

United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR)

Introduction

The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) held its 65th Executive Committee session between 29 September and 3 October 2014.¹ Several Member States also convened in December for a special session to pledge resettlement and support for Syrian refugees as the crisis in that country continues to escalate.² Further, conditions throughout Africa and the Middle East remained geographic areas of priority for the UNHCR late in 2014 and topical areas of priority into 2015 will include eliminating statelessness, emergency response, and improvements to protection.³ Nutrition, refugee health, and shelter continue as basic needs that the UNHCR aspires to address, and the agency will continue to work with its partners to this end.⁴ Aside from these substantive areas of work, the UNHCR also faces administrative challenges, including funding shortfalls, practical difficulties with refugee identification and registration, and the need for new strategies to address changing needs.⁵

Recent Activities

The 65th Executive Committee session primarily included discussions on administrative and budget matters for the UNHCR; closing remarks for the session by High Commissioner António Guterres further served to highlight the goals and the path ahead for the UNHCR as the year approached its end.⁶ Simultaneously, a meeting of the High Level Segment on enhancing international cooperation, solidarity, local capacities, and humanitarian action in Africa took place.⁷

In addition to its usual discussion of financial and administrative matters, the Executive Committee also considered a report regarding international protection.⁸ The report raised concerns regarding arbitrary detention, access to legal status for asylum-seekers, human trafficking, and the need for increased or improved humanitarian response.⁹ The Director of International Protection reaffirmed the importance of refugee registration in camps and the establishment of protection systems on the national level.¹⁰ Following the meeting of the High Level Segment, the Executive Committee called upon the international community and on African states in particular to strengthen emergency response, render assistance to stateless and internally displaced persons, combat human trafficking, and enhance existing efforts to repatriate and resettle refugees.¹¹

Furthermore, in the 65th session, the UNHCR issued updates on its regional operations and on its partnerships in both the public and private sectors.¹² The Executive Committee noted the agency's partnerships with host governments to improve refugee health, nutrition, and hygiene, whereby the UNHCR and governments are currently working to integrate refugees into national health systems.¹³ The UNHCR has also worked closely with the World Food Programme (WFP) to improve nutrition, according to the Executive Committee update.¹⁴ Unfortunately, funding shortfalls have resulted in reductions in rations, particularly in Africa, leading the UNHCR and WFP to refocus efforts on self-sufficiency.¹⁵ Besides health and nutrition, the Executive Committee update regarding partnerships addressed the UNHCR's role as a co-leader of the global shelter cluster, which is currently in the

¹ UNHCR, *2014 Executive Committee Meeting*.

² UNHCR, *Governments at Geneva meeting agree to take in 100,000 Syrian refugees*, 2014.

³ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2014-2015*.

⁴ UNHCR, *Update on UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships*, 2014.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ UN General Assembly, *Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Summary record of the 676th meeting (A/AC.96/SR.676)*, 2014.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ UNHCR, *Statement of the Executive Committee on Enhancing International Cooperation, Solidarity, Local Capacities and Humanitarian Action for Refugees in Africa*, 2014.

¹² UNHCR, *Update on UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships*, 2014.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

process of implementing its 2013-2017 strategy.¹⁶ With private-sector partners outside the cluster, and inline with its own Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter, the UNHCR is also in the process of developing a plan to bring refugees closer to society at large, connecting them with local economies and infrastructure.¹⁷

Recent Policy Outcomes

UNHCR's most recent work, taken as a whole, demonstrates the agency's commitment to improving protection of refugees and IDPs in particular.¹⁸ In the statements and summaries that have been published in the past several months, this subject has been mentioned as an area of concern and one in which national governments should focus their efforts.¹⁹ Protection of refugees in Africa in particular has consistently been included in UNHCR documentation, as have humanitarian conditions in refugee camps in that region.²⁰ Eliminating statelessness has been a concern of the UNHCR for quite some time, and the agency has refocused on the topic at the end of 2014.²¹ Additionally, recent calls for response in the Syrian refugee crisis have been at the center of much of the news coming from the UNHCR, though this subject was not addressed at the meetings during September and October. The UNHCR remained focused on current strategies and plans, including its Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter, plans developed as a part of the agency's partnership with other UN agencies, Member State governments, and private actors, and, notably, the Syrian Arab Republic Strategic Response Plan.²²

Implementation of Outcomes

In 2015, perhaps the most measurable implementation of UNHCR's policies will come in the form of the 2015 Syrian Arab Republic Strategic Response Plan (SHARP).²³ The plan will cost an estimate \$2.9 billion (USD) and is intended to address the needs of 12.2 million displaced persons.²⁴ Of course, the outcomes of this program remain to be seen, but in most respects, it mirrors the goals of the 2014 SHARP initiative, which achieved adequate funding for some, but not all, of its planned projects.²⁵

The UNHCR has also made progress in the Central African Republic, where the conflict has caused 854,070 individuals to become "people of concern."²⁶ The agency has succeeded in training officials on refugee protection, including police officers and members of the military.²⁷ Progress has also been made in the area of refugee registration and identification in the Central African Republic, where the UNHCR facilitated a protection monitoring workshop and continued refugee registration through its mobile protection teams.²⁸ In other African countries encountering refugee crises, in 2015, the UNHCR has concrete plans to combat sexual and gender-based violence through preventative and treatment measures and to meet basic needs through partnerships with other agencies, such as the World Food Programme.²⁹

Conclusion

The UNHCR has made substantial plans and commitments for 2015, and the agency will continue to honor its commitments to protect refugees, improve humanitarian conditions, and strengthen efforts for reconciliation, repatriation, and resettlement. Africa and the Middle East in particular will remain areas of concern, and the crisis in Syria will be a central focus for the UNHCR moving into 2015. Protection, shelter, and nutrition, as always, will be

¹⁶ UNHCR, *Update on UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships*, 2014.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UN General Assembly, Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Summary record of the 682nd meeting (A/AC.96/SR.682)*, 2014.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Humanitarian Country Team, *2015 Strategic Response Plan, Syrian Arab Republic*, 2014; UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2014-2015*; UNHCR, *Update on UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships*, 2014.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Humanitarian Country Team, *2015 Strategic Response Plan, Syrian Arab Republic*, 2014.

²⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *2015 Response Plan, Syrian Arab Republic*.

²⁵ Financial Tracking Service, *Strategic Response Plan(s): Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) 2014, 2015*.

²⁶ UNHCR, *Central African Republic Situation, UNHCR Regional Update 42*.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ UNHCR, *2015 UNHCR regional operational profile – Africa*.



areas to which the UNHCR and its partners will divert a large amount of resources, and combating sexual and gender-based violence against refugees will be an important component of the UNHCR's efforts to improve refugee health. Though the agency made progress with current projects by the end of 2014, funding shortfalls and other challenges will need to be overcome before the agency can achieve new and existing goals.

Annotated Bibliography

Governments at Geneva meeting agree to take in 100,000 Syrian refugees. (2014, December 9). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/548737926.html>

This news story includes information regarding the commitments of Member States to take in refugees from Syria. The Syrian refugee crisis remains one of the UNHCR's greatest challenges. As the conflict has been prolonged over the past several years, resettlement has increasingly become a large component of the UNHCR's response to the crisis. The commitment of governments to resettle refugees is a victory as instability persists in the region. Delegates should be well aware of recent developments on this topic as it is a priority program area for UNHCR.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). 2014 Executive Committee Meeting. Retrieved 5 January 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/541843656.html>

This website contains documentation and information regarding the 2014 Executive Committee meetings that took place at year's end. Documentation includes the summaries of the discussions that took place during the session, including summaries of the work of the High Level Segment. The conclusions of the Executive Committee are important to understanding the programs and objectives of the UNHCR moving into 2015.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2015 UNHCR regional operational profile – Africa. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d7fd6.html>

This page outlines, in broad terms, the UNHCR's recent and current work in Africa. As a region, Africa is a primary area of concern for the agency. Conflict persists in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, further the status of West Sahara is still at issue. The UNHCR is active in this region in particular, therefore it is important to track its progress there in order to understand how it addresses large-scale crises.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). Central African Republic Situation, UNHCR Regional Update 42. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/52fa46209.html>

This update constitutes a quick summary of the UNHCR's progress in the Central African Republic and neighboring countries that have been receiving refugees as a result of the conflict. The update provides information as to the agency's progress and the reconciliation process in the region, as well as information regarding the number of displaced persons in the region. UNHCR's work in the Central African republic also provides good examples of its coordination efforts within other UN agencies through the cluster system, such as the World Food Programme.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2015 Response Plan, Syrian Arab Republic. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/RM_Syria_20141217_Final_1830.pdf

The Response Plan for the Syrian Arab Republic is one of the UNHCR's largest undertakings in the past several years, and its 2015 iteration will require additional, large financial commitments of funding from states, non-governmental organizations, and private actors. The 2015 plan will be a large part of the UNHCR's work in the Middle East in the next year. This plan is a revised version of the 2014 SHARP plan and is based on lessons from the past year and on recent changes in the nature of the conflict. The Syrian refugee crisis is a topic for discussion in this committee, and delegates should familiarize themselves with UNHCR's responses to the situation in the region.

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http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/2015_SRP_Syria_EN_AdvanceCopy_171214.pdf

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United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2015 Response Plan, Syrian Arab Republic*. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/RM_Syria_20141217_Final_1830.pdf

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Strategic Response Plan(s): Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP,) 2014 - List of Projects (grouped by sector), with funding status of each. Report as of 09-February-2015*. (2015). Retrieved 5 January 2015 from: [http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_R3_A1044_7_January_2015_\(03_01\).pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_R3_A1044_7_January_2015_(03_01).pdf)

I. The Syrian Refugee Crisis

Introduction

Nearing five years of war with no definite solution to the crisis, Syria continues to experience military confrontation and internal conflict.³⁰ During a Security Council briefing in January 2015, United Nations (UN) Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Kyung-wha Kang lamented the “relentless violence and destruction” that have driven over 3.8 million Syrian refugees from their homes and created “the largest political, humanitarian and development challenge of our time.”³¹ While the international community has rallied to help those affected by the conflict, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expects humanitarian need to grow as the number of Syrian refugees increases to 4.27 million by the end of 2015.³²

In recent months, the Syrian refugee crisis has remained a priority for the UN. The UN Security Council adopted resolution 2178 (2014) on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts” in September 2014 and resolution 2191 (2014) on the “Middle East” in December 2014.³³ These resolutions focused on the expansion of the counter-terrorism framework, the renewal of the authorization for cross-border humanitarian access until 10 January 2016, the active participation of the Syrian government in peace efforts, and the continued support of Member States hosting Syrian refugees.³⁴ The Security Council also issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2014/21) recognizing the increased susceptibility of refugee and internally displaced women and girls to human rights violations and reaffirming “the primary responsibility of Member States in the protection of their populations,” including refugees and internally displaced persons.³⁵ On 18 December 2014, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the “Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic,” which urged donors to support host countries incurring the significant political, socioeconomic, and financial costs of large refugee populations.³⁶ On 14 January 2015, UNHCR released a report, *Living in the Shadows*, which revealed that two thirds of Syrian refugees in Jordan are now living under the national poverty line.³⁷ UNHCR continues to release regular Inter-Agency Regional Updates on Syrian refugees, which have recently highlighted the cooperative efforts of over 160 agencies and aid groups currently working to aid Syrian refugees in host countries.³⁸

Key documents pertaining to this topic include the *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (1950), the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951), and the *Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967).³⁹ UNHCR spearheads the international response to the Syrian refugee crisis, with support from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and financial aid from the UN’s targeted humanitarian appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and OCHA’s country-based pooled fund (CBPF) for Syria.⁴⁰ Other UN organizations providing humanitarian assistance in the region include the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).⁴¹

³⁰ UNHCR, *2015 UNHCR country operations profile-Syrian Arab Republic*, 2014.

