EXPLORING THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS: POLYGENESIS, MANAGEMENT, AND RESETTLEMENT

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**Nomenclature: Refugee or Migrant?**

- **migrant** – “a person who goes from one place to another especially to find work”
- **refugee** – “a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster”

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Skopje, Republic of Macedonia, 12 Sept. 2015

Ploštad Makedonija
GENESIS OF THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

Primary Impact Felt by the European Union
- Syrian Civil War (2011-Present)
- Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan (1994-Present)
- Spread of the Islamic State (1999-Present)
- Somali Civil War (1991-Present)
- Warfare in the Democratic Republic of Congo (1996-Present)
- Boko Haram in Western Africa (2002-Present)
- Legislative Change (e.g. Macedonia)
- etc.

Primary Impact Felt by the USA
- Violence in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, etc.

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An ideological movement, the Arab Spring, swept across Northern Africa and the Middle East, leaving people with an outlet for their discontent.

The government of Bashar al-Assad swiftly put down protesters with violence, ultimately leading to the start of the Syrian Civil War (2011-Present).

Complexity?

- Syrian Armed Forces (Assad)
- National Defense Force (Assad)
- Assyrian Defense Force
- Hezbollah
- Islamic State (IS)
- Islamic Front
- al-Nusra
- Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (Kurds)
- Free Syrian Army
- Foreign Nations (USA, Russia, Iran, UK, Saudi Arabia, etc.)
Legislative Change: Macedonia Case Study

- Mere presence was initially criminalized.
- Refugees crossing the border were doing so illegally and could face legal consequences.
- If someone wanted to remain under the radar, public transportation was not an option.
- Successful lobbying of the government allowed a legislative change in June 2015: Refugees now had three days (or seventy-two hours) to pass through the transit country. Public transportation could now be utilized (prices also increased from 6€ to 25€).

**Result? Travel through the Balkans now became a viable option.**
\[ \approx 60,000,000 \]

FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE
The Journey to Europe

- North African route is less widely traveled now, as refugees opt for the safer, though still extremely dangerous, Balkan route.
- Going from Turkey to Bulgaria eliminates travel across the Aegean Sea, but leaves open much greater possibilities for theft, rape, and violence.
- Camps are divided into two types:
  - **transit** – individuals simply acquire the resources they need and continue on the journey
  - **registration** – individuals are required to obtain documentation (hours to days) prior to continuing
The Tabanovce Refugee Camp is located at the northernmost part of the Republic of Macedonia and meets the southern Serbian border.

Refugees arrive aboard a train from Gevgelija at the southernmost part of the Republic of Macedonia (approx. 4 hours).

They are told to depart the train upon arrival and gather whatever they might need before continuing, i.e. food, water, milk for babies, blankets, socks, shoes, sanitary products for women, etc.

They walk from the station in Tabanovce, Macedonia, to Miratovac and Preševo, Serbia. The former is a transit camp; the latter, registration.
MACEDONIAN-SERBIAN BORDER

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The Moria Detention Center is located on Lesvos Island, Greece, only a few kilometers from Mytilini, the capital of the island.

Refugees arrive via dinghy (typically) at the northern coast of the island. Most are in need of warm clothing and hot food to prevent hypothermia.

Only Syrian families get expedited processing at Kara Tepe, while the non-Syrians (e.g. Afghans, Iraqis, etc.) and Syrian singles go to Moria.

Refugees receive a number upon arrival, wait for their number to be listed, and then receive their documentation. This can take days.

