

Forum: International Organization for Migration

Issue 1: Addressing the impact of immigrants on the host country's asylum systems

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Introduction

The impact of migrants on asylum systems in receiving countries is a complex issue that involves humanitarian, economic, and political challenges. As the number of asylum applications rises, countries are increasingly facing pressure on their resources, legal frameworks, and social services. In many cases, governments are concerned about the immediate monetary costs and the capacity of their institutions to process and integrate newcomers, especially when asylum seekers arrive in large numbers. For instance, countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have implemented restrictive asylum policies, driven by uncertainties that their systems could become overwhelmed and concerns about national security risks.

While there is evidence that refugees and asylum seekers can contribute positively to local economies in the long term through workforce participation and entrepreneurship, many governments prioritize short-term challenges such as

overcrowded shelters, congested public services, and the potential risk of rising social tensions. The issue of mass deportations has further complicated the situation, creating serious health and social risks for migrants, as they are often left in poor conditions. These difficulties emphasize the tension between protecting human rights and controlling immigration systems.

In this context, it is crucial to understand how different countries manage these pressures, balancing international solidarity with national priorities. The challenge is not only about managing migration, but also about ensuring the dignity and well-being of migrants, while maintaining stability within incoming communities.

Definition of Key Terms

Refugee: A refugee is an individual who has to flee their country of origin and seek safety in another country by crossing international borders due to being at risk of persecution (UNHCR).

Persecution: Hostility and ill-treatment towards people over a long period of time, especially on the basis of religion, race, or political beliefs (Cambridge).

Asylum seeker: An asylum seeker is any individual who has left their country of origin in search for international protection (UNHCR).

Mass deportation: The removal of a group of individuals from the state without examining the case of each person in the group (Scholten).

Host country: A nation that accepts people from other countries. Usually for the purpose of work, study or immigration (Boundless).

Remain in Mexico: The "Remain in Mexico" program, officially known as the Migration Protection Protocols, is a protocol at the United States-Mexico border that was initiated under the presidency of Donald Trump and restarted by Joe Biden in 2021. This program places the safety of asylum seekers in danger of kidnapping, rape and abuse in

Mexico. This violates their rights to seek asylum in the United States (HRW)

General Overview

Economic Impact

The impact of refugees and asylees has been a topic of discussion for many years; for the majority, the overall economic impact of refugees and asylees on the host country has been positive. According to a report by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), throughout a 15-year period, from 2005 to 2019, refugees and asylees have created a total revenue of \$581 billion to federal, state, and local governments. Throughout the 15-year period, there was a total of \$457 billion in expenditures for refugees and asylees from the government. Around 72.5% of this came from the federal government, and the other 27.5% came from local and state governments.

In regions such as the United Kingdom, asylum support includes housing, cash support, healthcare, and education. According to an article written by (GOV.UK), as an asylum seeker, you are able to get all these benefits. Britain spent a total of \$5.38 billion on asylum systems, which is an increase of \$1.43 billion since last year, 24/25.

Forced Deportations & Mass Deportations

Expulsions are when non-national individuals are compelled at any measure to leave the state's territory against their will. A successful expulsion by a country of a person is considered a deportation. A mass deportation is when a group of non-national individuals is coerced to leave the state's territory. These conditions do not apply if every individual has a reasonable and objective examination of their situation. Mass expulsions do not only apply to non-national individuals, but also when an ethnic group is removed from the state despite their nationality. Any form of mass deportation is prohibited by many laws. According to the American Immigration Council, a one-time mass deportation can cost up to \$315 billion, and a long-term mass deportation regime can cost up to \$967.9 billion over a single decade. This amount of money could be used in many other national development projects, including homes, schools, and paying off tuition for 4.3 million people going to a private college for four years.