³¹ UN DPI, *Lack of funding hampering humanitarian aid to war-affected Syrians – UN relief official*, 2015; UNHCR & UNDP, *About the Crisis*.

³² UNHCR, *UN and partners launch major aid plans for Syria and region*, 2014.

³³ UN Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/2178 (2014))*, 2014; UN Security Council, *Middle East (S/RES/2191 (2014))*, 2014.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2014/21)*, 2014.

³⁶ UN General Assembly, *Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/RES/66/189)*, 2014.

³⁷ UNHCR, *UNHCR study shows rapid deterioration in living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan*, 2015.

³⁸ UNHCR, *Inter-Agency Regional Update-Syrian Refugees*, 2014, p. 9.

³⁹ UN General Assembly, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/428 (V))*, 1950; *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; *Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

⁴⁰ OCHA, *2015 Syria Response Plan: Summary December 2014*, 2014, p. 5; OCHA, *Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPF)*.

⁴¹ WFP, *WFP Launches Plan to Assist Syrians Affected by Conflict in 2015*, 2014; UNDP, *Helen Clark: Statement to the First Regular Session of the UNDP Executive Board*, 2015; UNDP, *Responding to the crisis in Syria*; UNICEF, *Syrian Refugees*, 2015; UNFPA, *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syria Crisis, December 2014-January 2015*, 2015.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have remained highly involved in directly assisting and advocating for Syrian refugees.⁴² On 8 December 2014, a group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) released a statement calling for renewed efforts from individual Member States to aid those affected by the crisis, particularly through resettlement and other initiatives allowing for admission to countries outside of the Middle East region.⁴³ On 9 December 2014, at the Ministerial-Level Pledging Conference on Syrian Refugee Resettlement and Other Forms of Humanitarian Admission, governments responded by pledging to increase the number of Syrian refugees they will accept into their countries for resettlement and other humanitarian opportunities.⁴⁴

Recent Developments

On 1 December 2014, due to a lack of funding, WFP announced that it was suspending a program providing food aid to 1.7 million refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt.⁴⁵ Consequently, WFP launched a social media fundraising campaign, and with the help of UNHCR, UNICEF, and OCHA, WFP was able to reach individuals, private sector donors in 158 countries to raise more than \$80 million.⁴⁶ As a result of the campaign's enormous success, the WFP announced on 9 December 2014 that it would restart the program. By mid-December, WFP was able to distribute about \$30 to each family member, with enough funds left for the duration of the month and the beginning of January 2015.⁴⁷ WFP has calculated that providing food in Syria and neighboring countries requires \$35 million per week.⁴⁸

On 18 December 2014, UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA, and other UN partners launched an appeal for more than \$8.4 billion to help an estimated 18 million people affected by the Syrian war.⁴⁹ The first element of the appeal is the 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP), which aims to support over 12.2 million people within Syria.⁵⁰ The SRP's objectives include ensuring the protection and accessibility of resources to affected people in accordance with international law, international humanitarian law (IHL), and international human rights law (IHRL).⁵¹ Further, the SRP aims to provide lifesaving assistance by prioritizing the most vulnerable individuals, to strengthen resilience and livelihoods, and to enhance the response capacity of all humanitarian actors working in Syria.⁵² The second element, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), aims to support Syrian refugees and host countries through an innovative, comprehensive approach that combines protection, humanitarian aid, and development programs.⁵³ The 3RP looks beyond providing immediate humanitarian assistance by promoting sustainable development and building the long-term resilience of affected people, communities, and institutions.⁵⁴

Difficult winter conditions have continued to prove challenging for humanitarian relief workers.⁵⁵ In early January 2015, a major winter storm unleashed snow, rain, winds, and freezing temperatures across the region, causing damage to homes, refugee camps, and infrastructure.⁵⁶ Despite the winterization plan preemptively launched by the UN in October 2014, UNHCR reported that the situation "remains precarious for many," especially in light of poor living conditions already experienced by Syrian refugees.⁵⁷ The limited effectiveness of the winterization plan is due largely to underfunding by approximately \$70 million.⁵⁸ To address chronic shortfalls in required funding across all relevant response plans, on 23 January 2015, Valerie Amos, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

⁴² *Ministerial-Level Pledging Conference on Syrian Refugee Resettlement and Other Forms of Humanitarian Admission: NGO Statement*, 2014.

⁴³ Oxfam et al., *Resettlement of Refugees from Syria: Joint Agency Briefing Paper*, 2014.

⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Governments at Geneva meeting agree to take in 100,000 Syrian refugees*, 2014.

⁴⁵ WFP, *WFP Forced to Suspend Syrian Refugee Food Assistance, Warns of Terrible Impact as Winter Nears*, 2014.

⁴⁶ WFP, *WFP Resumes Food Assistance to Syrian Refugees as Fundraising Drive Exceeds Goal*, 2014.

⁴⁷ *UN resumes food aid for Syrian refugees*, Al Jazeera, 2014.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ OCHA, *Syria: UN and partners launch major appeal for 2015*, 2014.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ OCHA, *2015 Syria Response Plan: Summary December 2014*, 2014.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ UNHCR & UNDP, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2015-2016: Regional Strategic Overview*, p. 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁵⁵ UN DPI, *Syria: UN relief agencies appeal for more funding as winter freeze sweeps region*, 2015.

