

Cerritos Fall Conference 2019

# UNHCR

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Topic: Refugees in the Yemeni Civil War

Director: Jessica Ghai

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October 12, 2019

To Delegates of Cerritos Novice 2019 Conference

Dear Delegates,  
Welcome to Cerritos Novice 2019!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our annual novice conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host another year of this long-standing conference, where you will become more knowledgeable on international issues, participate in intellectually stimulating discussions, and create new and everlasting friendships.

The CHSMUN program continues to compete around the world as a nationally ranked MUN program. Our delegates utilize diplomacy in order to create complex solutions towards multilateral issues in the global community. Our head chairs are selected from only the best seniors of our program, undergoing a rigorous training process to ensure the highest quality of moderating and grading of debate. Furthermore, all the topic synopses have been reviewed and edited numerous times. We strongly believe that by providing each and every delegate with the necessary tools and understanding, he or she will have everything they need to thrive in all aspects of committee. We thoroughly encourage each delegate to engage in all of the facets of their topic, in order to grow in their skills as a delegate and develop a greater knowledge of the world around them.

Our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience at the conference. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2019, students are encouraged to continue on in Model United Nations and nevertheless, inspired to spark change in their surrounding communities. With 31 high school committees and 2 middle school committees, CHSMUN 2019 will provide a quality experience for beginners to learn, develop, and grow as delegates.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us! We look forward to seeing you at CHSMUN Novice 2019!

Sincerely,

Brianna Roldan and Tess U-Vongcharoen

Secretary-Generals

# UNHCR

## Refugees in Yemen Civil War

### A Note From the Director

Delegates,

Hello! My name is Jessica Ghai and I am super excited to be your United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees head chair for CHSMUN 2019! I began my MUN journey when I started high school and following the MUN pathway has been one of the best decisions of my life! I have been able to receive amazing opportunities through MUN such as going to New York with my MUN team by making great memories there and having an awesome debate. Outside of MUN, I am actively involved in tutoring for an organization called School On Wheels, in which I tutor homeless children, who I have become really close with. In my free time, I love reading books, and watching Netflix, especially “The Flash” and “Supergirl.” Additionally, I am really close with my younger sister and love spending time with her. I am also involved in the Educators’ Rising club at my school, in which we basically help the PTA raise funds at our school and help coordinate events in surrounding elementary schools. I hope that this conference is an awesome learning experience for you delegates and please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns, through email. I cannot wait to see the innovative solutions that you delegates bring to committee!

Sincerely,

Jessica Ghai

Director, UNHCR

### Committee Introduction:

Established on December 14th, 1950, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or better known as UNHCR, focuses on protecting refugees, people in displaced communities, and stateless people in times of crisis by integrating them back into society through means of local integration methods or resettlement to a different country. UNHCR was primarily created to help the millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes after World War II and was created as a mandate for three years. The following year, the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was created. Instead of only being a three year mandate, the UNHCR agency has been continuously working ever since to better the lives of displaced people and refugees. UNHCR took three years to help these Europeans to resettle. The UN Refugee Agency has its main headquarters in Geneva, in which more than 9,760 work in 126 different

countries, and has so far provided assistance to more than 59 million refugees, returnees, internally displaced, and stateless people.

## Background:

A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country because they are escaping persecution, war, or natural disasters. Refugees are displaced in many countries, the Yemeni Refugee Crisis is a crisis that has left 22 million refugees without a home. Refugees are all faced with mostly the same problems: lack of basic rights, such as education and health care. When refugees leave their own country and arrive to a new country, they should have access to these basic rights. However, many underdeveloped and developed nations have not been giving these rights to incoming refugees and have limited the amount of refugees that can enter their country. This is due to problems such as overpopulation and the country's inability to provide necessities for the people already living there.

Since 50% of refugees are children under the age of 18, these children have been lacking basic education that has pushed these children and their families deeper into poverty. Many of these refugees do not have enough resources and food which causes them to become malnourished and lose their health. Malnutrition in child refugees is extremely common as malnutrition severely affects children under the age of 5, as one in every 4 children have stunted growth due to malnourishment. Due to this, many refugee children die and the refugee families become more poor as the parents of these refugee children have no one to rely on. This, in turn, creates a never ending cycle for these refugee families which makes it extremely difficult for any action to be taken to solve this issue.

