



THESSISMUN



Study Guide

3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly



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1. Welcoming letter

Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor as much as a great pleasure to welcome you to the Social and Humanitarian Committee of the UN General Assembly of the ThessISMUN 2025. We feel both honored and excited to serve as the Board of this crucial committee under this year's unique topic.

This year's topic, "Safeguarding Minorities Against Forced Displacement" addresses crucial and important aspects of the current geopolitical scene. Minorities have always been the first victims of conflicts, resulting in their displacement. As such, during the last decades our world has faced many global disputes and wars. The Russian invasion in Ukraine, the restart of the Israeli Palestinian conflict in Gaza, and until recently the Syrian Civil War have resulted to the displace of many. The protection of rights is increasingly important as far right and radical political parties gain popularity, threatening democratic values, human rights, and freedoms. Debating upon this topic the delegates will have to address a variety a issues which will emerge, mainly the root causes which lead to the displacement of people. Lastly, the delegates will have to uses sufficiently the UN mechanisms and cooperate with other organizations in order to address effectively the topic and its challenges.

In this study guide, we aim to provide you with all the relevant background information that will help you understand the topic in depth. Additionally, we strived to incentivize you to conduct your own research as well, which is always necessary to grasp every aspect of a complex international issue fully. On a special note, we kindly want to ask all of you to not only carefully read this study guide, but also the Rules of Procedure (RoP). We are looking forward to seeing you bring your excitement and diplomatic spirit to the conference.

On behalf of the Organizing Team and the Secretariat, we welcome you to ThessISMUN 2025!

Sincerely,

Ioakeim Delimitrou, Chairperson

Margarita Theodora Vasileiadou, Vice-chair



2. Introduction to the Committee

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, also known as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), is one of the six committees of the UN General Assembly. It addresses a broad range of issues related to fundamental human rights, humanitarian affairs, and the social development of the international community. SOCHUM, alongside the other five committees of the UN General Assembly, was established in 1948 following the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reflecting the post-World War II international commitment to protecting human rights and combating humanitarian crises such as forced and mass displacement.

The main objective of the committee is to review reports from various UN bodies, such as the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the High Commissioner for Refugees, to develop resolutions and recommendations aimed at improving social conditions and safeguarding dignity for all individuals. SOCHUM consists of 193 member states, while non-member states and other UN-recognized entities may attend as permanent observers, participating in discussions but without voting rights.

The committee's agenda includes topics such as the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, the protection of refugees from forced displacement, the rights of minorities and people with disabilities, and the promotion of self-determination. Therefore, the committee's main initiative is to uphold human rights, foster international cooperation to address modern crises, and mitigate their humanitarian impact. Additionally, while the committee's resolutions are not legally binding, each recommendation plays a significant role in shaping the evolution of international and humanitarian law.

3. Introduction to the Topic

The forced displacement of minority groups is a timeless phenomenon in world history and constitutes one of the most significant challenges of the modern era for the protection of human rights and fundamental principles. It is now a well-established fact that minorities, regardless of whether they are defined by nationality, language, religion or any other characteristic, face



systemic discrimination and are victims of marginalization and socio-economic exclusion. These groups, due to their particular characteristics that distinguish them from the majority, are disproportionately affected by political instability, conflict, environmental degradation, and institute inequalities, making their protection a critical issue for the international community.

Approaching the issue, it is important to recognize the different categories of minorities as each of them faces different problems associated with the aforementioned phenomenon. Among the different categories of minorities, the following stand out: Ethnic, religious and social minorities, including linguistic groups, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ individuals. In addition to the adverse conditions, adversities and atrocities, the environment they face in the host country or in refugee shelters is not conducive to their integration into society, the improvement of their living conditions, and their economic situation.

Global challenges, including protracted conflicts, the rise of nationalism, xenophobia, and climate change, are the root causes of forced displacement. As a result, minority groups must navigate these crises to prevent the erosion of their cultural identities, languages, and traditions. The risk of cultural identity loss, and more broadly, the protection of minority rights, necessitates global coordination and cooperation. It underscores the responsibilities of host and transit countries to provide protection and facilitate the integration of displaced minorities.

For this reason, international cooperation through agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), as well as adherence to legal frameworks established by the United Nations, is crucial to addressing these challenges comprehensively.

4. Key Terms and definitions¹

In order to proceed with the analysis of the topic, we should bear in mind the following definitions of the key terms of the discussed subject:

¹ Lixinski, L., Åhrén, M., Charters, C., & Hohmann, J. (Eds.). (2024). *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous Peoples and International Law*. Oxford University Press.



A **minority** refers to a national or ethnic, religious, or linguistic group that is smaller in number compared to the rest of the population and shares a common identity. Generally, minorities do not hold dominant positions in the economic and political spheres within their country.

Indigenous peoples have distinct social, cultural, economic, and political systems that are often closely tied to their traditional lands and natural resources. Moreover, they often possess a unique collective identity and maintain a deep relationship with their cultural heritage, languages, customs, and traditional knowledge.

A **refugee** is a person who has been forced to leave their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution, conflict, or violence. They are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin and seek protection and asylum in another country.

People in a refugee-like situation include *groups of people who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to those of refugees, but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained.*

Asylum seekers are *individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not been determined.*

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) include *persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State*

Forced relocation/displacement refers to the coerced or involuntary movement of individuals or communities from their homes or places of residence to another location against their will.



It involves the use of force, threat, or other forms of coercion by authorities or powerful entities to displace people from their established communities.

Racial Discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.²

Marginalization is the process by which individuals or groups are discriminated against in society, thereby excluding them from full participation and denying them equal access to resources, rights and opportunities.

Chronic poverty is defined as a persistent state of poverty experienced by individuals or communities over a long period of time. It is about a long-term lack of basic needs, limited access to resources and opportunities, and the inability to escape the poverty trap.

Sexual violence is any form of sexual abuse, assault or exploitation of a person without their consent. It includes acts such as rape, sexual harassment, human trafficking and forced prostitution and can have serious physical, psychological and emotional consequences for victims.

5.1 Categories of minorities

5.1.1 Ethnic Minorities and Indigenous People

Although the terms “ethnic minorities” and “indigenous peoples” have conceptual differences, it is common practice to examine both categories in parallel, as they face similar challenges after displacement³.

