

Forum: Population Movement Council

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TOPIC 1: The question of neighboring countries and regional burden sharing for migrants and asylum seekers

Be sure to consult the [UNIS MUN LibGuide](#) for additional resources.

I. Introduction to the Topic

The theme of the March 2024 UNISMUN conference, “How can we use multilateral diplomacy to surmount the challenges of rapid societal change?”, connects deeply with the first topic of the Population Movement Council. The increasing number of warfare and conflicts has resulted in an unprecedented rise in the number of refugees worldwide. One strategy to mitigate the impact of refugees and migrants on nations is through burden sharing, which requires cooperation between nations. Delegates should be aiming to collaboratively build a solution that actively protects both the refugees and the host states.

In 2022, 108.4 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced. Of that, 62.5 million people are internally displaced, 35.3 million are refugees, and 5.4 million are asylum seekers. Many people are forced to leave due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order.

Burden sharing refers to the idea that additional states will share more fairly in the various costs associated with the host state's granting asylum to refugees. Many states have used the perceived lack of global burden sharing in recent years as an excuse for placing limits on the asylum they provide to migrants. Due to these restrictions, the majority of refugees reside in some of the poorest nations on earth. As a result, burden sharing has emerged as one of the most important obstacles to international refugee protection.

On an international level, many countries hold much more refugees compared to others, especially countries that border states with conflicts. Major hosting countries include Türkiye, with 3.6 million refugees; Islamic Republic of Iran, with 3.4 million refugees; Colombia, 2.5 million refugees; Germany, 2.1 million refugees; and Pakistan, 1.7 million refugees. Furthermore, 76% of refugees are hosted in low

or middle-income countries. Many of these countries are still developing and having to support refugees means increasing funds for asylum, creating economic strain.

On a regional level, host states, especially in the global South, have used the lack of global burden sharing as an excuse to place limits on the asylum they offer to refugees. An increasing number of countries identify proper burden sharing as a requirement before accepting refugees. Furthermore, 70 percent of refugees and other individuals requiring international protection resided in nations neighboring their home country.

On a national level, internally displaced people refer to those who flee their homes due to safety reasons but have not crossed an internationally recognized border. At the end of 2022, 71.1 million people were internally displaced due to conflict, violence, and disasters. Burden sharing within nations will help reduce the amount of pressure on a specific region of a country.

II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

Asylum seeker

An asylum seeker is an individual who has fled their country and is looking for safety from persecution and serious human rights breaches in another nation but has not yet received official recognition as a refugee and is awaiting a decision on their asylum petition. Asylums are safeguards against detention and extradition granted to political refugees by a country, an embassy, or any organization with diplomatic immunity.

Migrants

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the term migrant refers to someone who relocates from their regular place of residence, whether temporarily or permanently, within a nation or across international borders, and for a variety of reasons. This encompasses a variety of individuals, including migrant workers, illegal immigrants, and foreign students.

Burden sharing

In the context of refugees, the term "burden sharing" refers to the shared obligations among member states to safeguard refugees. This can include financial assistance for countries of asylum and the dispersal of refugees among states.

Burden shifting

Burden shifting is defined as completely changing the authority to approve and disapprove from one party, state, or nation to another. When used in this context, it can mean that the nation disapproves of all new refugees arriving, forcing them to leave.

Non-refoulement

Non-refoulement states that everyone has the right to apply for asylum and that no prospective asylum seeker may be sent back to their own country or to a third nation where their lives may be in danger.