In Yemen, the refugee crisis has reached a whole different level. When President Ali Abdullah Saleh was elected in 1978 by the Northern part of Yemen, the North and South was unified and there was peace until 1990. However, as economic problems persisted and Yemen continuously struggled with the Cold War and unhappy civilians, a civil war began in Yemen between the North and South. The president at the time was strictly against any rebels, especially the Houthi rebels who bombed the Yemen palace. The Houthis ultimately murdered Saleh as he was escaping Sana'a, the capital of Yemen. Without having a real election, a new President, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, was chosen and he isolated the Houthi rebels. The Houthi rebels became more powerful over the years as more people in Yemen began supporting these offenders because of the worsening situation in Yemen. Supporting the rebels became the only option for many citizens of Yemen. This caused more anger between the Houthi rebels and the people who were supporting the President, which led to increased violence over the years, such as more bombings and airstrikes that were becoming more and more common.

This civil war has taken a negative toll on the Yemen citizens as they have been forced to leave their homes to refugee camps in Yemen because of airstrikes performed by the rebels, thus making them internally displaced people. Internally Displaced People or IDPs are refugees who are displaced in their own countries. Even though there are some Yemeni refugees displaced in their own countries, some refugees have chosen to flee the country because of these airstrikes and continuous threats by the Houthis. About 6,000 Yemeni citizens have died because of the

airstrikes and about 1,000 Yemeni troops have died because of this civil war. These Yemeni citizens have fled to neighboring countries, but have been severely discriminated against. Most refugees are moving towards underdeveloped countries as these countries may be closer to the refugee's native country, making it easy for these refugees to leave their country. In fact, according to the UNHCR, 85% of refugees are hosted in developing countries, not developed. There are many countries that refugees from Yemen are fleeing to. These countries include countries in the Gulf region, as well as Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan. There are a total of 166,658 arrivals of Yemeni refugees in these countries. Yemeni refugees choose to come to these countries because of their proximity and because of the open door policy of some of these countries. There are other countries around the world going through the same problem, such as Iran which is actively involved in the Yemen refugee crisis. Under the international law, it is prohibited for a country to forcibly send back the refugees from the country that they came from, but the amount of discrimination and stigma that refugees face causes many of these refugees to flee from country to country.

## United Nations Involvement:

The UN has been actively involved in providing rights to refugees in any way possible. The UN has created two conventions in which the rights of refugees are explicitly stated. These two conventions are the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of refugees and 1967 Optional Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. In the 1951 Convention, the definition of a refugee and the rights given to these refugees were established. Some of these rights include the right to not be discriminated against and the right to practice the religion of the refugee's choice. However, there are many countries in the world, developed and undeveloped who are unwelcoming to these immigrants. The 1967 Optional Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees was made in collaboration with 147 countries and emphasizes the importance of making sure that a refugee family is not separated unless there is an emergency and recommends governments to make laws that will not cause any separation of these refugee families. This convention encourages that countries collaborate on making a better living environment for refugees, in any country that these refugees choose to live in.

The UN has created a multitude of resolutions that have been able to better the perspective that people have of refugees and their situation. The UN created resolution 70/290 that emphasizes the benefits that are brought by refugees in other countries, in order to encourage countries to take in these refugees from Yemen. These benefits can include an increase in economic development of the country. When the refugees come into a new country, they will spend money that will help to circulate the economy once they are able to provide basic necessities for their families. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights created by the UN, Article 14 mentions that it is legal for any person to go to another country to seek asylum to escape persecution in their countries. The UN has also adopted A/RES/70/147 which specifically focuses on women and children refugees and secures their right to a healthy lifestyle when moving from country to country. This resolution is directly applicable to these Yemeni refugees as they are escaping ill-treatment and hostility in their country. The UN has also targeted certain countries who require aid from the United Nations to help them host refugees in their countries, which is seen through A/RES/71/290 in which Georgia has specifically mentioned that it needs

to increase the amount of help that it is giving to refugees. The UN has also created resolutions in countries that can be altered and modeled off of to suit the situation in Yemen. The UN has created a resolution that deals with problems that Africa was going through in times of conflict. This resolution, A/RES/69/482 ensures additional assistance to displaced people, refugees, and returnees, and is one of many resolutions created by the UN that has been successful in protecting refugees in times of crisis.

