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GEC Model United Nations

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Refugees and Rehabilitation



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Letters from the Chairs

Dear esteemed delegates,

Welcome to GECMUN V! My name is Sarah Sunwoo Yoo, a Grade 9 student at St Johnsbury Academy Jeju. It is my utmost pleasure to serve as one of the chairs of United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and I wholeheartedly look forward to meeting all of you in March. Throughout the conference, I wish to help you engage in a fruitful and passionate debate regarding the conflict in Syria. Good luck to all delegates and I hope your GECMUN V lasts as an amazing memory!

Yours truly,
Sarah Sunwoo Yoo

Greeting honorable delegates.

My name is Heeju Cho, a junior from Saint Johnsbury Academy, Jeju Campus. It is a great honor to work as chair for the committee this year. I believe that the most crucial part in MUN is to show active participation and passion to resolve the ongoing human rights violations in Syria. Having a thorough understanding of the issue and possible solutions - which concentrates on not only short-term solutions but also long-term strategies - might also help you to participate more actively. We are looking forward to seeing productive debates and exceptional resolutions. Overall, we would love to present the unforgettable memory through this conference.

Please feel free to contact me: s17013120@sjajeju.kr! I am opened to any questions including the procedure, issue itself, and more.

Best regards,
Heeju Cho

Hello delegates from all over the world!

My name is Henry Ko, a Senior at Korea International School Jeju, and I will be serving as your chair for GECMUN V. Though our committee will be quite large (the biggest committee in GECMUN, actually!) please don't be nervous thinking of talking in front of such large crowds. A bigger committee means more diversity, more ideas, and more chances to find friends you'll connect with even after the conference ends. In fact, our committee will be the closest to "modeling" the United Nations as all of you guys will get to know what it is like to be debating in a room full of delegates representing a wide array of different countries. Speaking of such diversity, I'm especially excited to see delegates from outside of Korea to be joining our MUN journey this year! Make sure you all take the time to enjoy Jeju Island while you're here too—I'll be happy to recommend some great places to visit. Delegates, whether you are a veteran MUN-er or experiencing MUN for the first time, remember that MUN is a place for collaboration and diplomacy--never a place for alienation nor arrogance. If you consider yourself a more experienced delegate please help the delegates rather new to MUN—we all know how terrifying our first few conferences were.

I hope you are all excited for this big big conference in March and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the conference as a whole or just to say hi (My email is hmko19@kis.ac).

See you all soon!

Introduction

UNHRC is a committee that is responsible for strengthening the protection of human rights and regulations of violations globally. It was established on March 15, 2006, to replace the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR). The committee deals with multiple issues such as basic rights, religion, LGBTQ rights, and the rights of racial minorities. The UNHRC is also known as one of the most important committees in the United Nations. Primary goals of the UNHRC are to protect human rights and further prevent other possible violations of it.

Definition of Key Terms

CHR

Commission on Human Rights

HUMANITARIAN AID

Material and logistic assistance intended to “save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur.” The humanitarian aid for the Syrian conflict is coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs)

These are people staying within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement. They often travel to areas more difficult for delivering.

ISLAMIC EXTREMIST TERRORISTS

Terrorist groups including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL)

OPT

Occupied Palestinian Territory

REFUGEE

The UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) defines refugees as someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

War that occurred in Syria between two main parties.

SYRIAN REFUGEE CAMP

A temporary settlement built for refugees through Syrian Civil War. It is mainly supported by not only United Nations itself but also by various NGOs throughout the world.

Agenda

The Syrian Civil War, which officially began on March 15, 2011, is considered one of the biggest humanitarian crises of our era. The Arab Spring, a series of anti-government protests and uprising in Arab countries, spread to Syria, leading protestors to oppose the political system and demand more political freedoms. President Bashar al-Assad responded by deploying security forces to employ violent means to end the uprising. Protestors armed themselves leading to a full-blown war between the government; rebel groups, which mainly consisted of citizens; and foreign backers, which consisted of third-party countries along with other groups such as the ISIS. Due to the war, 346,371 people were killed and now the number of refugees who have fled the country reached 5.6 million, with an additional 6.6 million who are internally displaced.

Standards of living have vastly decreased over the past decade; Syria lost not only access to water, electricity, and safety but also significant institutions such as hospitals, schools, and historical landmarks. Moreover, historically important artifacts are being significantly undervalued and sold through black markets, which arose amid the chaos of the war. Turkey received 3.6 million refugees and other neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq have took in 2 million. Refugees have then sought asylum outside the region, with approximately one million refugees aiming to reside in nations such as Germany, Canada, Sweden, and the United States.

However, countries that have been accepting refugees started to send them back to their home country due to overburdened infrastructure, welfare systems and sociocultural conflicts. Due to the loss of shelter, there are even some Syrian refugees who have to live at sea without anything to eat and are dying above water. In extreme cases, radical groups such as ISIS execute people on the street simply because they asked for a glass of water. As Syrian refugees continue to be deprived of their human rights, discussion around creating a viable solution that can offer Syrian refugees a way to at least resume a part of their everyday lives is crucial.