III. Key Stakeholders

Africa

Africa has had a significant influx of refugees for many years, and since 2010, this number has been rising quickly. The reason for the increasing number of refugees is mostly owing to the growth in war on the continent. Africa is home to the world's largest number of refugees, with 26 million migrants and 7 million refugees, including those seeking asylum, hosted in Africa in 2019. Due to the fact that conflicts are the primary cause of refugees on the continent, East African nations are disproportionately burdened with refugees because many of their nations suffer from insecurity. It is very hard for countries in Africa to share the burden between neighbouring countries as the majority of these nations are developing and already struggling to support their citizens, let alone refugees.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR is an organization under the United Nations designated to safeguard and assist stateless persons, refugees, and communities displaced by force. The absence of burden sharing between nations causes a big strain on host countries. Considering a great number of refugees are hosted in low and middle-income countries, these nations bear the burden of responsibility because their infrastructures are inadequately prepared to handle the influx of a large number of newcomers, placing an extreme strain on scarce resources and host communities. The UNHCR works with nations to handle refugees, such as

through resettlement. Thus, the UNHCR plays a valuable role in protecting refugees, and the lack of burden-sharing undermines the UNHCR's efforts.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The IOM is the main organization under the UN that deals with migration. The organization carries out programs of operational support for migrants, encompassing migrant workers, refugees, and internally displaced individuals. They are stakeholders because they help support burden sharing between nations by providing services and advice to governments and migrants. The IOM helps facilitate the resettlement of migrants in the European Union.

National Governments

Governments are essential in establishing immigration laws, controlling borders, deciding the rights and status of migrants inside their boundaries, and forming immigration policies. They are in charge of implementing policies that cater to immigrant requirements, such as giving them access to social services, healthcare, and education. Burden sharing helps relieve the pressure of migrants on the nation, especially for countries that host a lot of migrants and countries that are low or middle-income. However, national governments are also affected by burden sharing such as through providing financial aid and resources to host countries and admitting migrants into the country.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

Unequal Distribution of Responsibilities

Geographical location, economic conditions, or political stability frequently result in certain regions or countries bearing an unequal share of the burden when it comes to hosting and assisting migrants. The 5 major hosting countries hold a total of 13.3 million refugees out of the 108.4 million forcibly displaced people. 4 of the 5 major hosting countries are middle-income countries. This imbalance may put a burden on infrastructure and resources, making it more difficult to provide necessities like housing, healthcare, and education. Furthermore, massive migration waves can put pressure on the community's social services, housing, work, healthcare, and education.

Lack of International Cooperation

Coordinated efforts across nations to divide up the burden of welcoming and supporting migrants are frequently lacking. It became evident after the 2015 rise in asylum-seeker landings in Europe that the European Union (EU) and other wealthier nations had failed to establish a successful burden-sharing system. In addition, resettlement goals, including those established by the UK and the EU, were not fulfilled. This revealed the unwillingness of EU members to share the burden of providing asylum to refugees. This can exacerbate the vulnerability of migrants by causing problems like overpopulation in some areas and inadequate support for them.

Failure of physical burden-sharing

The lack of physical burden-sharing between countries is an issue that causes complications for refugees and host countries. Due to its inability to transfer refugees in a way that would have satisfied their requirements, many have referred to the European response to the refugee crisis as a failure of burden-sharing. Additionally, the UK's relocation efforts have been criticised for being insufficient. For example, it established a goal of 20,000 Syrian refugees to be resettled in 2015. This figure stands in sharp contrast to the 6.8 million Syrian refugees, which does not take account of the millions of people who have been internally displaced. This poses an issue as the unequal distribution of migrants allows certain countries to host a greater number of refugees compared to other countries.

Financial Implications

As stated above, 76% of refugees are hosted in low or middle-income countries. In the European Union, the first year of accommodation and support for migrants costs between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per person. Supporting refugees costs a lot of money, and therefore it is a financial strain for host countries with the lack of financial burden sharing from other countries. If not addressed with the right support or distributed among a larger network of donors, the expenses of hosting and assisting migrants can be significant for nations and communities, posing economic issues.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
28 July 1951	The United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which created the international definition of a refugee and related laws, uses the word

"burden" in its preamble. The preamble states that other governments must assist in order to lessen the burden.

