



SOCHUM

**Social, Humanitarian
&
Cultural Committee**

STUDY GUIDE





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1. Letters from Secretariat and USG

1.1 Letter From Secretary General

Distinguished Participants of EKJ-BMUN'26,

It is a very splendid honor to welcome you all to Erciyes College Junior-Beginner Model United Nations Conference. I am Rmeysa Baęçovan, the Secretary General of EKJ-BMUN'26 conference. Within 3 years of efforts and exertions, I am proud to be part of this year's unique event. In our conferences, where we are accustomed to achieving firsts, I am grateful to be organizing the first Beginner Model United Nations conference in Kayseri this year as another first and only.

You can be sure that EKJ-BMUN'26 will be a home, a place to be confident, an exclusive experience, a memory that is unforgettable and an event that will be immense for everyone who attends. You will get a special opportunity and place for debate, collaborate and share your superb ideas in this field. My team is working with a diligence just to delight you and make you feel privileged in here. With my marvelous academic team, you will be treated like you are the future's diplomats who make the world better with your ideas and lights in your brains.

I am so proud of what I have done just for your satisfaction. I have no doubt about my team's endeavors and fervency to make the best conference ever seen. I am keen to see your performance in this endemic conference. Lastly I can say, in my 30 experiences in 3 years, even I have never seen more fabulous conference like EKJ-BMUN'26. So, I think now I encourage you to attend and show your magnificence in here. My pleasure.

Best Regards,

Rmeysa BAęÇOVAN
SECRETARY GENERAL

1.2 Letter From Under Secretary General

1.3 Distinguished Delegates,

It is my distinct honor and privilege to welcome you all to the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM). As we gather today, the global community faces a displacement crisis of unprecedented proportions. Behind the staggering statistics of millions on the move, there are individual faces-most of them children-who have been forced to leave their homelands, their schools, and their families in search of safety.

The rights of children who have left their homeland is not merely a legal agenda item; it is a profound moral challenge that tests the very core of international solidarity. These children are among the most vulnerable inhabitants of our planet. They face barriers to education that threaten to create a "lost generation," healthcare gaps that endanger their physical well-being, and protection failures that leave them exposed to exploitation and trauma. As the Under-Secretary-General, I urge you to remember that while borders may define our nations, they must not define the limits of a child's fundamental rights.

In this committee, your task is to move beyond national interests and look toward a sustainable, humanitarian future. We expect you to be diplomatic in your discourse, innovative in your solutions, and unwavering in your commitment to the "Best Interests of the Child." The resolution you draft today will serve as a testament to this committee's ability to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

I look forward to witnessing your fruitful debates, your strategic alliances, and most importantly, your passion for upholding human dignity. The world is watching, and the children on the move are counting on your leadership.

I wish you all a highly productive and successful conference.

Best Regards,

Mehmet Batuhan Köseoğlu

Under Secretary General of SOCHUM

EKJMUN'26

2. Introduction To the Committee and Understanding the Agenda Item

The **Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee**, commonly referred to as **SOCHUM** or the **General Assembly Third Committee**, is one of the six main organs of the United Nations General Assembly. Established to facilitate international cooperation, its mandate is rooted in the pursuit of social progress and the universal protection of human rights as outlined in the **UN Charter**.

Mandate and Scope

SOCHUM's agenda is vast, covering issues ranging from the advancement of women and the protection of children to the treatment of refugees and the promotion of fundamental freedoms. Unlike the Security Council, which deals with immediate threats to international peace and security, SOCHUM focuses on the **long-term humanitarian and social pillars** of the UN. Its primary goal is to ensure that no individual—regardless of race, gender, or legal status—is left outside the protection of international law.

Millions of children around the world are forced to leave their homes every year. Some escape wars, others flee poverty, famine, political violence, terrorism, or climate disasters.

Children who leave their homeland may become refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, or internally displaced persons. During this difficult process, many lose access to education, healthcare, housing, and emotional support.

Children are especially vulnerable because they depend on adults for protection. Without support, they may become victims of trafficking, exploitation, child labor, forced marriage, or violence.

This issue has become one of the most urgent humanitarian problems of the 21st century.

