

CLEIMUN19

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Economic and Environmental

QUESTION OF: The Question of the Allocation of Funds Toward Refugee Camps.

AUTHOR: Isabella Capuano

Introduction & Background

The number of refugees has significantly escalated globally within the past five years, being at its highest since World War II. In 1951, the Geneva Convention addressed and laid out the terms of what a refugee is and what forms of aid they can receive from countries that agreed upon the terms from the Convention. Refugees are people that are forced to flee their country because of prosecution, war, or a lack of resources. In 1999 there were 11.7 million refugees. In 2014, there were 14.4 million. Last year (2017) there were 19.9 million refugees. The 1951 Convention stated that no state could return a refugee to a country where a serious threat to their life or freedom lay.

When the number of refugees coming into neighboring countries increased, the need for the establishment of refugee camps also became apparent. Refugee camps were established to provide temporary accommodation for refugees, protection, and allow for lifesaving aid to be administered. Based on the increased number of refugees from the past five years, refugee camps have become overcrowded and are not temporary establishments as they provide prolonged help

for refugees who cannot gain footing outside of them.

What is a Refugee?

There are numerous interpretations of what makes a person qualify as a refugee with many sharing common concepts. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines a refugee as ‘someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence.’ The UNHCR goes on to emphasize that refugees cannot return to their homes or are too afraid to do so due to persecution. Reasons for such persecution would be due to the individual’s race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in certain social groups.

There were over 68.5 million forcibly displaced people in 2017; 25.4 million of those people were refugees. This was a dramatic increase from 2016 as there were only 17.2 million refugees then. Of the 25.4 million refugees in 2017, over 66% of them originated from the same five countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia. This is due to the fact that all are experiencing some form of crisis, from Syria experiencing its seventh consistent year of war or South Sudan with its war increasing the deterioration of its natural resources. Of the refugees seeking resettlement, there are broad parameters which makes them eligible to be relocated. They can fall under any of the categories of women and girls at risk, survivors of violence and/or torture, family reunification, medical needs, children and adolescents at risk, or those who lack ‘foreseeable alternative durable solutions.’ The refugee crisis has attracted the increased attention and formation of many organizations around the world. Some of the said

organizations include the United Nations, the formation of the United Nations Refugee Agency, and World Refugee Day.

What are Refugee Camps?

The establishment of refugee camps increased when the number of incoming refugees increased, leading to a larger need of places to shelter them. Refugee camps are explained by the UNHCR as temporary accommodations (shelters) for refugees which provide immediate protection, safety, and lifesaving aid such as antibiotics, water, and food. The regions hosting the largest numbers of refugees and refugee camps are the Middle East and North Africa at 39%, Africa at 29%, Europe and the Americas at 18% and Asia and the Pacific at 14%. Amongst the top countries are Turkey, Pakistan, Jordan, Ethiopia, and Lebanon. Japan, Russia, and South Korea rank lowest with incoming refugees as they accept 0% of what is considered the 'fair share'.

Based on the increased number of refugees from the past five years, refugee camps have become overcrowded and are not temporary establishments; many refugees are in a state of 'limbo' as they cannot go back to their country but can't gain enough footing to venture out of the camp. In 2015, the UNRA (United Nations Refugee Agency) was underfunded by \$10.3 billion dollars; the cost of just one refugee's basic needs in Jordan is \$3,000 and \$30,000 in Germany and Austria. This underfunding is one of the factors of why these refugees are stuck in this 'limbo'. Although there are laws in place for countries to provide housing, education, etc. for the refugees, the countries and aid organizations do not have enough funding to carry out and

continue the treatment they have previously been using. Due to the fact that the 1951 Convention states that all countries under it must provide housing and education to its refugees, many camps are underfunded and too densely populated.

What was the 1951 Refugee Convention?

The 1951 Refugee Convention established the main international laws regarding what a refugee is, the protection of them by other countries, and the treatment they have to show to the country they're staying in. The Convention highlighted what a refugee is and its difference from a migrant. The main difference between the two is that migrants are people who leave their country for a multitude of reasons, one of them not being persecution, and still being under the protection from their home country. Refugees, on the other hand, are forced to leave due to persecution and are not under, or lacking, the protection of their home country.

The most prominent result of the Convention originates from its 33rd Article- the principle of non-refoulement. This indicates that a refugee should not be sent back to a country where they face a serious threat to their life or freedom. Other noteworthy results of the Convention were the rights to housing, education, freedom of religion, and the ability to access the courts. Following the Convention, the 1967 Protocol made an amendment to the law changing the prime protection of refugees from Europe to the whole world as refugees spread internationally.

Past Efforts To Solve This Problem

The United Nations has continuously kept attention on refugees and refugee camps since the 1950s, most prominently after the Second World War. To address the problem of refugees and their need for shelter and protection, the 1951 Geneva Convention (the 1951 Refugee Convention) was put together to create the basic international laws and regulations regarding refugees. All but 43 countries within the United Nations have still not signed for the Convention or any of the following Protocols. The UN also created the UNRA and UNHCR to address the different facets of the issue; they are the main organizations that address the aid and camps for the refugees. Other organizations that give attention to the issue are the International Rescue Committee, Jusoor, and Médecins Sans Frontières amongst many others.

Possible Solutions

The issue of the allocation of funds toward refugee camps not only influences the refugees in said camps but also the countries that they are being taken place in. This is an international issue that affects almost every single country in some sort of way, may it be from funding to letting refugees in and everything in-between. Delegates are urged to come up with a way to address this issue while keeping in mind the pre-existing laws and regulations. The increase in knowledge of this refugee 'crisis' is important to spread as it can increase awareness and prompt an initiative to be taken. Due to the fact that many of the camps are underfunded and refugees are getting 'stuck' as the numbers of occupants continue to grow, this issue should be addressed with a degree of urgency. The focus for the solutions to this problem is to come up with a way to address the funding of refugee camps as the number of refugees continues to grow before this becomes an international emergency.

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