Forum: GA3: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues

Issue #G3-01: Improving Conditions and Attitudes Towards Immigrants and Refugees

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Introduction

In the current times, the conflicts of the world have escalated. People around the world have encountered hardships such as wars, natural disasters, and financial crises, when facing them they had no other option than to migrate in search of asylum and opportunities. However, in the pursuit of stability, they may find themselves in inhuman situations. Such is the example of Syrian refugees, who suffer not only the hazardous crossing of borders but the lack of opportunities that the hosting country provides them. According to UNHCR over 70 percent of Syrian refugees live in a poverty situation, moreover, the latest reports inform that one million Syrian refugees can be added to the list as a consequence of the pandemic. Without a stable source of income, there are millions of migrants and refugees lacking the necessities such as food, water, and healthcare. Without mentioning those who are denied a nationality and those whose human rights are constantly violated.

For those migrants and refugees who have finally reached their hosting country, they find themselves with major political setbacks just as the complicated bureaucratic process needed to access the nationality of the country, a process that can last a decade with the person being unable to access a basic livelihood. This tendency to put obstacles to the settling of migrants has become a common pattern between nations. This is due to a long-lasting cultural rejection of migrants that has been expanding over the years, to the point that even political figures have given public statements against migration and the integration of immigrants into the society they represent. These kinds of actions have been influential in the deterioration of the general view of migrants from the public and have contributed to the implementation of anti-migration laws around the globe.

Over the years the issue has been analyzed by different organizations, some of which form parts of the UN such as UNHCR and IOM, which have assessed the issue and have compiled data in the search for a solution. Remembering articles 13, 14, and 15 of the

Universal Declaration of human rights which establishes the rights that migrants shall possess.

Key Terms

Migrants:

A person who is moving or has moved across an international border regardless or within a state away from his/her actual place of residence, regardless of:

- the person's legal status
- wherever the movement is voluntary or involuntary
- what the causes of the movement are
- what is the length of the stay is

(*Definition Provided by the IOM.*)

Refugees

A person who is outside his/her country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection.
(Definition Provided by the UNHCR)

Asylum-seekers

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which the claim is submitted. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee has been an asylum-seeker.
(Definition provided by UNHCR)

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the fear or dislikes towards foreigners. Xenophobia has been a severe problem for immigrants trying to adapt to a new society.

Issue Overview

Historical Background

Migration has been a common tendency for humanity. The first registered migrants were from Africa and sprayed all over Eurasia approximately 60,000 years ago. Their motivations were most likely pushed by environmental factors. As the years passed the motivations to migrate changed, an example there is Rome which sent people to their colonies around the world to ensure the expansion of their territory.

In the last century, two milestones settled the course of migrations of the last decades, these two are World War I and World War II. With an international conflict of massive scale, millions of refugees were displaced and had no other option than to escape in the search for safety and stability outside the conflict. With the overwhelming majority of immigrants arriving in, hosting countries began to raise concerns about the overwhelming arrivals of migrants leading to strengthening immigration policies. An example is the United States, between 1900-1920, during those years the country reinforced its national immigration law with new legislation as a result of the huge number of immigrants arriving in the country. Such legislation involved measures for immigrants to be able to read and write in the language of the nation and a more-rigorous medical examination to prevent the spread of any disease.

Racism, Xenophobia, and obstacles

Article 13th of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the freedom of movement, and residence within borders were established. In the 14th Article, the right of asylum was established. In the 15th Article right to nationality was established, in which it is stated that no person shall be denied the right to change their nationality. As it is reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world has always been in favor of migration and the protection of refugees. Yet, in the last decade, a quite different posture could be seen.

On one hand, with the rise of globalization and ongoing cultural and economic change going on in the world, concerns have started to raise. With the adaptation of the labor market, certain jobs tend to disappear and job opportunities tend to limit. In the fear of losing their income, natives start worrying about arriving migrants who could occupy a job instead of a native. It is necessary to claim that there is no exact proof of migrants taking out job

opportunities to natives- Even more, migrants have proven to be extremely beneficial to a country's economy.

On the other hand, it is identity. Every country has its identity, and that identity is composed of values and culture. In countries with a strong sense of nationalism, the identity is even stronger. The problem comes when an immigrant enters the country, carrying with him/her their own culture and traditions. The immigrant is very likely to face natives judging him and attacking him for celebrating their culture. Xenophobia has been a problem for the world over the years, migrants have suffered harassment and violence for their identity, which is a direct violation of human rights.

Moreover, the situation extrapolates from a social and cultural issue and falls into a political one. With the overwhelming increase in anti-migrant behavior and the rise of the voices of extreme parties. Anti-migration started having a great impact on western society. Such is the case, that in some nations even political figures have given statements against multiculturalism. Migration is starting to be seen with negativity, it can be extremely dangerous for migrants who may suffer racism or a violation of their necessities.

