



Ensuring safety and effective integration of refugees, in their new places of residency, from crisis zones



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Overview

Throughout the early 21st century, refugee numbers continue to rise as a result of the ever increasing number of armed conflicts, human rights violations, political persecution, and most recently climate related situations. According to statistics from the UNHCR, as of the end of 2025 approximately 117.3 million people have been forced to flee their homes. Among this staggering number 42.3 million of them have been classified as refugees. The vast majority of them face dire situations, and continue to face struggles with emigrating and integrating into other nations such as those in the EU. Some common struggles faced by these populations include, dangerous journeys (e.g., open water crossings), lack of legal residence, and ostracization by their adopted country due to stigma, refugee fatigue, and unique cultural differences. Furthermore, even if refugees and displaced populations are able to settle down in a new state, they most often face serious financial difficulties due to the lack of stable employment and initial funds. According to the UNHCR “Many refugees have no access to banks and other mainstream financial services. This creates an enormous hurdle on their way to self-reliance and economic independence. Because without a bank account, they lack a safe place to save and receive money, and have much fewer options to make payments or access loans” [6]. This issue is made worse by refugee fatigue which refers to the reluctance of countries to host/accept refugees due to years of ever increasing numbers and waning public opinion. Their further effect on a nation's job market, economy, etc.. are other reasons fueling a lack of public support. In recent years this “refugee fatigue” has only gotten worse, with countries holding large scale anti immigrant/refugee movements such as one in the UK in early 2025 that attracted a crowd of over 100,000 protesters according to PBS news.

The center of refugee policy and international oversight is the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UN agency was initially established in 1950 to support millions who had lost their homes as a result of the second world war. In the modern day, they are active in 128 countries and are focused on providing life saving help such as food, water, and shelter to those who are forced to flee their homes. In the long term, they are working to influence national and international policy/regulation, in order to better support the needs and rights of refugees worldwide. Furthermore, they are heavily involved in monitoring relevant situations and providing accurate results that portray the scale and severity of the problem at



any given time. According to the UN “UNHCR protects or assists 121 million forcibly displaced and stateless people” [2]. This portrays its vital importance and relevance in new policies and initiatives aimed at dramatically reducing the number of displaced individuals worldwide and its role in future endeavors.

Out of the world's states, a couple stand out for their large intake and work in regards to refugees. For instance, according to the UNHCR, Turkey currently hosts around 3.2 million Syrian refugees who were forced to leave the country due to years of violent civil war [19]. Turkey's large refugee population is mainly due to its crucial geography which places it at the crossroad between Europe and Asia. This vital position often means that it is the only European country accessible to vulnerable refugees in the Middle East which has begun to see a rise in conflicts in recent years (Palestine, Israel). Furthermore, refugees often find Turkey the easiest path to get into other EU countries such as Germany, and France due to their better quality of life compared to other states within the middle east. Although Turkey is often the preferred state for many, Iran actually holds the most refugees with numerous sources placing the number at over 3 million. These mainly consist of those that fled during the conflict in Afghanistan as Iran shares a similar culture, is geographically close, and is financially more viable to reach compared to other states.

In the world of drafting and creating resolutions/regulations aimed at refugee protection and procedure, a couple states stand out for their influence. Countries such as the United States and UK have been pivotal in establishing early regulations related to refugee rights in the 50s. This mainly arose due to their statuses as hegemony and ability to influence international policy, especially in the infancy of the UN and other major international organisations. In the modern day however, countries such as the US and major European powers have slowly reduced their input on refugee related topics on the world stage due to national issues with integrating the large influx of refugees and displaced populations. This inability to successfully integrate and assimilate refugees in recent years has only added to the crisis as once prominent nations in the UNHCR have been unwilling or severely hesitant to create and ratify new regulation that forces the intake of displaced populations.

Successful integration into a host country has emerged to be one of the most significant and challenging problems facing refugees attempting to settle down in the long term. The issue is complex and involves multiple factors at play such as cultural, linguistic, and economic barriers. This problem is closely interrelated to a host country's own requirements and responsibilities such as the need to expand social services, increase housing availability, and establish stronger integration support services. The main issue for refugees is the access to employment, more specifically legal employment. Many refugees are often forced to enter countries undocumented which can make it near impossible to find and retain long term work at a livable price. This is why international advocates and actors heavily push legislation that gives refugees a path to



achieving legal work as they believe that it is vital in protecting the long term ability for these populations to integrate. Some other commonly faced issues are linguistic and cultural barriers. The majority of the world's refugees originate from separate cultures compared to their host countries, it can be very challenging to transition to the new unique cultural and linguistic norms. For instance, if they are moving to European countries such as Germany, not learning the language or adopting their culture can cause issues with employment, whilst adapting can reduce personal identity and infringe on certain cultural and social rights.

