

## CARE International position on the 2016 Global Refugee Summits June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016



On the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of September, world leaders gather at the United Nations (UN) for two major summits on the global refugee crisis – a summit of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) plenary to address the large movements of refugees and migrants co-chaired by the Governments of Jordan and Ireland and a Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis convened by President Obama.

This paper outlines recommendations from CARE International, a non-governmental organization with 70 years' experience supporting people displaced by wars and natural disasters. The very origin of our organization was in ordinary citizens of the United States mobilizing to send 'CARE packages' to people displaced during World War II. Over the past year, we have provided assistance to millions of refugees in contexts as diverse as Germany, Jordan, Pakistan, Turkey, Kenya, DRC and the Balkans.

This year's summits take place at a moment at which, across the world, *one in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum*. Developing countries host the vast majority of the world's refugees. With a few honorable exceptions, developed nations have frequently responded in a shameful fashion – failing to provide safe and legal routes to claim asylum, instead erecting walls and barbed wire fences. Wealthy states do not lack the resources or capacity, they lack political will. This short-sightedness and pandering to misinformed and xenophobic stances on the issue risk a wider unraveling of international frameworks on refugee protection and human rights.

All world leaders have an opportunity in September to demonstrate true leadership and commit to carrying out two new "global compacts" on refugees and migrants that share the responsibilities between states on a fairer basis and treat people with humanity. ***We urge all states to ensure that these negotiated "compacts" reflect the following recommendations, and to make national commitments based on them at the September Summits:***

**1. Wealthy states should commit to accepting their fair share of refugees, thereby contributing to the collective resettlement of at least 10% of all refugees globally.** Although Europe saw a large influx of refugees in 2015, of whom the majority have been taken up by Germany, the biggest EU economy still only ranks number 4 in the ranks of global refugee hosting countries, behind Turkey, Lebanon and Pakistan, and slightly in front of Iran and Ethiopia<sup>i</sup>. Even if Germany accepted a million more it would host fewer refugees than Turkey does now. No other western nation even makes the top 10. The needs for global resettlement continue vastly to outpace resettlement commitments. In 2017, UNHCR estimates that 1,190,000 people will need to be resettled – a 3% increase compared to projected needs for 2016 and a 72% increase compared to projected needs in 2014.<sup>ii</sup> All governments have a responsibility to contribute to the hosting of refugees.

When to make comments? Towards and during the Summits:

- **Each state should identify specific numbers of refugees they are willing to host as part of a coordinated global effort to meet annual resettlement needs identified by UNHCR, or at least 10 per cent of the total refugee population.**
- **Where regional bodies exist, such as the European Union and the African Union, states should work together to agree to a fair and coordinated approach to sharing the hosting of refugees.** For example in the EU, European states should speed up the re-allocation program for refugees in Greece.

**2. All states should commit at the summits to provide significant safe and legal routes for people to seek refuge and claim asylum.** The closing of borders around the world means that some are trapped inside warzones, including inside Syria, whilst others are forced to risk their lives, including

travel over sea and deserts, to find a place of refuge. That thousands of people fleeing violence and persecution have died crossing the Mediterranean is a horrific stain on the conscience of the international community. Yet these tragedies are just one aspect of a global problem, which the Summits must address. States at the Summits should outline steps to establish safe and fair routes for people to claim asylum, including:

- **Enable people to apply for asylum at embassies in their home or neighbouring countries**
- **Establish humanitarian visa schemes and temporary evacuation programmes**
- **Expand family reunion opportunities for refugees**
- **Ensure basic standards for protection and prevention of gender-based violence inform the design and management of refugee camps, transit facilities and related infrastructure; including through providing safe spaces for women and children, establishing effective systems for the prevention of exploitation and abuse**
- **Enable civil society organisations with relevant expertise – including associations of displaced people - to register, work and access those in need of support.**

