

- **Abstract:**

For most people the refugee crisis has been limited to making arrangements for the shelter of refugees in neighbouring or developed foreign countries. There has been little focus on the problems that these refugees have to deal with while residing in refugee camps in foreign countries. Moreover, there has also been little international attention towards the conditions of these sheltered arrangements as well as to the guest status of refugees therein, which denies them proper access to education, healthcare and employment, at a time when they need it the most. This topic will also seek to address the exploitation and human rights violation of illegal migrants as well as the racism and xenophobia faced by legal migrants in foreign countries. On a broader level, this study guide will aim to highlight the social and economic problems faced by refugees and migrants that reside in countries other than their own.

- **Refugees**

We are in the middle of the most serious refugee crisis since the Second World War, with millions of people risking everything to flee terrifying conflict, disaster and poverty. More than 65 million people worldwide have been forced to flee their homes. The majority – more than 38 million people – are displaced within their own countries. Others shelter in neighbouring countries or are still on the move, putting their lives in danger on treacherous journeys to seek refuge further from home.

And yet, having escaped the unthinkable, many vulnerable families are met by closed borders, hostility, discrimination, abuse and worse. Pushed into poverty by circumstances beyond their control, terrified of what their future might hold, these desperate families need safety and protection – and have a right to be treated with dignity.

The plight of refugees, however, does not end when they arrive in a foreign country and are given refuge in refugee camps. On the contrary, most of the individuals in refugee camps face discrimination and hardships in meeting even their most basic necessities. Moreover, they are also vulnerable to internal gender-based violence and external xenophobic rhetoric that repeatedly violates their self-respect and sense of security.

Listed below are some of the issues faced by refugees in foreign countries. Delegates are encouraged to research other issues on their own.

### **Education**

***(To depict the education crisis of children in refugee camps, the case example of Syrian refugees in refugee camps of Jordan and Lebanon has been taken)***

Lebanon has a population of a little over 4 million and reached a saturation point long ago, with 800,000 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR by the end of October 2013.

However, a recent education assessment found that 80 per cent of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon were not in school.

School drop-out of Syrian refugees is a serious problem in both Jordan and Lebanon. According to a recent World Bank report, failure and drop-out rates among Syrian children are twice the national average for Lebanese children. UNHCR estimates that 20 per cent of Syrian refugee children drop out of school in Lebanon-the biggest problem being among children over 12 years old.

For many refugee children, school is a safe place where they can learn new things and make friends. It helps them to restore some normalcy in their lives, and develop future goals. Parents and children spoke of teachers being very supportive and kind, giving Syrian students extra attention and assistance.

However, the influx of refugee students is taking a serious toll on the capacity of local teachers and the quality of education offered not only to the refugees, but also to Lebanese and Jordanian students.

In some schools, the entire dynamic in the classroom has changed. Not all teachers have been trained to work with refugee children suffering from psychological distress. Coupled with a lack of adequate resources, some Syrian students complained that the quality of education they receive in public schools is poor.

Some parents also reported verbal and physical abuse by teachers. Several children in Lebanon said their teachers beat them in class and “tell us bad words.”

A recent UNICEF report found that corporal punishment is widespread in Jordanian schools. At Za’atari camp, girls described how their teachers tell them “you have ruined your country,” cursing Syria for sending them to Jordan. Muna, 17, who dropped out of school, said, “We can’t get educated at the cost of our self-respect. We fall victim to verbal abuse.”

When serious cases of bullying, violence or discrimination by teachers or other students are identified, UN agencies and partners alert the relevant Ministry of Education to follow up with the school and, if necessary, the authorities. However, parents are often reluctant to report cases, wanting to keep a low profile in a foreign country. The number of identified cases is, therefore, low.