⁵⁶ UN DPI, *UN ramps up relief efforts as huge Mid-East snowstorm threatens Syrian refugees*, 2015.

⁵⁷ UNHCR, *Thematic Update: Winter Assistance – Syria and Iraq Situations*, 2015.

⁵⁸ UN DPI, *Syria: UN relief agencies appeal for more funding as winter freeze sweeps region*, 2015.

and Emergency Relief Coordinator, announced an allocation of \$77.5 million from CERF to assist countries affected by the Syrian crisis.⁵⁹

Conclusion

Committed to its statute, UNHCR “will strive [throughout 2015] to deliver its programmes to people of concern,” including millions of Syrian refugees.⁶⁰ However, António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has warned that humanitarian need resulting from the Syrian conflict is growing more quickly than levels of incoming aid from the international community.⁶¹ Ongoing violence will restrict both humanitarian access and distribution of aid to the region, thus further threatening the livelihoods of refugees.⁶² In collaboration with external partners, UNHCR must redouble its efforts to support a rapidly expanding population of Syrian refugees, who will remain dependent upon international aid until a political solution to the Syrian conflict is found.⁶³

⁵⁹ UN DPI, *Syria, other poorly-funded crises to receive \$100 million from UN emergency fund*, 2014.

⁶⁰ UNHCR, *2015 UNHCR country operations profile-Syrian Arab Republic*, 2014.

⁶¹ UNHCR, *UNHCR chief urges action to tackle rising poverty of Syrian refugees*, 2015.

⁶² UNHCR, *2015 UNHCR country operations profile-Syrian Arab Republic*, 2014.

⁶³ OCHA, *2015 Strategic Response Plan – Syrian Arab Republic*, 2014.

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *2015 UNHCR country operations profile-Syrian Arab Republic*. Retrieved 26 December 2014 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486a76.html>

This UNHCR document provides detailed information regarding the Syrian refugee crisis and the strategies needed to be performed in 2015 to ensure the safety and needs of refugees are met. By reading this document, delegates will learn important statistics pertaining to refugees, internally displaced persons, and people of concern both in and out of Syria. Further, the statistics define the number of individuals UNHCR will assist in each of these population groups.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Inter-Agency Regional Update-Syrian Refugees*. Retrieved 28 January 2015 from: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7705>

This document describes achievements accomplished in 2014 regarding the Syrian crisis. Further, the document presents information on the protection of human rights and dignity of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt. By reading this document, delegates will get a better understanding of the education, health, shelter, and water and sanitation opportunities offered in 2014 to refugees, in addition to challenges that need to be addressed in the months to come.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016: In Response to the Syria Crisis*. Retrieved 12 February 2015 from: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/3RP-Report-Overview.pdf>

This document is very important and highly useful in understanding not only the demands of Syrian refugees, but also of those countries hosting refugees, including Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. The 3RP and the SRP present a strategic shift that will enhance the ability of the international community to meet the continuing demand of funding and assistance to Syria and its refugees. Navigating through this site, delegates will be able to find useful information regarding host countries as well as recent news updates regarding the situation in Syria and the Middle East.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2014). *OCHA, 2015 Syria Response Plan: Summary December 2014*. Retrieved 27 December 2014 from:

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/RM_Syria_20141217_Final_1830.pdf

This document summarizes the goals of the SRP to address humanitarian need associated with the Syrian refugee crisis. In addition, this document presents the work for both UN and non-UN entities on protection, life-saving assistance, resilience, coordination and monitoring of refugees, and effective response capacities to the threats of refugees. The document will help delegates understand the financial requirements as established by UNHCR and the division of funds required by the SRP.

United Nations Population Fund. (2014). *Regional Situation Report for Syria Crisis*. Retrieved 28 January 2015 from: <http://www.unfpa.org/resources/regional-situation-report-syria-crisis-august-2014>

This document highlights operations taking place in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq to accommodate and provide for Syrian refugees in these countries. In addition, the document presents a background of pressing challenges Syria is currently facing as a result of the conflict. Delegates will find detailed logistics and numbers pertaining to refugee populations in host countries. In addition, delegates will be presented with current and ongoing projects taking place to secure the security and dignity of Syrian refugees. More specifically, delegates will find descriptive information on projects addressing gender-based violence and the empowerment of women, among other important humanitarian responses and development projects.

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II. Protecting the Civil, Political, and Socioeconomic Rights of Refugees

Introduction

Conflicts around the world continue to force individuals to flee their homes in the hopes of finding safety elsewhere.⁶⁴ Ongoing situations, such as the current Syrian crisis, demonstrate a clear example of the need for the international community to coordinate efforts in order to protect the civil, political, and socioeconomic rights of refugees fleeing disastrous situations.⁶⁵ As highlighted by António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at a conference in October 2014 on the Syrian refugee situation, there needs to be a clear “cultural change to bridge the relief-development gap that exists in the way governments, agencies and international financial institutions plan and deliver” aid to those in need.⁶⁶ The United Nations (UN) must continue to forge new partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and host countries alike in order to protect the rights of refugees, as well as continue to develop new ways to assist refugees in current conflict situations to maintain their rights and freedoms.⁶⁷

During its 69th session, the General Assembly (GA) adopted multiple resolutions pertaining to the civil, political, and socioeconomic rights of refugees, including resolution 69/154, which discussed assistance to refugees and those displaced within Africa, as well as resolutions 69/89, 69/88, and 69/86, all pertaining to the Palestinian situation.⁶⁸ In 2014, the Security Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2014/21) discussing the rights of women and children that have been displaced.⁶⁹ During UNHCR’s 65th session, discussion focused on enhancing international cooperation in the provision of humanitarian action in Africa (A/AC.96/1143).⁷⁰ In addition, in December 2014, the UNHCR released a discussion paper on the policies and practices of incentive payments for refugees, a topic gaining prominence in the field of refugee rights, as the incentives provided are compared to minimum wage standards around the world.⁷¹