Stances of Key UN Member States

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom has offered a Syrian Resettlement Programme for about 8,000 Syrian refugees. The UK also provided humanitarian aid to help Syrian refugees and made the second largest donation to the Syrian refugee crisis since 2012 when the crisis first started.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Germany has accepted more than 360,000 Syrian refugees. However, Germany is currently preparing to send refugees back to Syria under various policies such as the family reunification policy.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Considering the close diplomatic relationship between Iran and Syria, Iran provided necessary aid for the Syrian government, which influenced the Syrian Civil War. However, even though Iran has enough resources to take in Syrian women and children, there has been no attempt to do so.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Russia has played an essential role in the Syrian Civil War by siding with the Syrian government forces against opposing forces. The main reasons that Russia is involved in the war are their historically strong relationship with Syria and their fight against terrorism. First, Russia and Syria have interacted as allies. Due to their stable and friendly relationship, Russia should help the Syrian government, who faces not only the rebel group, but also other violent parties such as ISIS. Also, because Russia identifies other interested parties such as ISIS as terrorists, Russia began to provide military support to help eliminate the terrorist party.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States presents a clear stance that they will try their best to finish the war. According to the Trump Administration, they will implement a new strategy to end the state of war, but still keep the military forces within Syria. The US also seems to have a relatively flexible attitude toward the Syria crisis, which is dependent on Russia's stance and actions regarding the issue.

Past Actions

Recently, Italy banned refugees from Syria from entering their country alongside a trend of numerous European nations adopting stricter immigration policies. In response, the UNHRC urged the European Union (EU) to implement alternative measures. However, due to the increasing number of crimes committed by refugees not only from Syria but also other nations in the Middle East, the request was in vain. In response to Italy's change of policy towards refugees, the current president of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, criticized the Italian government for their new policies. However, others would argue that the immigration policies of the French Republic are just as strict as those recently implemented by Italy regarding the acceptance of refugees.

According to the current prime minister of the United Kingdom, Theresa May, one of the main reasons that nations around the world should be more careful about accepting refugees is the climbing number of terrorist attacks around the globe. Moreover, although the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Angela Merkel, had been famous for her friendly policies towards refugees from the Middle East, the paradigm is shifting due to the current political climate in Germany and violent crimes committed by the refugees. Furthermore, her impending resignation from the position opens up more uncertainty on Germany's stance towards refugees. [A2]

The United Nations system mounted a unified plan in responding to the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015 called the Regional Refugee and Resilience Framework (3RP). It is composed of two approaches: protection of refugees who are vulnerable and building resilience by providing support to affected communities and governments.

In 2017, the UN worked out a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) with acknowledgement by the Syrian government that UN would be working to uphold international humanitarian law involving the refugee crisis. The Syrian government recognized the mandate of the UN and other agencies in providing humanitarian assistance. [A4]

The 2018 HRP focuses on three priorities: saving lives and alleviating suffering, enhancing protection, and building resilience. It continues the original mandate of emergency relief that was approved through General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (A/RES/46/182).

Currently, several UN agencies like the UNDP are operating in Syria in observing the Whole-of-Syria (WoS) approach, which provides monthly aid, such as food and medicine, to Syrians who are in priority areas that are hard to reach due to ongoing conflict. These agencies include:

1. Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): coordinates the response of agencies in Syria
2. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): makes efforts in health and education aimed at children to prevent a "lost generation" of children
3. World Health Organization (WHO): provides health services and helps address public health issues
4. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): assists internally displaced Syrians
5. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA): provides services to women of reproductive age and pregnant women
6. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO): provides food aid and vouchers
7. United Nations Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat): provides emergency shelters to displaced populations
8. International Organization for Migration (IOM): assists resettlement and evacuation of third country nationals

Solutions

Based on the current state of Syria's political and economic issues, the following policy recommendations are possible solutions in the future, when the Syrian crisis comes to an end:

- Based on the current state of Syria's political and economic issues, the following policy recommendations are possible solutions in the future, when the Syrian crisis comes to an end.
- Develop and implement a high-level campaign to make a transition to a mixed economy.
- Provide an opportunity for citizens to have access to a public-private debate and engage in conversations centered on the public good.
- Include a legal framework to make the economy more transparent.
- Develop public services to provide education and food and improve the environment within Syria.

Questions to Consider

- What can nations with high immigration rates of Syrian refugees do with regards to improving the immigration process?
- What are the best solutions for distinguishing refugees from Islamic extremist terrorists to ensure the safety of civilians around the world?
- What are the current policies of countries with large inflows of refugees and what kind of policies could be amended to better serve human rights?
- What can countries that hardly have any refugees from Syria help countries (especially in Europe) to help them readjust? Do they have a responsibility to accept more refugees?[A1]
- How can the safety of refugees be ensured during and after relocation?
- What do those who oppose the acceptance of refugees argue? How can we persuade those who are against accepting refugees in a peaceful, productive manner?
- Are there certain "model examples" of how to help refugees make a smooth transition to their new environment? Are there examples of failures which we can be mindful of?

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