

2020

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Strategies for Assisting Refugees:

Repatriation versus Resettlement

by

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Submitted to the LSU Roger Hadfield Ogden Honors College in partial fulfillment of
the Upper Division Honors Program.

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Today, there are more refugees than at any other time in history. These refugees live in camps where conditions are poor and their needs are rarely met. What is the best strategy for assisting these refugees in a timely manner?

The strategy which is currently emphasized in refugee assistance efforts is repatriation; however, this strategy is often not the best option. The system for assisting refugees is overwhelmed, and the system must evolve to be effective in today's world.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the leading organization in refugee assistance. The UNHCR aims to offer refugees one of three durable solutions: repatriation, resettlement, or integration. Although repatriation is considered to be the ideal durable solution by the UNHCR, resettlement is typically a better and more readily-available solution.

The data used in this paper has been taken from peer-reviewed journals focusing on international issues, news articles, documents created by the UNHCR, and documents created by various governments and non-governmental organizations. The data shows that repatriation is often unreliable and leads to refugees spending extended amounts of time in refugee camps. Refugees often experience frustration and negative feelings during their time in these camps. The UNHCR should focus on a strategy which will allow refugees to leave camps sooner.

Often, resettlement is a preferable strategy to repatriation because resettlement can end refugee crises more quickly than repatriation can. While repatriation forces refugees to remain in camps for longer than is necessary, resettlement allows refugees to leave the camps and begin building lives for themselves. Resettlement is more readily-available and reliable.

Two case studies highlight the benefits of resettlement over repatriation. The Bhutanese refugee crisis began in 1990 and continued until 2007. The crisis began when the Bhutanese government created a series of laws and programs which increased the persecution of the Lhotshampa ethnic minority in Bhutan. Large numbers of Lhotshampas were deprived of their citizenship and forced out of the country.

After the Lhotshampas removal from Bhutan, the Nepali and Bhutanese government held a series of talks aimed at negotiating the return of the Lhotshampas. However, Bhutan was unwilling to allow the Lhotshampas to be repatriated. Once it was clear to the UNHCR that repatriation was not an option, the Bhutanese refugees were allowed to be resettled. The Bhutanese refugee crisis could not be resolved until the UNHCR began to focus on resettlement.

The Syrian Refugee Crisis began in 2011 and is still on-going. Reasons for the war's continuation include the addition of new conflicts to the war and the involvement of foreign nations in the war. As long as the Syrian War continues, refugees will not be able to return home, and the war does not seem as if it will end in the near future.

Although the UNHCR is hoping for the repatriation of refugees, some Syrian refugees have already been resettled in Canada. Those refugees who have been resettled have experienced successful integration into Canadian society and report positive feelings regarding their repatriation. If the UNHCR began to emphasize resettlement, as they did in Bhutan, the refugee crisis could be greatly alleviated.

Repatriation is currently the preferred solution for assisting refugees, based on conventional wisdom. However, it should not be. Repatriation often proves to be impossible, and

waiting for repatriation only prolongs the suffering of refugees. The UNHCR should begin to prioritize resettlement in their attempts to provide refugees with durable solutions.

Introduction

The current system for assisting refugees began following World War II. Although the number and magnitude of the refugee crises this system addresses has changed since the post-War era, the organizations and strategies developed to aid refugees have mostly remained the same.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the international organization which oversees international refugee assistance efforts. The UNHCR was established in 1951 by the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Convention). To be considered a refugee under the Convention (1951) an individual had to be a person who:

As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (14).

Under the original definition of a refugee, only those who had become displaced because of a conflict which occurred prior to 1951 were considered to be refugees. World War II ended in 1945, and, therefore, the refugees created by World War II would fall under the UNHCR's

mandate. The UNHCR was originally created with the intention of assisting European refugees as part of a larger attempt to rebuild Europe following World War II.

In 1967, the definition of a refugee was updated in the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Protocol). Article 1, Section 2 of the Protocol (1967) extended the definition of a refugee to also include those who were displaced because of events which occurred in 1951 and afterwards (46). With the drafting of the Protocol, the UNHCR became the leading authority for refugee assistance in the global community and began to assist refugees in all regions of the world.

The UNHCR assesses those who have been displaced across international borders and determines whether or not they fit the definition of a refugee as determined by the Convention and the Protocol. Today, the UNHCR assists a tremendous number of refugees across the globe. In fact, the number of refugees is now the largest it has been since World War II (Milliband & Gurumurthy 2015, 118). With refugee crises occurring around the world at an alarming rate, the number of refugees continues to grow. Although the UNHCR was created to address refugee crises which were occurring in Europe and stemmed from one specific conflict, the organization is now addressing multiple refugee crises in all regions of the world, and these crises begin for a number of different reasons. Currently, the UNHCR struggles to adequately provide for the refugees under its care. Because the scope of the crises the UNHCR is dealing with has changed, the strategies the organization uses to assist refugees must also be updated.

The UNHCR is already overwhelmed by the number of refugees the organization is responsible for helping. As of 2018, the number of refugees reached 20.4 million (Global Report 2019, 5). As the number of refugees increases, the strategies that the UNHCR uses to assist

refugees must be reconsidered. The UNHCR is currently dealing with refugee crises beyond the magnitude of any others in the organization's history, but the system for dealing with the crises has not changed rapidly enough to remain effective.