On 9 December 2014, UNHCR released the Inter-Agency Regional Update on Syrian refugees, which reported that there are 163 agencies and aid groups that have been working together to assist the refugees in neighboring countries.⁷² Notably, following a temporary shortage in funding, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced that it had been able to gather enough financial support in order to reinstate food assistance to the region, which provides food vouchers to refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt.⁷³ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been involved in training sessions in all major host countries, including conducting training in Turkey on clinical management of rape for 23 Syrian gynecologists, psychologists, and midwives and facilitating a three-day training session on family planning counseling for 24 health providers and health educators from the Ministry of Health in Jordan.⁷⁴ The Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) has worked diligently with the Department of Labor and Social Affairs in Iraq to ensure that children have specially designated areas in camps around the state.⁷⁵ Finally, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has committed itself to ensuring over 57,000 children in Lebanon are able to attend school during the afternoon shift.⁷⁶

⁶⁴ UNHCR, *Remarks by António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation – Supporting Stability in the Region*, 2014.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ UN General Assembly, *Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa (A/RES/69/154)*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *Palestine refugees’ properties and their revenues (A/RES/69/89)*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/RES/69/88)*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *Assistance to Palestine refugees (A/RES/69/86)*, 2014.

⁶⁹ UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2014/21)*, 2014.

⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, *Report of the sixty-fifth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme*, 2014, p. 8.

⁷¹ UNHCR, *Which side are you on? Discussion paper on UNHCR’s policy and practice of incentive payments to refugees*, 2014.

⁷² UNHCR, *Inter-Agency Regional Update-Syrian Refugees*, 2014, p. 9.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 2014, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 2014, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 2014, p. 3.

The key documents that pertain directly to this topic include the founding document of the UNHCR, known as the *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (1950); the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), which outlines the rights of all people to seek asylum in another state; the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951); the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967); the *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* (1954); and the *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* (1961).⁷⁷ In addition, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1966) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966) remain particularly relevant to this topic, as they contain obligations for Member States and outline clear rights that all individuals share.⁷⁸

Several important events also took place regarding refugee rights in the past few months. Notably, on 25 November 2014, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, and other UN partners commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and launched their annual 16 Days Campaign to End Violence against Women and Girls.⁷⁹ Furthermore, on 28 October 2014, the Security Council held its annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, and focused its attention on women who have been internally displaced or are currently refugees.⁸⁰ This meeting drew attention to the fact that “three-quarters of the refugee and IDP population are women and children, and women and girls comprise about half of any refugee, internally displaced or stateless population.”⁸¹ These numbers are particularly important given the fact that gender-based discrimination is often rampant in refugee camps and amongst displaced populations.⁸² From 10 to 11 December 2014, the Seventh High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges took place in Geneva, with the discussion focusing on protection at sea, which touched on the lives of those feeling “persecution, conflict, instability and poverty” in areas around the world.⁸³ This meeting included delegates from 88 countries, as well as 52 NGOs, and led to a joint statement from UNHCR and other international organizations asking states to “tackle the root causes of maritime migration.”⁸⁴

Recent Developments

Within recent months, Iraq and Syria have been two of the most prominent areas of focus for refugee aid.⁸⁵ It is estimated that 40% of the 2 million displaced Iraqis currently live in sub-standard shelters, and as temperatures continue to decrease, this has become one of UNHCR’s main priorities.⁸⁶ In addition to its own internal strife, Iraq hosts an estimated 220,000 Syrian refugees, creating an even greater need for aid to the region.⁸⁷ On 9 December 2014, governments meeting in Geneva pledged to take on 100,000 Syrian refugees currently living in vulnerable conditions through “humanitarian admission schemes, including humanitarian visas, private sponsorship, family reunification, scholarships, medical evacuation and labor mobility programs.”⁸⁸ This type of multilateral refugee assistance is the first of its kind and is indicative of how dire of a situation Syria is currently facing.⁸⁹

On 18 December 2014, the UN announced a new humanitarian and development appeal to the international community, requesting over \$8.4 billion in assistance to address the needs of nearly 18 million Syrians requiring aid in 2015.⁹⁰ This appeal, launched by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and UNHCR, contains two facets; the first is

⁷⁷ UNHCR, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 2010; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948; UNHCR, *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 2010; UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, 2010; UNHCR, *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*, 2014.

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

⁷⁹ UNHCR, *Inter-Agency Regional Update-Syrian Refugees*, 2014, p. 3.

⁸⁰ UN Women, *Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security: “Displaced Women and Girls: Leaders and Survivors”*, 2014.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ UNHCR, *High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges*, 2014, 2014.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ UNHCR, *Displaced Iraqis Seek Safety and Aid in Camps as Winter Falls*, 2014.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ 3RP, *Iraq*, 2015.

⁸⁸ UNHCR, *Governments at Geneva Meeting Agree to Take in 100,000 Syrian Refugees*, 2014.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ 3RP, *UN and Partners Launch Major Aid Plans for Syria and Region*, 2014.

known as the Syria Strategic Response Plan 2015 (SRP), which is meant to provide support for 12.2 million people and will call upon organizations within Syria and in neighboring countries to work together to provide this assistance from within the areas most at risk.⁹¹ This plan highlights the need for joint planning and cooperation amongst communities, as well as the need for a better response time from humanitarian actors aiding in this crisis.⁹² The second part of this appeal, known as the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), was created to aid neighboring host countries in assisting Syrian refugees and is meant to directly support the growing number of refugees living in host communities, as well as to create more economic opportunities for those individuals.⁹³ This response is unique in terms of refugee assistance, as it takes into account the needs of the neighboring countries, as well as those of the refugees, and highlights the need to also help citizens of host countries, as they utilize their own resources to help incoming refugees.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Forced displacement statistics from 2013 have surpassed the 50 million mark, reaching beyond even the figures found during the Second World War.⁹⁵ Of those numbers, a staggering 80% are women and children.⁹⁶ Moreover, 2015 will see the Syrian conflict enter its fifth year, with over 3.2 million refugees to date, a number that continues to increase every day.⁹⁷ Although significant work has been done worldwide to ensure that refugee rights are protected, it is clear that more must continue to be done as conflicts continue to arise. The implementation of the 3RP response in Syria and neighboring states suggests new avenues for similar strategic plans for other refugee populations in the future.⁹⁸ This issue will certainly remain a topic of discussion as 2015 progresses.

