

Forced Migration

The G20 Countries Should Assume Leadership of the Forced Migration Crisis and Mitigate the Deficiencies of the Existing Governance System

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Abstract

The G20 countries should lead the initiatives for mitigating the global forced migration crisis by devising long-term, effective, inclusive, and humane solutions. G20 represents contemporary global economic and political superpowers, giving it the unique opportunity to assume a leadership role. The challenges that currently plague the migration governance system are inefficient & bureaucratic funding structure; inconsistent and antiquated national and international asylum policies; ineffective refugee resettlement strategies; and absence of global governance to oversee and provide humanitarian services during transition. The essential reforms for the system involve members sharing equitable burden, achieving policy coherence, and institutionalizing refugee transportation resettlement services.

Challenge

In the Communiqués from the past G20 Summits in Antalya (2015) and Hangzhou (2016), the G20 leaders have referred to the forced displacement crisis as a global concern and emphasized the importance of organized and inclusive responses towards the humanitarian crises.

To fully comprehend the magnitude the problem and finding long-term solutions, both preemptive and responsive, the deficiencies of the current system must be addressed through reforms.

- **Inefficient Fund Management:** The inadequacies of forced migration governance begin with both insufficient and inefficient fund management & distribution mechanisms. While gap in required and available funding persists, the utilization of existing resources is redundant and poorly managed. The intergovernmental and aid agencies lack coordination among each other, losing portions of funding due to inefficiency. Lack of effective leadership leads to delayed funding for refugees in camps. Available fund is often used for short term, ad hoc solutions instead of finding long term solutions.

- **Inequitable Burden Sharing:** The financial burden borne by countries taking in refugees is not equitable. In 2014, G20 countries offered resettlement opportunities to only 10% of the refugees in need of assistance. Saudi Arabia, China, Korea and Japan, are G20 members with robust economies and have the capacity to support efforts for resettlement of refugees forced to flee their homes.
- **Outdated and Inconsistent Asylum Policies:** Ignoring the plight of the fleeing Syrian refugees pose long term security threats to the region as the conflicts spill over the borders; a crisis that causes not only financial concerns but strategic and security concerns for the West. UN's [1951 International Convention on Refugees](#) is a 58 year old convention which fails to reflect the modern-day facets of mass migration; the flow, routes, and demography of people fleeing persecution vastly differ from when the convention was crafted. There are discrepancies in asylum policies among nations who ratified the Geneva Convention; while some have welcoming policies towards forced migrants, others perform extreme vetting and discrimination. Some policy agreements also undermine the humanitarian aspect of refugee asylum: [Schengen Agreement](#) & [Dublin III Regulation](#)
- **Ineffective Refugee Resettlement Policies, Initiatives & Services:** Due to ineffective refugee labor incorporation, skills development, and employment initiatives, European economies are struggling to integrate valuable skilled labor force into their economies. There is a lack of agencies at ports of entry at first asylum countries to place migrants into economies or markets according to their skills. There are no standardized programs for host countries to integrate refugees into their societies. IOM and UNHCR programs for assistance in labor market integration of refugees are usually temporary, irregular, and not available for all host countries.
- **Absence of Global Governance to Oversee and Provide Services during Transition:** One of the biggest deficiencies of the current forced migration governance system is the lack of proper transportation available for displaced people. Smugglers & traffickers take advantage of the situations by charging exorbitant amounts for the journey, using extremely low-quality vessels, and overcrowding the rafts even during frightful weathers.

Proposal

The 4Cs of Migration Governance Reform



Coherence

- Policy research for gaps
- Uniform & consistent policies among nations
- Refugee Passport: Nansen Passport
- Transportation laws and services



Coordination

- Improve management of activities
- Enhance exchange of knowledge
- Optimize resource utilization & avoid overlaps



Capacity

- Increase provision of legal & political services
- Improve training for field-level service providers



Cooperation

- Develop communication & collaboration among diverse stakeholders
- Support conciliation strategies for equitable solutions

The G20 members which comprise 85% of the world’s GDP and two-thirds of its population have to take collaborative initiative to support the escalating global refugee crisis. In addition to clustering some of the wealthiest nations on the earth, G20 also hosts all 5 of the UN Permanent Security Council members. This gives G20 the opportunity to bring about implementable political solutions to an ever escalating crisis.

The G20 represents the premier forum for global economic and financial discourse. Each G20 country has responded to refugee crisis in its own way but has not reacted collaboratively. The G20 as a single unified entity can put forward pragmatic solutions for the problems plaguing refugee host, transition, and first asylum countries.

Reform 1: Equitable financial burden sharing & effective fund mobilization

The rapid escalation in refugee crisis has pushed several UN humanitarian agencies on the verge of bankruptcy. The lack of funds is not necessarily due to unavailability of resources but because of the inefficient and bureaucratic fund mobilization system between central UN coffers and its subsidiary organizations. This poses a serious risk in general institutional governance.

