



Iowa High School Model United Nations

Social and Humanitarian Committee

Humanitarian Questions Regarding Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons

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Background

The realms of this topic include concerns over human security for refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The Commission on Human Security (CHS) defines human security as “the protection of ‘the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and fulfillment’”(UN.org). It is also vital to understand what is meant by refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The UN Refugee Agency spells out that a refugee is someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”. Refugees who make an effort to reintegrate themselves into their home country are labeled returnees. Displaced persons are similar in that they are persecuted for the same reasons as refugees yet they have not crossed any international borders. Displaced persons or IDP’s remain under the protection of their own government and nation’s humanitarian rights (UNHCR.org).

According to The UN Refugee Agency there are approximately 33,924,500 individuals in the world who remain a concern to the UN in regards to human security. These people include refugees, displaced persons, returnees, asylum seekers and stateless people. The largest portion of refugees and IDP’s are generated in Asia and Africa (UNHCR.org). The UN aims to create political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that, can give people the tools they need for survival (UN.org). Citizens can be forced to leave their country or live with discomfort within their country for many reasons which include international war and conflict, civil violence, organized crime, transnational terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, chronic poverty, environmental degradation, and deadly infectious disease. It is evident that the use of humanitarian intervention needs some adjustments with its failed success in situations such as Somalia and Rwanda. However, humanitarian intervention is not necessarily unwarranted when we can see the usefulness of it in situation such as East Timor.

What Has Been Done/ Past UN Actions

The importance of Human Security was first introduced in the 1994 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In subsequent years two additional reports, the *Commission on Human Security* which entitled *Human Security Now*, were generated which also addressed this issue. Presently the topic of Human Security is in high discussion among intergovernmental and regional organizations. These organizations include the G7/G8, the African Union, the Association of South East Asian Nations, and the European Union (UN.org). The most recent reports that have discussed human security issues are the *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility*, which was drafted by the UN High level Panel on

Threats, Challenges and Change. The second report is of the UN Secretary-General, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*.

Possible Solutions

According to the General Assembly's Human Security Debate, discussion on how best to achieve human security for refugees, displaced persons and returnees have all agreed that human security should be aimed at solving modern-day problems such as poverty, armed conflict, high food and energy prices, easy access to small arms and light weapons, and financial and economic crises. The problem surrounding human security and peacekeeping operations is being able to set reasonable standards that follow the UN Charter and international law on when to implement peacekeeping tactics. The UN website outlines the goal of the Commission of Human Security and describes their framework as a providing protection and empowerment of people. The 2010 General Assembly report suggests that the UN perform a comprehensive review of all peacekeeping issues.

Questions to Consider

Are current peacekeeping tactics following the UN charter and international law?
How can the UN protect the economic, political, environmental and social needs of citizens?
When should peacekeeping tactics be implemented?
Who has the authority to intervene in interstate affairs?
What are the benefits of peacekeeping forces in terms of both the conflicted state and other countries?

Consulted/Recommended Sources

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10944.doc.htm>

(2010 General Assembly discussion on Human Security)

<http://ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity/Home/tabid/2097/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

(UN.org – Human Security homepage)

<http://ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity/Reports/tabid/2186/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

(UN documents on Human Security)

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

(The UN Refugee Agency)