Functionality and Impact

- **Universal Membership:** Every UN Member State has a seat in SOCHUM, making it one of the most inclusive and representative bodies for discussing global human rights crises.
- **Standard Setting:** The committee is instrumental in drafting international instruments and declarations. It serves as the preliminary ground for resolutions that eventually shape global norms and national policies.
- **Collaboration with UN Agencies:** SOCHUM works in close coordination with specialized bodies such as the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, **UNICEF**, and the **Human Rights Council (HRC)** to implement field-based solutions.

Relevance to the Current Agenda

In the context of children who have left their homeland, SOCHUM's role is to bridge the gap between **national sovereignty** and **international humanitarian obligations**. The committee must navigate the complex tension between a state's right to control its borders and its duty to uphold the "Best Interests of the Child." As a delegate, your task within this committee is to move beyond political rhetoric and formulate actionable, rights-based solutions that provide displaced children with a legal and social safety net

3. Introduction to the Topic: The Rights of Children Who Have Left Their Homeland

The movement of children across international borders is one of the most complex and heartbreaking challenges of the 21st century. Whether they are fleeing the ravages of war, the devastation of climate change, or the grip of extreme poverty, children who leave their homeland enter a state of extreme vulnerability. According to recent data, millions of children are currently "on the move," often finding themselves in a legal and social limbo where their fundamental rights are overlooked or outright denied.

The Core of the Crisis

When a child leaves their home, they lose more than just a place of residence; they lose their "protective environment." This includes their family structure, their school system, and the legal protection of their state. In the journey toward a safer life, these children are frequently exposed to physical violence, psychological trauma, and exploitation by human traffickers. The transition from being a citizen in their own country to being a "foreigner" in another often leads to a dehumanizing experience where they are treated as security threats or administrative burdens rather than children in need of care.

The "Protection Gap"

A significant issue facing the international community is the **Protection Gap**. While international law (such as the UNCRC) technically protects all children regardless of their status, in practice, national policies often prioritize border control over child welfare. Children who have left their homeland often face:

- **Administrative Barriers:** Lack of birth certificates or identification papers which prevents them from accessing basic rights.
- **Discriminatory Policies:** Laws that exclude non-citizen children from national healthcare or education systems.
- **The Risk of Detention:** In many jurisdictions, children are still detained in migration centers, which is a direct violation of their rights.

The Objective of the Discussion

The goal of this committee is not merely to acknowledge the crisis, but to establish a standardized, rights-based approach to the treatment of these children. Delegates must consider how to ensure that "migration status" never supersedes "child status." The debate should focus on creating a roadmap for host countries to integrate these children into their societies, ensuring they have the opportunity to heal, learn, and grow in a safe environment, regardless of their origin.

4. Key Terms and Definitions

To engage in a productive debate, delegates must have a unified understanding of the following legal and humanitarian terms:

- **Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs):** Children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. These children are at the highest risk for exploitation and require immediate state guardianship.
- **Separated Children:** Children who are separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may include children accompanied by other adult family members.
- **Principle of Non-Refoulement:** A fundamental principle of international law that forbids a country from returning asylum seekers to a country where they would be in danger of persecution, torture, or other irreparable harm. This is a non-derogable right for all children.
- **The Best Interests of the Child:** A primary consideration in all actions concerning children, as stipulated in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This principle requires that the child's well-being takes priority over administrative or migration-related concerns.


- **Asylum Seeker vs. Refugee:**
 1. *Asylum Seeker*: An individual who has left their country and is seeking international protection but whose claim has not yet been finally decided by the host country.
 2. *Refugee*: A person who has been recognized under the 1951 Convention as having a well-founded fear of persecution and is unable to return home.
- **Statelessness**: A condition where a child is not considered a national by any state under the operation of its law. Children on the move are at high risk of statelessness if they are born in transit or if their birth is not registered.
- **Durable Solutions**: The long-term processes by which the situation of a displaced child is permanently resolved. These include:
 1. *Voluntary Repatriation*: Returning to the country of origin in safety and dignity.
 2. *Local Integration*: Settling permanently in the host country.
 3. *Rese Local Integration*: Settling permanently in the host country.
 4. *Resettlement*: Moving to a third country that agrees to admit them.
 5. *Settlement*: Moving to a third country that agrees to admit them.


