

Durable Solutions for Syrian Refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan: Return and Resettlement

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Abstract

Durable solutions are considered to be the cornerstone of the international protection of refugees stated in the international refugee law. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is deemed to be the global humanitarian agency responsible for such protection worldwide. It has been the chief organisation responding to the Syrian refugee protection needs in the region, particularly in Turkey, Lebanon, and, Jordan. This research aims to examine two main durable solutions in the context of Syrian refugees, which are return and resettlement, by investigating UNHCR's operation regarding these processes, particularly resettlement.

A meticulous research on the two solutions was conducted through examining the development of self-organised returns to Syria and UNHCR resettlement submissions of Syrian refugees to third countries. The gathered data from the Agency's portals was transformed into statistics which represented the basis of the analysis. Data analysis demonstrated that self-organised returns occurred based on mainly the situations of Syrian refugees in the host country and due to the personal reasons impelling such a process, which was only assisted, not encouraged by UNHCR. Regarding resettlement, data analysis pointed

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out that UNHCR submitted Syrian refugees to resettlement between 2014 and 2016 chiefly from Jordan and Lebanon due to the first mass-influxes to these countries and owing to the deplorable conditions endured by refugees, particularly in Lebanon. The shift of the mass-influx to Turkey, however, led UNHCR to primarily submit Syrian refugees from this country starting from 2017. UNHCR also introduced complementary pathways as alternative solutions for the reduction in resettlement quotas helping then several refugees to rebuild their lives.

Keywords: UNHCR, Syrian refugees, durable solutions, return, resettlement, refugee protection

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Introduction

From the inception of the forced displacement engendered by the war in Syria, UNHCR is deemed as the leading operator regarding Syria regional refugee response. The agency attempts to provide international refugee protection for Syrian refugees by delivering lifesaving supplies and support and by seeking durable solutions under its mandate.

This research, first and foremost, focuses on UNHCR's operation on account of Syrian refugees in three neighbouring countries, namely Turkey, Lebanon, and, Jordan, regarding two main durable solutions, that is return and resettlement. To be more specific, it is essential to stress that this study is not concerned with local integration, the third pillar of durable solutions. It should be noted that neither Lebanon nor Jordan is a country of asylum, as they are not state parties to the 1951 Convention, and that although Turkey is a state party, yet it adopts its geographical limitation by restraining applications only to European asylum seekers. Equally important, the choice of these three countries is deliberate because they are the first three countries welcoming Syrian refugees on their territories, being refugees of forced displacement.

The article consists of three main parts. The first section is concerned with an overview of durable solutions according to UNHCR's mandate. The second part examines return, as a durable solution currently not encouraged by UNHCR owing to the unsustainable conditions in Syria, and displays the self-organised returns of Syrian refugees to their hometowns so far based on their

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situations in the host country and the personal reasons impelling such a process. The third section addresses resettlement and complementary pathways and highlights the resettlement submissions and migration approaches presently operated by UNHCR as the most convenient durable solution. It is also crucial to underline that the applied methodology in this research concentrated on using and analysing statistics on the base of monthly and annually published data in UNHCR reports and dashboards.

1. Durable Solutions: Overview

According to the definition provided in UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, a durable solution for refugees is

*“one that ends the cycle of displacement by resolving their plight so that they can lead normal lives. Seeking and providing durable solutions to the problems of refugees constitutes an essential element of international protection, and the search for durable solutions has been a central part of UNHCR’s mandate since its inception.”*¹

Return, resettlement, and local integration are deemed the three principal durable solutions for refugees:

¹ UNHCR, 2011, “UNHCR Resettlement Handbook,” p. 28., <https://www.unhcr.org/46f7c0ee2.html/> 01 December 2018.

a) Voluntary repatriation, in which refugees return to their country of origin in safe conditions and with dignity and re-avail themselves of national protection;

b) Local integration, in which refugees integrate in the host country legally, economically and socially, and avail themselves of the national protection of the host government;

c) Resettlement, in which refugees are selected and transferred from the country of refuge to a third State which has consented to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status.

The three solutions are complementary and, when practised together, can constitute a feasible and comprehensive strategy for the resolution of a refugee situation. They function as the overarching groundwork for UNHCR's response to refugees, particularly those in protracted situations. According to UNHCR, as of end of 2018, more than three-fourths of all refugees (78%), or 15.9 million refugees, were in protracted refugee situations. A protracted refugee situation is defined by UNHCR as one in which "25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given asylum country".²

It is evident that there is unevenness when examining the data on protracted displacement notwithstanding the global responsibility to respond to international protection needs. In the case of Syrian refugees,

² UNHCR, 2019(a), "Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2018," p.22, <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf> / 15 May 2020.

