

UNHCR

SEZMUN III. HRD SYMPOSIUM

Ethics and Fundamental Rights

AGENDA ITEM: ESTABLISHING INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING WHILE PRESERVING STATE SOVREIGNTY

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Distinguished Delegates of the UNHCR committee,

It is our greatest pleasure to welcome you all to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Our names are Arın Kurtaslanoğlu and Görkem Gözübüyük and we are truly honored to serve as your chairs for this year's SEZMUN Symposium.

Our agenda item for this SEZMUN is "Establishing International Responsibility-Sharing While Preserving State Sovreignty". This topic focuses on the current conundrum between states indipendant rights and sharing responsibility for the asylum of refugees. Around the globe, many refugees face challenges to seek proper asylum due to state policies or public opinion of those states that condemn and are against refugees, however this does not mean those states are not responsibile in aiding international asylum programs or disregarding responsibility. In the UNHCR committee, we will work together to find practical and effective solutions to counter this issue and to protect refugees rights.

We encourage all delegates to speak confidently and professionally, pay attention to other delegates, and communicate collabratively to produce an effective resolution. SEZMUN is not only a conference to debate, instead it also focuses on collabration, respect, and professionalism.

We as your chairs are very excited to meet you all and spectate your debates during our sessions.

Introduction to the Agenda

The topic of “Establishing International Responsibility-Sharing While Preserving State Sovreignty” refers to the current problem between sharing responsibility and states opposition against refugees who seek asylum. This does not necesarily state that they are against aiding refugees however they are unable to accept refugees into their nation due to public opinion and local policies which protects their state sovereingty. This divides member states into 3 different categories or perspectives:

Member State A: This nation is a major host nation due to its geographical pressence and proximity to current conflicts or crises. This member state requires international assistance to keep up with education, hospitals and housing for asylum seekers.

Member State B: This nation is a developed country and has great financial resources however faces domestic opposition against accepting refugees. This goverment prefers providing financial or technical assistance over accepting refugees.

Member State C: This nation is a developing country. It may be willing to share responsibility however lacks the capacity, funding or infrastructure to provide a similiar level of assistance as developed member states.

Definition of Key Terms

- *Sovreignty:* The ability independently authoritate and control a territory or state.
- *Asylum Seeker*: A person who seeks international protection from diplomatic or personal causes.
- *Host Nation*: A nation who receives refugees and asylum seekers from across their geographical territory.
- *Resettlement:* The transfer of a refugee from a nation to another nation that agrees to admiting them into their nation.
- *Refugee Self Reliance:* The ability of refugees being able to support themselves financialy including education, employment in a foreign nation in which they seek asylum in.
- *Sustainable Development: The long term improvment of social, economic, enviromental conditions that can support themselves and do not require excessive revision or change.*
- *International Responsibility Sharing:* Cooperation between nations across the globe to provide assistance on the problem as balanced as possible as a whole.
- *Accountability:* The process of monitoring actions and providing responsibility on those actions to identify the effectivety and honesty of work.

Key Issues

- **Unbalanced Distribution of Refugee Hosting Responsibilites:** A relatively small majority of member states host a majority of refugees around the globe regardless of their capabilities due to the factor of geography and the proximity to conflicts and crisises. This poses issues of its own as it creates economical or public challenges for the hosting nation which can also result in the unavailability of supporting the hosted refugees.

- **Insufficient and Ineffective International Funding:** International funding faces several challenges such as insuffiency during active asylum crises. The issue of improper spending is also a key issue in international refugee funding as valuable funding may be spent on general problems instead of specific key issues that require immiediate assistance.

- **Balancing National Sovereignty With International Responsibility:** States are responsible for managing national asylum procedures however refugee protection also requires international cooperation and compliance with new international law. This may result in disorganisation or lack of compliance for member states who do not accept new measures with are against their national policies.

