 10,000 new arrivals entering the country each month. This influx places additional strain on communities, making peaceful coexistence increasingly a challenge.

Thanks to development partners like the World Bank, Uganda has maintained its global leadership in refugee policies. However, Uganda still requires more international support to sustain its commitment to providing for refugees.

Background

In 2023, Uganda received 98,232 new arrivals, of which 50.7% entered through border points, mainly at Kiosro, Lokung, and Bundibugyo, while 49.3% were received in Kampala. The ongoing conflict in Sudan has led to 12,900 new arrivals from Sudan since January 2023. Of these, 86% have settled in Kampala, while 14% have arrived in refugee settlements. Uganda is recognized as having one of the most progressive asylum regimes globally.

One significant challenge is the diminishing funding for humanitarian assistance, which affects the provision of life-saving aid, such as food rations, core relief packages for new arrivals, hygiene kits, medicines, and self-reliance projects. This funding shortfall has strained public services such as water, sanitation, hygiene, healthcare, and education. In response to these funding cuts, harmful coping mechanisms have emerged, affecting not only refugees but also the peaceful coexistence between Uganda's rural and host communities.

Current Situation

Uganda is currently impacted by the Sudanese crisis, with 54,000 new Sudanese refugees arriving in the country since the conflict began. While Uganda is praised for its open-door policy, the constant influx of new arrivals is putting its progressive refugee framework under pressure.

The country is also vulnerable to natural hazards, such as floods, landslides, droughts, and hailstorms, as well as epidemics, including cholera, Ebola, malaria, measles, and, more recently, pox. At the same time, climate change is leading to more frequent and extreme weather events across Uganda.

Since 2017, the European Union (EU) has supported humanitarian action in Uganda with more than €318 million. During 2024, the European Union allocated €36.4 million destined for humanitarian aid. This includes an initial allocation of €29 million, with an additional €6 million mobilized to accelerate local responses to humanitarian and health crises, address flooding, and mitigate the impact of the Sudan crisis.

EU humanitarian funds aim to address the needs of over 1.7 million refugees, asylum seekers, host communities, and those exposed to natural hazards. The funding focuses on providing rapid and effective emergency assistance to newly arrived refugees, improving access to basic services in refugee settlements, and anticipating and responding to disasters.

Questions to Consider

- *How can Uganda promote peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities?*
- *What steps can address funding shortages for refugee assistance in Uganda?*
- *How can Uganda handle the rising number of monthly arrivals?*
- *How can other delegations support Uganda without receiving an excessive amount of refugees?*
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- *What is the role of organizations like the World Bank in Uganda's refugee policies?*
- *How can access to basic services for refugees in Uganda be improved?*
- *What is your delegation's position towards receiving refugees?*
- *How can your delegation assist the crisis in Uganda towards the refugees?*

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