

GWJ Resolutions Committee
GWJ VP Advocacy and Education
GWJ 2020

Fair and Non-Discriminatory Management of Refugees and Asylum Seekers



2019 Policy Resolution 6

- ✓ GWI Policy Position 2019
- ✓ Policy Resolution 2019

GWI Strategic Advocacy Plan 2020

Resources and prior resolutions

Associated UN documents

GWI Strategic Advocacy Toolkit 2020



POLICY POSITION RESOLUTION 6 2019

FAIR AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY MANAGEMENT OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

GWI Resolutions Committee

The Issue

The global refugee population under the UNHCR's mandate has now reached 25.4 million, which is referred to as "the global refugee crisis". Since 2012, which marks the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the number of forcibly displaced people continues to reach record highs, year after year. Developing countries host a disproportionate number of the world's refugees. In fact, 85% of the world's refugees are concentrated in developing countries, with one third of them in the world's least developed countries.

It is vital for governments to adhere to the 1951 Refugee Convention which is a legal document that defines and outlines refugee rights as well as legal obligations of States. The Convention's cornerstone is the principle of non-refoulement (Article 33) which states that (with some exceptions) refugees should not be returned to a country where s/he faces serious threats to her/his life or freedom.

Barriers

The current global protectionist and militarized approach to borders by developed countries is contributing to increased suffering of displaced populations by making them highly vulnerable to violence, sexual violence, torture, trafficking and exploitation. This is in violation of several human rights conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention.

GWI's Position

Developed countries have a legal and moral obligation to do more to solve the global refugee crisis. Governments must continue to show leadership and spark international solidarity towards refugees by increasing refugee intake and allocating adequate resources to ensure successful refugee resettlement and integration.



GWI recommends

Urge Governments

- to provide and expand the resources, training counselling, and infrastructure to the appropriate entities to ensure an efficient and effective refugee claims system;
- by ensuring such infrastructure continuing to increase the number of vetted refugees and asylum seekers accepted, settled, and integrated into the country now and onward:
- promote increasing the targets for refugees, support adequate resources for resettlement programs and provide the necessary resources for expeditious refugee claim processing.

Identify and seek to support local NGOs working on refugee and asylum seekers rights.

Research whether their local government has an adequate plan for refugee and asylum seekers resettlement and where local government, or 3rd sector has a sponsorship or other community program, become involved to help resettle and welcome families and individuals who have fled their home countries.



POLICY RESOLUTION 6 - FAIR AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY MANAGEMENT OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Proposed by: Canadian Federation of University Women

Seconded by: Women Graduates-USA

The 33rd Graduate Women International General Assembly resolves that:

1. National Federations and Associations (NFAs) urge their respective governments to provide and expand the resources, training counselling, and infrastructure to the appropriate entities to ensure an efficient and effective refugee claims system;
2. National Federations and Associations (NFAs) urge their respective governments to protect the world's most vulnerable by continuing to increase the number of vetted refugees and asylum seekers accepted, settled, and integrated into the country now and onward, after the measures in clause #1 have been initiated.

Suggested Plan of Action

1. NFAs should write to their local government representatives requesting they promote increasing the targets for refugees, support adequate resources for resettlement programs and provide the necessary resources for expeditious refugee claim processing.
2. NFAs should seek to support local NGOs working on refugee and asylum seekers rights.
3. NFAs should research whether their local government has an adequate plan for refugee and asylum seekers resettlement. If their local government has a sponsorship program, they should get involved in community sponsorship and donation programs to help resettle and welcome families and individuals who have fled their home countries.

Supporting Statement:

The global refugee population under the UNHCR's mandate has now reached 25.4 million, which is referred to as "the global refugee crisis". Since 2012, which marks the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the number of forcibly displaced people continues to reach record highs, year after year. Developing countries host a disproportionate number of the world's refugees. In fact, 85% of the world's refugees are concentrated in developing countries, with one third of them in the world's least developed countries.