Upon fleeing their country of origin, a refugee will typically first enter a country which borders their own. This country will offer the refugee asylum, and the refugee lives in a refugee camp while they remain there. Once a refugee has entered their country of asylum, the UNHCR can qualify that individual as a refugee. The organization will decide on one of three "durable solutions" to assist the refugee. The three durable solutions are repatriation, integration, and resettlement (Framework 2003, 4-5). Each of these three strategies is meant to be a permanent solution for the refugee; once a refugee has been assisted using one of these strategies, they are no longer considered a refugee under the UNHCR's mandate.

Repatriation involves assisting a refugee in returning to his or her home country once the conflict that caused the individual to flee has ended. Under integration, a refugee would remain in their first country of asylum and begin the process to gain citizenship in that country. Resettlement means a refugee would be admitted to a new country, which is neither their home country nor their original country of asylum, and the refugee would begin the citizenship process there.

Of these three strategies, the UNHCR places the highest emphasis on repatriation. The United Nation's New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) states that the UNHCR's main goal is to return to refugees to their home countries (19). Although repatriation is considered by the UNHCR to be their primary strategy to assist refugees, resettlement is a more preferable strategy when one considers the realities of current refugee crises.

Repatriation is currently considered to be the best strategy to assist refugees according to conventional wisdom, as evidenced by the UNHCR's emphasis on using the strategy, but repatriation should not be favored above resettlement. This paper will analyze the benefits and challenges of both repatriation and resettlement and then examine two case studies in order to prove the UNHCR should shift their focus from repatriation to resettlement.

Repatriation

Repatriation does have an advantage. Refugees do not want to be pushed from their homes. Many would prefer to return, if the situation they fled from ceases, and it is safe to go back. However, refugee crises do not resolve themselves quickly. Situations in the countries refugees have fled from are ongoing and often last for years, if not decades.

Also, refugees do not typically return home, even if they are repatriated. The majority of refugees who are repatriated go back to their home countries, but they are not able to return to their houses or their cities because those places have been destroyed by war (Zieck 2004, 49). The idealized version of home to which the UNHCR hopes refugees will return no longer exists.

The refugees' home countries are often not equipped to handle the sudden influx of refugees from repatriation. Usually the countries which refugees are re-entering are less stable and more impoverished than the countries which they had found refuge in (Chimni 2004, 68). They are therefore less able to assist and re-integrate refugees. Although refugees are finally able to leave refugee camps, they may continue to live in poor conditions once they return home.

While refugees' home countries often struggle to assist them once they have repatriated, the UNHCR also offers repatriated refugees no assistance. The UNHCR is only responsible for getting refugees back to their home country; they are not responsible for helping them once they

have returned (Zieck 2004, 46). The UNHCR does not assist refugees in finding housing, employment, or resources. Refugees can return home but will still struggle to build proper lives for themselves.

Refugees are fleeing countries which have been destabilized. They often flee from countries which are experiencing extended warfare (Hansen 2018, 134). The effects of this extended warfare will be felt in the country even after a conflict has officially ended. If refugees flee because they are facing persecution, but their country is otherwise healthy, the situation could be resolved by a new government coming to power. However, the countries refugees flee from usually are facing a wider variety of challenges and conflicts. Before refugees can return, their countries must be rebuilt.

In some cases the UNHCR has been criticized for returning refugees before it was safe for them to return. Repatriation should be voluntary, and refugees should return willingly. Following the Indochinese Wars, 88,000 Vietnamese refugees were repatriated to Vietnam; some believed those who returned were actually forced to return, rather than willingly returned (Hansen 2018, 133). Even when repatriation is achieved, it is not always positive.

If the UNHCR has determined that a refugee will be repatriated once the situation in their country of origin is no longer dangerous, that individual typically must remain in a refugee camp while they wait to return to their home country. Camps are meant to be temporary solutions, but because of the UNHCR's focus on repatriation, a large number of refugees must remain in camps for extended amounts of time.

The majority of current refugees have spent more than five years in a camp (Protracted n.d.). As these individuals remain under the UNHCR's mandate, more individuals continue to

flee across international borders and become refugees. Thus, the number of refugees is constantly increasing.

The average amount of time that a refugee will spend in a camp is seventeen years (Betts & Collier 2015, 92). Refugee camps are massively underfunded, and as long a refugee remains there, their basic needs are not likely to be met. The opportunities available to refugees are basically nonexistent. Refugee camps are not meant to house refugees for such long periods of time, but the UNHCR's focus on repatriation can force refugees to remain for decades.

By emphasizing repatriation, the UNHCR is only increasing the amount of time that a refugee will have to live in poor conditions. For example, a large number of Afghan refugees have been living in camps in Pakistan and Iran for over thirty-five years (Proposed n.d.). In this refugee crisis, refugees have been forced to live in camps for the majority of their lives. To say that life in a refugee camp is unenjoyable is an understatement, and the camps were not built or designed to hold refugees for decades. Refugees may spend the greater part of their lives unable to work, have access to education, or travel freely.

Refugee camps are massively under-funded. The UNHCR is responsible for running these camps and providing resources, such as food, clothing, and shelter to refugees while they remain in the camps. However, the UNHCR simply does not have the funds to meet the needs of all the refugees living in the camps. The UNHCR depends on donations by United Nations member states to fund their operations. In 2018, the organization determined that it would need 8.22 billion dollars to adequately fund all of its programs; however, it only received 4.71 billion dollars (Global Report 2019, 6). The UNHCR received just over half of its proposed budget that year.

