

Impact of Conflict in Neighboring Countries: The Refugee Crises

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Introduction

“Civil wars should be considered as international problem, since they almost always affect and involves neighboring states, thereby undermining regional stability” (Brown, 1996:03).

Armed conflicts have the tendency to influence beyond its boundaries. There is ample of research has proved that the effect of conflict on host countries. Moreover, there is also tendency to look at effect of conflict in one country to its neighbors. The effects of armed conflicts are not only felt to the people in conflict countries but also in neighboring countries and beyond. In a world of increasing demand for globalization, states are no longer exist in isolation but influenced their interaction and exposure to the activities of other states (Gleditsch, 2003). According to the report of World Bank (2003) noted that civil war has spillover effects for both neighboring countries and the entire international community.

Armed conflicts may also include protracted wars involving either single or many stakeholders. Due to this the impact of a conflict in one country or region inevitably surpasses national boundaries. It can affect a country’s economic, social, historical, religious, political, geographical and cultural fabric as well as that of other countries or

regions (DNP Education Partnership, 2015). Murdoch and Sandler (2002a, 2002b) stated that better understanding of civil wars, not only on a host country's economic growth but also on its neighbor's growth, is essential to improve the effectiveness of foreign assistance to developing countries. According to UNHCR's annual Global Trends Report, World at War, released on 18 June 2015, globally, one in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or asylum seeker. If consider this total number as a population of a country it take 24th largest country in the world.

Due to lack of literature about impact on conflict in neighboring international community has paid its attention to sort out what are the severe impacts that huge number of refugee can have on the social, economic, and political life of host countries. Since the arrival of refugees it's required to access scarce resources of land, water, housing, food, and medical coverage along with local citizens. After some years their need increase demanding natural resources, education and health, transportation, social services, and employment. For this crisis has been proven by Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt sheltering an unrelenting flood of Syrian refugees, saving lives and providing protection. These five countries host more than 2.1 million registered Syrian refugees, as stated by UNHCR Head, Antonio Guterres on 30 September 2013 (DNP Education Partnership, 2015). Apart from increasing the probability of conflict, the most immediate effect which faces by neighboring countries is the large scale of refugee population arrival and consequences of this move for the population thereafter. Moreover, on the other hand refugees stay in hosted countries long after the civil war ends, the social effects of civil war on neighboring countries also continue well into peace time (World Bank, 2003).

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the main goal is to protect refugees and their rights, and to resolve worldwide refugee problem. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees; to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. When UNHCR was found there were only 34 staff members and by the end of 2015 it has increased by contribution of national and international members of staff over 89% numerally more than 10,130 staff particularly based in the field. The agency works in 127 countries, with regional, branch, sub, and field officers (UNHCR). Taking into account the data of

refugee crises in the last two decades, it shows that UNHCR and other agencies working in the refugee crisis are struggling to respond to and meet all the humanitarian needs they face. The budget of UNHCR in response to global refugee crises has grown from USD 300,000 in its first year to USD 7 billion in 2015 (UNHCR).

Understanding the Refugee Crisis

“A refugee is a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...” (The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in UNHCR).

The issue of refugee crisis has taken higher attention from the globe due to the consequences face by the refugees. UNHCR’s annual report, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015, released on 20 June 2016 discloses, worldwide displacement was at the highest level ever recorded. Moreover, it traces, at the end of 2015 the number of people displaced by force has been increased by 65.3% million compared to 59.5% million a year and 37.5% million a decade ago.

Contemporary world the big problem is risk of refugee lives in search safety. 2015 has seen as massive increase of asylum seekers. Indeed, sea arrival refugees across the world not only the Mediterranean but also Gulf of Aden, the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea and Caribbean as well (DNP Education Partnership). It has been questioned by people why refugees flee from their home country keeping their life in risk. The answer was hope of free from fear and insecurity finding safer place in another territory other than their home.

