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18TH – 19TH JUNE 2019
BERLIN



Concept Note

THE OTHER 1 PERCENT - REFUGEES AT INSTITUTIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION WORLDWIDE

1 Context

Globally, 68.5 million individuals have been forced from their home – either displaced within their home country or living in exile as refugees. Among them are 19.9 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, approximately half of whom are children.

When it comes to accessing quality education, refugee youth confront numerous obstacles ranging from lack of funds and cultural barriers to distance and legal restrictions. As a result, low retention along the education continuum leads to a consistent decline in school enrolment: Only 23 per cent of refugee youth are enrolled in secondary school, compared to 84 per cent worldwide. Even fewer students make it to university or other higher education institutions, with **only one per cent of refugees enrolled in tertiary education, compared to 37 per cent of young people worldwide**. Those who do access higher learning are examples of perseverance and talent in the face of challenging conditions and limited opportunities.

Achieving equal access to education for refugees at all levels requires sustainable, long-term investment in national education systems and planning. But, there are some obstacles that can and should be overcome more readily. The most visible barrier to higher education are direct costs; many refugees are unable to overcome the financial burden. To be eligible for university or other tertiary opportunities, students are routinely required to show proof of prior education or completion; circumstances of flight and refugee life means that many refugees have left behind or lost their education documentation. Even when documents are available, qualifications earned in another country may not be recognized by or regarded as equivalent in the host country system. These and other barriers should be remedied in order to recognize refugees' unique situations and facilitate greater access to all levels of education.

The **Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI)** is a scholarship programme that has been expanding access for refugees to earn a higher education degree since 1992. The German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) is the main funding partner. Over the past decades, it has ensured that UNHCR has been able to respond to increasing demands for higher education for refugees. **Today, more than 15,500 young refugee women and men in 51 countries have been able to pursue their higher education with the support of a DAFI scholarship.** Other scholarship programmes, inclusion in national education systems and innovative Connected Learning opportunities, initiated by host governments, universities, private partners and organizations, have each contributed to increasing the number of refugees with access to higher education.



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Another initiative, with a regional focus, is the [HOPES project](#).¹ HOPES (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians) is a 12 million Euro intervention funded by the European Union's Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund'. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the British Council, Campus France and Nuffic² implement the project. It aims at improving prospects for refugees and young people in the host communities affected by the high influx of Syrian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey and contributing to the preparation of the post-crisis reconstruction of Syria.

Reflecting the joint commitment to ease pressures on host countries, improve international cooperation to find sustainable solutions to refugee situations and enhance refugee self-reliance, the international community adopted the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) in December 2018. The Global Compact acknowledges that education and recognition of qualifications can increase the chances of young refugees and their families having an independent working life and can reduce dependence on humanitarian aid. However, with only about one per cent of refugees enrolled in higher education worldwide further action is needed to harness the potential of education to help achieve greater self-reliance and resilience for young refugees.

Box 1: Global Compact on Refugees, December 2018

Core Objectives

- ease pressures on host countries;
- enhance refugee self-reliance;
- expand access to third country solutions;
- support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

The global compact seeks to achieve these four interlinked and interdependent objectives through the mobilization of political will, a broadened base of support, and arrangements that facilitate more equitable, sustained and predictable contributions among States and other relevant stakeholders.

Commitment to Higher Education

In line with national education laws, policies and planning, and in support of host countries, States and relevant stakeholders will contribute resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality and inclusiveness of national education systems to facilitate access by refugee and host community children (both boys and girls), adolescents and youth to primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Source: [Global Compact on Refugees](#). Dec. 2018, (Section 7; p2 and Section 68; p13).

In December 2019, the first [Global Refugee Forum](#) will be held with the aim to turn the commitments of the Global Compact into [measurable, action-oriented contributions](#) in the following key areas: burden and responsibility-sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, energy and infrastructure, solutions and protection capacity. The first Global Refugee Forum is dedicated to mobilizing [formal pledges and contributions](#) from a wide range of stakeholders such as governments, humanitarian and development actors, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academics, and specific stakeholders such as higher education institutions. The Global Forum will also provide a platform for harnessing good practices and exchange on lessons learned. Subsequent Forums will provide an opportunity not only to make new

¹ Please find more information at <http://www.hopes-madad.org/>

² The Dutch organization for internationalization in education.