**3. All states should commit to protect and empower displaced women and girls** Women and girls who flee conflicts and natural disasters face specific threats, including sexual violence and trafficking.<sup>iii</sup> Assessments in November 2015 found that refugee programmes in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Greece and the Balkans were failing in prevention and response to gender-based violence.<sup>iv</sup> Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare for displaced women is also inconsistent.<sup>v</sup> Meanwhile displaced women are organising themselves to support aid delivery and protection efforts, such as through establishing safe spaces for women and children. Yet global policies are often blind to these efforts. Towards the Summits and beyond, states should commit to:

- Ensure women-led grassroots civil society groups from displaced communities can meaningfully **participate in all aspects of the preparatory process, the Summits themselves and follow-up implementation, monitoring and accountability** efforts.
- Provide increased and dedicated **funding to grassroots displaced women-led civil society organisations**, and support **policy reforms to enable displaced women to organize themselves and register civil society organisations** to better participate in all aspects of the crisis response.
- Promote **coherent and systematic accountability in humanitarian funding for addressing women’s leadership and participation, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender sensitivity throughout humanitarian response**; adapt the World Humanitarian Summit Gender Core Commitments as benchmarks in financing of the refugee crisis response.<sup>vi</sup> To this end, expertise across these areas (women’s participation, GBV and SRHR) and displaced womens’ civil society groups should be included in the design, implementation and monitoring of IDP and refugee programmes.

**4. All states should allocate increased needs based funding to support local communities and refugees in host countries in the global south, with specific attention to social cohesion, livelihoods and clarifying the legal status of refugees in line with the UN Refugee Convention.**

CARE welcomes the call from the US administration for at least 10 other states to increase global humanitarian financing for appeals by 30 percent from \$10 billion in 2015 to \$13 billion in 2016. We call on those wealthy states that are yet to contribute their fair share to funding the refugee crisis response to do so. We also highlight two key priorities that must be addressed in channeling this funding effectively. First, “silos” between development support to host communities and humanitarian support to refugees should be overcome. CARE has developed an innovative “one neighborhood approach” in Lebanon and other contexts to ensure that host communities’ needs are addressed alongside refugees. This aims at inspiring a wider approach that bridges the divide and promotes social cohesion and self-sufficiency, enabling displaced people to contribute and escape the destructive narrative of being “wards” of the state and a burden on host communities.

Second, the uncertain legal status of refugees in many contexts poses major challenges for people fleeing crises, who often lose their official documents along the way. For example, an estimated 200,000 refugees still lack a valid Ministry of Interior card in Jordan, while an estimated 70% of Syrian refugees and almost all Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon lack a valid residency permit. This impedes refugees' access to services and livelihoods, and condemns them to live in constant fear of detention or deportation. For this reason, funding to support services such as infrastructure and livelihoods, should be linked to tackling this 'legal limbo.' Specific commitments by states at the Summits should include:

- **High and middle income countries should increase funding for the refugee response towards a global increase in financing of appeals by 30 percent.** This would raise the funding level from \$10 billion in 2015 to \$13 billion in 2016, and ensure that funding is allocated on the basis of needs, rather than being instrumentalised to push for refugee returns or to keep refugees in their areas of origin.
- All states must increase support for **initiatives to combat xenophobic and racist violence and build social cohesion** between host communities and refugees in line with the proposed global campaign outlined in the UN Secretary General's report, *In Safety and Dignity*.<sup>vii</sup>
- All states should address policy obstacles and **funding gaps to enable dignified work for both host communities and refugees**, including livelihoods programming, vocational training, and formal and informal education. In particular, commitments made at the 'Supporting Syria and the Region' Conference in London on opening-up work permits in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey require concerted follow-up. Policy options include:
  - Regularise refugees currently working on an informal basis;
  - Clarify and simplify the process for refugees to obtain work permits (eg allowing them to apply directly rather than have the employer apply on their behalf);
  - Reform education, vocational training and professional qualification policies to enable refugees with transferable skills to bring their expertise to support the host economy;
  - Expand the categories of economic activity that refugees are permitted to engage in;
  - Develop inclusive financial services and packages for vulnerable populations, both within host and refugee communities, especially women and youth;
  - Promote responsible private sector investment, including targeted support for Micro and Small Enterprises, access to Decent Work and Human Rights Due Diligence in line with the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*;
  - Amend counter-terror financing policies to enable remittances.
- **All states should clarify and simplify the processes of registration and legal documentation for refugees** in line with the UN Refugee Convention so they can obtain and maintain legal stay without sponsorship requirements, and births, deaths, divorce and other key life events are documented.

