

# RESEARCH REPORT

## 1. COMMITTEE: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Back-up Topic:

The question of protecting the rights ,safety and well-being of migrants and refugees in border regions.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The protection of migrants and refugees in border regions is a critical issue at the intersection of human rights, humanitarian law, and international security. Border areas often serve as the first point of arrival for individuals fleeing conflict, persecution, or natural disasters, making them particularly vulnerable to human rights violations such as pushbacks, arbitrary detention, and limited access to asylum procedures. North African transit countries, European border states, and frontline host nations face enormous pressure to manage these flows while complying with international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and other human rights treaties. The challenge is further compounded by the increasing politicization of migration, limited resources, and the need to protect particularly vulnerable groups, including children, women, and victims of trafficking. Addressing these issues requires coordinated international action, responsibility-sharing among states, and robust humanitarian support to ensure the safety, dignity, and well-being of displaced populations.

## 3. KEY TERMS

### NON-REFOULEMENT:

- **A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW PROHIBITING STATES FROM RETURNING INDIVIDUALS TO A COUNTRY WHERE THEY FACE PERSECUTION, TORTURE, OR SERIOUS HARM. IT APPLIES AT BORDERS AND IS CENTRAL TO REFUGEE PROTECTION.**

### 1951 REFUGEE CONVENTION:

- **THE REFUGEE CONVENTION ESTABLISHES THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF A REFUGEE AND OUTLINES STATES' OBLIGATIONS, INCLUDING PROTECTION FROM FORCED RETURN AND ACCESS TO BASIC RIGHTS.**

## **RIGHT TO ASYLUM:**

- **THE RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS TO SEEK PROTECTION IN ANOTHER COUNTRY. STATES MUST ENSURE ACCESS TO FAIR ASYLUM PROCEDURES AND INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT OF CLAIMS.**

## **PUSHBACKS:**

- **THE PRACTICE OF RETURNING MIGRANTS ACROSS BORDERS WITHOUT ASSESSING THEIR PROTECTION NEEDS. PUSHBACKS ARE WIDELY CRITICIZED AS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW.**

## **4. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANTS**

- **1948 – UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**
- **1951 – REFUGEE CONVENTION**
- **1967 – PROTOCOL RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES**
- **2015 – EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS**
- **2018 – GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES**
- **2018 – GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION**
- **2020–2022 – COVID-19 BORDER RESTRICTIONS**
- **2022–PRESENT – INCREASED GLOBAL DISPLACEMENT (E.G., UKRAINE, SUDAN)**

## **5. CURRENT SITUATION**

- **GLOBAL DISPLACEMENT: OVER 117 MILLION PEOPLE FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING 42+ MILLION REFUGEES AND MILLIONS OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND IDPs. DRIVEN BY CONFLICT, PERSECUTION, AND VIOLENCE.**
- **MAJOR CRISES: SUDAN (SINCE 2023) – MILLIONS FLEEING TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES; UKRAINE (SINCE 2022) – MILLIONS DISPLACED INTERNALLY AND ABROAD.**
- **BORDER AND PROTECTION ISSUES: REPORTS OF PUSHBACKS, ARBITRARY DETENTION, AND LIMITED ACCESS TO ASYLUM. VULNERABLE GROUPS SUCH AS WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND TRAFFICKING VICTIMS FACE HEIGHTENED RISKS.**
- **STATE POLICIES: MANY COUNTRIES HAVE TIGHTENED BORDER CONTROLS AND ASYLUM PROCEDURES. POLITICAL DEBATES FOCUS ON DETERRENCE, RETURNS, AND RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING. GERMANY HAS EXTENDED INTERNAL BORDER CONTROLS UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2026.**

- **HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE: UNHCR EMPHASIZES PROTECTION, PROVISION OF BASIC SERVICES, SAFE CORRIDORS, AND FUNDING. RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING BETWEEN COUNTRIES REMAINS UNEVEN.**
- **KEY TRENDS: MIGRATION REMAINS HIGHLY POLITICIZED; SECURITY CONCERNS OFTEN CONFLICT WITH HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS; HUMANITARIAN NEEDS CONTINUE TO RISE.**

## 6. KEY COUNTRY POSITIONS

### GERMANY / EUROPEAN UNION:

- **EMPHASIS ON BORDER SECURITY WHILE COMPLYING WITH EU ASYLUM LAW.**
- **SUPPORT FOR RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING AMONG EU MEMBER STATES.**
- **CALLS FOR EFFICIENT ASYLUM PROCEDURES AND INTEGRATION PROGRAMS.**
- **CRITICIZED FOR PUSHBACKS AT EXTERNAL EU BORDERS IN SOME CASES.**

### UNITED STATES:

- **FOCUS ON BORDER CONTROL AND NATIONAL SECURITY.**
- **SUPPORTS LEGAL PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS BUT LIMITS IRREGULAR MIGRATION.**
- **RECENT ADMINISTRATIONS EMPHASIZE SCREENING AND VETTING RATHER THAN OPEN ACCESS.**

### MEXICO / CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES:

- **HIGHLIGHT TRANSIT MIGRATION CHALLENGES FROM CENTRAL AMERICA TOWARD THE U.S.**
- **CALL FOR PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS ALONG TRANSIT ROUTES.**
- **EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR HUMANITARIAN AID AND ASYLUM ACCESS.**

### RUSSIA / CHINA:

- **PRIORITIZE SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL SECURITY OVER INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS IN BORDER REGIONS.**
- **EMPHASIZE STATE-LED CONTROL AND MIGRATION MANAGEMENT RATHER THAN RESETTLEMENT.**

## 7. CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION, PROTECTING THE RIGHTS, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN BORDER REGIONS REMAINS A MAJOR GLOBAL CHALLENGE. CONFLICTS IN SUDAN, UKRAINE, AND ELSEWHERE HAVE CAUSED RECORD LEVELS OF DISPLACEMENT, WHILE BORDER REGIONS OFTEN FACE PUSHBACKS, ARBITRARY DETENTION, AND LIMITED ACCESS TO ASYLUM. STATES MUST BALANCE BORDER SECURITY WITH THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE 1951 REFUGEE CONVENTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW, AND FRONTLINE COUNTRIES CALL FOR GREATER INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING. COORDINATED ACTION, SAFE LEGAL PATHWAYS, AND HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT ARE ESSENTIAL TO PROTECT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND UPHOLD HUMAN DIGNITY.

