



# **GOMUN 2024 OFFICIAL DOCUMENT**

## **Study Guide**

**United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund**

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## **COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION**

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is a special program by the United Nations devoted to ensuring humanitarian aid, protection, access to education, healthcare and the general welfare of children worldwide. UNICEF was established in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II to provide relief to children in countries stricken and devastated by this reality. Today UNICEF operates in more than 190 countries and plays a key role in supporting national coordination in strengthening national child protection systems.

## First Topic: Tackling the issue of child prostitution

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### Introduction

The issue of child prostitution, more correctly put commercial sexual exploitation is defined as “exploitation by an adult with respect to a child or an adolescent – female or male – under eighteen years old; accompanied by a payment in money or in kind to the child or adolescent or to one or more third parties”

For many years, incorrect labelling of this vast issue as “child prostitution” is no longer recommended, since by this designation, we erroneously allow the claim that the child or adolescent is not a victim of sexual exploitation by suggesting that they could conceivably provide consent. That carries prime misinformation and switches the blame onto the child.

Commercial exploitation of children includes:

- i. trafficking of children for the sex trade
- ii. the production, promotion and distribution of child pornography
- iii. sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism
- iv. online child sexual exploitation and abuse

### Key terms

- I. **Sexual abuse** = the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18 years) constitutes sexual abuse
- II. **sexual exploitation** = any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another, it includes but is not limited to exchanging money, employment, goods or services

for sex

- III. **CSEC** = commercial sexual exploitation of children = sexual activity involving a child in exchange for something of value or promise thereof, to the child or another person, in this situation, the child is being treated as a commercial sexual object, a type of sex trafficking, the force of broader coercion does not have to be proven in the form of law
- IV. **transactional sex** = sex for non-essential items, sexual exchange not for survival but for a range of other reasons (from educational opportunities to social status or gifts), when the parties involved include adults obtaining sex from children, automatically considered as a child sexual exploitation
- V. **survival sex** = sexual services are exchanged for basic necessities such as food, clothing or shelter. In instances of survival sex, one party is exploiting another's need for basic necessities and is taking advantage of the power they have to provide these necessities in return for sexual acts
- VI. **Special Rapporteur** = is a title given to independent human rights experts whose expertise is called upon by the United Nations

## Overview of the topic

Commercial sexual exploitation of children represents one of the most serious violations of children's rights. Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) comes in a variety of forms often concealed from the public eye. Therefore, identifying the exact number of affected children is rather unfeasible. On the basis of approximate statistics, the fact that millions of girls and boys continue to be sold, exploited at the whims of adults and treated as property to be passed from one hand to another is unacceptable. Many myths circulate about the topic of exploited children, such as that CSEC applies only to females/girls, or that youths figuring in this area operate here voluntarily or even enjoy it. Concerned children often

do not have a choice because of their social status and background, they are doing it out of necessity. We frequently encounter the claim that only men are perpetrators, despite the fact that in the family-facilitated CSEC is about 2/3 of the time the trafficker the mother.

There are certain groups of children, who are more vulnerable to sale and sexual exploitation owing to specific aspects of their conditions of birth, identity or circumstances. These vulnerabilities may arise because of the situational status of their families, in the digital space, or within institutional or alternative settings. These children are more likely to experience violence and denial of a spectrum of human rights. Youths more likely at risk of falling into commercial sexual exploitation of children are those from financially unstable families, refugees, indigenous communities, ethnic minority groups, children with disabilities, homeless children, children with substance use disorder or from family with a history of substance use, children with low self-esteem, children who have a history of sexual abuse and violence, etc. Some youths are more predisposed to fall into a life of exploitation or sex work than others, most likely those, who experienced a childhood full of abuse (sexual, emotional, ...) and, therefore have created behaviour patterns. From their childhood they often fail to trust, then simply susceptible to manipulation, normalization of abuse and viewing one as a sexual object. Up to 70 to 90% of children in CSEC have a history of childhood sexual abuse. Then it is comprehensible they take up as the perpetrators. Further excellent explanation of why this occurs is the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Traffickers will provide basics survival needs addressed by the exploiters: physiological needs, safety, love and belongingness. Many victims encounter with meeting their needs for the first time in their life. Not to mention the elaborated methods of manipulation perpetrators use.

Average age of exploited youths is around 12 to 14 years of age, however, this is a range, in which is the easiest to identify victims, unfortunately it is assumed that the exploitation starts around the age of 8.

