



MUNES'26

MUNES

26

**STUDY GUIDE**

**SOCHUM**

## **Table Of Contents**

- 1. Letter from the Secretary General**
- 2. Letter from the Chairboard**
- 3. Introduction**
  - a. Introduction to the Committee
  - b. Introduction to the Agenda Item
- 4. Key Terms**
- 5. Background Information**
  - a. Global Refugee Crisis
  - b. Causes of Child Displacement
  - c. Challenges Facedby Refugee Children
- 6. Past Actions**
- 7. Possible Solutions**
- 8. Questions to be Addressed**

## 1. Letter from the Secretary General

Dear Delegates, As Eskişehir's first and only official MUN, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to

MUNES'26, a historic Model UN Conference. This conference is a special opportunity to promote cooperation, critical thinking, and diplomacy among young people in our city and beyond. In order to ensure that every aspect of this conference reflects excellence, dedication, and a commitment to providing a truly transformative experience, the Academy has brought together the most gifted students from all management teams of local MUNs.

The Eskişehir Municipality and Governorship, along with the prestigious companies that have supported this event, are proud to support MUNES'26. Their contributions and trust demonstrate the importance of MUNES as a catalyst for civic engagement, youth leadership, and the advancement of global awareness in Eskişehir. We really care about setting the rules for talking working together and cooperating with other countries as the only Model United Nations that represents our city. We are the Model United Nations for our city and we want to make sure we do a good job of discussing things and working with other people from different countries. We think it is very important to have discussions, diplomacy and international collaboration as the Model United Nations, for our city.

This conference is an opportunity for you to think like world leaders. You get to discuss problems that affect the whole world and come up with new ideas to solve them.

As a delegate you are representing the country you were assigned to. You also need to show that you can work well with others respect each other and understand points of view which is what the United Nations is all about.

I want each of you to take part fully in your committees. Listen to what other people have to say even if you do not agree with them.. When things get tough be brave and curious and try to find a way to make it work. The United Nations is, about people working together so let us make that happen at this conference.

I want to wish every delegate the best of luck during their sessions on behalf of the organizing team. I hope your discussions are enlightening, your partnerships fruitful, and your MUNES'26 experiences motivating. Let this conference be a journey of self-improvement, deep connections, and a long-term dedication to changing the world and your communities for the better.

*Best regards,*

**Çağlar Baran Topaç**

Secretary General

MUNES 2026

## 2. Letter from the Chairboard

Dear Delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to this committee as the Under-Secretary-General. I am Yağmur Özyılmaz and I've been Model UN Conferences for more than 3 years.

In today's world, millions of children are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, and instability. However, beyond displacement, refugee children often face systemic challenges including social exclusion, lack of access to education, and, most critically, criminalization for circumstances beyond their control. This committee will serve as a platform for you to analyze the root causes of these challenges and work collaboratively toward innovative and sustainable solutions. I strongly encourage each of you to come well-prepared, equipped with a deep understanding of the topic, your country's policies, and potential solutions. Diplomacy, cooperation, and creativity will be key elements in achieving a fruitful outcome. I look forward to witnessing your debates, your passion, and your dedication throughout the conference. If you have any questions regarding to the committee please don't hesitate to contact me.

**Yağmur Özyılmaz**

Under Secretary General

[yagmurozylmz@gmail.com](mailto:yagmurozylmz@gmail.com)

Dear Delegates,

My name is Erdem, a 12th-grade student at Kenan Yalçın Anadolu Lisesi, and I will be serving as your Vice Chair in this committee. First of all, welcome. We hope this committee will be both productive and enjoyable for all of you. Especially for first-time delegates, there is nothing to be nervous about—everyone starts somewhere, and this is a place to learn and improve. Our President Chair, Yağmur from Istanbul, is also a close friend of mine, and together we aim to create a smooth and engaging committee process. We expect active participation, respectful debate, and well-thought-out ideas from all delegates. Don't hesitate to speak up and contribute.

Looking forward to meeting you all in committee. Best regards,

**Erdem Öncüler** Vice Chair

[onculererdem789@gmail.com](mailto:onculererdem789@gmail.com)

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### **3. Introduction**

#### **a. Introduction to the Committee**

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee (GA3) , also known as Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues Committee (SOCHUM), was established in 1945. SOCHUM serves as the primary forum within the General Assembly for addressing global social, humanitarian, and cultural issues, with a particular emphasis on the promotion and protection of human rights. Promoting and protecting human rights and ensuring the safety of vulnerable groups such as the disabled, elderly, refugees, and many more, are the committee's main focus. The abuse of fundamental human rights during World War 2 and the aftermath underlined the need for a global agency focused on such areas. The Committee also conducts its work by reviewing reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), special rapporteurs, independent experts, and treaty-based monitoring mechanisms.

