

# COMMITTEE GUIDE

IOM



**International Organization for Migration**

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## 1. Presidents' Letter

Esteemed delegates,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the International Organization for Migration committee at CCBMUN XIX. First, let us introduce ourselves; we are Nicolás Ossma and Sofía Barrios. We are currently 11th-grade students at Colegio Bolívar, and both of us have been involved in MUN since 6th grade. Being involved in this has been an experience that we have both significantly enjoyed; we have participated in over twenty models between us, winning several awards along the way, and we've already experienced being presidents of several different committees.

Within MUN conferences and the United Nations, we can see that every committee has an important role to play. We believe that IOM is important because, as years have gone by, humanity has realized that refugee-related topics are some of the most life-threatening conflicts in today's society. We have seen how conflict, civil disturbance, and political dishonesty have led to crises that have displaced thousands of people from their homes. These people have been forced to survive in a completely different country with little to no starting capital and, in several cases, without their families. In this committee, you will develop solutions for some of the most critical migration issues.

As your presidents, we want you to know that, whether this is your first model or you have had previous experience, we will be there to answer your questions and to help you have an enriching experience at this conference. So, throughout our time together, feel free to regard us not only as your presidents but also as your guides. We have both been where you are, and even though we know it may be difficult at first, we firmly believe that all of you have the potential to achieve great things in this model.

We expect to see excellent and fluent debates within the committee; you must be well prepared, meaning you have done a vast amount of research for your portfolios. In the portfolio, you must show you clearly understand your country's position regarding the topics whilst also developing possible solutions for the problems at hand. We also encourage you to participate as much as possible; this might be difficult for some of you, but keep in mind that your interventions could be what's needed to move the debate forward!

The MUN is an extraordinary experience that will allow you to develop solutions to the world's most critical issues. In addition, you will have the opportunity to meet new people and gain new skills, such as public speaking and critical thinking. We hope you enjoy this conference and realize that no matter how young you are, your mind can develop innovative ideas that will help our world. We wish you all the best, and we look forward to seeing you in the model.

Best wishes,

Sofía Barrios and Nicolás Ossma

IOM Presidents

## 2. Committee Information

### I. History

The International Organization for Migration, commonly known as simply the IOM, is an intergovernmental organization that provides both guidance and services to deal with migration issues, such as the handling of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and migrant workers. It was established on December 6th, 1951, as a direct consequence of mass civilian displacement in the aftermath of the Second World War. The founding name of the organization was the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe or PICMME; however, this name was replaced after 1952, turning PICMME into the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM). This was the first of many name changes, later becoming the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) in 1980, before settling with the IOM name in 1989.

Since 2016, the IOM has been a related organization of the United Nations. With 174 member states, a further eight states holding observer status, and offices in over 100 countries, the IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all.

The IOM works with four areas of migration management: migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration, and addressing forced migration. The organization is also in charge of promoting migration laws, protecting migrant rights, and assuring the well-being of migrants. The organization works along with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental partners. Its mission is to “promote humane and orderly migration by providing services and advice to governments and migrants” (IOM, 2021).

### II. Structure

As of April 2021, 174 member states are a part of the International Organization for Migration. [You may view the list here.](#)

To accommodate such a large number of member states, the IOM operates with a decentralized system of power. What this means is that it doesn't have one central office of operations; instead, it has several bases spread all over the world. This allows them to carry out a wide array of projects simultaneously at the request of the aforementioned member states. “Their field structure is composed of:

- 9 Regional Offices, which formulate regional strategies and plans of action and provide programmatic and administrative support to the countries within their regions. These Regional Offices are in Dakar, Senegal; Nairobi, Kenya; Cairo, Egypt; Pretoria, South Africa; San José, Costa Rica; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Bangkok, Thailand; Brussels, Belgium; Vienna, Austria;

- 2 Special Liaison Offices which strengthen relations with specific multilateral bodies, diplomatic missions, and non-governmental organizations. These offices are located in New York, USA; and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- 2 Administrative Centres (Panama and Manila), which provide core support in the areas of information technology and administrative services to IOM's network of offices.
- 5 Country Offices with Coordinating Functions that have the additional responsibility of ensuring that migratory realities within a defined cluster of countries are taken into account in programmatic activities of the region. The Country Offices with Coordinating Functions are in Canberra, Australia (covering the Pacific); Rome, Italy (covering the Mediterranean); Astana, Kazakhstan (covering Central Asia); and Georgetown, Guyana (covering the Caribbean). A coordinating function for the cluster of countries in South Asia also exists in the Regional Office in Bangkok.
- In addition, 4 Country Offices with Resources Mobilization Functions have the additional responsibility of resource mobilization by assisting in fundraising activities as well as providing advice on fundraising policies, priorities, and procedures. These offices are located in Tokyo, Japan; Berlin, Germany; Helsinki, Finland; and Washington, D.C., United States of America.
- Country Offices and sub-offices, which implement a wide range of projects addressing specific migration needs.
- The African Capacity Building Centre (ACBC), based in Tanzania, provides Africa-wide technical assistance in matters pertaining to migration and border management.
- Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC). The Centre is based in Berlin, Germany, and was established as IOM's response to growing calls for comprehensive high-quality data on global migration trends." (IOM, 2021)

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### **3. Simulation:** *The effect of the Taliban takeover on refugee concerns in Afghanistan*

#### **I. History/Context**

The Taliban is a group of former Afghan fighters founded in 1994. Their goal was to spread their interpretation of the Sharia Law throughout Afghanistan and to turn it into the country's dominant dogma. In 1996, the Taliban took over Kabul, the Afghan capital, and established themselves as the legitimate government of the Asian country. For five years, the Taliban ruled ruthlessly over the country. They imposed rules such as the obligation of women to wear burqas and the prohibition of media such as television, cinema, and music.

