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Global Migration Crisis Response Strategy

Taking into consideration the many millions of lives affected on a multinational level reaching past the political boundaries of any one country, the refugee crisis must be treated as the international human rights crisis it is instead of any country's political one. Although some feel this a political issue isolated to the countries refugees flee, it seems apparent to those who see the bigger picture, the only course of action is to treat this as an international crisis with state actors providing the U.N. the appropriate power and resources necessary to *mediate, manage, and facilitate* the entire migration process. The UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) already maintains the proper infrastructure of manpower and know how necessary to execute and deliver this strategy with flawless efficacy. Member countries of the U.N. must recognize the vital importance of setting aside debate on, and attempted flight from, sharing responsibilities and burdens in effectively prescribing treatment to the global migration crisis affecting close to 80 million refugees or 1% of the population world-wide (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). We cannot allow countries to subscribe to delusions of reaching any *lasting* success battling the crisis through *limited* political actions that do not reach beyond their own sphere of influence. To move towards building a more *permanent* solution, member countries of the U.N., especially countries affected, must collectively empower the UNHCR with the necessary financial and political capital necessary to transform from the current supporting role into actively overseeing the entire diplomatic response. Understandably, the first major hurdle to cross will be finding the

immense resources required to implement this strategy and the other will be overcoming charges of “Globalism” from member states fearing this a step towards the erosion of their sovereignty. Through the works of Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin in *Illegal* and Valeria Luiselli in *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay In Forty Questions* we intimately learn the underlying reasons as to why people would choose to illegally immigrate despite the dangers faced on the “journey”. From this analysis the necessity of a large-scale response led by the U.N. but in concert with those parties affected will become increasingly apparent.

There is no way one country can address an international crisis that affects so many beyond its scope of authority. Stop-gap political measures taken by individual countries at best offer temporary relief but fundamentally fail to fully address the root reasons instigating migration. Most “affected countries” have conflicting legislature such the U.S.’s “priority juvenile docket” working heavily against refugee youth and the “special immigrant juvenile status” working significantly for refugee youth (Luiselli). This divided stance stems from opposing positions people hold on what share of the responsibility either party should take and disagreements on what action is necessary or not. Through the interrelationship of text, Ion Grillo’s “Why Central American Refugees Will Keep Coming to the U.S.”, Lauren Collins’ “Europe's Child-Refugee Crisis.”, and the UNHCR’s add in to give us a glimpse into the global migration crisis today and the debates swirling around it. Opposition campaigns work avidly through planned ethnocentric themed propaganda machines to pit “host countries” against the refugees and the “origin countries” from which they escape. Many voters still fail to understand the urgency of the crisis and why people sense the need to migrate instead equating migrants to criminals by default, as an example, **“People are leaving because they are suffering from high levels of violence from gangs and other organized criminal groups. These gangs**

want to recruit minors, they carry out extortion, kidnapping, sexually abusing girls,” says Francesca Fontanini, spokesperson for the UNHCR in the Americas (Grillo). Simply, the only way to properly address an international issue is with an international response and no other organization in the world is better prepared to administer that response than the UNHCR. We must advocate the state actors involved in migration crises to acquiesce to a U.N. led response to the various international humanitarian crisis’ affecting millions world-wide in many different nations currently with no solution or end in sight.

The U.N. should be used to create measures cohesively agreed upon and strategically coordinated by member states to be made immediately applicable and deployed to the source country(s) of each humanitarian migration crisis. A diplomatic response led by affected countries together in choir with representatives of the recent dislocated populations carefully choreographed and executed by the U.N. on their behalf, but with their support, seems the optimal path to permanently solving migration crisis’ worldwide. Currently, the UNHCR ideally works to protect the rights and liberties of these displaced refugees however lacks the diplomatic assignment of power required to effectively implement this strategy. The UNHCR has been around since 1950 and currently employs 17,324 personnel in 135 countries worldwide with an annual budget of \$8.6 billion as of 2019 clearly representing the type of infrastructure necessary to viably carry out the prescribed remedy (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Lack of unity and bipartisanship in creating suitable action plans the core resistance reported to withhold the progress of the UNHCR, **“The absence of binding obligations on States to share the costs and consequences associated with the provision of asylum is widely recognized as a significant weakness in the international refugee protection regime. Whereas the**

principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing has met with broad acceptance, it has not yet been matched by international practice” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Words and good intentions alone, absent any mutually agreed upon diplomatic action, leave many poor refugees like Ebo in *Illegal* to take matters in their own hands via *illegal immigration*, despite the many explicit dangers involved (Colfer & Donkin). While member states remain with locked horns over how to handle the migration crisis a political minefield surrounds the refugees leaving many stuck in *legal limbo* like Wasil and other refugees from the “Jungle” waiting for their asylum applications to be reviewed (Collins). Only through U.N. member states cooperating and exercising their authority to delegate the powers necessary to the UNHCR to spearhead an international response appropriate to the size of the crisis’ will we see a long-term effect.

Many countries would likely want to know where the money comes from to establish and maintain such a bold international diplomatic policy. Other countries would misguidedly cite “Globalism” and encroachment on individual sovereignty as the real reason policymakers are proposing this resolution. **“These have generated considerable debate about how the costs and broader impact of refugees on host communities could be assessed, taking into account the many variables that typically characterize refugee situations”** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Opposition to migration crisis relief measures have made interpretation of who qualifies as “refugee status” strictly bound to proven religious and government persecution not allowing for any other exceptions such as gang or cartel violence, instead summing it up as “generalized violence” (Grillo). Some countries argue that they limit immigration to those with college degrees, money to buy property, a certain net-worth or other such qualifying measures with the rhetoric focusing on what the refugee can do for the country,

not what can the country do to help empower and positively affect the refugee. Steps taken against helping these refugees, such as up to 88% of asylum applications in the U.S. being denied, reflect a routine of systemic ethnocentric practices being prioritized over providing constructive humanitarian aid (Grillo). Propaganda stimulated by the media has soured public opinion of refugees in Europe by exposing only a single story and only highlighting such things as when “a seventeen-year-old Afghan asylum seeker had attacked people with an axe on a train in Germany, and a twenty-one-year-old Syrian refugee had killed a pregnant woman with a machete” (Collins). In addition, language used by U.S. immigration officials also promotes ethnocentrism, marginalization, and discriminatory rhetoric towards migrants by referring to them as first *illegal* and then *alien* which they are neither. This practice of ethnocentric rhetoric can cause immigration officials to feel alright, or even compelled, to treat these displaced people with bitter coldness. Being treated like people who need to prove their worth to society versus society working to lift these migrants’ opportunities up consistently being the government’s modus operandi pertaining to the displaced youth. We see in the works of Luiselli and Colfer/Donklin each of the refugee youth being treated as sub-humans, only as important as the money in their wallets or what they could offer *quid pro quo*. For these reasons, the member countries of the U.N. remain at a stalemate on forming meaningful legislature beyond limited funding and outreach programs mainly leaving UNHCR in a *supporting* role absent the power to affect real change.

Fortunately, the UNHCR takes advantage of what role it can play and conducts thorough periodic review on the progress of pledges and initiatives and measuring the impact of hosting, protecting, and assisting refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). While the train of international progress has been stalled due to division within “countries affected” the

