

**United Nations
High
Commissioner for
Refugees**

**STUDY
GUIDE**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. LETTER FROM SECRETARY GENERAL.....	3
2. LETTER FROM UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL.....	4
3. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE.....	5
3.1 What is UNHCR?.....	5
3.2 Relevant Documents and Conventions.....	5
4. GLOSSARY.....	7
5. INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA ITEM.....	8
6. REASONS COUNTRIES IMPOSE STRICTER LAWS.....	8
6.1 National Security Justifications.....	8
6.2 Economic Burden & Welfare Strain Narrative.....	10
6.3 Labor market concerns.....	13
6.4 Public Opinion and Political Pressure.....	14
7. CASE STUDIES.....	15
7.1 United States of America - Implementation of Title 42 and 2025 ICE raids.....	15
7.2 United Kingdom - Controversial asylum policies.....	18
7.3 Germany and the EU - The effect of other countries' actions.....	18
8. CURRENT REFUGEE CRISIS.....	20
9. GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES.....	21
9.1 Overburdening Neighboring Countries.....	21
9.2 Rise in irregular migration and Human Trafficking.....	24
9.3 The normalization of restrictive asylum policies–the impact.....	25
10. QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED.....	26
11. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	27



1. LETTER FROM SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear Attendees,

On behalf of the MIS MUN Organizing Team, it is with immense pride and heartfelt gratitude that I welcome you to the inaugural Milestone Model United Nations conference. Today, we stand together at the beginning of an extraordinary journey—a gathering of the next generation of decision-makers and leaders whose vision, passion, and efforts will shape a brighter future for our world. This conference represents more than just an academic simulation. It is a platform where ideas converge, where diversity thrives, and where meaningful dialogue takes center stage. It is a space for youth to address global challenges, exchange perspectives, and collaborate on solutions that will leave an everlasting impact.

The MIS MUN Organizing Team, alongside our dedicated partners, has worked tirelessly over the past months to bring this vision to life. From planning every detail to overcoming obstacles, the effort poured into this event is a testament to our shared commitment to your growth and success. We hope this conference not only meets but exceeds your expectations, creating memories and experiences that you will carry with you forever. At MIS MUN, we strive to provide you with a platform to not only discuss and tackle pressing global issues but also to sharpen your linguistic, negotiation, and debating skills. We are confident that the sessions ahead will challenge you to think critically, collaborate effectively, and grow as leaders.

As you step into your roles as delegates, chairs, or part of the organizing team, I urge you to embrace this opportunity wholeheartedly. Let this be a space for learning, for pushing boundaries, and for fostering connections that transcend borders. Your voice matters, and your actions here can serve as a blueprint for a better tomorrow. Once again, welcome to MIS MUN. We are honored to have you here and look forward to witnessing the incredible achievements you will bring to this conference.

Let us work together to make this a milestone worth remembering.



2. LETTER FROM UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear esteemed delegates,

It is my utmost honor to welcome you to the first addition of MISMUN. I will serve as the Under Secretary General of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees committee, my name is Salsabeel and I am a senior (Grade 12) at Aljazari International School. Allow me to extend my warmest welcome to all of you.

I picked this topic as it affects us all as citizens of Türkiye, and I hope all of you will enjoy researching and discussing it. Me and My amazing Academic Assistant, Remas Jouda, have worked very hard to make this a comprehensive and useful study guide for each of you. Though please be aware that there still needs to be individual research and critical thinking for fruitful debate to exist. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns regarding the study guide, my email is salsabeelemad1@gmail.com.

I hope we have a lively debate during the three days of the MISMUN'25.

Ps. If anyone actually reads this all the way, inform me during the MUN and I will buy you chocolate.

Diplomatically yours (but only if we're in agreement),

Salsabeel Hassan

Under Secretary General



3. INTRODUCTION THE COMMITTEE

3.1 What is UNHCR?

Established in the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created to help the millions of people who had lost their homes. Initially the UNHCR was only intended to operate for 3 years to assist displaced Europeans; today however, UNHCR works in 136 countries and serves as the leading international organization responsible for refugee protection and asylum rights worldwide.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' core mission is to provide international protection and solutions for refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and internally displaced people (IDPs) worldwide. It achieves so by providing life-saving assistance, including shelter, food, water and medical care for people forced to flee conflict and persecution.

3.2 Relevant Documents and Conventions

1. 1951 Refugee Convention & 1967 Protocol

Full Name: Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) & 1967 Protocol

Defines who qualifies as a refugee, their rights, and states' obligations and serves as the foundation of international refugee law and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. May be used to argue whether restrictive asylum policies violate international law but also to state exceptions allowing states to impose stricter laws. [For more information about the convention](#)



2. Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)

The Global Compact on Refugees was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018 as a response to the growing global refugee crisis and the uneven distribution between host and non-host countries. It aims to expand resettlement and ease pressure on host countries by burden-sharing. GCR Provides a modern framework for fair asylum policies and may be used to propose solutions to the agenda item based on the GCR principles

[For more information on this Document](#)

3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

UDHR is the foundational international document outlining basic human rights and freedoms adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It establishes asylum as a basic human right in Article 14, which states: “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”.

[For more information on this Document](#)

4. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

ICCPR guarantees civil and political rights, such as the right to freedom of movement. Whilst the ICCPR document may be used to argue for the right to seek asylum, Articles, such as Article 12: allows for restrictions on freedom of movement due to security concerns and Article 9: allows for detention of individuals in certain cases such as to manage immigration control, may be used to excuse restrictive laws.

[For more information on this Document](#)



4. GLOSSARY

Asylum: The protection granted by a country to individuals fleeing persecution in their home country. It allows them to stay and not be returned to danger.

Asylum Seeker: A person who has applied for asylum in another country but has not yet received refugee status.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP): A person who has been forced to flee their home due to conflict, natural disasters, or persecution but has not crossed an international border.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS): A legal status given to individuals from countries experiencing conflict or natural disasters, allowing them to stay temporarily without being granted refugee status.

Resettlement: The process of transferring refugees from an asylum country to another country that has agreed to admit them and provide permanent residence.

Deportation: The forced removal of an individual from a country, often applied to those whose asylum claims are rejected or who violate immigration laws.

Host Country: A country that receives refugees or asylum seekers and provides them with temporary or permanent protection.

Refugee Status Determination (RSD): The legal process by which a country or UNHCR decides whether an asylum seeker qualifies for refugee status.

Stateless Person: An individual who is not recognized as a citizen by any country, making it difficult for them to claim asylum or receive legal protections.



5. INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA ITEM

The global refugee crisis has intensified in recent years, with conflicts, political instability, and economic hardship forcing millions to flee their home countries. As the number of displaced persons grows, many governments are implementing very restrictive measures, not only at the borders but also within the asylum procedures themselves, often stating national security and economic strain to be their justifications. However such policies limit access to asylum and more often than not violate international refugee protection laws. The goal of this agenda item is to find a middle ground between the right for a country to regulate their immigration and their obligations under international law.

6. REASONS COUNTRIES IMPOSE STRICTER LAWS

The reasons countries implement very restrictive asylum laws can be broad; they can range from concerns over the rising numbers of displaced people, to worries about overpopulation putting a strain on public services and finances, national identity, or cultural concerns. In order to assess the legality of these measures, their effect on the affected people, many of whom may be displaced and have no other option than to try and settle in other countries, and the wider implications of the global refugee protection, it is crucial to be aware of the motivations behind these restrictive approaches.

6.1 National Security Justifications

Many governments justify strict asylum restrictions on the grounds of national security. They argue that without tight controls, dangerous individuals could slip in among genuine refugees – for example, members of gangs, drug cartels, or terrorist organizations come in as asylum seekers; this fear leads authorities to insist on regaining 100% control over who enters their territory. In practice, this has meant high border surveillance and tougher entry rules aimed at preventing any potential security threats from crossing their borders.

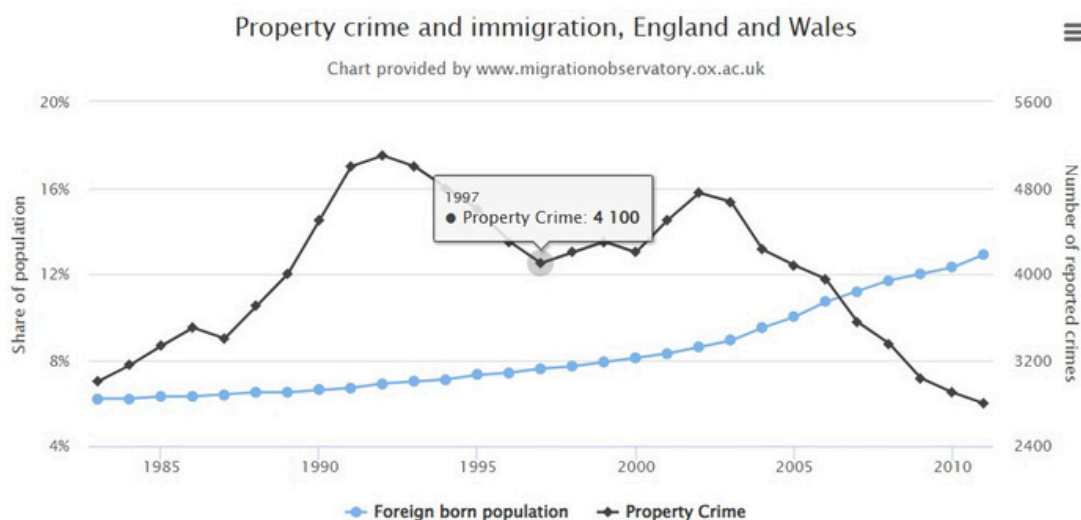
The 2015 Paris attacks had a significant impact on the discussion around asylum in Europe. It was reported that two of the attackers entered the European Union through Greece by pretending to be asylum seekers. As a result, many countries decided to bring back border checks and tighten up their background checks to ensure safety. The United



States also took similar measures after the events of 9/11, pausing its refugee admissions program for a time to re-evaluate how to protect against potential threats. It was a tough decision, but one they felt was necessary to keep their people safe.

Even though such incidents are rare, they have huge political consequences. One attack can significantly shift public opinion and trigger strict measures not just on those who pose a threat, but on thousands of legitimate asylum seekers fleeing war or oppression. Governments often justify these responses as “precautionary measures” to ensure national safety.

Criminal activities: Governments often worry over public safety and crime when justifying restrictions on asylum seekers. The fear is that a sudden influx of unfamiliar individuals, particularly in economically fragile areas, could lead to higher rates of theft, violence, or disorder, and they claim that without harsh measures, criminals or extremists might enter under the name of refugee status and endanger the society. (Opponents of this view point out that most refugees are fleeing violence, not causing it, and studies have found refugees do *not* raise crime rates above those of native populations). A study by the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford found that a 1% increase in asylum seekers in a local UK area was linked to a 1.1% rise in property crime — but showed no link to violent crime. Meaning that most of their actual effect was limited to property crime, not violent crime.



It's interesting to note that even as the number of foreign-born residents increases, property crime rates have actually declined. This challenges the common belief that more migrants or asylum seekers automatically lead to more crime. If that were the case, we would expect both numbers to rise together, but they don't.

6.2 Economic Burden & Welfare Strain Narrative

● *Government Concerns: Short-Term Costs and Budget Strain*

Many governments justify restrictive asylum policies by arguing that accepting large numbers of asylum seekers imposes significant short-term costs on public finances. They point to immediate expenditures on welfare benefits, emergency housing, healthcare, and education for newcomers. For example, economists estimate that in Europe each refugee can cost around \$8,000–\$10,000 per person in their first year for basic housing and support .

This creates a public narrative that taxpayers have a heavy burden to care for refugees before they can become self-sufficient. Governments warn that social services and budgets are “overstretched” – suggesting that resources spent on asylum seekers might reduce capacity or benefits for citizens. The UK Home Office, for example, described the pressure on its asylum system as “unsustainable,” noting it was “costing over £3 billion a year” and “costing the taxpayer around £8 million a day” to house asylum seekers in hotels.

There are also healthcare costs, for emergency medical treatment to ongoing care, that fall on public hospitals. In some cases, influxes of refugees have led host countries to claim their health or welfare systems are under severe strain. For example, Jordan (a major refugee-hosting country) announced in 2014 that it could “no longer afford” free healthcare for over a million Syrian refugees because the additional burden on its healthcare system had grown unmanageable .



Examples of the Economic Burden Narrative in Policy

- ~~Australia~~ Australia's strict asylum regime is due to a fear of an economic burden. For years, Australia has maintained a policy of offshore detention for unauthorized boat arrivals, arguing that accepting them would encourage more arrivals and strain resources. This policy itself has been so costly – the Australian government has spent at least A\$1 billion per year on offshore processing in Papua New Guinea and Nauru, totaling around A\$12 billion from 2012 to 2024 . Critics point out this is significantly more than what it would have cost to host the asylum seekers in ordinary community settings. However, governments justified the expense by claiming that a full-scale influx would burden Australia's welfare, housing, and job market far more in the long run.