After the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government forcefully removed the Taliban, holding them accountable for hiding Osama Bin Laden, the orchestrator of the attacks on the Twin Towers. The Taliban's refusal to hand the terrorist over to U.S. authorities led to military intervention and the establishment of a new Afghan government by the members of NATO. Despite this, Taliban attacks continued, and combat against NATO forces made 2014 one of the bloodiest years. In that year, the NATO combat mission ended, which left Afghanistan in the hands of its weak army, allowing the Taliban to seize more territory.

Peace talks between the Taliban and the U.S. emerged in 2020 and concluded to remove U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Although this agreement was consolidated, the Taliban attacks did not stop. As an effect of this recently re-sparked conflict, over 3 million Afghans fled the country by the end of 2020; most of these migrants have sought asylum in the neighbouring countries of Iran and Pakistan; some of them have even made it into other countries such as Germany, Turkey, and India. Unfortunately, even though Iran and Pakistan are the countries that have received most of the Afghan refugees, they have also been the countries that have mistreated them the most. Iran has established "no-go areas" for refugees, which are restricted parts of the country where asylum seekers cannot access. Unfortunately for the migrants, these "no-go areas" deny them the chance of education, and many immigrants have been detained and deported back to Afghanistan. Between 2019 and early 2021, approximately 1.5 million refugees were sent back from Iran. Pakistan has approximately 1.4

million Afghan refugees and about 2 million other Afghan migrants; Human Rights Watch has reported that many refugees have suffered from police abuse and forced deportations.

## **II. Current Situation**

Despite agreements between the Taliban and countries such as the United States, attacks by the belligerent group did not cease. Then, in May of 2021, the US Biden administration began the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. By the middle of August, the Taliban had retaken Kabul. This completed their takeover of Afghanistan and the reestablishment of a government. The Taliban are now in control of the Asian nation, and their government has put the country on the brink of economic and social collapse. After the group took control of the country, bank systems were frozen, and ATMs stopped dispensing monetary resources, causing desperation among the citizens. The Taliban takeover has also significantly affected Afghanistan's GDP, because most of it came from foreign countries, which have now cut their economic ties with the Asian nation as a sign of opposition towards its regime.

This financial crisis and other ongoing humanitarian crises have generated starvation, lack of monetary resources, death, drought, lack of medical aid, and illness in the Afghan community. The deplorable state of the country has led thousands of Afghans to attempt fleeing to other countries. Airports have been overcrowded, people have tried everything to get in flights that will take them away from the country, even if it means risking their lives. Desperate mothers have given up their young children to American soldiers hoping that they will take care of them, and chaos has taken over the country. Afghans that have managed to flee the country have arrived at different nations such as Turkey, Greece, the United States, Colombia; each of these countries has had various responses towards the exodus of immigrants. Since the 2015 crisis, Turkey has been one of the nations that have granted the most asylum to migrants coming from different countries, and so far, the nation has remained this way throughout the ongoing crisis. The Turkish government is constantly looking for ways to take care of and provide protection to the refugees in their territory, but they are not doing this for free.

During the 2015-16 crisis, the Turkish government gained a certain amount of influence over European leaders. The country was paid around \$7.03 billion to take care of the migrants that arrived at their territory. As the country regains importance in the Afghan crisis, it is

speculated that it will become essential in the migrant intake and possible negotiations with the Taliban. In the face of this information, it is expected that the nation will again charge for taking care of the refugees and regaining influence over different leaders. Opposite to Turkey, Greece has not provided a positive response towards migrants; this response is not limited to those coming from Afghanistan but all asylum seekers in general. In the face of the Afghan migrant crisis, the Greek government has strengthened its migrant policy. It has also sent more guards to the nation's border with Turkey and strengthened the vigilance quality of its borders. Greek citizens don't have a positive response to migration either; a Greek coastguard vessel came across a group of migrants trying to reach the country, one of the guards threw an inflatable raft to the immigrants and shouted: "Get the f\*\*\* out of here, you don't belong here." He then grabbed one of the migrants and threw them overboard; the group of asylum seekers was left adrift with no life jackets and no engines. The rest of the European Union has shown mixed responses; some countries do not want to receive refugees because they are already struggling with their citizens and the refugees they received in the past. Other countries do want to accept migrants but want to impose regulations to avoid another crisis such as the one in 2015-16. The leaders have met several times, and they show the same preoccupation towards the exodus of incoming refugees and have agreed to prevent a crisis. The US has mostly had a positive approach to incoming migrants from Afghanistan. A poll taken on October 4, 2021, showed that only 9% of US citizens were against receiving Afghan migrants; testimonies from people show an overall desire to provide refuge from those fleeing the Asian nation. Andrew Davis (a Republican veteran) has given the following testimony: "We owe it to them, it'd be dangerous for them to stay there, I think if they helped us. If we can do that, I do think we should take them in; I mean, they're obviously at threat." This is just one example of the many US citizens who want to take in Afghan refugees and advocate for their proper treatment. On September 30, Congress passed a resolution in which it would provide \$6.3 billion to ensure migrants' safety. Finally, in Latin America, Colombia has agreed to receive around 4000 Afghan refugees. Iván Duque, the nation's president, has stated that it is Colombia's duty to provide help to those who come to the country seeking it, and it is also the nation's duty to defend women, children, and in general, people's rights. Although the president's decision will help a good amount of asylum seekers, Colombian citizens are not very happy with the incoming migrants. Colombia has become a recent country of refuge. It has provided asylum to over one million Venezuelans; streets are filled