- 31 January 1967 The 1951 Convention's scope was expanded by the 1967 Protocol. The 1951 Convention's temporal and geographic restrictions were eliminated by the 1967 Protocol. These original restrictions limited the Convention to individuals who were made refugees by events that had taken place in Europe prior to January 1, 1951.
- 1989-1996 The Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Indochinese Refugees was adopted in June 1989 to address the situation of refugees from Vietnam (ie "boat people").
- 2001 The 2001 Temporary Protection Directive in the European Union offers permanent and temporary protection in the event that a mass influx of displaced people from non-EU nations arrive and are unable to go back to their home country.
- 2015 The European refugee crisis started in 2015 when there was a sharp rise in the number of migrants from 153,000 in 2008 to over 1 million in 2015. 1.3 million people, the greatest number of asylum seekers to arrive on the continent in a single year since World War II.
- 19 December 2018 Prepared under the United Nations' auspices, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) is an agreement reached through multilateral negotiation that includes the concept of shared responsibility to promote the safety of migrants while ensuring the security of all communities.
- 2020 On 23 September 2020, the European Commission adopted the New Pact on Migration and Asylum acknowledges that no Member State should bear an excessive burden and that every Member State should consistently contribute to solidarity.

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

Unequal Distribution of Responsibilities

The unequal distribution leads to certain countries supporting more refugees than others, and countries that are less economically developed having to provide funds to resettle refugees. Physical and financial burden sharing is required to overcome the unequal distribution of responsibilities between nations. Propose solutions to encourage burden sharing between neighboring countries and financial aid from wealthier countries. For countries against burden sharing, advocate for countries responsible for the movement of migrants to primarily bear the greatest responsibility.

Lack of International Cooperation

Without international cooperation burden sharing would not be possible. Delegates can encourage nations to increase the number of refugees admitted, or advocate for increased financial burden sharing such as through providing resources to host countries, especially underdeveloped countries. Establishing international funds and targets can motivate more countries to participate in helping refugees leave their country.

Failure of physical burden sharing

Failure of physical burden sharing poses a problem as this leads to a mass exodus of refugees entering certain countries. Many countries are afraid of the complications of admitting refugees. To combat this, delegates can encourage nations to accept more refugees and establish a fund that countries, especially those that are less economically developed, can use to help aid refugees and migrants. Current examples include the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) within the European Union. Furthermore, physical burden-sharing can be beneficial for countries with declining populations. Bringing in refugees can increase the number of skilled workers.

Financial Implications

Over time, it has been discovered that, despite the potential financial costs, assisting refugees in integrating into their new nation has actually benefited economies. Delegates can consider highlighting the economic benefits of refugees. For example, Germany welcomes a large number of refugees due to the need to replace the aging working population. Furthermore, according to a 2019 analysis, every refugee-owned business in Australia generates an extra \$98,200 in annual economic growth. However, money must be invested in refugees' education, housing, food, and more in order for countries to reap the

benefits of newcomers. Delegates can also choose to emphasise the economic competition as a result of bringing large numbers of refugees to the country.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

In resolution writing and research, please take full advantage of this chair report and the Libguide sources as they provide lots of helpful information regarding the topic. It is crucial that you fully understand your country's stance on neighbouring and regional burden sharing for migrants as it will strengthen the delegates' quality of argument in the debate.

Please recognize a trend that weak economic foundations and countries suffering from asylum seekers and refugees are correlated, affecting each other. With that said, countries with refugee populations spreaded worldwide include: Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine, Central African Republic, Somalia, etc. Countries such as Turkey, Germany, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Iran, are the 'refugee acceptors', they might have a stable foundation and economic ability to accept more refugees, or they do not have a system to filter out the refugees that are illegally flooding into the country, from any neighbouring countries.

Thus, delegates are advised to first conduct research on the historical context, policies, and past resolutions regarding burden sharing in their assigned country before writing their resolutions. Then delegates are advised to craft realistic solutions that consider the circumstances of migrants and asylum seekers in their assigned country and countries worldwide. Consideration of economic status and resources available is also extremely important. Please bear in mind that the resolutions must not only acknowledge the delegate's assigned country's stance but also countries around the world.

