



Geneva declaration: Mobility and human solidarity, a challenge and an opportunity for Europe and the MENA region

The co-signatories of this declaration adopted during the panel debate entitled “Migration and human solidarity, a challenge and an opportunity for Europe and the MENA region” organized on 14 December 2017 at the United Nations Office in Geneva hereby agree to the proclamation of the following declaration:

“We take note of the fact that mobility has become a global issue affecting every corner of the world of which approximately 1 billion people are on the move encompassing migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection as well as internally displaced persons;

“We acknowledge that migration is part of globalization and remains a positive factor to achieving sustainable development in line with the provisions set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

“We recognize that the unprecedented rise and forced displacement of people on the move is a global problem requiring global solutions and should not merely be considered as a ‘neighborhood’ and/or regional problem limited to a given geographical area;

“We welcome the adoption of the 2016 New York Declaration on 19 September 2016 at the United Nations Summit calling for the adoption of a Global Compact for

Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration and a Global Compact on Refugees to guide the member States of the United Nations and international decision-makers in their efforts to promote safe, orderly and regular migration and to respond to the plight of displaced people worldwide as set out inter alia in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF);

“Owing to the lack of a unified global response to address the plight of migrants and of refugees, we deplore the rise of migrant and refugee deaths in the Mediterranean Sea and other major international migration corridors in the Balkans and in North Africa;

“We condemn the growing instability witnessed in the MENA region owing to the rise of extremist and violent groups and foreign interventions fueling insecurity and instability thus forcing people to flee their home societies;

“We warn against the adverse impact of climate change and environmental degradation in the Sahel region exacerbating the living conditions of millions of people, often causing conflict and forcing people to flee thus increasing the numbers of people on the move. In this regard, we call upon international decision-makers to put stronger emphasis on addressing the adverse impact of climate change on human mobility in future consultation processes related to migration and displacement;

“We underline that policing and over-securitized migration is not the solution to address the plight of people on the move and are contradictory to the founding principles of globalization, non-discrimination and non-rejection. Concerted efforts must be taken to reduce the use of restrictive and over-securitized migration policies. In a globalized world, absence of response to the situation of refugees creates instability which spreads across borders and does not spare countries restricting or refusing access to refugees;

“We recall that hosting refugees is a legal and moral obligation as they are defined as those who are outside their country of origin who are in need of international protection because of a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder against which the authorities in their home country cannot or will not protect them as recalled in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and other relevant legal instruments;

“We call attention to the campaign of fear against refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, in many parts of the world, aiming at reducing, or rejecting, legal obligations, and at undermining the principles of solidarity and respect of human rights, as enshrined in national constitutions, national legislation, international covenants and in the Charter of the United Nations. This campaign of fear is growing, challenging the legitimacy and mandates of multilateral institutions, and restoring previous nationalistic reactions that constitute direct threats to peace and international cooperation;

“We note that 60% or more of refugees worldwide are currently of Muslim origin and warn against defamatory conflation between terrorism and refugees and asylum-seekers. We deplore all similar attempts to criminalize undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers regardless of religion, ethnicity, culture, nationality and/or geographic origin;

“We call upon international decision-makers to promote the restoration of peace and of stability to the South and to the East of the Mediterranean Sea to promote safe, orderly and regular migration and to increase livelihood options in countries of origin. We acknowledge the need to support poorer countries that bear the brunt of the burden of hosting refugees;

“We deplore the appalling conditions at detention and custody facilities in some transit countries of migration in which undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers are denied the right to asylum and have their human rights violated owing to abuse, extortion and lack of access to food, medicine and sanitation. We echo the views of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights H. E. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein¹ who stated on 14 November 2017 that conditions at detention and custody facilities in Libya are ‘an outrage to humanity’;

“We urge international decision-makers to provide special priority in funding to countries in the Sahel region that are victims of persistent economic difficulties combined with the adverse effects of climate change on standard of living;

“We call for continued dialogue between countries in Europe and in the MENA region to identify equitable burden - and responsibility-sharing mechanisms guided by the principles of human solidarity, impartiality, non-rejection, non-refoulement, non-

¹ UN News Centre 2017. “Libya’s detention of migrants ‘is an outrage to humanity,’ says UN human rights chief Zeid.” 14.11.2017. Online. URL: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58084#.Wq2Gr1WnGUk> (Available on 23.11.2017)

discrimination and justice in recognition of the fact that the arrival of displaced people in the European Union constitute about 0.2%² of its population as compared to approximately 25%³, 20%⁴ and 3%⁵ respectively of the populations of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey to cite but a few telling examples;

“We emphasize the need for intensified global action to identify joint solutions to the unprecedented movement of people and to find common ground in identifying a global framework to respond to the plight of migrants and of refugees in the MENA region;

“We appeal to international decision-makers to meet the funding requirements set forth by the United Nations in the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan and in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan as these response plans remain underfunded. We likewise urge decision-makers to meet all other funding requirements identified by the United Nations in relation to addressing the acute humanitarian needs of refugees worldwide;

“In this regard, we warn against the ‘globalisation of indifference’ concerning refugees as highlighted by HH Pope Francis on 08 July 2013⁶;

“We call upon host countries to promote the resilience of their societies so as to enhance the integration and inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in line with the provisions set forth in Sustainable Development Goal 16;

“We call for the establishment of a Global Charter to enhance the protection of people on the move including in particular the recommendations identified during the consultation phases of the Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees;

“We call upon all member States of the United Nations to contribute to the realization of the Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees through dialogue, consensus-building and mutual

² Matringe, Jean 2017. “Errements de la politique migratoire de Bruxelles” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*. May 2017.

³ Syria Regional Refugee Response 2017. “Lebanon.” 30.06.2017. Online. URL: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122> (Available on 01.11.2017)

⁴ Ghazal, Mohammad 2017. “Jordan hosts 657,000 registered Syrian refugees” in *Jordan Times*. 21.03.2017. Online. URL: <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-hosts-657000-registered-syrian-refugees> (Available on 01.11.2017)

⁵ Syria Regional Refugee Response 2017. “Turkey.” 19.10.2017. Online. URL: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224> (Available on 01.11.2017)

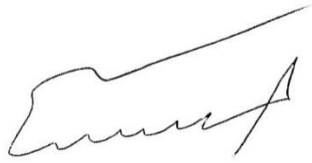
⁶ Vatican Radio 2013. “Pope on Lampedusa: ‘the globalization of indifference.’” 08.07.2013. Online. URL: <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-on-lampedusa-the-globalization-of-indifferenc> (Available on 23.11.2017)

engagement and to refrain from undertaking any actions that may undermine the joint efforts of the global community to present a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility:

“We underline that humanitarian responses to refugee flows call for long term action that must enable people in distress not just to survive but to have access to income generating activities in recognition of their productive function and to education in recognition of the fact that close on half of displaced people are under 18 years of age;

“We also call upon member States of the United Nations to cooperate with the International Organization for Migration, the UNHCR and other organizations to facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of migrants, refugees including asylum-seekers to their countries of origin;

“We call for the establishment an inter-agency Task Force including the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society organizations as well as think tanks from the MENA and the European regions to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations set forth in the Global Compact for Migration and in the Global Compact on Refugees.”



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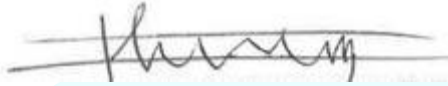
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