A successful NGO that has been funded by UNHCR is ADRA. ADRA was first implemented in Yemen, and helps young child refugees going through malnutrition. This organization has given children a dietary program to get these children back on track to living a better and healthier life. These children are given food baskets with proper food items such as rice, milk, eggs, yogurt, cheese, and sugar to decrease malnutrition. ADRA has provided food shipments to more than 29 countries and has given more than \$2.3 million in food to countries in the Middle East and South America. This NGO has also expanded to Asia and has provided education in the hygiene sector to women and children and also basic education. It is extremely vital for organizations to provide hygiene to women and children. Also, as these refugees often lack this education as they are constantly moving from country to country. It has been proven that when children refugees move from one country, the time that is lost when these children do not go to school takes away 3 months of education for these children. Therefore, it is vital for NGOs such as ADRA to provide this education for these children so that they can catch up in their studies. The UNHCR maintains helpful partnerships with more than 900 NGOs and governmental institutions to ensure that refugees are treated in the right way. In fact, 40% of the annual amount of money that the UNHCR receives goes into creating new and innovative projects that provide protection to those people who were forced to flee their homes.

## Bloc Positions:

**Western Bloc:** Many western countries have already taken in a lot of refugees, and because of this, many western countries have set a limit on the amount of refugees that can enter the country. However, the western region does believe in helping these refugees to their utmost ability. The United States has severely lowered the amount of refugees and these low numbers are rare to the United States. In fact, the number of refugees that have been accepted in 2018 have been the lowest in 40 years. The United States has been accepting only a dozen refugees per year, and in 2016, the United States accepted no refugees. Other countries in the western region, such as the United Kingdom have limited the amount of non-European immigrants. However, the limited amount of refugees that have been accepted into these countries have faced a huge amount of discrimination and have been frowned upon by the citizens already living in these countries. In 2018, the UK received 29,380 applications from refugee applicants who wanted to live in the UK and escape their homes. This was 11% higher than the previous year, and higher than any other amount of applicants applying to other Western countries. However, the UK has been successful in providing aid to 15,891 refugees, about half of which are children, and has been helpful in bettering the lives of these people.

**Latin America and Caribbean Bloc:** Because the Latin American and Caribbean bloc is already heavily impacted by their own refugees, this bloc has severely limited the amount of

refugees that are allowed in the countries. Not only do Latin American countries not have the capability of accepting refugees, but this bloc cannot afford to provide a proper life for any incoming refugees. Countries such as Venezuela are stuck in their own refugee crisis, which has led to an increased amount of corruption within the whole country. This has caused economic instability in the country and has caused many refugees to flee their country. Countries such as Colombia and Brazil have also suffered extensively with the issue of refugees. There have been so many refugees who have moved to Brazil, the country has closed down any connection with refugees and has been placed in an emergency situation that has cut down any possible way for refugees to shift to Brazil. In Colombia, there are a total of about 5 million people who have been displaced. This is because of the poor economic conditions in Colombia that have made Colombian citizens displaced as they try to escape from any persecution in their country. Countries such as Argentina have only accepted 9% of refugees that applied. The Latin American countries believe that if they let in refugees into their country, their country will be at risk of fully being destroyed and will never be able to reach its full potential. The Latin American bloc supports providing aid to refugees in other countries and has even given political positions to refugees in their own countries.

