

**Forum:** Humanitarian, Social and Economic Committee

**Issue:** Protecting the Rights of Refugees in the Middle East

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**Position:** Head Chair

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION:

Hello all,

My name is Will Horsford, I started MUN through the school competing in the first school MUN where I won an honourable delegate, I was immediately hooked, being able to express an opinion from many differing perspectives. Spreading a country's beliefs, however contradictory to your own beliefs, I found exhilarating. I feel that this topic is especially awesome for a few reasons, one it brings in countries that people may not know about previously, for example Bahrain, Oman and Qatar, all of these countries are pivotal for this topic but may have escaped most people prior to this. Furthermore this topic is just incredibly interesting, human trafficking is an essentially prevalent issue to be looked into, as it has many consequences supersede those that may appear at face value, I.e. delegates must see how this relates to things. May I recommend all delegates have at least a brief knowledge of how their country relates to these industries and their stances.

I am very experienced in MUN, so you are in the best hands. I have been recognised as a Commended Delegate at Bath MUN 2023, an Outstanding Delegate twice, and a honourable Delegate at previous QEGS MUN conferences, so essentially I know what I am doing.

(MY favourite chocolate bar is toblerone, I said this for no reason. I would never accept bribes.)

Overall I love this topic due to its nuance and horrific real life prevalence, thank you all and I hope you all too find the fascination with this topic that I do have.

If you have any questions before the day, please feel free to contact me by email, at [3382@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk](mailto:3382@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk)

Kind regards,  
Will Horsford



## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Over the last century we have seen great development of the area known as the middle east, with numerous projects on the development of this area, many wars around predominantly natural resources, this committee is concerning how we as a committee best protect the rights of refugees in the middle east, I.E. How does your country react to the influx of refugees and what is the most appropriate way to counter the inflow for these Less developed nations who can't necessarily sustain themselves let alone millions of refugees.

## KEY TERMS:

### 1. Refugee.

- A person who has been forced to flee their 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.

### 2. Asylum-Seeker.

- An individual who is seeking international protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. Unlike refugees, asylum-seekers remain in the process of seeking protection and recognition under international law.

### 3. Internally Displaced Person (IDP).

- Someone who has been forced to flee their home but has not crossed an international border. They remain within their own country and are subject to its laws.

### 4. UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East).

- A UN agency established to support the relief and human development of Palestinian refugees. Unlike UNHCR, UNRWA focuses specifically on Palestinian refugees in its designated areas of operation.

### 5. Temporary Protection.

- A mechanism used during situations of mass influx, providing immediate and temporary protection to persons who are in need of international protection. This is often used when the regular asylum system is unable to process the large numbers of applications.

### 6. Durable Solutions.

- Long-term resolutions for refugees that typically include voluntary repatriation to their home country, local integration in the host country, or resettlement to a third country.



### **7. Resettlement.**

- The transfer of refugees from a country in which they have sought asylum to another state that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent residence.

### **8. Voluntary Repatriation.**

- The return of refugees to their home country when they deem it safe to do so. This process is based on the principle that refugees should not be forced to return against their will.

### **9. Host Country.**

- A country that receives refugees and asylum-seekers and provides them with protection and basic humanitarian assistance.

### **10. Non-Refoulement.**

- A principle of international law that forbids the return of refugees to a country where they may face persecution. This principle is a cornerstone of refugee protection.

### **11. Stateless Person.**

- An individual who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law. Stateless persons often face significant legal and social challenges.

### **12. Migration.**

- The movement of people from one place to another, which can be voluntary or forced. Forced migration includes movements due to conflict, persecution, or natural disasters.

### **13. Protection Regime.**

- The set of legal, administrative, and operational measures to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in a host country. This includes ensuring access to basic rights and services.

### **14. OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation).**

- An international organisation founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with a collective aim to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony.

### **15. Plan Dalet.**

- in which Zionist forces shifted to an offensive strategy, as the beginning of a new phase in the 1948 Palestine war.

## **16. League of Arab states.**

- A group of 22 countries including: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

## **17. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with UNHCR.**

- Various countries in the Middle East have signed MOUs with the UNHCR to facilitate the management and protection of refugees within their borders.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## The Lebanese war.

The 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah (Lebanon) inflicted severe damage on Lebanon, devastating homes, offices, infrastructure, and livelihoods across the nation. This conflict led to the displacement of up to one million people, primarily from southern Lebanon, southern Beirut, and the Bekaa Valley. These displaced individuals returned to their towns, villages, and neighbourhoods, which were left socially and economically ravaged post-hostilities.