with unemployed refugees, which has become unpleasant for many citizens who see immigrants as invaders in their country. When Duque announced the acceptance of Afghan migrants, many Colombians had an immediate negative reaction; citizens complained that their president was more concerned about foreign crises such as Afghanistan, Venezuela, and Haiti than about its constant and ongoing issues. Many believe that Duque is only taking in the refugees to maintain a good image in the eyes of the United States, but whichever his reasons truly are, Duque has stated that Afghan refugees will receive medical treatment if needed along with COVID-19 vaccine and other resources to ensure their well-being until they find a permanent new home.

### **III. Key Points of the Debate**

- Possible solutions for the Afghan migrant crisis
- Process of Afghan migrations
- Insurance of basic necessities and protection to Afghan migrants
- Intake of Afghan asylum seekers into foreign countries
- Restoration of social stability in Afghanistan
- The eventual return of Afghan refugees to their home country

### **IV. Participating Organisms**

- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- UN World Food Programme (UN WFP)
- International Refugee Assistance Project
- Save The Children
- Amnesty International

## V. Guiding Questions

1. Is your country currently being affected by the Afghan refugee crisis? If so, in what way?
2. What should be done with the Afghan refugees? Is your country willing to accept them and, if not, what does your government say should be done about the refugees?
3. Should Afghan refugees have priority over other refugees that have arrived from other countries, and should they be given permanent or temporary refugee status?
4. In what ways can countries accept Afghan refugees without endangering their own national security, taking into account that there are many belligerent groups in the country?
5. Is your country doing anything to encourage/force refugees to return to Afghanistan, or does your government not consider this to be an option now or in the near future?

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#### 4. Topic 1: Mitigating the effects of the Bolivarian mass exodus in Latin America (Venezuelan Refugee Crisis)

##### I. History/Context

Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, Venezuela was an economically successful country. The nation was oil-rich, educated, had a solid democratic tradition, and seemed to offer steadfast, unwavering socioeconomic growth for the foreseeable future. It was considered to be the fourth richest country in the world at one point, far more stable than many Latin American countries at the time, and even drawing envy from some of their



<https://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Gonzalez-Vargas-on-nostalgia-LEAD.png>

continental neighbours. Diego Arria, a former Venezuelan ambassador to the United Nations, described his home nation as “a relatively rich country that offered opportunities, with no insecurity,” adding that “no one ever thought about leaving” (Arria, 2009). However, in less than a half-century, the situation in Venezuela changed dramatically.

Problems in the nation started in the 1980s when it entered an age of economic downturn and social upheaval. The economic boom of the 1970s, which came with an abundance of oil exports, started to unwind at the start of the new decade. Due to the unstable demand for its primary export commodity, the Venezuelan economy fluctuated heavily.

Michael McCaughan’s book *The Battle of Venezuela* dives deep into the conceptualism of these problems. He explains that “Venezuelan workers enjoyed the highest wages in Latin America and subsidies in food, health, education, and transport,” but “toward the end of the 1970s, these tendencies began to reverse themselves.” Per capita oil income and per capita income both declined, dropping around 8% between 1970 and 1997; this downward trend sparked a massive foreign debt crisis and led to the forced devaluation of the bolivar in 1983. Between 1984 and 1995 the percentage of people living below the poverty line catapulted

from 36% to 66%, while the number of people suffering from extreme poverty tripled, going from 11% to 36% (McCaughan, 2004).

Furthermore, in an excerpt from the book *Venezuela: Hugo Chávez and the Decline of an "Exceptional Democracy"*, Dr. Edgardo Lander discussed the intensification of class division as a consequence of the nation's economic downturn. He says: "A sensation of insecurity became generalized throughout the population, constituting an emerging culture of violence, very distinct from the culture of tolerance and peace that dominated Venezuelan society in the past. Along with unemployment, personal safety topped the problems perceived as most serious by the population. Between 1986 and 1996 the number of homicides per 10,000 inhabitants jumped from 13.4 to 56, an increase of 418 percent, with most of the victims being young males. Countless streets in the middle



and upper-class neighbourhoods were closed and privatized; increasingly, bars and electric fences surrounded houses and buildings in these areas. The threat represented by the 'dangerous class' came to occupy a central place in the media – along with demands that drastic measures be taken, including the death penalty or direct execution by the police" (Lander, 2006).

June 23rd, 1989 was an important date in Venezuelan history. On that day, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a Special Drawing Rights Loan of nearly 5 billion dollars to Venezuela. The agreement established that a quarter of that loan would be allocated to paying off debts to private banks, and another 25% was to be used to pay off debts to commercial banks (Brezina, 1989). This seemed like a blessing for the Latin American country, as it would supposedly aid them greatly in paying off their total debts of \$34 billion [dollars]. (For context, Venezuela's GDP in 1989 was \$43.53 billion. In other words, their debt was equal to around 78% of the nation's current GDP.) Instead, it would also serve as a detriment, as it brought widespread civilian scrutiny upon president Carlos Andres Pérez, who they criticized

for succumbing to IMF policies while setting the country up for a problematic financial situation in years to come.