In this respect, SOCHUM plays a critical role not only in norm production but also in monitoring and strengthening the existing human rights regime. One of SOCHUM's fundamental functions is to establish common understandings and normative frameworks among member states regarding human rights and social issues. The draft resolutions adopted by the Committee are not binding. However, they constitute an important point of reference for guiding international public opinion, evaluating the human rights performance of states, and advocacy activities of civil society. Therefore, SOCHUM is an organ that is effective through political pressure, normative legitimacy, and international credibility mechanisms rather than legal sanctions.

## **b. Introduction to the Agenda Item**

Establishing a mechanism to ensure better orientation and decriminalization of refugee children is a serious topic in today's society. The issue of refugee children has become a central concern within the broader context of global displacement. Ongoing conflicts, political instability, and environmental factors continue to force millions of individuals to leave their countries of origin, with children representing a significant proportion of this population. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, refugee children constitute a substantial share of displaced populations and face distinct vulnerabilities compared to adults.

Refugee children encounter multiple structural challenges in host countries, including limited access to education, language barriers, and restricted access to basic social services. In addition to these barriers, many are exposed to legal uncertainties due to their migration status. In certain jurisdictions, irregular entry or lack of documentation may lead to detention or other forms of criminalization, raising concerns regarding compliance with international legal standards. Such practices are widely considered inconsistent with the principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasizes the protection and best interests of the child.

Furthermore, the absence of comprehensive orientation mechanisms contributes to the marginalization of refugee children. Without structured integration policies—such as access to education systems, language acquisition programs, and social inclusion initiatives—refugee children often experience long-term social and economic exclusion.

In this context, the establishment of effective mechanisms aimed at both improving orientation processes and preventing the criminalization of refugee children remains a significant priority for the international community. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts at national and international levels, supported by legal frameworks and sustainable policy implementation.



#### 4. Key Terms

**Refugee:** A person who has been forced to flee their country due to various reasons such as war, persecution, conflict, or violence and is unable to return to their country.

**Refugee Children:** Individuals under the age of 18 who have been displaced across international borders.

**Unaccompanied Minors:** Children who are separated from both parents and aren't under a legal guardian.

**Asylum Seeker:** A person who applied for international protection in another country but whose refugee status hasn't been officially determined.

**Decriminalization:** The process of removing criminal penalties related to certain actions. It refers to ensuring that refugee children aren't treated as criminals due to irregular migration or lack of documentation.

**Irregular Migration:** Movement of people across borders that does not comply with the legal requirements of the destination country.

**Detention of Migrant Children:** The practice of holding refugee or migrant children in immigration detention centers due to their migration status.

**Statelessness:** The condition of not being recognized as a citizen by any country, resulting in lack of access to basic rights and legal protection.

**Orientation Programs:** Programs designed to help refugees adapt to a new country, including language learning, cultural awareness, and access to services.

**Integration:** The process by which refugees become active participants in the social, economic, and cultural life of the host country.

**Child Protection:** Policies and measures aimed at preventing abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children.

## **5. Background Information**

### **a. Global Refugee Crisis**

In 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded 16.1 million refugees around the world. Throughout the last 10 years has nearly doubled, with 30.5 million refugees. Displacement has uprooted 121 million people around the world forced to leave their homes. There are refugees from all around the world but 83% come from 10 specific countries which are; Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan, Venezuela, Türkiye, Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somalia.

The increasing number of refugees over the past decade highlights the growing scale and complexity of global displacement. Armed conflicts remain the primary driver of forced migration, particularly in regions experiencing prolonged instability. In addition, political repression, economic collapse, and human rights violations continue to contribute to large-scale displacement across multiple regions.

The concentration of refugees in a limited number of countries of origin indicates that displacement is often linked to persistent and unresolved crises. These situations not only force individuals to flee but also create long-term challenges for both refugees and host countries.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of displaced populations consists of children, who are disproportionately affected by the consequences of forced migration. The scale of the crisis places considerable pressure on international protection systems and highlights the need for coordinated and sustainable responses by the global community.

### **b. Causes of Child Displacement**

Child displacement is primarily driven by a combination of armed conflict, political instability, and human rights violations. Ongoing wars in regions such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Sudan have forced millions of families to flee their homes in search of safety. In many cases, children are either separated from their families during displacement or are forced to migrate alone.

Additionally, economic instability and poverty contribute significantly to forced migration. Families facing extreme financial hardship may be compelled to relocate in order to secure basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare. Environmental factors, including climate change and natural disasters, have also emerged as growing causes of displacement, further exacerbating existing vulnerabilities.

Moreover, persecution based on ethnicity, religion, or political opinion continues to drive forced migration. Children belonging to minority groups are particularly at risk, often facing discrimination and violence that leave them with no choice but to seek refuge elsewhere.