The UNHCR has received far less than its proposed budget in other years, too; The organization regularly operates with far less funding than it needs. The budget the UNHCR has to work with is typically less than 40 percent of its ideal budget (Milliband & Gurumurthy 2015, 118). The organization must focus on providing the most basic necessities to refugees, such as food and water, because they do not have the means to provide much beyond that. Refugees may have to go without proper shelter and clothing and will most likely have few opportunities for education.

Living in a refugee camp can be extremely frustrating. Refugees cannot be employed while they are living in the camps and will often become demoralized (Hansen 2018, 139). They cannot work towards bettering their situation. They are at the mercy of the UNHCR and must depend on the organization to provide them with everything they need.

Refugees also have very limited access to education. In 2018, sixty-one percent of children in the camps had access to a primary education, twenty-three percent had access to a secondary education, and only one percent had access to a university-level education (Global Report 2019, 7). When these refugees are finally able to leave the camps, they will have very few employment opportunities available to them because they have little education. Furthermore, refugees could find a sense of dignity and empowerment through education. By keeping the persecuted populations who find themselves in refugee camps uneducated, the UNHCR is only perpetuating the oppression which those populations face.

Having refugees remain in camps, means those refugees are also remaining in their countries of asylum. Countries which face refugee crises are most often underdeveloped, and the countries bordering them are also underdeveloped. This means the countries to which refugees

commonly flee do not have the proper resources to support and help them. In many cases, these countries do not even have the proper resources for their own citizens.

If large numbers of refugees stay in countries of asylum for too long, they could serve to destabilize entire regions. The countries of asylum face tremendous pressures as they try to assist refugee populations. Sharing resources with refugees or simply allowing large numbers of refugees into the country could cause strong tensions between native populations and refugees. By keeping refugees in camps for extreme amounts of time while they await repatriation, the UNHCR could cause refugee crises to grow and spread.

Repatriation is a highly impractical strategy for assisting refugees. Only a very small number of refugees are actually able to be repatriated in any given year. Out of the 20.4 million refugees in the world, only 593,814 were able to be repatriated in 2018 (Global Report 2019, 227). In other words, repatriation was only an option for around three percent of the world's refugees last year. The UNHCR needs to focus on a strategy which is more reliable and does not force refugees to remain in camps for longer than they need to.

Resettlement

Resettlement is a much more reliable strategy for assisting refugees. Resettlement does have its own challenges; however, these challenges are much easier to overcome than the challenges of repatriation. In many cases where repatriation is not available, resettlement is.

The biggest challenge to resettlement is state sovereignty. State sovereignty is the idea that a country should have control over what occurs within its own borders without the influence of outside actors. Each state's sovereignty is protected under international law. Because of these protections for sovereignty, each country has a right to decide who it will allow within its borders

(Behrman 2019, 43). The idea that a country can prevent individuals from entering its borders also applies to refugees.

When the UNHCR wants to resettle a refugee, they must first petition a specific country to take that refugee in. It is then up to that country to decide whether or not it will allow that particular refugee to be resettled within its borders. Countries are not required to take in any refugees (Stevens 2018, 531). The UNHCR cannot order any country to accept a specific refugee or even a certain overall number of refugees.

Many countries have laws regarding refugees that the UNHCR must consider when trying to find resettlement countries for refugees. For example, New Zealand will only accept a refugee from Africa or the Middle East if the refugee has family living in New Zealand (Stevens 2018, 532). For some refugees the number of countries that would be willing to accept them may be low just because of their country or region of origin. Even countries that do not have special requirements regarding a certain refugee could still choose to reject that refugee.

Although, countries have a right to assert their sovereignty and deny entry to refugees, it is still in their best interest to allow refugees to be resettled within their borders. The international community must practice burden sharing when it comes to assisting refugees. If developing nations are solely responsible for aiding refugees, and more developed nations who are geographically removed from refugee crises refuse to help, entire regions could become destabilized. By helping with refugee crises now, developed nations can avoid being pulled into a large conflict later on.

Furthermore, nations benefit from being a part of the international community. Accepting refugees can demonstrate to asylum states and other resettlement countries that a country is

participating in burden sharing (Margesson 2020, 1). Accepting refugees can help a country to build its relations with other nations, and strong international relations help a country to have a voice in the international community. If countries wish to be respected in the international community, they must help in addressing problems which face the community, such as refugee crises.

Although countries are not forced to accept refugees, many still regularly admit refugees. According to the UNHCR, from 2015 to 2019, a total of 392,697 refugees were successfully resettled (Resettlement Data 2020). Typically thirty-six countries will allow refugees to be resettled within their borders in a given year (Margesson 2020, 2). Even though countries are not required to accept refugees, they still reliably do.

The number of refugees who were resettled since 2015 may be small comparative to the total number of refugees worldwide. However, this is because the UNHCR does not prioritize resettlement. In any given year, the UNHCR usually submits fewer than one percent of the refugees under their mandate for resettlement (Margesson 2020, 1). The number of refugees who are resettled is more dependent on the UNHCR's processing of refugees than on the willingness of countries to admit refugees.

The upfront cost of resettling a refugee can be large. Once a refugee is resettled in a country, that country must provide for the refugee. In the United States, the government will spend, on average, \$64,370 to provide services for a refugee in the first five years after resettlement (Hansen 2018, 137). Accepting a large number of refugees can become costly.

Although the assumption of costs to provide resources for a refugee may be seen as a challenge to the resettlement country, it is a benefit to the UNHCR. Once an individual has been

resettled, the UNHCR no longer considers that person to be a refugee. Therefore, the UNHCR is no longer responsible for providing for them. As refugees are resettled, the UNHCR is able to better provide for the refugees still under their care.

