



UNHCR

The UN Refugee Agency

1. Migrant Abuse at International Borders
2. Stop Human Smuggling



By: Keith Allan
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Dear King's MUN 2023 delegates,

I am truly honoured as this year's Secretary General of King'sMUN to welcome you to our 9th annual conference and our first in-person conference since the COVID-19 pandemic. The secretariat has been working hard throughout this school year to deliver you an incredible conference with a variety of unique committees, experienced chairs, and an overall successful day of debate.

MUN is a reenactment of United Nations conferences at the high school and university level, where representatives from all over come together to discuss the most pressing issues that plague our world today. Students take on the positions of various countries, characters, or political figures in order to create resolutions for both real and fictional issues and crises.

Throughout my time participating in Model United Nations, I have developed many valuable skills that I will take with me throughout my life. It has improved my confidence when public speaking as well as my ability to problem solve. Furthermore, MUN is valuable to me as it promotes lifelong connections with new people as you meet many other delegates who share your passions while in committee sessions. I truly believe that skills that you will learn through your participation in MUN will help you throughout your high school journey, in everyday life, and beyond.

Contrary to popular belief, MUN is truly for everyone. At King'sMUN, we provide a variety of committees to ensure that we have something that everyone will enjoy debating about. From the world's most pressing issues discussed in UNSC and UN Women to Indigenous affairs and from the gods on Mount Olympus to the prohibition in the 1920s, we strive to ensure that we can appeal to the passions of a variety of delegates. Everyone is welcome at King'sMUN, whether you have no experience or have been to a multitude of conferences, there is a place for you here.

Once again, I am thrilled to welcome all delegates, new or returning, back in person to King'sMUN. I, as well as the rest of the secretariat, are looking very forward to seeing you on Saturday, February 25. Whether this is your first conference or your last, I hope you are able to engage in fruitful debate and have an amazing time at King'sMUN 2023.

Sincerely,

Athena Ponte
Secretary General
King'sMUN 2023

Purpose of United Nations (UN):

The purpose of the United Nations, which was established in 1945 following World War II, is to uphold global peace and security. This is accomplished by preventing conflicts, offering support to all parties involved in a conflict, and fostering an environment that will enable and preserve peace. The UN works to defend human rights all over the world. They achieved this by drafting a declaration of human rights that needs to be adhered to and implemented. Many people have benefited as a result of the creation of a fundamental and essential minimum standard of living. A council within the UN is dedicated to providing humanitarian aid. The UN supports the created declaration of human rights by providing assistance to the most vulnerable during times of crisis. This guarantees that fundamental human rights are upheld. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), also known as sustainable development goals, are extremely important to the UN. The success of Earth depends on achieving these objectives because everyone will profit. The UN invests a lot of resources into these specific goals because they are so important. The UN has 17 goals as of now, and they are all being worked toward. To eradicate all forms of poverty is an example of a goal. The upholding of international law is the UN's final priority. The UN Security Council, multilateral agreements, and the international court of justice can all carry this out. The UN Security Council has the authority to approve peacekeeping missions that send troops to areas where human rights are being violated or to stabilise a conflict to stop it from getting worse.

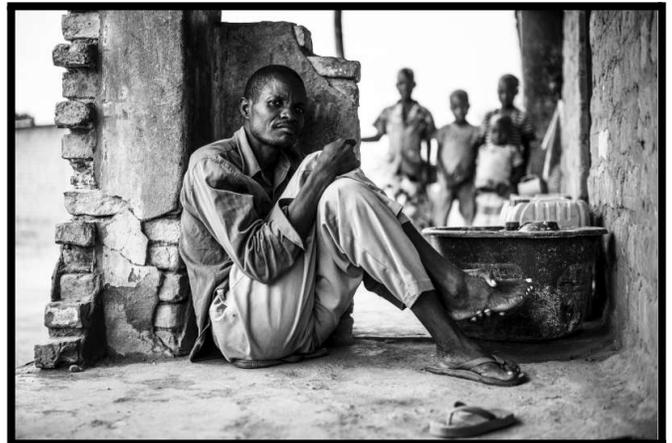


Purpose of United Nations of High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

