



## UNHCR: Syrian Refugee Crisis

Hello delegates,

My name is Makena Gordon, and I am your head chair and a junior at Mission Viejo High School. This year will be my third year involved in Mission Viejo's MUN program. Apart from MUN, I also play on the lacrosse team at Mission and participate in Mock Trial competitions. I love to see people who care about becoming a change in the world, as well as watching people improve on their public speaking abilities-something I struggled with before joining MUN. I am very excited to see you all this January and I hope you all enjoy MUN as much as I do!

### **I. Background**

In March 2011, the Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad, faced pro-democracy protests. These peaceful anti-government demonstrations soon turned violent and a civil war between the government and the rebels followed. By 2014, the Islamic State (IS), Al-Qaeda, and other rebel groups took control over some parts of Syria, causing a three-way war. Since then, there have been nearly 500,000 civilian casualties as a result of this civil war. Over 4.8 million have registered as refugees and 6.6 million are internally displaced within Syria. Many countries, including, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Germany have accepted refugees, although they have taken a toll on the socio-economic infrastructure of these countries. Refugees are very often deprived of basic necessities and are vulnerable to exploitation.

### **II. UN Involvement**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a committee dedicated to ensuring the rights and well-being of refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people who have fled from violence. This committee plays a major role in helping the displaced find shelter. They provide food and clothing to those in refugee camps as well as help them with integrating into new countries. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is another committee that strives "to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information". They also help with the Syrian refugee crisis by providing education and protecting Syrian heritage. The Security Council has adopted Resolutions such as 2268 (2016) and Resolution 2258 (2015) to renew authorization of humanitarian aid to pass through SYria and to "endorse the cessation of hostilities" within Syria. There are many NGO's who participate in helping the refugees, including UNICEF, Islamic Relief USA, CARE, Project HOPE, SAVE, REACH-Initiative, and Oxfam International.

### **III. Possible Solutions**

Obviously to stop the violence in the region would be the primary focus. But until then, refugees must be taken care of. Possible solutions include giving refugees more visas to prevent them from dangerous attempts to reach safety, resettlement, safer routes to asylum, prosecuting



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trafficking gangs, combating racism and discrimination, and encouraging more countries to welcome refugees. However, countries like the United States are not welcoming many refugees at the moment in fear for their national security. Some nations need to realize that this crisis is not someone else's problem and take more action. Other solutions include sending troops to protect "safe zones" in Syria, increasing financial aid, building infrastructure, providing education, and creating jobs in the Middle East to help refugees gain stability and have new opportunities for better lives.

#### IV. Questions to Consider

1. What has your country done to help the crisis?
2. How can refugees safely travel to these safe havens?
3. What should the UN do to alleviate the crisis?
4. What can be done to stop the trafficking and exploitation?
5. How can the international community respond to the issue?
6. What do the refugees need most immediately?
7. How can countries discourage racism and allow for more refugees?

#### V. Country Bloc Policies

Western: They have taken in some, but most have strong policies that don't welcome very many. They are scared of ISIS attacks slipping in and their national security being threatened.

Latin: Latin countries are starting to welcome refugees from Syria. Despite their economic statuses, they are preparing resources to accommodate the influx of refugees, to take pressure off of countries like Turkey and Lebanon.

Middle Eastern: Syrian refugees have crossed their borders into many neighboring countries in the Middle East. These Middle Eastern nations have many refugee camps and are carrying the heaviest load of hosting the displaced.

Asian: Wealthy Asian nations like China, Japan, and South Korea have barely accepted Syrian refugees. Although being one of the top, financial aid contributors, Japan only welcomed 11 refugees in 2014. Europe is calling upon these countries to take in more.

African: African nations are leading the race in international refugees being hosted. They have around 2.5 million refugees from all around the world and they are one of the top destinations migrants want to go. Syrian refugees are welcome in countries like Chad and Kenya.



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