Cultural and linguistic differences have been cited as one of the reasons fueling the recent protests seen in Europe along with the rise of right wing parties. The recent gain in popularity of Reform in the United Kingdom partially brought on due to mass immigration and refugee fatigue has increased the spread of controversial rhetoric that calls for displaced populations to be returned to their country of origin such as the large protest held last September in London. This change is not isolated to just the UK as countries across Europe have seen a large rise of anti-immigration parties such as the AfD in Germany and RN in France.

These developments in national politics may portray a broader rise of anti-refugee and immigrant sentiment across certain regions that could be related to a sharp rise in refugees worldwide and an economically uncertain period. This is not only isolated to national politics and could have large implications in international settings such as at the UN. Without clear support, governments may be less willing to support refugee resolutions and regulation which could pose serious issues as conflicts continue without clear endings in sight, and refugee numbers continue to rise worldwide.

Definitions of important terms

Refugee: According to the UNHCR “Refugees are people forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder” [18]. The difference between refugees and migrants is that refugees are forced to flee their country due to certain situations such as war whilst migrants choose to move to a country. This is why refugees often have more protection and get fast tracked when seeking to settle in a new state.

Asylum seeker: An individual who has had to flee their country due to a justified fear of persecution often due to discrimination on the grounds of religion, political affiliation, beliefs, etc, and seeks residence in a new state.



Economic integration: Economic integration in the context of refugees is a multi stage process where refugees gain access to financial services, labour markets, education, housing, and in some countries medical care. This is mainly aimed at allowing them to settle down in their host countries, contribute to society, and become economically self reliant. There are however potential issues that arise such as strict regulation, discrimination, and difficulties for undocumented immigrants.

Cultural assimilation: Cultural assimilation refers to a minority group that adopts the cultural norms, beliefs, behaviours, etc.. of their host country. This mainly occurs due to a desire to integrate with the population, a perceived need to fit in for long term residence, or in some cases may arise due to pressure from within their adopted community. Some common issues immigrants, refugees, and other displaced populations may face with culturally assimilating include, linguistic barriers, large cultural differences, and differences in religious belief.

Undocumented: In the context of migration, undocumented refers to foreign individuals working/living in a country without the legal authorization to do so. These individuals are often referred to as "undocumented immigrants" or "Illegal aliens" in some countries. Undocumented immigrants often have trouble finding work due to their legal state. Furthermore, they are susceptible to immediate deportation in many countries which can be very hard if they were attempting to escape a volatile environment.

Repatriation: Repatriation is the return of an individual to their country of origin. In the context of refugees, this often comes when their home country is safe enough to return to, e.g., a conflict has ended, or they are no longer being prosecuted due to their religious or political beliefs. Repatriation is often never a suitable option for refugees as most situations resolve far after they build a new life in a host country.

Family reunification: In the context of refugees, family reunification is a legal rights based process established in many countries that allow refugees who have migrated to later bring their close family to the country. This process often occurs when families are separated due to events such as conflict or only one family member is able to get out. There are however significant legal and regulatory roadblocks that often prevent many refugees from bringing their family such as if they entered undocumented or can't prove their relationship.

Refugee fatigue: Refugee fatigue is the diminishing willingness of a country to accept or provide aid to refugees. This mainly arises after years of consistently high refugee rates, economic strain, and a shift in culture/values. Although economic downturns may be due to other



reasons, refugees are often blamed due to their perceived effect on factors such as housing availability, job opportunities, and a shift in national culture.

Integration: Integration is a process in which refugees adjust different aspects of their lives in order to live more effectively within their host countries. This concept encompasses cultural integration, economic integration, social integration, etc, and is a vital step in many refugees' journeys. Successful integration can often curb negative public opinion, reduce refugee fatigue, and increase a country's intakes of displaced populations.

Host state (also referred to as host country): the new country of residence for refugees, immigrants, or asylum seekers who left their original country. Furthermore, the term host state is used regardless of an individual's legal status meaning that the term is used to refer to both legal and undocumented voluntary/unvoluntary migrants.

Timeline of key events

Post 1948:

After the second world war, it is estimated that around 65 million people were refugees in Europe alone [27]. This was a direct result of fighting which forced millions to flee their homes and seek refuge in safer areas. To this day, WW2 led to the largest number of recorded refugees in history and prompted the creation of organisations around the world to deal with the issue.

