Princeton Model United Nations Conference 2017

UNHCR
Chair: Larry Bao
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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

It is an honor to be your chair for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in PMUNC 2017! I'm excited to hear all you have to offer as we combat human trafficking and protect the rights of internally displaced people in Colombia.

Here’s a little about me: I am currently a junior at Princeton, majoring in Operations Research and Financial Engineering (ORFE) with certificates in computer science and finance. I attended PMUNC myself as a high school student, and joined the Princeton Model U.N. team as a freshman. Outside of Model U.N., I am a member of Princeton’s Heavyweight Rowing team and co-president of Tiger Investments. I’ve always been interested in economics, politics, finance, and international affairs, and I love hearing opposing viewpoints in debate – that is why I do Model U.N.

As for our committee, I expect to run an orderly and clean committee, despite our high number of delegates. You will have a good time in this committee as long as you are not disruptive. Model U.N. is a competition, but it is also a forum for meeting new people, engaging in passionate debate, and having a great time at the delegate dance. As such, do not let the competition negatively affect your actions here. Note that I was a high school delegate and still compete in Model U.N. now, so I understand rule-breaking that happens in committees – pre-written resolutions and other forms of cheating **will not** be tolerated. We will follow parliamentary procedure as used in the United Nations, which includes moderated caucuses, unmoderated caucuses, speakers list, and voting procedure. I understand that this is the first conference for many of you, and mistakes are inevitable. Do not worry too much about this: we will be going over parliamentary procedure in committee and you will learn quickly.

We have two topics for our committee: internally displaced people in Colombia and East Asian human trafficking. I expect to spend majority of the committee on one of the topics, which you will vote on as a committee during our first session. Coming to a resolution in a General Assembly is often a long process, so we may or may not have time to finish the second topic. As such, come prepared to discuss both topics at great length.

The best advice I can give you for this committee is to **stick to your country’s position**. As you research our topics and grow passionate about them, it is extremely easy to drift towards using your own viewpoints as your country’s position. In debate, do not forget your country’s position, even if it opposes your own. For all intents and purposes, in committee, you are representing your country in the United Nations; your own views do not matter.

I’m looking forward to an amazing conference with all of you!

Larry Bao
Internally Displaced Peoples in Colombia: In December 2014, the UNHCR announced that nearly 6 million people were registered in Colombia as “internally displaced.” Colombia has been engaged in a civil war between insurgents and the government for over half a century; the population has suffered greatly from these conflicts. In addition to the war, the drug trade in Colombia has displaced thousands of people as cartels attempt to expand coca cultivation. How should the UNHCR respond to this crisis?

East Asian Human Trafficking: Migration of displaced people has always been a complex and politically sensitive issue, especially because it has shot up to unprecedented levels in recent years. Reports estimate that approximately 30-40% of this migration is unregulated traffic and a significant portion of this migration is human trafficking. Trafficked women are often sexually exploited and sold for a premium; these profits go on to fund other criminal enterprises. How can the UNHCR address this issue and protect the rights of those being trafficked?
TOPIC A: East Asian Human Trafficking

Introduction

Human trafficking is a widespread issue in many Asian countries. Because trafficking is illegal and hard to regulate, exact numbers are difficult to obtain, but studies suggest that there are nearly 36 million victims worldwide, and of those, nearly two-thirds of the victims are from Asia.[1] Human trafficking can take many different forms, such as sex trafficking or forced labor, and most victims of human trafficking are impoverished and thus unnoticed by society when they disappear. Many Asian countries have implemented some policies to combat human trafficking, yet other countries have not: notably, countries like Malaysia, North Korea, Papua New Guinea, and Thailand are currently classified as ‘Tier 3’ countries because they are not making significant efforts to improve compliance with anti-trafficking frameworks.[2]

Though the United Nations and nations like the U.S. have tried to enact anti-trafficking laws in East Asian countries, there has been minimal enforcement of these laws and thus little progress in reducing the number of trafficking victims. In fact, in Thailand, the government has allegedly aided in human trafficking, though the government claims to be seeking better ways to combat it.

How can the High Commissioner of Refugees protect the freedoms of victims and potential victims of human trafficking? How can we attempt to regulate an unregulated and secretive practice?