Furthermore, refugees will actually benefit their resettlement countries economically over time. On average, refugees began to pay more money in taxes to the government than they have received from the government after they have been in a country for nine years; after twenty years each refugee will have paid approximately \$20,000 more in taxes than they received (Rose 2017). A leaked 2017 report from the United States Department of Health and Human Services shows that, from 2005 to 2014, refugees contributed \$63 billion more in revenue than they cost the government (Davis and Sengupta 2017). Although the initial costs to provide for a resettled refugee may be high, refugees do benefit their resettlement countries in the long run.

Many refugees will struggle financially once they reach their country of resettlement. Resettlement countries typically offer refugees some kind of assistance while they are still settling in. However, this assistance is temporary and in many cases does not last for long. In the United States refugees are offered assistance for healthcare, education, and housing expense, but this assistance will only last eight months at the longest and usually ends once a refugee is employed (Grace, Nalwyn, & Okwako 2018, 47). Financial assistance for refugees is limited.

However, even with limited assistance, most refugees still enjoy a better standard of living in their new country than they did in the refugee camp. In the camp, a refugee can not work and provide for themselves. They rely on the UNHCR and the government of their host country to provide for them. The UNHCR, and the organization's refugee camps, are typically

underfunded and unable to provide even basic necessities. Once a refugee is resettled and can be employed, they can enjoy a higher standard of living than the camps can provide.

Despite all of the challenges to resettlement, it is often a far better solution than repatriation. It offers refugees a permanent solution in a safe and timely manner. It can end refugee crises more quickly than repatriation can.

When refugees are resettled, they often enter countries with healthier economies than their home countries. Resettlement countries are able to offer refugees more aid than they would receive from their home country if they were repatriated. Refugees are also able to find employment and begin to provide for themselves, instead of relying on aid from others.

Finally, resettlement countries have more stable governments and, generally, have not just emerged from drawn-out conflicts. Resettlement offers a chance for refugees to establish lives for themselves in stabilized countries as opposed to re-entering countries which are struggling to repair themselves from years of violent conflict and destruction.

Case Studies

The Bhutanese and Syrian refugee crises are two cases where repatriation has proven impossible, and resettlement has been the only viable option for assisting refugees. The Bhutanese refugee crisis lasted for almost two decades and was not resolved until the UNHCR began to focus on resettling Bhutanese refugees rather than repatriating them. In the case of Bhutan, repatriation was never an option because the Bhutanese government was so hostile to refugees.

The Bhutanese refugee crisis lasted from 1990 to 2007. It began with the Bhutanese government's increased persecution of the Lhotshampa people. Lhotshampas were deprived of

their citizenship and their rights. A great number of people were forced to leave Bhutan and became refugees.

Throughout the refugee crisis, the Nepali and Bhutanese governments held a series of talks to discuss the repatriation of refugees. The UNHCR was hopeful that repatriation would occur, and Bhutanese refugees waited in refugee camps to return home. However, the Bhutanese government was unwilling to allow any of the refugees to ever return.

After seventeen years of waiting, the Bhutanese refugees were finally offered a durable solution: resettlement. The UNHCR began allowing the Bhutanese refugees to be resettled in 2007. The refugee crisis could not end until resettlement was an option.

The Bhutanese refugee crisis highlights the idea that countries which have pushed people out of their borders are often opposed to allowing the refugees they have created to be repatriated. In some cases, repatriation will never be possible, and the UNHCR's focus on repatriation only prolongs the suffering of refugees in camps. Resettlement is often a preferable solution in these kinds of cases.

In the Syrian refugee crisis, the UNHCR is waiting for repatriation to occur, and repatriation did seem likely at one point. However, because of the scope and duration of the Syrian Civil War, repatriation has remained impossible for Syrian refugees. Considering recent events in the war, repatriation does not seem like it will be possible in the near future.

The Syrian refugee crisis began in 2011, when rebel groups began to fight against President Bashar al-Assad's regime. As the Syrian Civil War started, Syrians began to flee to surrounding countries. The refugee crisis has continued because the war has evolved to include new actors and new conflicts have arisen. Although the war started as fighting between the

government and resistance groups, it now includes fighting among different ethnic groups in the country. If the war had not evolved, repatriation might have been possible by now. However, repatriation is still not a viable option for Syrian refugees, who have remained in refugee camps for the past nine years.

The UNHCR should focus on resettlement as a way of alleviating the refugee crisis, as they did in Bhutan. Although Syrian refugees are not being resettled on a large scale by the UNHCR, some refugees have been able to resettle in Canada. Resettled refugees in Canada have entered the country through private sponsorships. They have experienced successes while living in Canada and report positive feelings toward their resettlement.

The case of Syria proves refugee crises are unpredictable, and repatriation is not a reliable strategy for assisting refugees. Even if repatriation seems like it may soon be likely, the situations surrounding a refugee crisis can change and worsen quickly.

Bhutan

The refugee crisis in Bhutan began in 1990 after the Bhutanese government began persecuting ethnic minority groups in the country. The ethnic group which was persecuted most heavily was the Lhotshampas, Bhutanese citizens of Nepali descent who mainly lived in the southern region of Bhutan (Trieu and Vang 2015, 349). The Lhotshampas first entered Bhutan in the 1800's; they were brought in by the government to work as laborers because of labor shortages in the country (Kharat 2001, 39). The Lhotshampas were outsiders who were brought into a country which was already established and already had a ruling ethnic group. Furthermore, they were brought in to be laborers and were therefore seen as being of a lower class.

