Addressing the Global Displacement Crisis by Expanding International Responsibility for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Particularly Those Displaced by Conflicts in Sudan, Ukraine, and the Middle East

United Nations General Assembly

I. Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It provides a forum for all UN Member States to discuss international issues and develop recommendations to promote peace, security, and cooperation. One of the major challenges facing the international community is the increasing number of people forced to leave their homes because of armed conflicts, persecution, and violence.

The global displacement crisis has become a major humanitarian concern, particularly in regions experiencing prolonged conflicts. Millions of people have been forced to seek safety within their own countries or cross international borders to find protection. These individuals often face difficulties accessing housing, education, healthcare, employment, and legal documentation. Additionally, countries receiving large numbers of displaced people may struggle to provide adequate services and resources for both refugees and their host communities.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 41.6 million refugees and 9 million asylum-seekers were recorded worldwide at the end of 2025. The conflicts in Sudan, Ukraine, and the Middle East have contributed significantly to displacement and have placed additional pressure on neighboring countries and humanitarian organizations.

Although international agreements and organizations already exist to protect refugees, responsibilities are not always shared equally among countries. Some host nations receive large numbers of displaced people while other countries provide limited financial assistance or

resettlement opportunities. Therefore, the international community must consider how to expand cooperation, improve protection mechanisms, and distribute responsibilities more fairly while respecting national sovereignty and international law.

II. History and Description of the Issue

Vocabulary

- **Forced displacement:** The involuntary movement of people away from their homes due to conflict, violence, persecution, or other serious threats.
- **Refugee:** A person who has crossed an international border and meets the legal criteria for refugee protection, including a well-founded fear of persecution under the 1951 Refugee Convention or applicable regional frameworks.
- **Asylum-seeker:** A person who has requested international protection and whose claim has not yet received a final decision.
- **Internally displaced person (IDP):** Someone forced to leave their home but who remains within their own country's borders.
- **Host country:** A country that receives and provides protection or shelter to refugees and other displaced people.
- **Resettlement:** The transfer of refugees from a country where they initially sought protection to another country that agrees to admit them.
- **Non-refoulement:** The principle that prohibits returning a person to a territory where they face persecution or other serious harm covered by applicable international protection rules.
- **Burden-sharing and responsibility-sharing:** Cooperation between countries to distribute the financial, humanitarian, and administrative responsibilities associated with refugee protection.
- **Statelessness:** A condition in which a person is not considered a national by any state under its laws.
- **Durable solutions:** Long-term options for displaced people, including voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement to another country.

Origin and Causes

Forced displacement has affected populations throughout history, particularly during wars, political instability, and periods of persecution. Following the Second World War, the international community recognized the need to establish a legal framework to protect people who could not safely return to their home countries.

In 1951, the United Nations adopted the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This agreement established an internationally recognized definition of a refugee and outlined basic rights and protections. The 1967 Protocol expanded the Convention's scope by removing its original temporal and geographical limitations. Together, these instruments remain central to the international refugee protection system.

Despite these developments, forced displacement continues to increase in regions experiencing armed conflict. People may be forced to flee because of direct threats to their lives, destruction of their homes, persecution, insecurity, or the collapse of essential public services. In many cases, displacement lasts for years because conditions in their countries of origin remain unsafe.

Sudan

The conflict that began in Sudan in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces has caused widespread displacement. Civilians have fled violence, insecurity, and the disruption of essential services. Many have sought protection in neighboring countries, including Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan, while millions remain displaced within Sudan. Host communities face additional pressure on housing, food supplies, healthcare, and other essential resources.

Ukraine

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 forced millions of people to leave their homes. Many Ukrainians crossed international borders into European countries, while others became internally displaced. Host countries have provided temporary protection, housing, education, and access to public services. However, prolonged displacement creates challenges involving employment, integration, funding, and the possibility of safe and voluntary return.

The Middle East

Conflicts and instability across the Middle East have displaced populations in countries and territories including Syria, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and Iraq. The conflict in Syria has forced millions of people to seek protection abroad or relocate within the country. The war in Gaza has also caused extensive displacement, while instability and conflict in other parts of the region have placed pressure on neighboring states and humanitarian organizations. Displaced populations may experience repeated displacement, family separation, limited access to essential services, and uncertainty about their long-term future.

