



# HOMMUNC XXXII

October 28th, 2017

32ND ANNUAL  
HORACE MANN MODEL UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE

## UNHCR

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR  
REFUGEES

**BLISS BEYER**  
CHAIR

**LAUREN PORT**  
MODERATOR



# HOMMUNC XXXII

October 28th, 2017

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# LETTER FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Jenna Freidus  
Valerie Maier  
Evan Megibow  
**Secretaries-General**

Samuel Harris  
Jacqueline Lee  
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Aaron Thompson  
Mitchell Francis  
**Faculty Advisors**

**DEAR DELEGATES,**

It is our pleasure to welcome you to Horace Mann's 32nd Annual Model United Nations Conference, HoMMUNC XXXII! Since 1985, HoMMUNC has brought together future world leaders in a day full of intellect, discourse, and compromise. The conference engages academically minded high school and middle school students to contemplate and discuss imperative global concerns. We are honored to have inherited the responsibility of organizing this conference for all of you, the over 1000 delegates that will attend HoMMUNC this year. We hope you are excited as we are for the conference to begin!

We encourage you to deeply explore your topics and arrive at HoMMUNC prepared to engage in the discourse of your committees and truly involve yourself in the negotiation process, regardless of your age or experience in Model UN. Each committee is comprised of a wide-ranging group of delegates and will address a pressing global issue. We challenge you to delve deep into your topics and think innovatively. Take this opportunity to learn as much as you can, create the best solutions possible, and lead your committee to a world-changing resolution.

Model United Nations has played a tremendous role in our lives over the past three years, and we are thrilled to share this activity with all of you. It has been our pleasure preparing HoMMUNC XXXII along with our dedicated junior and senior staff over the past six months. We hope you have an enriching and enjoyable experience at the conference.

Sincerely,

**JENNA FREIDUS, VALERIE MAIER, AND EVAN MEGIBOW**  
Secretaries-General

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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**DEAR DELEGATES,**

Welcome to HoMMUNC XXII's United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees! I am so excited to be chairing this committee alongside your moderator, Lauren Port. I joined Horace Mann's Model UN team my sophomore year, and I hope to make my last HoMMUNC the best one yet!

I am a senior at Horace Mann, and I have loved being a part of the Model UN team for the past three years. Other than Model UN, I am on the field hockey and track teams at school, and I started an architecture club last year. I play the violin and am in the school orchestra and participate in an out-of-school orchestra as well. In my spare time, I love watching TV, and some of my favorite shows are Criminal Minds, Riverdale, and House of Cards.

Lauren and I have worked diligently preparing for this conference, and we hope you will all come with similar excitement and dedication. I encourage you to do as much research as you can outside of the background guide and become well-versed in our topics. The status of refugees is a pressing issue right now, and both the Syrian refugee crisis and education for refugee children are topics pertinent to today's international community. Lauren and I are looking forward to hear your thoughts on these topics and the innovative solutions you come up with. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns leading up to the conference.

See you in October!

**BLISS BEYER**

bliss\_beyer@horacemann.org  
Chair, UNHCR

## **COMMITTEE BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURE**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the United Nations Refugee Agency, was established in order to protect and support refugees. UNHCR was created in 1950, as a result of the Second World War, to help the millions of Europeans who fled their homes seeking safety and protection. In the present day, UNHCR's purpose is "protecting and assisting refugees around the world."<sup>1</sup> UNHCR's goal is to ensure that all people maintain the right to seeking and obtain safe asylum in another state. UNHCR strives to provide the options to return home, resettle in a third country, or integrate locally.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of committee at HoMMUNC, we will set the agenda to either topic A or topic B, which will be the topic we will discuss for the majority of the day. After the topic is

chosen, we will proceed to debate the topic chosen, starting with a speakers' list. During the speakers' list, delegates may share whatever they would like about the topic. However, most of committee after this time will be spent on moderated and unmoderated caucuses. Moderated caucuses consist of delegates speaking about a certain aspect of the topic. Prior to the start of the moderated caucus, delegates vote on the specific topic, length of the caucus, and speaking time. During unmoderated caucuses, delegates meet with their blocs, which are made up of other delegations with similar policies, to work on writing working papers and draft resolutions. Unlike moderated caucuses, the delegates can freely move around the room and speak with other delegates in unmoderated caucuses. After each bloc has devised their working paper, they will present their papers, and the committee will further discuss each paper's content. Once the delegates have edited and

perhaps merged their papers, the delegates will proceed to present their papers as draft resolutions. The committee will then vote on the draft resolutions.