non-profits such as ICARE have had to mobilize coordinated efforts to provide “relief” to largely failing immigration policies world-wide directly leaving many refugees abandoned and dislocated (Luiselli 40). If you don’t have to erect and maintain detention centers for refugees in Europe or the U.S, you could take that money and in turn put it into a large pool of resources to be further expanded upon by nonprofits and the UN alike. From these economic budget maneuvers and nonprofit partnerships coupled with the immense reduction in immigration enforcement’s necessary overhead, we clearly start to see the funding necessary emerge. Policy makers need to work in a spirit of “cooperation” to form internationally recognized diplomatic action plans to fully engage and support these displaced populations enduring a humanitarian crisis. If all diplomatic efforts are exhausted without avail, there exists soft power reserved and routinely exercised by the 5 permanent U.N. members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) in the form of funding and aid that could be withheld until these countries become more willing partners. Its time we take this crisis more serious and do whatever it takes to ascend the UNHCR to the role it has been groomed and ready for since 1950. For decades, countries have gone it alone trying to solve the crisis in their own way and the number of displaced persons has just steadily risen every year. Internationally speaking, we have the best chance at success if countries work avidly in harmony together towards accomplishing the common goal of ending global mass migration issues once and for all.

Many see this “journey” consistently as a major risk to human capital that could be avoided with better structuring and management and in 2020 and we have some pretty amazing technology making this current process seem really antiquated. The UNHCR also points out the issues “hosting” these migration events, “There are huge gaps in international cooperation with respect to contributing to the global public good of refugee hosting” (United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees). Life dangers refugees are met with during the “journey” sometimes worse than the reasons they originally left as seen in the works of Luiselli and Colfer/Donklin. Only by reimagining the process to include the U.N., representatives of the refugee’s and the countries affected in concert coupled with strategically changing the *locations* we establish to “host” the crisis to be geographically closer to the source, will we find a *permanent* solution. I certainly believe if we separated the responsibilities of traditional immigration and *forced* migration between state actors and the U.N., we could stop the problem in its tracks. For example, for the traditional immigration one would follow and adhere strictly to the country sought to immigrate and that country would host the immigration process as it does currently. However, when large number of people are affected in forced migration, now being an international humanitarian crisis, the U.N. steps in and creates a suitable compound in or next door to the country spurring the crisis. This compound would fall under diplomatic protection with U.N. security forces on site and would be designed to serve as a point of contact for the refugees removing the need to take a "journey". At whichever point it is deemed a humanitarian refugee crisis the U.N. assumes responsibility and *manages, facilitates, and hosts* the event on behalf of the refugees and the countries involved. This U.N. crisis center managed by UNHCR, could provide security, housing, health, food, and educational care for those in the most imminent danger as well as a caseworker to help facilitate the administrative and legal process eventually supplying even the transportation, safely. Unlike the current migration processes, legal or not; this process would allow the elderly, disabled, and sick that would normally be left behind and abandoned to be reached and cared for equally. This forward approach would essentially be to bring the entire process as close to the source of migration as possible, thus removing the need for refugees to undertake such a perilous journey saving hundreds of

thousands of lives if not more. This process would appeal to both sides of the table gaining wide-spread bipartisan effort because it appeals to everyone's interest by first taking care of the refugees needs as humans (youth and disadvantaged first of course), but also by removing the countless problems that arise from the "journey".

In closing, we can now vividly see the crisis' affecting the refugees worldwide is not solvable by any one country acting alone through limited political measures but a global humanitarian crisis affecting millions of people requiring an equal international response. We understand the strongest opposition to its realization will be meeting the resources needed and acquiring enough diplomatic agreement to assign enough power to the UNHCR to upgrade its role to hands-on management. We also now know how we can overcome those challenges through budget maneuvers and the incredible savings this brings the host countries coupled promoting a spirit of cooperation to form cohesive strategy to be implemented by the U.N., on their behalf. The dangers that Colfer and Donkin's Ebo, the children in *Tell Me How It Ends*, and Wasil in *Europe's Child- Refugee Crisis* face on the "journey" paint a dark and dismal picture of a journey filled with tragedy, grief, and sacrifice in an effort to hopefully reach what they can only dream to be a better life. Sadly, after so much pain and loss intertwining each of the journey's here the children are still met with unacceptance and unwelcome tones reverberated through their entire asylum/immigration process. Now we know that this whole migration process can be reimagined to combat the crisis head on with the U.N. hosting the event near the epicenter of the problem making such a "journey" needless. This strategy, implemented globally, would eventually work to completely end mass migration issues world-wide *permanently* and provide a consistent, equal, fair, and thorough process to *uplift, empower, and protect* those refugees in need. Imagine how hard human traffickers, gangsters, and drug cartels

would be financially hit if you removed their steady stream of millions of people to exploit?

