

## **40 Countries, 40 Opinions, 1 Solution**

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What was the “it” factor in the International Labour Organization (ILO) at the Model United Nations San Antonio XXIV Conference (MUNSA)? The “it” factor was three sessions of debate, discussion, and compromise about the mistreatment of migrant refugee workers. Although there were times of disagreement, in the end, they all came to a consensus that offers a real and attainable solution that will help millions of migrant refugees.

The session started with the Delegate of Brazil explaining their solution; to offer education, health, and work to these refugees. They also believe that the ILO should provide refugees with more information about their rights and how they should be treated. To this, multiple countries argued that this wasn't a valid solution and that this wouldn't have an effect on the refugees.

Next up to the podium was Germany. Germany is one of the largest receiving countries of immigrants, due to many Syrian citizens escaping from modern slavery and seeking asylum. Germany has welcomed these refugees with slightly open arms, by allowing them into their country but not giving them equal opportunities. Twice as many refugee workers were injured in work than German citizens, and unlike the citizens, they don't have documentation that limits them to healthcare. In 2018, Germany received 600,000 refugees, and since then, they've been working towards a better climate for these migrants. The Delegate of Germany stated, “We believe the United Nations needs to take votes away from countries that discriminate against migrant refugee workers.” Many countries disagreed with this statement because they felt that it was not the United Nations' right to take away votes for discrimination. However, countries Turkey and Indonesia believed it was reasonable to take their votes away.

After Germany, came Lithuania; a big immigration country. Lithuania has over 900 partners that help them with the cost of the migrant refugees, one including the UNHCR. The United Arab Emirates believed that we needed to encourage the 8 million refugees to obtain some sort of identification to help. To that, many countries argued that these refugees were scared about getting identification because they felt that they would get deported. The United Arab Emirates responded by saying they'd make it very clear that no immigrants were going to get deported for getting identification.

During the unmoderated caucus, the Delegate of Iraq responded to a couple of questions that were drafted during the moderated caucus. The first question focused on where the majority of displaced migrants come from, and they responded by saying they don't receive any refugees because refugees actually leave Iraq. Then, a follow-up question was asked; why are these refugees leaving the country? The Delegate of Iraq responded by saying that the Iraqi War has caused people to flee Iraq, even though it happened almost 15 years ago. During the moderated caucus, Iraq explained that they didn't have refugees, but that they agreed with Brazil on helping migrants know their rights. They also added that the 40 countries needed to work cohesively to fix this problem.

Mongolia added that countries with more immigrants and do not have the necessary means to help the refugees should seek aid from bigger countries where it wasn't as big of an issue. Japan responded by saying that they would send 5 million dollars to the countries that needed it. The United Kingdom and the United States both agreed with Japan and said they would help as well.

Then came Turkey, who had a lot to say about this topic. Turkey started off with the saying the insane amount of refugees in their country: over 4 million just from Iraq and Syria. Of those 4 million, only 65,000 work permits have been given, which allows them to have jobs with benefits, including healthcare. Not having formal permits also exposes them to job exploitation, which can lead to prostitution, modern slavery, and so many more horrific problems. These refugees leave their countries to live a better life, and the last thing they want is to be exploited because the government can not provide what they needed. Turkey's plan, documentation, became the new big topic of conversation. This was the turning point in the session because it allowed the delegates to sit back and think about if this was a reasonable solution, which it was. As soon as time ran out, almost every placard went up. Countries who had never spoken were now speaking about the possibility of this amazing, yet simple solution.

Documentation is such a simple concept, but not something that will be easily accomplishable. All 40 countries will need to work together to accomplish this goal, but will they be able to? Countries bank off of refugees not having documentation because it allows them to pay more than they should for everything, including healthcare, food, and housing. These refugees leave their countries to escape something, whether it be religious persecution, war, or an overpowering government. The countries they immigrate to is their new hope, and it's up to us to give them everything they need to have a better, healthier, and safer life.