According to UNHCR Population Statistics, prior to 2014, the numbers of refugees arriving via the Mediterranean to European coasts have ranged 10,000 to 70,000 each year. By the time of 2014 number has increased to 200,000 and in 2015 over one million refugees have arrived on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Table 1 : Arrival by Sea from January 2008 to October 2016 across the Mediterranean

Year	Number of Refugees
2008	59,000
2009	56,252
2010	9,654
2011	70,402
2012	22,439
2013	59,421
2014	216,054
2015	1,015,078
2016	333,940

(Source: Based on latest available figures from four countries (Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain), Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean, Regional Overview, UNHCR, Accessed on 01 November 2016).

The Refugee Situation in the World

The ever growing number of internally displaced people, or IDPs, i.e. who have not crossed an international border in search of shelter and safety also rapidly increased throughout the decades parallel to refugees and asylum seekers. IDPs are the one most vulnerable due to their protections remain under their own government. Surprisingly at the end of 2015, 40.8 million of people were forcibly displaced within their own country by violence. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council’s Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) 11 million of IDPs were uprooted during 2014, equal to 30,000 people a day. Iraqi civilians suffered by displacement, with at least 2.2 million displaced in 2014, while 7.6 million people in Syria’s population have been displaced being highest number in the world. The conflict in Syria has forced 2.3 million people to flee Syria into neighboring countries. According to UNODA, as Syria’s war heads towards a fifth year, the United Nations and partners requested over US\$8.4 billion in funds to help nearly 18 million people in Syria and across the region in 2015.

Table 2 : Global Overview of Conflict-related IDPs (in million) from 1995 to 2015

Year	IDPs (in million)
1995	22
1996	19.7
1997	17.4
1998	19.3
1999	21.3
2000	21.2
2001	25
2002	25
2003	24.6
2004	25.3
2005	23.3
2006	24.4
2007	26
2008	26
2009	27
2010	27.5
2011	26.4
2012	28.8
2013	33.3
2014	38
2015	40.8

(Source: Global Internal Displacement Database (GIDD), International Displacement Monitoring Center, Accessed on 02 November 2016.

While many people found people fleeing to other countries as migrant problem Mediterranean crisis found as refugee crisis. According to the date provided by UNHCR,

in the first half of 2015, close to 130 thousand people have attempted to cross through Mediterranean during a six month of period.

Table 3 : Number of Dead/Missing Persons via Mediterranean Sea Crossings from January 2008 to October 2016

Year	Number of Dead/Missing Persons
2010	20
2011	1,500
2012	500
2013	600
2014	3,500
2015	3,771
2016	3,949

(Source: Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean, Regional Overview, UNHCR, Accessed on 02 November 2016).

In addition, South Sudan can show up as another example which bears more than 30,000 South Sudanese fled to neighboring countries since December 2013. Moreover, UNHCR on 31 March 2014 has revealed that Sudanese arrived to Ethiopia is over 2,000 a day and 200 in Uganda. Overall, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Sudan bear up over 100,000 Sudan refugees.

Consequences of Conflict

As stated by UNDP during the press release on 8 January 2014, the conflict in Syria has reversed human development achievement by 35 years in just 36 months of conflict. It has left more than 50% of the population living in poverty, 9.3 million in need of humanitarian and development assistance and 6.5 million displaced from their homes. Moreover, it has forced 2.3 million of people to flee Syrian into neighboring countries. The noticeable thing in Syria is nearly 80% of the refugees do not live in refugee camps but amidst host communities, highly impacting municipal and social service, such as health, education, sanitation, housing and socio-economic infrastructure, as well as social cohesion in those communities. Nevertheless, the press release by UNHCR on 18

December 2014 stated when Syrian war headed towards its fifth year, UN and partners launched over USD 8.4 billion funds to help nearly 18 million peoples humanitarian and development across Syrian region.

Conflict deeply and most violently, affects women, children and the indigent. Considering, UNOCHA in November 2014 indicated that from the beginning of Syrian conflict over 191,000 people were killed, over 1 million injured, and 12.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance including more than 5 million children. Furthermore, the Amnesty International published in 3 February 2016 revealed nearly 4.5 million of Syrian refugees have fled to its neighboring countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt.