Imagine how the people that cannot take a "journey" such as the disabled, elderly, or mentally challenged could now be helped? What if we could close all the detention centers along the U.S. border and cut the resources committed to the war on drugs and human trafficking in half? What if all the money and efforts on behalf of refugees and their family's savings did not have to go to a *coyote* but they could use it on proper lawyers instead? In the end it came down to one question for me- *How much human capital would be saved?*

Bibliography

Colfer, Eoin, and Andrew Donkin. *Illegal*. Sourcebooks, Inc, 2018.

Collins, Lauren, et al. "Europe's Child-Refugee Crisis." *The New Yorker*, 27 Feb. 2017,
www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/27/europes-child-refugee-crisis.

Lauren Collins, a reporter for *The New Yorker* covers the migration story of a Afghani refugee named Wasil trying to reach the UK and the inhumane conditions the displaced youth endured at a camp along the entrance to the English Channel in Calais, France called "The Jungle". The author brings to light the many ways that the government's in Europe oftentimes disregard or avoid dealing with these children leaving many vulnerable or open to dangerous methods of reaching the UK. The reader is confronted with the human rights issues facing these youth and some of the propaganda aimed at challenging the public opinion of these youth by highlighting only the most heinous crimes perpetrated by refugee youth. Lauren Collins has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 2003 and became a staff writer in 2008, since 2015 has been based in Paris, covering stories mainly from France. I plan to use her work to connect to the migration of refugee youth to Europe, provide more details and substance (lacking in *Illegal*) to the reception of these youth in Europe, as well as highlight the counterarguments being made against assisting these refugees.

Grillo, Ioan. "Why Central American Refugees Will Keep Coming to the U.S." *Time*, Time, 21 June 2018, time.com/5318718/central-american-refugees-crisis/.

Time reporter Ioan Grillo follows the journey of Francis Gusman and her family from Honduras to the U.S. as they run from violence hoping to gain asylum. The piece highlights "the brutality

that is pushing many to leave the Northern Triangle of Central America” as well as the arguments on the other side trying to push back on these refugees. It briefly touches on why many refugees do not see Mexico as a place of safety and why many move past Mexico pursuing asylum in the U.S. however are met with a building resentment among a portion of our populace. Finally, Grillo examines the way refugees are treated by U.S. immigration once arriving here and petitioning their claim to asylum with many families being separated at the border and kept in detention facilities for indefinite amounts of time only for a majority to be ultimately denied. Ioan Grillo has covered Latin America since 2001 for international media including *Time* magazine, *Reuters*, *CNN*, the *Associated Press*, *PBS News Hour*, *Houston Chronicle*, *CBC*, and the *Sunday Telegraph*. I will utilize this source to bring a connection to *Tell Me How It Ends*, a deeper understanding of the crisis affecting refugees coming from the Northern Triangle, and understand the counter arguments being made to not help but in fact turn these refugee’s back towards the violent cold countries from which they came.

Luiselli, Valeria. *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay In Forty Questions*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press 2017.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR. “Measuring Impact of Hosting Refugees. Progress Report.” *UNHCR*, 17 Dec. 2018, www.unhcr.org/en-us/5f0570754.

The UNHCR is also known as the U.N. Refugee Agency and is the utmost authority on global migration research and reporting. The UNHCR is basically everything I envision to tackle the migration crisis just with its hands tied and only currently serving in a limited capacity. The website offers a plethora of research resources such as facts and figures which I plan to use to

support my argument for a globalist strategy to solve the crisis as well as to illustrate the counter arguments to using such an agency to execute migration strategy.