⁹¹ 3RP, *UN and Partners Launch Major Aid Plans for Syria and Region*, 2014.

⁹² Humanitarian Response, *2015 Syrian Arab Strategic Response Plan*, 2014.

⁹³ UNHCR, *UN and Partners Seek US\$8.4 Billion for new Syria Programme in 2015*, 2014.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ What's In Blue, *Women, Peace and Security: Open Debate and Presidential Statement*, 2014.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ 3RP, *A Strategic Shift*, 2015.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Annotated Bibliography

Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP). (2015). *UN and Partners Launch Major Aid Plans for Syria and Region*. Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/news/un-partners-launch-major-aid-plans-syria-region/>

This resource provides an outline of the Syrian crisis, as well as a detailed overview of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. It defines how the plan will be put in place in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq, as well as the tasks assigned to the national and regional levels versus those to be monitored at the international level. The plan itself is subdivided into two components: the refugee component and the resilience component. It is the first of its kind to be implemented, making this a vital resource in order to understand new areas of work in refugee rights.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2014) *Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security: Displaced Women and Girls: Leaders and Survivors* [Report]. Retrieved 4 January 2015 from:

<http://www.unwomen.org/%7E/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/news/in%20focus/open%20debate%20on%20wps%202013/2014%20wps%20open%20debate%20concept%20paper.pdf>

This paper supplies the reader with a broad understanding of the Security Council's open debate on women, peace and security. It outlines the continued vulnerability of women and children in conflict zones and especially in refugee camps. It also provides statistical evidence as to why this particular group requires a renewed focus in areas of refugee rights and is a good foundation for delegates to gain a broader understanding of the current discussion surrounding gender-based violence at the international level.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Inter-Agency Regional Update-Syrian Refugees*. Retrieved 3 January 2015 from: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5492ba984.html>

This document provides a detailed analysis of the Syrian crisis and provides up-to-date data on the number of refugees, as well as other important statistical information such as the number of individuals who have been given access to safe drinking water, shelters in camps, and basic household relief items. In addition, this update describes the current situation of Syrian refugees in each of the affected host countries and documents the work of over 163 organizations in areas such as shelter, water and sanitation, and health care. As the Syrian crisis remains one of the most dire situations involving refugees, this resource should be utilized as a base to understand the current state of affairs, as well as a good example of partnerships formed amongst states and NGOs.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Remarks by António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation – Supporting Stability in the Region*. Retrieved 1 January 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/544fb4189.html>

This statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees clearly outlines the importance of the Syrian refugee crisis for UNHCR and highlights the effects that this crisis is having on neighboring countries. In addition, it emphasizes the link between Iraq and Syria, demonstrating the clear need for UNHCR's focus to be placed on this area in particular, as well as publicly setting the groundwork for future projects by highlighting the need for a multifaceted response that takes into account the humanitarian, resilience, and developmental dimensions of the crisis.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *UN and Partners Seek US\$8.4 Billion for new Syria Programme in 2015* [Press Release]. Retrieved 2 January 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5492a7bb6.html>

This news article draws attention to the main elements of UNHCR's humanitarian and development appeal in December 2014. It discusses the two main elements of the appeal: support for those displaced within Syria, as well as those that have become refugees in neighboring states. It details where the \$8.4 billion in requested funds will go and highlights the current situation in Syria and the neighboring countries, so as to better allow the readers to understand why such an appeal was necessary.

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III. Protecting Refugees from Human Trafficking

Introduction

UNHCR continues to focus on its protection mandate for refugees, especially for those coming from the ongoing conflict in Syria and Eritrea. Further, the human rights situation continues deteriorate in refugee camps and host cities and refugees are at increased risk to smugglers and traffickers taking advantage of their desperate search for livelihood opportunities. However, UNHCR, Member States and civil society are working together to develop collective strategies to combatting the larger issue of human trafficking for vulnerable populations and the protection of those during conflict. Additionally, the focus on protecting children from trafficking into child labor has also been a priority of the international community. A key example is the non-governmental organizations (NGO) led and Member State supported Global Modern Slavery Directory. The Clinton Global Initiative Polaris, the Freedom Fund and the Walk Free Foundation launched the Global Modern Slavery Directory on 9 October 2014.⁹⁹ This international directory is a unique database listing over 700 organizations in 120 countries to connect service providers, victims and activists. It is also a tool to increase collaboration between government and legal aid officials and policy organizations working on the ground on these issues.¹⁰⁰

Vulnerability, Human Trafficking and Refugees

The United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) finished its third phase and final report in 2014. The report highlights the project's achievements and lessons from 2007 to 2014.¹⁰¹ UNIAP is focused on the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) under collaboration between several UN agencies since 2000.¹⁰² Member State governments from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Thailand also came together to support work of these UN agencies.¹⁰³ The project focused on strengthening policy frameworks, government leadership of anti-trafficking initiatives and institutional capacity building of civil society partners in the anti-trafficking movement. Lessons from UNIAP sparked the establishment of Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons (UN-ACT) in early 2014 and continued to develop through the close of UNIAP.¹⁰⁴ The report highlights the importance understanding and planning for gender specific vulnerabilities in populations at risk of both sexual and forced labor trafficking.¹⁰⁵ The report also highlights the increase in trafficking of populations displaced due to regional conflicts in Myanmar, citing limited government and civil society infrastructure to protect those displaced.¹⁰⁶ The report further highlights the need for continued civil society and government collaboration to support UN efforts to combat trafficking in the region.¹⁰⁷