The UNHCR's mission is to work with and support refugees around the world. Their objective is to guarantee that everyone has the right to request asylum or refuge in a state, with the choice to return to their home country or emigrate to another one. This is accomplished by giving assistance to individuals by meeting their basic needs. They offer protection, access to clean water, a place to stay, blankets, furniture, and occasionally food. For those who are returning home, the UNHCR also offers travel and assistance packages. People who relocate are given access to projects that generate income. These initiatives aid people in obtaining a living and improving their quality of life.

Background of UNHCR:

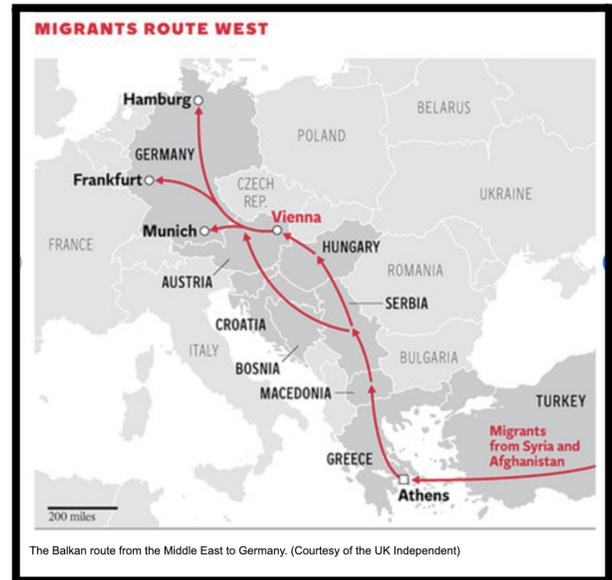
The UNHCR was established in 1950 with the intention of assisting the millions of Europeans who lost their homes and were forced to flee after World War II. They gave these people the necessities they needed and assisted in their safe immigration. After three years of assisting these people, the UNHCR was disbanded. The UNHCR received the Nobel Peace Prize for this work on behalf of its efforts in Europe. The UNHCR soon encountered a bigger problem as a result of the Hungarian revolution, which caused 200 000 people to flee to Austria. As a result of the UNHCR's assistance with their relocation, numerous organisations that would aid in addressing the refugee crisis were established. The UNHCR operated in Africa in the 1960s because the continent was unstable and a refugee crisis resulted. Over a 20-year period, the UNHCR also assisted people in Asia and Latin America. As a result of this work, the UNHCR was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1981 for its efforts in Latin America. The UNHCR took the lead in



addressing the refugee crisis in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Additionally, the UNHCR has assisted stateless and internally displaced individuals in finding better lives. The 1951 Refugee Convention, an international law that helps protect refugees from being sent back to their home country if they are in danger, was also established by the UNHCR. The UNHCR has significantly grown since 1950 and has 17,324 workers in 135 countries. The initial funding for the UNHCR was US \$300 000 and has now grown to US \$8.6 billion in 2019. It is apparent that whenever a crisis occurs the UNHCR can be counted on to uphold refugees rights.

Migrant Abuse at International Borders:

Migrants and refugees are often treated poorly at international borders as an asylum seeker is fleeing the country they were living in. Many claim to have a well-founded fear of persecution, conflict, violence or serious public disorder. Refugees require international protection and are defined clearly by the UN General Assembly and therefore the definitions of migrants and refugees can not be combined into one. All people deserve to be treated with human dignity and human rights, including asylum seekers, who are protected by international law for their safety. However, illegal border crossings create challenges for migrants. Although the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, UN General Assembly (2016) refers to both refugees and migrants to have the same universal humans rights this is not always the case for migrants. This New York Declaration for Refugees addresses a need for change and more protection for refugees and migrants such as: work together as a international cooperation to help stop migrants become prey to human trafficking and employ criminal groups for their journey, look at root causes for migration, addressing hate and racism, and simply treating humans with dignity. At Europe’s borders there are instances when migrants are denied basic human rights. March 2016, many migrants took the arduous journey, despite the Western Balkan route to Europe closed, to European countries (Oxfam, 2022). The Balkan countries did not want these migrants moving through to the EU. They faced unsafe accommodations and many European borders were militarized with border patrols and aggression giving no consideration for human dignity and rights despite the migrant desperation. These European countries, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Hungary did not provide safe passage for migrants and border protection mistreated the migrants. There is clear evidence of abuse by the border guards of abuse, violence,