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neighbouring countries have undertaken a disproportionate share of the responsibility of hosting refugees. It is crucial to note that Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey continue to host the largest number of refugees according to their national population, in that 1 in 6 people is a refugee in Lebanon, (1 in 14) in Jordan and (1 in 22) in Turkey.³

It is important to stress that the three countries have welcomed Syrian refugees as temporary guests until a durable solution would be found, that is either to be returned to their country of origin when repatriation is sustainable or be resettled to a third country by UNHCR. Put differently, local integration of refugees in these countries as a third durable solution is conventionally inconceivable. It is evident that Jordan and particularly Lebanon are not asylum countries since they are not state parties to the 1951 Convention; both are rather signatories to Memoranda of Understanding. Turkey, on the other hand, is a state party to the Convention, yet under other conditions adopting its geographical limitation upon acceding to the 1967 Protocol, hence restraining applications only to European asylum seekers. Therefore, the governments of these countries do not provide prospects for local integration of Syrian refugees, particularly when considering that they represent the first three countries hosting refugees worldwide. UNHCR then concentrates on resettlement in the first place, assists the self-organised returns upon planning and occurrence despite discouraging such a process, and operates for the assistance of social inclusion in these countries.

³ Ibid., p. 3.

2. Return (Voluntary Repatriation)

Refugees, in general, consider the return to their country of origin as the preferable solution. However, it is important to note that repatriation is conditioned to be based on a free and informed decision along with the full adherence of the country of origin to the reintegration process so as to guarantee that returnees are able to safely reconstruct their lives. For returns to be sustainable, it is crucial that they do not take place abruptly or at an inopportune time, without the apprised consent of refugees or the necessary elements of long-standing solutions in place.⁴

Refugees intend to return for several reasons, such as family reunification, lack of employment, medical treatment, education, checking on property, documentation, improved situation in place of return, etc...⁵ UNHCR's position is that present conditions in Syria are not favourable for voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity. Serious risks could face civilians across the country. UNHCR does not stimulate refugee returns at this stage, that is it neither promotes nor facilitates their impending repatriation. Yet, as there are self-organised returns, it is important to continue planning for ultimate UNHCR-assisted

⁴ UNHCR, 2018(c), "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017," p. 28., <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>/ 20 November 2018.

⁵ UNHCR, 2019(b), "Trends: Admission, New Registration, Spontaneous Return to Syria and Re-admission (as of 31 May 2019)," <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/trends-admission-new-registration-spontaneous-return-syria-and-re-admission-31-may-2019> / 10 October 2019.

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repatriation to Syria when conditions for a safe and dignified return are in place.

UNHCR's planning for return in Syria is marked by two phases:

Phase 1: It is the current phase, where the required conditions are not met for safe and dignified return, but there are some self-organised returns taking place. During this phase, return should not be stimulated. UNHCR involvement in return throughout this phase is confined to “planning, monitoring, counselling, advocacy, and ongoing analysis of obstacles to and conditions necessary for return and identifying the necessary actions to address them”. Self-organised returnees are assisted by dint of current humanitarian programmes.

Phase 2: It will take place when conditions have substantially changed, and wide-ranging voluntary repatriation can be promoted by UNHCR and partners. The shift to this phase would be governed by four criteria:

1. Legal framework is in place, that is ensuring rights of returnees and unrestrained access to them and return areas;
2. There is clear indication of protection thresholds being maintained in the place of return;
3. There is betterment of conditions in return areas;
4. There is an active request of refugees, in large numbers, for support from UNHCR to return.⁶

⁶ UNHCR, 2018(b), “Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Strategy: Protection Thresholds and Parameters for Refugee Return to Syria,” p. 2., <https://data2.unhcr.org/ar/documents/download/63223/> 02 November 2018.