History of the Topic

Human trafficking in Asia has been an ongoing issue for many years. In Southeast Asia, where it is most rampant, the problem has three main causes: poor economic situations, the structure of the economy, and government corruption. Cambodia, for instance, was colonized until 1953, and as a result it lacks infrastructure. However, Cambodia’s tropical climate made it a desirable
tourist location, so its economy quickly became reliant on tourism, including sex tourism. The growing demand for sex tourism resulted in a higher demand for sex slaves, making human trafficking more profitable.\[3\] Moreover, the rising number of military bases contributed to the demand for sex slaves, and accordingly human trafficking in Cambodia saw a massive increase in the 1970s.

Industrialization further contributed to the demand for human trafficking in Southeast Asia. As newly industrializing countries, Thailand and Indonesia both saw increased demand for cheap labor in mines and factories. As a result, poor individuals throughout the country and around the region began moving to these industrialized centers seeking jobs and employment; stories of wealth and success attracted them to the industrial centers. However, these individuals would find themselves under extremely inhumane labor conditions with no real option to leave. In this way, a lot of the labor trafficking that took place during this industrialization period was not as a result of coercion or force, but rather as a result of people gambling on opportunities for increased wealth and finding themselves with no other options.\[4\]

The United Nations has taken action to prevent human trafficking, but its efforts have largely ineffective. In November 2000, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children was enacted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The protocol defined trafficking in human beings, facilitated the return of trafficked children, prohibited trafficking of children, suspended parenting rights of any individuals who have taken part in human trafficking, and provided criminal penalties for those found to be involved in human trafficking.\[5\] The protocol was ratified by 170 parties as of September 2016. While this protocol represented the first major steps towards combatting human trafficking, trafficking remains a growing industry in Southeast Asia, and statistics and research are still not readily available.
The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking was launched in March 2007 under the premise that human trafficking is too heinous a crime and too difficult a problem to be combatted by governments alone. It works in collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Its goals are to reduce the vulnerability of potential victims and demand for exploitation, ensure adequate protection and support for victims, and support the prosecution of all criminals involved. It attempts to foster awareness and global commitment to counter human trafficking, and assist countries in creating support structures for victims of trafficking.[6]

In August 2010, the General Assembly launched the Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, in which the United Nations declared its “steadfast commitment to stop human trafficking.”[7] The plan stresses commitment to data collection, research, and increased analysis of trafficking in order to make more informed policy decisions about trafficking. Furthermore, the plan attempts to establish partnerships between States and within regions under the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. The plan also established the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for trafficking victims to support their physical and psychological recovery, and it encouraged nations to contribute to the fund.

Governments in Southeast Asia have taken little action against the problem, even denying the existence of the problem in the worst cases. In 2015, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh threatened victims of human trafficking with punishment should they return home because they were “mentally sick.” The governments of Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia historically turned a blind eye to the problem, as they did not want to reform the system that enriched government officials and provided business tycoons a source of dirt-cheap labor.
While Indonesia and Malaysia have begun sheltering victims and ramping up efforts to catch traffickers in recent years, rates of progress have been incredibly slow. The United States, European Union, and the United Nations have condemned their treatments of refugees and have made it clear that countries not allowing refugees to return home will face punishments.[8]

Current Situation

23.5 million of the world’s 36 million victims of human trafficking come from Asia, with India (14 million), China (3 million), Pakistan (2 million), Indonesia (700,000), and Thailand (475,300) all making it in the world’s top ten countries with the most victims. The United Nations estimates that about 64% of human trafficking in Asia is for forced labor, servitude, and slavery, and 26% is for sex exploitation. Children make up 36% of trafficking victims while adults make up the other 64%. The ILO estimates that the profits of forced labor are $150 billion per year globally, so human trafficking is an extremely lucrative business.[9]