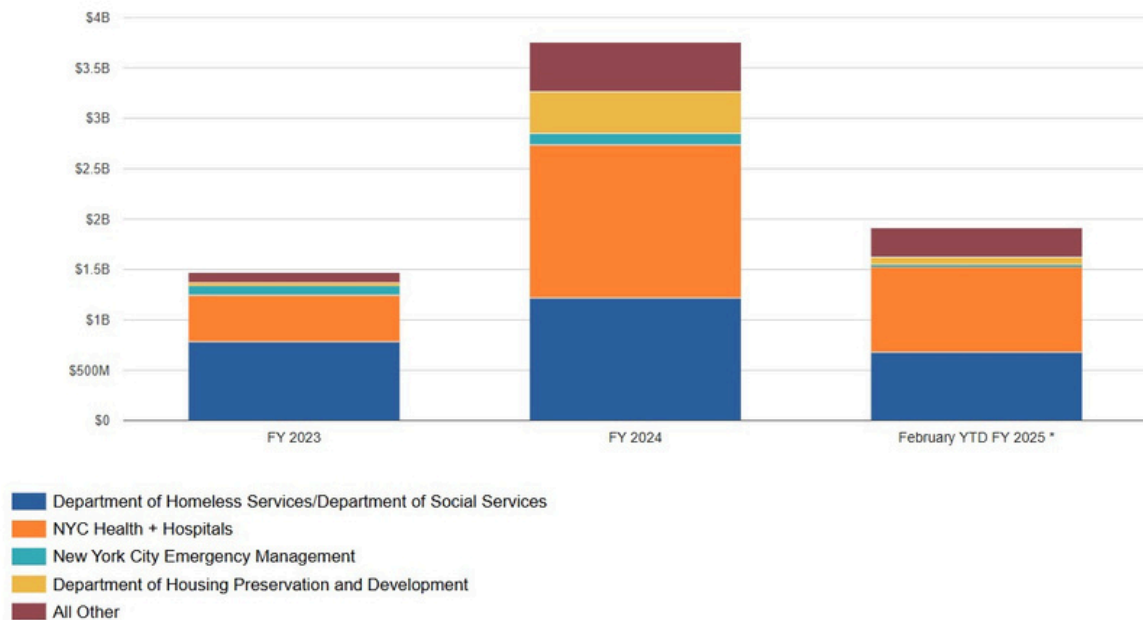
All in all, countries often impose restrictions such as settlement policies, work permit limits, or even closure of borders, only because their economies and public services are under strain. They argue that without more international aid, they cannot integrate additional refugees without hurting their own development.

● Welfare Strain Narrative:

Sudden increases in population especially in specific towns or regions can overload housing capacity, hospitals, schools, and welfare offices. Housing is often highlighted as a critical pressure point. Finding accommodation for large numbers of asylum seekers can be challenging and costly; many governments resort to renting hotel rooms, emergency shelters, or camps. In New York City, for example, the arrival of tens of thousands of migrants in 2022–2023 forced the city to open emergency relief centers and hotels, with costs projected to exceed \$4 billion over FY 2023 and 2024 – a level the city warned is *“beyond what [it] can reasonably sustain”*



Figure 3 – New York City Asylum Seeker Expenses by Agency, FY 2023, FY 2024 and FY 2025 (through February 28, 2025)



This chart shows how New York City’s asylum-related costs were distributed across agencies from FY 2023 to FY 2025, including Health + Hospitals, Emergency Management, and the Department of Homeless Services.

(source: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/asylum-seeker-spending-report>)

Similarly, in Germany, many towns have struggled to expand shelter capacity. By early 2025, some local German officials protested that “*infrastructure capacity*” was maxed out and could not accommodate more people without impacting local residents . Such scenarios feed the welfare strain narrative, suggesting that an influx of asylum seekers might come at the expense of good services for citizens.



6.3 Labor market concerns:

Governments and citizens frequently express economic fears about asylum seekers entering the workforce. Unlike general migrants, asylum seekers may arrive suddenly and in large numbers, they also come diverse and may not have the same profile in terms of country of origin, age, gender, education and skill set. Which opens worries about competition for jobs, decrease wages especially in weak economies where job security is already a major issue, and difficulties in workforce adaptation. These concerns apply both to low-skilled sectors (e.g. manual labor, services,) and high-skilled sectors (professional jobs).

As a result governments impose strict limits on asylum seekers' access to the labor market. As of 2020, UNHCR estimated that 70% of refugees live in countries that restrict their right to work (whether in formal jobs or self-employment) . For instance, the European Union allows member states to bar asylum applicants from working for up to 6–9 months, and countries like the UK enforce a 12-month work ban (with few exceptions) for asylum seekers awaiting a decision , these restrictions mean many asylum seekers spend months or years unable to legally work, even if they are skilled professionals. Ironically, this can increase the burden on public resources – keeping asylum seekers dependent on government support – and reinforce the very public perception that they are “burdens.”

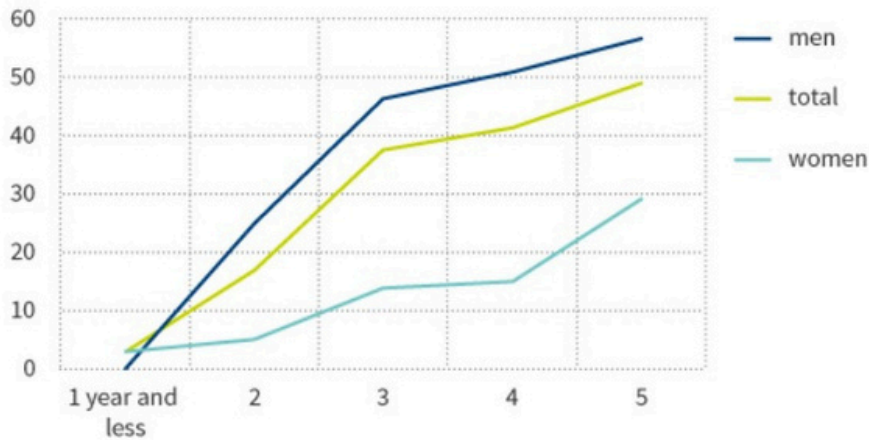
NOTE: (For more information check: [unhcr.org](https://www.unhcr.org))

Workforce Integration and Data: A key concern is how well asylum seekers integrate into the workforce over time. Initially, recently arrived refugees have low employment rates – due to language barriers, trauma, or legal problems, which causes the fear that they'll remain unemployed indefinitely. However, longitudinal data show a steady improvement in employment the longer refugees stay in the host country. In Germany, for instance, only about 19–20% of refugees who arrived in 2015 had a job within two years (by 2017) , but with each additional year, more found work: about 50% *were employed after five years* in the country. By 2022, even with continued new arrivals, Germany recorded an *asylum-seeker employment rate* of 41.7% .



