



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

**United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees**

**Agenda: Refugees Children**

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# **Letter From Secretary General**

# Letter From The Under Secretary General

Distinguished Delegates,

It is an utmost pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of Sohil Mun 2021.

I am **Muaz Ahmed**, a 12th grade student at Seven Square Academy. It's my honor to serve as the **Under Secretary-General** responsible for **The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**. I genuinely hope that the critical and multidimensional topics related to the agenda can create a productive debate that each participant can ambitiously participate and enjoy.

This study guide had been assembled to give background and general knowledge about the agenda items. Delegates are expected to have done their further research and gathered information.

In the committee, you will talk upon the problems faced by '**Children Refugees**'. It is an agenda item that is not specific to, although highly related to the education, health, psychological impact of citizens due to the rights granted to refugees and pandemic, COVID-19 that the whole world is facing right now.

And as your USG I want you delegates to talk upon this topic and find some proper solutions that can be used in real life that the majority of governments would agree to use. I am available for any of your concerns and questions about the committee.

I wish you all to experience a wonderful MUN with joyful and fruitful debates and coming up with realistic solutions.

I am looking forward to see all of you and I wish you the best luck

For any of your questions you can contact me without hesitation at [muaazzz.mun@gmail.com](mailto:muaazzz.mun@gmail.com)

Yours Sincerely,

**Muaz Ahmed**

**Under Secretary General of UNHCR, SohilMun'21**

# **Letter From The Chairperson**

# WHAT IS UNHCR?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a UN agency mandated to aid and protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people, and to assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country.

UNHCR strive to ensure that everyone has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, with the option to eventually return home, integrate or resettle.

During times of displacement, UNHCR provides critical emergency assistance in the form of clean water, sanitation and healthcare, as well as shelter, blankets, household goods and sometimes food. It also arranges transport and assistance packages for people who return home, and income-generating projects for those who resettle.



The Gulf War in the early 1990s was followed by the exodus of 1.5 million Iraqi Kurds. Some refugees, including these children, were able to return home within weeks



# HISTORY OF UNHCR

UNHCR was created in 1950 to address the refugee crisis that resulted from World War II. The 1951 Refugee Convention established the scope and legal framework of the agency's work, which initially focused on Europeans uprooted by the war. Beginning the late 1950s, displacement caused by other conflicts, from the Hungarian Uprising to the decolonization of Africa and Asia, broadened the scope of UNHCR's operations. Commensurate with the 1967 Protocol to the Refugee Convention, which expanded the geographic and temporal scope of refugee assistance, UNHCR operated across the world, with the bulk of its activities in developing countries.



War and displacement ripped through West Africa in the 1990s. More than 800,000 Liberians fled their homeland in the early 1990s, followed by tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans. The supply of clean water was essential to prevent the spread of disease.

As of June 2020, UNHCR has over 20 million refugees under its mandate. The agency's work includes providing protection, shelter, healthcare and emergency relief, assisting in resettlement and repatriation, and advocating for national and multilateral policies on behalf of refugees.

In recognition of its work, UNHCR has won two Nobel Peace Prizes, in 1954 and 1981.

# Introduction To Agenda Item

## **Refugee Children:**

Children are the most innocent ones in these conflicts of the world. Yet they are the ones who are being hurt more than anyone. Many will spend their entire childhoods away from home, sometimes separated from their families. They may have witnessed or experienced violent acts and, in exile, are at risk of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking or military recruitment.