² McDougall, Gay. n.d. “International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.” Audiovisual Library of International Law. Accessed December 4, 2024. <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cerd/cerd.htm>

³ *Minorities and Indigenous people* (no date) APT. Available at: <https://www.apr.ch/knowledge-hub/dfd/minorities-and-indigenous-people> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).



To begin with, ethnic minorities differ from the majority of the population due to their unique cultural identity, language, and religious beliefs, which consequently define them as minorities. As they are often victims of systemic discrimination, political marginalization, economic exclusion, and violent persecution, forced displacement exacerbates their already challenging circumstances. As a result, they must adapt to unfamiliar environments without access to the resources they left behind in their homeland. Ethnic minorities often experience racial discrimination and marginalization, which hinder their social integration and adaptation to new regions ⁴.

A stark example of this situation is the Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic minority group described by the United Nations as "the most persecuted minority in the world." Due to armed attacks and mass violence in August 2017, thousands of Rohingya were forced to flee their homes in Myanmar's Rakhine State, crossing the Bay of Bengal in search of safety in Bangladesh. More than 742,000 people—half of them children—became refugees in Bangladesh, while 168,400 sought refuge in Malaysia, 93,100 in India, and 84,000 in Thailand, making them the world's largest stateless population ⁵. Rohingya refugees face not only severe deprivation of their legal and educational rights but also limited access to medical and other essential resources ⁶.

On the other hand, Indigenous peoples have historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their ancestral territories. These deep-rooted historical ties are often reflected in the term "first peoples." As Indigenous communities possess distinct cultural identities and heritage, they are non-dominant populations in comparison to the

⁴ *Communicating social cohesion in forced displacement*. Available at: <https://cnxus.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Communicating-Social-Cohesion-in-Forced-Displacement.pdf> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

⁵ *Rohingya refugee crisis explained*. Available at: <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

⁶ *Rohingya refugee crisis explained*. Available at: <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).



majority ⁷. Consequently, they frequently encounter racial discrimination due to their unique cultural characteristics and, after displacement, suffer severe violations of their rights. In many cases, they are forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands due to development projects such as mining, deforestation, or dam construction ⁸. Despite the existence of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), they remain vulnerable within their societies and are often victims of exploitation ⁹.

Another group that faces racial discrimination and severe violations of fundamental rights is stateless people, whose global population, according to the UNHCR's 2024 statistical report, exceeds 4.4 million. As they are not recognized as citizens by any country, they are unable to obtain birth certificates or other legal identity documents, preventing them from enrolling in schools or accessing public services. Furthermore, they are prohibited from legally working, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation, abuse, and forced labor, as they are often confined to low-paying and informal jobs ¹⁰. Additionally, they are unable to marry legally or confer nationality to their children, perpetuating the cycle of statelessness.

5.1.2 Religious Minorities

Religious minorities are non-dominant populations that are politically and socially marginalized due to their distinct faiths, which diverge from the ideology of the majority. They are often victims of systematic discrimination and targeted violence due to their unique cultural identity and spiritual practices ¹¹. In many cases, national legislation imposes restrictions on

⁷ *Working with national or ethnic, religious and linguistic* Available at: [https://emergency.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/Working with national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples in forced displacement, 2011.pdf](https://emergency.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/Working%20with%20national%20or%20ethnic,%20religious%20and%20linguistic%20minorities%20and%20indigenous%20peoples%20in%20forced%20displacement,%202011.pdf) (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

⁸ *United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous* Available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

⁹ Khoudi, Y. (2024) *In Peru, the world's largest uncontacted indigenous tribe disrupted by deforestation*, *Le Monde.fr*. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/environment/article/2024/08/08/in-peru-the-world-s-largest-uncontacted-indigenous-tribe-disrupted-by-deforestation_6711281_114.html (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹⁰ *Meepia Stateless people*, UNHCR. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/stateless-people> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹¹ *Minority religion* (2024) *Wikipedia*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minority_religion (Accessed: 07 February 2025).



their religious practices¹², forcing them to live under oppression without access to fundamental civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights¹³. Several examples of religious minorities that have suffered from violence, racism, socio-economic exclusion, and political marginalization include the Yazidis in Iraq¹⁴, Ahmadis in Pakistan¹⁵, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar¹⁶, Christians in the Middle East¹⁷, and Muslims in the Central African Republic¹⁸.

Religious minorities are disproportionately affected by forced displacement and, as a result, are frequently targets of persecution, legal suppression, violence, and, in extreme cases, genocide. After displacement, they face numerous difficulties, as they are often unable to practice their religious traditions, distancing them from their cultural identity, ethics, and beliefs. They live in refugee camps under precarious conditions, deprived of essential resources such as medicine, healthcare, potable water, food, and education¹⁹.

¹² *In religion's name* (2023) *Human Rights Watch*. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/02/28/religions-name/abuses-against-religious-minorities-indonesia> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹³ *Combating discrimination based on religion or belief* / ohchr. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-religion-or-belief/combating-discrimination-based-religion-or-belief> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹⁴ Kristensen, C.Ø. (2021) *The Yazidi genocide, lack of justice and gender-based violence in...*, Feature from King's College London. Available at: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/the-yazidi-genocide-lack-of-justice-and-gender-based-violence-in-genocides> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹⁵ *The Ahmadiyya in Pakistan: Religious persecution, human rights, and Islam* OHRH. Available at: <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/the-ahmadiyya-in-pakistan-religious-persecution-human-rights-and-islam/> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹⁶ *Investigation of alleged human rights violations and abuses against the rohingya* / OHCHR. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2017/09/investigation-alleged-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-against-rohingya> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹⁷ Editor, I. (2022) *Worsening conditions for Christians in the Middle East*, *International Christian Concern*. Available at: <https://www.persecution.org/2022/11/30/worsening-conditions-for-christians-in-the-middle-east/> (Accessed: 07 February 2025).

