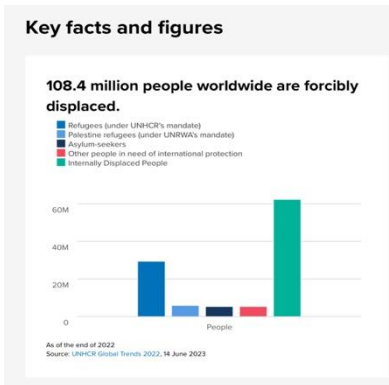




## **Briefing paper – Human Rights Committee**

### ***Topic: The issue of mistreatment of refugees***

#### Overview



A refugee is an individual "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it"

#### Housing

As well as being a fundamental human right, safe, secure and affordable housing plays a critical role in determining overall health and well-being and provides a base from which resettled refugees can seek employment, re-establish family relationships and make connections with the wider community. Most resettled refugees will have spent prolonged periods in a country of asylum where their shelter was unsafe, substandard or overcrowded and where they may have lacked security of tenure. Setting up a home and establishing a 'sense of place' in the receiving society is therefore a critical part of the integration process. Resettled refugees' capacity to secure housing is influenced by a range of factors, including their:

- Earning capacity in the early integration period, with many being on low and fixed incomes. This affects both the ability to meet the initial costs associated with establishing a housing tenancy as well as ongoing rental payments.
- Knowledge of the housing market in the resettlement country which will hamper their search for housing.
- Knowledge of rights and responsibilities as tenants. Detailed orientation should be provided in the first week of arrival and information on how to maintain the tenancy throughout the support period.

- Capacity to meet requirements for securing a housing tenancy (for example, prospective tenants are usually required to furnish personal references and to have an established employment record).
- Ability to communicate in the language of the resettlement country.
- Inability to rely on accommodation support from family and friends.
- Family composition and housing needs. Large families, extended families, singles and refugees with disabilities may experience greater difficulties in securing appropriate accommodation.
- Culture views of various housing types. For example, in some cultures, wooden housing may be perceived as inferior.

Ensuring that resettled refugees have access to secure and affordable permanent housing is perhaps one of the most challenging and complex problems facing countries of resettlement. Recognising the critical role of housing in the integration process, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands all allocate long-term housing to resettled refugees soon after their arrival.

### Safety of Transportation

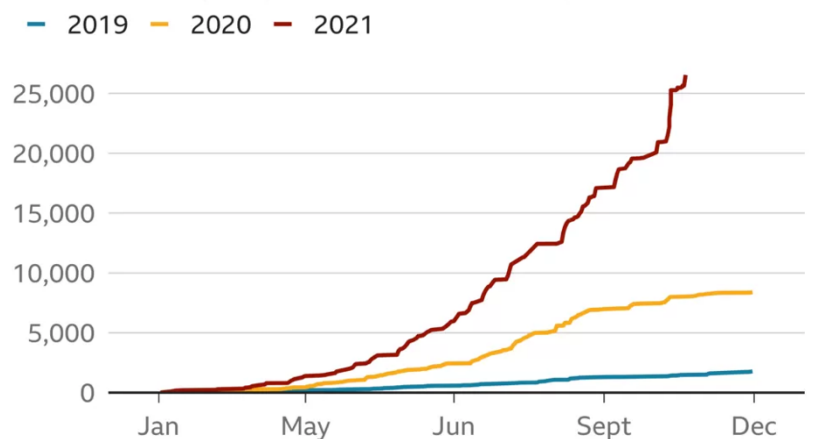
Transportation is also something which must be considered when discussing refugee safety. At the end of 2022, of the 108.4 million forcibly displaced people, an estimated 43.3 million (40 per cent) are children below 18 years of age. Refugees face difficulties while escaping as shown by an estimated 2,275 people perished in the Mediterranean in 2018 – an average of six deaths every day.

More than 2,500 migrants died or went missing this year while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to get

to Europe, according to the United Nations. Between June and August this year, at least 990 people perished or vanished trying to get to Europe from northern Africa. Meanwhile, during the same period last year, 334 people died. Since the start of the year, well over 31,000 have attempted the dangerous crossing between France and the UK and 7,800 people have been rescued at sea, the French authorities have reportedly said. Additionally, the number of deaths in the first six months of the year, after at least 1,146 people died attempting to reach Europe by boat from January to June, the UN migration agency said. In September the IOM reported a sharp increase in the deaths and disappearances of migrants at sea heading to Spain's Canary Islands, along the West African coast. By the end of September, 785 people, including 177 women and 50 children, had died or disappeared in 2021. More than 100,000 migrants have crossed the English Channel on small boats from France to southeast England since the UK began publicly recording the arrivals in 2018, official figures revealed on Friday.

### Crossings in 2021 far exceed previous years

People crossing English Channel in boats, year to date



Source: Home Office, 22 Nov 2021

BBC

## Education

Close to half of all refugee children – 48 per cent – remain out of school. At pre-primary level, the average gross enrolment rate for the academic year 2020 to 2021 for reporting countries was 42 per cent. For primary level, the corresponding rate for reporting countries was 68 per cent. For secondary level, it was 37 per cent, illustrating that significant structural barriers remain for refugee learners to access post-primary education. At tertiary level, enrolment rates for the same period were at 6 per cent. This increase, of 3 percentage points since 2019, represents a transformational change for thousands of young people and their communities. The literacy and numeracy skills learned at primary and secondary level form the basis of lifelong learning, meaning that the refugees who aren't able to prioritise education are at risk of being at a severe disadvantage later in life.

### **Points to consider:**

*How is the refugee crisis impacting your country?*

*Is information surrounding housing readily available and accessible to refugees upon arrival?*

*How will the refugee crisis impact your country?*

*Should the education of minors be prioritised?*

*How can the issue of transportation of refugees be tackled?*

*Is there anything citizens can do to help tackle the issue of refugee mistreatment?*

### **Helpful Links:**

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/refugees>

<https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education>

<https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education/primary-and-youth-education>

<https://www.npr.org/2023/09/29/1202560292/migrants-mediterranean-deaths-2023>

<https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/ih/housing/access-secure-and-affordable-housing#:~:text=As%20well%20as%20being%20a,connections%20with%20the%20wider%20community.>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/12/six-dead-after-migrant-boat-capsizes-crossing-from-france-to-uk>

<https://www.unhcr.org/desperatejourneys/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-housing/migration-and-right-housing>