

**Country: India**

**Committee: UNHRC**

**Agenda Item: Refugee Crisis; Forcibly displaced and stateless people**



India, the seventh largest country in the world and a nation of ethnic and cultural diversity is located in Asia. India is home to one of the oldest civilizations in the world. It is recognized that the area now known as India was inhabited approximately 250,000 years ago. Indian history begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization and the coming of the Aryans. India today has the second largest population in the world with 1.38 billion people. It is one of the most religiously and ethnically diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures. India has the world's sixth-largest economy with \$2.313 trillion GDP per capita. The main sources of the country are goods and services (domestic private consumption) while the industrial activities are developed as well. In the 2016 Global Burden of Disease Study Report, India was ranked 145 out of 197 countries in "healthcare access and quality". However, 50% of all villagers in India have no access to healthcare providers. Education level in India is 77.7% in total; 70.3% female and 84.7% male. The country has high birth rates with 17.163 births per 1000 people although, the life expectancy is less than the world's average with 69.66 years. India is a founding member of the United Nations, signing the UN Charter, along with 50 other countries, on 26 June, 1945.

Refugee crisis can refer to difficulties and dangerous situations in the reception of large groups of forcibly displaced persons. The first refugee crisis was between 1791 and 1810. In 2020, there were 82.4 million forcibly displaced people worldwide with 26.4 million refugees, 48 million internally displaced, 4.1 asylum seekers and 3.9 Venezuelans. 87% of all refugees are hosted in developing countries such as Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan and Uganda. In India, there are nearly 200,000 refugees to whom the country provides assistance and protection. India's policy states that refugees are allowed freedom concerning their movement, practice of religion and residence. "We want to ensure that refugee rights are upheld everywhere and that they have access to shelter, food and healthcare. This must continue. But we also want to create opportunities for education and livelihoods. This is what refugees want desperately." Said Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in February 2016. However, according to UNHRC, India lacks specific legislation to address the problem of refugees in spite of their increasing inflow. The Foreigners Act, 1946, fails to address the peculiar problems faced by refugees as a class. Two years later, Displaced Persons Act passed by Congress which aimed to address nearly 7 million displaced persons in Europe as a result of World War 2.

Statelessness is yet another problem. At least 10 million people in the world today are stateless. In international law, a stateless person is someone who is "not considered as a national under the operation of its law". Though some stateless people are considered refugees as well. Gaps in nationality laws are a major cause of statelessness. Every country has laws which establish under what circumstances someone acquires nationality or can have it withdrawn. If these laws are not carefully written and correctly applied, some people can be excluded and left stateless. Statelessness can also be caused by loss of deprivation of nationality, emergence of new states and changes in borders. Without citizenship, stateless people have no legal protection and no right to vote, and they often lack access to education, employment, health care, registration of birth, marriage or death, and property rights.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the key legal documents to these problems while The UN General Assembly also adopts resolution 194. The core principle is non-refoulement, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is now considered a rule of customary international law. UN peacekeepers are often there to protect the camps in which refugees must live. Due to the unnecessary interference in internal matters of the country and the porous nature of borders in South Asia, India is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol and does not have a national refugee protection framework. However, it continues to grant asylum to a large number of refugees from neighboring States and respects UNHCR's mandate for other nationals, mainly from Afghanistan and Myanmar. Voluntary repatriation may be one solution for refugees who have made the brave decision to return home. This indeed establishes a reason for opening up safe routes to sanctuary for refugees. It allows them to reunite with their relatives and prevents them from using illegal ways. For those who cannot return, either because of continued conflict, wars or persecution, resettlement in another country or integration within the host country is another alternative. Wealthy countries must also increase the support and funding they provide to people in conflict-stricken countries. That means it is essential that countries work together to share the responsibility for protecting refugees.