14th of December 1950:

To deal with the aftermath of the war, the United Nations general assembly voted to form the UNHCR to help solve the refugee crisis. After its creation, the UNHCR was instrumental in creating initial legislation that protected the rights of refugees, coordinating humanitarian aid, and pushing countries to accept refugees.

28th of July 1951:

The United Nations built and adopted the 1951 refugee convention. The convention made major strides in refugee goals and rights and was the first legal framework by the UN outlining international laws on refugees. According to the UNHCR the core principle



outlined was “non-refoulement, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom” [1].

1967:

In 1967 the UN adopted the 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees. This was aimed at fixing the geographical and time limitations of the 1951 refugee convention as it was limited to refugees displaced by events before 1951. The 1967 protocol made the convention universally applicable and not time bound.

1969:

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) convention was adopted by countries across Africa and was a pivotal step in refugee rights and guidelines. Its main improvement was expanding the ways that one could become a refugee from just individual prosecution, to a wider range of causes such as conflicts, external aggravation, etc...

1975:

Indochinese crisis

Following the communist takeovers of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in 1975, approximately three million people were classified as refugees due to conflicts which forced them to flee their homes. This was especially the case for those fighting against the communist forces who may have faced prosecution if they returned to their home countries at the time [22].

1979-1989:

After the soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, millions were forced to leave the country and became classified as refugees. This large-scale event would be called the Afghan refugee crisis, and is one of the biggest displacement crises in history with the conflict producing over 3 million refugees at its height in the 1980s [20].

1991-1999:

The Balkan war which took place in the early to late 90s, caused Europe's second



largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. This refugee crisis was mainly caused by immense fighting that led many to flee their homes. The total number of refugees as a result of the conflict is estimated to be around 3.5 million.

2011-present

The Syrian refugee crisis first began in March 2011 and slowly escalated to a nationwide civil war that forcibly displaced millions. The UNHCR estimates that around 16 million people are in need of humanitarian aid as the impacts of the decade-long civil war are still being felt. The UNHCR places the number of refugees at over 6 million making it one of the most severe refugee situations in modern history [21].

2022-present:

The latest major refugee crisis has been in Ukraine where millions have been forced to flee the country due to the war. According to the UNHCR there are approximately 6.9 million Ukrainian refugees and many more who are internally displaced [25]. These results do not however account for the number of refugees in the future as the war is still ongoing.

Position of key nations

Turkey:

In recent years Turkey has been at the forefront of global refugee intake, in particular it has been a vital state in receiving refugees from conflict affected areas within the middle east. Data from the UNHCR suggests that Turkey hosts approximately 3.2 million Syrian refugees alone as a result of the recent civil war and political instability. They have further hosted over 200 thousand people of concern from various other nationalities[19].



In recent years Turkey has faced significant struggles with refugees, especially in areas such as employment. This difficulty in the labour market mainly arises from their limited language skills, low amounts of education and technical expertise, and a limited access to information and other services due to linguistic barriers. This has not only prevented many refugees from being able to settle down, but has fueled the recent wave of refugee fatigue in the country. Furthermore, like in many parts of Europe, Turkey has seen an economic down slope which has led to rising costs in areas such as rent, and day to day living. This has been blamed on widespread immigration by certain groups and individuals in the country and is currently one of the main factors fueling the state's refugee fatigue.

Externally, Turkey is unique in its immigration policy and has faced skepticism from other states and IGOs. A major point of controversy that currently exists in regard to Turkish immigration law is their geographic limitations on the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees and the 1967 protocol. This currently means that they only recognise people from Europe as refugees under the UN convention whilst other nationalities such as those originating from Syria are considered as temporary residents. Temporary residents are not given all protections outlined by the UN convention which could lead to the future possibility of repatriation. This has led to a great amount of international backlash and condemnation [19].

Germany:

Germany in recent years has been at the center of refugee debate, partially regarding cultural and linguistic integration. According to UNHCR data Germany takes in the second largest quantities of refugees among European states just behind Turkey and has heavily contributed humanitarian aid to crisis areas around the world. In the year 2023 Germany has approximately 2.5 million refugees and over 300 thousand asylum seekers [4].

Germany currently faces major integration hurdles, most prominently being refugee fatigue, and a growing anti refugee population base. Similar to Turkey, Germany has faced significant economic hardships in recent years that have greatly impacted areas such as housing, and education. Some political factions and sections of the public in the country are beginning to perceive this economic downturn as related to the large influx of immigrants and the added pressure that they have put on already fragile social services. Although they have been able to positively impact the job market by filling worker shortages such as in the healthcare industry, many believe that integrating refugees and other displaced populations into Germany has taken too much resources and has greatly damaged the state's economy. This growing sentiment has helped strongly conservative parties capitalize on the refugee crisis such as Alternative für Deutschland (AFD) who in recent years has gained significant support around the country.