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pledges but also to take stock of implementation progress on previous pledges and overall headway towards realizing the objectives of the compact.³

“The Other 1 Percent” conference provides a platform to identify opportunities to measurably expand higher education for young refugees, including through greater inclusion in national education systems and institutions. More precisely, the conference is an opportunity to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss how existing or emerging programmes and partnerships can contribute to achieving fifteen per cent enrolment of young refugee women and men in higher education by 2030. With an array of committed partners, responsive host countries, committed donors and talented, ambitious refugee students, it is evident that access to higher education for more refugees can become a reality. The global affirmation to increase support for refugee hosting countries will provide the foundation for increased higher education enrollment across host countries. Scaling of existing connected learning, TVET and third country education opportunities will complement in-country university enrollment.

Box 2: Global Refugee Forum - Global arrangement for international cooperation

A periodic Global Refugee Forum, at ministerial level, will be convened for all United Nations Member States, together with relevant stakeholders, to announce concrete pledges and contributions towards the objectives of the global compact [...] and to consider opportunities, challenges and ways in which burden- and responsibility-sharing can be enhanced.

Pledges and contributions made at Global Refugee Forums could take different forms, including financial, material and technical assistance; resettlement places and complementary pathways for admission to third countries; as well as other actions that States have elected to take at the national level in support of the objectives of the global compact.

Source: [Global Compact on Refugees](#). Dec. 2018, p. 4.

2 Convening Partners

On the occasion of **World Refugee Day 2019**, the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are co-convening an international expert conference on refugee students in higher education.

The collaboration between the German Government, the DAAD and UNHCR reflects their common vision and longstanding partnerships to help refugee youth realize opportunities for self-reliance for themselves and their communities through higher education. The conference aims to strengthen collaboration between higher education stakeholders in countries where refugees live to ensure that generations of young people do not lose their opportunity to live productive, engaged and independent lives today and in future.

German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)

³ [Global Compact on Refugees](#). Dec. 2018, p. 4.



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With its strong commitment to university education for refugees, the German Government plays a lead role in expanding refugee education worldwide. Having initiated the DAFI programme in 1992, the GFFO is UNHCR's primary partner on DAFI and remains the core funder providing more than 90 per cent of total programme funds today. In 2015, in response to the Syria crisis the GFFO, through the DAAD set up the "[Leadership for Syria](#)" scholarship programme in Germany as well as additional sur-place scholarship programmes for postgrad studies. Overall, the German Government is the second largest bilateral donor to UNHCR and has contributed substantially to the development of the Global Compact on Refugees.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Higher education is a priority for UNHCR and forms an integral part of UNHCR's protection and solutions mandate. The DAFI programme is the longest running and largest single scholarship programmes for refugees and remains the cornerstone of UNHCR's higher education strategy. Since its inception, the DAFI programme has grown considerably, enabling more than 15,000 refugee students to study at universities and colleges in 51 countries of asylum today. Beyond the DAFI programme, UNHCR works to strengthen access to [tertiary education](#) through the important work of the [Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium \(CLCC\)](#), technical and vocational education and training ([TVET](#)) programmes, the establishment of third country scholarships as complementary pathways to protection for refugees, and advocacy with ministries, universities and academia to expand access for refugee students to enter universities in host countries.

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

In collaboration with universities and partner organizations, the DAAD implements various programmes to promote the integration of refugees at German universities.⁴ In 2016, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has allocated 100 million Euro to support these efforts. The two major programmes are the "[Integra - Integration of Refugees in Degree Programmes](#)", which aim to intensively prepare refugees for the rigours of university study and the "[Welcome - Students Helping Refugees](#)", a programme which finances student-initiated projects and mentoring programmes that help refugees gain orientation at university. Between 2015 and 2018 the DAAD together with the Federal State of Nordrhein Westphalia implemented the GFFO funded "[Leadership for Syria](#)" scholarship programme in Germany, which enabled 221 young Syrians to study in Germany. Furthermore, the DAAD supports the implementation of the HOPES project and JOSY (New Perspectives through academic Education and Training for Young Jordanian and Syrians)⁵ which support higher education for refugees in the countries neighbouring Syria.

