

Exercise 1.5.a. Refugee Protection Role Play

The population in Country X comprises two ethnic groups, the Minority and the Majority, representing 20% and 80% respectively of the population. The country is ruled by MINOTA, the only authorized political party, predominantly composed of leaders from the Minority. Most army personnel are recruited from among the Minority.

Following the arrest and subsequent execution of some of the political leaders of the Majority, who were accused of conspiring to overthrow the Government, violent ethnic clashes break out throughout the country. Many civilians are killed or injured in the fighting and large numbers of persons, among whom the majority are women and children but also a sizable group of armed rebels, flee their homes and villages to seek safety in neighboring Country Y.

Country Y is a country with few resources and with high levels of inflation and unemployment. For historic and ethnic reasons, the Government of Country Y has always been favorably inclined toward the people of the Majority in Country X, but has been careful not to be seen as interfering in the internal affairs of Country X, which is an important military and economic power in the region.

The imminent arrival of large numbers of refugees from Country X into a poor and remote region of Country Y, where incidents of banditry are rife, is therefore giving rise to serious concern among the Government of Country Y.

In this connection, the Prime Minister of Country Y is convening a meeting of representatives from different interest groups for a discussion on what actions the Government should be taking.