

# Mediterranean Strategy Group 19

## Migration: Mediterranean Cities on the Frontline

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# Migration situation

The nations' biggest concern for the future isn't pollution or climate change – it's immigrants.

- Worldwide, there is an estimated 250 million immigrants
- The last 50 years has seen an almost doubling of immigration
- 75% live in just 28 countries



Demographic forces, globalization and environmental degradation mean that the migration pressures across borders will likely increase in the coming decades.

The refugee crisis dominates the image of immigration.

# Situation of Arab countries

- 57 million Arabs don't read or write
- 13.5 million Arabs children didn't attend school for the academic year 2017-2018.
- 30 million Arabs are living under the poverty line.
- 8% increase in poverty rates last two years
- 14 million Arabs were displaced.

# Refugees and refugee protection have become global issues

1. There is no region of the world not affected, whether as a producer or a receiver of refugees, or as a country of transit.
2. The causes of migration form a broad spectrum, including:
  - forced migration, due to persecution, conflict, environmental issues and violation of human rights;
  - economic and voluntary migration;
  - Asylum seekers
  - In addition to the internal transfer

This variety creates a challenge for the specific needs of refugee protection. And strategic planning for cities and new compounds.

3. There is a record high of 65.6 million person forcibly displaced due to conflict, persecution and human rights violations, according to the UNHCR, of which 22.5 million are refugees and 2.8 million are asylum seekers.
4. Lebanon is the distinguished case in the world, we've all kind of migration

# The refugees are caught up in a circle of constant human rights violations sometimes through the polices e.g.:

- Push backs: not allowing refugees to cross border, or even returning them after they have reached the border
- Transfer agreements (EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan)
- Violation of the principle of non-refoulement (some countries are pushing the immigrants to return them to their countries in which they would be in danger)
- Violation of human rights, such as detention of migrants, violations of the right of life...
- Lack of respect to specific vulnerabilities (such as those of children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities)

# Refugees situation

**“while refugees are already victims of human right violations, the current international scenario is re-victimizing them”**

The refugees crises underscores a lack of political will to protect refugees.

This is reflected by:

- Closing of border (returning Asylum seekers)
- Securitization of migration (pushing an area of regular politics, such as asylum, into an area of security)
- Criminalization of migration and of migrants (in an irregular situation)

# Situation of poor countries hosting Syrian refugees

- High numbers of Refugees in comparison to the number of permanent residents of poor countries,
- Limited capacities of local communities and labor market to absorb the increasing numbers of displaced.
- Living conditions of residents declined and poverty levels increased.
- Additional pressure on resources and on the already limited social services: education, health, electricity...
- High influx of displaced that exacerbated the problems of infrastructure and the need for maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Fierce competition of displaced Syrians in the labor market that led to the transfer of youth, that accept any job opportunity abroad even if working conditions are very hard. (Lebanon case) transfer

# Case of Lebanon

- The term refugee does not exist in Lebanese law, which only refers to the status of asylum seeker as it appears in the 1962 Law Regulating the Entry
- The 1991 bilateral agreement between Lebanon and Syria oversees the entry procedures of Syrian and Lebanese nationals to each other's countries without a visa, by only showing their identity cards.
- Entry policy and regulations are not based on a clear and long-term state strategy, it rather managed by ad hoc decisions that follow the unfolding of the crisis and its repercussions.
- Lebanon did not officially established camps and did not enact a comprehensive national policy, so it was left to the municipalities to cope with the new challenges in addition to the already country's internal problems which is suffering from. The pressure still high: water network, electricity, garbage collection, job market, and housing... CMI

# Migration situation in Lebanon

- More people than ever before are moving in search of safety, livelihoods, education, or opportunities. Also the movement from rural to urban areas, as a form of domestic migration, has led to a rapid urbanization.
- Lebanon is the Arab country with the longest history of emigration. Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, the emigration flows were a response to a number of factors, WW1, occupation, WW2, Palestinians transfer, Israeli invasion, civil war. And I hope that the Syrian crisis will be the end.
- 3.5 M of Lebanese Population are living in Lebanon, the other 16 M are living abroad, and despite that we have 700,000 Palestinian refugees, 1,982M Syrian refugees and 200,000 migrants from different nationalities.
- Lebanon hosts 35% of refugees in MENA
- Registered 6M 45% migrants

# Financial aid

- The financial burden on Jordan and Lebanon to provide for refugee populations already surpasses their national capacities, forcing them to rely heavily on unreliable international assistance.
- Although UN member states pledged \$12 billion for host countries at the 2016 “Supporting Syria and the Region” donor conference in London and an additional \$6 billion at the 2017 “Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region” donor conference in Brussels, they consistently fall short of fulfilling these pledges.
- Lebanon’s national Response Plan (LRP) only received 54 percent of pledged funding in 2015, decrease to 46 percent in 2016 and 43 percent in 2017.
- The pledge for Lebanon is not real because only 1.25% of this amount is transferred to Municipalities

# Cities in crisis

- Cities in Lebanon have significantly developed beyond their administrative borders in a very chaotic and unplanned way;
- The majority of the Lebanese population lives in cities; Beirut and its suburbs host around 40% of the total population;
- Center-towns have transformed into large hubs, receiving 10s of thousands of people migrating from remote areas seeking better living conditions;
- Existing planning fiscal and administrative frameworks haven't been adjusted to cope with the significant urban changes;
- Increased pressure on basic services and housing have led to everlasting problem of lack of sufficient services and inadequate housing.