The Lhotshampas have been systematically oppressed since their arrival in Bhutan. The ruling class in Bhutan consists of the Ngalops and the Sharchops, with the Ngalops being the most elite ethnic group in the country (Carrick 2018, 15). In Bhutan, religion is the most divisive factor among all ethnic groups (State Department 2008). An ethnic group other than the Ngalops will not be oppressed as long as they practice the same religion as the Ngalops. For example, the Sharchops practice Buddhism, which the Ngalops also practice, and therefore, they are able to hold positions of power and have citizenship in Bhutan (State Department 2008). However, the Lhotshampas practice a different religion. The Lhotshampas are Hindu (Carrick 2008, 15). The Lhotshampas have been historically discriminated against because they do not practice Buddhism.

At one point, the Lhotshampas began to receive legal protections from the government. The Nationality Act of Bhutan gave the Lhotshampas the same rights enjoyed by citizens in 1958 (Kharat 2001, 39). After being in the country for a century, the Lhotshampas were finally being treated like citizens in their home country. During the 1950's until the 1970's, Bhutan's King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck made reforms to include Lhotshampas in the government and to give them more representation; these reforms caused the ruling Ngalops to fear Lhotshampas could threaten their power in the country (Carrick 2018, 16). The reforms meant to help the Lhotshampas actually increased tensions in the country and made the Ngalops target them. In the 1960's and the 1970's, Bhutan experienced increasing numbers of Nepalese entering and settling in Bhutan (Kharat 2001, 40). The sudden influx of Nepali citizens further escalated the ethnic tensions in the country.

The reforms created by King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck were not long-lasting. In 1972, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck died, and his son, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, became the King of Bhutan (New York Times 2006). Under King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Lhotshampas lost the rights they had enjoyed during his father's rule. In 1985, the government conducted a census which declared a majority of the Lhotshampas in the country were no longer citizens (State Department 2015). The government only conducted the 1985 census in southern areas of the country which had large Lhotshampa populations (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 98). Because the census was only conducted in areas where Lhotshampas were living, it is clear that the census was only meant to deprive the Lhotshampas of their citizenship. Any progress the Lhotshampa community had made during the earlier part of the century was reversed.

The Lhotshampas were oppressed through many other methods during this time as well. In 1988, Bhutan began its "One Nation, One People Program," which required that all people in the country wear traditional Ngalong clothing in public (Carrick 2008, 22). The Lhotshampas were no longer able to wear their traditional clothing. The government was trying to ban all expressions of Lhotshampa culture in the country.

The government also attacked the Nepali language, which is the language spoken by the Lhotshampa people. In 1989, the Nepali language was banned in schools (BBC 2018). The government also ordered for all textbooks which were written in Nepali to be burned (White House Initiative 2016). Lhotshampa children were not allowed to learn their language or to speak it to their classmates. Then, the government banned speaking any language other than the Ngalops' Dzongkha in any public place (Carrick 2008, 23). The only way for the Nepali

language to be spoken in Bhutan was in private places. The Lhotshampas were forced to hide their culture.

The government then enacted a series of laws to keep Lhotshampas out of business and to deny them an education. In the 1990's "No Objection Certificates" were created and were required for person to enroll in higher education, to gain employment within the government, and to own a business; Lhotshampas were frequently denied these certificates (Carrick 2008, 26). No Objection Certificates were a method of keeping the Lhotshampas oppressed and ensuring they could not gain any power in Bhutan. The government also created "security clearance certificates," which were similarly not made available to Lhotshampas in Bhutan; these certificates were necessary to schedule doctors' visits; to be employed anywhere in the country; to enroll in any school, including primary and secondary schools; and to travel outside of the country (State Department 2015). The Lhotshampas were prevented from working or learning in Bhutan. They had no chance for employment, and they could no longer survive in Bhutan.

Ethnic tensions had existed in Bhutan for many years, but they escalated even further in 1990, after a series of protests by the Lhotshampas. Many Lhotshampas participated in peaceful demonstrations against the government in September and October of that year (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 98). The government reacted strongly to these protests. In 1991, the government declared that anyone who participated in a protest against the government or complained about human rights abuses in Bhutan would be forced to leave the country (Sinha 1994, 181). However, as the protests continued, the government's tactics for dealing with dissenters became more brutal. The government imprisoned and tortured those who had been involved in the protests (Trieu and Vang 2015, 349). Government forces also burned houses in

the southern region of the country and physically and sexually assaulted Lhotshampas, regardless of their participation in protests (Sinha 1994, 181). The Lhotshampas now had to fear for their personal safety. They could not safely remain in Bhutan.

The government enacted a number of new laws in response to the protest, which did not threaten physical violence against the Lhotshampas, but nevertheless furthered their oppression. In 1997, a law was written which explicitly forbid the employment of anyone with Nepali heritage in southern Bhutan, and every school in southern Bhutan was closed down (Carrick 2018, 25). The No Objection certificates and security clearance certificates had been covert ways to prevent Lhotshampas from gaining employment and an education; now, the governments hatred towards the Lhotshampas was overt.

Finally, the government started a campaign to force all Lhotshampas out of the country. The government printed “Voluntary Migration Forms” in Dzongkha, a language which the Lhotshampas did not speak, and compelled Lhotshampas to sign them; upon signing the forms, the Lhotshampas would learn they had signed away their right to remain in the country (Kharat 2001, 43). The government used the Lhotshampas’ lack of knowledge about the Ngalops’ language against them. The Lhotshampas lost their homes and the only country they had ever known without even realizing what they were doing.