Another complex term commonly used in the discourse around sexual exploitation of children in prostitution is 'transactional sex'. It is argued that 'transactional sex' differs somewhat from the sexual exploitation of children in prostitution as it may involve "agreement or predetermined payment, form part of a broader set of social obligations, is often embedded in an emotional relationship, and is generally not perceived by communities as a form of prostitution or sexual exploitation. Furthermore, 'transactional sex' may in fact be 'survival sex', where sexual services are exchanged for basic necessities such as food, clothing or shelter. In instances of survival sex, one party is exploiting another's need for basic necessities and is taking advantage of the power they have to provide these necessities in return for sexual acts. However, it can be said that whenever adults exchange sex for anything with children, it always constitutes child sexual exploitation.

### **CRUCIAL EFFECT ON CHILDREN**

- I. Sexually transmitted diseases
  - II. Unwanted pregnancies
  - III. Illegal abortions
  - IV. Early marriage
  - V. Limited access to education
  - VI. Psychological disorders
  - VII. Substance abuse
  - VIII. Juvenile justice system
  - IX. Exposure to physical violence
- ...and many more.

### **CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES**

Existing risks for child trafficking are worsened further during times of emergency. Natural disasters, such as floods, droughts and typhoons, and armed conflicts force children to flee their homes often unaccompanied by or, at times, separated from parents or guardians (earthquake in Haiti in

2019 or in Nepal in 2015). The fragile landscape is becoming more complex with climate change, rising inequality, demographic change, new technologies and other issues. Over the last 10 to 20 years has CSEC exponentially risen due to many factors and contextual challenges. As previously mentioned, the online environment has helped this considerably, however, climate change or COVID – 19 are not negligible factors.

## Types of CSEC

Children are trafficked for the earnings of their perpetrators. Many ways exist:

- i. **Trafficker facilitated CSEC:** individuals or group of individuals is using elements of force to engage in sexual acts for items of value, other youth serve as a recruiters for new youth -> traffickers are using already involved youth to recruit new once (in classrooms, communities,...), since from young age children are told not to talk to strangers, over last few decades extreme increase
- ii. **Technology facilitated CSEC:** Through the gradual building of a relationship of trust, predators manage to persuade the child to engage in sexual activity either live in front of a webcam or by sending explicit pictures. The child is then vulnerable to exploitation as predators will often blackmail them into producing more material. The rate of online child pornography increased 290% between 2014 and 2022. Between 2014 and 2022, there were 15,630 incidents of police-reported online sexual offences against children and 45,816 incidents of online child pornography. Mafia networks have been known to take advantage of the economic needs of families by grooming children and exploiting them through sexting and sextortion.

- iii. **Gang facilitated CSEC:** Over the last 10 to 20 years gangs have increasingly turned into human (sex) trafficking. The reason is that it is less risky than drug trafficking and arms dealing, moreover with human trafficking the human can be sold multiple times, this results in a higher profit. In the last 2 decades, the large scale of sexual exploitation of children by organised criminal gangs was exposed in the United Kingdom. Several gangs were able to target vulnerable children due in part to the deficient care they were receiving from public institutions. Unaccompanied minors had been placed in inappropriate accommodation with little to no supervision thus making them easy targets for the perpetrators.
- iv. **Business facilitated CSEC:** Youth who take part in an enterprise and who engage in sexual activities in that enterprise.
- v. **Family facilitated CSEC:** one of relatives of a youth is exchanging sexual acts with the youth for the thing of value or the relative is having the youth exchange sexual acts for others for items of value, often younger victims – children between 6 and 13
- vi. **Sex tourism:** The main reasons for child sex tourism are related to the lack of education, economic disparity, corruption and rural-urban migration which put children in the condition to be forced to have sexual intercourses for survival, money or to accomplish some cultural practices. Poverty could also push children's parents to allow or be complicit in child sex tourism as it could be a way for the entire family to survive. On the other hand, clients have an interest in taking advantage of these vulnerable situations for their own interests. The different layers of demand for the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism has mainly originated in industrialised countries and targeted popular



tourist destinations. It is not limited to developing countries and will depend mainly on the ease to commit such crimes with utter impunity.

## **CENTRES**

**USA:** While exact numbers are difficult to assess, in 2020 was announced 17,200 reports of possible child sex trafficking – and those reports came from all 50 states. In 2021, the NCMEC CyberTipline received more than 29.4 million reports of online child sexual abuse material involving photographs and videos of the sexual assault of minor children (including infants).