Key Issues

- **Lack Of Long Term Asylum Programs:** Most asylum programs focus on emergency and temporary aid programs which leaves the question of long term asylum aid unsolved. Most refugees who seek asylum in neighboring countries live in refugee camps and are unable to seek independant asylum.

- **Lack Of Self Reliance Of Foreign Asylum Seekers:** Majority of foreign asylum seekers lack the ability to support themselves economically. This results in families who seek asylum to lack basic human rights such as education, shelter and food. The lack of job opportunities for refugees is a key factor for the issue of self reliance of asylum seekers.

Historical Background

Following the aftermath of World War 1 the issue of refugee protection and asylum became a frequent topic across the globe and continues to be a controversial topic.

The origins of international refugee protection started with the introduction of the “Nansen Passport”. After World War 1 the League of Nations brought the topic of displacement into initiative to aid displaced refugees who lacked internationally recognized identity documents. The Nansen Passport was the solution to this problem to help affected civilians who lacked asylum.

After World War 2 the establishment of a major refugee protection program was imminent. In 1948 the declaration of Human Rights included Article 14 which recognized the right to seek asylum in other countries. This was followed with the establishment of the United Nations High Commisioner for Refugees by the UN General Assembly in 14 December 1950.

Following the Refugee Convention of 1951, a legal definition of a refugee was established and was followed with the establishment of important rights which included non-refoulment which supports the prohibition of returning refugees where they face threats against their safety or freedom. The 1967 Protocol removed the temporal limits and the protections applicable to new refugee situations.

Historical Background

In 1969 the OAU Convention adressed international solidarity which was adopted by the Organization of African Unity. In the following years in 1984 the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees was adopted in Latin America to recommend a broader refugee definition.

During the following decades, the middle east experienced many devastating wars that include The Gulf War, Iraq-American War and the Syrian Civil War. This period exposed several areas in asylum that required development. In particular, the requirement of support for refugee services from host countries and the dependency of humanitarian assistance from refugees due to employment or other oppurtunities became key problems that were required to be permenantly addressed. This issue was also a victim of the major disagreement between nations on how the responsibility of humanitarian assistance and financial aid should be distributed.

In September 2016, all 193 UN Member States adopted the New York Decleration for refugees and asylum seekers to recognize that the responsibility of the protection of refugees and supporting hosting nations were to be shared internationally.

In 2018, The Global Compact on Refugees was affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly. The compact contained objectives that aimed to ease pressure on refugee hosting countries, enhace refugee self reliance and support conditions for appropriate return.

Main Parties Involved

Major Refugee Hosting States:

These member states are the major states who host the majority of refugees and asylum seekers. These states

- **Uganda**
- **Kenya**
- **Pakistan**
- **Chad**
- **Iran**
- **Colombia**
- **Greece**

States of refugee origin:

These member states are nations refugees and asylum seekers flee from. These states are relevat to conversations on the causes of displacement, regional cooperation and voluntary return conditions.

- **Syria**
- **Venezuela**
- **Afghanistan**
- **Sudan**
- **Ukraine**

Main Parties Involved

Major Aiding States:

These states contribute to asylum seeking by providing technical assistance, financial funding and diplomatic affairs. These states may oppose accepting refugees into their nation due to local policies or public opinion.

- **United States**
- **Germany**
- **United Kingdom**
- **Japan**
- **Italy**
- **France**
- **China**

Previous Attemps to Solve The Issue

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants:

On Septeber 19 2016, The New York Decleration was adopted across all 193 UN Member States. Its main measures were to support states who were hosting large numbers of refugees, improve cooperation and coordination between governments, UN agencies and humanitarian organizations. It also supported the expandment of legal pathways with the purpose of developing a comprehensive approach to refugee situations. Even though the declaration established a framework for cooperation, the framework did not force or require every state to accept a number of refugees or contribute a fixed amount of funding.