Although not necessary, it will be helpful to research other countries' stances beforehand in order to form alliances during draft resolutions and during the debate. Delegates should form alliances with countries that have similar views on burden sharing and distribution of migrants and resources. Delegates can also consider their neighbouring states.

VIII. Bibliography

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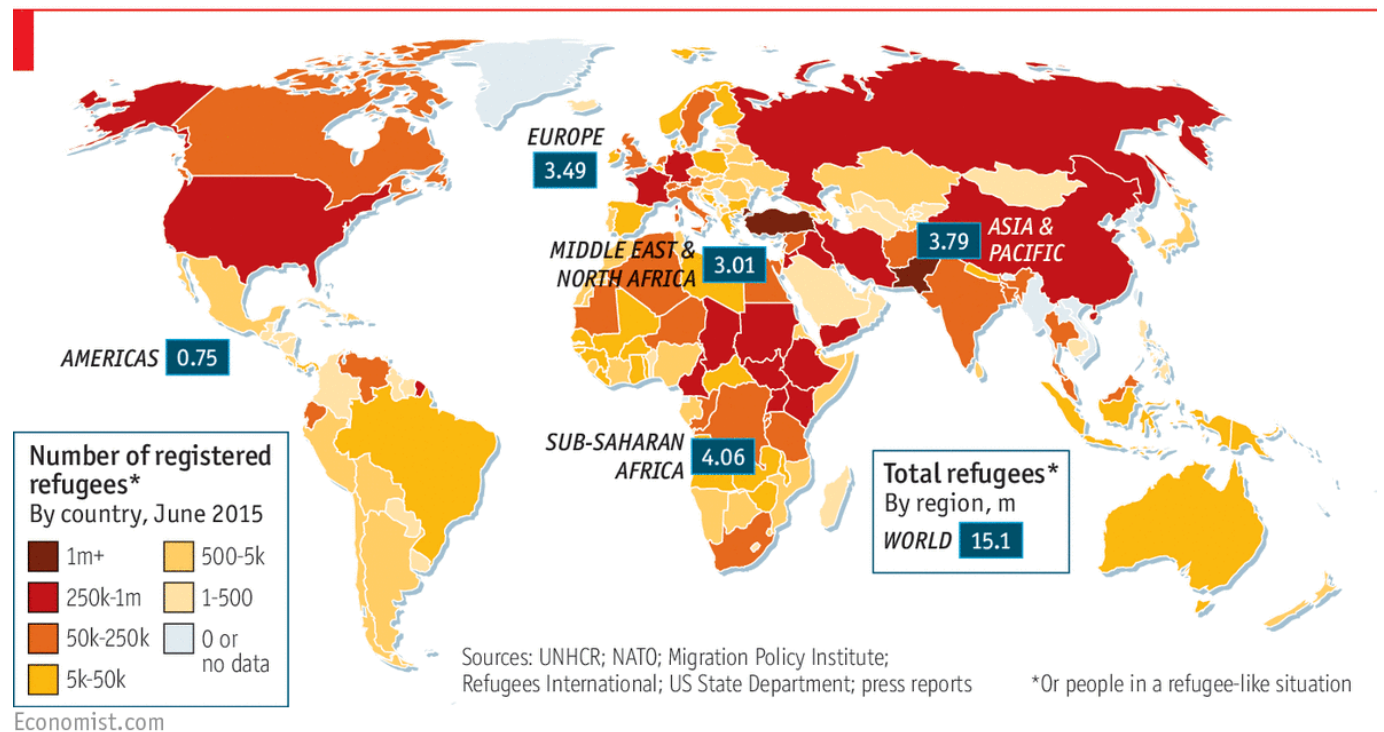
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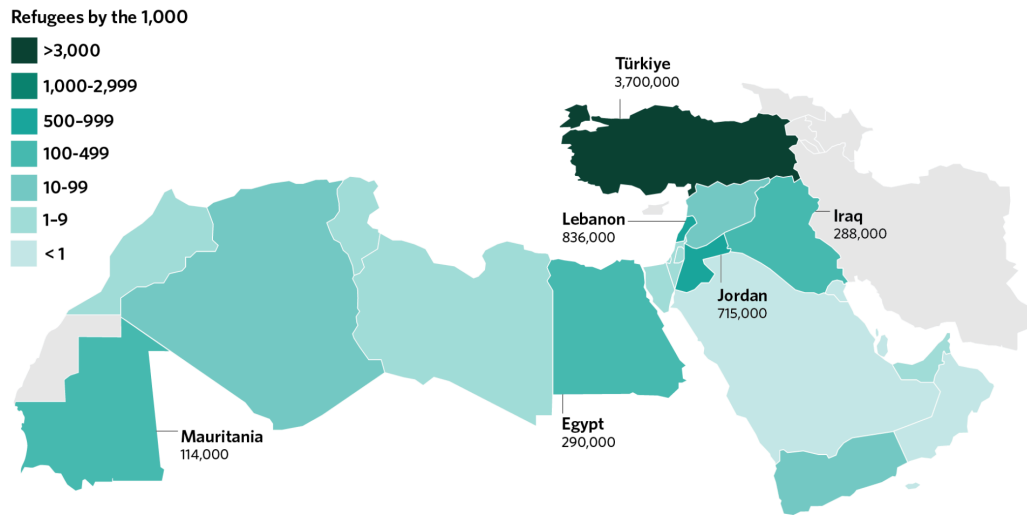
IX: Additional Resources