¹⁸ Central African Republic: Muslims forced to flee. (2020, October 28). *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/12/central-african-republic-muslims-forced-flee>

¹⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2011). *WORKING WITH NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN FORCED DISPLACEMENT*. Available at: <https://emergency.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Working%20with%20National%20or%20Ethnic%2C%20Religious%2C%20and%20Linguistic%20Minorities%20and%20Indigenous%20Peoples%20in%20Forced%20Displacement.pdf>



An example of a religious minority that was forcibly displaced due to mass persecution is the Yazidis in Iraq. Historically, they have been a Kurdish-speaking ethno-religious minority with a monotheistic faith influenced by elements of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam, primarily residing in the Sinjar region. Due to their religious distinctiveness, ISIS launched a genocide against them in 2014, forcing more than 400,000 Yazidis to flee their homeland and seek refuge in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Iraq or the Kurdistan Region of Iraq²⁰. In addition to their socio-economic isolation and stigmatization due to their religious beliefs, many Yazidis also suffer from severe psychological trauma caused by the genocide, targeted violence, human torture, and other atrocities²¹.

5.1.3 Social Groups

5.1.3.1 Linguistic Minorities

Linguistic minorities are an important social group that faces discrimination due to their distinct language and cultural identity. Their unique dialect plays a vital role in preserving their cultural heritage and serves as a cornerstone of their native history and traditions. The category of linguistic minorities can also include ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, or other isolated populations, such as the Basques in Spain, the Sami in Scandinavia, and the Kurds in the Middle East. Unfortunately, despite their cultural richness, these groups frequently experience racial discrimination, lack of legal recognition, and socio-economic exclusion due to limited access to education and services in their native language²².

²⁰ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2024. Yazidi Displacement and Migration from Iraq: Trends, Drivers, and Vulnerabilities. IOM, Iraq, Available at: https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/BorderMonitoring/20244304316478_iom_iraq_protection_yazidipaper_digital.pdf

²¹ Reuters (2024) *Iraq's missing Yazidis: Inside the long search for Islamic State captives*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/investigations/iraqs-missing-yazidis-inside-long-search-islamic-state-captives-2024-11-16/> (Accessed: 7 February 2025).

²² California Western International Law Journal *LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AND THE RIGHT TO AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATION*. Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.cwsl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1601&context=cwilj> (Accessed: 7 February 2025).



For linguistic minorities, one of the greatest challenges to cultural continuity is forced displacement, as they are often compelled to assimilate into dominant linguistic systems and become distanced from their native-speaking environments. As a result, in host communities or refugee camps, they face serious communication barriers that not only hinder their access to essential services and resources but also exacerbate their marginalization, preventing social cohesion²³. For instance, Kurdish people are recognized as one of the largest linguistic and ethnic minorities, facing significant difficulties in communication and social interaction with the native populations of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

5.1.3.2 People with disabilities

Among various social groups, a distinct category that faces significant challenges during forced displacement is people with disabilities. In large-scale crises, armed conflicts, and natural disasters, essential support systems—such as caregivers, assistive devices, and access to medications—are often disrupted, leaving people with disabilities unable to meet fundamental survival needs. This group faces numerous difficulties during the evacuation process, resulting in many being forced either to remain in conflict zones or in disaster-affected areas. For those who manage to flee, neither host communities nor refugee camps typically meet the requirements for accessible infrastructure, such as ramps, sanitation facilities, or language interpreters. As a result, in addition to the social stigma surrounding disabilities that exacerbates their marginalization and economic exclusion, people with disabilities also lack access to critical resources such as medical healthcare and education. Furthermore, especially in refugee camps, they are often victims of targeted or gender-based violence, exploitation, and abuse, making humanitarian aid from the global community urgently needed.

²³ Council of Europe (2019) *Language policies should accommodate diversity, protect minority rights and defuse tensions*. Available at: https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/news/2019/-/asset_publisher/Arb4fRK3o8Cf/content/language-policies-should-accomodate-diversity-protect-minority-rights-and-defuse-tensions (Accessed: 7 February 2025).



5.1.3.3 LGBTQIA+

Another group of social minorities that are victims of marginalization and targeted violence after displacement are LGBTQIA+ individuals²⁴. The primary factor driving many of them to forcibly flee their home countries is the existence of strict legislation that criminalizes same-sex relationships, with some extreme cases imposing the death penalty on LGBTQIA+ individuals. For example, in regions such as the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Asia, there are legal frameworks—such as the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2023 in Uganda²⁵ and the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act of 2014 in Nigeria²⁶—that condemn homosexual relations and different sexual orientations, thereby forcing LGBTQIA+ individuals into the difficult paths of forced displacement. However, even as refugees, they continue to face criticism and stigmatization for their sexual preferences, which presents multiple barriers to their socio-economic well-being. In addition to suffering from social stigma and economic exclusion, LGBTQIA+ individuals are also victims of targeted violence, abuse, and persecution, which hinder their social cohesion and development.

5.2. Challenges to safeguard minorities

5.2.1. Political instability and conflicts

In cases of political instability, where governmental facilities and mechanisms are undermined by conflict, minorities are consequently exposed to systematic discrimination and marginalization. Laws designed to safeguard minorities become unenforceable when governmental institutions and legal frameworks collapse, inevitably creating an environment that fails to protect fundamental rights. This weakness forces regions plagued by political

²⁴ OHCHR (n.d.) *LGBTI and gender diverse persons in forced displacement*. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/lgbti-and-gender-diverse-persons-forced-displacement> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

²⁵ Wikipedia (2024) *Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2023*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Homosexuality_Act,_2023 (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

²⁶ Hannatu Adamu, *The Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act 2014: Nigeria's Rejection of a Western Secular Trend* Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3808366 (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



unrest and conflict to prioritize the rehabilitation of the majority, while neglecting minorities who find themselves on the margins. For instance, during periods when state institutions are dysfunctional and the country is in crisis, minorities are deprived of access to essential administrative or legal documents necessary for their protection and safety. The absence of political stability forces minorities to live under a regime of limited freedoms and rights, which not only impedes their rehabilitation but also makes them victims of social marginalization, economic exclusion, and discrimination ²⁷.

In countries dominated by authoritarian regimes, minorities are often perceived as obstacles to development, evolution, and progress. As a result, they either live in suppressed, unfavorable conditions or are forcibly displaced in search of a better future. Under such circumstances, minorities are denied the ability to express their cultural identity, speak their dialects, or gain political representation. By eliminating the visibility of these groups, authoritarian regimes strive to eradicate diversity and multiculturalism, creating a homogeneous environment in which the unique characteristics, traditions, and heritage of each race are unable to flourish. Furthermore, these governments manipulate the majority of citizens through political propaganda and hate speech, portraying minority groups as scapegoats for economic or social challenges and as the cause of societal decline ²⁸.

