



Committee: United Nations
International Children's Emergency
Fund (UNICEF)

Topic: Refugees: Children's Rights
(America)

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Background

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created in 1946 with the purpose to help children in war zones such as Europe, China and the Middle East. In 1953, the words "international" and "emergency" were removed from the organization's name and its mandate was extended to address the needs of children in the developing world. UNICEF is dedicated to saving and protecting the most vulnerable children, works to ensure child rights, provides emergency relief and much more.

The United States has been a global leader in the resettlement of refugees for many years. The country used to offer refuge to more people than all other nations added together. Recently, the Trump administration has reduced the maximum number of refugees that can enter the United States. Also, the government has imposed new procedures on refugees to be admitted into the country, which has exacerbated the problem of gaining entry and increased waiting times leaving refugees exposed to dangerous situations. Research from 2017 showed that for the first time in modern history, the United States took in fewer refugees than the rest of the world. Adding to this issue, the amount of refugees fleeing violence or persecution in their countries has increased and therefore, the need of relocation has too.

In the last few years a child refugee crisis has become the worst seen since World War II and at the moment a humanitarian emergency is being called out that demands immediate action. Millions of children are caught in wars in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, South Sudan and many other countries. Since the Trump administration reduced the number of refugees entering USA, unaccompanied children arriving to the country have been trapped in status as migrants, with little consideration to their vulnerabilities and needs as children. Many have been denied access to adequate medical services and education, have been abused and mistreated by authorities and furthermore are unable to seek asylum. Child refugees have been detained in jail like facilities, in conditions that are often degrading and inhumane. As a result, some children have suffered physical and mental consequences. These periods of detention can either create new traumas or re-emerge previous ones. UN human right bodies have called upon this issue and have stated that detaining children is cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment that is prohibited under international law.

Guide Questions:

1. What is a refugee?
2. Why has relocation into United States of America decreased?
3. How can countries in America help to reduce migration?

References:

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