## TOPIC A: SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

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### Overview

In 2011, war broke out in Syria, and after six years of war, Syria is still being torn apart. During this time, hundreds of thousands of adults and children have been killed.

Approximately half of the population has been displaced from their homes and families throughout the years. The people remaining in Syria want nothing more than to seek protection and safety from the violence and the hardships that they endure at home. The majority of these people have sought refuge in the nearby countries including Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq.<sup>3</sup> During this time, the European Union, containing 28 member states, has served as both a provider of humanitarian aid and a hosting region for people who yearn to escape the chaos in Syria. Financially, the UN has requested 4.5 billion dollars in order to help the people in Syria needing the

most help; however, it has only received 2.9 billion thus far.<sup>4</sup> Up to this point, there have been approximately 6 million people who have been internally displaced throughout Syria and remain in dangerous conditions where medical care, food, water, and other basic necessities are sparse. Not only are the conditions dangerous within Syria, but Syrians are also risking their lives fleeing the country. People avoid being injured or killed by any means possible, whether it be walking extreme amounts of miles or being on a boat for days on end. As much as families try to stick together when they flee Syria, they often end up split up and sometimes end up alone. Refugees are lucky to escape Syria. With that in mind, many people use fleeing from their home and splitting up from their families as their last resort and only do so when they see a tragic event take place involving people they know.



**Ruins in Syria**

<https://geopoliticsmadesuper.com/2015/07/27/the-short-history-of-the-mess-that-is-syria/>

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## History

Syria's civil war was set off by Arab Spring protests, which were a string of events that led to chaos. The Arab Spring protests occurred in 2011 and acted against the authoritarian regime of President Bashar al-Assad.<sup>5</sup> An intense government crackdown preceded the Arab Spring protests, and in many parts of the country, notoriously violent Islamist groups gained power. As President al-Assad's military forces continued to crack down on demonstrations through the middle of 2011, thousands of regime soldiers began to cut loose from the government in order to launch attacks against it. Meanwhile, as the opposition grew stronger, the United

Nations sent out warnings throughout Syria saying that it was on the verge of a civil war and called for immediate action. In August of 2011, the Syrian National Council was established to try to defeat al-Assad's government. The Syrian National Council sought to end President al-Assad's rule and wanted a modern democratic state to take the President's place. In February 2012, the United Nations and the Security Council attempted to pass a resolution that condemned President al-Assad's attack on his civilians; however, bigger countries such as Russia and China blocked all efforts. As predicted, Syria spiraled into a Civil War with extremely high levels of violence throughout Syria. By the summer of 2013, the United Nations, along with other groups, reported that 90,000 people had been killed by that point in the Syrian Civil War. Today, there have now been around 450,000 deaths, 5 times more than in 2013.<sup>6</sup> With all of the violence in the streets and constant deaths of loved ones, many of the

Syrian people felt an urgent need to flee the country and find refuge in neighboring states. If the refugees were lucky enough to make it with their families, these countries have allowed families to establish a safer lifestyle with better resources. As the Syrian Civil War went on, basic human necessities became scarcer, another source of danger for the people still living in Syria that are unable or unwilling to flee.