Figure 1: Employment rates of refugees arrived since 2013 by gender and years since arrival

Employment rate as a percentage of the population aged 18 to 64



Note: According to the definition of the Federal Statistical Office, persons are considered as gainfully employed if they receive remuneration for their work. This definition also includes trainees, interns, and marginally employed persons. Observations with a positive reply regarding employment, but with zero Euros in earnings were coded as unemployed.

Legend: Five years after arrival, the average employment rate of refugees amounts to 49 percent.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees, 2018. © IAB

NOTE: Check this website for more information on refugee employment (thedocs.worldbank.org)

6.4 Public Opinion and Political Pressure

People's opinions toward asylum seekers play a huge role in shaping government policy. In many countries, leaders respond directly to people's fears and demands, and asylum policy is often driven by the court of public opinion and pressure. In recent years, large segments of the public in various countries have grown concerned – even alarmed – about incoming asylum seekers. Opinion surveys show that people worry about everything from security and terrorism to economic competition and cultural change.

In late 2015, after terrorist attacks in Paris grew global fears, American public support for accepting Syrian refugees plummeted. A poll at the time found 53% of Americans did not want to accept any Syrian refugees at all, with an

additional 11%

saying only Christian refugees should be allowed . This is a perfect example providing

how the public's opinion influences policy, because many of U.S. state governors



(mostly reflecting what their people want) announced they would refuse Syrian refugees in their states.

Media coverage strongly shapes the public's opinion and thereby policy. For instance, a 2024 report by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) highlighted that political advertisements, news stories, talk shows, and famous politicians, who may frame asylum seekers as invaders or criminals, often depict the asylum seekers debate negatively, contributing to public fear and misunderstanding.

In turn, even mainstream leaders feel obligated to close off places for asylum to show they are “listening to the people.” For instance, in Italy, years of public frustration over boatloads of migrants arriving on its shores helped anti-immigrant leaders into power in 2018. Those leaders responded by closing Italian ports to rescue ships and passed strict rules that took away or reduced the rights of asylum seekers.

7. CASE STUDIES

7.1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - Implementation of Title 42 and 2025 ICE raids

Historically, the USA was one of the largest recipients of asylum seekers. As a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, the U.S has committed to protecting asylum seekers. There has been a huge shift however in recent years as the US has been tightening its asylum policies, one of the most prominent examples of this is Title 42. In March 2020, the Trump administration implemented Title 42 of the U.S code: a public health statute that grants federal authorities the power to take emergency action to prevent the introduction of communicable diseases into the United States. Under Title 42, the U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP) was authorized to immediately expel individuals apprehended at the border without due process. While originally framed as a health measure, Title 42 was extended under both the Trump and Biden administrations, with the removal of over 2.8 million migrants many of whom were sent back to dangerous conditions, leading to its widespread criticism claiming it to be a way to bypass asylum laws.

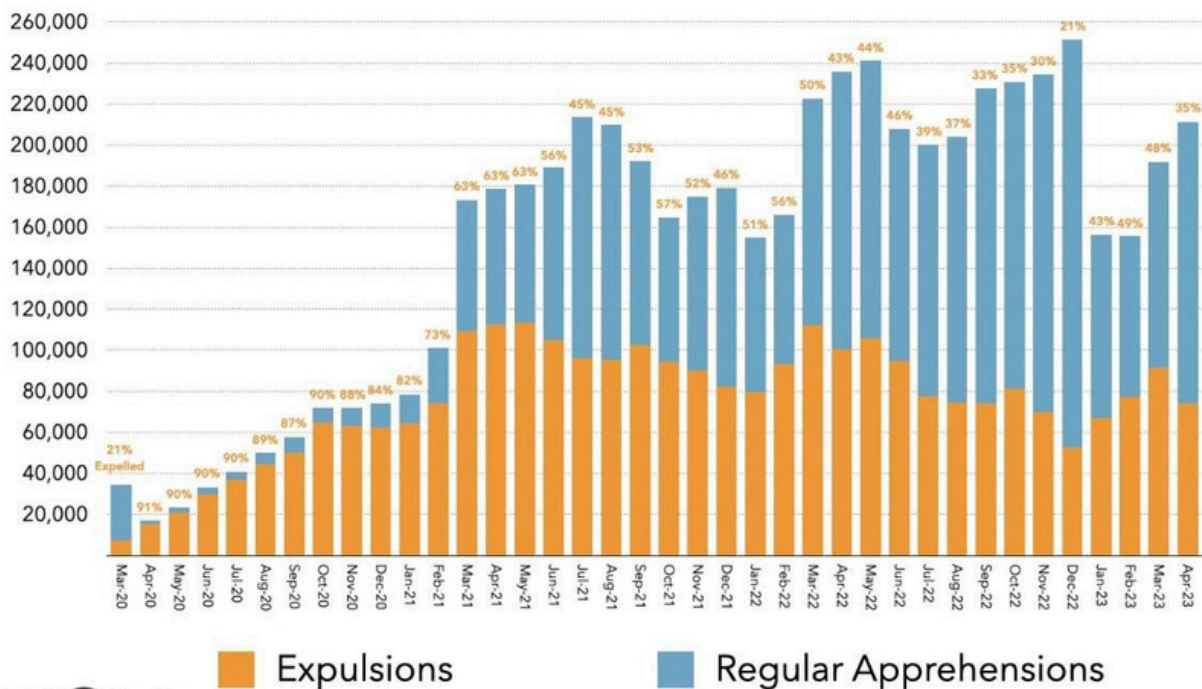
In November 2022, a federal court deemed Title 42 unlawful, ordering the cessation of its enforcement, however the policy continued until its termination in May 2023.



Customs and Border Protection (CBP) released its latest data showing that the Biden administration has conducted 2,358,093 expulsions between February 2021 and March 2023. See more below.