Why Does This Matter?

THE PROTECTION GAP – WHAT THE LAW SAYS VS. WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS

 International law protects ALL children



 Many are denied education & healthcare


 No child should be detained due to migration status




 Thousands held in migration centers

 Every child has the right to a legal identity



 Many flee without documents and become "stateless"

 "Best Interests of the Child" must always come first



 Border control priorities often come first

5. Legal Framework and UN Conventions

The protection of children who have left their homeland is not merely a moral preference but a binding legal obligation under international law. Delegates must refer to these instruments to justify their proposed solutions and hold Member States accountable.

A. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989)

The UNCRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history and serves as the primary legal authority for this committee.

- **Article 2 (Non-Discrimination):** Mandates that all rights apply to every child within a state's jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality, migration status, or origin.
- **Article 3 (Best Interests of the Child):** In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, or administrative authorities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
- **Article 22 (Refugee Children):** Explicitly states that children seeking refugee status, or who are considered refugees, must receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance. It also mandates cooperation with international organizations to trace parents or family members.

B. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol

While this convention applies to all refugees, its application to children is vital:

- **The Principle of Non-Refoulement (Article 33):** Prohibits the expulsion or return of a child to a territory where their life or freedom would be threatened.
- **Administrative Assistance:** Requires host states to provide displaced children with identity papers and travel documents, which are essential for accessing education and healthcare.



C. The Global Compact on Refugees (2018)

Adopted by the General Assembly, this framework aims to ease the pressure on host countries and enhance refugee self-reliance. For children, it emphasizes:

- The integration of displaced children into **national education systems** within three months of arrival.
- Strengthening national child protection systems to be inclusive of refugee and migrant children.

D. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990)

This convention ensures that even if a child's parents are "undocumented" migrant workers, the child retains the basic right to access emergency medical care and education (Article 30), emphasizing that no child should be denied education based on their or their parents' irregular stay.

E. Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- **Target 4.1:** Ensuring all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education.
- **Target 16.2:** Ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
- 6. Current Situation and Major Challenges

As of 2026, the global crisis of displacement has reached a critical threshold. With over **50 million children** currently living outside their country of birth due to forced displacement, the international community faces an unprecedented challenge in ensuring these children do not become a "lost generation."

A. Access to Education

Education is often the first thing a child loses when they leave their homeland, yet it is the most vital tool for their recovery and future.

- **The Documentation Barrier:** Many host countries require previous school records or national ID cards for enrollment. Displaced children who fled without these papers often find themselves barred from formal schooling.
- **Language and Integration:** Even when enrolled, children face significant language barriers. Without specialized "bridge programs" or language support, dropout rates among displaced children remain alarmingly high.
- **The Gender Gap:** Displaced girls are significantly less likely to be in school than their male counterparts, often being redirected toward domestic labor or facing the risk of early marriage due to economic desperation.

B. Health and Safety

The journey away from home and the subsequent life in camps or urban slums poses severe risks to a child's physical and mental well-being.

- **Psychological Trauma:** Exposure to conflict, the loss of family members, and the uncertainty of life in a new country lead to high rates of PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Most host countries lack the specialized mental health resources to treat "war-affected" children.
- **The "Invisible" Threat (Exploitation):** Children on the move are prime targets for human traffickers. In the absence of legal status, children may be forced into the informal labor market or subjected to sexual exploitation to help their families survive.
- **Healthcare Exclusion:** In many jurisdictions, "emergency care" is the only medical service available to displaced children. Chronic illnesses, dental care, and routine vaccinations are often neglected, leading to long-term health crises.

C. Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs)

Unaccompanied and separated children represent the most vulnerable demographic within the global displacement crisis.

- **Legal Guardianship:** There is a severe global shortage of legal guardians. Without a designated adult responsible for their welfare, UAMs often fall through the cracks of the legal system, leading to arbitrary detention in adult facilities.
- **The Risk of Disappearance:** Thousands of UAMs "disappear" every year after arriving in host countries. Without a centralized tracking and protection mechanism, these children are often lost to criminal networks.
- **Family Reunification:** The processes for tracing family members are often slow, bureaucratic, and hindered by a lack of cross-border cooperation between NGOs and governments.