Further possible reasons fueling anti-immigrant rhetoric include, slow/costly integration, and cultural and religious differences. Increasing crime rates have also been listed by certain groups, but its connection to refugee intake lacks numerical evidence and has so far not been validated by official sources [8].

In recent months Germany along with the EU have been drafting and implementing new policies with the aim of developing the region's refugee systems and meeting political backlash. For example, the EU is about to implement the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). According to DW “The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is the [European Union's](#) legal framework to create uniform, fair and efficient standards for processing asylum applications. The system's reform, agreed in 2024, will become legally binding in Germany and throughout the EU in June 2026. EU member states had a two-year implementation period during which the new rules — including stricter border procedures — were transposed into national law.” [13] One of the goals of this system is to create a more united front when it comes to refugee policy, and harmonise border screening processes across the EU.

Egypt:

In recent years Egypt has been in the center of refugee related issues within the middle east. For context, UNHCR data suggests that Egypt currently hosts close to a million refugees largely coming from Sudan due to the current civil war and also a large Syrian population [15].

Akin to Germany and Turkey, in recent years Egypt has been experiencing significant integration issues particularly because of the large unprecedented influx of regional refugees due to conflicts in the region. The country's integration issues mainly center around economic strain and inadequate social services and infrastructure that has been significantly challenged due to the rapidly increasing population of the country, especially since Egypt often integrates refugees directly into cities and not specialized camps. For instance, according to the UNHCR “ the economic conditions in the country have considerably increased the vulnerability of both refugees and host communities. With many refugees lacking a stable source of income, coupled with soaring inflation, basic needs are barely covered. Other challenges include limited livelihood opportunities and the language barrier facing non-Arabic-speaking refugees.” [15]. These hardships are further fueled by a rapidly developing anti refugee sentiment within the country as certain political groups and segments of Egypt's society have largely attributed the refugee influx to the state's poor economic condition and degrading job market.

Uganda



Uganda currently stands as the largest refugee host in Africa with most of its refugees arriving from within the continent. Data sourced from the European civil protection and Humanitarian Aid operations indicates that Uganda hosted over 1.8 million refugees in 2025 mainly originating from south Sudan, Sudan, and the DRC [23].

As Africa's largest refugee host state, Uganda has faced significant problems with refugee integration in recent years. For instance, their current social services are being overstrained with the increased number of users which has led to a large backlash from certain segments of Uganda's population who perceive that their needs deserve to be met first. Further shortages in natural resources such as water sources and refugee related funding have led some in the country to call for a change to the country's current refugee policy[7].

One of the major challenges currently facing refugee integration other than spreading anti refugee sentiment, is difficulty in sustaining long term integration programs. Currently Uganda has faced serious difficulties when transitioning refugees from settlement living to life among their population in cities. The main issues center around resource limitations and a lack of systems to support them. For instance, many refugees in the country struggle with securing ID cards which are needed to open bank accounts. This not only limits their self agency but decreases their overall ability to successfully integrate into the state's economy and society [9].

Currently Uganda has one of the most friendly and internationally praised immigration laws, with the country often described as having an “open door” policy which gives refugees the right to enter the country, access public infrastructure and services, and have the right to work [7]. Although the policy has its widespread support, certain segments and political groups within Ugandan society and in countries around the world have brought up concerns about its impact on the country's already strained public services such as health care, and its degradation of the country's limited resources. These issues have significantly increased public backlash in recent years highlighting a growing anti refugee sentiment and overall refugee fatigue that may have major ramifications for the country's immigration policy in coming years [7]. This transition can already be seen with the government announcing in 2025 that individuals originating from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea will no longer be given refugee status [24].

Pakistan

Pakistan currently hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world with most originating from Afghanistan. According to UNHCR data Pakistan has over 1.5 million refugees



and asylum seekers, and along with Iran they host a combined total of around 5.7 million afghans [11].