Then, Hugo Chávez came into power. Born in 1954, he began participating in politics in the 1980s, with the hope of restoring order in his home country. It started with the creation of the Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement-200 (MBR-200) in 1982; while it was conceived



"more as a political study circle than as a subversive conspiracy," as the group gathered traction, they "began thinking... of some kind of *coup d'état*" (Gott, 2000). As Chávez himself recounted in 1994, "[they] were tired of the corruption, and [they] swore to dedicate [their] lives to the creation of a revolutionary movement, and to the revolutionary struggle in Venezuela" (Chávez, 1994). There

was also the tragic *Caracazo*, a series of mass riots in February 1989 that took the lives of over 1,000 civilians; this event led to the imposition of martial law in the country, and it was the final nail in the coffin of Pérez's presidency. Civil unrest was at its peak, so Chávez and his advisors saw that the time was right to bring the people a new perspective.

They staged a *coup d'état* in February 1992. While it was unsuccessful, and Chávez was imprisoned for two years, it garnered him national attention, and soon the masses began to shift towards his side. During Chávez's sentence, president Pérez left his post in disgrace following his impeachment in 1993. Chávez's purpose had been accomplished, and upon being pardoned, he put all his momentum to use. The MBR-200 became the Fifth Republic Movement, a new political party meant to forward his presidential campaign. The oversaturation of bad politics in previous years led to the lowest voter turnout in Venezuelan history, meaning that Hugo Chávez easily won the 1998 election.



<https://cdn.historycollection.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/9.png>

After taking the presidential oath in February 1999, the new leader got straight to work. He proposed the creation of a new constitution and assembled the *Asamblea Nacional Constituyente* (ANC) to draft it. This constitution proposed changes to the governmental



structure, such as extending the presidential term, re-organizing the National Assembly, and ceding more powers to the president. It also conceived idiosyncratic concepts, such as the implementation of “social human rights” like employment, housing, and healthcare. After a public referendum, this document passed with 71.8% in favour, and the new constitution was applied after the 2000 election.

Chávez also put a bigger emphasis on maximizing oil production, as it was easily the most abundant, and therefore the most profitable resource that Venezuela had at its disposal. Higher prices led to solid economic growth throughout the 2000s, with temporary GDP increases of around 13%, while inflation dropped by about 5%. 2003 was the peak of this upturn in fortune, when 3.3 million barrels of oil were being produced per day, and which added to this economic development. Deals with Caribbean leaders such as Fidel Castro helped expand their economic outreach, in an agreement known as Petrocaribe. Additionally, the President was putting the extra revenue to good use, allocating these resources into a host of social outreach programmes that, when fully functional, drastically increased quality of life.



However, as his rule kept going, Hugo Chávez met more and more opposition. The feared “Cubanization” of the country led to the creation of the *Coordinadora Democrática*, which temporarily executed a successful coup d’état in April 2002, as Venezuela momentarily succumbed to chaos and violence. Once more, a massive strike in the winter of 2002-03 led to the firing of 19,000 “treacherous” PDVSA (Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.) employees. This amounted to roughly 40% of the Bolivarian nation’s oil-producing workforce, and resulted in drastic increases in the unemployment rate and decreases in oil production. The aftermath of these events meant oil production in Venezuela never reached the same heights of old.

Counter measures carried out by Chávez’s administration ended up backfiring. Attempted currency controls led to a massive boom in black market activity. Nationalizing local companies also failed, “crippling domestic production and leaving the country more reliant

on imports” (Millard et al., 2019). Later, freedom of expression became an issue; Chávez censored organizations such as news stations with alleged connections to the 2002 coup and the 2003 strike. While Chávez kept making small-scale gestures to keep the general public opinion in his favour, such as using the initial oil windfall to combat poverty across the nation, national and international scrutiny towards him was slowly growing.

In 2008, the global financial crisis affected Venezuela in a significant way. The oil industry had



[https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/styles/immersive\\_image\\_3\\_2\\_desktop\\_2x/public/image/2021/01/petrostate.jpg](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/styles/immersive_image_3_2_desktop_2x/public/image/2021/01/petrostate.jpg)

never fully recovered from the extended oil strike years previously, and plunging oil prices were the final straw. Venezuela had no other major exports to make up for this decline, and the nation simply ran out of economic momentum. As a consequence, the Bolivarian nation spiraled out of control, and quality of life decreased considerably: extended power outages began occurring in 2010; the quality of

public forces deteriorated, so crime rates went up between 30% and 50% by 2011; the amount of people below the poverty line grew considerably; and the oil market became even more underfunded, as Venezuela couldn't even afford to export through international waters.

However, the most pressing fact was that, in 2013, the Central Bank stopped regularly releasing economic data. Projections saw the economy drop around 50% every year, and inflation increased between 700% and 10,000,000% (estimated) in the coming years. OPEC called Venezuela the country with the richest oil reserves in the world in 2011, but this did not mitigate the financial problems it was having. The people needed their strong leader to take charge, but Chávez died of cancer in 2013. As the nation grieved, experts agreed that whoever took over succeeded him would be faced with an impossible task.