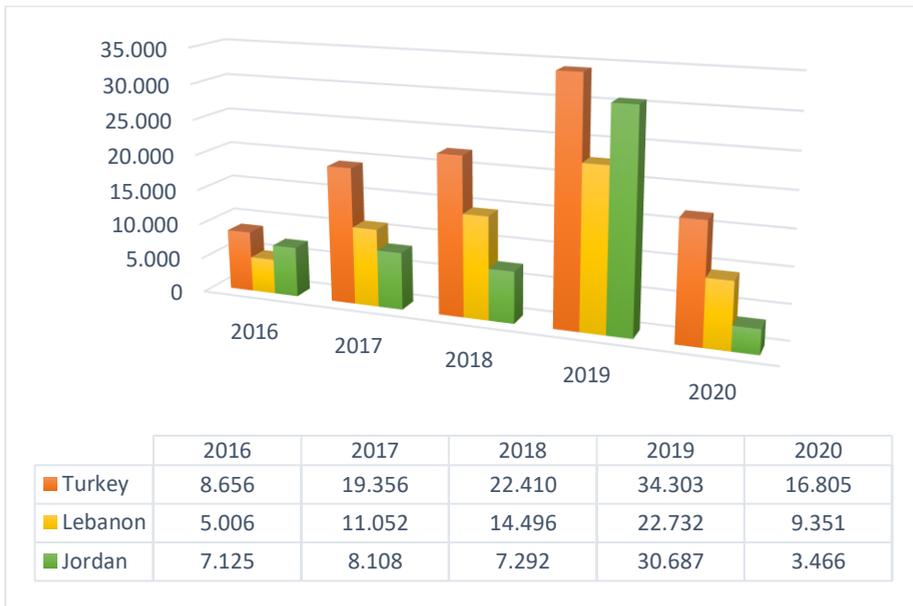
According to the figures reported, there was a total of 220,671 self-organised Syrian refugee returns to Syria from Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan between 2016 and 2020.⁷ As demonstrated in graph 1, the return rate increased between 2016 and 2019. The majority of returns then occurred in 2019, and the largest number of returnees is from Turkey, followed by Lebanon, and Jordan, respectively. However, from 2020, the return rate decreased owing mainly to the pandemic of Corona virus, which has affected such a process, and also to the conditions in Syria being not proven to be conducive for returns to be sustainable and safe.

Graph 1: Self-Organised Refugee Returns to Syria by Year from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon (2016-2020)⁸

⁷ UNHCR(a), Syria Regional Refugee Response: Durable Solutions, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria_durable_solutions/ / 30 April 2021. The numbers reported are only those monitored/verified by UNHCR and do not reflect the entire returns.

⁸ Concerning Lebanon data 2019, it includes only those verified by UNHCR, General Security reported additional figures from their Group Returns and of these a total of 1389 individuals were not known to UNHCR. Concerning Jordan data 2019, the figures following the re-opening of the border in October 2018 are tentative. UNHCR identifies returns based on departure lists regularly obtained from the government.

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Source: UNHCR⁹

It should be noted that most of the returns, particularly in the first years, have occurred in a complex context under detrimental circumstances to situations in which sustainable reintegration is difficult to be maintained. In some cases, unplanned returns occurred under a degree of threat in which conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified repatriation not being met.¹⁰

2.1. Turkey

From 2015, Turkish authorities shifted its policy from providing temporary protection, to integrating refugees into its society and promoting voluntary return. Yet, it should be stressed that the Turkish

⁹ UNHCR(a), op. cit.

¹⁰ UNHCR, 2019(b), op. cit.

authorities and state institutions do not consider return as a main priority. It should be noted that UNHCR statistics of returnees from Turkey are not identical with those registered by DGMM. In 2018, according to statistics from DGMM, 254,000 Syrians voluntarily returned to Syria of whom 194,000 re-entered Turkey (about 76%).¹¹ These returns were encouraged in the aftermath of new government policies promoting return, in the shape of permits for holiday visits and family reunion. However, the re-entrance of their majority to Turkey after voluntary return and relocation to safe zones implied the conjecture of both policies of Turkey and conditions in Syria.

The Turkish authorities has allowed visit permissions to Syria easing the mobility or re-migration of refugees to subdue their concern about return. Guaranteeing their original status upon re-entry to Turkey is an incentive for refugees to endure the possibility of return. These visit permits allow refugees to evaluate the circumstances in their hometowns and decide about their return. It should be mentioned that the Turkish authorities has stuck to this policy after realising the ineffectiveness of the previous limiting of the open border policy with Syria in the aftermath of EU-Turkey Refugee Deal. This policy along with ceasing the temporary protection status of refugees once exiting Turkey, not guaranteeing re-registration upon return to Turkey and denying registration to new arrivals was futile due to the high number

¹¹ These numbers are not allowed to public. They were obtained from the head of the DGMM with permission to be used in research performed by Başak Yavçan, an associate professor at TOBB University of Economics and Technology in Ankara.