Asylum Conditions

According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), many asylum seekers were in overcrowded camps and shelters, making it a place where viruses, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, could spread at rapid rates. This is due to the camps having poor sanitation and limited amounts of space for the migrants to walk freely and maintain social distancing. These conditions risk the safety of refugees and asylum seekers.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States

The United States is one of the main destinations for asylum seekers in the Americas. Between 2017 and 2020, the US reduced the number of refugees it accepted, which cost the economy over \$9.1 billion every year ("Refugees and Asylees Annual Flow Reports"). Although some groups argue that refugees can help the economy, the government says that the asylum system is overloaded. They focus more on border security and agreements with countries like Mexico. Right now, most of the money spent on refugees comes from the federal government, which is mainly focused on security and deportations (Batalova).

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom's asylum system has been criticized for being "hostile", meaning it has long waiting times (up to 12 months without work permits) and bad living conditions, like the controversial Bibby Stockholm ship. Even though the UK spends \$5.38 billion on the asylum system, many groups say that the strict policies make it harder for refugees to integrate and cause mental health problems. The government argues that these measures are necessary to stop people from moving to the UK for work ("The UK's Asylum Backlog - Migration Observatory").

Turkey and Lebanon

Turkey and Lebanon are two of the main countries hosting Syrian refugees. Turkey has 3.6 million refugees, and Lebanon has 1.5 million. Both countries face big challenges

because their systems are overcrowded. Turkey gives refugees some access to jobs, but there are still tensions because refugees compete for informal jobs. Lebanon doesn't have clear laws about refugees, which means refugees can't own property or get an education easily, which makes them even more marginalized ("Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response").

European Union (France, Greece, Italy)

The European Union has a two-part approach: it tries to share asylum seekers among member countries, while also working with countries like Turkey to control borders. France and Greece have overcrowded refugee camps, like the one in Moria, where the poor living conditions caused a lot of COVID-19 cases. Italy has made deals with Libya to stop migrants in the Mediterranean, but these agreements have been criticized because they put refugees at risk of human rights violations ("Sharing Responsibility: A Proposal for a European Asylum System Based on Solidarity - EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy").

Transit Countries (Mexico and Colombia)

Mexico has increased deportations of Central American refugees due to pressure from the United States, even though many are escaping violence. Colombia, which has 2.9 million Venezuelan refugees, offers temporary protection but has trouble providing healthcare and education for them. Both countries emphasize the need for international cooperation to share the burden of hosting refugees (Anticipatory Note 12 February 2025).

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
1951	The UN Refugee Convention was adopted. It gives a clear definition of "refugee" and introduces the rule of non-refoulement, meaning refugees cannot be sent back to a country where they face danger. (UNHCR)
1967	The Refugee Protocol is introduced, expanding protections by removing the time and regional limits from the 1951 Convention. It helps make

refugee rights global. (OHCHR)

1980

The US Refugee Act was passed. It creates a more organized asylum process in the United States and aligns U.S. law with international refugee standards.

1990s

Wars in the Balkans led to a rise in asylum applications across Europe. The EU starts working on a Common European Asylum System to manage this more effectively. (European Asylum Support Office)

2011

The Syrian Civil War begins. It creates one of the biggest refugee crises in modern times. Turkey and Lebanon have become the main host countries for Syrian refugees.

2015

The European Refugee Crisis reached a peak, with over 1 million asylum seekers arriving in the EU, mainly from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Many asylum systems become overwhelmed (European Parliament).

2016

The EU-Turkey Deal is signed. Turkey agrees to stop migrants from crossing into Europe in exchange for financial support.

2017–2020

The US and UK tighten their asylum policies. The US reduces the number of refugee admissions and starts the "Remain in Mexico" policy (The White House). The UK adds more restrictions and delays.

2020

The COVID-19 Pandemic causes border closures and worsens living conditions in refugee camps, making asylum even harder for many people.

2021

The UK passed the Nationality and Borders Act, which includes strict rules like offshore asylum processing and making irregular entry a crime (UK Parliament).