Refugees attempting to integrate into Pakistan's society have faced significant challenges in recent years, especially due to the presence of legal issues. This arises due to the fact that Pakistan is not a party to the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees and the 1967 protocol. Furthermore, according to the UNHCR, Pakistan has “not enacted any national legislation for the protection of refugees nor established procedures to determine the refugee status of persons who are seeking international protection within its territory”. As a result of these legal constraints, refugees are often at risk of deportation and are in some cases unable to integrate successfully into society due to a lack of legal documents such as ones permitting the right to work [3]. Further issues relating to national security have also arisen in the past couple years such as the presence of militant groups like the TTP which is a Taliban affiliate operating within Pakistan. This has led to stricter regulation when it comes to refugees specifically from Afghanistan, and a rise in legal hurdles. Furthermore, partially due to these national security concerns, Pakistan is in the process of expanding its illegal foreigners repatriation plan. This new regulation has led to the forceful repatriation of hundreds of thousands of afghans living in the country including asylum seekers [12]. This new law has faced widespread condemnation from IGOs such as the UNHCR due to its large effect on Afghani refugees who could face persecution back home. Further issues such as economic instability and inadequate social systems/ infrastructure have led to certain segments of Pakistan's population and government to take on anti refugee stances highlighting a shift in the country from a welcoming rhetoric, to a more cautious perspective on refugee influx.

Suggested solutions

Expanded integration programs

One of the most prominent complaints reported among host communities is a lack of cultural and linguistic integration from refugees and other displaced populations which makes conversation, joint beliefs, and cultural compatibility difficult. This main issue stems from an insufficiency of community assimilation programs and support in order to teach refugees how to live day-to-day life in their host country.

To resolve or address this common issue, host countries could expand and develop linguistic programs that focus specifically on giving refugees the basic language skills needed for



employment and general social interaction. This could be furthered by national programs and community initiatives focused on cultural integration including classes and events that slowly allow refugees to adapt to their host country's values and beliefs. These new initiatives could be especially beneficial in areas such as Europe where there is often a large cultural divide between locals and refugees as they often arrive from war torn regions in the Middle East and certain parts of Asia. Expanding these programs could not only reduce refugee fatigue, but could improve a host country's willingness to work on refugee related issues in the future in international organisations such as the UN.

It is however important to mention that large scale programs being rolled out nationally can become greatly economically taxing due to their resource and labour intensive nature such as the need for teachers and facilities. To resolve this, individual communities could set up volunteer services/programs to reduce the economic costs of the initiatives through measures including, making classes online to remove expenses related with in person facilities. All these actions could support the programs long term viability and ensure an effective way for refugees to culturally and linguistically integrate into their host country.

Support for host communities

Another major concern among host communities is economic difficulties that are perceived to be a result of the refugee influx. Whilst economic struggles can often be linked back to global recessions, economic cycles, etc., many local populations often find refugees to be the root cause due to their effect on areas such as employment and housing. To reduce this issue, host country governments could provide support to communities struggling with high refugee numbers. This could be done through ways such as subsidies to local industries, designating impacted areas for government housing development, and developing employment opportunities through providing government jobs and encouraging industry/commercial development.

Some major problems that may arise with this initiative could be budget constraints and a lack of long term viability. Many countries such as the UK and the US already have stringent and inflexible budgets due to limited funds. This likely means that it could be hard to secure further finances for community support. Furthermore, certain parties far right parties would be wary to put any more funds towards refugee related policy and may be more focused on short term deportations to resolve community concerns. In order to solve these issues, careful legislation would need to be implemented that would prevent fund reallocation even through changes in government. Furthermore, funding would have to be reallocated from separate areas such as defence which may be hard, but could be achieved with the proper support and planning. If



successfully implemented, these measures could ensure the long term viability of the program instead of just short term success.

Developing international refugee systems

One of the largest issues resulting in refugee fatigue in certain nations is a lack of international accountability and systems. Whilst the UNHCR and other relevant agencies/organisations have provided frameworks and extensive regulation on refugee rights, there is a lack of policy concerning the distribution of refugees. In 2025 UNHCR data indicated that around 34 percent of the world's refugees live in the following 5 countries: Colombia, Germany, Türkiye, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Uganda [16]. This portrays one of the primary reasons for refugee fatigue and how decades of poor international accountability measures have led some hegemony to take in extremely low numbers, whilst nations such as Turkey and those in Europe are feeling overwhelmed with the influx of refugees.

To address this concern, organisations such as the UN could amend current resolutions and agreements to distribute refugee accountability more equally. Not only could this reduce refugee fatigue in countries with high refugee numbers, but it could allow refugees to be more efficiently integrated as individual states would have more resources to fund refugee support programs.

There are however some major problems with the proposed solution that may make it extremely difficult to implement in international organizations. On one hand, powerful countries such as China and Russia are unlikely to ratify any amendments made to resolutions as it goes against their foreign policy goals and strategy interests. Furthermore, getting the backing of the majority of the world's nations may be difficult as many governments and populations are wary of taking in refugees due to their perceived economic and social downsides. These difficulties may make the implementation of accountability agreements extremely difficult especially in the long term.

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The Fifth West Japan Model United Nations