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of returnees after months. For these reasons, the Turkish government resumed registration.

Equally important, the Turkish authorities established safe zones for refugees to be settled there. Turkey created security perceptions of the safe zones in places such as Jarabulus and Efrin. However, it is crucial “to provide credible information regarding the safety conditions in these regions and inside Syria via domestic and international reports” for refugees to sustainably return in security. Furthermore, according to the interviews conducted with experts, Syrian refugees incline to the view of returning to their homelands in Syria rather than to the safe zones.

On the whole, it should be argued that both the introduction of visit permits and the creation of safe zones have not been as effective policies as expected. The lack of policies for economic support upon return regarding 4R programs (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction), such as cash assistance, loans, and economic opportunities, prevents refugees to consider their return to Syria.¹²

2.2. Lebanon

Lebanon hosts the estimated 1.5 million refugees, accounting for one quarter of its population. It should be then noted that the number of

¹² Yavçan, B., 2019, “Turkish Experience with Refugees Returns to Syria,” *The Geneva Centre for Security Policy & Omran for Strategic Studies*, pp. 3-5.

returnees from Lebanon is significantly substantial when compared to the number of refugees there, particularly when considering the soaring rate of returns between 2016 and 2019 (53,286).

The Lebanese government accelerated the issue of refugee returns starting from 2016 owing to the considerable strain placed on the country by Syrian refugees as proclaimed by its policymakers. Furthermore, thousands of Syrian refugees decided to turn back to their homeland for the severe conditions in Lebanon. It is incontrovertible that life in Lebanon is prohibitive, in that even Lebanese citizens struggle to find decent paid employment, affordable housing and access to services, namely health and education. This undoubtedly generates tensions between communities, and the government has reported growing expressions of outward hostility to refugees. Most of refugees are mainly illegal in the country and live in a highly miserable situation. Since the cost of maintaining residency in Lebanon is severely unaffordable for most refugees, many have let their residencies lapse. Accordingly, around 75% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon currently are not legally registered. This translates the fact that they can neither access services nor legally work. Furthermore, their freedom of movement is restrained as they are fearful of being stopped by the police. Equally grave, letting their residency lapse means paying a weighty fine of several hundred dollars when caught with expired documents. The absence of up-to-date residency papers is a very risky situation where refugees could be held at the border or pay large amounts when leaving Lebanon.

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According to the findings of the 2017 UNHCR Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, “economic vulnerability has worsened, with more than half of refugees living in extreme poverty, and that food insecurity rates are stable, but remain high”.¹³ All these critical circumstances represent the leading reason for Syrian refugees to plan return to Syria considering it the most appropriate alternative, nonetheless the unsafe situation on the Syrian territory.

2.3. Jordan

Pertaining to the case of Syrian refugees in Jordan, it is estimated that the real number of refugees is the double of the officially registered Syrian refugees, accounting for a population of around 1.4 million many of whom are undocumented and illegal. With similar regard to the situation in Lebanon, this figure has burdened the country hosting them with a huge cost. However, the political context in Jordan has presented a much more welcoming atmosphere for Syrian refugees than in Lebanon. In late July 2018, the Foreign Ministry publicly asserted that refugees will not be obligated to leave the country and that the government would work with others to ensure the safe, voluntary repatriation and resettlement of refugees currently in Jordan assuring that such conditions would include security, political, social and

¹³ UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, 2017, “VASYR 2017: Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Geneva: United Nations Children Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and World Food Programme,” <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/VASyR%202017.compressed.pdf> / 06 November 2018.

economic factors. Furthermore, it should be noted that since the re-opening of the border on 15 October 2018, the methodology for returns data was adapted. The return data after this date remains provisional and has undergone validation and re-adjustments.