dog attacks, removing migrant clothing in freezing temperature, pouring cold water on migrants, beatings and robbery. The mistrust that is created causes migrants to avoid the legal system and use more illegal and unsafe methods to get into the country.



The UNHCR is increasingly concerned with the violence and mistreatment of migrants at many European(EU) borders (UNHCR, 2022). Land and sea

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borders in the EU and beyond have been mistreating migrants and pushing them back despite UN agencies, including the UNHCR, intergovernmental agencies and non governmental agencies. There have been 540 reported incidents since 2020 on the border of Greece and Turkey border where Greece has sent migrants away. Additional disturbing accounts of mistreatment at the Central and South eastern Europe at the borders of EU countries. UNHCR reported repeated incidents of violence, threats, intimidation and humiliation and sometimes at sea borders letting people go adrift in rafts without any care for humanity. Many EU countries have put up fences at the border to prevent migrants from entering the country. European countries do support the UNHCR rules but claim financial limitations. At the Greece and Turkey border in 2022, 19 Turkish migrants were found naked and frozen to death at the hands of Greece's border guards (Imakter, 2022). At the same border area, both Human Amnesty and Human Rights watch published detailed incidences of migrant men having to take off their clothes in front of women and children and searched, forcing unclothed men and children back into the sea, confiscating mobile phones, guards kicking, punching and slapping migrants, migrant women were searched and sexually molested by male guards, women stripped to their underwear and forced back into the river to Turkey and more. Many of these incidents have been recorded and reported but the Greek government still does not take responsibility. The guards that perform these heinous acts usually have their faces covered and cannot be identified. The UN agencies, including the UNHCR, has been very concerned with the treatment of the Turkish migrants and will be meeting to uphold Greece to its actions. It is very important that States improve their humanitarian, development and peace actions. If these are not put into place, refugees and migrants will always take the dangerous trips for a better life that is safe. These migrants are looking for a better life that includes work, education and safety without having a safe path and it is a State responsibility to provide a pathway for safe and organized migration.