### **c. Challenges Faced by Refugee Children**

Refugee children face numerous challenges upon displacement, both during migration and in host countries. One of the most significant issues is limited access to education. Language barriers, lack of documentation, and insufficient resources in host countries often prevent children from enrolling in schools, hindering their long-term development.

In addition to educational barriers, refugee children are at a high risk of exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Unaccompanied minors are especially vulnerable, as they lack parental protection and are more likely to be exposed to trafficking and forced labor.

Another major challenge is the criminalization of refugee children. In several countries, children may be detained due to irregular migration status, which negatively impacts their psychological well-being and violates international child protection standards. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, such practices remain a critical concern within the global refugee protection system. Furthermore, social exclusion and discrimination hinder the integration of refugee children into host societies. Without proper orientation mechanisms, including language support and cultural adaptation programs, children often struggle to build a sense of belonging

## 6. Past Actions



### Turkiye

As the host of the world's largest refugee population, Turkey transitioned from an emergency response to a long-term "Harmonization" strategy under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (No. 6458). A major past action is the PIKTES Project, which integrates hundreds of thousands of Syrian children into the national education system through specialized Turkish language training and psychosocial support. Turkey's mechanism relies on Social Service Centers (SHM), which treat refugee children as vulnerable individuals, providing them with "Conditional Cash Transfer for Education" (CCTE) to prevent child labor and street-level criminalization.



### United States Of America

The United States governs the treatment of refugee children through a hybrid system of judicial precedents and federal mandates. The Flores Settlement Agreement serves as the legal cornerstone, establishing that children must be held in the "least restrictive setting" possible and released to sponsors within 20 days to avoid long-term detention. Orientation is primarily managed by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which oversees a network of state-licensed shelters providing educational, medical, and case management services. Despite these mechanisms, the US system is frequently criticized for the "criminalization" of minors during border surges, where children are often processed in facilities that resemble detention centers. To mitigate this, recent policies like the Central American Minors (CAM) program aim to provide "in-country" processing to prevent dangerous, unauthorized journeys.



### Germany

Germany's approach, solidified after the 2015 crisis via the Integration Act, focuses on rapid socialization to prevent criminalization. A key mechanism is the Welcome Classes, where refugee children receive intensive language and cultural orientation before entering the mainstream curriculum. To ensure "decriminalization," Germany grants jurisdiction over unaccompanied minors to the Youth Welfare Office rather than immigration police. This shifts the child's status from a "migrant" to a "child in need of protection," ensuring they receive a legal guardian and access to the social safety net immediately upon arrival.



### Sweden

Sweden is renowned for its child-centric legal framework, specifically the "God Man" (Vasi) system, where every unaccompanied minor is assigned a legal representative to manage their education, health, and legal status. To prevent the trauma of criminalized legal proceedings, Sweden utilizes the Child's House model. In this mechanism, interviews for legal or asylum purposes are conducted in a child-friendly, domestic-style environment by specially trained staff, ensuring that children are not treated like suspects in traditional police stations or courtrooms.



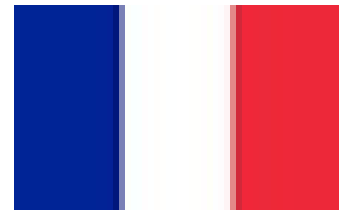
### Canada

Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program is a global model for "de-stigmatization." By allowing groups of five citizens or local NGOs to sponsor a refugee family, the orientation process is shifted from a bureaucratic state function to a community-based welcome. This mechanism ensures that children are oriented into the local culture through personal relationships, which significantly reduces the risk of social isolation and the subsequent "criminalization of poverty" that many refugees face in urban ghettos.



### United Kingdom

The UK operates under the Children Act 1989, which mandates that any child on British soil is a "child first" and a "migrant second." To prevent the overcrowding and potential criminalization of children in entry ports like Dover, the UK implemented the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). This mechanism legally mandates the redistribution of unaccompanied children across various local councils to ensure they receive adequate foster care and social worker support, preventing the "containment" of children in high-stress border facilities



### France

In France, the principle of "Protection de l'Enfance" dictates that the state must provide for any minor. The CASNAV centers provide orientation mechanism by facilitating school enrollment for "Allophone" (non-French speaking) students. However, France's past actions are often scrutinized due to controversial "age assessment" test. Critics argue that when the state suspects a child is an adult, the subsequent legal battle effectively "re-criminalizes" the minor, stripping them of their right to ASE housing and education.