**Haiti** – Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty, coupled with environmental challenges such as earthquakes remain key drivers for violation of children's rights. Haiti is a known destination for child sex tourism (predominantly for tourists coming from Canada, and the United States), and often children are forced into commercial or transactional sex in order to fund basic needs such as school-related expenses. These children are vulnerable to abuse, sexual exploitation and pornography at the hands of criminal gangs. Despite the establishment of laws and regulations to protect children from child labour, gaps still exist and children in Haiti are subjected to the worst forms of child labour, including commercial child sexual exploitation and child trafficking.

**France:** The victims were said to belong to all social backgrounds, but affected minors were found to have shared similar problems, often having been victims of or confronted with violence, particularly within the family.

**China:** Over the past few decades, the country has experienced remarkable progress in poverty alleviation and living standards leading to mass migration. Meanwhile, nearly 70 million of children have become the so-called “left-behind children”, in the care of relatives in their home villages. Away from the protection of their parents or unable to register as legal residents of China’s cities, running the risk of being trafficked, sexually

exploited or dragged into other forms of forced labour. Traffickers target adults and children with developmental disabilities and children whose parents have left them with relatives to migrate to the cities – estimated at 6.4 million – and subject them to forced labour and forced begging domestically and abroad.

**Europe:** The CSEC in Europe takes place – mainly in the 28 countries of the European Union. Countries in Eastern and Western Europe often experience CSEC differently; for example, those in the West are generally recipients of trafficked children, while those in the East are more often the source. One result of economic inequalities is increased migration across (now easily traversed) borders; unaccompanied minors face special risks of sexual exploitation during the migration process and after arriving at their destination. Migration by parents has weakened family structures, again, leaving children vulnerable. Countries severely affected are for example: **Czechia, Germany** (The number of known cases of sexual abuse of children and adolescents in Germany increased in 2023.), *France* (The victims were said to belong to all social backgrounds, but affected minors were found to have shared similar problems, often having been victims of or confronted with violence, particularly within the family.), *United Kingdom* (New data has revealed that in 2022, 1,871 children identified as potential victims of human trafficking or modern slavery dropped off the support system set up by the UK government system after they turned 18.) or *Greece*.

Sexual exploitation of children in tourism: Although Western European child sex tourists often travel to other continents, a trend of increased travel and tourism within Europe, with the intent sexually abusing children, has been noted. Some engage in the relatively new mode of “voluntourism,” seeking out children for abuse in orphanages, schools or shelters.

Child Sexual Exploitation Online: The widespread use of new information and communication technologies throughout Europe has encouraged a

growing trend in the production and distribution of abusive child images, especially in Western Europe.

**Prostitution of children:** Despite a lack of reliable regional data on child prostitution, sharp increases have been noted, especially in countries hard-hit by the global recession. The use of children in prostitution appears to be closely tied to child trafficking, although some young people exchange sex for cash needed to survive or to obtain drugs or high-end consumer goods.

Child trafficking happens everywhere, other stricken regions are: *Central America, the Caribbean, North Africa, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa.*

*South Africa, United States, Thailand, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Dominican Republic, Kenya and Morocco* have been identified as leading hotspots of child sexual exploitation.

## **PAST ACTION**

- i. the Agenda for Sustainable Development: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The required measurement for the 17 Sustainable Developments Goals should lead to an improved assessment of progress, namely through the adoption of comprehensive legislation, effective prevention through quality education that empowers children, enhanced law enforcement and all-encompassing victim support programmes.
- ii. UNICEF Special Rapporteur: Special Rapporteurs are independent experts appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council with the mandate to monitor, advise and publicly report on human rights situations in specific countries. UNICEFs Special Rapporteurs have been systematically visiting countries or performing fact-finding

missions. Fact-finding missions or country visits are an opportunity for the Special Rapporteur to assess the human rights situation in a given country and more specifically the state of child rights and child protection systems. Country visits are undertaken following an invitation by the Government and are prepared and conducted in close cooperation with the State concerned. Special Rapporteurs conduct two to three country visits per year. As the only mandate holder in the Special Procedures system with an exclusive focus on children, the Special Rapporteur has a unique role and responsibility to raise awareness about the rights of the child.

