



**Dear Delegates,**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2014 Montessori Model United Nations Conference.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2014 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

MMUN Secretariat Team

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## The UN Refugee Agency

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The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people.

In more than six decades, the agency has helped tens of millions of people restart their lives. Today, a staff of some 7,685 people in more than 125 countries continues to help some 33.9 million persons.

Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c2.html>

# Rights of Internally Displaced Persons



## Topic Background

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The problem of the world's internally displaced people is an increasingly alarming issue that the international community has ever faced. Internally displaced persons are defined as persons or groups of persons who have left their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internally recognized state border.<sup>i</sup> Today there is an estimated 26.4 million internally displaced persons, mainly coming from nations that experience internal uprisings or strife.<sup>ii</sup> Three countries with the largest IDP populations include Colombia, Iraq, and South Sudan.<sup>iii</sup>

Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find sanctuary, and therefore have remained within their own home countries. A person becomes a refugee only once he or she crosses an international border, whereas an internally displaced person remains within his or her home country. Although IDPs outnumber refugees nearly 2 to 1, displaced persons usually lack better care or protection, since as citizens they are under the protection of their own government [even if that government might be the cause of their flight].<sup>iv</sup>

Many of the ID population consist of women and children who live in poor quality housing or shelter – typically in tents or unsubstantial mud homes. In displacement, many times families report facing obstacles to find adequate health services and education facilities for their children. In addition, because the home government of the IDPs is usually under transition or facing internal conflict – there is little to no government aid being provided to its displaced civilians.

## Past Actions

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When human rights are violated, the international community intervenes in order to mitigate and eventually the solve crisis. In 1998, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) established the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC). Today, the IDMC is the leading international body monitoring internal displacement worldwide aimed at improving national and international capabilities to assist millions of displaced persons. The organization created an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on the internally displaced in some 50 countries per request from the United Nations.<sup>v</sup>

Other achievements made by the international community refer back to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which is intended to serve as an international standard to guide governments, international organizations, and other bodies in providing assistance and protection to IDPs. The Principles have been welcomed by the UN Commission and the General Assembly, and also have been incorporated in national policies and laws by independent government. Although it is merely a set of guidelines, the Guiding Principles act as a basic standard for many to follow.

The United Nations upholds its duty to intervene whenever the human rights violations are taking place. In the case with refugees, in 1946 the United Nations General Assembly established the International Refugee Organization (IRO) to provide temporary materials, protection, and housing for the refugees. However, due to lack of funding, the IRO's operations began to dwindle and soon its successor was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR originally was only supposed to last for 3 years; however, the UN permanently recognized the agency as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. The UNHCR mandated the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol. The purpose of the two was to establish a main framework for defining who is a refugee, their rights, and legal obligation of states.<sup>vi</sup>



Although the international community has established international humanitarian law for refugees, there is no convention the IDPs that are equivalent to those of the refugees. Therefore many IDPs are left to the protection of their own domestic law, and are often times neglected or overlooked. Many advocate for a similar document to protect internally displaced persons; however, little progress has been made. Until recently, the UNHCR has implemented the “Collaborative Approach” plan in dealing with the IDPs.<sup>vii</sup> The approach encourages independent governments and agencies to aiding those internally displaced, in hopes that this collaborative response will work together “to respond to the needs of IDPs on the basis of their individual mandates and expertise.”

## Possible Solutions

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In order to improve the rights and status of the internally displaced persons, the United Nations should address several issues:

- **Cooperation with national government:** As citizens of their home country, IDPs are still under the jurisdiction of their domestic government. Therefore, when member states draft resolutions in order to aid the IDPs, they must look to cooperate with the national government in order to reduce the risk of infringing on that the country's respective national sovereignty. In addition, many governments with IDPs within its borders refuse to publicly acknowledge the internal displacement situation and their responsibility to respond. Therefore member-states shall also look at asking governments to aid their own civilians, whether citing former Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Responsibility to Protect or through negotiations.
- **Return and resettlement:** Delegates shall plan to either returning IDPs back to their respective homes or to relocate the IDPs to another part of the country with sustainable conditions. Currently many IDPs dwell in poorly built homes in the slums; therefore, delegates must address the issue of sustainable housing.
- **Humanitarian aid:** Working with local and international NGOs as well as using government-funded agencies in order to provide adequate aid to the IDPs would reduce the risk of death, provide basic medical supplies, and allow those that are internally displaced to have access to food, water, shelter, and a basic education.

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- **Defining international law for IDPs:** Just as the delegates of the 1951 UNHCR Convention outlined criteria and international law for refugees, the same course of action should be
- **Economic stability:** One of the main reasons why many men, women, and children are forced to relocate is because of a lack of job opportunities. Many countries with internal conflicts cannot foster stable economic growth, and therefore many families are forced to look elsewhere for income. Delegates should look toward creating jobs or other economic stimuli in order to boost a nation's economy and provide long-term stability for a family.

After addressing the several subtopics, the international community shall be able to properly resolve both the short-term and long-term problems of the internally displaced. The immediate health and relocation issues are steps that need to be enacted within a shorter time span, in order to reduce casualties. The projected long-term goals of continued work with the local dominate government, drafting protective legislation, and economic stability are all steps to take to ensure that those internally displaced are protected.

## Further Research

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### *Guiding Questions*

- Does your country have a community of internally displaced persons? How are they being treated?
- Has your nation done anything in the past to aid the IDPs? Does your country support spending governmental funds and resources to help the internally displaced?
- Has your country defined what rights should be given to the internally displaced? If so, what are they?
- What are some long-term goals that can be set in place to allow people to have a stable livelihood?

### *Research Sources*

- 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees: <http://untreaty.un.org/cod/avl/ha/prsr/prsr.html>
- Global Principles on Internal Displacement: <http://www.idpguidingprinciples.org>
- Responsibility to Protect: <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgresponsibility.shtml>

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<sup>i</sup> Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: <http://www.asil.org/pdfs/stlp.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Internal Displacement Global Overview: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/global-overview>

<sup>iii</sup> UNHCR – Internally Displaced People: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c146.html>

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/9251510E3E5B6FC3C12572BF0029C267/\\$file/Global\\_Overview\\_2006.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/9251510E3E5B6FC3C12572BF0029C267/$file/Global_Overview_2006.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> IDMC: [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BD0DA/\(httpPages\)/3E2B69E882ED03D380257099005AED1B?OpenDocument&count=1000](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BD0DA/(httpPages)/3E2B69E882ED03D380257099005AED1B?OpenDocument&count=1000)

<sup>vi</sup> The 1951 Refugee Convention: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html>

<sup>vii</sup> The “Collaborative Response” to situations of internal displacement: [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/9E4BCA9FEAF0A377C12571150046F255/\\$file/Actors%20module%20handout%20collaborative%20approach.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/9E4BCA9FEAF0A377C12571150046F255/$file/Actors%20module%20handout%20collaborative%20approach.pdf)