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published its *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014* in November.¹⁰⁸ The report claims that in recent estimates; one in three human trafficking victims are children, mostly female. Further, the report also goes further to say that in Africa and the Middle East, these numbers are even higher, where two out of every three victims are children. The report highlights a 5% increase in the number of child trafficking victims since the last study was completed in 2012.¹⁰⁹ The report examines trafficking in persons and armed conflicts citing the deterioration of national justice and protection services, gender imbalances and demand for combatants as some of the key reasons for an increased risk of trafficking.¹¹⁰ The report further highlights that since the conflict in Syria began in 2011, Syrian victims have been reported in eight countries in the Middle East and Western Europe.¹¹¹ Prior the conflict, Syrian victims were very rarely reported.¹¹² Additionally, in countries like

⁹⁹ Polaris, *Worldwide Directory of Modern Slavery Organizations Launches*, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ UNIAP, *Final Report Phase III*, 2014.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ Gladstone, *U.N Report Shows an Increase in Trafficking of Children*, 2014

¹⁰⁹ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014*, 2014, p 4.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p 5.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 42.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 42.

Turkey, the prevalence of child labor, mostly Syrian refugees, has increased exponentially.¹¹³ Further, because Syrian refugees cannot receive work permits in Turkey, they are increasingly subject to human rights abuses.¹¹⁴ Trafficking for child labor in this context has also increased largely due to the poor capacity of schools in refugee camps and little access to other avenues of formal education.¹¹⁵

In Africa, displaced populations are largely trafficked to support combatants.¹¹⁶ For example, UNICEF reports that the conflict in Central African Republic has led to the enslavement of over 6,000 children in May 2014.¹¹⁷ Finally, the UNODC report also recalls the documented increase in the trafficking for sexual exploitation of the victims of conflict instigated by national armies and even UN peacekeepers.¹¹⁸ The worsening levels of displacement in the East and Horn of Africa region over the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 have further demanded UNCHR intervention.¹¹⁹ Fleeing to neighboring Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, over 450,000 new South Sudan refugees are in need of assistance, while almost 250,000 Sudanese refugees seek assistance in South Sudan.¹²⁰ Ethiopia has a particularly large influx of refugees due the South Sudanese conflict at over 190,000 and is now the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa.¹²¹ These refugees are largely women, children and other marginalized groups.¹²² Specifically, the large number of unaccompanied minors from Eritrea continues to be a large driver of trafficking in persons in the region.¹²³ The outlook for 2015 does not predict a decrease or even stabilization of the displacement in the region.¹²⁴

Assisting Trafficked Refugees

Recent news reports highlight the most recent concerns voiced by UNHCR officials on human rights abuses refugees face in the hands of traffickers on “ghost ships” to transport those fleeing the conflicts in the Middle East.¹²⁵ These ships are set on course in dangerous waters to Europe with hundreds of passengers and no crew.¹²⁶ Additionally, actual interceptions and boarding of these ships is dangerous and can often only be done once the ship has run out of fuel and is no long on autopilot.¹²⁷ Traffickers are reported to earn anywhere between \$4,000 to \$8,000 per passenger on each of these ships.¹²⁸ Further, these ships are often found under the disguise of country flags such as Moldova or Sierra Leone and are easily pass through weak regulation in boarder controls and maritime law.¹²⁹ One example, the Ezadeen was set sail by traffickers on the Mediterranean with 359 passengers, mostly Syrian refugees aboard.¹³⁰ Just a few days prior, a ship with 970 migrants was found off the coast of Greece.¹³¹ These ships are reported to have originated from Turkey and Turkish controlled Cyprus.¹³² Smugglers reportedly abandon the ship with the intention of it being intercepted by Italian coast guard.¹³³ Once intercepted and docked in Europe, migrants must satisfy a valid claim for asylum.¹³⁴ On 10 February 2015, the first refugee trafficking related deaths were reported in the Mediterranean of the coast of Italy.¹³⁵ The deaths of these 29 people occurred aboard a

¹¹³ Letsch, *Syrian refugees trigger child labour boom in Turkey*, 2014

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014*, 2014, p. 42.

¹¹⁷ Ibid..

¹¹⁸ Ibid..

¹¹⁹ Ibid..

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Day, *Ghost Ship with Human a Cargo: The worrying new trend used by traffickers to exploit people desperate to flee the Middle East*, 2015.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Coleman, *Migrant Ghost Ships: Who are the People Smugglers?*, 2015.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² *EU migration: Traffickers ‘made \$3m’ on ship to Italy*, BBC News, 2015.

¹³³ UNHCR, *UNHCR urges beefed up search and rescue capacity as at least 29 die off Italy*, 2015

¹³⁴ *EU migration: Traffickers ‘made \$3m’ on ship to Italy*, BBC News, 2015.

