

***REFUGEE POLICY GOVERNANCE
AFTER CONFLICT AND CRISIS –
TOWARDS AN ARAB REGIONAL
APPROACH?***

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THE ONGOING MENA REFUGEE AND IDP CRISIS

- Global refugee crisis of 79.5 million displaced people
- 6.6 Million Syrian Refugees globally, of which 5.6 Million (85%) are registered refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey
- 6.1 Million Internally Displaced People inside Syria (IDP's)
- 4 Million Internally Displaced People inside Yemen
- In Lebanon 90% of over 865,000 Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty
- COVID-19 has increased poverty and made access to help and resources harder for refugees and communities around them (an estimated 1.1 Million Syrians are in poverty because of the pandemic)
- According to March 2021 UNHCR survey, 90% of Syrian refugees in Arab countries do not intend to return to Syria in the coming year



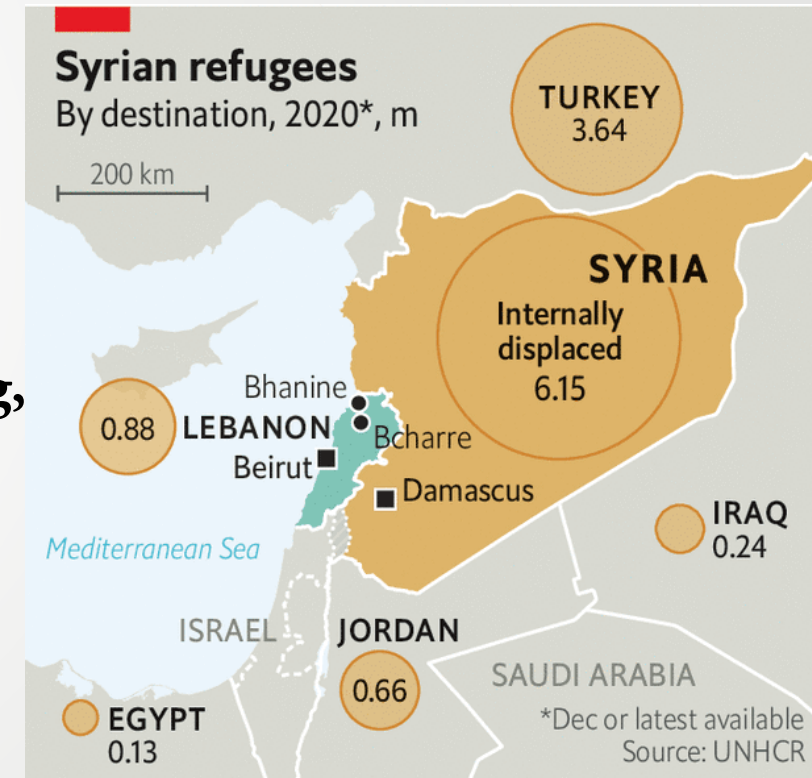
MAJOR COMPONENTS OF ADDRESSING THE CRISIS

- International Refugee Law – 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol
- 2018 Global Refugee Compact voted by UN General Assembly
- UNHCR
- Individual MENA refugee host states: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey
- Individual MENA states providing aid and hosting of some refugees: most GCC states
- Global Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) with 270 partner organizations
 - \$14 billion channeled to help both refugees and host communities
- International partnership from one major host government, funders and EU (Jordan Compact)
 - WHAT'S MISSING?



WHY A REGIONAL APPROACH?

- With many countries largely closed to Syrian refugees and most living across the MENA region, the issue is already a regional one
- Language and cultural barriers for education and work are low
- Security and long-term economic costs to region are daunting, especially when Yemen is included as part of the ongoing crisis
- Support and good will for welcoming and helping refugees is strong, even if compassion fatigue and declining resources are problems
- Relatively few barriers to cooperation on this issue could make it a model for broader Arab and overall regional policy coordination



The Economist

WHY -NOT- A REGIONAL APPROACH?

- Inter-Arab regional organizations and policy coordination have been weak
- Recent Saudi-led boycott of Qatar and engagement with different Syrian factions has made GCC joint purpose and work harder
- Broader regional politics around Iran, Turkey and Russia complicate collaborative efforts
- Prior regional engagement on Syria and Yemen have been more adversarial than collaborative
- States in region are reluctant to sign international refugee treaties because of concerns around citizenship, integration and security, as well as frustration with Western state postures



TOWARDS A WAY FORWARD...

- Accept that many countries may not sign international refugee treaties or admit most refugees
- Use national refugee legislation (like Qatar's) and new general (GRC) and regional (3RP) frames as scaffolding for modest regional coordination and policy connections
- = Couple GCC aid to regional scheme to support structural and economic development where refugees currently are
- This could be a low-stakes opportunity for confidence-restoration among GCC states.
- The above could be concretized into a MENA regional framework or organization around refugees like the 1965 Casablanca Protocol (for Palestinian refugees) or 1994 Arab Convention on the Status of Refugees in Arab Countries
- KEY is willingness for strong states to make effort and use soft power to make a regional scheme work