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Immigration

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# Aiding Lebanon with Its Refugee Crisis

Author: Rylan Maksoud from the Kinkaid School, TX

The United States has a population of about 323 million people.<sup>1</sup> Now imagine if 64 million of those 323 million people were poor Syrian refugees. Many people probably can't imagine how that would impact their lives and the nation. However, Lebanon is living that situation right at this very moment. The United States should aid Lebanon with its Syrian refugee crisis with monetary aid, training, and intelligence.

Lebanon cannot cope with the number of Syrian refugees that have flooded in since the start of the Syrian Civil War. There are 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Lebanon is already buckling under the weight of 500,000 Palestinian refugees.<sup>3</sup> So the total number of refugees in Lebanon is 2 million in a country of 4 million.<sup>4</sup> To compare these numbers with the United States, that is the equivalent of 170 million refugees flooding into the U.S. These would be 170 million people living in abject poverty, in makeshift huts and shelters, scattered all over the place.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the United States has accepted just 2,174 Syrian refugees since 2012.<sup>6</sup> That's only about 0.0007% of the U.S. population. The scale of what is happening in Lebanon is unheard of elsewhere. According to the UNHCR, Lebanon has the highest per capita number of displaced people, more than double the next nine countries combined!<sup>7</sup> Lebanon's infrastructure was already strained before this massive influx of refugees. For example, in 2012, electricity consumption exceeded 2,400 MW during the day, but the government only produced 1,500 MW.<sup>8</sup> The difference is made up for with rolling blackouts and private generators. Also, in 2012, 27% of the population was living in poverty.<sup>9</sup> Now, with 1.5 million new Syrian refugees, it is a wonder how a country that can't even provide basic utilities for its own citizens, manages to function. When it comes to children, the situation is even worse. There are 250,000 Lebanese children in the public school system, but there are 450,000 Syrian refugee children needing education.<sup>10</sup> Somehow, Lebanon has powered through and opened its doors. Lebanon currently educates 200,000 Syrian refugee children through a double-shift system.<sup>11</sup> This

means that there are two school days in one day, so that one school can accommodate double the amount of children. Lebanon plans to accommodate all 450,000 children by the end of the 2016-2017 school year, but desperately needs funds to accomplish this.<sup>12</sup> Lebanon is already drowning in debt and as mentioned before, can't even provide basic electricity services to its people, much less triple the size of its school system on its own. Lebanon wants to provide healthcare, education, and shelter from war until the Syrian refugees can go back, but cannot do so without the help of wealthier nations like the United States. As Khalid Ibo, an 11-year-old Syrian refugee, puts it, "It's better here, because we're not being bombed."<sup>13</sup> From a humanitarian perspective, the United States should feel obliged to help Khalid Ibo and others like him to weather out the deadly storm that has fallen upon Syria and stayed there for the last 5 years.

The United States should also aid Lebanon with its refugee crisis because it is in its best interests to do so. First, there is the issue of terrorism. When children are out of school, or when they live in such abject poverty, they are easy targets for organizations like ISIS to come in and recruit or to use as child labor.<sup>14</sup> Famously demonstrated by the Paris attacks, terrorists can travel from the Middle East easily to strike the Western world. By allowing millions of Syrians to wallow in horrible conditions, the U.S. creates a breeding ground for future terrorists. For example, the Free Syrian Army, the U.S.-backed rebel group, only pays its fighters \$100 a month. Al-Nusra, a terror group, pays its fighters between \$300 and \$400 each month, making the choice of organization clear for any young man in poverty.<sup>15</sup> The effects can be seen partly in the consistent bombings and attacks by ISIS and its affiliates as part of the spillover of the Syrian Civil War into Lebanon.<sup>16</sup> Aid to Lebanon doesn't have to just be monetary. Aid could include security personnel to advise and train the Lebanese government on how to prevent terrorism from taking root in an already fractured country and threatening the Western world. Second, it is in the United States' best interests to relieve some pressure off of its European partners. As previously mentioned, the United States has accepted just 2,174 Syrian refugees since 2012. Meanwhile, European countries have received over a million asylum applications since the start of the war.<sup>17</sup> Germany alone expects to spend 50 billion euros on

