



Arizona Model United Nations 65

Specialized Historical Committee: Bandung Conference of 1955

Short Research Guide

Introduction

UNHCR was created by the UN General Assembly in 1950 to protect refugees and, over time, other forcibly displaced people. Its legal foundation is the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. In Africa, the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention broadens the refugee definition to include people fleeing generalized violence. UNHCR's mandate over IDPs is not automatic. It comes from the UN cluster system, where UNHCR leads the Protection, Shelter, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management clusters in conflict settings. Eastern DRC, including North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, and parts of Tanganyika, has seen conflict for 30 years. Armed groups include M23, the ADF, CODECO, and many Mai-Mai militias. UN experts report that M23 is backed by Rwanda. Roughly 6 to 7 million Congolese are internally displaced, among the highest figures in the world, and over a million are refugees abroad. The M23 offensive in early 2025 emptied or destroyed many IDP sites around Goma and caused new waves of displacement. Peace efforts, including the US-brokered DRC-Rwanda agreement and the Doha track, have had mixed results. Verify current figures and the security situation on UNHCR's Operational Data Portal and OCHA/ReliefWeb before the conference, since they change quickly.

Topic I: Living Conditions in IDP Camps in the DRC

Conditions in DRC camps are shaped by overcrowding, inadequate shelter, food insecurity, scarce clean water and sanitation, outbreaks of cholera and measles, limited healthcare, and widespread sexual and gender-based violence. Much of this traces back to chronic underfunding. The DRC Humanitarian Response Plan has rarely been fully funded, and major donor cuts in 2025 made the gap worse. Insecurity compounds the problem, since camps have been directly attacked, as in the CODECO attacks in Ituri, and armed groups often restrict where aid workers can go. A further complication is that most IDPs actually live with host families rather than in camps, which means camp-based aid misses a large share of the displaced and puts heavy strain on the communities hosting them.

Questions to Consider

- How can UNHCR and the cluster system better coordinate with the DRC government and with armed actors who control territory?



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- What is realistic for livelihoods in an unstable environment, such as agriculture, vocational training, and cash assistance?
 - Should aid shift toward cash assistance and host community support rather than camps

Topic II: Preventing the Recruitment of Children in Armed Conflicts

Armed groups in the DRC recruit children as fighters, porters, spies, cooks, and sexual slaves, and displacement, poverty, and lack of schooling make children especially vulnerable. Children who leave armed groups often face stigma and rejection from their communities, which can push them back toward recruitment. The legal framework is extensive: the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and its 2000 Optional Protocol on children in armed conflict, the Rome Statute, which makes recruiting children under 15 a war crime, Security Council Resolution 1612 and its Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, and the 2007 Paris Principles on the protection of children associated with armed groups. The ICC has also convicted Thomas Lubanga in 2012 and Bosco Ntaganda in 2019 for crimes involving child soldiers in the DRC, which gives delegates concrete precedent when discussing accountability.

Questions to Consider

- How do UNHCR's role and responsibilities differ from those of UNICEF and MONUSCO?
- How can armed non-state actors be pressured to sign and honor commitments?
- How can girls, who are often missed in DDR programs, be reintegrated without stigma?

Topic III: Supporting Cross-Border Refugees from the DRC

Congolese refugees are hosted mainly in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Zambia. Uganda is the largest host, with settlements such as Nakivale and Kyangwali, and its 2006 Refugee Act is often cited as a progressive model because it grants refugees land plots, freedom of movement, and the right to work. Even so, the system is under severe strain. Camps are overcrowded, food rations have been cut because of funding shortfalls, and competition over



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land, jobs, and services creates tension with local communities. The political sensitivity of refugee flows among Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC adds another layer of difficulty for host governments.

Questions to Consider

- How can donor states share responsibility beyond funding, for example through resettlement quotas?
- What incentives help host countries expand refugee work rights and education access?
- What conditions would make large-scale voluntary repatriation safe?