Table 4 : Number of Syrian Refugees in Neighbouring Countries

Country	# of Syrian Refugees
Lebanon	1.1 million
Jordan	635, 324
Turkey	2.5 million
Iraq	3.8 million
Egypt	117,658

Source: News: Syria’s Refugee Crisis in Number, Amnesty International, published on 03 February 2016 and accessed on 02 November 2016.

Moreover, report published by UNHCR on 7 June 2013, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that 6.8 million Syrians are in emergence of humanitarian assistance.

Considering the Yemen, almost half of Yemenis children are in risk of severe malnutrition. As a result of Yemen conflict four children have died every day (DNP Education Partnership). UNHCR has provided its continuous protection to the two urban areas: Sana and Basateen neighborhood in Aden. As shown by December 2015 UNHCR, in 2015 Yemen received 92,446 new arrivals on Yemen’s Arabian and Red Sea coasts.

Table 5 : Top 10 Nationalities Comprising 77% of Mediterranean Sea Arrivals from January to October in 2016

Country	% of Arrivals
Syrian Arab Republic	26%
Afghanistan	14%
Nigeria	9%
Iraq	8%
Eritrea	5%
Pakistan	3%
Guinea	3%
Gambia	3%
Sudan	3%
Cote d'Ivoire	3%

Source: Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean, Regional Overview, UNHCR, accessed on 02 November 2016.

Nevertheless, conflict worsens poverty by undermining economic development. Political instability and armed violence not only limited to development in neighboring countries, but also refugees, cross-border crime, human trafficking, and terrorism. The results the impact destroys about USD 100 billion annually. It is not easy to find answers for these challenges. According to Jordan factsheet published by UNHCR on October 2015, World Food Programme has allocated USD 139.4 million, including USD 139 million for the Syria responses and USD 390 thousand for the Iraq situation.

Rebuilding the Lives of Refugees

UNHCR has found three possible solutions for refugees: repatriation; local integration or resettlement. Refugee resettlement helps about 100,000 refugees a year to start a new life in a new country. But, it is a hope yet that millions of refugees around the world are going home. In Afghanistan 50,500 Afghan refugees returned home and 948,000 Afghans have been listed as IDP. As UNHCR's annual report, Global Trends: Force Displacement in 2015, reveals, the total number of Afghans labeled to be refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs,

returnees and those Others of concerns to UNHCR is around 1.767,291 people (UNODA).

Table 6 : Total Number of Afghans Labelled to Be Refugees, IDPs, Asylum Seekers, Returnees and Others of Concerns to UNHCR in 2015

Label	# of Persons
Refugees and people in refugee-like situations (assisted by UNHCR)	257,554
IDPs and people in IDP-like situations (assisted by UNHCR)	1,174,306
Asylum seekers (pending cases)	82
Returned refugees	61,379
Returned IDPs	123,653
Others of concern to UNHCR	150,317

Source: Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015, Annual Report, UNHCR, published on 20 June 2016 and accessed on 02 November 2016.

As the report, suggests, since 2002, 4.7 million refugees have returned under the UNHCR voluntary repatriation programme. In 2014 it was 16,769 which were 56% lower than in 2013. This situation has been changed in 2015 reaching rapidly increasing returnees by 50,053 at the end of August. But in the case of South Africa, living in Pretoria as a refugee or asylum-seeker is challenging. Most of the refugees live on the streets or cramped apartments. To improve the situation UNHCR has adopted a project on skill development to facilitate employment. Among all the direct and indirect effects of civil war, most deaths in neighboring countries particularly in Africa were causes of infectious diseases especially Malaria (World Bank, 2003).

Conclusion

Protecting refugees is the core mandate of UNHCR. Both refugees and internally displaced people are the result of armed and all kind of conflict and intolerance. Though the refugees cared by UNHCR there is no international organization to care internally displaced persons. Both refugees and IDPs pose a threat to political, sociological, and economic stability in both local and neighboring states. For lasting solutions for armed

conflict international communities are assisting effectively in violent conflict countries rebuilding their shattered societies.

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