Syrian refugees in 2016.<sup>18</sup> By aiding Lebanon with its refugee crisis, the United States will make Lebanon a more habitable place for refugees, reducing the number of refugees that feel the need to flee to Europe. The U.S. will also be able to deflect international criticism alleging that it has not taken its fair share of burden in helping those fleeing Syria.

In conclusion, the United States must aid Lebanon with its Syrian refugee crisis from a humanitarian and moral perspective, as well as a self-interest perspective. Lebanon, a country already fractured and in disarray, could buckle completely at any moment due to the strain placed upon it from 1.5 million new Syrian refugees. Morally, the United States, as a very wealthy country, should feel obliged to help the people who have gone through the worst the world has to offer. In addition, from a self-interest perspective, the United States should work to prevent Lebanon from becoming too great of a terrorist breeding ground, and should work to relieve pressure off of its European partners. Khalid Ibo and others like him don't want to join a terror group. They don't want to starve. They don't want to not go to school. They want to have a normal life just like you. The United States must work to make that happen.

# Solutions to America's Growing Immigration Problem: The Route to Amnesty

Author: Sam Richey from The Kinkaid School, TX

Immigration has quickly become one of the central issues in the 2016 election cycle. Clearly, the immigration system is flawed. Over 11 million undocumented migrants currently lack a legal resident status and live in a perpetual state of fear with regards to deportation. Many on the right have called for an unconditional deportation of all undocumented immigrants. According to their logic, such migrants broke the law by coming to the U.S. illegally, requiring a proportional governmental response via deportation. However, despite what those on the right may say, denying amnesty to undocumented migrants would be a logistical and economic nightmare.

One of the reasons that granting amnesty to all undocumented immigrants is critical is because of the lack of a feasible alternative; it would lead to a massive increase in government expenditures, making it a fruitless operation by the metric that many conservatives value the most: how much it costs. In order to deport someone, the government has to first detain the individual, give him/her a hearing, and finally transport him/her back to his or her country of origin. This might seem like a simple process, yet the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) currently only deports around 400,00 individuals each year.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in order to accommodate the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants currently in the United States, huge investments would be required into not only ICE, but also into the infrastructure necessary to deport migrants. One such investment would be hiring new ICE agents. ICE currently employs around 4,000 agents who are mainly charged with collecting immigrants that are arrested by local authorities.<sup>20</sup> Under any policy of mass-deportation, however, the government would be responsible for conducting raids and finding individuals that are not citizens. While ICE does currently conduct raids on an ad-hoc basis, mass deportation would necessitate an increase in the frequency and size of raids, meaning

that ICE would be forced to find new agents. According to a recent report, ICE would need somewhere around 90,000 agents to successfully deport 11 million undocumented immigrants, given its current efficiency.<sup>21</sup> While this number is certainly an estimate, and the true number of new agents that ICE would be forced to hire and train might be slightly more or less, there is no doubt that the amount of ICE agents would increase, creating a huge burden on tax payers. On top of this new cost, the government would be forced to either open new detention centers or massively expand existing ones.<sup>22</sup> Currently, the average wait for undocumented immigrants between the time of arrest and a deportation hearing is roughly 29 days, meaning that the government is forced to provide food and a place to sleep while immigrants are awaiting trial. Any increase in the amount of deportations would require the government to increase its investment in these overcrowded facilities, buying new beds and more food for the newly arrested undocumented immigrants. What is more, only about half of the undocumented immigrants in the United States are from Mexico, meaning that the government would be on the hook to pay for millions of airline tickets to get migrants from Asia, Central America, and elsewhere back to their native countries.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, the American Action Forum estimates that all of these costs will amount of about \$400 billion, clearly making it ineffective in the eyes of conservatives.<sup>24</sup> To conclude, absent amnesty, investments would need to be made at nearly every level of the immigration system which would ultimately cost tax payers hundreds of billions of dollars.