## **Health**

***(To depict the health crisis in refugee camps, the case example of Syrian refugees in refugee camps of Turkey have been taken)***

Today, Turkey bears the burden of caring for over 2.62 million refugees from Syria.<sup>1</sup> A large part of this responsibility entails providing some form of healthcare to non-citizens who desperately need it. Although several policies have been put forth, issues of implementation, demographics, communication, and institutional gridlock still create instability within Turkey and prevent Syrian refugees from accessing sufficient healthcare. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, two years after the start of the Syrian Civil War, the Turkish government issued its first policy addressing healthcare. It stated that all Syrian refugees, registered or not, in the eleven provinces along the Turkish-Syrian border would be authorized to receive the same health services as Turkish citizens but at no cost.<sup>2</sup> According to this new policy, the Turkish government had committed to provide free healthcare to a large sum of refugees. That is, they could, in theory, walk into any public hospital to see a physician and receive medical treatment.

Despite the decree, medical teams in many of the bordering regions did not uniformly apply the policy. For instance, a think tank our group met with mentioned that in the province of Hatay, teams of physicians were told that unregistered urban Syrian refugees, who comprise the majority of the refugee population, were experiencing difficulties accessing services, especially tertiary medical care. Although hospitals have been reported to be consistent in providing emergency health care to almost all refugees, follow-up visits have not been covered, largely because the visits are free for refugees, and doctors are not necessarily compensated for their work.<sup>3</sup> About a year after the initial decree, the Turkish government introduced a new protection policy to extend health coverage to all 81 provinces in Turkey.<sup>4</sup> In addition to issuing this policy, Turkey also introduced identification cards for Syrian refugees. Refugees require ID cards to access healthcare, education, and similar civil services.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of introducing these ID cards was to promote the registration of refugees: if refugees knew they required ID cards to access services, they would be more inclined to register.<sup>6</sup> However, in spite of the ID cards and the extension of coverage in all provinces of Turkey, the implementation of the health system remains problematic.

Most of Turkey's troubles with refugees are derived from the assumption that the Syrian Crisis would be transient.<sup>7</sup> Four years ago, when refugees first started to flee to Turkey, the Turkish government did not expect the conflict to last, and as a result they only planned for temporary accommodations. However, the persistence of the crisis and the nearly exponential influx in refugees has made the problem increasingly complicated and difficult to manage. Furthermore, it has become clear that refugees are unable to return home anytime soon, especially given the deadly circumstances in modern Syria. Every government official with whom we met in Turkey, including President Erdogan's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Kalin, mentioned that the likelihood of permanent residence among refugees has complicated policy issues and questions of integration, which largely include access to healthcare services.

In refugee camps, the challenge of providing health services has largely been met. For instance, primary health care and vaccinations are provided to refugees and are completely funded by the Turkish government. In spite of this, however, the Turkish Medical Association has reported several inefficiencies in the system, which include a lack of access to more specialized services such as advanced procedures and medications.<sup>8</sup>

The healthcare situation is vastly different outside of the refugee camps (i.e., urban areas). Today, over 80% of all refugees reside in urban areas outside of the camps.<sup>9</sup> Although the Turkish government has made all of its public hospitals accessible to refugees and has provided funding to staff the hospitals, urban refugees are encountering many difficulties in gaining access to hospitals and health services. These difficulties are a result of the sheer number of refugees and the lack of awareness among health workers of the governmental policies extending health coverage to all Syrian refugees with an ID card. In addition, it has been widely reported that doctors are refusing to treat chronically sick refugees who have been diagnosed with conditions such as diabetes or cancer. Because refugees with such chronic conditions require follow-ups or continuous treatment, they have encountered major shortages in treatment. In some provinces, hospital administrators have even refused to recognize the recent government decree and have demanded that refugees pay to cover their health care costs.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, since Syrian refugees are concentrated in many of the provinces along the Turkish-Syrian border, overcrowding has overwhelmed the health system and thrust it into chaos. Hospital workers have complained of being overworked and exhausted due to the increased number of patients. Many doctors have requested transfers out of the area, which has led to grave concerns regarding a shortage of qualified medical personnel in the border areas. As a result, many refugees requiring medical care have not been able to see a physician. Beyond the refugees, Cengiz Candar, a famous Turkish journalist, and many other figures have mentioned that the Turkish people and staff in these areas are upset because they claim that the havoc has prevented them, as Turkish citizens, from receiving the services they pay for and to which they are entitled. For instance, one commonly cited

example during meetings was Kilis, a city situated near the border. Today, Kilis is home to more than 200,000 Syrian refugees, and the number of refugees exceeds the number of actual Turkish residents. With such numbers, the central public hospital within Kilis has been unable to respond to the needs of both refugees and local patients, creating distress in the region and a point of conflict between the refugees and locals.<sup>11</sup>