In both countries, Jordan and Lebanon, there have recently been initial steps by the Russian Federation through a Russian Defence Ministry Initiative, in cooperation with the Government of Syria, to establish processing centres for refugees who plan to return. This initiative starts to get attention and interests of refugees planning to return, even though none of the aforementioned guarantees in the preconditions for return is fully addressed.¹⁴

3. Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

3.1. Resettlement

Resettlement is intended to serve three crucial functions. First, it is an instrument to provide international protection and meet the special needs of individual refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk in the country where they have sought refuge. Second, it is a durable solution for refugees, along with the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. Third, it can be a manifest symbol of international solidarity and a

¹⁴ CAFOD and SCIAF, 2018, “Syria Refugee Returns: A CAFOD and SCIAF Policy Position,” pp. 3-4,
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CAFOD%20SCIAF%20Syria%20refugees%20returns%20policy%20October%202018.pdf> / 10 January 2020.

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responsibility sharing mechanism, allowing States to cooperate for sharing responsibility for refugee protection, and lessen the burden on the country of asylum.¹⁵

According to UNHCR, there are seven Resettlement submission categories as follows:

- a) ***Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs*** of the refugee in the country of refuge (including a threat of refoulement);
- b) ***Survivors of Torture and/or Violence***, where repatriation or the conditions of asylum could lead to further traumatising and/or intensified risk; or where apposite treatment is not available;
- c) ***Medical Needs***, particularly when life-saving treatment is unavailable in the country of refuge;
- d) ***Women and Girls at Risk***, who have protection problems related to their gender;
- e) ***Family Reunification***, when resettlement is the only means to reunite refugee family members who are separated by borders or continents, owing to refugee flight or displacement;
- f) ***Children and Adolescents at Risk***, who have legal and physical protection needs, may be survivors of violence and torture;
- g) ***Lack of Foreseeable Alternate Durable Solutions***, which is mostly appropriate only when other resolutions are not operable in the near future, when resettlement can be applied strategically,

¹⁵ UNHCR, 2011, op. cit, p. 3.

and/or when it may render contingencies for exhaustive solutions to refugees.¹⁶

UNHCR focuses on extremely vulnerable individuals and those with critically serious protection risks. The process consists of resettlement identification and referral of Syrian refugees and cases are selected according to the global resettlement criteria.

Resettlement is a manifest way to achieve boosted solidarity and responsibility-sharing, in the spirit of the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. In the case of Syrian refugees, resettlement has been considered the most important instrument of protection and a durable solution for some of the most defenceless refugees worldwide on account of limited cases and opportunities for voluntary repatriation and local integration of refugees.

As demonstrated in graph 2, it should be noted also that the top three UNHCR resettlement operations between 2014 and 2016 were from Jordan (58,538 submissions), followed by Turkey (49,292) and Lebanon (30,230). However, between 2017 and 2019, the top three resettlement submissions have been from Turkey (42,708 submissions), Lebanon (31,917), and Jordan (18,845) respectively. In 2020, Lebanon has ranked the first (8,172), followed by Turkey (6,097) and Jordan (3,657). However, it should be noted that the growth trend in resettlement quotas has endured a decline after 2016 due to the

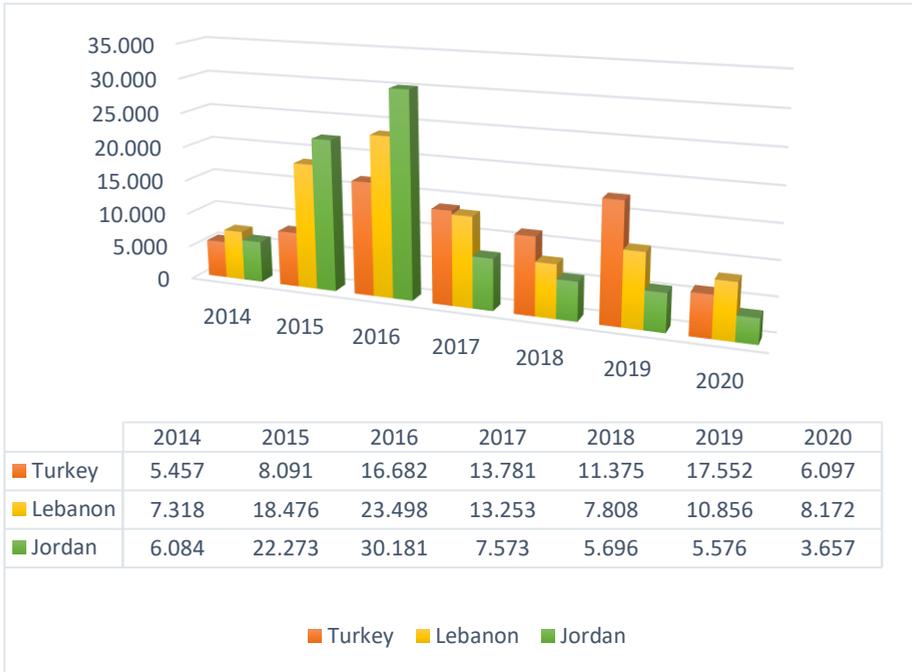
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

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decreasing global resettlement opportunities. Equally important, the 2020 had the least resettlement operations due to the global pandemic of Corona virus, which affected such a process.

