

RENMUN VII

Peace in Permanence



March 5-6, 2022

Chair Report

Chair Introduction

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1945 as a UN agency, with the intention of tackling the refugee problem created by the Second World War in Europe. With the occurrence of more conflicts across the globe since then, the UNHCR has expanded its scope of operations to assist refugees everywhere. At its core, the UNHCR is an organisation based upon human sympathy and mutual, unconditional aid. Through the support of its member countries and the parent organisations of the UNGA and ECOSOC, the council has been able to provide proper aid to refugees under its expansive mandate.

To formally introduce ourselves, we are Anston Yu and Michelle Geng, your Head and Deputy Chair respectively. We'd like to welcome you to the UNHCR, and are honored to be serving as your chairs this year!

Although the HCR may be labelled as a beginner-friendly committee, we would like to kindly remind all delegates to do thorough research and be well-prepared for each topic. Please make sure to read the chair reports and use the bibliography as a foundation for your preparation if you are unsure of where to start researching; we also encourage delegates to do additional research when preparing materials! We hope that, through this conference, you will all grow and excel as delegates of MUN, and are looking forward to the fruitful debate and meaningful solutions delegates will create during the conference. As such, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us through the email addresses below.

*A tip for this topic: the South Sudan refugee crisis is **not** the same as the Sudan refugee crisis!

Best,
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Protecting the Liberty, Safety, and Rights of Refugees in South Sudan

After the civil war crisis in 2013, more than 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees were displaced, many attempting to flee to nearby African countries. Refugees are seeking safety and shelter after struggling to find it in their own country. Through years of conflict, constant violence, and environmental disasters, a famine crisis began and citizens were unable to live peacefully within their own country. The largest population of refugees fleeing from South Sudan are women and children, who suffer from sexual assault and violent crimes against them.

The main host countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Nigeria. Refugees in these countries often live in camp settlements, which are overcrowded and lack humanitarian services. Many disease outbreaks arise from the camps as poor living conditions are able to foster the diseases spreading rapidly.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Refugees	Individuals who are forced to flee from their country because of conflict within their home country.
Host countries	Countries that allow refugees to seek asylum in. These countries typically provide some type of aid for the refugees, i.e. food, water, shelter.
Camps/settlements	A temporary accommodation for refugees. They provide the most basic needs: food, water, shelter, medical treatment, etc.
Famine	A shortage of food. Famine has been declared in some states such as Aweil State, South Sudan.
Food insecurity	Lack of access to sufficient quantities of nutritious food. In the case of South Sudan, up to 60% of the population is struggling to access enough food.

Background Information

Timeline

2011-12: South Sudan was officially announced as an independent country, after decades of conflict with Sudan. However, even after the announcement of independence, tensions were high and over 600 were killed in ethnic clashes. The conflict between the Sudanese army and rebels in Sudan's southern border caused unrest within the country, many fleeing to South Sudan.

2013: A civil war began when President Salva Kiir accused his former Vice-President, Riek Machar, of trying to overthrow him. Kiir was part of the Dinka tribe, while Machar was an ethnic Nuer, the two representing the biggest ethnic groups in the country. This setup was established when President Kiir was committed to preventing ethnic tensions. Vice-President Machar led a rebellion against the President after he was fired in 2013. Rebel groups seize control of several towns, thousands are killed in the process. This was the start of the mass refugee crisis.

2014-2016: A ceasefire was signed, but broken immediately as it failed to end the violence. This displaced more than a million people in 2014. In addition, President Kiir issued an order to redraw the internal boundaries, creating 28 states instead of the previous 10. This caused major boundary fights over which groups controlled what land. During this time, over 1,900 houses were destroyed in the Central Equatoria region. In 2016, Machar returned and became the Vice-President in a new government, but was sacked and exiled after a few months.

2017-2018: President Kiir signs an agreement with Machar and other opposition groups to end the civil war. Machar returns to the government once again as one of the five Vice-Presidents.

2020-Present: Despite COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the neighboring countries, up to 28,000 refugees were able to seek asylum in the countries. However, the impact of COVID-19 on the refugees was critical. 120,000 refugees returned to South Sudan due to drastic food ration cuts at the asylum. The pandemic has caused limitations on humanitarian aid, further food shortages, and a spread of disease across the camps.

Living Conditions in Camps

South Sudan refugees have been and still are fleeing to all six neighboring countries: Uganda (~45%), Sudan (~30%), Ethiopia (~18%), Kenya (~5%), DRC (~4%), and Central African Republic (~1%).

Most refugees are forced to live in camps. The largest camp for South Sudan refugees is in Bidi Bidi, Uganda, which houses over 270,000 refugees. The living conditions in these camps are poor and require more involvement of the host country in providing aid for these refugees. For example, food distribution is insufficient and the water supply is not sustainable. The lack of water has contributed to poor sanitation around the camps, and fewer shelters as these are built with bricks that require large amounts of water. To make matters worse, several thousands of households do not have latrines, also contributing to sanitization issues. Through overcrowding and substandard sanitation, the risk of spreading infectious diseases is extremely high.