⁴ For more information on DAAD funding programmes and projects in Germany visit <https://www.daad.de/der-daad/fluechtlinge/en/>

⁵ JOSY is funded through the Federal Ministry for Development and Economic Cooperation and offers scholarships for Jordanians and Syrians. For more information visit the website <http://www.daad-jordan.org/en/>



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3 Conference Objective

The conference marks the growing interest among stakeholders to exchange experiences, information and good practices in refugee higher education. It aims to explore opportunities to expand access to higher education for refugees and ways to invest more effectively in this area. Already, we can build on several successful country and programme experiences, partnerships and innovations in higher education for refugees, some of which will be showcased at the conference.

In panel discussions, workshops and world-café, panellists and participants will *identify good practices, partnership opportunities and possible actions in the areas of financing and partnerships, inclusion and access, research and data, connected learning, internationalization and transition to employment*. These are areas of focus that will contribute to expanding access to higher education for refugee youth over the next ten years.⁶ Participants will also learn from one another about what works in various contexts, how to overcome certain challenges, what can be replicated in other situations, and what can be scaled up with further support. Cumulatively, these exchanges will *inform the preparation of pledges on higher education to be made during the first Global Refugee Forum* in December 2019.⁷

Box 3: Examples of possible GRF pledges in the area of higher education

Possible pledges and good practices in the area of higher education can be made by any stakeholder and in any area related to expanding the access to higher education for refugees. The conference aims to identify good practices and recommended actions that can be translated in concrete pledges before or during the Global Refugee Forum.

Generic examples are:

Access

Remove or reduce fees charged to refugee learners. Ensure refugees access public higher education institutions under the same terms as national students.

Host Government

Connected Learning

Collaborate with connected learning partners to make connected learning accessible to relevant host and refugee students with the appropriate wrap-around support that higher education institutions can provide, such as in the form of counselling, tutoring, career development, etc.

Higher education institution

Funding

Provide funding for refugee students to complete full four year degree programmes in their host countries; use networks to make internships, mentorships and on-the-job-training available to refugees in the appropriate field.

Donor

Source: UNHCR Education Section

⁶ For each workshop and world-café taking place on June 19, concept notes will be available on the [conference website](#) by June 5.

⁷ Please go to <https://www.unhcr.org/good-practices.html> for more specific information about good practices and how to submit them to UNHCR. Please look at and use the [template on submitting good practices](#).

