

UNHCR: A Critical Analysis.

Who are they?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were founded in 1950 after the Second World War. Their duty is to safeguard and protect internationally displaced people as a result of, "Race, Nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." (1951 Geneva Convention).

How do they help?

By providing safeguarding and protection for refugees, they are funded by governmental grants to help with transport and providing basic needs to help refugees survive until they either choose to return home or start a new life, (Wissner, 2004). as this can take many years, the UNCHR contributes with camps, funding and medical care.

How serious is the refugee situation?

Using the UNHCR Population Statistics Database (2019), it is evident that the refugee situation over the world has increased dramatically.

In 1951: 2.12 Million people were displaced, as a result of World War 2. **As of today:** approximately 68.5 million people are displaced, with 25.4 million are refugees.

However, these numbers may appear misleading, as the definition given by UNHCR for refugee initially only represented refugees in Europe. That number could have been much higher if Eastern populace was also included. This definition was adapted to incorporate all refugees in 1967 (Dustmann, Fasani, Frattini, Minale & Schhnberg, 2016).

Is there a problem with their methods?

The UNHCR does not have a sustainable or clear end goal for refugees. They currently have their resources split between helping refugees start a new life in a new country or to provide safety until they return home (Stein, 1994).

This provides more difficulty, as the UNHCR will be swayed by host and asylum countries for their personal benefit.

Are they actually helping?

Research by Harvey and Lind (2005), found that settlements that were attempted to be able to make refugees self-sufficient, failed and made refugees reliant on aid. Therefore, their long-term goals are not being met.

Asylum Countries – Want to be more compensated more than the cost of caring for the refugees.

Host Countries – Prefer to invest less money if there is a chance for refugees to return. (Crisp, 2001).

Conclusion: Their help is needed more than ever, however they need to revise more contemporary goals to care for refugees in a more urbanised world.