Challenges in International Responsibility

One of the main difficulties in addressing the displacement crisis is that responsibility is not distributed equally. Countries bordering conflict zones frequently receive large numbers of refugees because they are geographically accessible. However, these countries may not have sufficient financial resources, housing, infrastructure, or public services to meet everyone's needs.

Another challenge is the difference between providing emergency assistance and creating long-term solutions. Humanitarian aid can provide immediate protection, but refugees also need opportunities to study, work, access healthcare, and participate in their host communities. Without these opportunities, displaced people may remain dependent on humanitarian assistance for extended periods.

Additionally, countries have different policies concerning asylum applications, border management, temporary protection, and resettlement. Some governments emphasize international cooperation, while others prioritize controlling migration and managing domestic resources. These differences can make it difficult to establish coordinated and predictable responses.

The international community must therefore consider how to strengthen existing mechanisms, improve financial support for host countries, expand legal pathways to protection, and ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers are treated according to applicable international law.

III. International Response and Bloc Analysis

The international community has established several institutions and agreements to address forced displacement.

The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** leads international efforts to protect refugees, support asylum systems, coordinate humanitarian assistance, and pursue long-term solutions. It also works with governments to implement international refugee protection standards.

The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** supports migrants and displaced populations through humanitarian assistance, migration management, and recovery programs. The **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)** provides essential services and assistance to Palestine refugees within its areas of operation. UNICEF also supports displaced children through education, protection, healthcare, and other services.

In 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, recognizing that protecting refugees and supporting host countries are shared international responsibilities. In 2018, the General Assembly affirmed the **Global Compact on Refugees**, which seeks to improve international cooperation, ease pressure on host countries, expand access to solutions, and support conditions for safe and dignified returns.

Other international responses include temporary protection programs, humanitarian funding, refugee resettlement, emergency shelter, education initiatives, and assistance for host communities. Nevertheless, funding shortages, political disagreements, limited resettlement opportunities, and differences in national asylum policies continue to create obstacles.

Bloc Analysis

1. Refugee-Hosting Countries

These countries receive large numbers of refugees and may prioritize financial assistance, international cooperation, and support for public services. They may advocate for increased contributions from wealthier nations to reduce pressure on housing, healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

2. Major Donor Countries

Countries that contribute substantial humanitarian funding may emphasize financial accountability, effective aid distribution, and cooperation with UN agencies. They may support funding

mechanisms and partnerships that strengthen refugee protection while encouraging host countries to develop sustainable integration policies.

3. Countries Prioritizing National Sovereignty and Border Management

Some countries may emphasize their authority to manage borders, establish national immigration procedures, and determine how public resources are allocated. These states may support international cooperation while seeking to maintain national control over admission policies and security procedures.

4. Countries Supporting Regional Cooperation and Integration

These countries may prioritize agreements between neighboring states, regional protection arrangements, shared registration systems, and coordinated humanitarian responses. They may argue that regional cooperation can improve the management of displacement and reduce pressure on individual host countries.

These blocs are general analytical categories rather than fixed alliances. Countries may belong to several groups simultaneously. Delegates should research their assigned country's official policies, international commitments, and voting record before deciding which proposals to support.

IV. Committee Mission

Throughout the debate, delegates of the United Nations General Assembly should focus on developing practical mechanisms that expand international responsibility for refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly those displaced by conflicts in Sudan, Ukraine, and the Middle East.

Delegates should consider how the international community can distribute financial and humanitarian responsibilities more fairly, improve access to international protection, and support both displaced populations and the countries receiving them.

Proposals should be realistic, financially sustainable, and consistent with international law. Delegates should also recognize the limits of the General Assembly's authority. The UNGA can adopt recommendations, encourage cooperation, establish political commitments, and support

international funding initiatives, but it generally cannot compel Member States to accept refugees or directly enforce its recommendations.