8. UN Involvement and Past Resolutions

The United Nations has a long history of addressing this issue, though implementation remains the primary hurdle.

- **UNGA Resolution 73/151 (2018):** Focused specifically on the protection of children in migration, calling for an end to the practice of child detention and emphasizing that children should be treated as children first and foremost.
- **The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016):** A landmark declaration where Member States committed to protecting the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status, with a specific focus on ending child detention.
- **UNICEF's "Agenda for Action":** While not a resolution, this is the primary policy framework used by the UN to push for:
 1. Pressing for action on the causes that uproot children.
 2. Ensuring access to education and health.
 3. Keeping families together.
 4. Ending the detention of migrating children.

Key Vocabulary

Refugee

Someone officially recognised as fleeing persecution, war, or violence in their home country

Asylum Seeker

Someone who has applied for refugee status but is still waiting for a decision

Unaccompanied Minor (UAM)

A child travelling alone — without any parent or responsible adult — the most vulnerable group

Non-Refoulement

A rule that says no country can send a person back to a place where they would be in danger

Statelessness

When a child is not recognised as a citizen of any country, meaning they have no legal protections

Best Interests of the Child

A key legal principle: every decision affecting a child must put their wellbeing first, above all else

Host Country

The country receiving and sheltering displaced people

Durable Solutions

Long-term fixes: going home safely, integrating in the host country, or resettling in a third country

9. Questions a Resolution Must Address

A successful resolution must move beyond symbolic gestures and provide concrete, actionable mechanisms. Delegates should focus their debates on answering the following critical questions:

1. **Legal Status and Documentation:** How can Member States provide temporary legal identity or "educational passports" to children who fled without official documentation to ensure they aren't barred from schools?
2. **Ending Child Detention:** What specific administrative or community-based alternatives to detention can be implemented to ensure that no child is held in a migration center or prison due to their legal status?
3. **The Guardianship Gap:** How can the international community standardize the appointment of legal guardians for Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) to ensure they have a protected legal representative within 24 hours of arrival?
4. **Integration vs. Segregation:** Should host countries create separate "refugee schools," or should the focus be on integrating displaced children into national systems? How can language barriers be bridged during this transition?
5. **Mental Health and Trauma:** What mechanisms can be established to provide specialized psychosocial support for children who have witnessed war or survived dangerous migration routes, especially in resource-poor host countries?
6. **Responsibility Sharing:** How can developed nations be incentivized to provide technical and financial aid to "Frontline States" (nations bordering conflict zones) to ensure their social infrastructures do not collapse under the pressure of displacement?
7. **Data Privacy and Tracking:** How can the UN facilitate the tracking of "disappeared" children without creating surveillance systems that could be misused against vulnerable population

10. Country Policy

- 1. AUSTRALIA** Maintains a strict border protection policy (Operation Sovereign Borders). While criticized for offshore processing of asylum seekers, it provides high educational standards for children within its territory. The core focus is on "legal pathways" and maritime security.
- 2. BRAZIL** Features one of the most humanitarian refugee laws in the region. Through "Operação Acolhida," it facilitates the direct integration of displaced children (especially from Venezuela) into the education and healthcare systems. Strongly advocates for humanitarian visas.
- 3. CANADA** A global model for integration. Policy focuses on immediate language support and psychosocial aid upon arrival. Consistently prioritizes the "Best Interests of the Child" over deportation and maintains a high resettlement quota.
- 4. CHINA** Emphasizes national sovereignty and non-interference. Prefers "addressing root causes in the country of origin" rather than mass resettlement. Skeptical of Western-led quota systems and views child rights through the lens of national development.
- 5. DR CONGO** Both a source and a host country. Struggles to support millions of internally displaced children due to ongoing conflict. Primarily advocates for "burden sharing" and calls for massive financial aid from the international community.
- 6. EGYPT** Hosts millions of refugees (Sudanese, Syrian, etc.) in urban settings rather than camps. Integrates children into local life but demands international funding to cover the resulting economic strain on education and health infrastructures.
- 7. FRANCE** Balances EU legal obligations with strict border controls. Focuses on the systematic care of Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) through local authorities. Advocates for a unified EU migration policy that combines security with humanitarian aid.
- 8. GERMANY** Has absorbed a significant portion of Europe's displaced population. Enforces "mandatory integration" via rapid school enrollment and language training. Supports family reunification but pushes for stricter control of EU external borders.
- 9. INDIA** Not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, yet traditionally hosts various groups. Provides children access to basic rights on an "ad hoc" humanitarian basis, though it lacks a formal legal domestic framework for refugees.
- 10. IRAN** Hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations, mainly Afghans. By supreme decree, all children—regardless of documentation—are entitled to attend public schools. Demands more global support for bearing this humanitarian burden.