Latest Events

Globalization and immigrants

Globalization has set a major change in the functioning of the global society. In a world characterized by its connectivity, velocity, and accessibility to any part of the world, it would be only logical to realize this phenomenon would have an impact on migration. Globalization has changed the pace of development between nations. This led to workers migrating to further developed countries in the hope of accessing better job opportunities. The problem comes with the uncontrolled number of immigrants accessing some countries, which can provide problems to natives looking for labor opportunities. Moreover illegal migration has set alarms for societies that are worried about the stability of their economy and the preservation of their culture.

Society's rejection of migrants and outsiders is not something new, over the years stereotypes and prejudices have been built around foreigners, and these prejudices harm the general view the world has of migrants and refugees. Over time these ideas have been stimulated in society to the point that they end up in situations of hostile behavior towards

migrants. Over the years different organizations have faced this issue in the search for a beneficial solution, however, the answer seems far from the present.

Major Parties Involved

UNHCR

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was created in 1950 to assess those refugees who have suffered the effects of the war. Is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for refugees. UNHCR has helped millions of asylum seekers and refugees.

IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. Established in 1951 IOM dedicates itself to promoting safe and humane migration. It interferes with migratory issues by providing humanitarian assistance and solutions to migration problems. IOM works on four areas of migration management:

- Migration and Development
- Facilitating Migration
- Regulating Migration
- Forced Migration

In 2016 IOM was added as a related organization of the UN. The UN now recognizes IOM as essential in the field of migration.

TÜRKIYE

Türkiye is the highest hosting country of refugees in the world. Nowadays Türkiye is responsible for hosting around 3.6 million Syrian refugees and 320,000 persons from different nationalities. Türkiye has maintained itself as a pioneer in the protection and acceptance of migrants.

SYRIA

For more than ten years Syria has maintained the largest refugee crisis in the world. With 6.8 million Syrians displaced outside their country and 6.9 million more displaced inside it. The crisis is the result of an ongoing civil war between the government and the citizens which have escalated over the years. In the latest years, Syrian refugees have faced many

challenges adapting socially and economically to the country that receives them. From racism, lack of job opportunities, and exploitation. The basic livelihood of refugees is in a dangerous situation.

UKRAINE

With the outbreak of the war between Russia and Ukraine in February 2022, approximately 7.8 million Ukrainians have forcibly fled outside Ukraine. With the ongoing numbers of migrants leaving Europe, concerns have been raised amongst European nations as the conflict has escalated into a major refugee crisis since WWII.

Timeline of Events

1914-1918	World War I took place during this period, and millions of refugees were displaced.
1939-1945	World War II took place
1950	UNHCR is created, its objective is to provide help to refugees affected by WWII
1951	The 1951 Refugee Convention takes place, the term "refugee" got defined.
1951	The IOM is founded. Its objective was to assist migrants in situations of need.
March 2011	The Syrian Refugee Crisis started, displacing millions of refugees
2014	Venezuela's economic collapse took place,

	leading to the world's second-largest refugee crisis.
2020	The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic took place.
2022	The invasion of Ukraine by Russia took place, and millions of Refugees find themselves in search of asylum.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- The 1951 Refugee Convention

- Resolution **A/RES/68/4** (3 Oct 2013)

- Resolution **A/RES/69/313** (17 Aug 2015)

- Resolution **A/RES/70/1** (21 Oct 2015)

- Resolution **A/RES/70/290** (30 Jun 2016)

- Resolution **A/RES/71/1** (3 Oct 2016)

- Resolution **A/RES/71/237** (21 Dec 2016)

- Resolution **A/RES/75/226** (20 Dec 2020)

Past Action

The UNHCR with the objective of assisting migrants has come up with two solutions.:

The first solution is Voluntary repatriation, where refugees are assessed by the UNHCR in order to return to their country in the best conditions possible. The process costs in providing guidance of the country situation to the person, they also function as a mediation between the nation and the refugee in order to fulfill the refugee requirements.

The other solution at hand is integration, this consists of promoting amongst hosting-countries the inclusion of refugees and migrants to the societies. They also provide the immigrants basic information on the legislation and culture of the country.

Possible Solutions

Despite all the years migrants and refugees have been living within societies, the world is still far away from reaching a proper integration of migrants integration of migrants in society. As the conflict in the world escalates in enormous proportion, migrants need useful and immediate solutions in order to fulfill their rights.

A possible solution is the reinforcement of educational programs including information about migrants and refugees. Xenophobia comes as a problem of the lack of knowledge amongst people. The majority of people who give an aggressive statement tend to possess misconstrued ideas and data. With an informed and well educated population migrants would finally reach acceptance among society. To enhance this solution, it could be accompanied by strengthening laws against discriminatory behavior.

As second measure, is the possibility of providing immigrants with monetary help, in order to secure a basic stability amongst citizens. The help can come in many forms, such as providing housing, limiting the princesses of essential products such as food and water and investing in labor opportunities.

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