# Crisis in cities

- Cities include large numbers of poor and vulnerable population; The 4 key coastal cities, Beirut, Tripoli, Saida and Sour, host 67 % of the total population of the country, 90% of the Palestine refugees, and 35% of Syrian refugees;
- Increased vulnerability led to increased risks on the cities at different levels (services, housing, security, tension amongst different social and ethnic groups and drug addiction and high unemployment rates among the youth);
- Central and local governments were not able to put in place coping mechanisms and therefore, original and newly formed cities witnessed the creation of slums and informal settlements mainly established around the center of cities, forming poverty belts; (Tripoli)(Choked city)
- Deteriorated economic situation has diminished the middle class, widen the gap between rich and poor, increasing urban disparities;
- The impoverished area in Lebanon and the vulnerability of refugees are similar
- Syrian refugees transform villages (touristic) to cities as camps. Dannieh ersal

- The high numbers of Syrian displaced in comparison to the number of permanent residents in area and the limited capacities of local communities and the labor market to absorb the increasing numbers of displaced.
- **Living conditions** of Dannieh residents declined and poverty levels increased.
- Additional pressure was put on resources and on the already limited **social services**: education, health, electricity...
- The high influx of displaced exacerbated the problems of infrastructure and the need for maintenance and rehabilitation.
- the influx of Syrian displaced and their residence in apartments which occupied by tourists in summer destroyed the **tourism** in the area.
- Deteriorating the **agriculture** sector that is providing about 70% of the income in the region: the Syrian crisis hampers the transit of goods through Syria and led to a drop of prices.
- The fierce competition of displaced Syrians in the labor market has led to the **transfer** of youth, that accept any job opportunity abroad even if working conditions are very hard.(resettlement)

## **Despite the above mentioned situation, the Union of Dannieh Municipalities have done a lot of efforts in this domain concerning:**

- Social Cohesion and Governance Program aimed at mitigating tensions and resource-based tensions between the Lebanese host community and the Syrian Refugee community.
- Strengthening local government structures between municipalities and Unions of Municipalities.
- Improving educational services for greater integration of young Syrian and Lebanese people into the labor market and for strengthening social cohesion between them.
- Working under a participatory approach and in cooperation with Local NGOs.
- Developing mix committees for conflict resolution.
- Distribute the potable water by water tanks

# Poorer countries host most of the forcibly displaced

- What's the difference between refugees and country punished to serve them without support?
- In Netherlands e.g. the EU paid 24000€ yearly to the hosting municipality on each refugee because the municipality is the only one in charge to serve the refugees
- In Lebanon the Municipalities didn't get any support and the pledges paid to the government was as in kind contributions as settlement of part of interest to the world bank or to create jobs for NGOs or for refugees... pales. Way

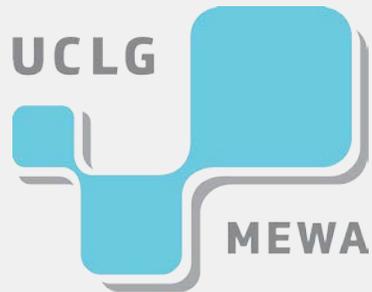
# Refugees are the victims of crisis

- Protection strategies need to be redesigned, reformulated, and implemented in different ways.
- No country can manage the refugee issue on their own, cross border challenges demand cross border solutions.
- We should elaborate for refugees a long term strategy and one strategy applicable in all countries in the world based on human rights and conducted by UN .
- Do not use the refugees in the interest of major powers.
- They talk about humanity and SDG's and act as dictators

# Opinion

- In Lebanon there's no climate change or cities changes only, we've been through demographic changes which will lead to bad results and conflicts and it's time to save this country because Lebanon is the last and end line of defense against troubles and terrorism in the Mediterranean.
- Lebanon now under resettlement operations.
- Lebanese people change their ID to Syrian ... food for whales and fish
- This Mediterranean will remain witness to secrets that no longer want to know decision makers.
- If the world now is busy by refugees and hosting we will insist to work for humanity wherever and whatever and without any kind of discrimination
- Thanks a lot for GMF and CMI and all organizers and we should be positive and optimistic to can survive, this is not an option, it's imposed.

# Thank you



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