[https://www.democracynow.org/images/story/06/22706/splash/chavez\\_procession.jpg](https://www.democracynow.org/images/story/06/22706/splash/chavez_procession.jpg)



## II. Current Situation

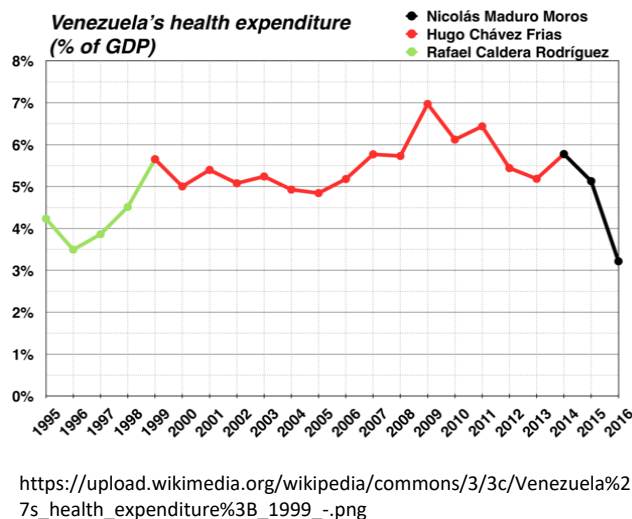
After Hugo Chavez's death, the reins of the presidency were handed over to Nicolás Maduro, and the situation in the country continued to decline: the value of the Venezuelan bolivar has kept deteriorating; oil production has continued to collapse; there have been calls of political dishonesty with a dispute over the presidency since 2018 between President Maduro and his opponents; and all these problems have been exacerbated by sanctions against the country led by the U.S.



<https://ca-times.brightspotcdn.com/dims4/default/b3f8864/2147483647/strip/true/crop/1333x800+0+0/resize/840x504!/format/webp/quality/90/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcalifornia-times-brightspot.s3.amazonaws.com%2F3b%2Fc9%2Ff0a28c8e482c8beeae65c23a565%2Fmaduro.jpg>

All these elements have led to a severe decline in quality of life within the Bolivarian nation. The site news.com.au reported that in “the reality of hyperinflation in this socialist dictatorship, ... enormous stacks of nearly worthless bolivars were required to purchase basic goods.” For example, a single roll of toilet paper was reported to cost 2,600,000 bolivars, the equivalent of \$0.55 US dollars (News.com.au, 2019).

Additionally, the economic decline had overwhelmingly negative consequences that detrimentally affected Venezuelan civilians' human rights. For example, healthcare in Venezuela is now a shadow of what it was decades ago. As seen in the graph on the left, health expenditures have deteriorated greatly since Chávez passed away; this meant that a nation with supposedly “free healthcare” barely had enough monetary resources to support the people's needs. Medical supplies were at 20% of the necessary quota, which meant that only around 7% of people could be properly treated. Furthermore, the return of malaria, yellow fever, diphtheria, dengue, and tuberculosis was problematic for the Venezuelan



healthcare system, and Human Rights Watch discovered that many people were dying from preventable health situations.

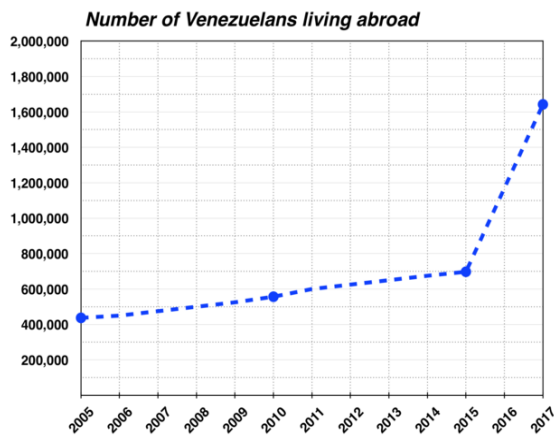
The Venezuelan people began to suffer even more as Maduro's presidency went on. In 2017, around 75% of the population had reportedly lost around 20 pounds (8 kilograms) from extreme starvation and malnutrition (UPI, 2017);

a 2018 study from Boston College displayed that over 50% of Venezuelan civilians did not have the income to meet their basic food needs (Boston College, 2018); as a result, an estimated 94% of the population lived in extreme poverty (Nichols, 2019).

A U.N. report from March 2019 titled, "Overview of Priority Humanitarian Needs in Venezuela," described the situation in a rather simple manner. It says, "Much more action is required to meet the growing needs of the Venezuelan people. Due to an increasingly contracted economy and political unrest, the Venezuelan population is facing unprecedented challenges in accessing essential services, including protection, healthcare, medicines, vaccinations, water, electricity, education, and access to food" (Reuters, 2019).

Most civilians concluded that it was impossible to lead a prosperous life in Venezuela, and they started to look for other opportunities. In 2014, the world began to see a mass exodus of Venezuelans.