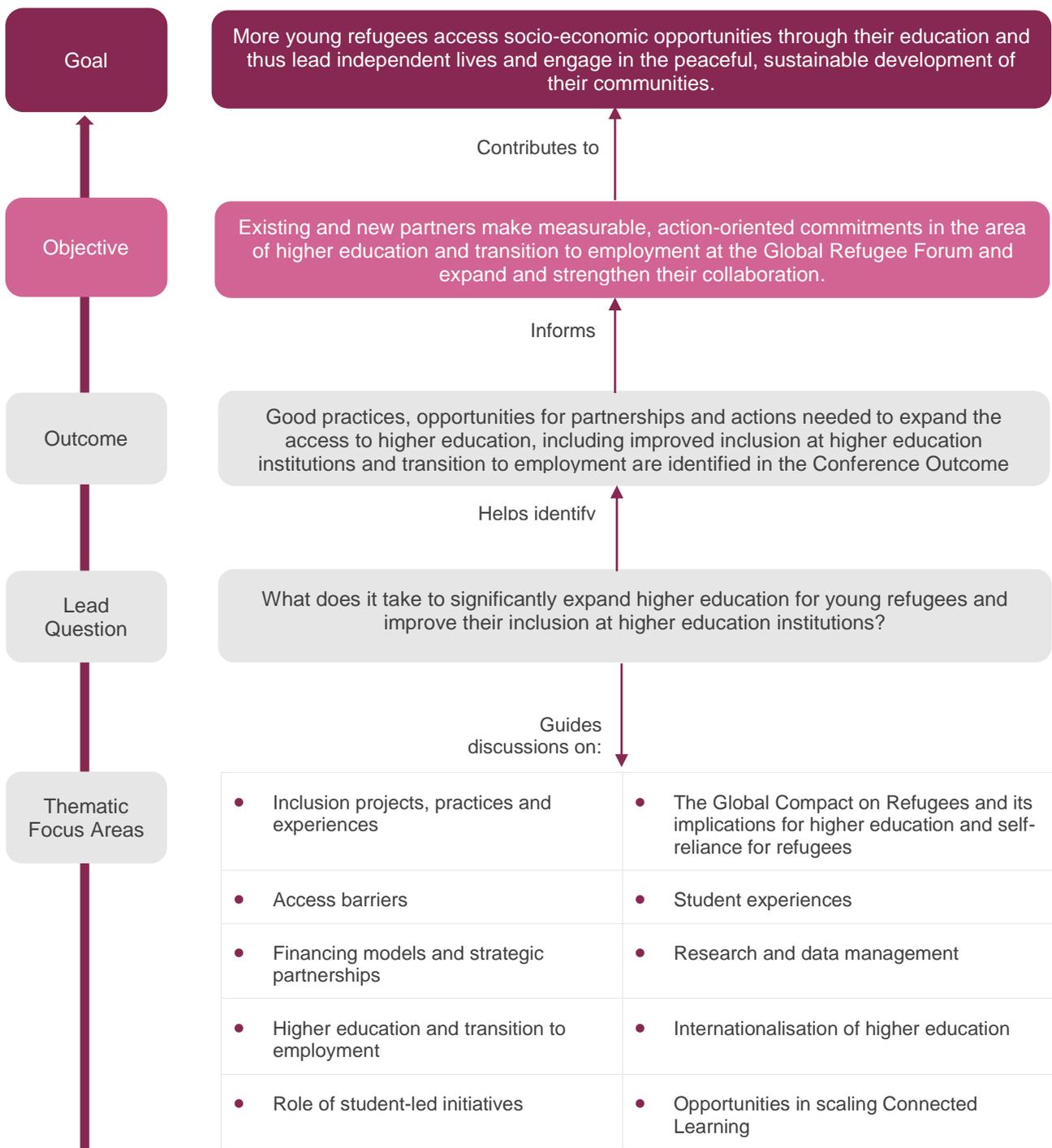


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Conference Overview





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4 Student Delegation

The impact of higher education is perhaps best expressed by those who have defied the odds, becoming one of the one per cent of refugee youth to have achieved access to higher education. Not only do refugees bring skills and talent to the countries that host them, but they also possess a tremendous potential that education can unlock.

To ensure the representation of refugee voices and refugees as stakeholders in the higher education landscape, a delegation of refugee students and alumni from DAFI, HOPES, and Connected Learning programmes will actively participate in the conference. They will share their personal experiences and ideas for supporting refugees to gain access to higher education in different contexts. This can inform the actions of organizations, academia, donors, and policy makers also attending the conference.

Before and after the conference, the students will come together in a workshop (16 and 21 June) to discuss and explore the potential impact of a new tertiary education student network. Between March and May, the students engaged in preparatory discussions, moderated by UNHCR, to ensure an efficient and impactful set-up of the workshop. Five students will serve as the Student Leadership Team and will support the group with preparation, orientation and guidance throughout.⁸

5 The Other 1 Percent – Photography Exhibition

Education and a university qualification are game changers for young refugees and their families to have an independent working life, make informed life choices and contribute to the peaceful development of their communities. However, only one per cent of refugees are enrolled in higher education, compared to 37 per cent of young people worldwide.

Titled “The Other 1 Percent”, the photography exhibition presents powerful portraits of refugee students and graduates in Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Rwanda, Pakistan and Senegal who belong to the one per cent of young refugees who enjoy access to higher education.

Including Bushra, Jean, Weam, Mohammed, Mireille, Innocent and Fatimata, the students portrayed in this exhibition are just a few of the many women and men who shared their unique, deeply moving stories with documentary photographer Antoine Tardy. What emerges from the exhibit is a unifying thread of determination, courage and self-belief.

The label ‘refugee’ can conceal the diversity of a group of people who possess a rich mixture of backgrounds, experiences, ambitions and futures. The exhibition challenges perceptions about refugee students and provides a glimpse into the lives of these strong individuals, which are far more nuanced than the news reports, clichés and long-held prejudices about refugees would have us believe.

Most of the students portrayed in the exhibition have benefitted from a scholarship provided through the *Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative* (DAFI programme) which is primarily funded by

⁸ An online feature on the student delegation can be found [here](#). Information about the tertiary education student network and the students can be requested at hqeduc@unhcr.org



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Germany and implemented by UNHCR. Other students study through Connected Learning programmes that enable them to access quality, certified education despite distance or other challenges that make attending university difficult. Each of them embodies the determination to succeed despite unfavourable conditions and obstacles.