Title 42 Expulsions and Regular Apprehensions of All Migrants at the U.S.-Mexico Border

2,861,755
expulsions since
March 2020



WOLA
Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas

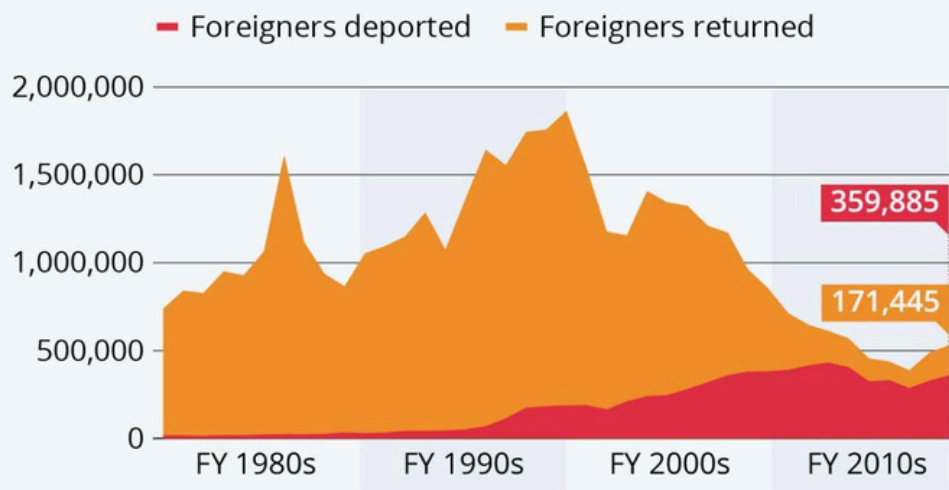
Source: <https://bit.ly/3LMNYWJ>

Following the expiration of Title 42, January to April 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) escalated their operations. In February 2025, immigration enforcement officials arrested more individuals than any month over the past 7 years and detention centers reached full capacity with 47,600 detainees during this period.



Foreigners Deported and Returned from the U.S.

Number of foreign nationals subject to formal deportation proceedings vs. informal returns*



* A deportation is a compulsory removal following a court order, a return is the confirmed departure without such an order.

Source: Department of Homeland Security



statista

Examples of ICE raids:

- In one of the largest workplace operations in years, ICE raided Mt. Baker Roofing in Washington, detaining 37 undocumented workers.
- Owners of Abby's Bakery in taxes were arrested, while both being legal adults, for employing undocumented migrants.
- In Hays County, Texas over 40 people were arrested for being suspected as part of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, however these crackdowns have been criticized for risking the racial targeting of migrants who had no previous criminal records.
- At the University of Minnesota, a graduate student lost his visa over a past DUI convention. And at Truffs University, an international student was detained by ICE for following pro-Palestinian protests.



UNHCR has previously condemned the U.S. for its failure to uphold asylum protections, warning that restrictive policies could set a dangerous precedent for other nations. Though UNHCR's urges to put a stop have been repeatedly ignored.

7.2 THE UNITED KINGDOM - Controversial asylum policies

In 2025, the UK made headlines for multiple controversial asylum policies, one of the most significant ones being the Illegal Immigration (Offences) Act 2024. The Act established harsher penalties for individuals caught entering the country without prior approval, along with the increase in penalties for anyone assisting migrants entering illegally, thus putting a burden on charities and volunteer groups that assist immigrants as well as targeting vulnerable individuals who may not have access to refugee processing channels due to war. Another example of the UK's controversial asylum policies is the Rwanda deportation agreement. Finalized in 2022, The Rwanda deportation agreement was an agreement to send individuals who arrive in the UK illegally or seek asylum via untraditional routes (such as small boat crossings across the English channel) to Rwanda for processing.

7.3 GERMANY AND THE EU - The effect of other countries' actions

Germany has been one of the leading asylum destinations in the European Union (EU), largely due to its strong economy, stable political environment, and commitment to international humanitarian law. It has upheld its obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the EU Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by continuing to accept asylum seekers despite rising anti immigration sentiment across Europe. Unfortunately, due to recent restrictive asylum policies implemented by other EU nations there has been an influx of asylum seekers coming into Germany, thus straining the economy, infrastructure and general resources.

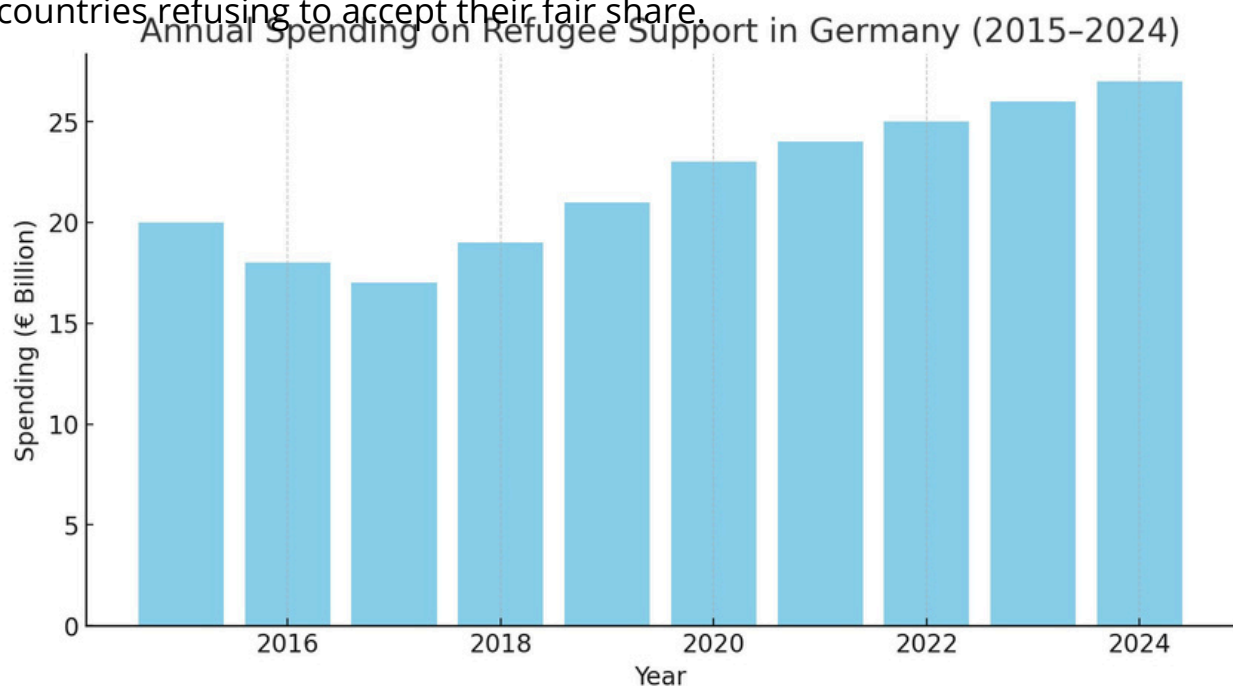
Several EU nations have implemented restrictive asylum policies that push refugees and asylum seekers towards Germany, Including:

- Hungary: Since 2015, has been significantly limiting the number of asylum seekers it accepts by criminalizing irregular border crossings, putting a heavier load on Germany in turn.