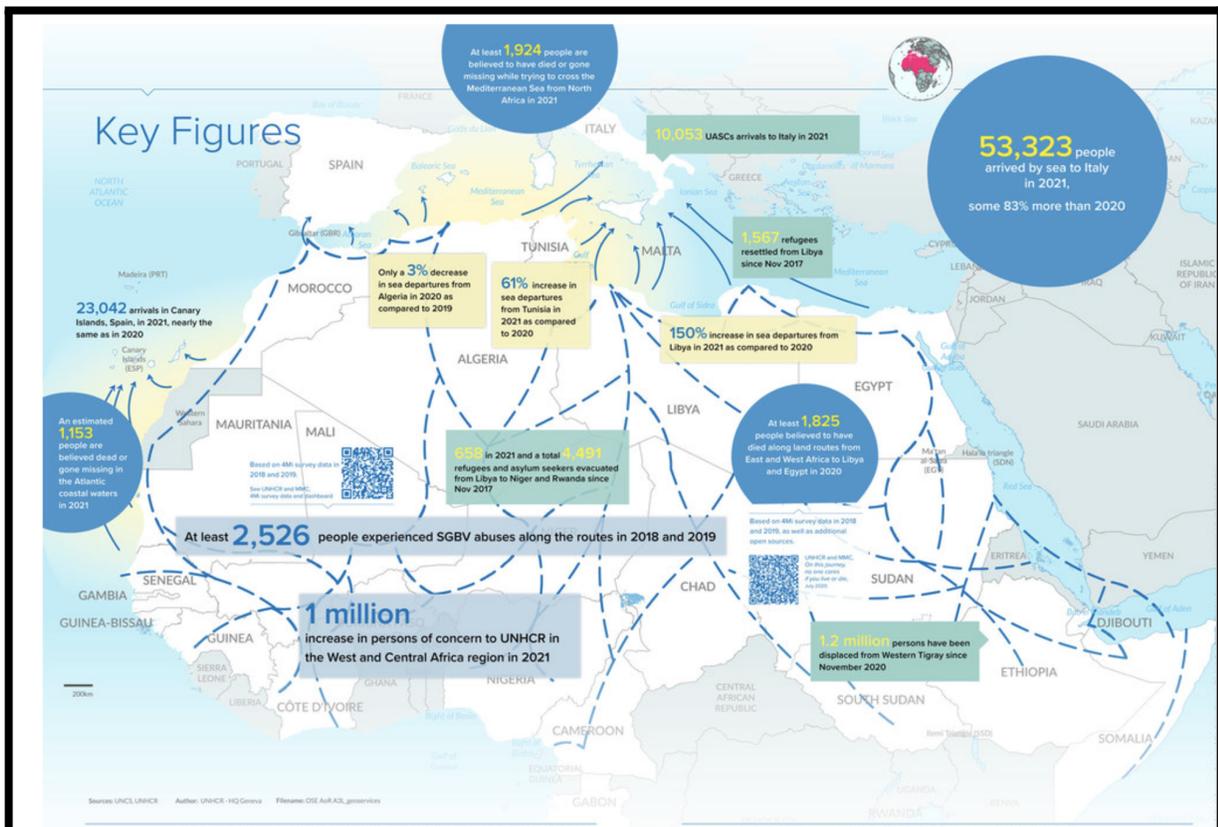
Stop Human Smuggling:

Smuggling of migrants is the “procurement of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit” (UNODC, 2016). Smuggling of migrants by land, sea or air has been addressed by the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2000) under the UN Convention against transnational organized crime. This convention addresses the protocol for preventing, suppressing, punishing trafficking in persons (women and children especially). UNHCR supports the States that are concerned about this smuggling because it leads to misuse of asylum and immigration rules. UNHCR has recorded several incidences of human smuggling with negative implications. In 2018, a family from Syria paid a smuggler to go through the snowy mountains to Lebanon but they were caught in a snowstorm and a trip that should have taken 30 minutes took several hours and six of the family members and 10 other people froze to death on the journey (UNHCR, 2018). The smuggler walked very fast and did not wait for the family which shows the desperation in the migrants to leave their country. There has been a great increase in African migration to Europe due to population explosion, differences between rich and poor, quality of life, political and security concerns, climate change, COVID-19, migrant networks and border controls. There are several migrant networks along the Mediterranean from East/West Africa to Mediterranean coast of Africa. In 2021, the UNHCR reported over 3000 people died on the migration trip from Africa to Europe (UNHCR, 2022). The trip to the Canary Islands can take up to 10 days on the sea and is very dangerous and boats can drift off course. Due to the challenges of this migration, migrants trust smugglers to help them through the trip. Some migrants choose land passages and smugglers help people through the Sahara desert and remote border areas. Unfortunately, many of the migrants die because of the smugglers actions and being held by the smugglers. The smugglers are getting paid and once paid, they do not care about the migrants' safety or lives. UNHCR is working closely with other states to help these migrants because the migration routes are very clear. There are three distinct routes through Africa.

“States must ensure unimpeded humanitarian access for the delivery of essential services to people on the move or stranded en route, intercepted at sea, or held in detention centres, and to determine whether they have international protection needs”, the UNHCR spokesperson has said (UNHCR, 2022). There needs to be shelters and safe spaces for travelling through the Sahara. There also needs to be services provided to survivors of abuse from the migration process through community shelters, access to legal services and programs for children and female who experienced trafficking and violence. To attempt to stop human smuggling, there needs to be more international laws and human rights standards against online platforms that advertising smuggling/trafficking to unsuspecting people.