## The effects of 9/11

The Middle East hosts a substantial number of refugees, with major host countries including Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and various Gulf nations. However, a critical challenge in the region is that many states have not signed international refugee instruments, resulting in a lack of formal protection regimes and, consequently, basic rights for refugees. This situation poses significant constraints on finding durable solutions. Resettlement opportunities for refugees from the Middle East have diminished since the events of September 11, 2001 (this being the 9/11 bombings), and voluntary repatriation remains limited until political solutions are achieved in the refugees' countries of origin.

## The 1948 Palestine war.

The 1948 Palestine war, the first conflict in the Israeli–Palestinian and broader Arab–Israeli conflict, took place in what was the British-ruled Mandatory Palestine. The war had two main phases. The first phase, the 1947–1948 civil war, started after the UN adopted the Partition Plan for Palestine, proposing to divide the territory into Jewish and Arab states. During this period, British rule was declining, and Zionist forces executed Plan Dalet to secure territory for a Jewish state. The second phase began on 14 May 1948 with the end of the British Mandate and the declaration of the State of Israel. The next day, neighbouring Arab armies invaded, leading to the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. Arab forces from Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon fought against the newly formed Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The IDF eventually halted and pushed back the Arab forces, capturing about 78% of the former mandate territory. Jordan took control of the West Bank, and Egypt captured the Gaza Strip. The war ended with the 1949 Armistice Agreements, which established the Green Line borders.



Throughout the conflict, both sides committed massacres and acts of terror. Notably, violent campaigns and massacres against Arabs led to the expulsion and flight of over 700,000 Palestinians, resulting in the depopulation and destruction of many urban areas. This event is known as the Nakba (Arabic for "the disaster") and marked the beginning of the Palestinian refugee crisis.

### The Syrian Civil war.

The refugees of the Syrian civil war are citizens and permanent residents who fled the country due to the conflict. Before the war, Syria had a population of approximately 22 million. By 2016, the UN identified 13.5 million displaced Syrians needing humanitarian aid. Over six million were internally displaced, while around five million sought asylum or were placed in refugee camps abroad. This crisis is considered one of the largest in history. The civil war began in 2011 when the Syrian government violently suppressed nationwide protests, leading to armed resistance and escalating into full-scale conflict. The Syrian Armed Forces' assaults on civilian areas forced millions to flee, triggering a significant refugee crisis. In response, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) was established in 2015 to coordinate aid among neighbouring countries, excluding Israel. By 2016, countries had pledged to resettle 170,000 registered refugees. Syrian refugees have significantly impacted the European migrant crisis, with nearly one million asylum applications received by the UNHCR in Europe by August 2017. Turkey hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees, with over 3.7 million registered. As of December 2022, an estimated 580,000 people have died in the conflict, 13 million have been displaced, and 6.7 million have fled the country. The Syrian government has arrested, tortured, and executed many repatriated refugees. Around 12 million Syrians face severe food insecurity, with women and children comprising more than two-thirds of the displaced population. Law No. 10, issued by Bashar al-Assad in 2018, allows the state to confiscate properties from displaced Syrians, complicating their return due to fear of regime retaliation. Humanitarian aid for internally displaced persons and refugees is largely coordinated by the UNHCR. UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi has labelled the Syrian refugee crisis as the largest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time, continuing to cause immense suffering.

### UNHCR'S (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.) General ideas.

UNHCR's strategy in the Middle East involves engaging regional governments to take greater responsibility for protecting refugees according to international law and seeking their political and financial support. Strengthening partnerships with organisations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the League of Arab States, and civil society institutions is crucial for promoting refugee rights. In particular, UNHCR focuses on ensuring that Iraqi refugees in surrounding countries are protected from detention and deportation and that their basic humanitarian needs are met. Maintaining an emergency preparedness and response capacity in the region is essential to manage population movements within and outside Iraq, with regular updates to contingency plans in coordination with key stakeholders. Efforts in specific countries vary.

### UNHCR in Egypt.

In Egypt, UNHCR has improved the quality of refugee registration and asylum management, aiding voluntary repatriation and enhancing refugees' self-sufficiency. In Israel, the focus is on supporting the government with asylum procedures and exploring legal enhancements for asylum-seeker protection.

### UNHCR in Jordan

Jordan hosts a large number of Iraqi refugees(as of November 15, 2020, there are 66,801 Iraqi refugees registered), with efforts aimed at strengthening registration, providing psychiatric care, and seeking durable solutions for stateless persons. Lebanon's post-conflict recovery includes protecting vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, improving attitudes towards refugees, and addressing long-term legal issues for those without legal residence permits.

