

# Research report

BonaMUN

*GA3 – Social, Humanitarian and  
Cultural Committee*



*Managing the refugee stream from the Middle-East  
and Africa*

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## ***Introduction***

Nearly 71 million people have been displaced from their homes due to war, persecution or violence. Displaced people count for one out of every 107 people on the planet. When they cross international borders, they are called refugees. In 2018 the number of refugees were at its highest with 26 million people. The European refugee crisis mainly focuses on the refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Many of those refugees requested asylum, which overloaded many government organisations. Those governments then tried to find a way to speed up the application process. There is now a system in place in Europe to distribute refugees among countries, but not everyone is satisfied with it. Countries outside of Europe often have a lengthy process to request asylum.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.therefugeeproject.org/#/2013>

## ***Definition of key words***

Refugee – Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

Political refugee – A refugee from an oppressive government, whose main reason to flee who has reason to fear persecution for their political views.

Economic refugee – A person who leaves their home country in search of better job prospects and higher living standards in a different country. Economic refugees usually escape the poverty in their countries of origin.

Climate refugee – A person who is displaced because of the results of climate change. Although they are technically not classified as a refugee because climate change is not currently included on the list of things a person must be fleeing from.

IDP – An internally Displaced Person, someone who has been forced to flee their home but never cross an international border. IDPs, which include people displaced by internal strife and natural disasters, are not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid because they are legally under the protection of their own government.

UNHCR – The UN refugee Agency<sup>234</sup>

Stateless person – Someone who is not a citizen of any country. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to a nationality.

The principle of non-refoulement – No one shall expel or return a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/definitions>

<sup>3</sup> <http://climatemigration.org.uk/climate-refugees-definition/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

## ***Background***

The 1951 Geneva Convention is the main international instrument for refugee law. Contrary to previous instruments relating to refugees, it codifies the rights of refugees at the international level. Before the 1951 Geneva Convention they usually referred to specific groups of refugees. At first, however, the Geneva Convention was limited as well. In 1967 it was amended to give the Convention universal coverage by removing the fact that it only applied to events occurring before 1 January 1951 and within Europe. The Convention provisions are to be applied without, for example, discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin or other prohibited grounds of discrimination. The convention further includes that refugees should not be punished for their illegal entry or stay, to recognise that seeking asylum sometimes requires refugees to break immigration rules. Moreover no one is allowed to expel or return a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom, on the grounds of the Convention. The convention does not apply to all those who might fit the definition of a refugee. Those for whom there are serious reasons to assume that they have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity or serious non-political crimes. Countries also commonly agree that the subject needs more detailed study.<sup>567</sup>

In the New York Declaration from 2018 measures are named to protect the human rights of refugees and improve their living standards. By means such as ensuring that all refugee and migrant children will receive an education within a few months of arrival.

Plans for the future in the New York Declaration include the start of negotiations leading to an international conference to an international conference and the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in the future. It would mean that migration, like other areas of international relations, will be guided by a set of common principles and approaches. Another plan is to develop guidelines on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situation, especially helpful for the increasingly large amount of unaccompanied children on the move. Lastly the countries announced to want a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees by adopting a global compact. Its four key intentions are to ease the pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.<sup>89</sup>

Many countries are in favour of local relocation of refugees. Algeria is a good example of that. There are almost twice as many refugees in Algeria than in Norway. However, neighbouring countries are often not capable of holding many refugees until they might

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/declaration>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.therefugeeproject.org/#/2018>

return to their home countries. So either the capacity should be improved or the refugees should be spread out across countries further away.

In Europe there are an estimated 362 thousand refugees and migrants risked their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea in 2016. Since the start of 2017, there are over 2,700 people believed to have died or gone missing. With many believing that refugees would not risk their lives on a journey so dangerous if they could thrive where they are. The UNHCR urgently calls for an additional forty thousand resettlement places, which is fulfilling to already existing commitments, to be made available for refugees in the fifteen priority countries along the Central Mediterranean route.<sup>10</sup>

***Timeline***

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1948	Universal Declaration of human rights, which recognizes the right of persons to asylum from persecution in other countries.
1951	The Refugee Convention
1967	Amendment in the form of the 1967 Convention, gives the Convention universal coverage.
2001	State parties issued a Declaration reaffirming their commitment to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 protocol.
2016	The New York Declaration
2018	The Global Compact on Refugees

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/europe-emergency.html>