Map of the number of refugees registered per country in 2015



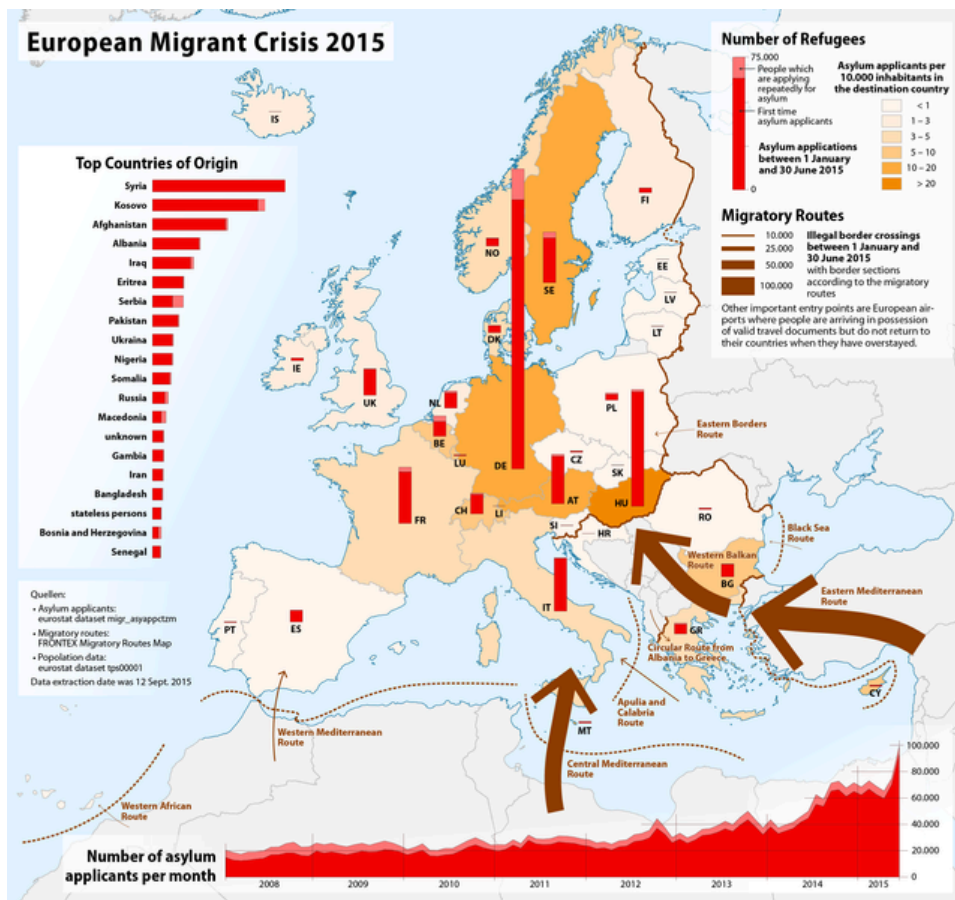
Number of Refugees in Middle East and Northern Africa 2022

