MASS MIGRATION GREATLY IMPACTS GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

What would you do if war, famine, drought, disease, and other regional problems face you, causing you to flee from your homeland to get to safety?

You flee, but the new situation brings its own challenges—You are unwanted and unwelcome. You also arrive with mental, physical, economic, challenges, as a consequence of the arduous trek. (Image below: Ukraine War, *Toronto Star*)

PLEAS FOR
GLOBAL PEACE
GROW LOUDER
WORLD IS WITNESSING LARGEST NUMBER OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS
SINCE 1946
AND
A QUARTER OF THE GLOBAL POPULATION
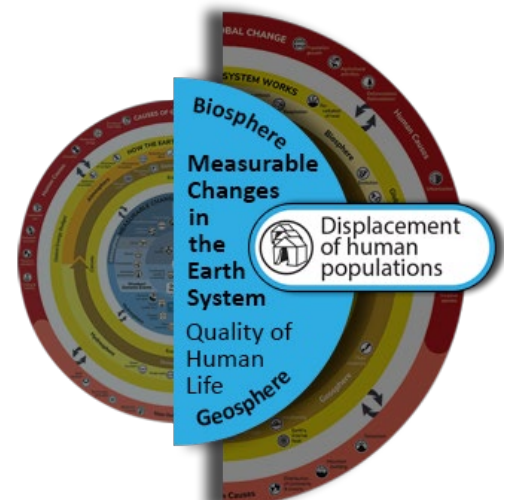LIVES IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED
COUNTRIES (END 2020)

A RECORD
100 MILLION PEOPLE
HAD BEEN FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE
(MAY 2022)

The **JHBC-PRME** Platform briefly takes up the issue of mass migrations. One cause of this migration is the disintegration of the institutions in nations around the globe. This results in conflict, pollution health and human stressor The UN's Sustainability Goal #16, shown on the right challenges nations to work toward world peace and to reinforce their institutions with ethical and enforceable laws, regulations, and other government policies.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

THE EXODUS FROM FAILED NATION-STATES: It is no surprise that failed and unstable nation-states cause the ***most at-risk people*** on the planet. They overwhelmingly cause the influx of refugees, asylum seekers and Internally-Displaced Populations (IDPs)[1]. Traumatic life events have been shown to produce direct effects on health outcomes). [2] These people suffer from increase in food and resource insecurity for host countries or regions and this leads to political and economic tensions for them where they reside. It has been demonstrated that one of the primary risk factors for displaced people is the loss of property and other belongings and assets, when they are forced to flee their homelands. They may also be unable to pursue their former work, leading to unemployment, underemployment or informal work, and a significant drop in income. They also suffer from loss of home-country culture and traditions. Other problems include alcohol consumption (Weaver and Roberts, 2010)[3], perinatal outcomes (Heslehurst *et al.*, 2018)[4] and oral health (Keboa *et al.*, 2016)[5]. These factors engender a cycle of other negative externalities arise such as lack of shelter, malnutrition and disease and as a result suffer social harms such as sexual assault, abduction and other violence. Refugee camps are breeding grounds for unsanitary conditions which exacerbate environmental damage. (Image above Right; Ukraine, *Toronto Star).* Non-Human causes of non-human harms also cause populations to flee, floods, fires, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and weather changes.

Displaced populations also have an effect on the host countries, usually the adjoining nations, countries, but their presence often can exacerbate tensions and perceptions of resource scarcity in the host nation. [6]

---

[1] Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are those who "who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border."