In addressing human trafficking, we must separately examine sex trafficking and trafficking for forced labor. Sex trafficking has been driven by the lack of rights women have in many Southeast Asian countries. For instance, many women in poorer areas of Indonesia and Cambodia are not given birth certificates or other forms of legal identification. In turn, this results in an inability to secure legal employment and few opportunities for class mobility, often forcing them to take on unregulated jobs, which can lead to them becoming victims of human trafficking. Moreover, because these women are often uneducated on human trafficking, their naivete means that they cannot recognize common signs of trafficking schemes, and they end up falling victims to traffickers. For instance, traffickers often target women in poorer cities and promise them better lives in bigger cities, but when the women arrive, they often find themselves stuck in very different work conditions, in debt, and without legal documents to travel back to their home countries.[10]
Furthermore, the popularity of sex tourism in Southeast Asian countries like Thailand makes government officials reluctant to take action against sex trafficking. The tourism industry is a major factor in Thailand’s economic development, and thus the government is not incentivized to act against it. Furthermore, men in some areas of Southeast Asia view sexual services as socially acceptable and enjoyable activities, increasing demand for the industry.[11]

Poverty and demand for cheap labor are the two root causes of forced labor trafficking. Poverty is a catalyst for human trafficking; more impoverished individuals are more likely to seek out the promises of urban wealth and lifestyle promised by traffickers. Furthermore, impoverished populations lack access to the information and infrastructure that trafficking relies on. However, we must also consider the effects of cheap labor demand; after all, without a demand for cheap labor, traffickers would not have a market. Many businesses knowingly employ impoverished, trafficked individuals at extremely low wages, because many developing countries are unable to meet the growing demands for low-cost labor in factories or agriculture. These businesses often prefer trafficked workers to local ones as trafficked workers are willing to work longer hours for cheaper.

While most countries have adopted laws and policies to prosecute human traffickers and rehabilitate victims, they have not yet tackled the more complicated issue of prevention. Arresting human traffickers that have been caught is not an adequate solution to the issue, as so much human trafficking goes undetected by the government. It is widely agreed upon that in order to address the problem, more data on under-developed countries is needed to better track individuals. Developed countries have more advanced technology, including facial recognition and government tracking, making it easier to notice when someone goes missing and find them when they do. However, in underdeveloped and developing countries where human trafficking is a major problem, such systems are not in place, and missing people go unnoticed by the government. The infrastructure for advanced technological tracking systems does not exist in the most problematic countries.
Runaway and homeless youth, especially LGBT teenagers, are especially susceptible to human trafficking. In the United States, NGOs are urging Congress to pass the Runaway and Homeless Youth Trafficking Prevention Act, which would ensure that all youth have access to housing and other critical services that they need. However, even in a developed country like the United States, Congress is reluctant to pass the act due to costs and corruption; in less developed countries, the government almost certainly does not have the funds to support such a program. Others have supported passing laws involving supply chain regulation, which would require companies to disclose the measures they’re taking to address forced labor and human trafficking within their supply chains and empower everyday consumers to make informed decisions about the companies they choose to support.[12]

The common problem with most of these plans is that though they are preventative measures, they are impractical in the countries where human trafficking is most prevalent. In such countries, corruption and infrastructure are major problems as well, making many of these solutions impossible to implement. Furthermore, when the United Nations has attempted to implement these solutions in the past, they were largely ineffective, as ineffective governments made little progress on the issues at hand. In this committee, I’d like you to think about the best ways to address the issue of human trafficking while keeping in mind the environments of the countries we’re working on.

Country Policy

Human trafficking is universally regarded as an issue - thus, there are not officially regional blocs (as no country officially supports human trafficking). However, the amount of effort that countries put in towards addressing human trafficking varies greatly. The United States government has classified countries into three tiers, with the specifications as follows:
● Tier 1 - Countries whose governments fully meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act’s (TVPA) minimum standards.

● Tier 2 - Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards.

● Tier 2 Watchlist - Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards AND:

  o The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;

  o There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or

  o The determination that a country is making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.

● Tier 3 - Countries whose governments do not fully meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

Tier 1 countries include: Armenia, Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, South Korea, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, St. Maarten, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom United States of America
Tier 2 countries include: Albania, Angola, Argentina, Aruba, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Croatia, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Macau, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vietnam, Zambia

Tier 2 Watchlist: Afghanistan, Antigua & Barbuda, Benin, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, China (PRC), Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d’Ivoire, Cuba, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Hong Kong, Kiribati, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Ukraine

Tier 3: Algeria, Belarus, Belize, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iran, North Korea, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Russia, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Solutions that countries propose to solve the issue of human trafficking vary greatly based on geography. More developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom favor a more interventionist approach, pushing for direct implementation of solutions in affected regions like Southeast Asia. However, countries in Southeast Asia where human trafficking is a major issue do not want western countries interfering in what they regard as their internal affairs; these
governments insist that they can handle the issue by themselves. For instance, the Malaysian government has made efforts since 2014 to double the number of trafficking investigations and prosecutions; however, international efforts recommend that Malaysia increase funding to outside NGOs. Malaysia has largely ignored this recommendation for the reasons stated above [13].