It is vital for governments to adhere to the 1951 Refugee Convention which is a legal document that defines and outlines refugee rights as well as legal obligations of States. The Convention's cornerstone is the principle of non-refoulement (Article 33) which states that (with some exceptions) refugees should not be returned to a country where s/he faces serious threats to her/his life or freedom.

The current global protectionist and militarized approach to borders by developed countries is contributing to increased suffering of displaced populations by making them highly vulnerable to violence, sexual violence, torture, trafficking and exploitation. This is in violation of several human rights



GWI Strategic Advocacy Campaign 2020

FAIR AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY MANAGEMENT OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS (Policy Resolution 2019,6)

conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention. Developed countries have a legal and moral obligation to do more to solve the global refugee crisis. Governments must continue to show leadership and spark international solidarity towards refugees by increasing refugee intake and allocating adequate resources to ensure successful refugee resettlement and integration.



GWI Strategic Advocacy Campaign

GWI VP Advocacy and Education

Fair and Non-discriminatory Management of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

*Based on
GWI Policy Resolution 2019,6*

**GWI Advocacy-G
NFA Advocacy-N**

Human Rights | Global Issue

Cross-linked to SDG 10.7, 16.3
Migration and Human Rights

THE ISSUE

The global refugee population under the UNHCR's mandate has now reached 25.4 million¹, which is referred to as "the global refugee crisis". Since 2012, which marks the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the number of forcibly displaced people continues to reach record highs, year after year.

Developing countries host a disproportionate number of the world's refugees. In fact, 85% of the world's refugees are concentrated in developing countries, with one third of them in the world's least developed countries.

It is vital for governments to adhere to the 1951 Refugee Convention² which is a legal document that defines and outlines refugee rights as well as legal obligations of States. The Convention's cornerstone is the principle of non-refoulement (Article 33) which states that (with some exceptions) refugees should not be returned to a country where s/he faces serious threats to her/his life or freedom.

GOAL

Governments will increase refugee intake including the allocation of resources needed for successful refugee resettlement and integration.

¹ Status as of 2019, pre-COVID-19

² <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/1951-refugee-convention.html>



CURRENT STATUS

Effects of Covid-19

At the beginning of 2020, before COVID-19, 80 million people had been displaced from their homes due to conflict and persecution. Over 80 per cent of the world's refugees and nearly all the world's internally displaced people are hosted in low- and middle-income countries, all of which are under severe economic strain.

According to the UN Secretary General Policy Brief "People on the Move" ³, while COVID-19 has left few lives and places untouched, the impact is especially harsh for groups already in crisis particularly those on the move: migrants, workers in the informal economy, human trafficking victims, people in conflict areas fleeing their homes, and victims of climate change and environmental disasters. As of February 2021, **79.5 million** people have been forcibly replaced around the world.⁴

The pandemic presents greater challenges for the protection of refugees, internally displaced and Stateless people, maintaining the need for solidarity and greater support. Refugees and other displaced people, at risk during the pandemic due to limited access to services such as access to water, sanitation systems and health facilities, are the most marginalized and vulnerable members of society.

"The pandemic has threatened the social and economic rights of the most vulnerable in society – among them refugees and those forcibly displaced who, all too often, depend on the informal economy. They are among the first to suffer the economic impacts of a lockdown".⁵

In addition there are increasing incidents of discrimination, stigmatization and xenophobia against refugees and displaced people.

This has resulted in the creation or further exacerbation of three interlocking crises:

1. Crisis in Health Care: people exposed to the virus with limited resources for protection, already experiencing compromising health care situations such as living / working in crowded unsafe environments, lack of access to basic services such as water and sanitation, food security and nutrition, pre-existing barriers (legal, language, cultural) and risk of deportation due to lack of proper documentation.
2. Socio-economic Crisis: people working in the informal economy with limited access to social protection systems; increase unsafe environments facing women and girls who are already susceptible to gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation, loss of employment and wages.
3. Protection Crisis: border closures due to prevention measures to restrict movement and the spread of COVID-19 has left many people trapped in extremely dangerous situations and unable

³ https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_on_people_on_the_move.pdf June 2020

⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/coronavirus-covid-19.html>

⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1076892>



to cross borders to seek protection and escape persecution in their own countries. In addition, fear of COVID-19 has seen an increase in xenophobia, racism and stigmatization and derailment of human rights.

