

REFUGEES V MIGRANTS - READING ACTIVITY. PART 1

UNHCR viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant' – Which is right?

With more than 65 million people forced to move globally and boat crossings of the Mediterranean still regularly in the headlines, the terms 'refugee' and 'migrant' are frequently used together. But is there a difference between the two, and does it matter?

Yes, there is a difference, and it does matter. The two terms have distinct and different meanings, and confusing them leads to problems for both populations.

Here's why:

Refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution. There were 21.3 million of them worldwide at the end of 2015. Their situation is often so dangerous that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as "refugees" with access to assistance from States, UNHCR, and other organizations. They are so recognized precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they need sanctuary elsewhere. These are people for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences.

Adapted from UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency

<http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>

REFUGEES V MIGRANTS - READING ACTIVITY. PART 2

Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The [1951 Refugee Convention](#) and its 1967 Protocol as well as other legal texts are the most important documents for protecting refugees.

The 1951 Convention defines who is a refugee and outlines the basic rights which States should afford to refugees. One of the most important principles laid down in international law is that refugees should not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom would be under threat.

The protection of refugees has many aspects such as safety from being returned to the dangers they have fled; access to asylum procedures that are fair and efficient; and measures to ensure that their basic human rights are respected to allow them to live in dignity and safety while helping them to find a longer-term solution.

The UNHCR works closely with governments, advising and supporting them as needed to live up to their responsibilities of protecting refugees.

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Migrants choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such problem. If they choose to return home, they will continue to be protected by their government.

This distinction is important. Countries deal with migrants under their own immigration laws and processes. Countries deal with refugees through norms of refugee protection and asylum that are defined in both national legislation and international law. Countries have specific responsibilities towards anyone seeking asylum on their territories or at their borders.

We need to treat all human beings with respect and dignity. We need to ensure that the human rights of migrants are respected. At the same time, we also need to provide an appropriate legal response for refugees, because of their particular situation.

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Direct provision is a system in Ireland whereby asylum seekers (parents and children) are given accommodation by the State in a centre. The aim of Direct Provision is intended to provide for the welfare of asylum seekers and their families as they await decisions on their asylum application.

Direct Provision 'directly provides' essential services, medical care and accommodation and board with three meals a day provided at set times. The Direct Provision system is overseen by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), a body of the Department of Justice, however the majority of the 35 centres around the country are privately owned and operated, and the standards of accommodation and living conditions vary widely.

The Direct Provision system has been very heavily criticised by those living in it and others. Families are not allowed to cook for themselves. They must eat the food provided at specific times. Families are given a small amount of money. This money must be used for non-essential items such as school uniforms, clothes, books, transport costs, toiletries etc.

Most reception centres have very few play facilities and families live in small spaces, such as caravans or hotel rooms. Some are in remote areas with few shops or facilities nearby. Until 2017 people in Direct Provision were not allowed to work. This is being examined by the government and it is hoped that this will change very soon. While primary and secondary education is free for children in Direct Provision, they are not allowed to go to third level unless they can pay.

When the Direct Provision system was established in 2000, it was described as a short-term solution to the high numbers of asylum seekers entering the State in search of protection. Over 17 years later, very little has changed in the physical conditions, supports or treatment of asylum seekers while they remain in these centres. One third of all asylum seekers (around 2000 people) living in Direct Provision in Ireland are children. The amount of time that families spend in this system can range from less than one year to seven years.

Refugee v Migrants. Reading Activity – Questions

Work with the other students in your group to find answers to the following questions by using the information in the sections that you all read.

1. How many people are forced to move globally?
2. What is the definition of a **refugee**?
3. How many refugees were there at the end of 2015?
4. Why can refugees not return home?
5. Which Conventions protect refugees?
6. Name two ways that refugees need to be protected.
7. Mention three reasons why a **migrant** might move country?
8. What is the main difference between a refugee and migrant?
9. Mention three facts about conditions in Direct Provision
10. What are two of the main problems with Direct Provision?

Minahil's Blog

1. Listen carefully to Minahil speak and then write down:-

Three things you learned

Two things you found interesting

One question you still have

2. Listen to Minahil again. As you listen, complete the sentences below:

Home is...
Sometimes we don't realise that...
Try to make refugees feel at home because...