- iii. The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The sale and sexual exploitation of children was addressed and codified at the international level for the first time in 1989 with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which is a universal instrument that sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. It was entered into force in 1990. With 196 states party, the UNCRC is currently the most ratified international human rights law instrument, however, still not ratified by the USA. Despite the importance of this document some gaps have been identified, such as the definitions of these crimes and the legal responsibilities of States.
- iv. Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography: This is a protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and requires parties to prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Many States that have ratified the Protocol have not properly implemented
- v. Global Partnership to End Violence against Children: In 2015, world leaders made a commitment to end all forms of violence

against children by 2030, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Partnership will advocate for more urgent action to end all forms of violence and make the case for increased investment in preventing and addressing violence.

vi. The International Labour Organization: ILO is a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice by setting international labour standards.

vii. Virtual Global Taskforce: VBS is an international collaboration of eight agencies to combat online child exploitation and create a safer online environment.

## **PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION**

Prevention was divided in three layers: *primary prevention*, which focuses on the entire population and consists in the provision of universal quality social services that reduce the likelihood of future violations; *secondary prevention*, which concentrates on specific groups or children which are known to be more at risk by providing additional, targeted, support services; and *tertiary prevention*, which consists of services targeting perpetrators and/or victims in order to limit the effects of the violation and prevent reoffending. For prevention to be effective, it must be an ongoing activity, not a fleeting one.

Rehabilitation and recovery for victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children is an important intervention in children's lives, however, it was observed that in the majority of national scenarios, there was no programme specifically addressing child victims of sale and sexual exploitation. Furthermore, there have been identified barriers preventing to provide of quality care and support to children, as well as children's ability and attempt to recover from their experiences, such as: survivors' lack of knowledge and awareness about available resources, lack of

resources, including funding associated with care, discrimination, lack of long-term support...

Many legal tools are in place that clearly lay out the duty of states to support children affected by CSE. Yet it is speculative whether they are efficient enough.

## **DELEGATES SHOULD CONSIDER**

Here are some questions that delegates should try to answer in the resolution:

- i. How to reform legal frameworks and social attitudes towards the exploitation of children in prostitution?
- ii. How to educate, engage and empower child survivors?
- iii. How to fight against the impunity of perpetrators?
- iv. How to ensure functional rehabilitation for the children and their families?
- v. How to face the issue effectively?
- vi. How to raise awareness?
- vii. What can be done to minimise repercussions on children?
- viii. How to ensure that victims come forward to report human rights violations committed against them?
- ix. How to identify victims?
- x. How to protect children from sexually transmitted diseases?
- xi. How to extant and strengthen cooperation between Member States?

## **CONCLUSION**

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a world wide issue affecting children permanently and rapidly. Throughout approximately the last two decades has this trend risen extremely. Mainly because of the development of digital technology, which has introduced new forms of online harm while also worsening the offline abuse of children. CSEC is

hidden from the eyes of the public but causes permanent harm to millions of children. Despite several attempts to combat it, nothing has worked properly.

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## Second topic: Addressing the problem of child refugees in

### Latin America

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#### Definition of key terms

Before submerging ourselves in a debate, in order for it to be fertile, we should get a hold of the most important terminology. Some definitions are listed below:

**Child refugees** - As the name states, child refugees are individuals under the age of 18, who have been forced to flee from their home country due to various reasons, such as, but not limited to: war, persecution, violence or natural disasters. As it is their legal right, they often seek asylum in other countries. Unlike migrants, they cannot return home if they wish to do so.

**Unaccompanied minors** - Children undergoing the dangerous migration journey without the supervision of an adult or a legal guardian.

**Asylum** - form of protection granted to people fleeing persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Child refugees often seek asylum to escape violence and danger in their home countries.

**Refoulement** - this word defines the practice of sending refugees or asylum seekers back to their country or to another country where they are likely to be in danger or suffer bad treatment. Protection from refoulement is a basic right of asylum seekers and refugees.

**statelessness** - A stateless person is someone who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law. Statelessness can occur for several reasons, including discrimination against particular ethnic or religious groups, or on the basis of gender.

**Internal displacement (IDP)** - being forced to flee home but remain within one's own country's borders. Internally displaced people are often referred to as refugees, although they do not fall within the legal definitions of a



refugee.

**La Bestia** - A network of freight trains traveling through Mexico towards the United States. It is used by refugees, including unaccompanied minors where they are likely to experience dangerous conditions, including accidents, robbery, assault and exploitation.

