Introduction

With the rising threat of terrorism among the global community, the number of refugees is rising rapidly. In the wake of the mass exodus of refugees, many governments are starting to form substantial refugee policies that specify what exactly a government should do when faced with a decision. The spectrum of countries’ opinions is far and wide, with some countries accepting refugees without question while some outright refuse their integration.

Definition of Key Terms

**Refugee**: “A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.”

**Refugee Status Determination (RSD)**: “A vital part of being recognized as a refugee is Refugee Status Determination, or RSD. This is the legal or administrative process by which governments or UNHCR determine whether a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international, regional or

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national law. States have the primary responsibility for determining the status of asylum-seekers, but UNHCR may do so where states are unable or unwilling. In recent years, due to changes in volumes and patterns of forced displacement, the refugee agency has been required to conduct RSD in more countries than before and for a greater number of people."²

**General Overview**

The Syrian war began in 2011, but the situation on the ground has greatly deteriorated in 2013 as a result of the escalating violence. With the beginning of Russian air strikes in October 2015 more Syrians have fled for safety in bordering countries. It is now estimated that the number of refugees in neighboring or near countries according to Amnesty international and recent declaration of host nations approximately reached:

- 2,700,000 in Turkey
- 1,100,000 in Lebanon
- 640,000 in Jordan
- 250,000 in Iraq
- 120,000 in Egypt

There are now more than 4.8 million (as of March 3, 2016 UNHCR) Syrian refugees scattered throughout the region, making them the world’s largest refugee population under the United Nations mandate. Not all refugees are living in refugee camps since these camps are mostly overcrowded, lack clean water, sanitation, proper heating and insulation.

There are also problems concerning education and health care: According to UNHCR only %10 of the refugees are in camps. Most refugees prefer to take shelter with relatives in urban areas where work opportunities are more available. These illegal working conditions also bring new problems where refugees can easily be exploited. Illegal and unrecorded employments make it difficult in order for actions that can be considered as exploitation of labour, such as child labour, forced labour and sex labour, to be detected and prevented. Child labour is particularly of great concern for the Syrian refugee crisis as there has been an increasing number of employed children, starting from the early age of 6, mostly in the agricultural sectors, in countries with a high number of refugees such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. All these facts and the conflict in Syria have become the biggest driver of migration from neighboring host countries to richer European countries. The migrants hope to achieve better security and living conditions.

According to Amnesty International;

- Gulf countries including Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain have offered zero resettlement places to Syrian refugees. (One reason could be because most of their small populations are already made up of immigrant workers)
- High-income countries including Russia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea have also offered zero resettlement places.
- Germany has pledged 39,987 places for Syrian refugees through its humanitarian admission programme and individual sponsorship; about %54 of EU total.
- Excluding Germany and Sweden, the remaining 26 EU countries have pledged around 30,903 resettlement places or around %0.7 of the Syrian refugee population in the main host countries.
The ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, and other poverty and oppression struck corners of the world are also leading people to look for new lives elsewhere.

The migration/exodus routes shown in the above map has put huge pressure on smaller European nations struggling with economic problems. Their fears of being stuck with the refugees have led them to close their borders. This in return has left thousands of refugees stranded in their prior transit nations.

Panicking nations and their chain reaction of closing borders have accumulated huge numbers of migrants in the first European nation of this exodus route: Greece.

Although Aegean crossing of refugees from Turkey continued to the Greek islands, Greece no longer was able to push them on to the next European nations, Macedonia and Albania. Greece, being able to cope with this influx, has asked for help from the EU to stop the Aegean migration route which, unlike land border crossings, is very difficult to control. The EU has been putting increasing pressure on Turkey to control its land and sea borders.
Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Turkey

Since 2011, when the Syrian war emerged, many Syrians began to migrate to Turkey. The recent flow of Syrian-Kurdish refugees from the region of Kobanê to Turkey is just one of many episodes in which Turkey has been affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. From April 2011 to September 2014 an estimated total of 1,350,000 Syrians fled to Turkey according to the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency. The number has reached 2.7 million as of 2016. At the beginning of the conflict, Turkey categorized those fleeing from Syria as “guests” and not “refugees”. In the coming years, the administration declared that “temporary protection” will be offered to the refugees; and in April 2014, a new migration law entered into force granting them “conditional refugee status”, or temporary asylum, under the newly established General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM). It is undeniable that the exodus of refugees has immensely affected Turkey’s political and economic stability, as it does not seem to have adopted a durable long-term solution to the issue. Recent developments such as the negotiations with the European Union show that Turkey and the EU will agree upon broad principles of a plan in order to ease the crisis from a certain perspective. The negotiation process is still in continuation and the plan seems to be quite questionable on Turkey’s side while the EU considers it as a potential “breakthrough”.