11. IRAQ In a post-war recovery phase, Iraq manages both returning citizens and Syrian refugees. Focuses on the legal status of children to prevent statelessness and seeks international aid for rebuilding educational infrastructure.

12. ITALY A frontline state for Mediterranean routes. The "Zampa Law" is a pioneering piece of legislation for protecting UAMs. Strongly advocates for a mandatory "solidarity mechanism" within the EU to share the burden of arrivals.

13. JAPAN Maintains very low refugee recognition rates. Prefers providing significant financial contributions to international organizations rather than domestic resettlement. Focuses on improving conditions in the children's countries of origin.

14. PORTUGAL Pro-migration due to demographic needs. Offers flexible laws for children and families to enter the workforce and school system quickly. Advocates for open humanitarian corridors and human rights-based integration.

15. RUSSIAN FEDERATION Focuses on the "evacuation and safety" of children within its sphere of influence (e.g., Ukraine conflict). Highly skeptical of international oversight and emphasizes that child protection should be governed by national law.

16. SAUDI ARABIA Uses the term "visitors" rather than "refugees." Provides free education and healthcare to millions of displaced Syrians and Yemenis but maintains a strict stance on permanent residency or citizenship.

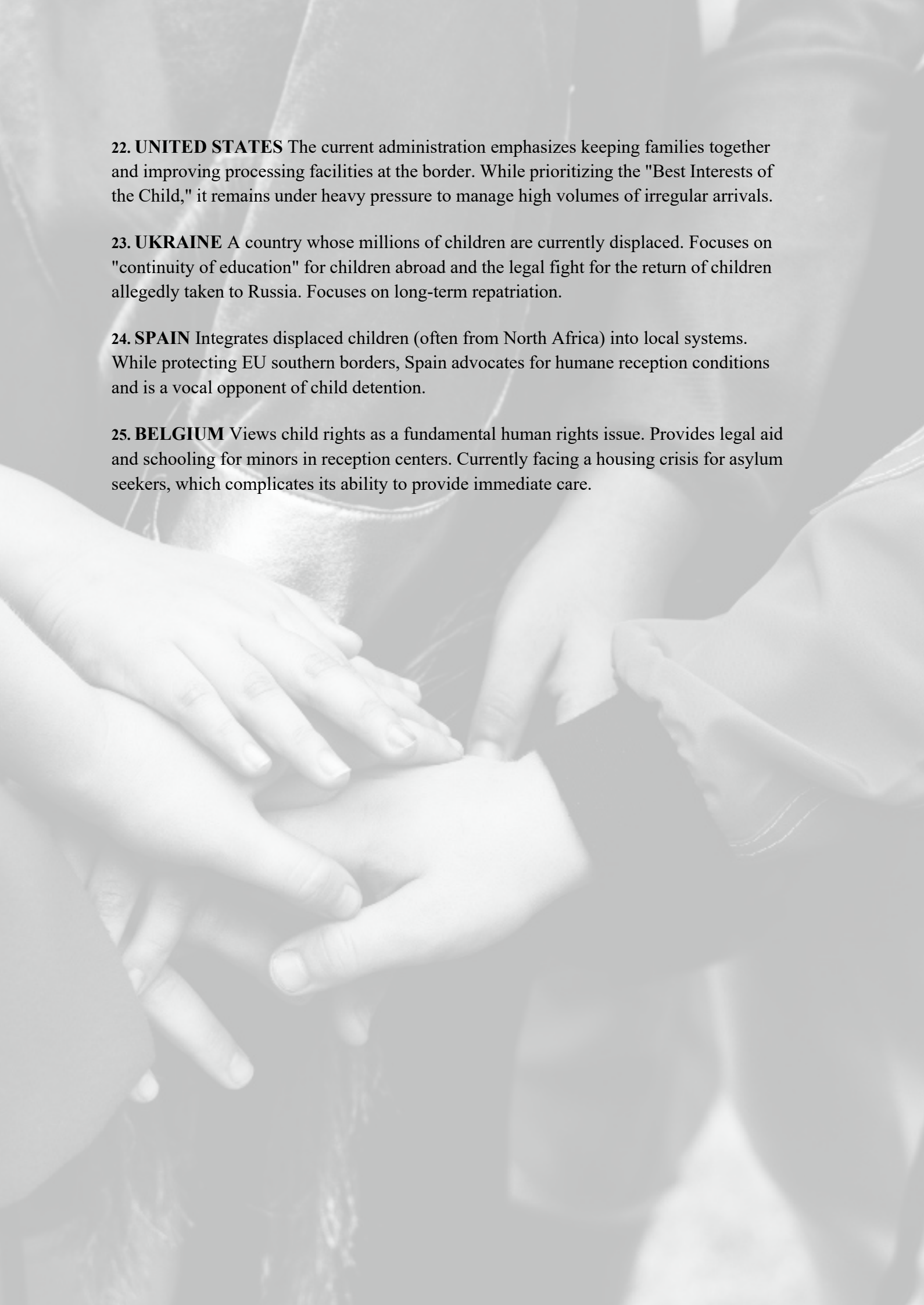
17. SINGAPORE Strictly limits refugee intake due to its small landmass. However, it is a major contributor to regional humanitarian technology and provides financial aid for child protection projects across Southeast Asia.