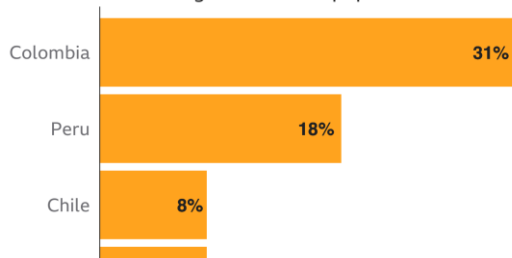
In the next year, migrations increased by approximately 3,000%, and it was estimated that around 1.8 million Venezuelan civilians had left the country in search of a new life. The number of people living abroad increased further, tripling between 2015 and 2017 (IOM, 2017); in raw figures, this mark is equal to about 1 million people. However, other reports, such as that of the Miami Herald newspaper, suggested that IOM's results may have been conservative. Late 2018 statistics were more concrete, as several credible studies, including those done by UNHCR and IOM, found that the number of Venezuelan migrants living abroad



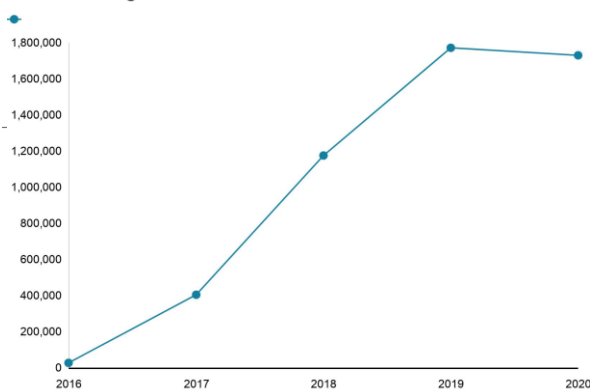
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/6/68/Number\\_of\\_Venezuelans\\_living\\_abroad.png/700px-Number\\_of\\_Venezuelans\\_living\\_abroad.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/6/68/Number_of_Venezuelans_living_abroad.png/700px-Number_of_Venezuelans_living_abroad.png)

### Where are Venezuelans going?

% of Venezuelan migrants in most popular destinations



### Venezuelan migrants in Colombia



Source: DANE, Migration Colombia

was equal to well over 10% of its current population. By around 2019, a large number of Maduro's opponents had left the country as well, leading to even less political opposition in the nation.

The latest study of Venezuelan migration trends reveals concrete statistics of where Venezuelan migrants are heading. Vanessa Buschschlüter published these results via the BBC in May 2021. It shows that 31% - nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  - of migrants have relocated to Colombia. This shouldn't be all that surprising, due to the geographical proximity of these two countries. Generally, Colombia has accepted these refugees with generosity; however, the situation is escalating to a point where Colombia is having a difficult time managing this quantity of migrants. Their Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE) reported that currently, the nation is hosting around 1.8 million Venezuelan migrants who intend to stay in the country long-term (keep in mind these are reported figures—actual values could be

much larger), and projected statistics indicate that there will be between 3 and 5 million migrants in Colombia come 2022.

Banks have reported that Colombia has spent close to \$190 million USD in order to provide adequate healthcare and basic necessities for Venezuelan immigrants, with that figure expected to quadruple by next year, according to Colombia's Central Bank. Their government

has called for help from an international donor to help cover some of these massive costs, before they escalate into major debt for the nation.

In around April 2021, in a decision that has been lauded internationally but scrutinized internally, Colombia's new official in charge of the Colombia-Venezuela border, Lucas Gómez (pictured), agreed to grant current Venezuelan immigrants a 10-year temporary protected status (TPS) licence. This figure is far greater than the 18-month TPS license offered by nations such as the United States, and Mr. Gómez expressed that his department is "hoping that



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it will create a domino effect and that other countries like Ecuador, Peru and Chile will follow in [their] footsteps" (Gómez, 2021). Over the summer, Gómez also attended an international donors' conference in Canada, hoping to obtain that aforementioned international donor to assist Colombia. For their work, the United States High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo

Grandi, has publicly praised and thanked the nation for its extraordinary generosity.



[https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/1FCE/production/\\_118524180\\_gettyimages-1317715539-1.jpg](https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/1FCE/production/_118524180_gettyimages-1317715539-1.jpg)

However, it goes without saying that the Colombian nation is also in the midst of its own internal turmoil. The closing of borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a de-prioritization of the imminent refugee crisis of their neighbours. Not only that, but attention has been directed towards the containment of widespread protests all across the country, due to a

drastic increase in unemployment, inequality, and instability within Colombia.

Additionally, Peru – despite not sharing a border with Venezuela – is second in terms of migrant percentage. The Peruvian nation harbours 18% (around ⅓) of Venezuelan refugees, according to the UNHCR/IOM study. Not only that, but it has an immense number of asylum seekers; a 2019 study conducted by Teresa Romero revealed that almost half a million (500,000) people sought asylum in Peru. The number of Venezuelan migrants in Peru is at

around 1 million, compared to about 7,000 in 2016 - an unprecedented increase of 14,285% in those 5 years.

Chile, Ecuador, and Brazil occupy the 3rd, 4th, and 5th spots on that list (respectively). The Chilean nation has faced backlash for its recently implemented legislation that rejects illegal immigrants; on top of that, violent anti-immigration protests took place in late September 2021 all across northern Chile, which has caused tensions in the country. Meanwhile, Ecuador has taken in nearly 1.2 million Venezuelan refugees since 2015, with only around 430,000 of those being officially settled; the nation intends to start a new “normalization process” to help these migrants settle in more effectively. Brazil already hosts about 1.3 million refugees in general, but those of Venezuelan origin constitute an overwhelming majority of 18%.

Other important countries with large intakes of migrants (or a high number of asylum seekers) include the United States, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Panama, and Argentina.