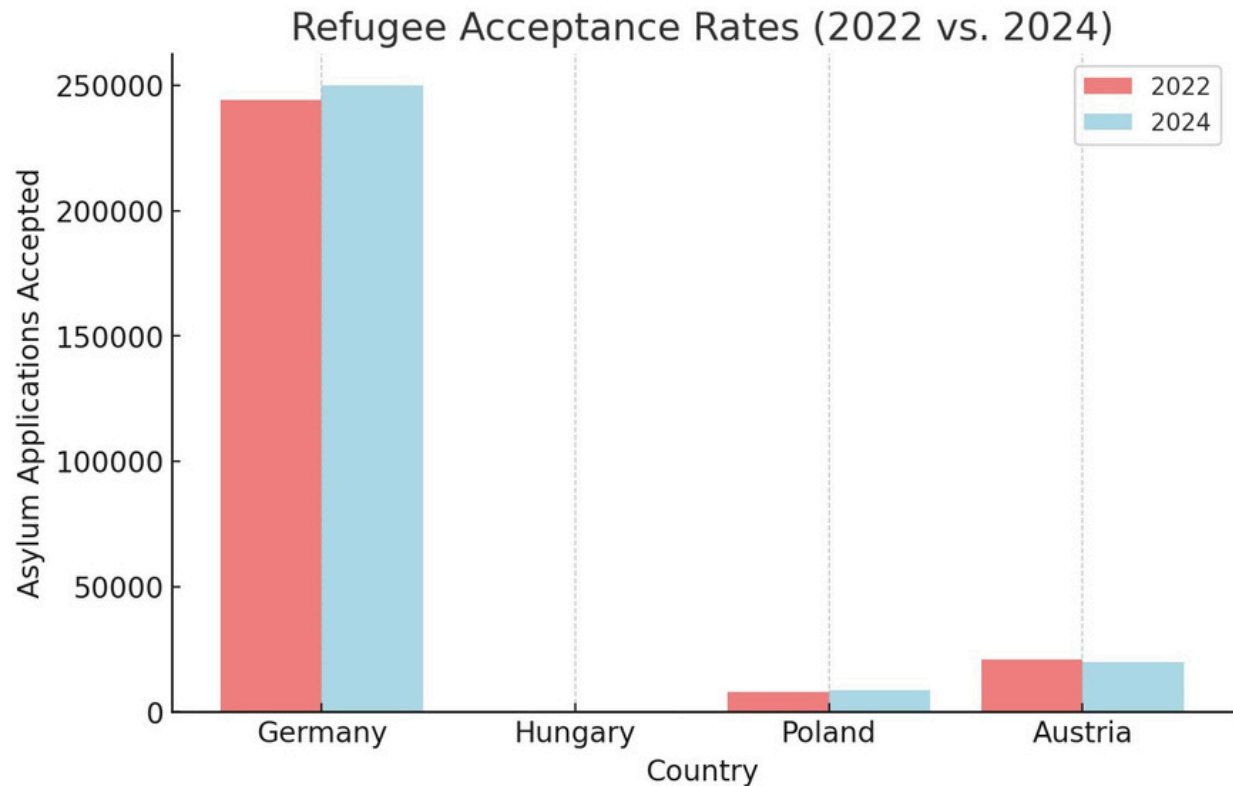
- Poland: Poland has refused to accept its quota of asylum seekers under EU burden sharing agreements, particularly those from the Middle East and Africa, leaving Germany to process more applications.
- Denmark and Sweden: Both countries who had been originally known for their open-door policies, have now tightened their border checks, causing refugees who had originally aimed for these countries to reroute to Germany.

Hungary, Poland, and Austria accepted fewer than 10,000 asylum seekers combined in 2022, while Berlin, a city in Germany, alone received over 100,000 refugees in 2023. As such, Germany is suffering from the uneven distribution of refugees and asylum seekers. The German government now spends approximately €25 billion annually on refugee programs and in 2022 alone Germany received over 244k asylum applications due to other countries refusing to accept their fair share.



The EU's burden-sharing program was designed to share a distribution of refugees across member states; however, despite Germany's efforts to advocate for an equal distribution many member countries have failed to meet their quota.





8. CURRENT REFUGEE CRISIS

As of 2024, the number of displaced people has surpassed 114 million, according to UNHCR, with over 36 million registered refugees seeking asylum. This surge occurred due to many reasons, of them:

Ukraine: Following the recent conflict with Russia in 2022, 14 million Ukrainians have been displaced and many are seeking refuge in EU nations.

Sudan: Has a refugee crisis with over 9 million displaced due the ongoing civil war.

Myanmar: Due to unethical military rule and ethnic violence, more than a million refugees were forced into Bangladesh.

Syria: After more than a decade of civil war, over 6.8 million Syrians refugees remain displaced into countries like Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan.



Venezuela: The country's economic downturn, hyperinflation, and food shortages have driven over 7.7 million people to flee.

Afghanistan: The Taliban takeover in 2021 led to a drastic decline in women's rights and economic opportunities, forcing millions to seek asylum abroad.

Pakistan: The 2022 floods left over 30 million people affected, many of which are displaced internally and across borders.

The Horn of Africa: Prolonged droughts forced mass migration in search of food and water.

9. GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES

As more countries implement restrictive asylum policies, the effects are not confined within their borders. These policies have triggered a chain reaction, impacting global refugee distribution, humanitarian conditions, diplomatic relations, and even regional stability. The consequences extend beyond asylum seekers themselves, affecting economies, international relations, and global commitments to human rights.

9.1 Overburdening Neighboring Countries

Wealthier nations applying restrictive policies often result in the burden shifting towards developing countries, resulting in the nations that uphold international law to face disproportionate pressure that leads to overburdened asylum systems, economic strain, and political instability.