**Northern triangle** - A term used for the Central American countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. It is one of America's poorest regions, with all three countries being in the bottom 20% of Latin American nations by GDP per capita. Many child refugees originate from here due to extreme violence, gang activity and lack of opportunities.

**Darien gap** - The only land bridge connecting Northern and Southern America is one of the most dangerous border crossings in the region. It refers to a geographic region in Colombia and Panama with an area of around 100 square kilometers. Filled with dense jungle, this area is home to militants and drug traffickers who attack and rob migrants.

**Push and pull factors** - reasons why people choose to leave their home countries. While push factors are negative factors like violence, poverty and persecution that force them to flee, pull factors are attractive things about a new country such as safety, job opportunities or the chance of family reunification. It is crucial to underline the importance of and understanding these factors in order to explain why children refugees migrate.

## Overview of the topic

To define and try to understand the pressing issue of child refugees in Latin America, we first need to focus on migration itself. Migration is a

phenomenon that is closely linked with the history of mankind from its very beginning and still remains present, whether we choose to overlook it or not. Nowadays, our immediate attention and possible solutions are needed in the Central American states of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and the island nation of Haiti, as well as other neighboring countries. So what exactly leads to people fleeing their homes?

There are many factors that influence whether people migrate and the final decision can be voluntary or involuntary. Most are driven by the poor socio-economic conditions that all of these countries have in common. Be it widespread poverty (the so-called Northern Triangle remains in the bottom 20% of poorest Latin American nations by GDP per capita), limited livelihood opportunities or disparities in resources and other examples of structural inequality. People fear for their lives escaping gang activities (MS-13 and Barrio 18 are notable examples) and drug cartels, which are common in the region. Other influential factors are barriers to essential services or lack of food, with COVID-19 making it even worse in terms of lockdowns, quarantines and even further deepening wealth disparities.

Some people also hold onto the hope of getting a better education and allocating a brighter future for their children. And as they do not want to separate, the little ones are dragged along, or worse, sent away by themselves, whether they like it or not. The percentage of child refugees in this region is almost double the world average of 13%. In other words, one quarter of all refugees in the region are children. Alarmingly, the average refugee age is decreasing. The largest group of migrant children are kids below age 11; at three specific border points — Colombia-Panama, Chile-Peru, Mexico-Guatemala — this age group accounts for 69 to 91 percent of all children on the move.

The routes undertaken and final destinations vary. The major flows are migrants on the move within and through northern Central America and Mexico, from Venezuela and from Haiti. People originating from the Northern Triangle countries mostly wish to end up in the USA, passing through Mexico on the way. South American refugees have to pass through the Darien Gap. To this day, it remains the biggest obstacle as the natural conditions here are quite dense with frequent hurricanes and earthquakes and even worse are the gangs here.

Nowadays, gender is also playing a big role in migration, as women make up almost half of the migrants. Accompanied just by their children, they are more likely to be facing grave dangers. A notable example are smugglers, who are often seen by communities of origin as providing a legitimate but very expensive service that takes successful migrants years to fully pay off. Children are often engaged as assistants to complete their very own journeys. They are also at high risk of being trafficked and then forced to labour in agriculture, as well as in commercial sex work, domestic work and street begging.

After finally making it through the journey, children are detained in migrant centers with inadequate facilities. Many countries in the region have limited resources for processing asylum claims and supporting child refugees. Some might even face being deported back to unsafe countries, which violates the principle of non-refoulement. Then there are issues with accessing citizenship. Many are missing out on education, protection and proper health care, they often find themselves malnourished and dehydrated. Another problem is integrating into and feeling at home in new communities, especially if it requires learning a new language or adapting to a different culture.

### **Timeline of the topic**

To understand the deep cores of the matter, we need to indulge ourselves in its historical roots.

**1980–1992:** The Salvadoran Civil War forces the inhabitants of the Northern Triangle to run away. Shortly after its end, many deported members of violent criminal organizations like MS-13 and Barrio 18 return from the US. Organized crime, gang violence, and government corruption worsen.

**2001:** The Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program is established for immigrants from El Salvador after earthquakes, protecting many children from deportation.

**2006-2014:** Drug cartel violence in Mexico intensifies, making migration routes for Central American children more dangerous. The number of unaccompanied minors increases.

**2014:** U.S. officials declare the surge of unaccompanied minors a humanitarian crisis. More than 68,000 unaccompanied children are apprehended at the U.S. southern border.