[2] Trauma and Mental Health in Forcibly Displaced Populations An International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Briefing Paper" *International Society for Traumatic Studies,*
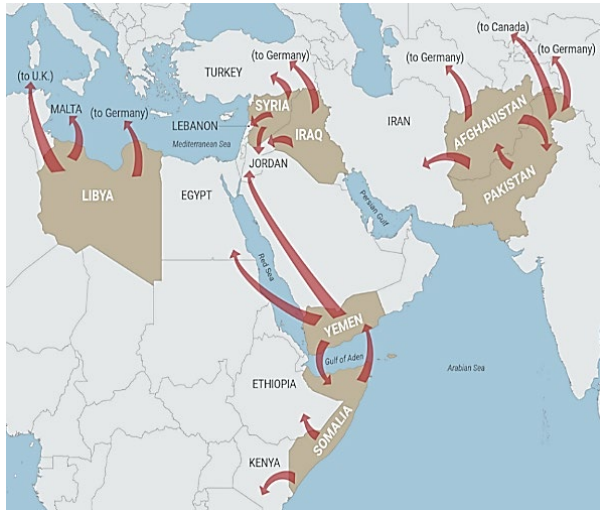
[3] Weaver, H and Roberts, B. (2010) "Drinking and Displacement: A Systematic Review of the Influence of Forced Displacement on Harmful Alcohol Use," *Taylor and Francis.*

[4] Heslehurst, N. *et al.,* (2018**) "**Perinatal health outcomes and care among asylum seekers and refugees: a systematic review of systematic reviews," *BMC Medicine,* 16:89 https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-018-1064-0
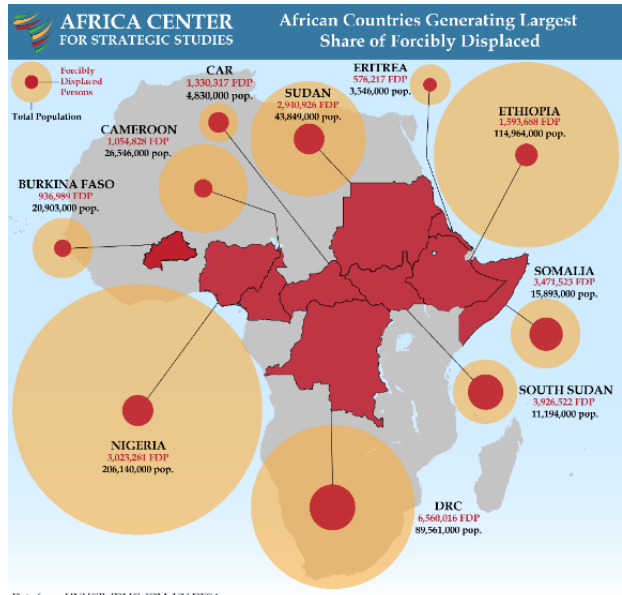
[5] Keboa, M. et. al., (2016) "The oral health of refugees and asylum seekers: a scoping review**,"** 2016 Oct 7;12(1):59.

