

# Consequences and cause of refugees essay sample

War



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Refugees are persons who have fled their country or been expelled from it and cannot or will not return, because of natural catastrophe, war or military occupation, or fear of religious, racial, or political persecution.

Although refugees have existed throughout human history, the problem has assumed more importance in the 20th century. It is estimated that more than one hundred million persons have left their home country, since the outbreak of World War II. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees, the outstanding world refugee total exceeded twenty-six million in 1996.

Deprived of the protection of their state, often detached from their families and communities of origin, refugees are, by any definition, particularly vulnerable to violence. Refugee women and their children, along with the elderly, are the most vulnerable.

Due to disruptions before, during and after flight (or whatever means of travel), the traditional family structure of many refugees is upset. Husbands, brothers, fathers and sons; who normally contribute to the care and protection of their families; are often absent fighting in wars or seeking better work prospects. Others may have been killed or separated from their families in the excitement of flight. As a consequence, a large number of refugee women find themselves as single heads of households. These women often risk ill treatment and exploitation as they assume the responsibilities of caring, alone, for their families. Their problems are exacerbated when they cannot find any legal form of work. So they turn to prostitution or other illegal activities, in order to support their families.

Refugees are also faced with the problem of what country to migrate to. America, being the number one choice of destination, intercepts thousands of refugees every year. When intercepted, these refugees are placed in a detention camp and held until they can be sent back to their country of origin. A detention camp can hold twenty to forty people at a time, but because of the growing number of refugees, these “ camps” are usually overcrowded and unkempt. Refugees also cost the government millions of dollars every year in labor, transport and food. Frequently, refugee camps are used as convenient recruitment grounds for child soldiers, and even, occasionally, and quite illegally, as training centers. In the former Rwandan camps in Eastern Zaire, between 1994 and 1996, this activity went on quite horribly. Fighting can seem attractive to these little boys, who may think it is better to become a soldier than to sit at home being frightened and helpless. Some children also join, so that they will receive food, clothing and shelter, but children who are soldiers miss out on their education.

This may prevent them finding work afterwards. Some child soldiers are also rejected by their families after a war and have to live alone. If we really consider the plight of these people, such as, the Bosnians, who are unable to safely return to their homes and remain stranded in Germany and Croatia; the Russian Jews who face a rising tide of anti-Semitism; the Burmese, who for years languished in camps along the Thai border; the Afghan women, along the border of Pakistan who fear repression under the Taliban; the Iraqis scattered throughout the Middle-East following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait; Somali Bantus who have been confined for as many as ten years in camps in Kenya and the Vietnamese, who worked with the American

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government during the Vietnam war, we would realize that refugees are victims of many circumstances and that we should help them in any way we can.

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