The UN Secretary General Policy Brief outlines *Four Basic Tenets to Advancing Safe and Inclusive Mobility*:

1. Exclusion is costly in the long run whereas inclusion pays off for everyone.
2. The response to COVID-19 and protecting the human rights of people on the move are not mutually exclusive.
3. No one is safe until everyone is safe.
4. People on the move are part of the solution.

The Policy Brief expresses concern about the future of human mobility as a result of COVID-19. *“As mobility in many parts of the world has ground to a halt, there are concerns that in the mid- to long-term some of the current movement restrictions could outlast the immediate crisis. This could erode legal obligations related to access to protection under international human rights and refugee law, as well as established practices and norms around mobility. It also risks reducing the beneficial impact of migration to countries of destination and origin.”*

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM)⁶, the first year of the pandemic saw more than 111,000 travel restrictions and border closures around the world. These measures “have thwarted many people’s ability to pursue migration as a tool to escape conflict, economic collapse, environmental disaster and other crises”, IOM maintained.

In May of 2021, a study showed that 1.5 million people from nations driving major refugee movements were admitted by 35 OECD countries and Brazil on family, work and study permits in the decade just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that data for 2020 will show these admissions to be significantly less owing to closed borders and travel restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷

Inequality in Restrictions:

1. Border closures impacted displaced people from seeking refuge but not business travellers.
2. Migrant workers and refugees who need to move out of necessity bear the brunt of expenses for quarantine and self-isolation.
3. The inequality will increase with requirements for proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 testing especially amongst migrants who have no access to services or health records.

⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1089302>

⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2021/5/60915f074/pandemic-threatens-progress-refugee-admissions-family-work-study-permits.html> UNHCR International Protection chief, Gillian Triggs.



Effects of COVID-19 on Education of Refugees

“Even before COVID-19, refugee children were twice as unlikely as other children to attend school”, Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the UN’s educational and cultural agency, UNESCO.

The UNHCR (the UN Refugee agency) has stated that while children in every country have struggled due to the impact COVID-19 has had on their education, refugee children, especially girls, have been particularly disadvantaged. Many may never return to their studies due to school closures, high fees or lack of access to technology needed for remote learning. The potential of millions of young refugees living in some of the world’s most vulnerable communities will be threatened. ⁸ 2019 data showed an increase of 2 percent school attendance over previous years, with a 77 percent enrolment at the primary school level, dropping to 31 percent in secondary school levels and 3 percent at high-school levels.

Any advances made in progress has now been undone by COVID-19. For girls, who already experience less access to school, the situation is grave. The Malala Fund has estimated that half of all refugee girls will not return to the classroom if and when they re-open and in countries where enrolment was already less than 10 percent, all girls are at risk of dropping out. ⁹

Without action by governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to join together in finding solutions, a whole generation of refugee children will be deprived of an education.

BARRIERS

The current global protectionist and militarized approach to borders by developed countries is contributing to increased suffering of displaced populations by making them highly vulnerable to violence, sexual violence, torture, trafficking and exploitation. This is in violation of several human rights conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention.

REVIEW OF LAW

NFAs to research current national / regional laws.

POLICY REVIEW

NFAs to research national, regional, local, community, institutional policies.

⁸ *Coming Together for Refugee Education*, a UNHCR report, September 2020

⁹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1071592>



SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL IMPACTS ON ISSUE

The world is now facing the largest displacement of people since World War II. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHRC), the number of refugees and people displaced by conflict and disaster worldwide reached a record high in 2017 of 68.5 million while another 10 million are classified as "stateless" people. Across the globe, nearly 50 million children have been uprooted. Among them are 28 million fleeing brutal wars in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan. There are 6.3 million migrant and refugee children in Latin America and the Caribbean fleeing violence and seeking to reunite with family members. In addition, there are another 258 million migrants, of which 120 million are women and girls, living outside of their country of birth. All these numbers continue to grow. ¹⁰

The Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved on 10 December 1948 by the General Assembly affirmed the principle that human beings shall enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination. The 1951 Refugee Convention extends the scope of protection for refugees recognizing that the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries. A satisfactory solution of the problem cannot therefore be achieved without international co-operation.