Nonetheless the decreasing trend in resettlement numbers, an increasing number of States have been keen on establishing or maintaining resettlement programmes. In 2017, the total number of the states which accepted UNHCR's resettlement submissions has been 35, a figure on equal terms with 2016. It is crucially important to stress that this figure has been higher than that in earlier years, indicating an overall increased multiplicity of global resettlement actors.

Graph 2: Resettlement Submissions of Syrian Refugees from Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan by (2014-2020)



Source: UNHCR¹⁷

According to graph 2, it is noted that the apex of resettlement submissions of Syrian refugees from Lebanon and Jordan was between 2014 and 2016. Submissions from Jordan and Lebanon were the highest in percentage accounting for 42% and 36% respectively. It is important to stress that Turkey had the minor opportunities for resettlement 22% in this period. However, between 2017 and 2020, Turkey had the highest resettlement submissions accounting for 44%, followed by Lebanon which retained the same percentage 36%. Jordan conversely had the least number of submissions 20% during these years.

¹⁷ UNHCR(b), “UNHCR’s official resettlement data site: Resettlement Data Finder,” <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#w2cA>. / <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#eCD3>

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This could be mainly explained according to the first mass-influxes which occurred towards Jordan and Lebanon up to 2015 and turned to Turkey starting from this date up to 2018. Added to that, Lebanon had the highest percentage of submissions between 2014 and 2020 (36%) due to particularly the deplorable conditions endured by Syrian refugees since there are no camps as in Jordan. Most of refugees in Lebanon are indigent staying in dwellings unfit for human habitation without formal legal residences, along with sparse opportunities of integration. Furthermore, Lebanon and Jordan do not provide Syrian refugees with temporary protection like Turkey.

Furthermore, in this respect, it should be stressed that the density of refugee population is of significant role. Among the 3 countries, Lebanon has the highest number of refugee populace worldwide, accounting for 146 per 1000 inhabitants (by end of 2017). In Jordan, too, this number is noteworthy with 71 per 1000 inhabitants whereas it is respectively 43 in Turkey.¹⁸ This enormous number of refugees in their hosting countries, particularly in Lebanon and Jordan, imposes economic and social burdens on their respective governments. Therefore, the situation of refugees in the two countries is much more urgent than in Turkey. The Turkish government has been more capable of handling the refugee plight on its territories, in that it has provided well-arranged camps, considerable opportunities for integration and temporary protection.

¹⁸ UNHCR, 2018(c), op. cit., p. 21.

3.2. Complementary Pathways

Complementary pathways are other migration approaches which might not necessarily concentrate on vulnerability but on other criteria that may qualify a refugee for entry into a third country.

In September 2016, in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the annexed Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, 193 governments undertake commitments to work over complementary pathways as alternative instruments of achieving a temporary or durable solution for refugees. The objective is to provide resettlement places and complementary pathways on a scale that would facilitate the annual resettlement needs and other solution avenues to be met.

Complementary pathways for refugees include humanitarian admission programmes, (medical) evacuation programmes, family reunification, private sponsorship, labour mobility, scholarships, and student visas. Since 2016, there has been an intensified focus on complementary pathways which have been developed as experimental programmes by states, UNHCR, international agencies and NGOs. States and the UN organs have initiated plans to enhance access to third country protection and solutions for Syrians and others under the Global Compacts for Refugees and for Migrants.¹⁹

¹⁹ Norwegian Refugee Council & International Rescue Committee, 2018, “Access to Resettlement and Complementary Pathways for Syrian Refugees,”

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Humanitarian visas provide Syrians with a chance to access a third country for the purpose of applying asylum. They may also contribute to accessing accelerated asylum procedures.

They might also be effective in the context of addressing family reunification requests for members of extended family. Family reunification enhances the right to family unity and the crucial importance of family life, particularly in respect with protection of children and the separated from their families.

