

Topic #1: Ensuring the Rights of Female Refugees**Country: Iran****Committee: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees****I. Background**

Today, there are 244 million migrants and 19.6 million refugees globally. Nearly half are women fleeing crises, civil war, poverty, and devastation in hopes of a better future. Burundi, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey source refugees where the vast amount are females. Refugee women are more susceptible to sexual exploitation and assault, so it is crucial that the international community addresses this violence with support for the female refugees in the form of access to sexual and reproductive medical assistance and health care as a whole. In areas where sexual harassment and violence are prevalent, women are unable to seek help within the court system. It is critical that the international community hears these women's stories and hardships to better understand how best to help them, as a majority of countries are affected by refugee related reforms. If countries are not sourcing refugees, they are most likely accepting them and are therefore involved in these crises. Seeing that the states that refugees are fleeing from continue to be embroiled in conflict and female refugees comprise a significant portion of the refugee population, it is imperative that the international community ensures their rights.

II. U.N. Involvement

The UN has taken actions in the past dedicated to ensuring the rights of female refugees. This was a major focus during the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016, which focused on including the voices of women in the conversation of refugee rights and preventing abuse. Following the Summit, UN Women focused on organizing "Safe Spaces" within the refugee camps around the world to provide the women with employment training,

opportunities for income, counseling, and leadership skill development. The Lusenda Refugee Camp houses fleeing Burundi refugees, creating one of the most successful “Safe Spaces.” That being said, only 4 percent of UN projects, appeals, and mandates are specifically created to address the needs of female refugees, and 0.4 percent of all funding to states experiencing instability is directed towards strictly female groups and ministries.

III. Country Policy and Proposed Solutions

Iran has taken several steps to improve the lives of female refugees. Iran recently ordered all schools to accept Afghan children refugees, a step that will better the lives of women who sacrificed a great deal to provide their children better opportunities, an act praised by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. For the women fleeing the gender-based violence prevalent in Afghanistan, Iran provides them with access to quality education and the ability to file for divorce. It is also important to recognize that a majority of the Iranian government ordered deportations are undocumented boys and single men seeking employment in Iran rather than women and young girls. In addition, Iran is working on implementing a health insurance system that will greatly benefit the female refugees and their families. Most recently, in early 2018, the Iranian government decided to provide the same medical insurance to refugees as it provides its own citizens. Iran is one of the few countries to adopt such a policy, providing the necessary medical assistance that will especially benefit female refugees with services that involve reproductive care. This was outlined in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants by the UN General Assembly and has now become a reality due to Iran’s willingness to consider the rights of the refugees it hosts, especially the rights of the female refugees.

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