One of the significant threats to minorities comes from nationalist movements and populist ideologies, which promote exclusionary practices to shape national culture around the majority, often at the expense of minorities. Through populism, these regimes achieve the marginalization of minorities, legitimizing practices that intensify intolerance and perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices. A striking example from modern history is the Nazi regime in Germany during World War II, where extreme nationalism turned against Jewish communities, presenting them as a threat to social cohesion, economic prosperity, and progress. In pursuit of creating an "Aryan race," these minorities were subjected to systematic persecution, eventually

²⁷ *Political instability: Diverse perspectives and critiques of the philosophical theories*. ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381433754_Political_Instability_Diverse_Perspectives_and_Critiques_of_the_Philosophical_Theories (Accessed: 7 February 2025).

²⁸ *Authoritarian Populism and Atavistic Nationalism*. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48603223> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



leading to genocide. Such ideologies inevitably erode minority identities, making it imperative to implement policies that respect and promote diversity by addressing the prejudices and racist perceptions prevalent within such communities ²⁹.

In times of crisis and political instability, minorities are often excluded from collective bodies and decision-making processes, reinforcing systemic inequalities and limiting their ability to influence the shaping of policies that benefit them. Moreover, in many cases, the exclusion of minorities from the political scene is entrenched through their limited electoral rights and the absence of legal protections against marginalization. Consequently, their limited representation undermines democracy and liberal principles by depriving society of the plurality of perspectives necessary for the formulation of policies based on equality and social justice ³⁰.

5.2.2. Climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters

It is common for minority groups to reside in areas disproportionately vulnerable to climate-related risks, such as coastal zones, drought-prone areas, or ecologically fragile regions. As a result, they are often subjected to environmental degradation and natural disasters. However, their choice of living in these areas was not a result of free will or preference, but of necessity, stemming from their marginalization and exclusion from wealthier, more developed regions. Consequently, minorities frequently face rising sea levels, droughts, and extreme weather events, which deprive them of access to essential resources for survival and hinder their societal development, preventing them from integrating into more developed societal models ³¹.

In the aftermath of natural disasters, minority communities often encounter systemic barriers to accessing recovery assistance. Discrimination and logistical challenges exacerbate these inequalities, leaving minorities at a disadvantage. For instance, according to official statements

²⁹ *Populism, Nationalism, and Nationalist Populism. Studies in Comparative International Development.* Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12116-021-09337-6> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

³⁰ The role of minority discrimination and political participation in shaping majority perceptions of discrimination: Two cross-national studies
. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/13684302221075711> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

³¹ BBC (2022) *Why climate change is inherently racist.* Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220125-why-climate-change-is-inherently-racist> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



from the Dalit community in India, during cyclones and floods, they were denied entry to emergency shelters and thus suffered without state support or welfare. This highlights how such discrimination not only accelerates the recovery of the majority at the expense of minorities, undermining basic principles of equality and social solidarity, but also limits the possibility for minorities to actively participate in the planning and execution of response and recovery strategies ³².

Environmental degradation and natural disasters also often lead to the deterioration of the cultural heritage of minorities, a key element of their identity and survival over time. In addition to being disadvantaged in terms of restoration and recovery, it is important to recognize that much of their daily lives are centered on primary sector work, which is heavily impacted by various natural disasters ³³. This is particularly true for indigenous communities, who identify as the "first peoples." The loss of ancestral land represents not only economic hardship but also profound cultural erosion. For example, coastal minorities in Bangladesh are witnessing the loss of cultural rituals due to rising sea levels, which are forcing them to separate from their ancestral customs. As a result, younger generations are increasingly disconnected from their heritage ³⁴.

Despite being disproportionately affected by climate change for the reasons mentioned above, minorities are often excluded from climate policy-making processes, both at the national and international levels. Global agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, rarely prioritize the needs of minorities, resulting in their marginalization and exclusion from key policy decisions. For example, international discussions have often overlooked the demands of Indigenous peoples for the recognition of their land rights, and as a result, most policies fail to consider the unique requirements of the most vulnerable groups. Achieving fair and sustainable outcomes in

³² Singh, M. (2023) 'Understanding the impact of climate change on Dalits and marginalised communities', *Outlook India*, 25 June. Available at: <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/understanding-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-dalits-and-marginalised-communities-harder-news-297864> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

³³ United Nations (n.d.) *Climate change and indigenous peoples*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/climate-change.html> (Accessed: 7 February 2025).

³⁴ UNDP Climate Promise (2024) 'Indigenous knowledge is crucial in the fight against climate change – here's why'. Available at: <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/indigenous-knowledge-crucial-fight-against-climate-change-heres-why> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



climate policy requires meaningful representation of minorities, which presents a significant challenge for contemporary societies ³⁵.

5.2.3. Discrimination and marginalization

Structural and systemic discrimination is deeply embedded in legal and institutional frameworks that deny minorities access to basic rights, reinforcing exclusionary practices, marginalization, and racism. Due to social and systemic barriers, minorities often live with the burden of social stigma, enduring restrictive laws, discriminatory government practices, and pervasive bias. For instance, in many modern societies, there are laws that not only deny citizenship to indigenous peoples but also refuse to recognize their right to own land, leaving them in a state of legal statelessness and partial jurisdiction. These restrictive frameworks entrench inequalities, perpetuate poverty, and limit access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and employment ³⁶.

One of the most pressing issues faced by minorities in the modern world is social exclusion, which manifests as cultural stigma, reinforcing prejudices and perpetuating stereotypes regarding their ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities. Due to their diversity, minority groups are often viewed as a threat to social cohesion, order, and prosperity, intensifying feelings of marginalization and exclusion from public life. For example, Roma communities in Europe frequently encounter widespread discrimination due to their distinct characteristics, hindering their ability to integrate into the broader society. As a result, they are often isolated in segregated neighborhoods and settlements with limited opportunities. This segregation severely impacts social cohesion, undermining multiculturalism and reinforcing racist and stereotypical perceptions within public opinion ³⁷.