**Syrian Refugees**

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-countries-taking-syrias-refugees-2014-9>

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## Current Situation

The world is currently experiencing a huge influx in refugee population, with a large number of them coming from Syria. Due to all of the chaotic events that have led up to the current situation today, innocent

and ordinary people have had no choice but to leave everything and start a new life in a new country. This conflict has caused one of the biggest refugee movements ever seen in recent history. The people within and outside of Syria are in desperate need of assistance due to a lack of resources. In the present day, the fighting is equally as bad as the world has seen in the past. This horrible situation is a result of the government forces and the rebels being unable to overpower the other side while remaining unable to agree on what the future holds for Syria as a country and for the people within it. The UN and developed countries do not know how to solve these problems, and there has been no sign of any major progression towards resolving this extreme crisis to this date. Ironically, the Syrian refugees are being hosted more often by developing countries than developed countries. This phenomenon is due to the fact that the more populous and economically prosperous countries

have not been as welcoming to refugees as the countries that are not as suitable to serve as host countries.<sup>7</sup>



#### Refugees Fleeing

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKewjlpWFseLVAhUEKCYKHV9DAzAQjB0IBg&url=https://www.fair.org/home/the-syrian-refugee-crisis-and-the-do-something-lie&psig=AFQjCNGEasBs01Fun0OUyqBgIjNUoMRSYQ&ust=1503200629774075)

[sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKewjlpWFseLVAhUEKCYKHV9DAzAQjB0IBg&url=https://www.fair.org/home/the-syrian-refugee-crisis-and-the-do-something-lie&psig=AFQjCNGEasBs01Fun0OUyqBgIjNUoMRSYQ&ust=1503200629774075](https://www.fair.org/home/the-syrian-refugee-crisis-and-the-do-something-lie&psig=AFQjCNGEasBs01Fun0OUyqBgIjNUoMRSYQ&ust=1503200629774075)

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#### Possible Solutions

There are a few key factors to keep in mind when pondering a solution to this universal problem: getting the refugees out of their country safely, assimilating them to their new home's culture and traditions, and making sure domestic safety in host countries is not overlooked. Because this problem is growing so rapidly in every part of the world, it is imperative that developed nations work together to welcome

refugees into their borders. When it comes to finding solutions for the current refugee crisis, a big priority is getting the refugees out of Syria safely. Search and rescue operations should be implemented globally for people in distress. As for transporting refugees to safer locations, transportation that allows for larger groups of people needs to be used in order to get a larger number of people to safety more quickly and efficiently. As there is a large risk of death during transport, refugee transportation needs to be safe and protected, with only a few people knowing the routes. Creating a living environment where refugees are able to feel safe and comfortable is an essential part of the UNHCR's mission. A safe and comfortable environment will help to foster relationships between refugees and their new host country and create a community where refugees can thrive. As for preventing unsafe transportation from becoming a larger problem, it is imperative that the international community investigates

and prosecutes, and eradicates trafficking gangs in order to ensure the safety of refugees. When the refugees arrive at their designated host countries, it is important to emphasize acceptance of refugees within their host countries and promote country cooperation. Also, regarding the overflowing of refugee camps, it is essential to build more refugee camps potentially funded by NGOs.

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#### Bloc Positions

##### ***Eastern Europe***

In 9 out of the 15 Eastern European countries, 50% or more of the population believes that their country should not allow any Syrian Refugees seeking asylum within their country.<sup>8</sup> Many people are scared of the possibility of these people committing crimes and causing chaos within their countries and want to avoid this at all costs. Due to past terrorist attacks, many people are also scared of more terrorist acts reoccurring and believe that letting refugees in would allow people with

bad intentions to follow through with these acts.<sup>9</sup> Regardless, many of these countries also do not have the resources to be able to support refugees to begin with.

##### ***North America and Europe***

Many developed countries host a large amount of refugees and use their access to a great amount of resources to their advantage while others that do not host as many refugees, or host no refugees at all. A long land border with northern Syria, relative stability, and a gateway to Europe has made Turkey the biggest host of refugees from the Syrian conflict. Between two and three million displaced Syrians live within its borders, the majority living in camps. Sweden has been a major destination for Syrian refugees following a policy of granting all asylum seekers and their families permanent residency. As for France, former president Francois Hollande has committed France to taking 30,000 refugees over two years. The United States state department said it would

only accept 10,000 Syrian refugees in 2016. Some state governors, however, have said they will not allow any Syrians to be placed within their states. China and Russia, two other extremely populous and wealthy countries, host minimal refugees despite all of the resources that these countries have access to.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Africa and Middle East***

While they are developing, some of the countries near Syria serve as a great help to refugees and are willing to serve as a host country for people in desperate need. Developing countries seek resources in order to provide for refugees, who need food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care. It is almost ironic that the countries with the least amount of resources host the most refugees while the most capable countries that can afford to host large groups of refugees have failed to do so. In fact, 84% of the world's refugees flee to developing countries; however, Turkey, a developed country, hosts the most refugees.<sup>11</sup> The developing

countries that are in the Middle East have continued to be Syria and other countries' first choice for refugees. This circumstance is largely due to a lack of effective and safe transportation for longer distances.