Irrespective of the costs of such an operation, however, logistical challenges would make deporting the 11 million undocumented immigrants functionally impossible. For starters, it is difficult for ICE to determine whether a person is an illegal immigrant or simply a naturalized/U.S. born citizen. After all, many of the 400,000 deportations each year are simply the result of dumb luck, as local police officers determine that individuals are undocumented after issuing tickets or making traffic stops.<sup>25</sup> Thus, it seems unlikely that all 11 million undocumented migrants would be located and deported since there is no method for the federal government to systematically determine who is and who is not a citizen. On top of

that, however, ICE is notoriously inefficient. For instance, in one worksite raid, ICE invested nearly 1,000 agents over a 17-month span, yet deported less than 200 undocumented migrants.<sup>26</sup> These bureaucratic inefficiencies and red tape that ICE goes through to deport migrants involves months (and in many cases, years) of investigation, making deporting 11 million undocumented immigrants shockingly unrealistic and time consuming. To conclude, even if Congress were willing to redirect the funds necessary for such an operation, it seems unlikely that it would ever be a success.

However, were such an operation to be successful, another major advantage to granting amnesty to undocumented migrants would be the economic ramifications of deporting all of the undocumented migrants in the U.S. According to the American Action Forum, roughly 8 million undocumented immigrants are employed, representing roughly 6.4% of the entire labor force.<sup>27</sup> In other words, any policy of forced deportation would remove roughly 6 out of every 100 workers from the work force. The economic costs would be extreme: business would downsize and enter bankruptcy as demand for labor reached an unsustainable level. As the report notes, the GDP would decrease by about 5.7%.<sup>28</sup> While this decrease in production might seem manageable and irrelevant, it would be nearly as large of a drop in the GDP as was seen at the height of the 2008 recession (which was about a 6.3% drop).<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, deporting all undocumented immigrants would result in a severe tax revenue drop. Specifically, the 8 million employed undocumented immigrants contribute roughly \$12 billion in the form of income, property, and sales taxes.<sup>30</sup> Not only that, between 2004 and 2014, undocumented immigrants contributed over \$100 billion to the Social Security Trust Fund, despite the fact that they will (most likely) never receive Social Security benefits, themselves.<sup>31</sup> In essence, the forced removal of all undocumented immigrants would represent a formidable blow to tax revenues, and would most likely lead the country into some sort of a recession.

To conclude, calling for the deportation of all undocumented migrants in the United States would be an utter disaster, leaving amnesty as the only practical alternative for addressing the immigration issue.

Although some on the left might say that amnesty does not go far enough in addressing the classism and racism that many migrants face, it would improve lives of millions of individuals and set the stage for future reforms, such as granting citizenship to those currently in the U.S. illegally.

# Get in Line!

Author: Jason Yang from the Kinkaid School, TX

Which line should I get in?  
 Should I go to the random lottery line,  
 Calculative employment line,  
 Obscure family line,  
 Or the impossible-to-qualify-for refugee line?<sup>32</sup>

You know what?

I will make my own line since you haven't given me one.  
 And who's going to stop me?  
 Not the businesses, since they get money.<sup>33</sup>  
 Not the great Trump Wall, since visas aren't checked.<sup>34</sup>  
 Not the government, since they get taxes.<sup>35</sup>

"Wetback"  
 Work or Rights  
 Technical Rights<sup>36</sup>  
 But None Protected<sup>37</sup>  
 These things should stop me, but  
 They don't.