³⁵ UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab (n.d.) 'Marginalized groups and disadvantages in climate change effects'. Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/e-teams/climate-justice/discussions/marginalized-groups-and-disadvantages-climate-change-effects> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

³⁶ Venice Commission (2007) *Report on non-citizens and minority rights*. Available at: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2007\)001-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2007)001-e) (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

³⁷ European Parliament (2020) 'Roma: what discrimination do they face and what does EU do?', *European Parliament*, 18 September. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20200918STO87401/roma-what-discrimination-do-they-face-and-what-does-eu-do> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



In addition to social exclusion, minorities are also subjected to economic marginalization, which often results in unemployment, low-paid work, and labor exploitation. Prevailing stereotypes about the labor efficiency, skills, and knowledge of minorities often place them in inferior positions within the workforce, leading to adversity and job demotion³⁸. Furthermore, in addition to being underpaid for their long hours of labor, minorities are often forced to work under unsafe conditions that jeopardize their health and physical integrity. Cases of illegal or child labor are not uncommon, as minorities become victims of exploitation in order to meet their basic livelihood needs³⁹.

5.4 Cultural and Identity Protection

In general, forced displacement poses a significant threat to the protection of cultural heritage and identity. In many cases, minority groups lose the opportunity to share their unique cultural heritage, dialects, and religious systems with host communities. Safeguarding the cultural heritage and identity of ethnic, linguistic, religious, and other social groups is critical to prevent cultural erosion and the extinction of these vital elements.

One of the primary challenges posed by forced displacement is the fragmentation of minority communities. Cultural and identity protection is essential to preserving historical heritage and the traditions of displaced populations. Ethnic minorities, in particular, have historically preserved their unique cultural identities by transmitting knowledge, rituals, and customs to future generations. However, forced displacement has disrupted this practice, causing many families and communities to lose their connection not only to their homeland but also to their cultural heritage. Indigenous people are especially affected, as they are often not recognized as the "first people" in the areas they are resettled. For example, indigenous tribes in the Amazon

³⁸ Panter, E.R.E. (2017) 'Economic marginalization of minorities: Do laws provide the needed protections?', *World Bank Blogs*, 1 May. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/psd/economic-marginalization-minorities-do-laws-provide-needed-protections> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

³⁹ Justino, P. and Litchfield, J. (2003) *Economic exclusion and discrimination: The experiences of minorities and indigenous peoples*. London: Minority Rights Group International. Available at: <https://minorityrights.org/resources/economic-exclusion-and-discrimination-the-experiences-of-minorities-and-indigenous-peoples/> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



were displaced due to deforestation and resource exploitation, distancing them from their sacred lands, spiritual practices, and cultural customs ⁴⁰.

Another critical challenge is the loss of language, particularly native dialects and idioms among linguistic minorities. Displaced linguistic communities often face communication barriers in host countries or refugee camps, leading them to adopt the dominant language as a way to mitigate socio-economic exclusion. This further threatens the intergenerational transmission of their native dialects. UNESCO has highlighted that nearly 40% of the world's languages are endangered, many of which are spoken by linguistic minorities facing challenges in maintaining their native tongues ⁴¹.

Religious suppression also poses a significant threat to cultural and identity protection. After displacement, many populations lose access to sacred spaces and face difficulties practicing their religious traditions in host communities. As they adapt to new environments, they may lose connection with their customs, and religion becomes less recognized as a cornerstone of their cultural identity. For instance, after the genocidal campaigns of ISIS, Yazidis faced immense challenges in practicing their religious traditions due to the destruction of sacred sites, leaving them vulnerable to assimilation or alienation.

Displaced minorities are frequently marginalized and racially discriminated against, which discourages them from expressing their cultural and religious identity. This social stigma further isolates them, hindering their efforts to rebuild social cohesion based on their cultural heritage. Since the preservation of cultural, linguistic, and religious identity is vital for maintaining multiculturalism, it is essential to promote global diversity and strengthen resilience in affected communities. Protecting the cultural and identity rights of displaced minorities helps safeguard their traditions, dialects, customs, and religious rituals from erosion. Moreover, protecting their heritage enables them to retain a sense of their homeland, enhance

⁴⁰ Minority Rights Group International (2016) *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2016: Focus on culture and heritage*. Available at: <https://minorityrights.org/culture-and-heritage/> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

⁴¹ UNESCO (2008) *The International Year of Languages: languages matter!*. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000181367> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



social cohesion, and pass on their customs to future generations, even in unfamiliar or hostile environments.

Several international frameworks and initiatives have been established to address the threat of cultural and identity loss among displaced minorities. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted in 2007, outlines 46 articles that emphasize the rights of Indigenous peoples and the obligation of host states to respect and protect those rights. This document is pivotal in promoting the self-determination of Indigenous communities and advocating for the protection of their cultural heritage, traditions, religious practices, and customs. Similarly, the UN General Assembly ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1966 to ensure equal protection of human rights for all, without discrimination. Article 27 specifically protects the rights of minorities to enjoy their culture, religion, and language. The 1951 Refugee Convention also underscores the importance of preserving the cultural rights of displaced people, in addition to safeguarding their refugee status.

International organizations, such as UNESCO, also play a crucial role in preserving the cultural identity of displaced minorities, particularly through educational programs aimed at revitalizing languages at risk of extinction.

Despite these efforts, the existing mechanisms to safeguard the cultural and identity rights of displaced minorities are still inadequate. It is therefore essential to develop and implement more comprehensive measures. These should include coordinated action plans from governments, international organizations, and humanitarian agencies to provide culturally sensitive aid, promote education in native languages, and protect sacred sites and traditions. By taking these measures, the international community can not only preserve the heritage and dignity of displaced minorities but also enhance their resilience and social cohesion in host communities.



5.5 Responsibilities of the Host and Transit Countries

The forced displacement of populations is one of the most pressing and contemporary global issues. Millions of individuals, primarily minorities, are compelled to flee their homes due to persecution, violence, or human rights violations. Reception and transit countries play a critical role in safeguarding these refugees and ensuring their rights in accordance with international treaties and human rights standards.

Responsibilities of Host Countries

Host countries bear the primary responsibility for the protection and reception of refugees and displaced minorities. Under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, host countries are obligated to provide asylum and protection to refugees and must refrain from returning them to countries where their lives or freedom would be at risk (UNHCR, 2011). The principle of non-refoulement is a cornerstone of international refugee law, ensuring that refugees are not returned to situations of danger or persecution.