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### Questions to Consider

1. What are the most effective types of refugee settlements? Think about how and where they should be built.
2. What role should the UNHCR play in finding the refugees the shelters where they would be most prosperous?
3. How could the UNHCR encourage countries that have more access to resources to host the Syrian refugees that are in desperate need? What measures could be taken?

## TOPIC B: EDUCATION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN



### Refugee Children

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwjO)

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[nsTQr-](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwjO)  
[LVAhVD4yYKHZlvDJUQjB0IBg&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcuritiba](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwjO)  
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[initiatives%2Frefugees-flee-syria-for-](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwjO)  
[brazil%2F&psig=AFQjCNEZvhfHoAYF4NPt3Z09UfLloGtJMg&](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwjO)  
[ust=1503200261469352](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwjO)

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### Overview

Education is and has always been a crucial part of any child's life; however, it is incredibly difficult for refugee families to focus on finding schools for their children. More than half of all refugees are under the age of 18, and some older refugees were displaced while pursuing tertiary education. While about 90 percent of children around the globe attend primary school, only 50 percent of refugee children have the chance to do so. Inequalities in refugee education

do not stop there; from finding a source of quality primary education to working towards a higher education, the odds are against refugee children. On account of low school capacities, schools for refugees often only allow children to attend up to a maximum age. That means that a refugee child whose secondary education is temporarily disrupted may find it impossible to return and complete it. Unless they can find a vocational training course, refugees' options become limited to odd jobs, making it difficult for refugees to support themselves financially. Refugees who flee while pursuing tertiary education will find no opportunities in camps to continue their studies.<sup>12</sup> In the face of such difficulties, children who were once ambitious often become discouraged and lose all faith in themselves. The biggest problem for refugee children is stability. Because they were forced to flee violence in their original countries, refugee children often doubt the stability of

their new homes. “Refugee education is generally of a very low quality, with ineffective indicators that measure inputs rather than outcomes. Teacher-pupil ratios average as high as 1:70 and, in many situations, teachers do not have even the ten days of training that would categorize them as trained.”<sup>13</sup> With these concerning ratios, it is imperative to begin to improve on this with better mandated training for teachers and being able to bring in more teachers in general.



**Children in a Classroom**

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwjx0fD4r-LVAhWEPiYKHenRCHAQjB0IBg&url=https%3A%2F%2Ffourworld.unu.edu%2Fen%2Feducation-in-emergencies-will-syrian-refugee-children-become-a-lost-generation&psig=AFQjCNHYzk-1rI-5H6HtNZMFRWynUp96gg&ust=1503200378148371>

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## History

Education for refugee children has been mentioned in the United Nations on many occasions. For example, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized compulsory primary education as something people should automatically be entitled to. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women called for the eradication of discrimination in educational settings for men and women, and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child affirmed the rights of all children, regardless of status, to a free and compulsory primary education, to available and accessible secondary education, and to higher education on the basis of capacity. Also, the right to education for refugees is articulated in Article 22 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In the past, refugee children’s education has not been made a top priority by anyone, including refugee children and



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## Possible Solutions

There are many important sub-topics to consider when discussing possible solutions for education for refugee children, the first being sufficient funding for schools and universities. National education systems in host countries need more funding in order to provide schools and teachers with the necessary resources to give all refugee children a quality education. Local universities need more support in order to offer displaced tertiary students the opportunity to follow through and finish their educations. In order to guarantee success and sustainability, expanding vocational training for older children is incredibly important. Vocational training has been seen as the best choice for children who are considered too old to return to school. Developing a Syrian curriculum for refugees is also very important for such children. If schools for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and elsewhere could teach the same Syrian

curriculum the kids were learning at home, it would minimize the disruption caused by moving countries.