What else should stop me is the  
 3000-4000 dollar fees that go to<sup>38</sup>  
 Cartel Bribes  
 Government Bribes  
 Legal Crimes  
 72 Undocumented Immigrants lined up and executed<sup>39</sup>  
 Illegal Crimes  
 Kidnapping, Sexual Violence, Cartel Violence (if the bribes aren't enough  
 But apparently not.)

I am an immigrant.  
 I will keep making my new lines to the US  
 Until there's a line back to me.

<sup>1</sup>Census Bureau, "U.S. and World Population Clock," last modified May 29, 2016, accessed May 29, 2016, <http://www.census.gov/popclock/>.

<sup>2</sup>CNN, "Interview with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi; Interview with Lebanese Education Minister Elias Bou Saab; Behind International Cyber Wars; The Story of Irshad Manji, Muslim Reformer," last modified April 24, 2016, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1604/24/fzgps.01.html>.

<sup>3</sup>UNRWA, "Where We Work," accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>.

<sup>4</sup>CNN, "Interview with Italian Prime."

<sup>5</sup>British Broadcasting Corporation, "Lebanon: The other refugee crisis," last modified September 29, 2015, accessed May 29, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-34386102>.

<sup>6</sup>Lauren Gambino, "Syrian refugees in America: separating fact from fiction in the debate," The Guardian, last modified November 19, 2015, accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/19/syrian-refugees-in-america-fact-from-fiction-congress>.

<sup>7</sup>CNN, "Interview with Italian Prime."

<sup>8</sup>The Daily Star, "EDL boosts power production to 1,500 MW, but far short of demand," last modified January 24, 2012, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Lebanon/2012/Jan-24/160876-edl-boosts-power-production-to-1500-mw-but-far-short-of-demand.ashx>.

<sup>9</sup>World Bank, "Lebanon," accessed May 31, 2016, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/lebanon>.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>CNN, "Interview with Italian Prime."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Anne Barnard, "A Refugee Crisis in Lebanon Hides in Plain Sight," The New York Times, last modified November 12, 2015, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/13/world/middleeast/a-refugee-crisis-in-lebanon-hides-in-plain-sight.html>.

<sup>14</sup>CNN, "Interview with Italian Prime."

<sup>15</sup>Ian Black, "Poverty driving Syrian men and boys into the arms of Isis," The Guardian, last modified May 4, 2016, accessed June 6, 2016, [http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/may/04/poverty-driving-syrian-men-and-boys-into-the-arms-of-isis?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/may/04/poverty-driving-syrian-men-and-boys-into-the-arms-of-isis?CMP=share_btn_tw).

<sup>16</sup>Anne Barnard, "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Blasts That Killed Dozens in Beirut," last modified November 12, 2015, accessed June 2, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/13/world/middleeast/lebanon-explosions-southern-beirut-hezbollah.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/13/world/middleeast/lebanon-explosions-southern-beirut-hezbollah.html?_r=0).

<sup>17</sup>UNHCR, "EUROPE: Syrian Asylum Applications," accessed June 2, 2016, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>.

<sup>18</sup>Andreas Becker, "The costs of the refugee crisis," Deutsche Welle, last modified February 1, 2016, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/the-costs-of-the-refugee-crisis/a-19016394>.

<sup>19</sup>"The Costs of Mass Deportation." WSJ. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-costs-of-mass-deportation-1458342018>.

<sup>20</sup>"The Budgetary and Economic Costs of Addressing Unauthorized Immigration: Alternative Strategies - AAF." AAF. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.americanactionforum.org/research/the-budgetary-and-economic-costs-of-addressing-unauthorized-immigration-alt/>.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>"The Costs of Mass Deportation." WSJ. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-costs-of-mass-deportation-1458342018>.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>"The Budgetary and Economic Costs of Addressing Unauthorized Immigration: Alternative Strategies - AAF." AAF. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.americanactionforum.org/research/the-budgetary-and-economic-costs-of-addressing-unauthorized-immigration-alt/>.

