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**Michigan Yearbook of  
International Legal Studies**

**Volume 3**

**1982**



# **Transnational Legal Problems of Refugees**



# Transnational Legal Problems of Refugees

1982

Michigan Yearbook of  
International Legal Studies

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# Preface

In this 1982 volume of the *Michigan Yearbook of International Legal Studies*, legal practitioners, public officials, and students of the University of Michigan Law School turn to the transnational legal problems of refugees. The topic is ambitious, and potentially ambiguous. The ambitiousness is easily documented. The problems and challenges of refugees range from the provision of humanitarian aid under conditions of international political upheaval to distribution of resettlement assistance in a country of refuge besieged with local claims to resources. Between these two chronological poles lie problems of immigration policy toward refugees; beyond them lie questions of redress for refugees harmed in person or property by individuals or governments before, during, and after their migration. The ambiguity, too, is apparent. The very word “refugee” has different meanings in different contexts. In everyday parlance, one refers to drought or famine victims who cross national borders in search of a better life as “refugees.” The major international legal instrument on refugees, however, includes only people fleeing persecution—those commonly referred to as “political” refugees—in its definition.

An ambitious scope and unsettled issues hardly defeat a *Yearbook* on transnational legal problems of refugees; instead, they invite it. The articles contained in this volume focus on select refugee problems—both problems for governments and problems faced by individual refugees—in a predominantly legal setting. Of course, refugee problems are not exclusively or even predominantly legal, but law tends to pervade even those provinces where it is not paramount. The selectivity of focus in this volume necessarily excludes a number of important concerns. The book accomplishes no mean task, however, if it helps elucidate the role international and national law and lawyers have to play—through rule and policy making, adjudication, enforcement, and procedures for distributing assistance—in refugee affairs.



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