The Global Refugee Forums of 2019 and 2023:

Under the organization of the UNHCR, these forums brought governments, international organizations and asylum seekers to review progress under the Global Compact. Both forums produced approximately 3500 pledges and 2.2 Billion$ of financial aid from states. However, the completion of several pledges faced challenges and have been slow to implement. Funding has also remained as a concern as well as progress tracking.

Questions To Be Answered

- **How can financial, logistical and humanitarian responsibilities be distributed between member states internationally?**
- **How can member states strengthen local asylum systems while protecting their national sovreignty?**
- **In what areas can the UNHCR provide support to nations who lack asylum systems, sufficient funding, personnel and infrastructure?**
- **How can international funding be directed to sustainable and accountable measures for the purpose of effective spending?**
- **How can the distribution of refugees among host countries be adjusted to establish a better balance?**

Questions To Be Answered

- **What international policies can assist refugees in becoming self reliant while preserving national laws and labor-market conditions?**

- **How can member states expand legal resettlement and migration pathways for refugees while preserving their sovreignty?**

- **How can international cooperation be addressed to establish a permanent cooperation mechanism?**

- **How can refugees be promoted into legal migration procedures rather than illegal immigration?**

Possible Solutions

Establishment of a multi year refugee assistance fund:

This solution proposes a coordinated humanitarian funding program for the development of schools, hospitals, housing and technical areas in major refugee hosting states while providing a predictable yearly fund with annual reports on pledged funding and project completion.

Establish a required responsibility sharing framework:

This solution proposes that each member state select an area that provides assistance to major refugee crises such as financial aid, technical assistance or providing legal pathways for assylum seekers.

Introducing an international pledge monitoring system:

This solution aims to monitor progress updates on pledges to ensure that funding is being spent efficiently for the goal of providing aid to major host countries to ensure international responsibility balance.

Summary

The issue of balancing international responsibility sharing while preserving national sovreignty is a key humanitarian and diplomatic challenge. The unequal distribution of responsibility among member states is caused by several factors that include some countries hosting the majority of refugee populations and states who are against any pro-refugee action due to their policies or local public opinion. This places major pressure on the states who host the refugees due to their lack of financial and humanitarian capabilities. Despite initiatives that include The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and The Global Refugee Forums of 2019 and 2023, the challange of international responsibility sharing continues to be topic that requires to be revised.

This agenda item aims to explore a sustainable and efficient approach to combat this issue and provide a long term solution. Key areas of this discussion include establishing more predictable funding mechanisms, balancing international aid sharing, distributing asylum seeker populations accross the globe and protecting well-being of asylum seekers.

Resources

- https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/Assessing_Psychosocial_Hazards_%26_Impact_CL_FINAL_20170804.pdf

- https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/stories/child-labour-has-profound-impact-health-and-wellbeing-children_en

- https://help.unhcr.org/global/rights-and-duties/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22123260198&gbraid=0AAAAA-lOxGT9mr9eYuGc19ClfxazklWg2&gclid=Cj0KCQjwlsfWBhD4ARIsACL7p1HDO8tmfhiAW7cZgUMJx-5FXDgmOunZSBhUA8izP1LvupaWpBJwmN4aAhQ0EALw_wcB

- https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/insights/explainers/refugee-hosting-metrics.html

- https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/ne-yapiyoruz/inter-institutional-coordination/resettlement

- https://www.unhcr.org/media/global-trends-report-2025

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- https://www.unhcr.org/media/1951-refugee-convention-and-1967-protocol-relating-status-refugees
- https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/stories/child-labour-has-profound-impact-health-and-wellbeing-children_en
- https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/migration.html
- https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/development-finance-for-refugee-situations-volumes-and-trends-2022-2023_05f247ae-en.html
- https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/topic/fragility-conflict-and-violence/forced-displacement
- https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/world-development-indicators/series/SM.POP.REFG
- https://globalcompactrefugees.org/about/global-refugee-forum/global-refugee-forum-2019
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- https://globalcompactrefugees.org/about/global-refugee-forum/global-refugee-forum-2023