After receiving the paperwork, they walk to the Port of Mytilini, purchase a ticket for the ferry, and travel to Athens, Greece.
PORT OF MYTILINI

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**Selection of Negative Responses to Refugees**

- “We could take 800 Muslims, but we don't have any mosques in Slovakia, so how can Muslims be integrated if they are not going to like it here?” - Ivan Metik, *Slovakia* (21 Aug. 2015)
- “I feel like a tourist on a beach in Thailand who is taking a picture of a small wave in the distance, not knowing that it will kill him.” - Miloš Zeman, *Czech Republic* (7 Sep. 2015)
- “Masses of young men in their twenties with beards singing *Allahu Akbar* across Europe. It’s an invasion that threatens our prosperity, our security, our culture and identity” - Geert Wilders, *Netherlands* (10 Sep. 2015)
- “Don’t feed refugees; otherwise more will come” – Carl Decaluwé, *Belgium* (4 Feb. 2016)
NEGATIVE RESPONSES: HUNGARY CASE STUDY

- Completion of a wall on Hungarian-Serbian border (108 miles, up to 10’ high)
- Development of walls at the Hungarian-Croatian and Hungarian-Slovenian borders in progress, the latter which is purported to contain a razor-wire fence
- Rubber bullets, water cannons, and tear gas used against refugees
- Parents and children separated from one another
- Forcing refugees to sign Hungarian-language admission of guilt
- Taking refugees to internment camps under guise of Germany/Austria

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PROCEDURE FOR RESETTLEMENT: VETTING PROCESS

1. Refugees apply for status through UNHCR. Personal information is collected, and interviews are undertaken. (<1% are eligible to be resettled in the USA.)

2. A Resettlement Support Center (RSC) abroad collects personal information and creates a file prior to security clearing.

3. Background checks are conducted by the National Counterterrorism Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of State.

4. Applicants are interviewed by an officer with the Department of Homeland Security, and fingerprints are taken.
5. Fingerprints are cross-referenced with databases from the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense.

6. A medical evaluation is conducted, and treatment is provided for typical illnesses.

7. Applicants register for cultural orientation classes, and a federally-designated resettlement agency decides on the final location.

8. Airfare is booked – a new life begins.

**NOTE:** The application process takes one to two years. Refugees must ultimately reimburse the government for the airfare, and a green card application is required within a year of arrival. More screenings follow.
NATIONAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

- World Relief [www.wr.org](http://www.wr.org)
- International Rescue Committee [www.theirc.org](http://www.theirc.org)
- Church World Service [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service [www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org)
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants [www.refugees.org](http://www.refugees.org)
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society [www.hias.org](http://www.hias.org)
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)
- Ethiopian Community Development Council [www.ecdcinternational.org](http://www.ecdcinternational.org)
- Episcopal Migration Ministries [www.episcopalchurch.org/emm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/emm)
**MY RESPONSIBILITIES?**

- Raised awareness domestically and internationally about the crisis and relief efforts
- Coordinated efforts among independent volunteers globally
- Organized and packaged food items for distribution
- Distributed food, water, milk, clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, etc.
- Unloaded large deliveries of donated items
- Translated (German) and coordinated translation (Arabic, Farsi/Dari, Pashto, Urdu)
- Started nightly fires for families sleeping outside in Macedonia and Greece
- Guided large groups from the Tabanovce Refugee Camp to the Serbian border
- Provided directional support along the Balkan Route
- Identified vulnerable families for temporary, limited accommodation in the Moria Detention Center
- Provided information about border policies, routes, and types and prices of public transportation
- Participated in the Muslim burial proceedings of victims at sea
- Lobbied the mayor of Mytilini for the allocation of land for burials
- Assisted in the emergency rescue of a boat at an atypical landing site

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A Volunteer’s Phrasebook

- “I’m sorry.”
- “Assalamu alaikum.”
- “We don’t have any left.”
- “Blankets only for children.”
- “I’m sorry.”
- “Only one, please.”
- “Let me check.”
- “Shway, shway.”
- “Do you need a doctor?”
- “I’m sorry.”
- “I’ll be right back. Wait here.”
- “OK, do we have anything?!?”
- “Where are you sleeping?”
- “I’m sorry.”
- “Do we have a translator?”
- “Food? Halal. Balash.”
- “I’m sorry.”
Questions?

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