2023	Record numbers of migrants cross the Darien Gap (520,000+), showing the pressure on host and transit countries in the Americas. (OHCHR)
April 2023	The US, Colombia, and Panama start a joint 60-day plan to stop illegal migration through the Darien Gap and fight smuggling. (Welle)
2024–Current	Debates continue in the US, UK, and EU about how to balance protecting refugees with national security and how to fix the overloaded asylum systems.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, 2016

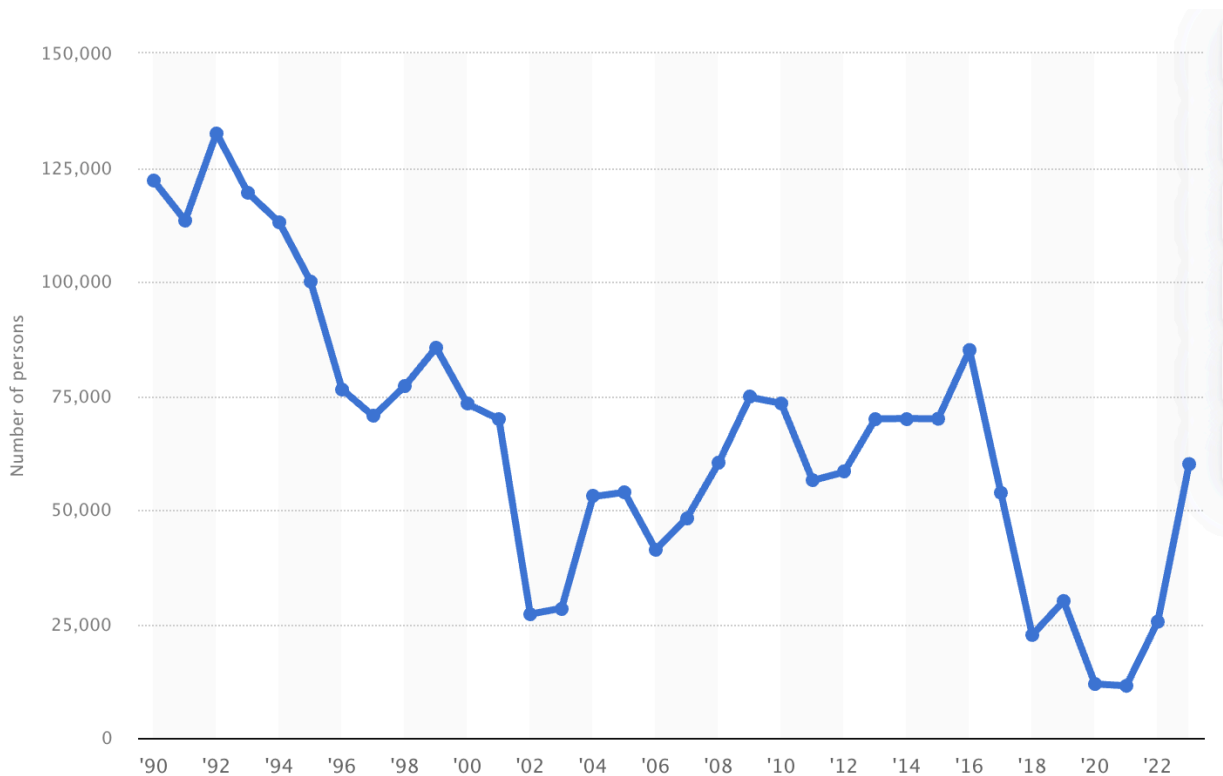
The United Nations has emphasized the protection of the human rights of migrants and refugees throughout multiple resolutions and assemblies. This includes the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants that the General Assembly adopted on September 19, 2016, which says “Refugees and Migrants have the same universal rights and fundamental freedoms,” demonstrating the United Nations’ stance on the treatment of refugees and migrants. It also states, “We reaffirm and will fully protect the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status; all are rights holders,” exemplifying the commitment the United Nations has to protecting refugees and migrants from any violations against their basic human rights (UN).

Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967

This treaty states, “- recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries”. This treaty removed the limitations in the Convention treaty to ensure refugees were protected no matter when or where they became displaced. This treaty has around 146 countries as parties, illustrating its impact and global acceptance to protect refugees (UNHCR).

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In recent years, several countries and organizations have taken important actions to manage the growing pressures on asylum systems. The United States significantly reduced refugee admissions and increased border enforcement. This includes policies like “Remain in Mexico,” an immigration measure that forces certain asylum seekers to stay in Mexico while they wait for their court hearings in the US, which created overcrowded camps and raised human rights concerns (Migration Policy Institute) (Statista).