One possible approach of increasing the level of available funding would be to persuade global powers to contribute in proportions consistent with their global influence. This would, for instance, require permanent Security Council members such as Russia and China to come forth and shoulder a greater share of the funding needs. This may be made possible through tailoring incentives that address key concerns of such countries. Hence, sharing intelligence in countering violent extremism originating in Syria may be apt for China and Russia– as it recognized as a potent threat for both countries.

The timely channeling of funds to the appropriate receptacle through effective means could also significantly curb the funding gap by facilitating the efficient utilization of available funds. Costs need to be predicted with greater certainty as this would allow the correct allocation of funds. Moreover, the current predicament could be ameliorated through the formulation of funding agendas that go beyond emergency needs and empower crisis-struck communities to become self-dependent. Mechanisms of funding should also be attuned to the particular socio-economic conditions of underdeveloped countries.

Reform 2: Uniform asylum and migration resettlement policies among the G20 nations

As huge numbers of refugees arrive everyday on countries neighboring conflict zones, the border guards and agencies responsible for transitioning refugees to safer sanctuary camps or countries, find themselves severely under-resourced. Host and destination countries always struggle with conforming to international laws, maintaining sovereignty, mitigating external threat, and keeping domestic political constituencies satisfied. As traditional policymaking dictates, the foreign policy of any country is formed while keeping its national interests in prime consideration. However hostile and arduous asylum policies pose the risk of intensifying refugee victimization, critically damaging economies and security, and subverting global human rights standards. If the current forced displacement crisis is handled by putting myopic national interests over global concerns, then non-traditional security threats arising from



illegal migration will only rise.

Today, countries need to design their foreign policies keeping the aspects of non-traditional security in sight. Foreign policies of both transition as well as host countries need to emphasize the need for incorporating security measures in policy formulation or revision without compromising on the humanitarian aspect of asylum seeking. One of the ways to achieve uniformity and coherence in border policies would be the introduction of universal travel and identity documents.

The UN and IOM could introduce a **Refugee Passport** similar to the Nansen passport, which was the first legal instrument used for the international protection of refugees. This would enable the forcefully displaced people to travel among the member nations without being obstructed. The Nansen passport was a certificate issued by the Nansen International Office for Refugees as an international substitute for a passport, which allowed repatriation 450,000 stateless persons or those deprived of their national passports to enter and transit other countries after World War 1.

Reform 3: Initiate institutional framework for refugee transition and resettlement services

Citizens of asylum countries demand proper screening and registration of refugees to mitigate risk of violence and terror attacks, but existing systems are not adequate enough to process smooth registration of so many people at one time. There is no single institution to oversee and manage safe transition of refugees and each region follows its own policy of transportation and registration of refugees creating chaos and inefficiency. The current mass forced migration around several regions in the world requires streamlined, uniform and efficient ways of transportation and reception facilities which the current intergovernmental and development institutions dealing with refugees have failed to provide. Refugees get services in the camps or when they arrive at the borders or shores of asylum countries. But from conflict area to asylum countries' border or from camps to asylum border, the journey is perilous and no institution has yet undertaken responsibility to ensure smooth and safe transit to their eventual desired destination.

There is lack of global institutional framework and leadership when it comes to global migration governance. While UNHCR works specifically to tackle refugee issues, there is a need to form umbrella organizations which can work on regional level. The reforms and subsequent coordinated activities can be initiated and funded by governments of G20 proportionate to their GDP. There needs to be a streamlined institutional approach to global migration governance to manage equitable distribution of the funds and refugees, oversee safe transportation along the transit routes, and reflect all regions and not just Europe in the refugee paradigm.

In addition to the search and rescue services, the life-threatening transport services provided by smugglers can be taken over by development organizations. One can argue whether such a provision would open a floodgate by providing a safe passage to which the number of people aspiring to embark upon would reach thousands. However, the reality is that the refugees are already willing to pay for the crossing and thus, financial sustainability can be ensured through subsidies, donations, and charging minimal fees for the service. The multitude of unfortunate deaths during passage can be prevented through cooperation among the agencies in providing safe transportation for the refugees, which would be further eased by coherent border policies.