All in all, the Bolivarian Diaspora - more commonly known as the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis - has reportedly left around 6 million migrants spread across the world. Only the Syrian Civil War, which historians call the worst humanitarian disaster of all time, has caused more displacement; however, if we take into account that Venezuela’s migrant exodus started more recently, then this crisis is rapidly becoming the world’s worst refugee crisis. Unless the internal situation is properly resolved, and more assistance is given to outgoing migrants, as well as to the countries who take in these migrants, then this crisis is destined to go on for many years to come.



[https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/styles/window\\_width\\_breakpoints\\_theme\\_rescue\\_large\\_2x/public/hero/9216/hero-image/rsz\\_20180520\\_hermanvolker\\_colombia\\_2.jpg?itok=2gbwPAKK&timestamp=1624291806](https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/styles/window_width_breakpoints_theme_rescue_large_2x/public/hero/9216/hero-image/rsz_20180520_hermanvolker_colombia_2.jpg?itok=2gbwPAKK&timestamp=1624291806)

### III. Key Points of the Debate

- The internal conflict in Venezuela
- Logistical and financial aid to countries taking in Venezuelan migrants

- Basic necessities and a solid living situation for Venezuelan migrants
- Specific situation of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia
- Anti-immigration movements in Chile and other South American countries
- Clear legislation and policies regarding the intake and management of refugees
- Effects of sanctions on the refugee crisis
- Long- and short-term solutions for the migrant crisis

#### **IV. Participating Organisms**

- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- European Union (EU)
- Organization of American States (OAS)
- The Lima Group
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
- World Bank
- Inter-American Development Bank
- Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- National Police of Colombia

#### **V. Guiding Questions**

1. Is your country currently being affected by the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis or any other refugee crisis? If so, how is it being affected? If not, has it been affected by any refugee crises in the past 10 years?
2. Does your government support the current government of Venezuela, or has it taken measures against the government, such as sanctions?



3. How are legal and illegal immigrants treated in your country? How long does it take for people to become legal immigrants in your country?
4. What has your country done, if anything, to help with the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis? What ideas does your country have to solve the problem?

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## 5. Topic 2: *Rejection of Asylum Seekers by the European Union*

### I. History/Context

In 2015, a series of conflicts and humanitarian crises appeared in different countries, with most of them originating in the Middle Eastern region. Thousands of people have fled their home nations in search of asylum in European countries. By 2015-2016, 1.3 million refugees had crossed European borders fleeing from armed conflict and/or civil unrest in their parent country. Thousands of immigrants died due to the perils and conditions of the voyages they had to undergo in order to arrive at a safe haven. The journey from their home countries to Europe was difficult.

In 2018, approximately six refugees died daily while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea; most casualties resulted from drowning. The largest percentages of refugees came from three main locations: Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. All of these countries are affected by a major internal conflict that has forced the population to relocate, especially Syria, which has endured one of the most gruelling internal armed conflicts for the past decade. Refugees apply for asylum in different countries within the European Union. It has been reported that most of these refugees come through Greece and Italy and take refuge in countries such as Bulgaria, Spain, Hungary, Austria, Germany, France, Sweden, and Denmark.

Along with those countries, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway also receive thousands of asylum applications. In 2019, the number of asylum applications had significantly decreased from the 2015-2016 peak. However, there are still around 750,000 applications annually, which could gradually increase due to the continuous increase in global conflicts, especially in the Asian region. The large numbers of refugees arriving in E.U. countries are becoming too large to take in, and European nations are reaching the point of being forced to reject or send back the incoming refugees.

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries that were rejecting refugees have halted these actions, but their intention to reduce the number of refugees continues. Due to this, several nations have considered coming to an agreement with origin countries; these agreements would imply sending back refugees to their home countries in exchange for

essential development aid which, if used well, could eliminate the need for such a large exodus of people towards Europe.

## **II. Current Situation**

In recent years, several conflicts have continued to evolve, causing the migrant flow to increase daily. Some of the most significant conflicts that have recently resulted in large quantities of migrants are the continuous Syrian civil war and the recently re-sparked Afghan humanitarian crisis. Countries in the European Union have begun to prepare for an upcoming, and possibly very large, migratory flow mostly coming from Afghanistan. Even though some are willing to receive migrants, several countries want to do everything in their power to avoid another crisis such as the one in 2015-16. Countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta, and Cyprus have stated that the best way to prevent such an enormous crisis from happening again is by coming to a joint solution among the 27 nations that make up the European Union. Following this idea, leaders from E.U. countries gathered in Brussels during the first week of September 2021 to discuss ways to regulate upcoming migrations to European countries.

Some of the measures taken by European countries to reduce the number of refugees that enter their territory have been the plans of constructing walls and razor-wire fences. One of the first countries to implement such actions was Greece, where a 40-kilometer wall was built on its border with Turkey. The country has also installed a surveillance system to prevent immigrants from crossing through Turkey into European nations. Turkey is one of the known nations that helped Europe provide asylum for refugees during the 2015-16 crisis, but the country did not do it for free. The European Union had to provide €6 billion (\$7.03 billion) to provide refugees with shelter, education, health, and other basic needs to reduce the number of immigrants in their territory. It is speculated that the leaders of the European Union will seek help from Turkey once again, and this time, the country is likely to become a vital piece of the migrant crisis. Turkey would help to reduce the number of immigrants coming into Europe once again, but it could also help in negotiations with the Taliban. This would give the Turkish president, Recep Erdoğan, a lot of influence over European leaders. Offering refuge

to the immigrants is a choice given to the countries in the European Union, and several of them have already rejected the call to action.