Figure 1. Refugees in the Middle East and North Africa by Country of Asylum, 2022

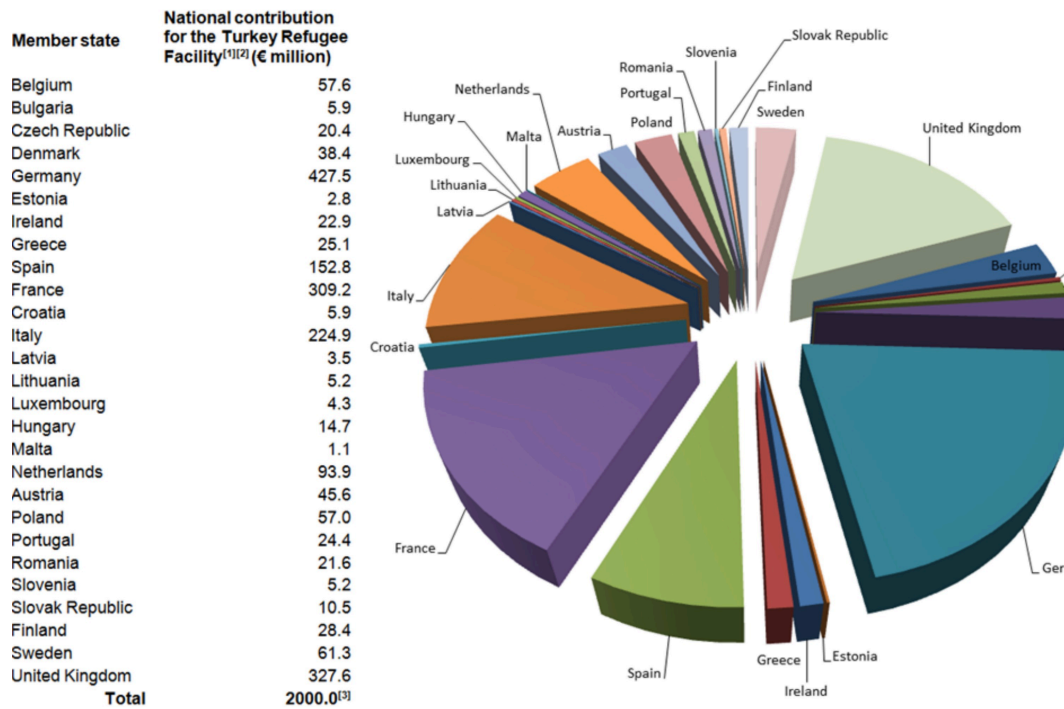


Source: UNHCR, "Number of Refugees in the Middle East and North Africa Region as of Mid-2022, by Country of Asylum," June 16, 2022, accessed from Statista, April 11, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1201495/mena-refugees-number-by-country-of-origin/?locale=en>; and "Türkiye: Populations," UN Refugee Agency, accessed April 17, 2023, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/turkey>.

European Migrant Crisis map and origins of refugees



EU national contributions to the €3 billion migration fund for Turkey, 2016



European Union Trust Fund for Africa funding by country