The primary responsibility of host countries is to grant access to asylum procedures. Refugees must be allowed to apply for asylum, with their applications being processed fairly and within a reasonable timeframe. In addition, host countries must ensure the provision of basic services such as healthcare, education, and housing without discrimination based on ethnic origin, religion, or any other status.

Equally important is the fostering of social integration for refugees. This includes offering initiatives such as language acquisition programs, vocational training, and access to employment opportunities, which are essential to preventing social exclusion and marginalization (Hathaway, 2005). Furthermore, host countries should actively work to facilitate the integration of refugees into their societies by creating opportunities for meaningful social and professional interactions with local communities. This requires the implementation



of policies designed to strengthen social cohesion and avoid the escalation of social tensions or the emergence of new forms of marginalization⁴².

Responsibilities of Transit Countries⁴³

Transit countries, through which refugees travel from their countries of origin to their final destinations, also bear significant responsibilities. While these countries may not be the ultimate destination for refugees, their role in ensuring protection is equally critical. Transit countries must ensure the safe passage of refugees and protect them from risks such as violence, exploitation, and forced labor.

The primary responsibility of transit countries is to guarantee the safety of refugees during their journey. This includes refraining from detention except when absolutely necessary and in accordance with international law, ensuring that detention is only used as a last resort and for the shortest possible duration (UNHCR, 2012). Furthermore, transit countries must cooperate with international organizations, such as the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to ensure the protection of refugees throughout their transit. This cooperation can involve providing temporary accommodation, offering humanitarian assistance, and ensuring the free and safe movement of refugees.

Additionally, transit countries must facilitate the ability of refugees to apply for asylum at their final destination without facing threats to their lives or freedom during the process. Protection against **refoulement** and cooperation with international organizations to implement these responsibilities are essential to upholding their rights.

Cooperation and International Support

The responsibilities of host and transit countries cannot be effectively fulfilled without international cooperation. The protection of refugees requires coordinated action and

⁴² Phuong, Catherine. " Identifying States' Responsibilities towards Refugees and Asylum Seekers." University of Newcastle, UK, (n.d.)

⁴³ Kilibarda, Pavle. " Obligations of Transit Countries under Refugee Law: A Western Balkans Case Study." International Review of the Red Cross 99, no. 1 (2017): 211–239. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383118000188> (Accessed: 8 February 2025)



collaboration among states and international organizations. Institutions such as the UNHCR, IOM, and various NGOs play a pivotal role in supporting these countries by providing resources, expertise, and technical assistance to ensure the implementation of international law and the safeguarding of refugees' rights⁴⁴.

Simultaneously, the international community must work to address the root causes of forced displacements such as armed conflict, human rights violations, and climate change—to reduce the necessity of forced migration in the first place. Only through a collaborative, holistic approach can the challenges faced by refugees be effectively addressed and mitigated.

5.6 Case Studies

5.6.1 Syria

The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, is indeed a prominent example of a large-scale crisis that led to the displacement of millions of people, including various ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. These displaced individuals, many of whom were already vulnerable due to historical discrimination, faced numerous challenges, including dire living conditions, exploitation, and the erosion of their cultural identities⁴⁵.

The war's political repression, economic instability, and rise of extremist groups like ISIS exacerbated the vulnerability of minorities, particularly the Kurds, Christians, Druze, and Yazidis, who were targeted for their beliefs and ethnic backgrounds. The displacement crisis continues to affect millions, with refugees fleeing to neighboring countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and others, often living in overcrowded and under-resourced camps. The lack of legal protection and the desperation caused by limited economic opportunities

⁴⁴ Hathaway, C, James (2005) “The Rights of Refugees under International Law”. University of Michigan. Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/rights-of-refugees-under-international-law/1D1B37200D80D23C727BE17711FB14FD> (Accessed: 8 February 2025)

⁴⁵ Britannica (n.d.) 'Syrian Civil War'. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



made many displaced minorities vulnerable to exploitation, including human trafficking and forced labor⁴⁶.

In addition to these hardships, displaced minorities often faced racial discrimination, xenophobia, and social exclusion, further hindering their ability to integrate into host communities. Their cultural and religious practices were suppressed, and many traditions and languages were at risk of being lost. The crisis created a hostile environment for minorities, forcing them to abandon significant parts of their identities in order to survive and adapt to the new challenges they faced.

The Syrian Civil War serves as a tragic example of how conflict and displacement can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, leading to further human rights violations and cultural erosion for minority groups.

5.6.2 Gaza / Palestine

The situation in Gaza, particularly regarding forced displacement, has indeed been a longstanding and ongoing crisis that has affected millions of Palestinians over several decades. The displacement began with the Nakba in 1948, which led to the forced exodus of over 750,000 Palestinians due to violence and massacres during the Arab-Israeli War. The displacement continued through subsequent conflicts, such as the Six-Day War in 1967, which further displaced Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank⁴⁷.

Most recently, the escalation in October 2023, which involved significant violence between Hamas and Israel, resulted in the displacement of over 1.4 million Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. These displaced individuals, many of whom had already experienced displacement in

⁴⁶ Mebrahtu, S. (2016) 'In Syria, children's courage for education offers hope amid grim realities', *UNICEF*, 25 July. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/stories/syria-childrens-courage-education-offers-hope-amid-grim-realities> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch (2024) '*Hopeless, Starving, and Besieged*': Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in Gaza. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/11/14/hopeless-starving-and-besieged/israels-forced-displacement-palestinians-gaza> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



earlier conflicts, were once again forced to flee their homes under horrific conditions, with the destruction of vital infrastructure like homes, schools, and hospitals ⁴⁸.

The vast majority of displaced Palestinians found refuge in neighboring countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. However, these refugees face ongoing challenges, including legal restrictions on employment, limited access to public services, and economic hardships, which keep them trapped in cycles of poverty and marginalization. Additionally, issues like child labor ⁴⁹ and human trafficking have become more pronounced in the context of the prolonged humanitarian crisis.