Anyone who did not sign a voluntary migration form would be forced to leave through other methods. Some Lhotshampas were attacked by soldiers and instructed to leave Bhutan if they did not want to be attacked again, while others were put into prisons and tortured until they agreed to leave the country (Economist 2009, 53). In the end, the government used manipulation and physical abuse to force the mass migration of Lhotshampas from the country.

This violence on behalf of the government caused a major exodus of Lhotshampas and other ethnic minorities and began the refugee crisis. In total, one-sixth of the overall Bhutanese population was forced to flee the country (Shrestha 2014). A large number of refugees were created, and the UNHCR was tasked with assisting these refugees.

Refugees began escaping Bhutan and traveling to surrounding countries in 1990. By 1992, over one-hundred thousand has fled from Bhutan (Trieu and Vang 2015, 349). The majority of these refugees fled to India, but they were not allowed to remain there and had to travel to Nepal to find refuge (Shrestha 2014). Once in Nepal, tensions flared between local citizens and the Bhutanese refugees.

One reason for tensions between citizens and refugees in Nepal was the massive amount of refugees which Nepal received. The total number of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal was equal to one-fifth of Nepal's total number of citizens (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 97). When the refugee crisis began, the number of people living in Bhutan suddenly increased by twenty percent. The Nepali government was overwhelmed by the number of Lhotshampas entering its borders. The Bhutanese refugees also began threatening the job security of Nepali citizens in areas surrounding the camp. The refugees looked for illegal work outside of the camps because their needs were not being met; they were willing to work for far less than Nepali citizens were (Kharat 2001, 44). The refugees needed to find ways to provide for themselves, but the Nepalese also needed their jobs. Competition over work led to anti-refugee sentiments in Nepal.

Because Nepal was so overwhelmed with the incoming refugees, they desperately wanted the refugees to be repatriated back to Bhutan. In 1996, the Nepali government demanded that

Bhutan allow the 80,000 refugees who had entered Nepal to return home (BBC, 2018). However, repatriating the Bhutanese refugees would never be possible.

After the onset of the refugee crisis, the UNHCR believed the refugees would eventually be resettled. Nepal and Bhutan began to hold regular meetings to discuss the refugees being repatriated in 2003 (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 97). The talks at first seemed promising. Bhutan decided they would divide refugees into four categories:

1. Bhutanese who were forced to leave the country;
2. Bhutanese who left the country willingly;
3. Those who were never Bhutanese citizens; and
4. Bhutanese who had committed crimes.

(Kharat 2003, 286)

However, the division of refugees into these categories did not help Bhutan and Nepal get any closer to resolving the refugee crisis. Bhutan asserted that the majority of the refugees fell into the second or third categories and either decided to leave Bhutan of their own accord or were never actually Bhutanese citizens (State Department 2008). Therefore, they believed the majority of the refugees living in camps in Nepal should not be returned to Bhutan.

At the beginning of the talks it seemed like at least some of the refugees could be repatriated. Bhutan said that the refugees who fell into the first category, and were determined to have been forced out of the country, could return (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 99). It seemed as if the refugee crisis could be somewhat mitigated, and a number of refugees may be offered a durable solution. However, when the Bhutanese government began dividing the refugees into the four categories, they only determined 2.4 percent to fall into the first category, and they said that

they now refused to even repatriate those refugees (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 99). The small glimmer of hope in the Bhutanese Refugee Crisis had been extinguished.

Two further aspects which prevented Bhutanese repatriation were India's refusal to participate in the talks and the continuing human rights violations in Nepal. India held enough power in the region to encourage Bhutan to repatriate its citizens; however, India wanted to remain neutral (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 99). India's refusal to accept Bhutanese refugees or to participate in negotiations between Bhutan and Nepal clearly indicate that the country did not want to get involved in the refugee crisis. However, without India's involvement, Nepal was not powerful enough to negotiate the return of the refugees to Bhutan. Then, in 1996 Amnesty International reported significant, continuing human rights violations in southern Bhutan (BBC 2018). Even if Bhutan was willing to let refugees return, Bhutan was clearly not safe for them to return to.

In total, the Bhutanese and Nepali governments made fifteen attempts to agree on a repatriation plan, but none of these talks were successful (Acharya 2006). The UNHCR thought these talks would solve the Bhutanese refugee crisis. However, the Bhutanese government had persecuted the Lhotshampas and intentionally drove them from the country; Bhutan did not want to allow the refugees back in. Despite the UNHCR's focus on repatriation, they were unable to make repatriation a reality in the Bhutanese refugee crisis.

National policies in Bhutan demonstrated the unwillingness of the government to allow the Lhotshampas to repatriate. The government began giving the land which had previously been occupied by the Lhotshampas to remaining Bhutanese citizens from other regions of the country and encouraging them to settle there (Rizal 2004, 168). This policy was an attempt to stop the

Lhotshampas from returning. The refugees would have nowhere to live and no land to return to if they decided to repatriate. Schools in the southern part of Bhutan remain closed, except in areas where large numbers of Ngalops have settled (Carrick 2008, 25). Lhotshampa children who were to return would still be unable to get an education. While the UNHCR planned on repatriating the refugees, the Bhutanese government made it clear that the refugees should not return.