**5. All states should commit to take action on the root causes of displacement, through steps to promote accountability for International Humanitarian Law, resolve conflicts in Syria and elsewhere, as well as to resource implementation of the 2015 global goals on sustainable development and on climate change adaptation.** Population movements in terms of refugees and migrants have multiple and complex root causes, including poverty, war and natural disasters.

Specific steps at the Summits and beyond to address current major drivers of displacement include:

- **Strengthen accountability for violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).** Worsening violence against civilians – both indiscriminate and targeted – has been a major driver of refugee flows from Syria, Iraq and other contexts affected by conflict. Over the past year, governments have failed to reach agreement on mechanisms to strengthen respect for IHL and to hold actors accountable for this at both the International Conference of the Red

Cross and Red Crescent in December 2015 and the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. To reverse these negative trends, G7 governments should take steps prior to and following the UNGA summits to demonstrate their own respect for IHL and thereby catalyse wider global efforts in this regard. Key steps would include:

- **Commit to refrain from using their Security Council veto in humanitarian situations;**
- **Cease the sales of arms to parties involved in IHL violations** in the current major crises (eg Yemen);
- **Hold their own policy-makers, military forces and allies accountable for IHL violations** (eg in relation to international military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq)
- **Take concerted action to resolve or mitigate the conflict in Syria and other countries of origin.** The Refugee Summits must be complemented by concerted political efforts in wider processes to end the conflicts that drive displacement. For example in relation to Syria, the international community will convene several important meetings during the Summits to review progress on commitments made at the London Conference on Syria, UN Security Council Resolution 2165 on protection and access, and the political track supported by the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). Current efforts to open up access for delivery of humanitarian aid, end violence against civilians and start a peace process are all but a complete failure. Unless this picture is transformed, conflict, displacement and suffering will continue. UN agencies, Security Council members and other relevant states should also commit to give people displaced by these conflicts, including women-led civil society groups, a meaningful voice in these processes.
- **Provide adequate funds for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change Adaptation.** Experts estimate that millions of the world's population are at risk of displacement due to climate change. During the last year, 14.7 million people were uprooted due to weather-related hazards, according to the *UN Global Report on Internal Displacement* (May 2016).<sup>viii</sup> Economic development, alone, will not necessarily lead to a reduction of migration (the poorest do not migrate), nor tackle the mass displacement caused by violent conflict and natural disasters. Yet over the longer-term, investments in sustainable development will help to catalyse the inclusive growth and good governance which can help to reduce the likelihood of violent conflict leading to mass displacement. To this end, wealthy nations should set binding timetables to meet the 0.7% goal for official development assistance and pledge additional financing for addressing climate change.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://247wallst.com/special-report/2015/09/21/10-countries-sheltering-the-most-refugees/4/>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/resettlement/575836267/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2017.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/operations/569f8f419/initial-assessment-report-protection-risks-women-girls-european-refugee.html>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/evaluation-implementation-2005-iasc-guidelines-gender-based-violence>

<sup>v</sup> <http://iawg.net/resources2013/iawg-global-evaluation-2012-2014/>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://consultations2.worldhumanitariansummit.org/bitcache/a013ad0b3de01c192588653dd4138280fbdcb69?vid=575816&disposition=inline&op=view>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/secretary-generals-report>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/47804>