POTENTIAL ALLIES

- GWI NFAs
- Human Rights and migration/refugee organization and other NGOs

RECOMMENDATIONS

Urge Governments [N]

- to provide and expand the resources, training counselling, and infrastructure to the appropriate entities to ensure an efficient and effective refugee claims system;
- by ensuring such infrastructure continuing to increase the number of vetted refugees and asylum seekers accepted, settled, and integrated into the country now and onward:
- promote increasing the targets for refugees, support adequate resources for resettlement programs and provide the necessary resources for expeditious refugee claim processing.

Identify and seek to support local NGOs working on refugee and asylum seekers rights. [N]

Research whether their local government has an adequate plan for refugee and asylum seekers resettlement and where local government, or 3rd sector has a sponsorship or other community program, become involved to help resettle and welcome families and individuals who have fled their home countries. [N]

¹⁰ All figures are pre-COVID-19



DEVELOP A MESSAGE

GWI Position

GWI believes that developed countries have a legal and moral obligation to do more to solve the global refugee crisis. Governments must continue to show leadership and spark international solidarity towards refugees by increasing refugee intake and allocating adequate resources to ensure successful refugee resettlement and integration.

The Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 10.7.2: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.¹¹

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes targets related directly to international migrations and migrants, particularly SDG 10.7.2 which call on countries to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Other migration-oriented SDGs and targets include:

- SDG 4.b (providing scholarships for study abroad)
- SDG 8.8 (respecting labor rights of migrant workers)
- SDG 10 c (reducing the costs of transferring remittances)
- SDG 5.2, 8.7, 16.2 (ending human trafficking)
- SDG 17.18 (disaggregating data by various characteristics including migratory status)

SUGGESTED FOCAL POINTS AND INFLUENCERS

- UN Agencies and other NGOs
- Governments and their agencies
- Human rights organizations
- Community leaders, businesses, religious institutions
- Community Sponsors
- Media, journalists
- Humanitarian aid workers, social workers
- Health care workers
- Institutes of education
- Religious and Community leaders and activists

¹¹ [SDG indicator 10.7.2: Data Booklet \(un.org\)](https://data.un.org/en/indicators/10.7.2)



ADVOCACY TOOLS

- Social media
- Blogs
- Community Action Calls
- Face-to-face meetings
- Phone calls
- Email
- Letter-writing
- Letters to the Editor, news articles
- TV and radio outreach
- White papers, research and data
- Community Action Toolkits

GWI Advocacy Tools

Toolkits: <https://graduatewomen.org/media-publications/toolkit/>

Press Releases: <https://graduatewomen.org/media-publications/press-releases/>

- 18 December 2019: [On International Migrants Day, GWI issues an infographic report that calls for international cooperation to tackle human rights violations of women migrants around the world](#)

Strategic Advocacy Tools

- GWI Strategic Advocacy Template
- GWI Strategic Advocacy Checklist
- GWI Strategic Advocacy Toolkit

GWI Resolutions

GWI (IFUW) first addressed support for refugees in a resolution in 1939 (#4), and subsequently added refugee and/or human rights resolutions in 1968 (#2, human rights for all), 1992 (#20, refugee women), 1995 (#14, refugee women and girls), and 2001 (#8, refugee women and human rights). This resolution builds on our ongoing commitment to address current challenges.

GWI will utilize its consultative role with UN Women, UN Refugee Agency, UN Human Rights Council, and other international bodies to assist in the implementation of this resolution.