<sup>25</sup>"The Costs of Mass Deportation." WSJ. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-costs-of-mass-deportation-1458342018>.

<sup>26</sup>"Trump and Cruz Want to Deport 11 Million Immigrants. That's Literally Impossible. - FPIF." Foreign Policy In Focus. 2016. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://fpif.org/trump-cruz-want-deport-11-million-immigrants-thats-literally-impossible/>.

<sup>27</sup> "The Costs of Mass Deportation." WSJ. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-costs-of-mass-deportation-1458342018>.

<sup>28</sup> "The Budgetary and Economic Costs of Addressing Unauthorized Immigration: Alternative Strategies - AAF." AAF. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.americanactionforum.org/research/the-budgetary-and-economic-costs-of-addressing-unauthorized-immigration-alt/>.

<sup>29</sup> "The Costs of Mass Deportation." WSJ. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-costs-of-mass-deportation-1458342018>.

<sup>30</sup> US News. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-03-01/study-undocumented-immigrants-pay-billions-in-taxes>.

<sup>31</sup> "Unauthorized Immigrants Paid \$100 Billion Into Social Security Over Last Decade | VICE News." VICE News RSS. Accessed June 1, 2016. <https://news.vice.com/article/unauthorized-immigrants-paid-100-billion-into-social-security-over-last-decade>.

<sup>32</sup> "Why Don't They Just Get in Line?" American Immigration Council, last modified March 14, 2013, accessed May 27, 2016, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/why-don%E2%80%99t-they-just-get-line>.

<sup>33</sup> "Why Don't They Just Get in Line?" American Immigration Council, last modified March 14, 2013, accessed May 27, 2016, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/why-don%E2%80%99t-they-just-get-line>.

The actual immigration quotas are much lower than the business needs for labor. It's possible that quotas are kept low to incentivize illegal immigration so businesses save money (undocumented immigrants do not have any workers rights like minimum wage).

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Dinan, "99 percent of illegal immigrants who overstay visas aren't investigated," The Washington Times, last modified January 20, 2016, accessed May 29, 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jan/20/illegal-immigrants-who-overstay-visas-rarely-investigations?page=all>.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Soergel, "'Undocumented' Immigrants Pay Billions in Taxes," UsNews, last modified March 1, 2016, accessed May 29, 2016, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-03-01/study-undocumented-immigrants-pay-billions-in-taxes>.

<sup>36</sup> "Are Illegal Immigrants Protected By Labor And Employment Laws?" The Warshawsky Firm, last modified February 4, 2013, accessed May 30, 2016, [http://warshawskylawfirm.com/lawyer/2013/02/04/Employment-Law/Are-Illegal-Immigrants-Protected-By-Labor-And-Employment-Laws\\_b16663.htm](http://warshawskylawfirm.com/lawyer/2013/02/04/Employment-Law/Are-Illegal-Immigrants-Protected-By-Labor-And-Employment-Laws_b16663.htm); "Undocumented Workers: Employment Rights," Legal Aid Society- Employment Law Center, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://las-elc.org/fact-sheets/undocumented-workers-employment-rights>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

They technically have workers rights, in the sense that they are employed, and all employees (undocumented or not) are entitled to basic rights like minimum wage. However, if those rights are not respected, the undocumented immigrant has no legal recourse since the Employer would report them to ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement).

<sup>38</sup> "Human Smuggling Fees." Open Borders The Case. 2012. Accessed June 14, 2016. <http://openborders.info/human-smuggling-fees/>.

<sup>39</sup> Walser, Ray, Jena McNeill, and Jessica Zuckerman. "The Human Tragedy of Illegal Immigration: Greater Efforts Needed to Combat Smuggling and Violence." The Heritage Foundation, June 22, 2011. Accessed June 14, 2016. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/06/the-human-tragedy-of-illegal-immigration-greater-efforts-needed-to-combat-smuggling-and-violence>.

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