Lhotshampas remain in prisons across Bhutan. As of 2015, political prisoners who had participated in the protests of the 1990's still remained in Bhutanese prisons (State Department 2015). The Lhotshampas who were unable to flee are still being punished in Bhutan, and any Lhotshampas who attempt to return would surely be punished in the same way. In fact, 261 refugees were arrested in 1991 after attempting to re-enter Bhutan (BBC 1991). Bhutan proved it was completely unwilling to allow any Lhotshampas to return to their homes.

The few Lhotshampas who remained in Bhutan and outside of prisons had their freedoms severely restricted. Foreign and internal travel of any kind was heavily restricted for Lhotshampas; they had to obtain special permissions to be allowed to travel anywhere within the country (State Department 2015). Lhotshampas who were unable to flee with the original wave of refugees were now stuck inside the country. Furthermore, the country continually threatened to revoke the citizenships of anyone who is "disloyal" to the country of Bhutan in any way (State Department 2015). Considering the government's historical treatment of the Lhotshampa people, Lhotshampas were likely to be accused of being "disloyal" without any real cause, simply because the government wanted to take their citizenship away from them. Even today, foreign visitors in Bhutan are not allowed to visit some areas in the southern part of the country

(Shrestha 2014). These restrictions are most likely in place to keep foreigners from witnessing the continued abuse of Lhotshampas in Bhutan.

The conditions in the Bhutanese refugee camps were very poor and even dangerous. Refugees were unable to provide for themselves and unable to learn new skills or get an education. Although the refugees tended to be more educated and skilled than the Nepali citizens living around the camps, the refugees were not allowed to have legal employment in the surrounding communities, and the UNHCR did not provide any funding for refugee education after 2003 (Rizal 2004, 174). As refugees stayed in the camps, they lost their ability and potential to be employed or to gain an education.

Refugees also experienced the loss of many other services while they remained in the camps. In 1995, the UNHCR majorly scaled down the health services available to refugees, and refugees only had access to the most basic first aid in the camps (Kharat 2001, 44). Refugees with medical conditions had to look outside of the camps for medical assistance. Local hospitals were overwhelmed by refugees seeking medical treatments and could not assist both the local populations and the refugees (Kharat 2001, 44). Without the UNHCR providing medical facilities, refugees were unable to get the proper medical attention that they needed and anti-refugee sentiments in Nepal once again increased because of the pressures refugees put on Nepal's medical system.

The UNHCR simply did not have the funding to provide everything the refugees needed. Many Bhutanese refugees in Nepali camps did not even receive proper amounts of food. Refugees report that the only food they received while in the camps was two pounds of rice

every two weeks (Marzo and Chapagain 104, 2012). They did not have enough food, or enough variety in their diet, to be healthy.

Furthermore, the camps were hostile environments for refugees. In 2006, Assistant United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Judy Cheng-Hopkins said, “There are girls, mostly subjected to rape and other forms of violence, whose lives continue to remain in danger at the refugee camps” (Acharya 2006). At this point, refugees had been living in the camps for sixteen years. The camps were not only demoralizing; they were a threat to the lives of those refugees who remained there. James F. Moriarty, the American Ambassador to Nepal, urged for refugees to be resettled because of the poor conditions in the camps (Karki 2006). The international community was beginning to call for the refugees to be offered a durable solution which would allow them to leave the camps.

Repatriation was obviously not going to be possible for the Lhotshampas. They needed a different durable solution to assist them. In 2006, the Lhotshampas in refugee camps in Nepal began to protest remaining in the camps and to call for resettlement (BBC 2018). International diplomats and the refugees themselves were demanding resettlement. It was the only possible solution to end the suffering of the Bhutanese refugees.

Resettlement of Bhutanese refugees finally began in 2007 (Trieu and Vang 2015, 349). At that point, the UNHCR let refugees submit applications to be moved to third countries (Preiss 2016). The Lhotshampas no longer had to remain in refugee camps. Instead they were resettled in the following countries: the United States, Canada, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Norway (Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 96).

Since 2007, over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled, and 84,000 of those refugees were resettled in the United States (Shrestha 2015). The United States was especially welcoming of the Lhotshampas who were resettled there. In 2015, President Obama started the “Stand Stronger Citizen Awareness Campaign” to assist permanent residents in the naturalization process; a large number of the resettled Bhutanese refugees have now been granted citizenship in the United States because of this program (White House Initiative 2016). After almost two decades in the refugee camps, the resettled Lhotshampas now have a place where they are welcome and can have a sense of belonging.

Refugees report four reasons why they chose resettlement once the option was available to them:

1. Repatriation remained impossible and did not seem likely to ever occur;
2. Refugees were frustrated with their lives in the camps;
3. Resettlement seemed like their only chance for an improved future;
4. The Lhotshampas no longer wanted to be stateless refugees. They wanted to be citizens of a country.

(Marzo and Chapagain 2012, 106).

Refugees were tired of their situation in the refugee camps. They knew that they would not be able to advance themselves as long as they remained in the camps. After seventeen years of waiting for repatriation, the Lhotshampas were finally able to settle in a permanent location and build lives for themselves. Repatriation was never a viable option for them, despite hopes from the international community that repatriation would occur. The Bhutanese refugee crisis could not be solved until the UNHCR considered resettlement.

Syria

The largest refugee crisis in the world is the Syrian refugee crisis. The Syrian Civil War began in 2011, and many Syrians have fled the country since it began. The Syrian Civil War began after a series of peaceful protests, which were part of the larger Arab Spring movement, against “regime brutality”; these protests highlighted already existing ethnic and religious tensions in the country (Berti 2018). Protestors were demonstrating for a more democratic form of government in Syria (Lynch 2018, 116). The tensions highlighted by these protests were not new. Many in the country had been upset about the economy, the political system, and a lack of freedoms for citizens for over a decade (Lynch 2018, 120). However, when the Arab Spring began, Syrian citizens finally felt empowered to voice their opposition to the government.