Moreover, some developed countries like the United States have adopted laws which slightly hamper business in favor of disrupting human trafficking. For instance, the Customs and Facilitations and Trade Enforcement Reauthorization Act of 2009 prohibit the importation of goods to the United States that are made using human trafficking or labor. The Mann Act of 1910 also makes it illegal to entice individuals across state lines to engage in prostitution, and this has also been effective in stopping human traffickers. However, countries in which human trafficking is a major issue often lack such policies because governments either do not want to interrupt businesses that spur their economies, or they simply do not have the resources or infrastructure in place to support such policies.

**Keywords**

- Human trafficking
- Policies
- Abduction
- Scamming
- Law enforcement
- Tracking
- Data
• Southeast Asia

Questions

1. How can we address the issue of human trafficking in countries with corrupt governments and underdeveloped infrastructure?

2. How can we prevent trafficking in addition to helping victims?

3. What can more developed countries do to help less developed countries?

4. How can education help solve human trafficking issues?

References

TOPIC B: Internally Displaced Peoples in Colombia

Introduction

Colombia’s civil conflict between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has left 220,000 dead, 25,000 disappeared, and 5.7 million displaced over the last half century [1]. FARC agreed to peace agreements in 2016, halting the violence, but millions still remain displaced in Colombia. Furthermore, cocaine, marijuana, and other narcotics are produced in Colombia, and cartel conflict has displaced thousands of innocent people as cartels expand their territory and expand on their coca cultivation.

The UNHCR must ensure that these people are able to find homes and accommodate their basic human needs. Displaced families often lack sanitary and humane living conditions, clean water, and proper stability; children do not have access to education. Yet while it is easy to state what the problems are, it is an entirely different story implementing policies to help - much of the country’s infrastructure has been destroyed by the civil war, and millions of people require help in lands that are largely fueled by the illicit drug trade.

History of the Topic

From 1948-1958, a decade of political violence known as la Violencia took place. The fighting ended as the government agreed to a power-sharing agreement; however, a group of communists were excluded from the agreement and took up arms against the new government, founding FARC and the National Liberation Army. FARC was a combination of both militant communists and peasant self-defense groups, and the National Liberation Army (ELN) was composed of students, Catholic radicals, and left-wing intellectuals. Both groups vehemently opposed the privatization of natural
resources and claimed to represent the poor against the wealthy. At times, the groups have worked towards a common goal, but have also clashed on other issues.

More conservative groups arose in the 1980s as a means of protection against the FARC and ELN - the largest paramilitary group was the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). While this group was disbanded in 2006, the bacrim (splinter groups) are still active.[1]

FARC and ELN used violence, kidnappings, and extortion as sources of leverage and income in its fight against the government. For instance, FARC abducted presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt in 2002, along with three other U.S. military contractors, for six years until U.S. forces were able to rescue them in 2008. FARC also assassinated a former culture minister in 2001 and it hijacked a domestic commercial flight in 2002, where rebels kidnapped a senator and held him hostage. Colombia’s National Center for Historical Memory estimated that guerilla groups in Colombia kidnapped 25,000 people between 1970 and 2010, and more than 10,000 people were killed or maimed by landmines during the same period (most of which were planted by FARC) [2].

In the early 2000s, Colombia supplied 90% of the world’s cocaine, and FARC profited off of the production, taxation, and trafficking of illicit narcotics [3]. The U.S. estimated that in 2009, FARC was responsible for sixty percent of the Colombian cocaine exported to the United States [4]. It is unclear exactly how much FARC was able to profit off of the drug trade; InSight Crime estimates that the figure is between $150 million and $500 million per year [5], and in 2012, Colombia’s defense minister estimated that the figure could be anywhere from $2.4 to $3.5 billion [6]. The ELN previously shunned drug trafficking as being anti-revolutionary, but turned to the drug trade for money later on during the revolution. ELN members were also known to use illegal resource extraction (like gold mining) for additional income [7].