[6] Trauma and Mental Health in Forcibly Displaced Populations An International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Briefing Paper" *International Society for Traumatic Studies,*
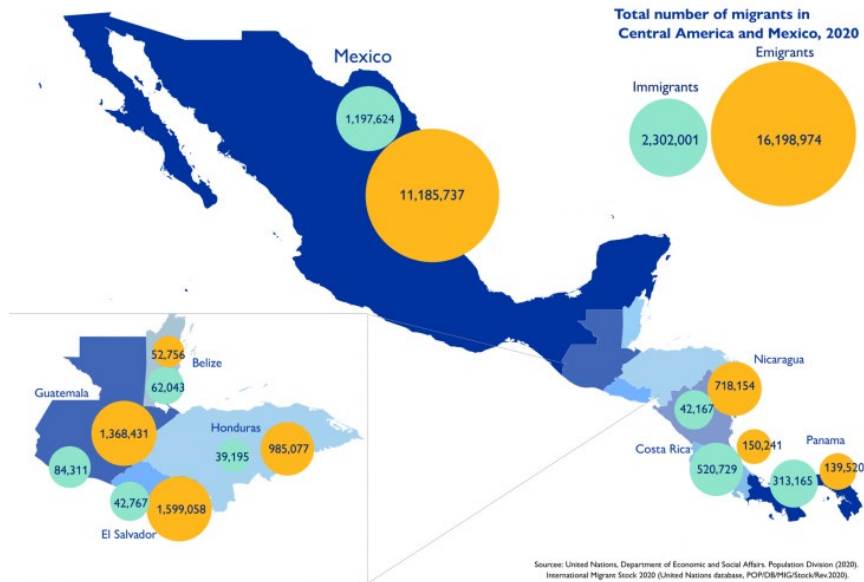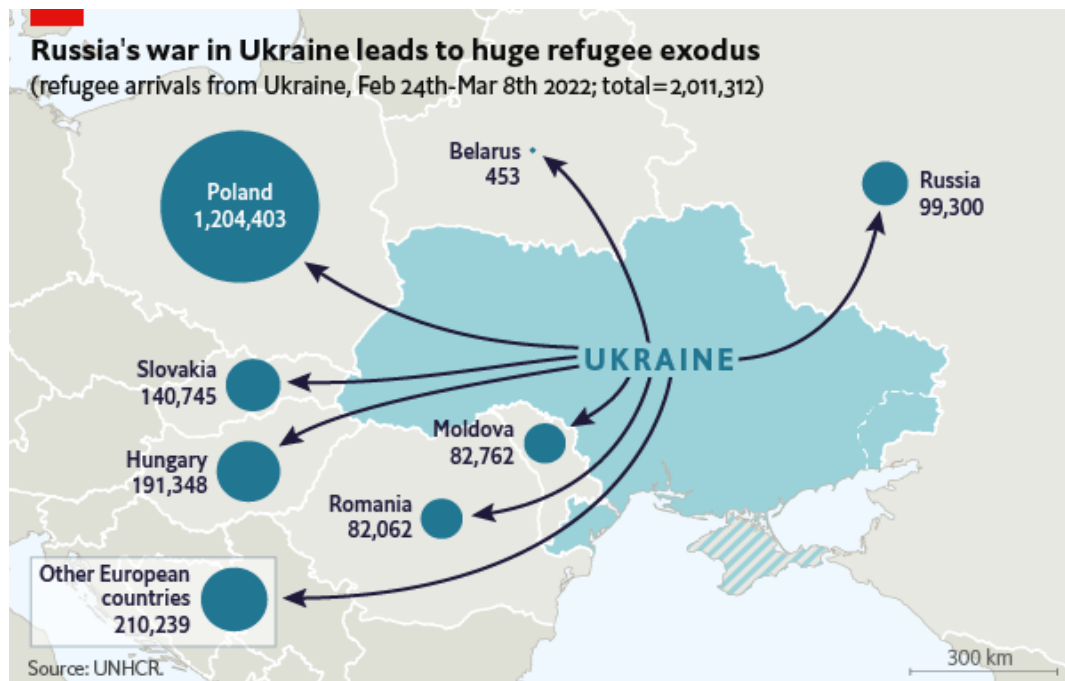
DISPLACED HUMANITY ON THE MOVE

(Image Above: Watson Institute Brown Univ.)

Russia's war in Ukraine leads to huge refugee exodus
(refugee arrivals from Ukraine, Feb 24th-Mar 8th 2022; total=2,011,312)

Poland
1,204,403

Belarus •
453

Russia
99,300

Slovakia
140,745

UKRAINE

Hungary
191,348

Moldova
82,762

Romania
82,062

Other European
countries
210,239

Source: UNHCR.

300 km

THE STORY OF ZHENIA—"*The Body Knows"*

Ukrainians often described their decision to leave areas of active military conflict as a visceral, rather than cerebral, process. A woman called "Zhenia," for example, lived through the epic siege of the Donetsk airport in 2014.

Although her family planned to stay, that changed one night when her husband saw a mortar from a missile strike land down the street from their high-rise apartment while he was standing on their balcony. But they didn't need to talk about it. Zhenia remembers thinking that her husband's skin looked almost green from shock. Then, he threw up in the bathroom. By the glances they exchanged, she knew it was time to pack their bags.

Young people in good health have described their hair going gray and teeth suddenly beginning to fall out.

Psychologists might call this "somaticizing"--when mental and emotional distress expresses itself physically under extreme trauma.

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND POLICIES AND DESCRIPTORS:

A **Refugee** has been defined as an individual who seeks shelter in another country due to legitimate fear of physical, social, and economic persecution in his/her own country. This may be due to intolerance of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. (Geneva Convention on Status of Refugees, 1951). Subsequent international policies have extended this delineation for some nations individuals fleeing the general effects of armed conflict and/or natural disaster. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 14), which states that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy **Asylum** from persecution in other countries. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention (and its 1967 Protocol), which protects refugees from being returned to countries where they risk being persecuted.