Continuing Syrian curriculum will make the transition less traumatic for refugee children in the long run. A blended model, with quality online content supporting local teaching, would make the most sense. The international community needs to work towards allowing refugee teachers to teach in their new countries. There are many teachers among refugee populations, who, due to their refugee status, cannot legally seek employment. Thus, schools for refugee children are short of teachers and have an abnormally low ratio of teacher-student ratio, while qualified Syrian teachers, familiar with the Syrian curriculum, are prohibited from teaching. In a more general sense, finding ways for refugees to earn money legally will reduce pressure on their children to drop out of school and work to support their families. Another topic to focus on is developing tests as

an alternative to school transcripts. Refugee children often never had transcripts, and if they did, they lose them while fleeing Syria, making transcripts a problematic way to measure students' abilities. A standardized test could be created in order to assess students' knowledge and potential without transcripts. It would be more efficient to develop a single test that multiple universities could use to determine whether or not a student deserves the opportunity to continue their studies. Also, facilitating travel for studies can be a productive way to give refugees access to education. Many governments could do more to facilitate travel procedures for the most academically talented refugees. Better transportation could give outstanding students access the highest-quality education, helping them become future leaders in post-conflict rebuilding.



<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwj4novBsOLVAhVDOCYKHVnaB-8QjB0IBg&url=http%3A%2F%2Ftheirworld.org%2Fnews%2Fgive-every-syrian-conflict-child-an-education-say-leading-charities&psig=AFQjCNHYzk-1rI-5H6HtNZMFRWynUp96gg&ust=1503200378148371>

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## Bloc Positions

### ***Middle East and Africa***

Since 84 percent of refugees are hosted by developing countries, these countries will end up hosting many children that need a quality education.<sup>16</sup> These countries need to gain access to the resources and infrastructure necessary to provide education to refugee children, from primary school to vocational training.<sup>17</sup> Infrastructure is extremely important for developing countries involved in hosting refugee families seeking education. These countries need stable structures that can accommodate large groups and students with access to educational materials, food, and water.

Without such necessities, developing countries cannot provide refugee children with the education that they deserve. The developing countries need to ally with developed countries in order to gain access to sufficient resources to begin the process of building schools and providing a quality, sustainable education for refugee children.<sup>18</sup>

### ***North America and Europe***

Surprisingly, many of the more developed countries are not as welcoming to refugees as the developing countries are, even though the developed countries have a greater amount of resources that they can use to support the refugees. It is important for the developed countries and developing countries to team up to ensure refugee children receive education. Also, when developed countries are willing to welcome refugees into their borders, refugees often have no way of getting there, often due to a lack of quality transportation infrastructure. Many

families feel lucky to be alive and have become too discouraged to seek quality education for themselves or their children. Therefore, it is the job of the countries, with the ability to do so, to raise awareness about the importance of education for refugees through methods such as technology or advertisements.

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### Questions to Consider

1. How can the international community ensure education for not only children, but also young adults and older refugees seeking a place to further their knowledge?
2. How can the UNHCR ensure that refugee children remain in school? How can UNHCR prevent refugee children from joining the workforce too early?

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/history-of-unhcr.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/history-of-unhcr.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2013/06/13/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-syrian-conflict>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/16979186>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2013/06/13/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-syrian-conflict>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gallup.com/poll/209828/syrian-refugees-not-welcome-eastern-europe.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/view\\_from\\_chicago/2015/11/why\\_american\\_people\\_are\\_scared\\_of\\_syrian\\_refugees.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/view_from_chicago/2015/11/why_american_people_are_scared_of_syrian_refugees.html)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2013/06/13/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-syrian-conflict>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/eighty-four-percent-of-refugees-live-in-developing-countries/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/5-things-you-need-know-about-refugee-education>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/5-things-you-need-know-about-refugee-education>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/5-things-you-need-know-about-refugee-education>

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/eighty-four-percent-of-refugees-live-in-developing-countries/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/eighty-four-percent-of-refugees-live-in-developing-countries/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://qz.com/711387/the-worlds-least-developed-countries-are-also-the-ones-hosting-the-most-refugees/>