18. SOUTH AFRICA Possesses very progressive refugee laws in Africa, legally guaranteeing children the same rights as citizens. However, it struggles to protect displaced children from rising local xenophobia and social inequality.

19. SYRIA A primary country of origin. The government encourages the "voluntary return" of displaced children. However, international bodies remain concerned about the lack of infrastructure and security for those returning.

20. TÜRKİYE The world's largest host country. Has integrated over a million Syrian children into its national education system. Policy focuses on "voluntary and safe return" to established safe zones and calls for global responsibility sharing.

21. UNITED KINGDOM Implements strict border policies (e.g., the Rwanda Plan) to deter irregular migration. Domestically, it provides high-standard care for minors but prioritizes stopping "small boat" crossings as a primary security objective.



22. UNITED STATES The current administration emphasizes keeping families together and improving processing facilities at the border. While prioritizing the "Best Interests of the Child," it remains under heavy pressure to manage high volumes of irregular arrivals.

23. UKRAINE A country whose millions of children are currently displaced. Focuses on "continuity of education" for children abroad and the legal fight for the return of children allegedly taken to Russia. Focuses on long-term repatriation.

24. SPAIN Integrates displaced children (often from North Africa) into local systems. While protecting EU southern borders, Spain advocates for humane reception conditions and is a vocal opponent of child detention.

25. BELGIUM Views child rights as a fundamental human rights issue. Provides legal aid and schooling for minors in reception centers. Currently facing a housing crisis for asylum seekers, which complicates its ability to provide immediate care.

11. Bibliography and Useful Links

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- **1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol:**
<https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention>
- **UNHCR Refugee Data Finder (2025/2026 Statistics):**
<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>
- **IOM World Migration Report 2026:** <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/>
- **UNICEF Child Displacement Data Portal:**
<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/displacement/>
- **UN Digital Library (Country Voting Records):** <https://digitallibrary.un.org>
- **Refworld - Law and Policy Database:** <https://www.refworld.org>
- **Human Rights Watch - Children's Rights Division:**
<https://www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights>
- **Save the Children - Resource Centre:** <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/>
- **Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform:** <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/>