Furthermore, scholarships provided by third countries are considered prominent opportunities for carrying on education and skills training. These occasions represent a threshold of a new life with hopes for a better future. They are deemed as a catalyst for the convalescence and rebuilding of lost careers of desperate, traumatised, helpless and, sometimes, homeless refugees.

Complementary pathways are momentous alternative solutions for vulnerable Syrian refugees since resettlement quotas have been dramatically reduced, along with the miserable conditions of most refugees in Jordan and Lebanon (over 80 per cent of refugees living

below the poverty line) and with cash assistance programmes only reaching a fraction of these.²⁰

Hence, scholarship programmes, labour mobility schemes in other countries and family reunification, are, therefore, for many Syrian refugees, the only instruments to achieve normalcy of life and a solution to their displacement. Subsequently, UNHCR will continue to pursue resettlement and complementary pathways as feasible solutions for refugees.

Conclusion

This article attempted to address two main durable solutions included in the international refugee law for the Syrian refugees hosted in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. UNHCR, the refugee agency, is the leading actor regarding this issue and has managed to handle the international protection of these refugees according to its mandate.

The first part, as a paving background, represented a succinct overview of durable solutions as a substantial context of the provision of international protection. It identified the thrust of term of durable solutions as stated in UNHCR's framework and demonstrated the effectiveness of their strategies as crucial for the resolution of a refugee situation. It also stated that local integration, as the third solution, was

²⁰ UNHCR, 2018(a), "Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Strategy a Roadmap for the Advance of Resettlement and Complementary Pathways in the Syria Crisis," p. 3. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/63759.pdf>/ 06 December 2018.

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not focused in this research owing to the absence of such prospects in the three countries.

The second part chiefly addressed return and voluntary repatriation of Syrian refugees to their homeland. It was deduced that in recent years self-organised returns to Syria increased from the three countries for several reasons, such as family reunification, lack of employment, medical treatment, education, checking on property, documentation, etc... Concerning Lebanon, Syrian refugee returns occurred mainly due to serious vulnerability and restrictive measures by the Lebanese government. Regarding Jordan, returns started to happen mainly after the re-opening of the border in October 2018. For both countries, returns also were encouraged and planned by the Russian government in cooperation with Syrian authorities. However, in the case of Turkey, returns occurred through visionary policies of the Turkish government promoting return, in the shape of permits for holiday visits and family reunion with guaranteeing their original status upon re-entry to Turkey and also the creation of safe zones. It was found that the re-entrance of their majority to Turkey after voluntary return and relocation to safe zones implied the conjecture of both policies of Turkey and conditions in Syria. To put it differently, both the introduction of visit permits and the creation of safe zones have not been as effective policies as expected.

The third part of the article examined resettlement of Syrian refugees to third countries operated by UNHCR. It was concluded that between 2014 and 2016 the highest percentages of submissions were

from both of Jordan and Lebanon due to the deplorable conditions endured by Syrian refugees there, particularly in Lebanon, since there are no camps as in Jordan. Furthermore, Lebanon and Jordan do not provide Syrian refugees with temporary protection like Turkey, along with sparse opportunities of integration, especially in Lebanon. However, in 2017 and 2018, Turkey recorded the highest submissions as it has become the first country hosting the largest number of Syrian refugees worldwide. Turkey in the beginning concentrated on TRP and the prior sub-clusters of the protection sector. Nevertheless, from a burden sharing perspective, it was found that resettlement quotas have sharply declined after 2016. Hence, resettlement as a durable solution for Syria refugees from LJT could not be effective unless solidarity and responsibility-sharing between UNHCR and the international community is critically considered.

In reference to complementary pathways, it was concluded that this resolution was proposed by UNHCR as an approach not necessarily concentrating on vulnerability criteria that may qualify a refugee for entry into a third country. They have introduced to Syrian refugees in the form of mainly humanitarian admissions, family reunification, private sponsorship, labour mobility, and scholarships. These solution initiatives had been an efficient and effective mechanism helping some Syrian refugees to rebuild their lives as alternative solutions for the reduction in resettlement quotas.

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It should be concluded that UNHCR's operation regarding return of Syrian refugees will be effective on the condition that the situation in Syria is safe and sustainable. Equally important, UNHCR's resettlement affairs will be efficient only if member states adhere to responsibility sharing and act in solidarity concerning the provision of resettlement quotas for Syrian refugees.

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