Reference Documents

1951 Refugee Convention

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

The Global Compact on Refugees

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>

Coming Together for Refugee Education, a UNHCR report, September 2020

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_on_people_on_the_move.pdf June 2020

Advocacy Timing

UN International Days

[World Refugee Day](#) – June 20

[International Migrants Day](#) – December 18

UN Human Rights Council (quarterly)

UN Commission on the Status of Women (annually in March)

UN High Level Political Forum (annually July)

Other UN events and meetings where GWI can deliver written and oral statements as thematically appropriate



Putting it all together

Strategic Advocacy

"Strategic Advocacy is a planned process, not an event"

Advocacy is a process involving a series of inter-related steps that take you from the identification of an issue, to the satisfactory resolution of that issue.



Advocacy's goal is to bring about changes in laws or regulations, public behavior and political perspectives concerning your advocacy issue.



Advocacy benefits all people: the marginalized and the mainstream.



Advocacy is about caring enough about social, economic and political issues that have the potential to either negate or affirm human rights and gender equality.

Planning is important. It helps you to:

- head in the right direction;
- break down your goals into manageable pieces or stepping stones;
- use the right tools;
- use scarce resources wisely by making strategic choices;
- make sure activities reinforce rather than undermine each other;
- get the timing right;
- start preparing early enough and become prepared to counter opposition.

Common Mistakes

- Unclear aims and objectives
- Activity planning without a strategy leading to untargeted actions, wasted effort and ultimately reduced impact
- Action plans that run to an internal timetable, rather than being determined by external events and opportunities
- Asking decision makers to do something which is not in their power
- Getting the timing wrong and trying to influence a process when key decisions have already been made
- Messages that don't get noticed and move people or fail to include a call to action
- Not having a clearly defined 'ask'
- Use the wrong tools
- Scarce resources used unwisely
- Activities that run at cross purposes
- Inability to counter opposition

Strategic Advocacy is about:

- achieving specific outcomes, not just raising awareness of problems;
- developing strategies based on research and analysis rather than guesswork;
- choosing approaches and deploying resources where they will have the most impact

The process is about:

- knowing what is wrong;
- identifying the problem you want to tackle and therefore which issue you want to work on;
- knowing what you would like to see as the solution to the problem;
- knowing what must change;
- knowing what you will ask for and the least that you will be satisfied with;
- recognizing who has the power to achieve change;
- recognizing who will help or hinder this process;
- identifying which resources will be needed;
- understanding how those with the power to make changes will be influenced.

The planning process has the following elements:

- Identify the issue
- Research the current status of the issue
- Review the law regarding the issue
- Identify the change that needs to be made
- Research socio-economic and political conditions that are causing or exacerbating the issue
- Identify allies – other organizations that are working on the same issue and have a similar goal: NGOs, community-based organizations, agencies
- Develop working partnerships with allies identified
- Develop recommendations
- Develop your message
- Identify institutions and people that you will focus your advocacy efforts towards
- Identify advocacy tools: position papers, press releases, social media
- Train members of your organization to deploy advocacy tools
- Monitor the progress of your advocacy and evaluate results to make necessary adjustments and changes





Strategic
Advocacy
Toolkit
Click Here

Graduate Women International Strategic Advocacy Plan Checklist

- ☐ Identify the issue
- ☐ Research current status of issue
- ☐ Review law in your country
- ☐ Identify needed change
- ☐ Research exacerbating issues
- ☐ Identify allies
- ☐ Develop working partnerships
- ☐ Develop recommendations
- ☐ Develop your message
- ☐ Identify targets of focus
- ☐ Identify GWI advocacy tools
- ☐ Train NFA members
- ☐ Monitor progress
- ☐ Summarize work
- ☐ Share success with GWI office



The Advocacy Cycle



GWI Toolkits

<https://graduatewomen.org/members-login/tools-resources/toolkit/>

GWI Advocacy and the Media

<https://graduatewomen.org/media-publications/press-releases/>
<https://graduatewomen.org/members-login/advocacy-media/press-release-templates/>

GWI Annual Reports

<https://graduatewomen.org/media-publications/annual-reports/>

GWI Policy Papers

<https://graduatewomen.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/policy-papers/>

GWI Resolutions

<https://graduatewomen.org/members-login/constitutional-material/resolutions/>

GWI Manifestos

<https://graduatewomen.org/who-we-are/gwi-manifestos/>