EU

As previously mentioned, the EU has agreed to take-in a relatively fair amount of refugees, but has decided to be selective. According to the EU’s proposed deal;

• “All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands will be returned to Turkey, with the EU meeting the costs. Irregular migrants means all those outside normal transit procedures, i.e. without documentation.

• In exchange for every returned Syrian, one Syrian from Turkey will be resettled in the EU
• Plans to ease access to the EU for Turkish citizens will be speeded up, with a view to allowing visa-free travel by June 2016

• EU payment of €3bn ($3.3bn; £2.2bn) promised in October will be speeded up, and a decision will be made on additional funding to help Turkey deal with the crisis. Turkey reportedly asked for EU aid to be increased to €6bn

• Preparations will be made for a decision on the opening of new chapters in talks on EU membership for Turkey.”

Germany

German chancellor Angela Merkel initially took a rather controversial approach to the issue by presenting open-door migrant policies. This approach has in fact faced outright oppositions by mostly eastern European counties who are affected the most by the flow of refugees to Europe as many refugees pass through these countries such as Macedonia, Bulgaria and Greece even if they do not necessarily reside there. The German interior ministry then stated that the hundreds of thousands of Syrians entering Germany would not be granted asylum or refugee status, creating much confusion among the global community about where Germany stands. According to the changed statement, Syrians would only be allowed to enter Germany for one year, are prohibited from having family members join them, and would only enjoy “subsidiary protection” which limits their rights as refugees. With almost 40,000 Syrians granted with refugee status in Germany and only 53 having to settle with a subsidiary status, Germany still stands as one of the biggest contributors to the easing process of the conflict.
## Timeline of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2011</td>
<td>Approximate start of the Syrian civil conflict with the spread of nationwide protests</td>
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<td>May 2011</td>
<td>First camp for refugees open in Turkey.</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>A total of 2000 Syrians flee to Jordan.</td>
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<td>4 April 2012</td>
<td>Most Syrian refugees of Kurdish origin head for the Iraqi Kurdistan region in northern Iraq and Domiz camp opens in Iraq as the largest Syrian refugee camp</td>
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<td>5 April 2012</td>
<td>UN launches ceasefire in Syria</td>
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<td>July 2012</td>
<td>Conflict flares up in Aleppo, causing approximately 200,000 Syrians to flee to Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>15,000 to 40,000 refugees enter Lebanon</td>
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<td>4 January 2013</td>
<td>Lebanese government agrees to register refugees</td>
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<td>6 March 2013</td>
<td>The UNHCR announces that the number of Syrians either registered as refugees or being assisted as such has reached the 1 million mark.</td>
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<td>11 September 2013</td>
<td>Germany agrees to resettle 5,000 Syrian</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>20 September 2013</td>
<td>Sweden offers residency to Syrian refugees</td>
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<td>11 November 2013</td>
<td>In response to a spike in Syrian asylum seekers, Bulgaria begins construction of a 30km border fence south of the town Elhovo</td>
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<td>3 April 2014</td>
<td>The number of refugees rise up to a million in Lebanon</td>
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<td>9 June 2014</td>
<td>After IS takes control of the city of Mosul, 500,000 flee the city.</td>
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<td>21 September 2014</td>
<td>IS fighters begin attacking Kurdish villages along the Syrian-Turkey border, sparking fears of a massive refugee influx. More than 130,000 flee.</td>
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<td>14 October 2014</td>
<td>The Turkish border city of Suruc doubles in population as almost 400,000 Kurds flee across the border</td>
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<td>24 June 2015</td>
<td>Migrants mass at Calais to get into the UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 July 2015</td>
<td>“EU decides upon a voluntary scheme to accept 32,256 migrants from Italy and Greece, falling short of a target of 40,000.”</td>
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7 September 2015

“France agrees to take in 24,000 refugees over two years, while Britain agrees to take in 20,000 Syrians over five years. Berlin earmarks six billion euros extra to help the refugees.”

