

GA3

(social, humanitarian and cultural)

“Ensuring the upholding of human rights of immigrants and asylum seekers at borders and in immigrant camps “

1. General information:

Immigrants and asylum seekers have to face discrimination, racism, gender based violence, pushbacks at borders, trafficking and arbitrary detention. Seeking asylum is a human right and has to be safe and secure for everyone.

2. Background:

The issue of safeguarding the human rights of immigrants and asylum seekers at borders and within immigrant camps has gained significant global attention in recent years. Amidst ongoing conflicts, political instability, persecution, and economic hardships, the number of people seeking refuge and better opportunities across borders continues to rise. This has resulted in complex humanitarian crises, particularly at international borders and in immigrant camps, where the living conditions often fall short of basic human rights standards. And the safety and security at borders and in immigrant camps is not guaranteed.

As of 2023, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that there are over 281 million international migrants worldwide, representing about 3.6% of the global population. Among them, approximately 35 million are refugees and asylum seekers who have fled their home countries due to persecution, violence, or conflict. The ongoing crisis in Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine, Ukraine, Venezuela, Myanmar, and South Sudan have contributed to large-scale displacements, with millions seeking safety in neighboring countries or attempting perilous journeys to Europe, North America, and other regions. At various borders around the world, immigrants and asylum seekers often face harsh conditions, with their human rights being severely compromised. Detention centers at borders, such as those at the US-Mexico border, have been criticized for overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, lack of access to legal assistance, and instances of family separations. In Europe, the situation at border crossings in Greece, Italy, and Spain highlights similar challenges. For example the Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, once the largest refugee camp in Europe, became famous for the bad living conditions before it was destroyed by a fire in 2020. The camp, which was originally designed to hold 3,000 people, at times housed over 20,000 refugees and migrants, leading to severe overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to medical care.

Often the Immigrant camps are located in border regions or within host countries, are frequently under-resourced and overpopulated, creating environments where human rights are difficult to uphold. In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, the world's largest refugee camp, over 900,000 Rohingya refugees live in cramped and squalid conditions after fleeing violence in Myanmar. Despite efforts by international organizations to provide humanitarian aid, the camp faces ongoing challenges related to food security, healthcare, and protection against

gender-based violence. The living conditions are often unsanitary and dangerous, especially for women and children who face violence and sexual harassment.

Common Human Rights Violations are:

- Prolonged Detention: Many countries detain asylum seekers for extended periods, often without proper legal procedures, which can lead to physical and psychological harm.
- Lack of Access to Asylum Procedures: Many individuals are denied the opportunity to apply for asylum or have their claims processed fairly, as seen in the widespread practice of pushbacks, where migrants are forcibly returned without due process.
- Inadequate Living Conditions: Overcrowded camps with limited access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare make it difficult to maintain basic human dignity and health standards.
- Vulnerability to Exploitation and Violence: Migrants and asylum seekers, especially women and children, are vulnerable to human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other forms of violence.

The ongoing crises at borders and in immigrant camps underscore the urgent need for international cooperation and adherence to human rights standards. While international law, including the 1951 Refugee Convention, provides a framework for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, implementation remains inconsistent. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving living conditions in camps, ensuring fair and humane treatment at borders, and facilitating access to legal protections for all individuals seeking refuge.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has highlighted the urgent need for action to address the health impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures and extreme weather events are already causing widespread disruption, leading to increased mortality and morbidity. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that climate change will cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year between 2030 and 2050 due to malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea, and heat stress.

3. Issues that are likely to arise:

- Conflict Between National Sovereignty and International Obligations: Nations may resist measures that they perceive as infringing on their sovereignty, particularly regarding control over their borders and immigration policies. Some countries might view international obligations, such as accepting a quota of asylum seekers or allowing international monitoring of border practices, as a threat to their autonomy.
- Incorporating Climate Refugees: As climate change increasingly drives migration, there may be calls to expand the definition of "refugee" to include those displaced by environmental factors.
- Funding: Designing a resolution with clear, feasible funding and implementation mechanisms that are acceptable to all member states.
- Long-Term Integration vs. Temporary Protection: Striking a balance between offering durable solutions for refugees and respecting the preferences and capacities of host countries.

4. Main Countries involved:

United States:

The USA is a major destination for migrants and asylum seekers, particularly from Central and South America. The situation at the U.S.-Mexico border, including policies such as family separation and the treatment of detainees in ICE facilities, has drawn significant international scrutiny. The USA also plays a key role in shaping global migration policies and funding international refugee aid programs.

Türkiye:

Türkiye hosts the largest number of refugees in the world, primarily due to the conflict in Syria. It plays a critical role as a transit country for migrants trying to reach Europe and has agreements with the EU, such as the 2016 EU-Turkey deal, which involve substantial financial aid in exchange for Turkey preventing migrants from reaching Europe. Turkey's management of its refugee population is pivotal in regional stability.

Australia:

Australia's approach to immigration and asylum, particularly its offshore processing centers in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, has been highly controversial. The country's policies have sparked global debate about the legality and morality of detaining asylum seekers offshore. Australia's stance is influential in shaping broader discussions on deterrence-based asylum policies.

5. List of questions delegates should ask themselves in regards to the topic:

- How can the international community ensure that the principle of non-refoulement is upheld while addressing legitimate national security concerns?
- What mechanisms can be implemented to improve the living conditions in detention centers and immigrant camps without overwhelming the resources of host countries?
- What fair system can be created to share the responsibility of helping refugees, and how should wealthier countries support those hosting the most?

6. Key terms and explanation

- **Immigrant:** An individual who moves from one country to another, usually for better economic opportunities or to join family members. They often face challenges at borders and in camps, such as legal hurdles, detention, and limited access to services.
- **Asylum seeker:** A person who has fled their home country due to fear of persecution and is seeking protection in another country but has not yet been legally recognized as a refugee. Asylum seekers face significant barriers, including access to fair asylum procedures and protection against refoulement (forced return).
- **Refugee:** A person who has been forced to flee their country due to persecution, war, or violence and has been granted refugee status by international or national authorities. They are protected under international law, particularly the 1951 Refugee Convention, which guarantees their right to safety and non-refoulement.
- **Non-Refoulement:** A principle in international law that forbids a country from returning asylum seekers or refugees to a country where they are likely to face persecution, torture, or other serious harm.
- **Detention Centers:** Facilities where immigrants and asylum seekers are held, often at borders, while their immigration status or asylum claims are processed.

- Border pushbacks: The practice of forcibly returning migrants or asylum seekers to another country without allowing them to apply for asylum or have their claims properly assessed. They violate international law and human rights, as they often result in individuals being sent back to dangerous conditions.
- International Protection: Safeguards provided by international law to individuals who have been forced to flee their countries, including the right to seek asylum and protection against refoulement.

7. Useful sources:

- <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- <https://rm.coe.int/recommendation-protecting-the-defenders-ending-repression-of-human-rights/1680ae9b1c>
- https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migrants_human_rights.pdf
- [Health and Safety Conditions at Immigrant Detention Centers | AMA](#)
- [What is a Refugee Camp? Definition and Statistics | USA for UNHCR](#)
- <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/4444afc80.pdf>
- <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/background-guide-challenge1-ensuring-the-safety-of-asylum-seekers.pdf>
- <https://ennhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Protecting-human-rights-of-migrants-at-the-borders-Evidence-and-work-of-European-NHRIs-December-2019-1.pdf>
- [What is the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum? | International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)