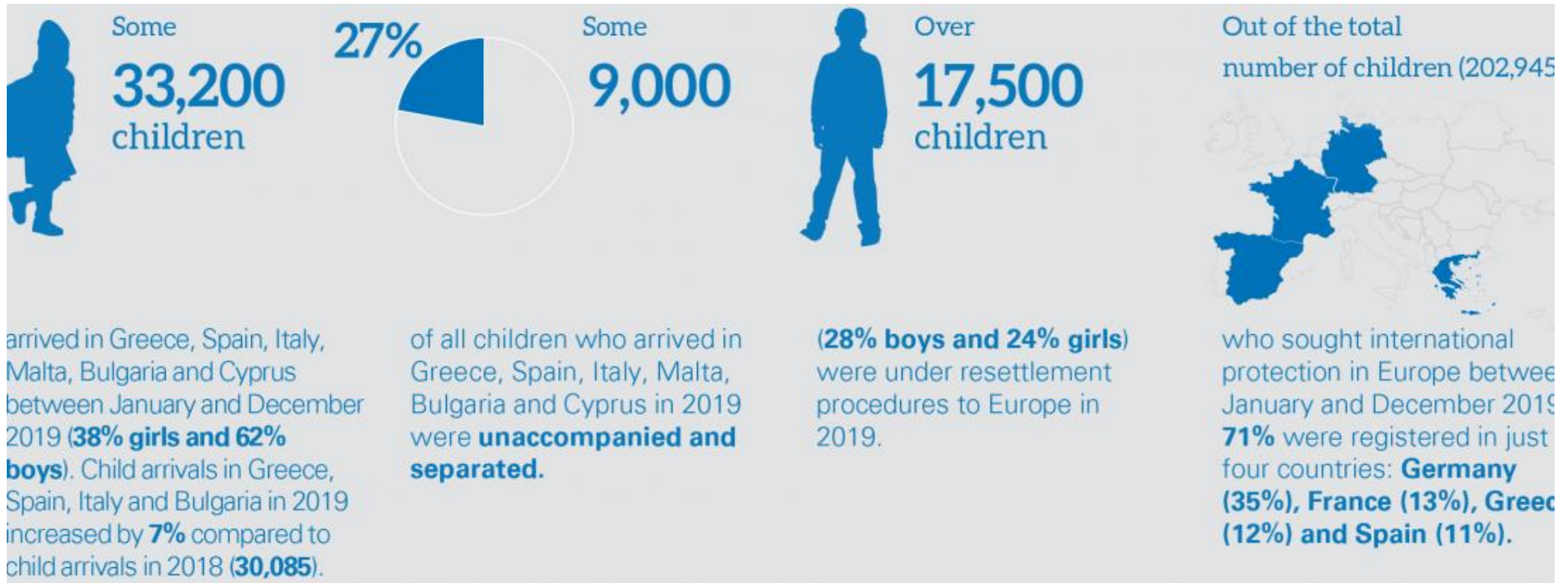
# Introduction To Agenda Item

**Refugee:** Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country. They often have had to flee with little more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind homes, possessions, jobs and loved ones.

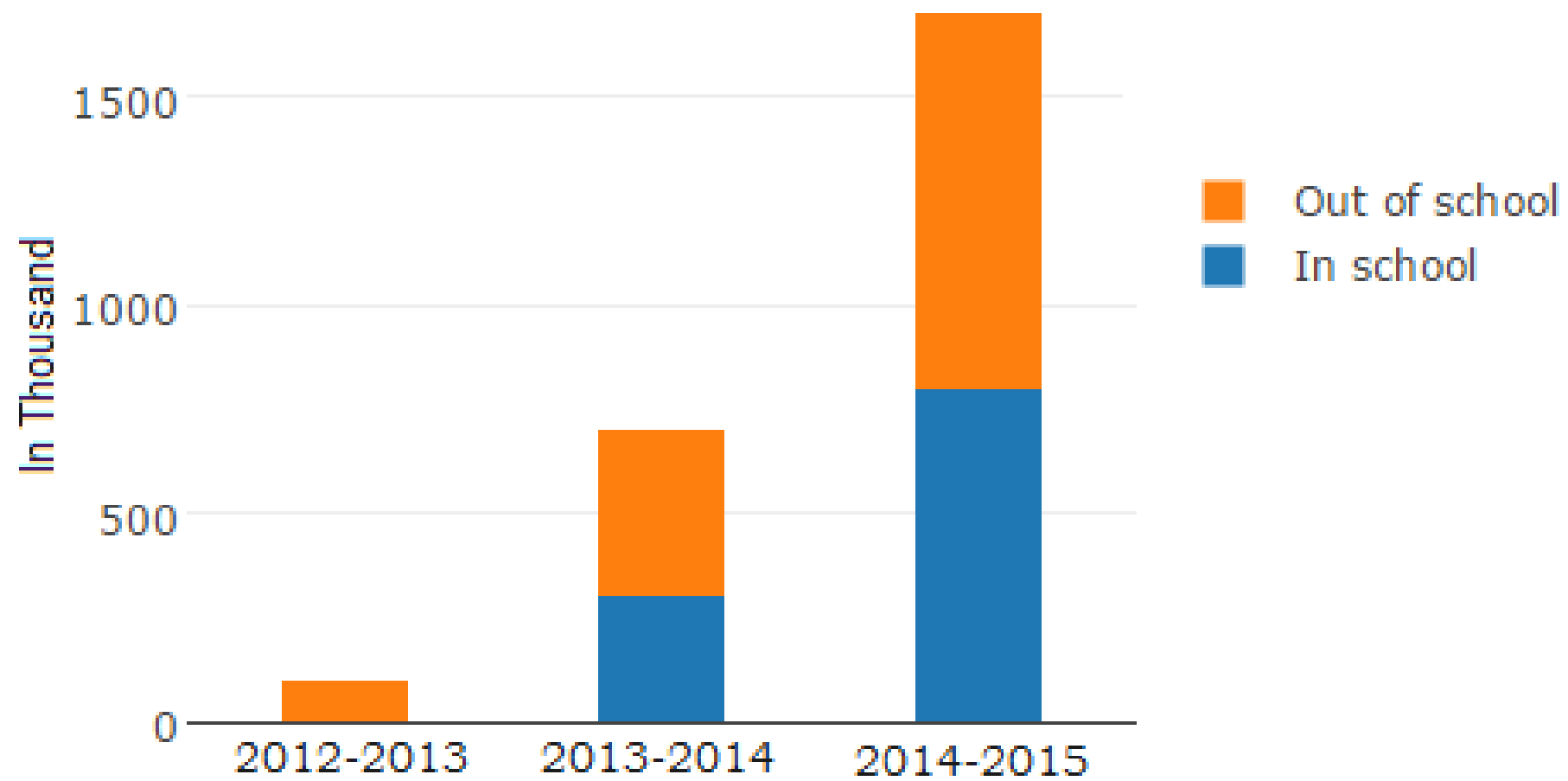
Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention is a key legal document and defines a refugee as: “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”



# Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe overview of trends (January-December 2019)



## Syrian refugee children outside Syria (registered)



data source :UNICEF regional office

# Most Common Problems of Refugee Children



## 1. Accomodation

Even though there are many refugee camps, there are still lot of refugees waiting to find a place to live. They struggle in the borders of countries in order to have better oppurtunities to live.

According to UNICEF's report about 28 million children are homeless globally due to violent conflict. Almost the same number have had to abandon their homes in search of a better life.

Of the 28 million children, 10 million are child refugees and one million are asylum-seekers whose status has not yet been determined. The remaining 17 million children are displaced by conflict and remain within the borders of their home countries.



## 2. Education

**Education is a basic human right**, enshrined in the **1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child** and the **1951 Refugee Convention**.

**Education protects** refugee children and youth from forced recruitment into armed groups, child labour, sexual exploitation and child marriage. Education also strengthens community resilience.

**Education empowers** by giving refugees the knowledge and skills to live productive, fulfilling and independent lives.

**Education empowers** by giving refugees the knowledge and skills to live productive, fulfilling and independent lives.

**Education enlightens** refugees, enabling them to learn about themselves and the world around them, while striving to rebuild their lives and communities.





# More About Refugee's Limited Access To Quality Education

A [quality education](#) is one of the essentials to success in life, but this becomes a challenge in refugee emergencies. According to UNICEF, refugee children are [5 times more likely](#) to be out of school than other children, often due to school safety, [language barriers in the classroom](#), and financial issues.

Many of these challenges are a reality for Syrian children living in Lebanon (which is host to over 1 million Syrian refugees). The emotional toll of conflict, trauma, and asylum-seeking has left many children simply not ready to enter a formal classroom, and many others end up in child labor, to help families make ends meet.

But it's not enough for education to be accessible, it also has to add value to the lives of students. In countries like [Nigeria](#), enrollment has gone up for primary schools, but many students complete their primary education and still lack basic skills like literacy and numeracy. This leaves them unprepared for the job market, and gives them very little hope for escaping the [cycle of poverty](#).



### 3. Healthcare

Health is a fundamental human right for all, including refugees. Making it possible for refugees to access healthcare is a top priority for UNHCR.

According to the **1951 Refugee Convention**, refugees should have access to the same or similar healthcare as host populations.

UNHCR works closely with national ministries of health and partner organizations so that refugees can get the health support and medical treatment they need in emergencies as well as in stabilized and protracted situations.

UNHCR's public health strategy aims to foster the conditions, partnerships, collaboration and approaches that enable refugees to access healthcare and essential health services. Advocating for the inclusion of refugees into national health systems at affordable costs and sufficient quality is a priority. This strategy is in line with the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).





# How Does UNHCR Help Refugees Get Healthcare?

In all situations, UNHCR advocates for refugee inclusion in national health systems and plans. When and as appropriate, UNHCR then provides guidance, infrastructure and capacity building, and funds laboratory diagnostics, medicines, medical equipment and supplies.

UNHCR trains [community health workers](#) to meet with refugees to diagnose, treat and make referrals for common illnesses (e.g., diarrhoea and malaria) and follow up with pregnant women, newborns and people living with chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes and hypertension). Fluent in refugee languages and cultures, community health workers teach refugees about health, hygiene and preventative health measures such as immunization from the same perspective more easily relatable.



©[American Near East Refugee Aid](#) (ANERA)

## 4. Compromised Mental Health And The Threat Of “Lost” Childhoods

The causes of [forced migration](#) are traumatizing enough for anyone. But they hit children especially hard as they are still developing emotionally and mentally, and lack the same tools that adults often have to navigate trauma.

“When children grow up in armed conflict, their deep mental scars are often overlooked,” UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore said [at a 2018 conference in Berlin](#). “Prolonged exposure to violence, fear and uncertainty can have a catastrophic impact on children’s learning, behavior and emotional and social development for many years.” All of this adds up to the sense of a “lost” childhood for those who have to grow up too quickly in order to survive.