¹³⁵ UNHCR, *UNHCR urges beefed up search and rescue capacity as at least 29 die off Italy*, 2015.

smuggler's boat in addition to seven who died of hypothermia aboard a rescue vessel.¹³⁶ This operation highlights the underlying need to not only address the illegal transport of these people but to also improve rescue operations and interventions from the European Union to the Italians.¹³⁷ In the past year, the number of refugees trafficked across the Mediterranean has risen by almost 1,500 of which, Syrian refugees accounted for about 22% of the total migrant population.¹³⁸ In addition, other groups seeking asylum in Europe, such as Eritrean refugees, also continue to grow and are the second largest group after Syrians.¹³⁹ The number stood at nearly 37,000 Eritreans in November 2014, in comparison to 13,000 in November 2013, with the majority arriving in dangerous boats across the Mediterranean and many of them children arriving unaccompanied by adult family.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, UNHCR reports that about 90% of these refugees are young adults between the ages of 18 and 24.¹⁴¹ Often, Eritrean refugees first flee to camps in Ethiopia or Sudan and engage with smugglers when opportunities for livelihood are not sufficient.¹⁴²

The American Red Cross organized an event on 25 September 2014 in Washington, D.C. focused on multi-disciplinary approaches to addressing the issue of human trafficking and armed conflict.¹⁴³ The event brought together professionals from leading agencies on this topic including UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Amnesty International, Women's Refugee Commission and American Bar Association.¹⁴⁴ Conference panelists emphasized major concerns for refugees and trafficking including the extremely high risk of being trafficked women and girls face in refugee camps across the world, especially those belonging to marginalized communities.¹⁴⁵ Further, panelists focused on the huge increase in trafficking of girls into forced and early marriages in displaced populations from Syria.¹⁴⁶ Specifically, the unmonitored movement between refugee camps and across borders in host countries has opened new routes and easy access for traffickers.¹⁴⁷ The UNHCR panelist highlighted limitations in the UNHCR mandate in directly dealing with trafficked persons and the lack of coordinated response on a UN level as a major barrier to policy development on this issue.¹⁴⁸ Panelists also focused on innovations in cross-sectoral or public-private partnerships to combat trafficking and applying to armed conflict contexts.¹⁴⁹ These included developing mobile applications that assist in reporting instances of trafficking in conflict zones, raising awareness of consumers on products and services typically using trafficked persons and creating stronger mechanisms for prosecuting traffickers.¹⁵⁰

Conclusion

The UNHCR, international NGOs and Member State governments have worked collaboratively in the past few months to address some of the major concerns regarding the safety and protection of refugees from trafficking. These include, creating comprehensive networks and information sharing platforms and engaging in dialogue for better policy making on this issue. However, as recent events in the Mediterranean and the ever-increasing rates of displacement in both the Middle East and Horn of Africa, the risk of trafficking to exploitation to refugees is highly prevalent. Therefore, Member States should look to further support in maritime rescue capabilities, boarder security, and providing livelihood and protection programs for refugees in camps and cities.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ UNHCR, *Number of Eritreans seeking asylum in Europe soars over figures for last year*, 2015.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ PILPG, *Event Summary – Human Trafficking and Armed Conflict: A Multi-Disciplinary Conference*, 2014.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Zimmerman, *Sold in War: Human Trafficking During Armed Conflict*, 2014.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Annotated Bibliography

Coleman, J. (2015, January 8). Migrant Ghost Ships: Who are the People Smugglers?. *BBC News*. Retrieved 10 February 2015 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30715001>

This BBC new article, along with the other published on January 3rd, provides investigative insight into the ghost ships carrying Syrian refugees across the Mediterranean. It highlights this issue as criminal activity and focuses on the tactics of traffickers. It also provides insight into the human rights violations of the refugees and migrants who are desperate enough to risk this journey. Delegates will also find key points for action, where UNHCR officials have called for European Union and international cooperation that can be used as starting points for proposed solutions.

Number of Eritreans seeking asylum in Europe soars over figures for last year. (2014, November 14). *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Retrieved 10 February 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/546606286.html>

The news article from UNHCR highlights the current situation regarding the crossing of migrants from the Middle East and Africa to Europe. UNHCR accounts of the facts and figures in the number of people is especially relevant because of the influx in migrants who are actually refugees not only fleeing conditions in their home countries, but also lack of resources and support in refugee camps and host countries. This article, along with links and sources included in on this webpage will provide delegates with a more detailed understanding of this issue from the perspective of the UN Refugee Agency.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2014). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014*. Retrieved 24 January 2015 from: http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2014/GLOTIP_2014_full_report.pdf

This is a key document in understanding the statistics and trends in human trafficking. It compiles the working information gathered from all UN agencies working on the issue and is the most recent report from UNODC after 2012. The report also has a particular section focused on the trafficking in persons of refugees and displaced populations, highlighting the major sources of trafficked individuals and children in the Middle East and Africa. Delegates will get a complete understanding of the most up-to-date analysis on the large issue of trafficking in persons and as it relates specifically to refugees with concrete recommendations for action that can be incorporated into their proposals and action plans.

United Nations Intern-Agency Project on Human Trafficking. (2014). *Final Report Phase III 2007-2014*. 24 January 2015 from: <http://un-act.org/background/publications/>

This report provides a detailed account of the success and failures of an anti-human trafficking program managed by United Nations Agencies. It exemplifies a collaborative inter-agency execution of a project on human trafficking. The region where this project took place is particularly relevant due to the high number of regional refugees who are trafficked due to lack of resources in host countries and refugee camps. Delegates can use this source to gain insight on successful interventions and develop proposals for an international level or replication in other regions.

Worldwide Directory of Modern Slavery Organizations Launches. (2014, October 24). Polaris. Retrieved 24 January 2015 from: <http://www.polarisproject.org/media-center/news-and-press/press-releases/1063-worldwide-directory-of-modern-slavery-organizations-launches>

This article provides an overview and link to the NGO directory lead by Polaris and the Clinton Foundation. This directory is a good example of NGO efforts to address this issue and will provide links to NGOs who work with refugees specifically. This article and directory is a useful tool for delegates to research the type of work civil society is engaged in and develop ideas for proposals on how UN Agencies and Member States can further engage these action networks.

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