### UNHCR in Syria.

In Syria, UNHCR supports both Iraqi and Palestinian refugees, promoting self-reliance and advocating for Syria's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention. The Gulf countries, none of which are signatories to the 1951 Convention, are encouraged to strengthen adherence to refugee law principles, enhance protection, and increase public awareness. In Yemen, addressing the influx of Somali refugees, supporting voluntary returns, and focusing on protection and assistance, especially for vulnerable groups, are key priorities. Overall, UNHCR's comprehensive approach in the Middle East aims to navigate the complex challenges of refugee protection and promote durable solutions amidst ongoing regional crises.

### Issues in Sudan and why this relates to the Middle East

We have seen a significant influx of asylum-seekers and migrants from the Horn of Africa to Yemen motivated by political and economic instability, droughts and other extreme weather events in their own countries. Further we have seen the impact on Sudan which is currently facing the world's largest internal displacement crisis. Over 7.1 million persons have been internally displaced since 15 April 2023. Prior to that, Sudan had already hosted an estimated 3.8 million internally displaced persons.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### Libya

Due to the war where Gaddafi was stopped after rising to power in 1969 as chairman, and was killed in 2011 by revolutionaries , with there being an unstable political field means law and order are both shaky in Libya today.

### Afghanistan

Due to the Taliban taking over they have been affecting people from countries close by.



## China

Has many development projects in these areas and is politically a major player

## Israel

Due to the ongoing conflict and previous ones that have forced hundreds of thousands of immigrants into surrounding areas

## Palestine

Due to the same reasons as Israel

## Syria

Had its economy damaged by immigrants and has found it very difficult to recover post wave of immigrants

## Lebanon

The 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah (Lebanon) inflicted severe damage on Lebanon, devastating homes, offices, infrastructure, and livelihoods across the nation. This conflict led to the displacement of up to one million people,

## UK

Has a lot of colonial history in this area, and was one of the major players in the Iran war and Libyan wars which were responsible for displacing many millions of people.

## Jordan

According to United Nations data, the total number of international migrants in Jordan is estimated to be 3,346,703, which constitutes 33.1% of the country's total population, so when in the middle east and having a population of which a third being immigrants, maltreatment is a rather large issue.

## Türkiye

As of August 2023, the number of refugees of the Syrian civil war in Turkey was estimated to be 3,307,882 people.

## Minor Countries

### USA

Invaded Iran displacing people and is currently backing Israel, of which is causing the displacement of people both Jewish and Islamic.

### Pakistan

Is often attacked by the Taliban and takes in a wealth of immigrants from Afghanistan



## Saudi Arabia

One of the largest international powers within the middle east with connections to countries such as the UK or USA.

## India

Large players and takes in a lot of immigrants in search of jobs or a better life from people living in the middle east.

## Russia

Backing Iran against Lebanon and Yemen against Israel in the conflict, and getting very political in the middle east, is also displacing Ukrainian and Crimean citizens from their homelands.

## Canada

A left leaning western influence into an issue, is ex commonwealth

## Qatar

Foreigners constitute 85% to 90% of Qatar's population of 2.7 million, with migrant workers making up approximately 95% of the workforce, and we all remember the world cup with 40 deaths of workers building the stadium.

## Kuwait

Migrant workers in Kuwait face many abuses, the majority of which relate to human trafficking. In Kuwait, those most vulnerable to forced labour and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) are unskilled labourers and female domestic workers. In 2017, almost all the persons who were trafficked in Kuwait (99.6%) were women. Is also part of the Middle east.

## Bahrain

Some immigration detention centres and prisons have been reported to hold detainees in cramped, dismal, and unhygienic conditions. Is also part of the middle east

## Germany

A very strong western influence, is also in part responsible for the deterioration of eastern europe in the early 20th century of which many countries did not recover, germany also forced many migrants onto the middle east during this time period.

## France

Many of these countries are ex colonies of France, meaning that these countries may have contention and others have stronger bonds with France.



## TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

Event	Date
Collapse of the ottoman empire	1922
World war 2	1939
Palestine war	1948
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).	1948
1951 Refugee Convention.	1951
1967 protocol	1967
OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation).	1969
9/11	2001
Arab Charter on Human Rights	2004
2006 lebanese war	2006
Gudaffi dies	2011
Syrian civil war	2011
Turkey's Temporary Protection Regulation	2014
EU-Turkey statement	2016
Law number 10 by bashar al-assad	2018
Jordans refugee act	2018

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