**African Bloc:** The African bloc holds a significant amount of refugees from around the world including Yemen. Even though the African Union does have ethnic conflicts with the refugees coming in, the African bloc realizes that these refugees are in extreme need of help so that they can better their way of living. The UNHCR has collaborated with the African bloc to provide aid to refugees by creating a protective environment for refugees in the schools that are in the refugee camps. The UNHCR along with the African bloc has provided education and health care to these refugees. The reason for collaboration between the UNHCR and the African bloc is because the African bloc holds about 26% of all of the refugees in the world. African countries are burdened by refugees coming into countries such as Djibouti because of the poorer economies of their countries. About 46,350 refugees are present in Djibouti and the reason why Yemeni refugees come to places such as Djibouti are because of the proximity, close cultural, social, and linguistic links, and the open door policy of the Djibouti government.

**Asian-Pacific Bloc:** Even though the Asian-Pacific Bloc is not considered one of the main places where refugees take refuge, there are many refugees in the Asian-Pacific Bloc. The Asia and Pacific region has 7.7 million people that the UNHCR is concerned about. Out of this 7.7 million, 3.5 million are refugees who have fled from other countries, 1.9 million people are internally displaced persons, and 1.4 million people are stateless people, which is a person who is not defined as a citizen of any country. The refugees that come to the Asian-Pacific region are from neighboring countries and countries within Asia such as Myanmar and Afghanistan. The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar has caused these Rohingya people to flee from Myanmar to these countries in the Asian-Pacific region. Two nations that are heavily involved in the Yemeni refugee crisis are Iran and Saudi Arabia. These two nations have their own proxy war against each other regarding the situation of Yemen. Iran has only provided marginal support to Yemen in its crisis, although previously, Iran was much more involved in the crisis during the time of the former president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh by providing arms to the Houthi rebels and is now barred from selling weapons out of the country without the approval of the UN security council. But now, Iran has not made any statements to aid Yemen in its rebuilding process economically. Saudi Arabia is the other nation involved in the Yemeni refugee crisis. Saudi

Arabia first became involved in this crisis when fighting between the Houthi rebels and the government of Yemen went into Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has stopped supporting Yemen economically and has been launching airstrikes which has resulted in devastation in Yemen.

## Basic Solutions:

When trying to solve the Yemeni refugee crisis, it is important to keep in mind that there can not be the use of just one solution that can solve this problem. This crisis has been going on for many years and it is important to first provide these refugees with proper aid such as access to medical care and basic education. Refugee camps are usually unsanitary and unhealthy due to diseases that spread easily in these camps. Refugees also have limited access to food, which is usually of lower quality. Feasible solutions should be represented in committee that can fully be implemented in the refugee camps in Yemen and should be cost-effective when keeping in mind the economic restraints that Yemen has. Delegates are also encouraged to consider post traumatic care for these refugees, especially children who might have been mentally abused by the death of their family members or physically abused when moving to a different country.

Delegates are highly encouraged to not use commonly mentioned solutions and instead look for more innovative and creative solutions that will not cause any problems when implemented in Yemen and other countries around the world. An example of a successful solution that has been implemented in the past is the International Rescue Committee. This committee has provided 1.5 million children with education and has a staff of 33,000 educators. These educators are trained for 3 months on a rigorous training level that requires these trainers to know how to properly teach these refugees with sensitivity and care. This committee has created 11,000 schools around the world and is funded through developed countries that provide aid such as money to underdeveloped countries. Delegates are also encouraged to not just rely on NGOs as their primary source for solutions, but to bring innovative solutions to committee that are feasible. Internally Displaced People can be discussed in this committee as they are also important to consider when creating these feasible solutions, as the solutions should also apply to these people.

## Questions to Consider:

1. How is your country involved in the Yemen refugee crisis and what steps has your country taken to address this issue?
2. What rights are being taken away from refugees that have affected the Yemeni refugees?
3. What are some previous solutions that have been unsuccessful? What can be altered about those solutions to make them feasible in committee?
4. What are some obstacles that refugees face that do not allow these refugees to be reintegrated back into society?
5. Is the definition of a refugee as written in the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees being followed in your country?
6. How can your country ensure personal safety of these refugees and prevent communicable diseases from being spread in these refugee camps?

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