Fortunately, there has been one major proposal introduced into the inner workings of the Union which, if carried out, could effectively limit or end this conflict. This strategy was presented to the European Union on April 28th, 2021. It consists of sending refugees back to



<https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/31830/eu-presents-strategy-to-send-unauthorized-migrants-back>

their home countries in exchange for monetary compensation. This form of financial aid is meant to be implemented for the betterment and restoration of the origin country so that there is not another mass exodus of refugees due to the lacklustre internal situation [of these countries].

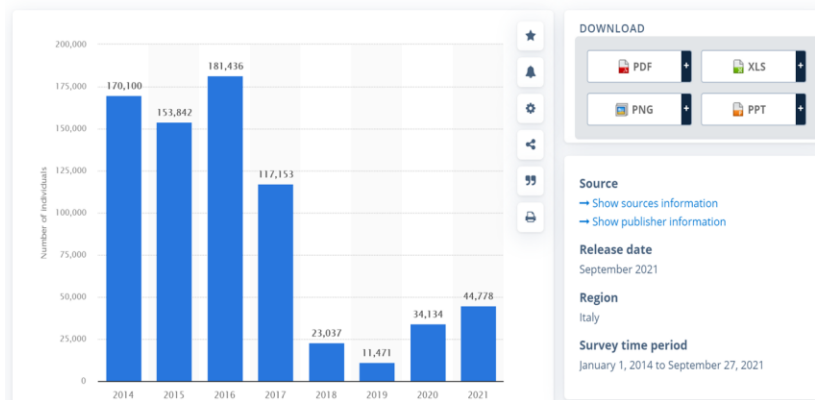
Nations such as France, Turkey, Greece, and Sweden have been the primary backers of this solution.

Below are some of the countries that have the largest refugee population:

### Italy

Italy is one of the nations that has received the highest numbers of immigrants. During the 2015-16 crisis, the country gave asylum to over 300,000 refugees, and throughout 2021, the country has received 44,778 new asylum seekers. The regions that have received the refugees in 2021 have been Sicily (36,405), Calabria (5,184), Apulia (1,726), Sardinia (841), Campania (32), and Basilicata (24). The acceptance of high amounts of immigrants has been a cause of criticism of the Italian government by a right-wing party called the Brothers of Italy. The party claims that it is unacceptable that the Italian government allows so many illegal immigrants into the country; they also claim that the country should establish a naval blockade to control the number of people entering the country in search of asylum.

Number of immigrants who arrived by sea in Italy from 2014 to 2021



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/623514/migrant-arrivals-to-italy/>

## Turkey

Turkey has been known for being a final destination or a transitory destination for refugees. It was a crucial player in the 2015-16 crisis, and its government has worked along with international and humanitarian

organizations to provide those that migrate to Turkish territory with humanitarian assistance and protection. The reason for the high number of migrants in the country is that it borders Syria, a country that has been in constant civil war since 2011, and also because the people who flee neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq look for haven in Turkish territory.

For the aforementioned reasons, Turkey has become one of the countries with the highest number of refugees, sheltering over three million since 2017. In more recent years, Turkey has also started to plan out strategies to regulate migration levels due to being a neighbour to countries that have ongoing and increasing conflicts.

## Greece

Even though Greece has been one of the countries that have received the most asylum seekers, the pandemic has not been easy on them. When the pandemic first hit Greece, thousands of migrants were put into lockdown on Greek islands under awful conditions, and those who came seeking asylum to Greece encountered discrimination and new challenges such as restricted access to healthcare, protection, and basic needs. In 2020, asylum seekers in Greece faced several challenges. Not only did they lack basic needs, but they were unable to receive protection against sexual or gender harassment, and only a few mothers were able to receive the attention they needed for their new-borns. In January 2021, a new asylum law

was implemented in Greece, and it increased the risks that refugees will face; along with that, the nation has established migrant camps.



<https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20210918-greece-to-open-new-controlled-migrant-camp-as-rights-groups-criticise-restrictions>

These camps are surrounded by barbed wire and under constant surveillance, but they have provided refuge for asylum seekers.

### III. Key Points of the Debate

- Possible solutions regarding the large percentage of asylum seekers arriving in the European Union.
- Migration camps as a way to control large numbers of asylum seekers.
- Insurance of basic necessities and protection to migrants in the E.U.
- Custody of unaccompanied migrant children.
- Process of migration into European Union nations.
- Restrictions of asylum seekers allowed in Europe.
- Effects of humanitarian crises on the number of asylum seekers in the European Union.

#### **IV. Participating Organisms**

- European Union (EU)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- National refugee-management organizations
  - Example: Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

#### **V. Guiding Questions**

1. Does your country have a problem with large numbers of refugees entering or leaving the country?
2. Is your country currently rejecting asylum seekers or receiving asylum seekers who have been rejected elsewhere?
3. What has your country done to tackle the problem of large numbers of refugees leaving or entering the country?
4. Has your country required external assistance to tackle the refugee problem?
5. Has your country worked either to provide the refugees with a new life OR to solve the conflict in the country of origin in order for them to return to their homes?
6. What should be done to cope with the large numbers of refugees still arriving at European borders?

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