



**Section A: The Development of the United Nations, 1945–1991**

You **must** answer Question 1.

**THE WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)**

- 1 Read the Sources and then answer the question.

When answering **Question 1**, candidates are advised to pay particular attention to the interpretation and evaluation of the Sources both individually and as a group.

**Source A**

UNHCR representatives need to be satisfied that their action falls within the non-political and humanitarian context under which UNHCR operates. In regard to material assistance, UNHCR's objective is not to substitute itself for the authorities of host countries, but to supplement, so far as possible, the efforts of host countries of asylum. Accordingly, no assistance may be granted to refugees in a host country without the approval of the authorities of the country concerned.

*Inter-Office Memorandum by the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, 1973.*

**Source B**

'Remarkably, the definition of a refugee, formulated in 1950 in an essentially European context, still applies today to situations which could not have been foreseen 30 years ago.' Thus spoke Poul Hartling, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, after his agency had gained the unique distinction of winning the Nobel Peace Prize twice in less than three decades – 1954 and 1981. A snapshot of UNHCR activities over 30 years spans many continents and civilisations. It facilitated the return of 250 000 Algerian refugees in 1962; repatriated 10 million Bangladeshis and 150 000 Sudanese in 1972; interceded on behalf of 200 000 Burmese refugees in Bangladesh, and 150 000 from Zaire who had taken refuge in Angola in 1978; facilitated the repatriation of 100 000 Nicaraguan refugees from Costa Rica and Honduras in 1979.

In 1954, UNHCR was struggling to provide assistance to Europe's 2.2 million displaced people on a budget of \$5 million and a staff of 100. In 1981, the refugee problem has grown exponentially – to almost 10 million – but so has the agency's success record. The Nobel Committee stressed that 'the stream of refugees creates serious problems in relations between states' and recognised that the activities of UNHCR 'serve the interest of humanity and peace'.

*Press release in the UN Chronicle following the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to UNHCR, 1981.*

**Source C**

UNHCR's actions are limited by the practices of states concerning sovereignty, particularly norms which prohibit intervention in the domestic affairs of these states. The major powers have been highly selective about whether, and to what extent, to get involved in political crises and humanitarian emergencies. By statute, UNHCR is not allowed to address factors likely to generate refugee flight. UNHCR is not allowed to intervene politically against government or opposition groups, even where there is clear evidence of human rights violations that result in forcible displacement. In civil war situations, UNHCR staff are often unfamiliar with human rights and humanitarian law and are uncertain of how governments and opposition groups will react to their interventions. Increasingly, UNHCR finds itself out of its depth and faced with security and political issues that it is neither permitted nor has the resources to deal with. Although it characterises itself as non-political, UNHCR is a highly political actor and is clearly shaped by the interests of major governments. In mounting massive relief operations, UNHCR is often at the mercy of its donors and host governments.

*From an article in 'Forced Migration Review', 2001.*

**Source D**

From the late 1960s, when UNHCR truly became a universal refugee agency, it was exposed to new challenges. In particular, the organization had to deal with sudden mass refugee influxes fleeing conflicts associated with decolonization, national liberation struggles and their aftermaths. UNHCR even became involved in activities that went beyond its mandate, including long-term development efforts in poor and often recently decolonized countries. A cardinal rule of UNHCR was – and remains to this day – to defend refugee rights and perform its humanitarian mandate, without alienating the national authorities they were dealing with. Moreover, UNHCR had to ensure not to displease countries contributing to its budget. In these respects, the internal political situation could also make things difficult. Thus, in Rwanda during the 1980s, UNHCR had to make sure it was not dragged into internal feuds between various governmental and military factions. The work of UNHCR was furthermore complicated by the militarization of refugee camps, which sometimes became bases for recruitment or to launch attacks into neighbouring countries.

*From a UNHCR-funded research project, 2007.*

**Source E**

Originally founded with a clear focus on Europeans becoming refugees due to events occurring prior to its creation, UNHCR had, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, expanded its operations into Africa, Asia and the Americas. In view of the involvement of the superpowers in regional conflicts, a great challenge for UNHCR was to keep these rapidly increasing humanitarian relief operations clearly separated from political, economic and military operations. When the government of Pakistan, catering for some three million Afghan refugees, asked for UNHCR assistance in April 1979, it insisted on having control over all aid. A UNHCR report from 1983 states that 'government officials have referred to the presence of UNHCR as evidence that the Afghans in Pakistan are genuine asylum seekers and not freedom fighters. However, there is ample evidence that the government is permitting, by acts of commission or omission, humanitarian assistance to flow into the hands of freedom fighters participating in the Holy Jihad.'

*From a UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation article, June 2008.*

Now answer the following question.

*How far do Sources A–E support the view that, between 1945 and 1991, UNHCR was successful in dealing with the international refugee problem?*

## Section B

You must answer **three** questions from this section.

You must **not** answer both Question 3 and Question 4.

- 2 Consider the view that the USA was more responsible than the USSR for the outbreak and development of the Cold War in the period from 1945 to 1949.
- 3 'The globalisation of the Cold War in the period between 1950 and 1975 was caused by the expansionist ambitions of the USSR.' How far do you agree?

OR

- 4 Why did the USA become directly involved in the Korean War when the USSR did not?
- 5 To what extent did the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 make the collapse of the USSR unavoidable?
- 6 Which did more to control the growth of nuclear weapons – the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 or the SALT Treaties of the 1970s?
- 7 'Japan's "economic miracle" was primarily a consequence of favourable domestic policies and practices.' How far do you agree?
- 8 Account for the rise and decline of OPEC in the 1970s and 1980s.

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*Copyright Acknowledgements:*

- Question 1 Sources A & D © Dr J B Elie; *UNHCR & the Cold War; A documented reflection on the UN refugee agency's activities in the bipolar context*; 2007; [http://graduateinstitute.ch/webdav/site/globalmigration/shared/\\_communintersites/UNHCR\\_and\\_CW\\_Work-P.pdf](http://graduateinstitute.ch/webdav/site/globalmigration/shared/_communintersites/UNHCR_and_CW_Work-P.pdf).
- Question 1 Source B © N R Currier; *U N Chronicle*; 1981; <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2003/issue3/0303p44.asp>.
- Question 1 Source C © Gil Loescher; *UNHCR and the erosion of refugee protection*; Forced Migration Review; 2001; [www.fmreview.org/FMRpdgs/FMR10/fmr10.10.pdf](http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdgs/FMR10/fmr10.10.pdf).
- Question 1 Source E © R Schoch; *New issues in refugee research; Paper 157; Afghan refugees in Pakistan during the 1980s*; 2008; [www.unhcr.org/4868daad2.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4868daad2.html); 11 November 2009.

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