Possible areas of action include:

- Strengthening the Global Compact on Refugees and encouraging greater participation from Member States.
- Establishing voluntary international funding mechanisms to support countries hosting large refugee populations.
- Expanding refugee resettlement programs and other legal pathways to protection.
- Improving access to asylum procedures and promoting compliance with the principle of non-refoulement.
- Supporting education, healthcare, employment, and housing programs for displaced people.
- Providing additional resources to countries neighboring Sudan, Ukraine, and conflict-affected areas of the Middle East.
- Improving coordination between UNHCR, IOM, UNRWA, UNICEF, national governments, and humanitarian organizations.
- Developing fair and transparent systems to measure national contributions to refugee protection.
- Supporting voluntary, safe, and dignified returns when conditions permit.
- Encouraging cooperation between host communities and displaced populations to reduce social tensions and improve integration.

Delegates should aim to develop solutions that address immediate humanitarian needs while ensuring that refugee protection remains a shared and sustainable international responsibility.

Further Questions to Consider

1. How can the international community distribute responsibility for refugees more equally?
    - Should countries establish voluntary contribution targets for humanitarian assistance?
    - How can countries that host large refugee populations receive additional support?
2. How can the UN strengthen existing refugee protection mechanisms?
    - What improvements could be made to the Global Compact on Refugees?



   - How can international cooperation improve access to asylum procedures?
3. How can the international community respond to displacement in Sudan, Ukraine, and the Middle East?
   - What specific challenges distinguish each crisis?
   - How can neighboring countries receive more predictable assistance?
4. How can countries expand legal pathways for refugees?
   - Should Member States increase resettlement opportunities?
   - How can family reunification and educational opportunities contribute to protection?
5. How can countries protect refugees while managing national borders?
   - How can governments address security concerns without violating international obligations?
   - How can asylum-seekers access fair procedures?
6. How can refugees become more economically and socially independent?
   - What role should education and employment programs play?
   - How can host countries support refugees without placing excessive pressure on local communities?
7. What should the international community do when refugee displacement lasts for many years?
   - How can humanitarian funding become more predictable?
   - What conditions are necessary for safe and voluntary returns?
8. How can the international community protect vulnerable displaced populations?
   - What additional support do unaccompanied children, older people, and people with disabilities need?
   - How can humanitarian organizations prevent exploitation and discrimination?

V. Annotated Links for Further Research

The following links are intended to guide delegates in researching the topic, understanding international mechanisms, and preparing country-specific positions.

a) Country Links

UN Member States:

https://www.un.org/en/about-us/member-states

This official United Nations page provides information about Member States and can help delegates identify their country's role in international cooperation.

The World Factbook:

https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/

This resource provides background information on countries, including geography, population, government, and economic conditions.

b) Committee Links

United Nations General Assembly:

https://www.un.org/en/ga/

This is the official website of the General Assembly. It provides information about the committee's responsibilities, meetings, resolutions, and international priorities.

UN General Assembly Resolutions:

https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/resolutions

This resource helps delegates research previous resolutions, identify existing commitments, and develop proposals that build upon the work of the international community.

c) Topic Links

UNHCR — Global Trends:

https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends

This resource provides international statistics and analysis on refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and other forcibly displaced populations. It is particularly useful for identifying major displacement crises and understanding their scale.

UNHCR — The 1951 Refugee Convention:
https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention

This page explains the legal foundation of international refugee protection, including the definition of a refugee, the principle of non-refoulement, and the rights of refugees.

UNHCR — Global Compact on Refugees:
https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/global-compact-refugees

This resource explains the international framework designed to improve responsibility-sharing, support host countries, and expand long-term solutions for refugees.

UNHCR — Refugee Data Finder:
https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics

This database provides statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers, countries of origin, and host countries. Delegates can use it to research their assigned country's situation and identify potential regional partners.

International Organization for Migration (IOM):
https://www.iom.int/

The IOM website provides information about displacement, migration management, humanitarian assistance, and programs supporting displaced populations.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA):
https://www.unrwa.org/

This resource explains UNRWA's mandate and its assistance to Palestine refugees in its areas of operation, including education, healthcare, relief, and social services.

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