Global Refugee Forum (GRF)

Why in News?

The first Global Refugee Forum (GRF) is currently underway in Geneva, Switzerland.

What is GRF?

- It is jointly hosted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Government of Switzerland.
- At the two-day event, member states of the UN are debating the response of nations to the global refugee situation.

Who is a Refugee?

- According to UN, a refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.
- Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so.
- War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

What are the global refugee numbers?

- According to the UN, by the end of 2018, there were around 70.8 million people around the world who had left their home countries because of conflict and persecution.
- Of these 70.8 million, roughly 30 million are refugees.
- More two-thirds of all refugees come from 5 countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia.
- 16% of refugees are hosted in developed countries; 1/3rd of the refugee population are in Least Developed Countries.
- The largest host countries are Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan and Germany.
- **UN report** - According to the UN's Global Trends report 2019, there are 37,000 new displacements every day.
- In 2018, 13.6 million people were newly displaced due to conflict and or persecution.

What are the current refugee crises?

- The website of the UNHCR has listed 12 emergency refugee situations that are unfolding currently. Among them:
- **Burundi** - A humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Burundi in East Africa.
- Economic decline, outbreak of disease, and food insecurity have led to displacements within and outside the country to neighbouring countries including Rwanda, Uganda, etc.,
- **Myanmar** - In 2017, the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar fled the country after violence broke out in the Rakhine state.
- An estimated 6.7 lakh crossed over to Bangladesh, adding to the roughly 2.13 lakh Rohingya who had left Myanmar in previous years.
- In December 2019, Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi was at the preliminary hearings of the proceedings in the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
- The proceedings are launched for alleged genocide against the Rohingya by the Myanmarese military.
- Suu Kyi has denied the allegations of genocide.
- Other countries and regions facing a refugee situation include Europe, Yemen, Central America, Africa, South Sudan, Venezuela, DR Congo, and Nigeria.

What is the refugee situation in India?

- **No statute** - India does not have a separate statute for refugees, and until now has been dealing with refugees on a case-by-case basis.
- India is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention on Refugees or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.
- In 2011, the Union government circulated to all states and Union Territories a Standard Operating Procedure to deal with foreign nationals who claimed to be refugees.
- In late 2011, the Rohingya started to arrive in India's Northeast following stepped-up persecution by the Myanmarese armed forces.
- **Data** - According to the Home Ministry, there are 54,000 Rohingya refugees living in India both registered and unregistered.
- According to the Bureau of Immigration Data, India sent back 330 Pakistanis and 1,770 Bangladeshis between 2015 and 2018.
- **Affidavit** - In 2017, in an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the government said that the presence of Rohingya in the country has serious national security ramifications and it poses national security threats.
- Illegal influx of Rohingyas into India started in 2012-13 and inputs suggest links of some of the immigrants with Pak-based terror groups.

- Earlier this year, the Home Ministry informed Rajya Sabha that India had deported 22 Myanmar nationals, including Rohingya, since 2017.

Source: Indian Express