It doesn’t end with past trauma, either: Displacement can further affect the mental health of children, leaving them to develop a number of unhealthy coping mechanisms in response to their heightened vulnerability. Even if a conflict ends and they’re able to return home, these experiences may remain with them for the rest of their lives.



*A boy cries as he stands amid rubble of collapsed buildings at a site hit by what activists said was a barrel bomb dropped by forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar Assad in Aleppo March 6. (CNS Photo/Hosam Katan, Reuters)*

## 5. Separation From Families And Greater Vulnerability

[UNICEF's latest estimates](#) suggest at least 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children were registered in 80 countries over the course of two years. Many of these children are separated from their families.

While refugee children in general are more vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and abuse, they're even more so if they're unaccompanied — a [2017 study](#) published by UNICEF found that risk could be more than doubled. Young girls can be the target of [gender-based violence](#) or trafficking.

**Unaccompanied Refugee Children Are At More Than Double The Risk For Violence, Exploitation, And Abuse.**



That same UNICEF study showed that 8 out of 10 unaccompanied young refugees traveling the Central Mediterranean route reported some form of exploitation. On the Eastern Mediterranean route, young refugees traveling alone faced nearly two times the risk as adults. These are two of the most dangerous migration routes.



## 6. Shifting Family Dynamics And Responsibilities

Overcrowded housing conditions. The aftermath of traumatic events. Radically different **financial realities**. These circumstances are common with refugee families living in host communities, which can lead to a dysfunctional shift in family dynamics once they reach asylum. This can have a family-wide impact, and leave children in an especially vulnerable position.

In the Central African Republic, violence has displaced over 1 million people, creating one of the [largest refugee crises today](#). This has left children like 13-year-old Octavie tasked with caring for younger family members (like Octavie's infant nephew, Jolidor) with their parents living in different areas.

In the case of Octavie and Jolidor, this not only placed an undue burden on the teenager's shoulders, but also resulted in Jolidor being diagnosed with acute malnutrition. (Community health volunteers were fortunately able to help with a regimen of [RUTF](#) therapeutic food, provided by Concern.)



**Octavie is only 13, but responsible for her nephew. Neither of their mothers are around.** Photo: Chris de Bode/Panos Pictures for Concern Worldwide

## 7. ISOLATION IN HOST COMMUNITY

Many of the above factors can affect how much “at home” a refugee child feels in their host community. Beyond these challenges, however, xenophobia and discrimination play a big role in isolating those seeking asylum. Amid such lonely conditions, it’s hard to rebuild a life or regain a sense of normalcy.

A [recent UNICEF report](#) also points out that children are often isolated from data surrounding refugees, leaving their representation in the numbers hard to fully codify. This adversely affects how much their own unique needs are heard and considered when it comes to setting policies or offering social services and child protection.



**Syrian Refugee children, living in informal settlements in Lebanon.**

**Photographer: Hussein Aladraa**

## 8. Difficulties Obtaining Legal Recognition And Personal Documents

The need for some form of personal documentation is a constant of daily life in most modern societies. Depending on the prevailing administrative arrangements, establishing one's identity may be essential for a wide range of activities, including the registration of births and deaths, contracting marriage, obtaining employment, housing, hospital care or rations, qualifying for social benefits, entering educational institutions, or requesting the issuance of official documents and permits.

To meet these needs, as well as for reasons of public order, many countries have established a system of national identity cards. Such cards, besides identifying the holder, can also serve as evidence of civil status and of nationality.<sup>1</sup> In virtually all countries, lawfully resident aliens also receive some kind of residence permit which may at the same time serve as an identity document.

**Refugee youths stress the challenges, complexities, and delays in the processes of obtaining asylum and related legal documents from UNHCR and/or local authorities, and the serious implications of not having them.**



For a refugee, the lack of identity documents may be far more than a source of inconvenience. In almost all countries an alien must be able to prove not only his identity but also that his presence in the country is lawful. In some countries aliens without appropriate documentation are subject to detention and sometimes even to summary expulsion.

Such measures are particularly serious for a refugee, for whom they could also **involve the risk of being returned to his country of origin**. Even where the consequences of being without documentation are less drastic, the refugee, in order to benefit from treatment in accordance with internationally accepted standards, needs to be able to establish vis-à-vis government officials not only his identity but also his refugee character.

Due to the circumstances in which they are sometimes forced to leave their home country, refugees are perhaps more likely than other aliens to find themselves without identity documents. Moreover, while other aliens can turn to the authorities of their country of origin for help in obtaining documents, refugees do not have this option and are therefore dependent upon the authorities of their country of refuge or upon UNHCR for assistance in this regard.



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