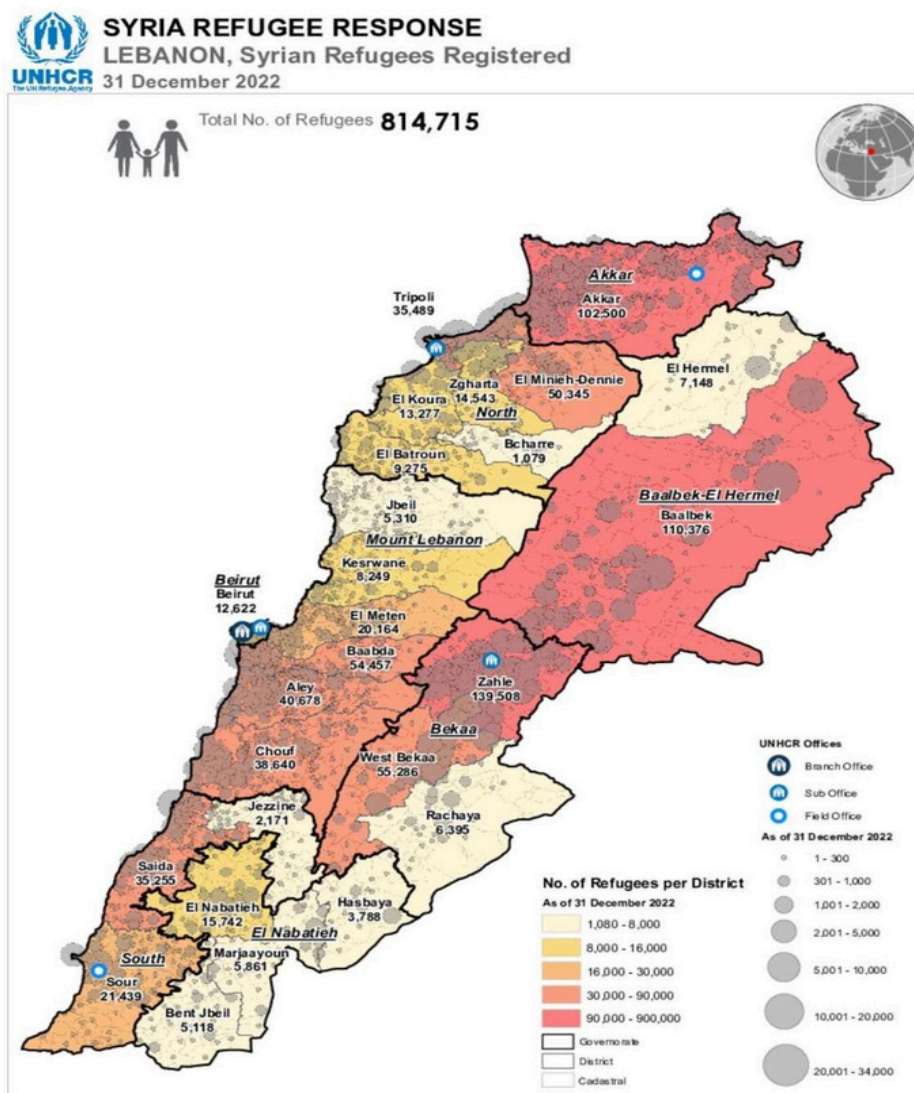
Lebanon

Lebanon, a country already strained by economic/political instability and limited resources, has been severely damaged by the influx of approximately 1.5 million refugees. Due to the fact that refugees often accept lower wages, the country's labour market has been heavily effected and tensions between locals and refugees in the market arose, as well as unemployment rates among locals rising after the increase in refugees residing in the country. Furthermore the country's infrastructure has been overcrowded, with over 40% of the students in some schools being refugees.

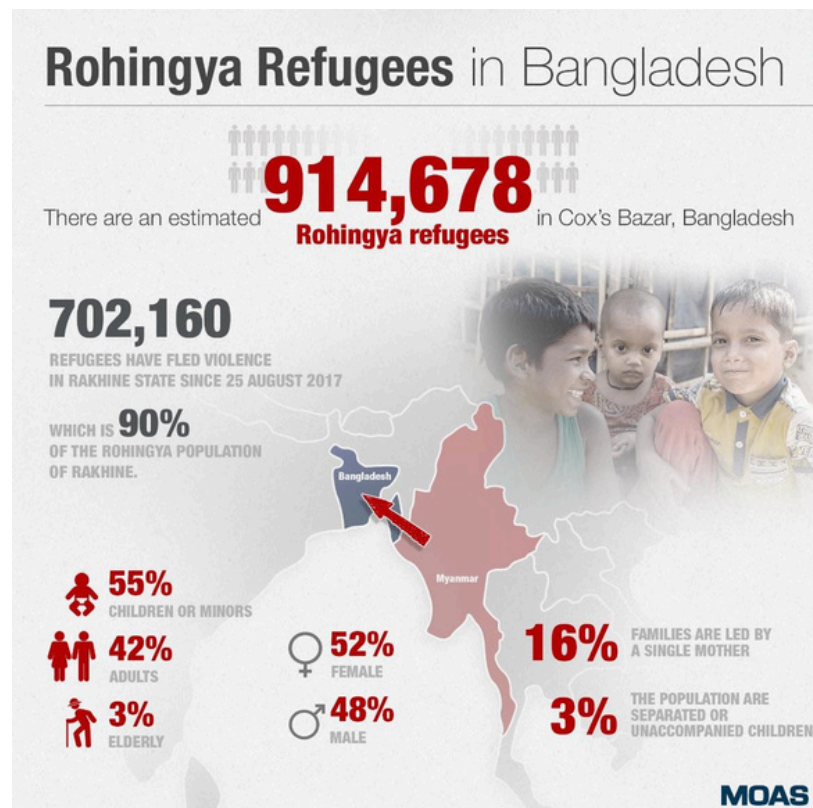


Jordan

With over 730,000 refugees, Jordan has also had its fair share of struggles. The country's GDP per capita was already low, the additional demands placed on infrastructure, healthcare, and resources have further increased debt levels. The government has estimated that hosting refugees costs 3 billion dollars annually. With already low resources on housing and water, the refugees have been causing immense scarcity with approximately 30% of the country's total water supply being spent on refugees, leading to dire living conditions and water rationing in several parts of Jordan, in turn affecting all citizens.



Bangladesh: Home to nearly 1 million Rohingya Myanmar refugees, Bangladesh is one of the largest refugee-hosting nations. Though due to the immense strain on Bangladesh's resources, such as insufficient medical care, there have been outbreaks of diseases like cholera and dengue fever due to poor sanitation in the overcrowded refugee camps.



Mexico: In 2021, Mexico saw an unprecedented rise in asylum claims, with over 130,000 requests compared to around 30,000 in 2018. The increase is partly due to U.S. policies like the Remain in Mexico program, which forced asylum seekers to stay in Mexico while waiting for their U.S. immigration hearings. Criminals have exploited this situation, with migrants often facing extortion, kidnapping, and violence while attempting to cross the border.