To ensure that all aspects of forced migration are holistically addressed, the governance system needs to align functions that are currently scattered among several organizations. These include the following:

-  Data collection, exchange, dissemination & analysis, and monitoring of trends to enable inclusive representation and formulate preemptive measures against rising sectarian conflicts.
-  Policy planning, research & development, & policy evaluation to enhance cohesion & streamlined implementation across nations.
-  Technical assistance, training, and capacity building to field level workers, camp personnel, regional aid agency workers, & policymakers to strengthen decision-making & implementation.
-  Documentation & resettlement services for the forcefully displaced people that allow them to travel to safety without hurdles & reintegrate themselves into the host society.
-  Facilitation of open dialogue & consultations among policymakers and stakeholders to share knowledge, discuss options , & deliberate without fear of political/strategic repercussions.
-  Conciliations through devises such as the UN Model Rules for the Conciliation of Disputes between States will help reach peaceful solutions & devise mutually beneficial arrangements.
-  Anti-trafficking initiatives & safe transportation services to prevent the unfortunate mass deaths in transit & prevent smugglers from exploiting the refugees.
-  Promotion & coordination of migration-related development initiatives of local, regional, & supranational institutions.

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Implementation Overview

The topic of migration first appeared in G20 in 2004 under Germany's management of the Finance Ministers and Central Governors' meetings. Despite several years of casual references, no formal policy prescriptions have come out of the G20. G20 leaders first officially identified migration to be a global challenge in the Antalya Summit in 2015, through the released Communique. The following year, in Hangzhou Summit, leaders also identified migration, forced and economic, to be a global phenomenon which requires robust and humanitarian response from G20 leaders.

[More Information](#)

Existing Agreements

G20 leaders' Communique, Hangzhou Summit, September 4-5, 2016

The leaders recognized that the massive forced displacement of people is a global concern. The leaders reiterated their call in Antalya for global concerted efforts in addressing the effects, protection need and root causes of refugee crisis to share in the burden associated with it. [More information](#)

G20 Leaders' Communiqué Antalya Summit, November 15-16, 2015

The leaders concurred that the outbreak in forced displacement around several regions of the world is a global concern with major humanitarian, political, social and economic consequences which requires coordinated and comprehensive response from states, private sector and individuals.

[More information](#)

L20 Statement to the G20 Summit, Hangzhou Summit, September 4-5, 2016

The statement calls for coordinated action to support the integration of migrants and refugees in receiving countries including their right to work, education, training and social protection.

[More information](#)

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants

To map a route towards a collective, rights-based response to displacement around the world. In endorsing the Declaration, member States agreed to a set of commitments, among them acknowledging a shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants in a humane, sensitive, compassionate and people-centric manner. [More Information](#)

The 1951 Refugee Convention

Ratified by 145 State parties, it defines the term 'refugee' and outlines the rights of the displaced, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them. [More Information](#)

European Agreement on Transfer of Responsibility for Refugees

Aims to secure the adoption of rules to determine which state is to assume the responsibility for a refugee, particularly, in connection with the issue of travel documents. The agreement lays down the conditions in which responsibility for issuing a travel document is transferred from one party to another when a refugee changes residence. [More information](#)

Analysis and Data

How the G20 views migration

This paper also examines the views of governments on migration. The paper also includes an annex containing a series of brief migration country profiles for each of the G20 countries. [More Information](#)

G20 and the Refugee Crisis: Platitudes instead of Promises

[More Information](#)

The Global Governance of Crisis Migration

This paper addresses the existing challenges and gaps in global governance of forced migration. [More Information](#).

The Normative Terrain of the Global Refugee Regime

This essay guide reflects on the obligations that states have both individually and collectively, toward refugees. [More Information](#)

Expectations from the G20 Leaders' Summit 2017, Hamburg

The G20 Summit from July 07 - 08, 2017 needs to indicate a clear path and the move away from isolationist migration policies and inequitable refugee burdens. It provides a forum for open dialogue for promoting humanitarian aid and for the long-term resilience towards conflicts and providing support to the distressed and displaced millions.

Keeping the humanitarian needs of refugees at the center of policymaking has never been more crucial than in times of economic, social, and political turmoil. The global economic decline threatens the essential international relief to forcibly-displaced persons. Similarly, refugees struggle even more to find food, shelter, and security. Tragically, displacement of impoverished populations is constantly escalating, as hardships result from increased marginalization of the oppressed and persecuted minorities.

Forced migrants are pertinent examples of what happens when societies are pushed beyond the limit: conflict, human rights violations, displacement. The G20 summit is an opportunity to take preemptive measures, to reduce economic instability by promoting holistic refugee protection and resettlement, enhancing employment opportunities for the displaced communities, and strengthening inclusive social protection systems.

In the midst of economic crisis, the fragile value of hospitality must be fostered. Dwindling economic opportunities are placing greater burden on overstrained national economies and social support networks, inciting intolerance. The G20 Summit can be the platform to change the narrative around refugees; they are stranded survivors trying to rebuild their lives in safety, rather than the simplistic and misleading labels, which demonize refugees. This constant dehumanization and hostility marginalizes refugees even further. Germany, being at the forefront of the European migration crisis and one of the biggest asylum provider nations, has an important role to play. As the G20 President and host of the G20 Summit 2017, Germany has a unique opportunity to lead other nations in effectively responding to one of the most compelling humanitarian crises of recent times.

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