The social stigma faced by these displaced minorities in host countries further complicates their situation, as their cultural and religious differences often lead to exclusion and discrimination. Despite efforts from international organizations like UNICEF and the ILO, the scale of the crisis remains overwhelming, with limited resources and weak law enforcement impeding efforts to address these urgent issues ⁵⁰.

The crisis in Gaza underscores the need for enhanced international cooperation to address the complex and multifaceted problems faced by displaced minorities. Efforts should focus on ensuring the protection, dignity, and future of displaced Palestinians, promoting social integration, and providing the necessary resources for long-term recovery and resilience.

5.7. Relevant stakeholders

5.7.1 UN mechanisms on protecting minorities

1. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

⁴⁸ UNRWA (n.d.) 'Jordan'. Available at: <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

⁴⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2019) 'Child labour increasing in Gaza'. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/child-labour-increasing-gaza> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

⁵⁰ UNICEF (2022) 'Fifteen years of the blockade of the Gaza Strip'. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/fifteen-years-blockade-gaza-strip> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



The UNHCR is the lead agency dedicated to refugee protection and provides humanitarian assistance to displaced minorities, including shelter, food, and medical care. It is vital in ensuring that refugees and other displaced people have their rights protected under international law, particularly the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. UNHCR also promotes legal protection for minorities and advocates for equal opportunities, including access to education and employment, which is essential for the social and economic integration of refugees into host societies ⁵¹.

2. UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)

UNICEF is crucial for the protection of children, particularly displaced children. It focuses on providing essential services, such as access to education, health care, and clean water. Additionally, UNICEF works to protect children from exploitation, including child labor and human trafficking. Through its educational programs, UNICEF ensures that displaced children, especially those from minority groups, maintain connections to their cultural heritage by supporting native language education and promoting emotional recovery from trauma ⁵².

3. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

CERD works under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, monitoring the implementation of anti-discrimination measures by states. It is an essential body for addressing issues such as racial discrimination against minorities, including displaced populations. CERD's role includes reviewing reports from states, issuing recommendations, and providing a platform for individuals to file complaints of racial discrimination. It plays a critical role in fostering racial equality and protection for vulnerable minorities, particularly in contexts of displacement ⁵³.

⁵¹ UNHCR (n.d.) *The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) official website*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

⁵² Wikipedia (n.d.) *UNICEF*. Available at: <https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNICEF> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)

⁵³ OHCHR (n.d.) *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)*. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cerd> (Accessed: 7 February 2025)



5.7.2 International Cooperation

1. *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*

The OSCE is instrumental in Europe in safeguarding national minorities, especially those displaced due to conflict. Through its High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), it oversees the living conditions of minorities in OSCE member states, intervening to prevent human rights violations. The OSCE also runs monitoring missions in conflict zones to report on the conditions of displaced populations, focusing on preventing human rights violations and fostering dialogue between minority communities and governments. The OSCE's role in public awareness campaigns and educational programs is crucial to fighting racism and promoting minority rights⁵⁴.

2. *European Union (EU)*

The EU plays a significant role in protecting displaced people, through frameworks like the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It ensures that the rights of minorities are upheld and that displaced persons receive the necessary support from member states. The EU's financial mechanisms, such as the Refugee Initiatives program, provide assistance to member states in managing displacement crises, while the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) delivers humanitarian aid to those in need⁵⁵.

3. *Council of Europe (CoE)*

The Council of Europe has established vital legal frameworks for protecting minorities, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities⁵⁶. The European Charter for Regional and Minority

⁵⁴ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). "Role of the OSCE in Protecting Minorities Against Forced Displacement". (Accessed January 6, 2025). <https://www.osce.org/minorities>.

⁵⁵ European Union, External Action Service. (2023) "Migration and Forced Displacement". (Accessed January 6, 2025). https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/migration-forced-displacement_en

⁵⁶ Council of Europe. *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1995.



Languages⁵⁷ ensures the preservation of linguistic heritage and guarantees the use of minority languages in public life. The CoE also monitors human rights violations through its European Committee Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)⁵⁸ and other monitoring bodies.

4. International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The IOM, part of the UN system, is dedicated to providing humanitarian aid to displaced populations and supporting the resettlement of refugees. It collaborates with national governments for the repatriation or resettlement of displaced persons to safe areas, and provides legal assistance to help them navigate their rights and options. The IOM also raises awareness about minority rights through educational programs, helping integrate displaced minorities back into society and prevent further exploitation⁵⁹.

These international bodies collectively address the multifaceted challenges faced by displaced minorities. Their combined efforts are vital for ensuring that refugees and displaced persons are protected and supported through humanitarian aid, legal assistance, and integration programs. As highlighted in your text, cooperation between these organizations and national governments is essential to safeguard the dignity and rights of displaced populations and to ensure they are not marginalized or exploited during their difficult journeys.

6. Legal Framework

1. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (A/RES/47/135).

On December 18, 1992, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992

⁵⁷ Council of Europe. *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1992

⁵⁸ Council of Europe. *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI): Mandate and Activities*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe

⁵⁹ International Organization for Migration (IOM). "Protecting Minorities from Forced Displacement." Accessed January 6, 2025. <https://www.iom.int>.



Declaration) by consensus. Although this document is not legally binding for member states, it remains the only UN soft law instrument entirely devoted to minority rights. According to the 1992 Declaration, the rights of minorities are under the protection of the states. Furthermore, states are encouraged to create a favorable environment for the protection of minority identities.

Additionally, while the 1992 Declaration does not explicitly address the collective rights of minorities, the UN Working Group on Minorities has suggested that, in certain cases, states may best fulfill their obligations to minorities through arrangements for autonomy in religious, linguistic, or broader cultural matters (ECN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2005/2). Article 2 of the 1992 Declaration outlines a broad range of rights for members of minorities, which can be characterized as a call for proactive measures by states. In summary, Article 2 calls for the protection and promotion of each minority's culture, religion, and language (both privately and publicly) without interference. Moreover, it guarantees the right to assembly and association, as well as the freedom to establish peaceful contacts with others, both within and outside of the minority group.

Finally, the 1992 Declaration operates on two levels. First, it seeks to protect the identity of each minority group. Second, it aims to combat fundamentalism and the isolation of closed ethnic groups. For instance, although minorities have the right to express their cultural and religious identities, any practice that violates national or international law—such as female genital mutilation—should be prohibited, and states are required to take action.

2. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (A/RES/61/295)

On September 13, 2007, after two decades of negotiations between governments and representatives of indigenous peoples, the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Declaration was adopted with 144 votes in favor, 11 abstentions, and 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA). Since then, several countries, including the four that initially opposed it, have changed their positions.



The Declaration considers the protection and promotion of the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples. It establishes a foundation for safeguarding their cultural identity, ensuring non-discriminatory access to education and healthcare, and enabling them to pursue their social, economic, and business interests. The UNDRIP serves as a universal framework and is considered the most comprehensive instrument on the rights of indigenous peoples, as it outlines minimum criteria for the recognition, protection, and promotion of these rights. Like all UN General Assembly Declarations, it is not legally binding on member states.

3. United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

On December 21, 1965, the United Nations General Assembly established the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The Convention entered into force four years later. As one of the oldest instruments of the UN Human Rights Office, the ICERD remains central to international law concerning the protection of the right against discrimination. The ICERD primarily focuses on defining and prohibiting racial discrimination in all areas of public and private life, as well as combating hate speech and prejudice. States that have ratified the Convention are required to outlaw racial discrimination and fulfill its objectives through legislation, educational initiatives, and, in some cases, prosecutions. They must also harmonize their legal systems with the Convention's articles. Additionally, the ICERD establishes its own supervisory authority, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, an international body of experts tasked with overseeing member states' compliance with the Convention. Member states are obligated to submit written reports to the Committee detailing their progress in achieving the ICERD's goals. During reviews, the Committee can pose questions and examine government officials. Furthermore, the Committee's work has expanded the protection offered by the Convention to include groups not explicitly mentioned, such as women, indigenous peoples, the Roma, Dalits, and non-citizens, including refugees.

4. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security



Resolution 1325, focusing on women, peace, and security, was adopted by the UN Security Council on October 31, 2000. This Resolution emphasizes the critical role of women in preventing conflicts, fostering peaceful environments, providing humanitarian responses, and supporting post-conflict rebuilding efforts. It also underscores the importance of women's equal participation in all peace and security initiatives, urging all actors to promote their involvement in UN peace and security efforts by integrating gender perspectives into policy-making processes. In conflict-affected states, the Resolution calls for measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence and sexual abuse. Furthermore, Resolution 1325 includes operational mandates that affect both member states and various UN entities. To ensure efficient coordination among UN agencies and the successful implementation of the Resolution, the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Women, Peace, and Security was established. This Taskforce includes representatives from several UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

5. UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/147

Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law" (hereinafter referred to as "the Principles and Guidelines") in 2005. These Principles and Guidelines aim to address impunity for serious human rights violations, protect victims, and ensure effective reparation measures. The Resolution can be divided into two main sections. The first focuses on the obligations of states and the consequences they may face for gross or serious violations of international human rights law. These obligations include preventing violations, investigating, prosecuting, and punishing perpetrators, as well as providing full reparation to victims. The second section outlines the status and rights of victims in seeking remedies and reparations,



with strong implications for national legal frameworks. These rights can be categorized into five areas:

- Restitution – measures aimed at restoring the victim to their original situation prior to the violation.
- Compensation – provided for damages, in proportion to the severity of the violation.
- Rehabilitation – access to medical and psychological care, as well as legal and social services.
- Satisfaction – a range of measures designed to ensure the cessation of violations, truth-seeking, judicial and administrative sanctions, and guarantees of non-repetition.

Guarantees of non-repetition – structural policy and institutional reforms aimed at preventing future violations.

6. The 1951 Refugee Convention

The 1951 Refugee Convention, officially known as the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, is a cornerstone of international law protecting the rights of refugees and defining the obligations of states toward them. Adopted on July 28, 1951, in the aftermath of World War II, the Convention provides a universal definition of a "refugee" as a person who has fled their country due to persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or natural disaster. The Convention also outlines the fundamental rights of refugees, including access to education, healthcare, and public services on an equal basis with nationals.

7. Conclusion

Forced displacement of minorities is a persistent and significant phenomenon throughout world history, and remains one of the greatest challenges for the international community. Minorities, regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, religious, or social dimensions, are often subjected to discrimination and marginalization, resulting in the loss of identity and cultural heritage. This



study examines the root causes of forced displacement, the responsibilities of host and transit countries, and the potential for international cooperation.

Minorities encounter numerous challenges during and after displacement. In regions governed by authoritarian regimes or political instability, minorities are often perceived as obstacles to progress, with efforts made to homogenize society. Conflicts create conditions conducive to persecution and widespread marginalization. Additionally, minorities residing in vulnerable areas are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, which contribute to the loss of both cultural and economic resources. The lack of minority participation in policymaking processes further exacerbates their plight. Institutional discrimination, limited political representation, and social prejudice intensify the isolation of minorities and restrict their access to basic rights.

Forced displacement poses a grave threat to the preservation of minority identities. The loss of language, religious practices, and cultural heritage underscores the urgent need for international protection and educational measures to safeguard traditions.

International treaties and declarations form the foundation for the protection of minorities. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Minorities (1992) promotes the preservation of minority identities; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) provides tools to combat racism; and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) enshrines the collective rights and identity of indigenous peoples.

In conclusion, forced displacement is a complex, multifaceted issue that demands coordinated international action. Effective strategies should focus on legal protections, integration in host countries, and the promotion of cultural diversity. Through such efforts, the international community can ensure the sustainability of minority communities and the strengthening of their rights.



8. Points to be addressed

1. What measures should the United Nations member states implement to address systematic discrimination against ethnic minorities and Indigenous people?
2. How should the United Nations member states and mechanisms help stateless people?
3. In which ways and measures can the United Nations member -states contribute to minorities to preserve their traditions and avoid cultural and linguistic erosion?
4. What are the main causes of forced displacement of minorities? How can the United Nations respond?
5. How can the United Nations member States protect minorities from political instability and especially from authoritarian regimes?
6. How does climate change affect minority communities and why? What could be done to assist and ensure equal restoration of the minorities in case of climate catastrophe ?
7. How could we achieve the political representation of minorities to their host countries?
8. Which mechanisms and how could aid victims of Middle East crises before and after their displacement?



9. How can the United Nations cooperate with other international organizations in combating forced displacement and assisting the minorities in conflict -affected areas?

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