### **Gender based-violence in refugee camps**

As many Syrian men have fled to Europe or joined the combat, women have filled the traditionally male role of head of household. Shifting gender roles have incited violence in refugee communities and gender-based violence has become a significant feature of the conflict. More than half of female refugees need psychological services and have experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or forced or early marriage. Most Syrian children live outside of refugee camps in Turkey, where only 25 percent of them attend school—heightening the risk of early marriage and sexual exploitation for Syrian girls.

Although Turkey has contributed over \$5 billion to assuage the refugee crisis, there has been little effort to ensure refugees' rights, and even less attention on the gender-specific issues that female refugees face. Humanitarian assistance is officially provided to only 10 percent of refugees at government-run camps, while outside the camps non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attempt to reach the majority of refugees living in urban areas without support. Strict regulations dictate NGOs response, making it difficult for them to work with refugees and, in turn, slowing down service provision for survivors of gender-based violence.

Under the assumption that the war would end and refugees would return to Syria, Turkey has treated refugees as “guests” and denied them employment and educational opportunities - which for many women has increased their vulnerability to gender-based violence. Syrian women report distress over their “guest” status and unstable lives in Turkey. One study finds that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an important mental health issue prevalent among female refugees in Turkey.

The humanitarian response in Turkey has primarily focused on emergency response and immediate needs; few NGOs target groups with particular needs such as disabled persons, LGBT persons, or women. Now that the majority of refugees in Turkey are no longer in a state of emergency and it has become apparent that they may stay permanently, Turkey

needs to devise a long-term solution that will ensure the realization of refugees' fundamental rights.

In January 2016, the Turkish government announced the release of a work permit that would allow refugees to work legally. Though this amended labor law is a step in the right direction, it should be followed by a comprehensive integration plan that prioritizes the needs of women and girls to effectively combat gender-based violence by addressing the root causes. An integration phase should involve language courses, job training, social preparation and any knowledge or skills-training that will facilitate the integration of refugees into Turkish society.

### **Discrimination and Xenophobic Rhetoric**

Refugees are frequently discriminated in foreign countries, either by landlords, employers and state own authorities, and stereotyped and vilified by some political parties, media organization or members of the public. They experience discrimination on several of the proscribed grounds, most significantly race or ethnic origin, religion and status. Status is a more general term. There is no detailed international definition of its meaning. Rather, international authorities have considered the issue on a case by case basis and have identified certain situations as falling within the scope of "other status". "Other status" would include both the status of refugee under the Refugee Convention and a particular immigration status (or lack of immigration status). The nature of the discrimination experienced by refugees in Australia mirrors that of others who experience discrimination. It can occur in any area of public life, including employment, access to accommodation and access to other goods, services and facilities. It can involve harassment, vilification and at times actual violence. The most recent refugee arrivals in Australia have been predominantly from Afghanistan and Iraq and they have been predominantly Muslim. They have experienced discrimination on these bases along with other Muslim and Middle Eastern residents of Australia.

- **Immigrants**

#### **Illegal Immigrants**

Illegal immigrants expose themselves to many dangers when they enter another country. Aside from the possibility that they may be intercepted and deported, illegal immigrants may be trafficked for exploitation including sexual exploitation and some illegal immigrants, are involved in criminal activity. These immigrants are used as a source of human trafficking and sex trafficking. People have been kidnapped or tricked into slavery to work as laborers,

after entering the country, for example in factories. Those trafficked in this manner often face additional barriers to escaping slavery, since their status as illegal immigrants makes it difficult for them to gain access to help or services. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Western Europe is being confronted with a serious problem related to the sexual exploitation of illegal immigrants (especially from Eastern Europe), for the purpose of prostitution.