Number of refugee admissions in the U.S. from the fiscal year of 1990 to the fiscal year of 2023

The United Kingdom adopted stricter asylum measures through its Nationality and Borders Act and implemented policies that made it harder for asylum seekers to access basic services (The Law Society). Across the European Union, efforts to unify asylum procedures through the Common European Asylum System faced challenges in implementation while dealing with countries like Turkey and Libya, externalized border control, but were criticized for human rights violations. In host countries like Turkey and

Lebanon, millions of Syrian refugees received temporary protection but continued to face limited access to jobs, education, and basic rights (European Union Agency for Asylum). Transit countries such as Mexico and Colombia increased deportations or offered temporary protection, yet struggled to provide sufficient support due to limited resources (CNN). Meanwhile, international organizations like UNHCR and IOM provided essential services such as shelter, legal aid, and integration programs, though they often faced funding shortages. Regional cooperation initiatives, like the 2023 US-Colombia-Panama plan, aimed to reduce irregular migration and combat smuggling networks, but migration numbers remain high, showing the need for more sustainable and humane approaches (UNHCR).

Possible Solutions

International Aid

To support countries struggling with a large influx of refugees and asylum seekers, international aid and addressing the root cause should be the two major priorities. International aid should be further developed to support the economic state of the host countries, therefore allowing them to accept more asylum seekers in the future. This also comes with its challenges and the possibility for countries to use the money for the wrong reasons.

Targeting Root Cause

Targeting the root cause of the increased number of people fleeing their country of origin will also help ensure the safety of all people. This includes targeting corruption and changing or adding policies to protect innocent people from being persecuted. This can be seen in Syria, where, as of 2024, ongoing conflicts since 2011 have left an estimated amount of 16.7 million people needing humanitarian aid (World Vision). Additionally, approximately 2 million children do not attend school, which goes against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) number four of quality education (World Vision).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 16 — Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Sustainable Development Goal 16 is strongly connected to the challenges asylum systems face in host countries. Many refugees are forced to leave their home countries because of war, corruption, weak institutions, and a lack of access to justice. When host countries create fair and organized asylum processes, protect the rights of migrants, and follow international law, they help build stronger and more peaceful societies. However, when asylum systems are overwhelmed or used for political purposes, this can lead to human rights abuses and a lack of trust in institutions. Improving asylum systems through better laws, transparency, and access to justice helps protect migrants and also supports peace and stability in the host country. In this way, better migration policies support the goals of SDG 16 by promoting fairness, justice, and strong institutions (United Nations Sustainable Development).

SDG 10 — Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Development Goal 10, Reduced Inequalities, is also closely linked to how migration affects host countries. Refugees and asylum seekers often face serious challenges in accessing jobs, education, healthcare, and basic services. Policies that limit their rights or keep them in overcrowded shelters can increase inequality and social exclusion. To reduce these gaps, host countries need to create fair policies that give asylum seekers the chance to be part of society and live with dignity. This includes access to services, legal status, and economic opportunities. Also, it's important that countries share responsibility and support each other, so no single country is overwhelmed. These efforts help reduce inequality both inside countries and between them, which directly reinforces SDG 10 (Migration Data Portal) (United Nations Sustainable Development).

Appendix

This section of the issue bulletin is dedicated to providing delegates with valuable sources to utilize during their research.

<https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/asylum-and-migration/10-poi>

[nt-plan-action](#)

Source A: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) migration and refugee page includes the UNHCR's "10 Point Plan," which helps guide the UNHCR, other United Nations organizations.

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-statement-recent-arrivals-ceuta-spain>

Source B: International Organization for Migration's (IOM) stance on the arrival of 9,000 migrants in Spain.

<https://www.rescue.org/>

Source C: International Rescue Committee includes information about asylums all around the world.

<https://www.refworld.org/>

Source D: Reports, legal documents, and policy analysis that are used by professionals.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/forced-displacement>

Source E: Contains information about refugee integration and asylum systems. Works alongside the UNHCR and has a "strategic and operational partnership," as the World Bank says it does.

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