Lack of education is also an important issue for the refugees. A vast population of refugees is children, many of whom are unaccompanied by any adults. The camps, where the majority of refugees reside, have limited access to schools and qualified teachers. This means that children are unable to become educated, causing a potential increase in poverty rates.

Potential Clashes

South Sudan and Sudan Individuals

During the refugee crisis, many South Sudan refugees had to flee to Sudan. However, the relationship between Sudan and South Sudan is weak, and both sides often support the rebel groups in the other's territories. Due to this, there may be a potential conflict between citizens of Sudan and the refugees from South Sudan. For example, cases of discrimination and unjust actions may occur if South Sudan refugees have a prolonged stay in Sudan. Delegates must ensure that refugees are being provided with enough humanitarian aid and livelihood support in countries, such as Sudan, where relationships with the home country are unstable.

Ethnic violence

In South Sudan, there are common occurrences of ethnic violence which were one of the main factors of the South Sudan civil war. South Sudan has 64 tribes, of which 35% consist of the Dinka tribe, while the second-largest is the Nuer tribe. Reasons for the fighting include issues over land and states, as well as land for cattle. Potential conflicts may arise from the tension between all the ethnic groups, therefore delegates may have to consider how to resolve or subside the ethnic violence in South Sudan to create a more stable and unified country. Through this, more refugees would be able to return to their homes in South Sudan, lessening the pressure put on other neighboring countries to provide support for these individuals.

Refugee camp conditions

South Sudan refugees also struggle with obtaining enough currency to purchase more food to sustain themselves. They are often unable to access the local markets to either sell or buy goods because of inadequate road conditions. Reports about opposition groups blocking food supplies and looting homes for food have also been announced. Refugees have a difficult time getting employed as most camps are in rural areas which are under-developed and economically disregarded. Delegates will have to find a solution to help the refugees integrate into the host country's society in order to help the development of the country.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
South Sudan	The country of origin for the refugees. Due to civil war and high political tension, many citizens had to flee and seek asylum in neighboring countries.
Uganda	One of the neighboring countries with the biggest South Sudanese refugee population. Up to 1 million refugees are hosted within Uganda. The Ugandan military has been involved with the South Sudan civil war crisis in 2013, in support of the government.
Sudan	Another neighboring country, and originally one country with South Sudan before South Sudan gained independence in 2005. Hosts up to 800,000 refugees.
Ethiopia	3rd largest South Sudan refugee host country. Ethiopia has up to 400,000 South Sudanese refugees. There are four major camps: Pugnido, Tierkidi, Kule, and Leitchuor camp.

Possible Solutions

Actions for the international audience

South Sudan is in need of support from other countries due to the lack of basic needs in the country itself. For example, there has been a severe food shortage in multiple states due to unstable food sources caused by war and drought throughout the country. Through other countries providing emergency food supply and technology, this can hopefully help the agricultural development in South Sudan which then can alleviate the food insecurity crisis.

Actions for the government

A major reason for many citizens to flee the country is because of constant war and violence within the country, rendering it unsafe for the families to stay in the country. The government may need to pass laws regarding and addressing the issue of ethnic discrimination and violence within the country. Delegates could be potentially thinking of ways to solve this crisis, starting from searching for the root cause of these issues. For example, adding prosecution laws for citizens that commit crimes against other ethnic groups can reduce their motivation to turn to violence when there is a conflict.

Actions for neighboring countries

As the South Sudan refugee crisis is affecting several of their neighboring countries since thousands of refugees are seeking asylum in those areas, the neighboring countries may wish to provide the South Sudan government with support, to rebuild and unify their country once again. The refugees will be able to return back to South Sudan and the neighboring countries will no longer have to bear the responsibility of keeping the refugees safe. A possible course of action can be providing South Sudan with more military resources, manpower, or security to reduce the conflict within the country. Furthermore, if the crisis is worsening, then neighboring countries may wish to develop actions to help refugees integrate into the country's society and strengthen their self-reliance. For example, countries can provide suitable employment and education for all refugees and potential citizenship grants.

Past Actions

Many countries and the UN itself have been actively engaged in solving this humanitarian crisis:

- In 2016, all 193 member states of the UN agreed upon the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and created a comprehensive refugee

response framework (CRRF). This means all countries will have international responsibility-sharing in situations of large movements of refugees.

- In Uganda, there has been a humanitarian and development plan, Uganda's Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA), which was established in 2015.
- By 2018, Ethiopia has already made nine pledges to comprehensively respond to refugee needs and is formulating a National Comprehensive Response Strategy (NCRRS).
- In Kenya, there has been a Country Integrated Development Plan that targets refugees to include them in national systems, i.e. education and health. This aims to span from 2018-2022.
- During 2020-2021, in DRC and Sudan, the refugee response plan (RRP) partners worked with governments to promote the inclusion of refugees to national systems and basic needs

Guiding Questions

- How can countries ensure that the refugees in the country are able to live with basic human rights?
- Will these refugees be able to move out of camps/settlements?
- How can refugees be integrated into the host country's society and communities, i.e. through education and employment?
- How can the government ease the ethical tensions across the country?

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