### **Legal Immigrants**

Legal immigration refreshes the community. However, one of the biggest obstacles these refugees and immigrant face is the problem of racism and xenophobia. Racism and discrimination have been used as powerful weapons encouraging fear or hatred of others. The “Burkini ban” pursued in Cannes and about thirty other towns might have just been overturned in the French courts, but it was only the latest and most absurd Islamophobic assault endured by Muslims in the country. This was a sign of racism and discrimination French had towards the immigrants and further, gave birth to Xenophobia. In USA, Trump's anti-immigrant rant and follow-up pledge to deport all undocumented immigrants and their families have proved a shrewd campaign tactic. This xenophobic atmosphere had a profound impact on many Mexican refugees in the US.

- **Global response to growing refugees and immigrant influx**

#### **Western states on the influx**

Some of this is about issues that are particular to the US and to Europe and Australia, but there is also a generalized anti-immigration sentiment playing out across the developed countries where refugees are arriving.

Europe, like a lot of places, has pretty robust anti-immigration politics. The British tabloid press, for example, has for years scaremongered about the supposed threats from refugees and migrants. Such politics, in Europe or elsewhere, often get described as being about pure racism or xenophobia, but in fact they're about something a little different: a fear, rarely articulated, of changing demographics and civic identity.

Taking in large numbers of refugees requires accepting that those refugees might bring changes to your nation's identity or culture. And while that change is often economically and culturally enriching, it can still feel scary. It requires people to modify, ever so slightly, their vision of what their town and neighbourhood look like. That change can be hard to

accept. You can see this play out in Europe, for example, in the regular political backlashes against new mosques being constructed. Those backlashes are partly about Islamophobia, but they are also an expression of people's fear and insecurity about "losing" what made their community feel familiar.

And anti-immigration sentiment tends to rise when people feel economically insecure, as many do in Western countries now. This insecurity can bring a sense of zero-sum competition, even though in fact migration is typically economically beneficial. There is thus enormous political demand within Western countries for keeping out migrants and refugees.

### **Europe's status on the influx**

Refugees are showing up just as the European Union is in the middle of a pretty fraught debate over migration, which is part of the EU's growing political tension over the feasibility of the Union itself.

In the 1990s, the EU introduced something called that Schengen Area that allows near-unlimited migration between EU countries. It's worked well, but not everyone is comfortable with the influx, and the backlash has contributed to right-wing, anti-EU parties in Europe. This gets expressed as generalized hostility against migrants. If you're a politician in, say, France, then you can't call for kicking out the Poles — that would violate EU rules — but you can call for keeping out Nigerian refugees.

European countries are also taking advantage of EU rules to keep refugees out. In theory, the EU's open internal borders mean that it ought to handle refugees collectively. But in practice, most EU member states don't want to take their fair share, and EU rules mean they don't technically have to. Part of how this happens is a European Union rule called the Dublin Regulation, which requires refugees to stay in the first European country they arrive in until their asylum claims are processed. This rule has allowed Europe to push most of the burden onto Greece and Italy, which are overwhelmed with thousands of refugees.

At the same time, countries such as Hungary and Austria are tightening their borders with other European countries to keep refugees from crossing their territory, even en route to other countries like Germany. In Hungary's case, this is apparently intended to discourage refugees from entering the EU at all — Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban is openly hostile to refugees, who he believes are a threat to Europe's "Christian character." While Germany has dramatically relaxed its asylum rules, which is a very important step for dealing with the crisis and helping refugees, the rest of Europe has not really followed, and is tightening restrictions rather than loosening them.

Until the EU can take on the refugee crisis collectively, as it's supposed to, the problem will remain unsolved. But the EU may be incapable of coming together on this until it is able to

deal with its underlying issues over the Union and whether individual states are really willing to give up a little bit of their separateness to function better together.

- **Conclusion**

In the light of the aforementioned scenario, the purpose of the committee now is to come up with a coordinated international plan that can effectively address the institutional discrimination against refugees and migrants in foreign countries.