Conclusion:

There are clear migration paths around the globe that are well researched and understood. It is the responsibility of our international states to provide the basic human rights and dignity for those people who are in search of a better life for themselves and their families. Despite not being protected by the Refugee International status, a migrant may not be protected when they arrive at a state border. At some state borders, the border guards are aggressive, militant and abusive. Many migrants are pushed back and are at risk of dying on the journey home or to another state border. Migrants are also challenged because some state borders have been shut down because of COVID-19 protocols and not being let in. Migrants also rely on smugglers to help them on challenging migration routes such as sea migrations. Smugglers are paid by the migrants and unfortunately many migrants die under the smugglers mercy. Boats capsizing in icy waters, extreme heat or being trapped in detention centres are reasons for migrant deaths. UNHCR has been reporting many of these incidents and are working with international states to improve human rights, support those countries rescuing, receiving and hosting large numbers of migrants, and strengthen the global governance of migration.



Connections to sustainable development goals (SDGs) and specific targets:

As almost every aspect of the SDGs has declined, the impact of migrant abuse at international borders and ending human smuggling fits into many of them. The first SDG to which this problem is related is SDG 1, which addresses poverty. The effects of the economy in their own country are felt by migrants who have given up everything they own and some who have given smugglers a large sum of money. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, which force businesses to cut costs or shut down, many migrants have lost their jobs and fallen into poverty. As a result, migrants who are supporting their family have suddenly lost their sole source of income. Even worse are some locations without migrant employment insurance or welfare programmes. This makes it impossible for migrants to provide for their families, which will increase poverty. SDG 1's target 1.1, which seeks to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty, will be delayed as a result of this. Additionally, it will hinder the achievement of target 1.4, which calls for all vulnerable or underprivileged men and women to have access to financial services and essential services.

Zero hunger is closely related to poverty (SDG 2). Families who are struggling to make ends meet will produce less food of lower quality and quantity. Stunting, wasting, and infections are just a few problems that can arise from this. These problems ought to be of great concern because they can cause generational stunting, which halts national development. This relates to target 2.1, which is to end hunger and make sure that those who are most in need have access to wholesome food. This holds true for immigrants, as not all will have access to or the means to purchase wholesome food.

Access to healthcare, which is related to SDG 3 on good health and well-being, is another issue that migrants face. Some migrants lack documentation, which is problematic because in some places, people can only access healthcare with documentation. Because their conditions may be life-threatening, this means that these migrants cannot access healthcare, which is a serious concern. Or perhaps immigrants are simply unable to afford health care, making them vulnerable in times of need. This relates to target 3.8, which calls for high-quality, accessible universal healthcare. Because not all migrants have access to healthcare, this goal is not being met.

The next issue that has a connection to the SDGs is the gender equality and access to education issue. Since everyone should have the opportunity to learn, the fact that migrant women and children

currently lack access to education raises serious concerns. The majority of schools have closed for migrants, and the majority of migrants cannot access online learning. This indicates that these kids are not developing critical skills that they would have learned in school. This relates to both target 5.1, which calls for the abolition of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and target 4.1, which calls for access to free and high-quality education.

SDG 6, which calls for ensuring that everyone has access to clean water, is closely related to migration and smuggling. People are cramped and crowded in detention facilities along migration routes and at borders. Due to the shared use of the facilities, COVID-19 can spread through droplets and aerosols, making it a breeding ground for the disease. This means that because of their poor sanitation and dense population, migrants are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. This is connected to target 6.2, which calls for good sanitation. The UN and local governments are overworked, and it's possible that they will overlook this problem, so this goal won't be met.



Further questions:

- Which issue do you believe should be addressed first? Why?
- Do you think the border state government is doing enough to help migrants when they reach the border?
- Should all countries take in migrants?
- What are some of the reasons border states do not want migrants in the country?
- Were you aware of some of the issues migrants have faced on route and at the state borders?
- Do you think more countries globally should allocate funds towards safe migration strategies to save lives in busy migration routes?

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