14 September 2015

Austria and Slovakia reintroduce border controls.

UN Involvement

UNHCR and UNICEF have been particularly involved in the Syrian refugee crisis throughout the 4-year period. UNHCR is teaming up with several agencies in order to provide humanitarian aid and stockpiles to the traveling refugees and the camps. UNHCR has stepped up its operations in Greece, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia to work with governments there to address the essential humanitarian needs of people as they arrive and transit through. UNHCR has also urged a substantial and rapid increase in legal opportunities for refugees to access the EU, including enhanced resettlement and humanitarian admission, family reunification and humanitarian and student visas. UNICEF has also actively contributed to the conflict by raising public awareness with its new campaign; “Children of Syria” and currently aims to provide healthcare and education to the refugee children. Several UN bodies including UNHCR have also called for the re-evaluation of governments’ policies on the issue. Meanwhile, the General Assembly and the Security Council in particular are working towards solving the overall conflict in Syria as a long-term approach.

Relevant UN Documents

The report, in general, affirms the proposed renewal of a 12-month period for stipulations stated in the 2258 UNSC resolution under which UN agencies and their implementing partners are allowed full authorization to use routes across conflict lines in Syria in order to provide humanitarian aid to civilians in the regions. The report also emphasized the implementation of the “Geneva Communique” stated in resolution 2258.

- UNSC Resolution 2139, 22 February 2014

Resolution 2139 touches upon the need to increase humanitarian aid in Syria as the conflict grows, and urges the cessation of attacks against civilians along with supporting the immediate evacuation of civilians wishing to leave. Demilitarization of medical facilities and the supplying of medical personnel and assistance in also mentioned throughout.

**Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

1. Providing and keeping open safe routes for sanctuary

2. Temporary or permanent Resettlement opportunities with basic human needs such as health care, food, education etc.

3. Investigating and prosecuting trafficking gangs

4. Providing security and cracking down of abuse, violence and looting

5. Increase search and rescue operations

6. Combating xenophobia and racial discrimination;

The list above by Amnesty International, are some of the ways of easing the refugee crisis. So far all or most of these have been implemented insufficiently. This lack of
success is attributed to reasons such as underfunding and lack of taxpayer support to this issue in Europe and elsewhere.

In fact, Turkey has been criticized by the EU for:

- Providing and keeping open, safe routes for sanctuary from Syria
- Not keeping the refugees in camps and letting them travel freely within Turkey
- Not doing enough to stop their flow into Europe

Without the taxpayers’ support it is very difficult for elected governments to implement solutions on this issue.

So far all attempts have been implemented with insufficient funds and citizen support.

**Possible Solutions**

Currently EU is negotiating on an agreement where Turkey will take back the refugees in Greece that have travelled through the Turkish Aegean sea route. Of all the refugees that have taken this route the EU will take 1 Syrian refugee for every Syrian refugee Greece has sent back to Turkey.

Although it sounds complicated, EU’s aim here is to allow for well controlled and filtered immigration while refugees await in Turkey for their applications to be processed. For this burden, EU pledges to fund the Turkish government on its related costs and betterment of the conditions for Syrian refugees. EU governing bodies and sovereign states still need to approve this agreement before it can be effectively put into action.

Therefore a major solution to the refugee crisis is the ending of the war in Syria and a peaceful solution to the internal problems of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. We must remember that these refugee numbers swelled after the US backed coalition military forces interfered and collapsed the ruling governments in these countries, thus paving the way for chaos and disorder. This puts an irrevocable responsibility on the shoulders of the Governments of the Coalition.
Another important task would be to gain the support of taxpayers (citizens) via press, NGO's and other organizations. This support will allow elected governments democratic countries to undertake the costly task of following through Amnesty International’s previously mentioned list of solutions.

Major issues worth thinking and discussing about that arise from these developments are:

• If globalization, through trade, technology, travel, use of international languages, education is a valid and desired phenomenon for products and ideas, should in not also be applicable to people?

• When dealing with refugee crisis shouldn’t nations open their doors for predetermined numbers (% of) with regards to the host nation’s population and wealth?

How ethical is it for nations with negotiation power to admit well selected refugees with education, capital, good health and occupation etc. and leave the rest to others?

Bibliography