Since March 2017, the exhibition has travelled from Amman to Copenhagen, Geneva, Islamabad and Paris. Some of the images are widely reproduced on social media, while a number of the photographs will be unveiled for the first time in Berlin. The exhibition will be on public display in the Atrium of the GFFO from 18th June to 9th July 2019.

6 Next Steps

Contributing to the Global Refugee Forum: The findings and key messages of the conference will be captured in a Conference Outcome Document and shared with Member States and stakeholders that have come forward as co-sponsors to the topic of education and livelihoods. The GFFO and UNHCR are dedicated to placing higher education as an important pillar of the overall topic of education.

Preparing pledges for the Global Refugee Forum: UNHCR encourages all stakeholders to pledge ambitiously to expand access to quality higher education for refugees at the Global Refugee Forum. UNHCR recognizes that partners bring a wide variety of experience, resource and potential to the table and stands ready to support the development of timely, appropriate, innovative pledges to achieve measurable gains on higher education.

Considering conference outcomes in interventions: Conference attendees and stakeholders, including the GFFO, DAAD and UNHCR are urged to consider the conference outcomes and conclusions in the design of interventions on higher education for refugees. The conversations, connections and lessons learnt during the conference should serve as inspiration and motivation for expanding and emerging initiatives on higher education for refugees.



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Annex

A | Suggested Reading

[German Federal Foreign Office](#)

[German Academic Exchange Service](#)

UNHCR. 2018. [The Other One Percent – Refugee Students in Higher Education. DAFI Annual Report 2017.](#)

Global Compact on Refugees (PDF, English) (PDF, Deutsch)

Global Refugee Forum. Guidance Note. Pledges and Contributions and Good Practices. ([PDF, English](#))

Information on the [Global Refugee Forum](#)

UNESCO. 2017. [Policy Paper 30](#). Six ways to ensure higher education leaves no one behind.

UNESCO. 2018. [Policy Paper 37](#). What a waste: Ensure migrants and refugees' qualifications and prior learning are recognized.

Jigsaw Consult. December 2016. Higher education for refugees in low resource environments: [landscape review](#).

HOPES [National Stakeholder Dialogues](#)

Conference on Higher Education and Refugees in the Mediterranean Region 26th-27th September 2017, Beirut, Lebanon. [Conference Report](#).

[DAAD Refugee Support and Information](#)

European Resettlement Network. April 2018. [Higher Education Scholarships for Refugees](#). A reference framework for expanding protection and solutions opportunities through complementary pathways of admission to Europe.



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B | Terms and Definitions

Asylum seeker is a person seeking international protection whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined.

Good practices demonstrate ways to achieve the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees at the local, national, regional, or global level. States and others are encouraged to exchange good practices at the Forum in December 2019, and in the period leading up to it, to learn from one another about what works well, what can be replicated in other situations, and what can be scaled up with further support. It is hoped that promising practices will inform the development of contributions for the first Global Refugee Forum and in the future.⁹

Inclusion in the context of refugee education refers to the policies and processes that facilitate refugee access to national education systems alongside national learners.

Integration describes the process of both accessing national education systems on equal footing as national students and the sense of belonging or social cohesion that accompanies full participation in that system. This is to be distinguished from the use of integration in the broader refugee context where it refers to durable legal status or a long term solution to displacement achieved when a refugee obtains citizenship or other status allowing her or him to obtain rights and remain in the host country.

Internally displaced person is an individual forced to flee from his/her home or place of habitual residence, who has not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

Internationalisation of higher education describes the process of augmenting teaching and learning through the addition of international and intercultural perspectives and qualities. Internationalisation is achieved through the recruitment of international students and staff, a research collaboration between regional and international universities and academics, adoption of curriculum that reflect global perspectives, exchange and fellowship programmes, as well as research scholarships amongst other strategies.

Refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for one of a number of specific reasons contained in the 1951 Refugee Convention, is outside the country of his/her nationality, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country.

Refugee in protracted situations is a refugee in a long-term state of displacement; for UNHCR, a protracted refugee situation is one in which a large number of refugees of the same nationality have been in exile for several years in a given asylum country.

Stateless person is a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law (1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons). Not all stateless persons are displaced. While some people are born stateless, others become stateless over the course of their lives.

⁹ For more details go to: <https://www.unhcr.org/5cc836594>