The "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement"[7] that were restated in 1998, reaffirmed the existing international human rights and humanitarian law germane to **Internally Displaced Persons** (IDPs) and they also refined and clarified efforts within the murky areas and fissure gaps in the policies. These "principles" mention that capricious disarticulation is prohibited in Principles sections 5-7.

The guidance includes language in sections 10-23 that IDPs retain a broad range of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, including the right to basic humanitarian assistance (such as food, medicine, shelter), the right to be protected from physical violence, the right to education, freedom of movement and residence, political rights such as the right to part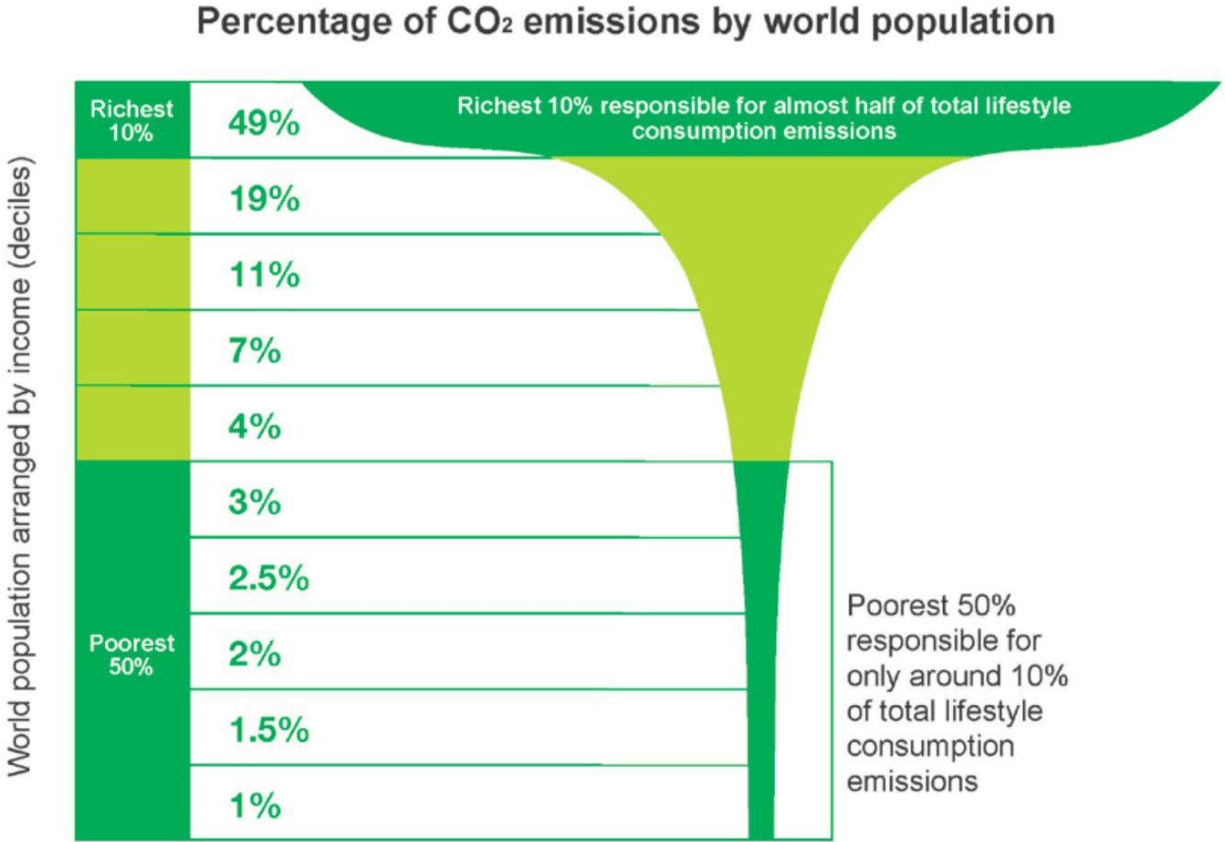icipate in public affairs and the right to participate in economic activities. This guidance on IDPs affirm in its 28-30 that such individuals have the right to assistance from authorities *"in voluntary, dignified and safe return, resettlement or local integration, including help in recovering lost property and possessions."* The IDP Guiding Principles call for reimbursement.

ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIETAL DESTABILIZATION: Policy decision makers, and the public at large are still largely unconscious of the factors in society that impact our planet (such as war and conflict, and more specifically economic instability, large-scale involuntary migration, famine and the breakdown on the social and economic system) effect the sustainability of the earth. The negative human impacts on the environment go 'beyond' climate change to encompass most of the other natural systems, driving a complex, dynamic process of environmental destabilization that has reached critical levels. This destabilization is occurring at unprecedented rates. More than 75 per cent of the Earth's land is substantially degraded. Risk

---

[7] Referred to the Geneva Convention—section on Refugees.

and uncertainty about collapses in the political, economic, and societal systems, add to the environmental threats on the biosphere . Due to the high levels of complexity, the scale of breakdown and systemic nature of the problem, responding to the age of environmental breakdown may be the greatest challenge that humans have faced in their history.

The human costs of the above factors have fallen upon the poorest among us—but they are not the creators of these disasters. The poorest are responsible for around 10 per cent of yearly global greenhouse gas emissions, with half of emissions attributed to the richest 10 per cent of people.

Percentage of CO₂ emissions by world population

World population arranged by income (deciles)

Richest 10%	49%	Richest 10% responsible for almost half of total lifestyle consumption emissions
	19%	
	11%	
	7%	
	4%	
	3%	
	2.5%	
Poorest 50%	2%	Poorest 50% responsible for only around 10% of total lifestyle consumption emissions
	1.5%	
	1%	

New refugee situations arise and as existing ones reignite or remain unresolved, so there is an overwhelming need for sturdy and long-lasting solutions. The **Global Compact on Refugees** of 2018, states the primacy of creating one urgent strategic priority for UNHCR and the humanitarian community, is to pin-point and provide robust decisions for the safety and health of refugees.

"CORPORATIVISM" NOT CAPITALISM IN GLOBAL BUSINESS: Corporate influence has dominated the market economy in modern times, according to Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz. This, he avers, is largely due to neoliberal policies leading to growing income inequality and a generally underperforming economy. He argues that "to improve the economy, it is necessary to decrease the influence of money on U.S. politics.[8] Another Nobel Laureate,

Edmund Phelps, criticized the economic system of the U.S. and other western countries in recent decades as being the new "corporatism." He asserts that big companies have influenced on the government, with lobbyists' suggestions being "*welcome, especially if they come with bribes*."[9]

Cartoonist Joseph Keppler in the image left shows the Senate being captured by moneybags.

All this power has given corporations in the last decades license to treat all areas of government as fiefdoms, and as a result many economic and environmental threats have arisen to destabilize societies, and have caused people to migrate from their homelands. Edmund Phelps calls this corporativism not capitalism. And now that the term "the triple bottom line" has come into our popular lexicon, many MNCs have "*talked the talk, but not walked the walk.*"

SHIFTS IN THE OVERALL GLOBAL MINDSET REQUIRED IMMEDIATELY:

> 1. *To understand the unsustainable scale and scope of mass migration.*
> 2. *The real and also the causes of environmental breakdown.*
> 3. *The stabilization of human societies caused by war and conflict.*
> 4. *The physical, mental, and spiritual health and wellness of humanity.*
> 5. *The wanton and wasteful destruction of non-human, living, entities.*
> 6. *The global consequences of greed.*

Disclaimer: *The information shown above, is not meant to be exhaustive in this document. This report is provided as a way to start your sustainability research studies—i.e., for JHBC term papers, projects, journal articles, etc.*

Created for JHBC's PRME Platform by Professor Breena E. Coates, for use by faculty and students in Ethics, and Sustainability Studies

---

[8] Stiglitz, Joseph (May 13, 2019). "Three decades of neoliberal policies have decimated the middle class, our economy, and our democracy". *MarketWatch.*
[9] Wolf, Martin (2014) essay in *Financial Times*