## Greece

As a frontline state, Greece has moved away from large-scale camp detention toward the Supported Independent Living (SIL) mechanism for teenagers (ages 16-18). This policy allows older refugee children to live in supervised apartments within urban areas, fostering independence and local orientation. By moving children out of the “limbo” of camps, Greece aims to prevent the psychological decay and petty crime risks associated with long-term institutionalization



## Russia

Russia’s framework is based on the Federal Law on Refugees, granting "Temporary Asylum" which includes access to public schooling. However, Russia’s orientation mechanisms are often criticized for being "passive." While the law allows for education, there is a lack of specialized "language-bridge" programs, which often leads to refugee children dropping out and falling into the "informal economy," a process that systemic neglect can inadvertently criminalize.



## Iran

Iran has a long history of hosting one of the world's largest refugee populations, primarily from Afghanistan. A landmark past action is the 2015 Supreme Leader's Decree, which mandated that all Afghan children—regardless of their legal or undocumented status—must be allowed to enroll in Iranian public schools. This mechanism serves as the primary orientation tool, ensuring that children are integrated into the formal system rather than being marginalized or criminalized due to their parents' legal status. Furthermore, Iran operates "Literacy Movement Organizations" to help older refugee children who have missed years of schooling to catch up with their peers, providing a clear path toward social orientation and reducing the risk of child labor.



## Syria

In Syria, the focus of "past actions" is not on traditional integration into a foreign culture, but on the "Normalization" of children's lives amidst internal displacement. The most significant mechanism is the establishment of "Makani" (My Place) Centers, often supported by international organizations like UNICEF. These centers provide a comprehensive package of services: informal education, psychosocial support, and life-skills orientation. The goal is to prevent the criminalization and radicalization of children living in lawless or war-torn areas by providing them with a safe environment that replaces the collapsed state school system.



## Iraq

Iraq's approach focuses on both international refugees (mostly from Syria) and its own Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). A key legal mechanism is the "National Protection Cluster," which coordinates legal assistance to ensure that refugee and IDP children obtain civil documentation (birth certificates, IDs). Without these documents, children are at high risk of being criminalized or denied basic services. Iraq has also implemented "Double-Shift Schools," where local schools operate in two shifts to accommodate refugee children, providing an immediate—though resource-strained—orientation into the Iraqrefugeesi educational framework and preventing social friction between host communities and .



## Afghanistan

For Afghanistan, "past actions" involve managing both internally displaced children and those returning from Pakistan and Iran. The primary mechanism used is "Community-Based Education" (CBE). Since many children cannot reach formal schools due to security or distance, CBE classes are held in local homes or community buildings. This serves as an orientation mechanism that keeps children connected to a structured environment, preventing them from falling into criminal cycles or being recruited by non-state armed groups. These programs focus on basic literacy and vocational orientation to prepare children for a stable future despite the country's volatile political climate.



## UNHCR

The UNHCR acts as the primary "mandate" organization for the protection of refugee children worldwide. One of its most significant past actions is the institutionalization of the "Best Interest Determination" (BID) mechanism. This formal process ensures that any decision affecting a displaced child—whether it involves legal status, family reunification, or resettlement—is made with the child's psychological and physical well-being as the paramount consideration. Furthermore, the UNHCR manages the "Educate a Child" global initiative, which serves as a vital orientation tool by funding the integration of out-of-school refugee children into national education systems, thereby preventing social marginalization.

## UNCRC

While not an operational agency, the UNCRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty and provides the essential legal "shield" for refugee children. Article 22 of the Convention is a landmark legal provision that mandates State Parties to ensure that children seeking refugee status receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance, granting them the same rights as national children regarding education and healthcare. The UNCRC Committee actively monitors state compliance to prevent the "Criminalization of Minors," advocating against the administrative detention of children based solely on their migration status, which establishes the legal foundation for all orientation policies.



## UNICEF

UNICEF focuses on the operational and practical aspects of protecting children and preventing them from being stigmatized as "criminals" or "illegal intruders." A key historical action by UNICEF is the implementation of "Blue Dot" Support Hubs along major migration routes. These hubs serve as standardized orientation centers where children find a safe environment, receive legal counseling, and access psychosocial rehabilitation. Additionally, UNICEF leads the "Justice for Children" global program, working directly with governments to reform local laws so that refugee children are diverted from the criminal justice system toward social welfare services, effectively promoting decriminalization on a systemic level.

## **7. Questions to be Addressed**

1. What extent should states prohibit the detention of refugee children under immigration laws?
2. How can effective orientation programs be established to ensure the successful integration of refugee children into host societies?
3. What legal measures can be taken to prevent the criminalization of refugee children due to irregular migration status?
4. How can access to education for refugee children be guaranteed regardless of their legal status?
5. What role should international organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees play in protecting refugee children?
6. How can host countries balance national security concerns with the protection of refugee children's rights?
7. What mechanisms can be implemented to support unaccompanied minors and ensure their safety?
8. How can international cooperation be strengthened to address the challenges faced by refugee children?

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