While coca cultivation fell by more than half between 2007 and 2012, coca production has recently again been on the rise in Colombia, with 2015 production levels on par with those from
2007. This is likely because the Colombian government decided to stop aerial spraying of coca crops due to health concerns [8]. Moreover, FARC encouraged coca cultivation in hopes that greater cultivation would give them more leverage in rural development programs.

In 2000, Plan Colombia was enacted: it was a package that aimed to help the country combat guerrilla violence, strengthen its institutions, and stem drug production and trafficking. While U.S. officials claimed that Plan Colombia was an important stepping stone for paving the way for peace talks, but critics of the plan stated that U.S. funding for the country was the cause of potentially thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people.

Peace talks began with FARC in 2012, under the administration of President Santos who was elected in 2010. Chile, Cuba, Norway, and Venezuela acted as hosts, mediators, and observers to the round of talks between the government and the rebel group. The peace agreement requires FARC to turn in their arms to a UN commission, and outlines a plan for the military to clear the landmines scattered across the country. The agreements also called for international support in redeveloping public services and justice institutions in former conflict areas. The rebels asked for the government to pledge to spend billions of dollars in rural areas, which the rebels believe have been neglected [9].

Supporters of this plan claim that spending more money in rural areas would create alternatives to the drug trade, on which Colombia’s country-side has been dependent. The peace treaty was signed in September 2016, and it was rejected in a referendum a week later, because the public felt that the rebels were being treated too leniently after decades of serious crime. The government and FARC leaders agreed to establish a special tribunal of judges to mete out punishments to those found guilty of serious crimes [10]. Opponents were still not appeased, as the tribunal did not allow for jail time. In December 2016, the Colombian Congress approved a revised peace agreement that was not put to a national referendum, in which punishments for former FARC
members were better defined. Former members were banned from running for office in former conflict zones, and the FARC pledged to hand over all of its assets for reparations [11].

Current Situation

Despite the peace agreements, violence continues to uproot thousands of people in Colombia. Since the beginning of 2017, fighting for territorial control in the Colombian Pacific Coast region displaced an estimated 3,549 people. Since the signing of the peace agreement, increase violence by new armed groups has resulted in killings, forced recruitment (including child soldiers), gender-based violence, lack of water and sanitation, limited access to education, and movement restrictions [12].

Displaced people in Colombia number about 7 million - more than Syria, Iraq, and any other war zone. These displaced people have resettled in slums at the edges of Colombia’s cities, fleeing the rural areas they lived in. While the peace accords pledge to return lost property to the displaced, giving them cash assistance and technical help to make sure their farms are economically viable, many refugees want to stay in the cities, as they do not want to relive the trauma of their flight. Many children grew up in urban areas with no interest in returning to the rural countryside [13].

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has been working to improve the health situation for the internally displaced peoples and other refugees. One of the main problems for the IDPs is that they lack proper identity papers. Without these papers, IDPs have no rights for healthcare or any other government services and help.

Ecuador has recognized more than 50,000 Colombian asylum seekers, with over 20,000 pending applicants. The Ecuadorian government asked the UNHCR for help with the refugees in 2001, and the UNHCR estimates that there are still 400,000 refugees from Colombia in neighboring countries today.

The UNHCR is currently working closely with the Colombian government and other NGOs to help with the IDPs. Over 600,000 people are under UNHCR assistance. The UNHCR is
cooperating with the NRC to protect refugees, dealing with projects involving judicial and rights advice to IDPs. The operational costs are split between the two corporations. They are also cooperating in ‘protection clusters’ where they gather all participating organizations and coordinate their efforts together. A UNHCR representative in Colombia states that only fifteen percent of the IDPs can return - the rest must be relocated or integrated [14]. Studies show that in general, internal displacement in Colombia is unidirectional, in that once displaced, most Colombian IDPs are displaced for life, and potentially for multiple generations. There have been no effective remedies to allow IDPs to safely return to their communities of origin and reclaim their property, which is why IDP numbers achieve a new peak each year, though the rate of increase has generally decreased over time [15].