Türkiye: Currently the host of the largest refugee population in the world, Türkiye is hosting over 3.6 million refugees alone. This has caused Türkiye to spend over 40 billion dollars on refugees since 2011 and housing prices have skyrocketed in cities like Ankara and Istanbul, making housing and rent unaffordable for many Turkish citizens. The presence of millions of refugees has furthermore fueled growing anti-refugee sentiment in Türkiye causing rising violent protests and attacks on Syrians in recent years.



9.2 Rise in irregular migration and Human Trafficking

When all legal migration pathways are blocked, individuals backed into a corner are forced to turn to smugglers and traffickers for support, risking their own safety and lives in the process.

The Central Mediterranean route has become one of the deadliest migrations paths, with over 28,000 migrants reported missing or dead since 2018. Policies restricting safe asylum push desperate refugees to illegally cross the sea in overcrowded and unsafe boats.

South and Southeast Asia have recorded an increase in human trafficking, especially among the Rohingya. Due to a lack of legal options, tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees have been trafficked to Malaysia and Indonesia, often subjected to forced labour and sexual exploitation. In turn causing organized criminal groups to profit off of restrictive policies.



9.3 The normalization of restrictive asylum policies—the impact

The normalization of restrictive asylum policies is undermining the foundation of international refugee protection laws such as the 1951 Refugees Convention and its core principles. The more countries close their doors to asylum seekers, the more a domino effect is caused: where other nations feel emboldened to do the same due to an overflow of refugees imputed upon them as a result of a lack of burden-sharing. Creating a cycle of eroding the global commitment to refugee protection and humanitarian aid.

Some wealthier nations have begun shifting their burden to poorer nations such as the UK's deal with Rwanda, reducing accountability for refugee protection by outsourcing their responsibilities to weaker nations. Other nations (such as Denmark) have gone even further to debate withdrawal from the 1951 Refugee convention.

As governments make asylum applications more difficult or implement deportation policies, humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR, Amnesty International, and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) face greater barriers to helping refugees.

In some countries, humanitarian workers have been arrested for assisting migrants. For example, in Italy and Greece, NGOs that conduct search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean have faced legal action, with authorities accusing them of aiding illegal migration.

The shift toward restrictive asylum laws is a global shift with far-reaching consequences. It strains host nations, fuels irregular migration, creates diplomatic disputes, and threatens established international protections. As more countries tighten their borders, the question remains: how can the UNHCR nations balance national security with its obligations to displaced people?



10. QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. How do restrictive asylum laws impact global refugee protection efforts?
2. What legal frameworks exist to regulate asylum policies, and are they being upheld?
3. How have restrictive policies in some countries led to a disproportionate refugee burden on others?
4. What economic and social consequences do host countries face due to an influx of refugees?
5. How do restrictive asylum policies contribute to irregular migration and human trafficking?
6. What challenges do humanitarian organizations face in providing aid under restrictive asylum policies?
7. How can the international community ensure fair burden-sharing without changing existing laws?
8. What solutions can mitigate the strain on overburdened host countries?
9. How can nations improve border security without violating international refugee protections?
10. What diplomatic and cooperative measures can be taken to uphold refugee rights while addressing national concerns?



11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

<https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

<https://www.unhcr.org/excom/scip/3ae68ccd10/note-non-refoulement-submission-african-commission-human-peoples-rights.html>

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2021/6/60c8eab204/unhcr-deeply-concerned-denmark-law-allowing-transfer-asylum-seekers-third.html>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/07/14/helping-lebanese-communities-cope-with-syrian-refugees>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2024/11/06/jordan-improving-economic-opportunities-for-syrian-refugees-and-host-communities>

<https://roasiapacific.iom.int/news/rising-needs-among-rohingya-refugees-and-host-communities-iom-appeals-usd-125-million>

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2025-03-04/as-trump-shuts-the-door-on-asylum-seekers-migrants-turn-to-mexico>

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/turkey-migration-history>

<https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

<https://www.unhcr.org/excom/scip/3ae68ccd10/note-non-refoulement-submission-african-commission-human-peoples-rights.html>



<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2021/6/60c8eab204/unhcr-deeply-concerned-denmark-law-allowing-transfer-asylum-seekers-third.html>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/07/14/helping-lebanese-communities-cope-with-syrian-refugees>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2024/11/06/jordan-improving-economic-opportunities-for-syrian-refugees-and-host-communities>

<https://roasiapacific.iom.int/news/rising-needs-among-rohingya-refugees-and-host-communities-iom-appeals-usd-125-million>

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2025-03-04/as-trump-shuts-the-door-on-asylum-seekers-migrants-turn-to-mexico>

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/turkey-migration-history>

<https://www.nrc.no/feature/2024/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-Central-Mediterranean-migration-route>

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/how-dehydration-leads-to-migrant-deaths-in-desert>

<https://www.unhcr.org/neu/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2021/01/UNHCR-Recommendations-to-Denmark-on-strengthening-refugee-protection-in-DK-Europe-and-globally-January-2021.pdf>

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/migrants-needs-trust-humanitarian-organizations>



https://www.jointdatacenter.org/literature_review/left-in-limbo-the-case-for-economic-empowerment-of-refugees-and-host-communities-in-coxs-bazar-bangladesh/

<https://www.iom.int/news/us-mexico-border-worlds-deadliest-migration-land-route>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/03/more-than-2200-people-died-trying-to-reach-europe-2024>

<https://apnews.com/article/e3d6cea321411e3e4385b1d46cb787b0>

<https://apnews.com/article/a88aa4591fa83971be645a8f84399c63>

<https://nypost.com/2024/10/28/us-news/kamala-harris-grim-border-czar-legacy-2700-dead-migrants/>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1140622>

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2023/09/12/US-Mexico-border-world-s-deadliest-land-route-for-migrants-IOM-says>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/12/us-mexico-border-is-worlds-deadliest-land-route-for-migrants-iom>

https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/cabef351-db62-4cf2-81d0-56ae6a08559d_en?filename=ip033_en.pdf&utm_source

https://www.jointdatacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/JDC-Quarterly-Digest_January-2023.pdf?utm_source



https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/05.23_refugee_report_v3_0.pdf?utm_source

https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/41411-recognition-rates-first-instance?utm_source

https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/asylum-seeker-spending-report?utm_source

https://ftp.zew.de/pub/zew-docs/dp/dp24073.pdf?utm_source

<https://www.iab-forum.de/en/what-do-we-know-about-the-employment-of-refugees-in-germany-answers-to-some-frequently-asked-questions/#:~:text=How%20should%20one%20>