**2015:** The Venezuelan migration crisis intensifies as millions flee the country's political and economic collapse. Many child refugees begin seeking asylum in neighboring Latin American countries and beyond.

**2016:** Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) (also known as the Remain in Mexico policy) is introduced by the U.S. government, requiring asylum seekers, including children, to wait in Mexico while their asylum cases are processed.

**2016–2019:** Countries like Mexico, Costa Rica, and Panama become transit points and temporary hosts for thousands of refugees, including children. These countries face increasing pressure on their asylum systems.

**2017:** The U.S. Family Separation Policy is implemented as part of a "zero-tolerance" approach to illegal border crossings, leading to the separation of many children from their families at the U.S.-Mexico border.

**March 2020:** The COVID-19 pandemic prompts the U.S. to invoke Title 42, allowing for the rapid expulsion of migrants, including unaccompanied minors, without giving them a chance to apply for asylum.

**June 2021:** The Biden administration formally ends the Remain in Mexico policy

**2022–:** Latin American countries like Costa Rica and Panama continue to face growing pressure from migration crises, particularly due to Venezuelan refugees, many of whom are children.

### **Past action**

**1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol:** The cornerstone of refugee rights, including the principle of non-refoulement.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): Establishes the obligation to protect children's rights, including those of refugees.

Cartagena Declaration on Refugees: A regional framework used in Latin America that expands the definition of a refugee to include those fleeing generalized violence and instability.

Central American Regional Migration Conference, aim to address the refugee crisis collectively.

## **Committees or NGOs tackling the issue**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) - an intergovernmental organization that provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers. In September 2016, IOM became a related organization of the United Nations.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - Provides legal protection, humanitarian aid, and advocates for child refugees.

Collaborates with national governments on asylum procedures and resettlement programs. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the key legal documents.

UNICEF - Focuses on the protection, education, and welfare of displaced children, ensuring their basic rights are upheld.

International Rescue Committee (IRC) - works in the areas hit hardest by humanitarian crises around the world

Other organizations include NGO Committee on Migration, Save the Children and Doctors Without Borders.

## **Country positions**

### **USA**

Primary destination for many child refugees, though a lot of them face harsh and inhumane conditions in asylum centers due to their limited capacities. Children are commonly sent back to Mexico after no more than a few days in the custody of the US authorities.

### **Venezuela**

It has been marked by hyperinflation, escalating starvation, disease, crime and mortality rates, resulting in massive emigration. More than 6.1 million refugees and migrants have left the country. Seventeen countries host around 80 per cent of Venezuelans (more than 5 million) throughout Latin America and the Caribbean – triggering the largest external displacement crisis in Latin America's recent history.

### **Mexico**

This country acts both as a transit as well as destination country due to a favorable legal framework for the inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees into the national system. Nevertheless, a significant part of Mexico is occupied by drug cartels, which makes it dangerous to pass through.

## **Haiti**

More than 360 000 people have escaped this country in the past year. It is the most impoverished country in the Western Hemisphere, with close to 60 per cent of the population living below the poverty line. An estimated 4.9 million people in Haiti are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.

## **Northern Triangle**

The Northern Triangle governments call for stronger international support to protect child refugees, including enhanced funding for child protection services, reintegration programs for returned migrants, and technical assistance to improve legal frameworks and asylum processes. They argue that migration is a symptom of deep-rooted problems that cannot be solved without long-term international investment in stability and development.

## **Questions a resolution must answer**

How can the root causes such as corruption and weak governance that push children to flee their countries be addressed?

What strategies can be implemented to combat organized crime and gang recruitment?

What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure the protection and safety (right to asylum and protection under international law) of child refugees, both during their journey and in destination countries?

How can we ensure that unaccompanied minors are identified and provided with appropriate care, such as legal guardianship or family reunification services?

What policies should be implemented to prevent the exploitation, trafficking, or abuse of child refugees?

What support can be provided to countries that are hosting or processing large numbers of child refugees?

What integration programs can be implemented to help child refugees access education, healthcare, social services and trauma support services in host countries?

What mechanisms should be established to hold countries accountable for their treatment of child refugees and adherence to international agreements?

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the child refugee crisis remains a multifaceted humanitarian emergency. It has its roots in violence, poverty, political instability and social inequality across the whole region. The number of children from Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Venezuela, as well as other countries is getting higher and higher each day. Child refugees face numerous challenges throughout their journeys or upon arrival to a new country. It is of paramount importance to adequately address the crisis and create a coordinated response.

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