The government has also committed to boosting economic infrastructure, social services, and good governance in rural areas that were previously controlled by the FARC, because the poverty in rural areas was one of the root causes of the armed conflict. This is why the UN Development Assistance Framework and the UN Peacebuilding Framework for Colombia focus on the rural areas - but many of the IDPs are unwilling to return to the rural areas, and this is an issue you should consider in coming up with your solutions[16]. The government has not made efforts to set up mechanisms for local integration of Colombian refugees who do not want to return to their rural homes.

Thus far, the UNHCR has been the only international actor to draw up comprehensive solutions strategies for Colombia’s IDPs. The UNHCR has helped victims reconnect with the government, and it works with displaced people at all stages of the repatriation process. It created the Transitional Solutions Initiative, which is a joint project between UNHCR and UNDP, to bring national authorities together with displaced people to find sustainable solutions. It has resulted in the legalisation of informal settlements and return and relocation projects. The UNHCR is using these
projects to promote a policy on solutions with national authorities so that the Colombian government can replicate these solutions in other parts of the country. In countries like Ecuador and Costa Rica which host large numbers of refugees, the UNHCR has promoted local integration process.

Despite the exceptional status of Colombia’s IDPs, the narrative of forced displacement in Colombia is not widely publicized or disseminated throughout the international community. This could be a potential cause of the longevity of the displacement problem in Colombia, and is something you should keep in your considerations for a solution. News coverage has been largely devoted to IDPs in the Middle East in countries like Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Africa, though these regions each represents about 20-25% of IDPs worldwide.

Drug trafficking is heavily related to internal displacement within Colombia. Colombia is the primary cocaine supplier in the world, and has recently become a major supplier of heroin internationally as well. The drug trade is the primary source of financing for armed groups, and thus armed groups expand their land holdings by displacing civilians for the purposes of cultivation of drug crops, concealment of drug processing laboratories, control over drug trafficking routes, and concealment of ancillary illegal activities like money laundering and arms trafficking.

There are many different mechanisms for displacements, with the top three mechanisms being threats, armed clashes, and murders or massacres. Forced recruitment of adolescent youth has also incentivized families to abandon their lands [17]. “Mass displacements” have also occurred, in which entire communities have abandoned their lands following episodes of threats, disappearance, public torture, and other atrocities. Solving the issue because more complex because internal displacement in Colombia is not about defeating a foe, as it is in most other cases; in Colombia, it is merely about the acquisition of land, making it an “enemy-less” crime.
Furthermore, many IDPs do not register themselves as internally displaced. IDPs can be thought to have sensitive and potentially incriminating information, and they are sometimes mistaken for having an affiliation with the armed groups that caused their displacement. Additionally, IDPs who have sought a restoration of property have been threatened or killed by former paramilitaries, guerrilla, or criminal bands. As a result of these factors, majority of IDPs prefer to remain in their resettled homes instead of going through the trouble of getting their lands back.

**Country Policy**

Ecuador has played a major role in hosting refugees from Colombia, currently sheltering 60,000 refugees and over 200,000 other Colombians who have fled violence. It has worked closely with the UNHCR to help the refugees rebuild their lives and provide for themselves in Ecuador. One notable program it has launched is the Graduation Model, which is aimed at supporting to the most vulnerable households to find sustainable and dignified livelihoods, and it hopes to lift 1,500 families out of poverty in 2016. Ecuador’s government has stated that it hopes that Ecuador can set an example for the world to follow in terms of hosting and finding solutions for refugees [18].

Costa Rica has also helped house refugees from Colombia, and it has historically had a long asylum and refugee tradition with solid legislation. It currently hosts 7,697 Colombian refugees, with an average of 150 asylum seekers per month arriving from Colombia. In Costa Rica, the UNHCR has worked with the government to provide refugees with subsistence allowance, healthcare, education, and first-time settlement assistance [19].

However, as stated earlier in this guide, most other countries have not taken an active notice of the internally displaced people of Colombia and as such do not have defined positions on the issue.
Key Terms

Internally displaced people

- Refugees
- Ecuador
- Costa Rica
- FARC
- Relocation
- Integration
- Infrastructure
- Education
- Labor

Questions

1. How can we encourage more countries to recognize the IDPs of Colombia and broadcast the issue in the media?
2. What solutions can you come up with for IDPs who do not want to be relocated?
3. What is the most effective way to rebuild areas affected by the conflict?
4. How can we address short-term, immediate problems for IDPs including sanitation, shelter, and education?

References