In 2011, the protests escalated to uprising. Syrian rebels began fighting against President Bashar al-Assad’s rule (Lynch 2018, 120). At this point, the Syrian Civil War started. The War was initially fought between rebels and the Syrian government. However, foreign nations quickly became involved in the war. Turkey began to support the rebels and to escalate the conflict because they saw the war as a chance to weaken Syria and to gain power for themselves in the region (Lynch 2018, 122). With Turkey’s help, the rebels were able to fight harder against al-Assad’s regime. The war became more brutal, and large swaths of Syria were devastated.

Because Iran is a Syrian ally, it involved itself in the war as well. The Iranian government assisted local militias fighting for al-Assad’s rule, and Russia has strongly supported al-Assad (Lynch 2018, 122-123). Both sides could now wage a bloody war. They had better weapons, and they had support from foreign powers, which legitimized their cause.

The longer the Syrian War waged, the more complicated it became. Many new actors emerged to fight in the war. ISIS, an offshoot of al-Qaeda, was created as a rebel group during the Syrian Civil War (CNN 2019). Since the Syrian Civil War began, it has continuously escalated.

Because of the destruction of the war, a large portion of the Syrian population has fled from their homes. Some of these Syrians remain internally displaced, while many have fled the country and are now refugees living outside of Syria. As of November 2019, the UNHCR had identified over 5.5 million Syrian refugees (Syria Regional Refugee Response 2019). The number of Syrian refugees which the UNHCR has been tasked with assisting is overwhelmingly large.

At one point repatriation seemed very possible. The main focus of the war for President al-Assad became fighting ISIS, who had emerged as one of the strongest rebels groups in Syria. ISIS once held territory in Syria and Iran which was as large as the country of Great Britain (Katkov & Kaplow 2019). They posed a genuine threat to al-Assad's regime. However, in 2017, the Islamic State lost control of some of its territory in Eastern Syria, and many were hopeful that refugees from that area of Syria would be able to return (Khaddour 2019, 3). Then, the last areas held by ISIS were taken back in March, 2019 (Katkov & Kaplow 2019). ISIS does not have control over any lands in Syria now; they have been significantly weakened. In fact, opposition groups, as a whole, have slowed down and no longer pose a significant threat to al-Assad (Lynch 2018, 123). However, the Syrian Civil War is still ongoing. At this point, the war is entering its ninth year.

The Syrian Civil War and the actors involved in the fighting have become very complicated; there are many reasons the war is still ongoing. The war was originally fought between pro-government and rebel forces. Since 2011, Islamic extremists, religious minorities, and ethnic minority groups have all established their own militias and are fighting amongst each other (Kingsley 2019). Even ISIS, which no longer controls any land in Syria, still has the potential to emerge again in the future. Estimates suggest that 14,000 ISIS members are still living in Syria and Iraq (Katkov & Kaplow 2019). At any point, these members could re-organize and renew their fight against Syria.

Ethnic conflicts are a major reason the war has continued. Two major ethnic groups in Syria are the Kurds and the Arabs. The Arabs are the ethnic majority in Syria, while the Kurds are the greatest ethnic minority in the country (Kingsley 2019). In the beginning of the war, Kurdish and Arab forces fought together to recapture territory from ISIS; however, both sides were distrustful of one another (Bertrand 2016). Their alliance was shaky and based on having a common enemy. Even while they fought together, many Arabs feared the Kurdish forces would try to gain control of the lands they pushed ISIS out of (Bertrand 2016). Many Kurdish people live in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, but there is no country where a majority of citizens are Kurdish (Kingsley 2019). Many Arab citizens in Syria speculated that the Kurds might use the chaos of the war to establish their own sovereign nation.

During the war, Kurdish forces have become very powerful. Some of the strongest forces against rebels and resistance groups were Kurdish forces (Kingsley 2019). Because of Kurdish successes in the fight against rebel groups in Syria, the United States chose to support a particular Kurdish force, the People's Protection Units, and began supplying arms to the group

(Lynch 2018, 118). The People's Protection Units then had access to better weapons and became a bigger threat in the eyes of the Arab population. The People's Protection Units eventually gained control of almost twenty-five percent of Syria, including the majority of the Syrian borderlands with Turkey (Kingsley 2019). As the People's Protection Units gained territory in Syria, tensions between the Kurdish and Arab populations in the country flared. Because of this tension, it was still unsafe for refugees to return (Khaddour 2019, 3). Although the situation that originally caused refugees to flee had ended, the area had been significantly destabilized and new conflicts had arisen.

A further reason the war has continued, and it remains impossible for refugees to be repatriated, is the involvement of foreign nations in the war. Many foreign powers have supported different groups fighting in the war. The Turkish government continued to support rebel groups (Can 2017, 175). Turkey's involvement in the war further escalated after the United States pulled troops out of Syria in October, 2019 (Chan 2019). Israel has frequently conducted air strikes in Syria, and Iran continues to support the Syrian government (Lynch 2018, 118). Although the war began as a civil war, it is quickly escalating into an international war. As the fighting continues, the war has a significant chance of spilling over into other nations.

The refugees created by the war have already put a significant strain on their asylum countries. Arab Spring protests were happening throughout the Middle East, not only in Syria, when the war broke out. Refugees began to enter Jordan when the country was dealing with its own protests and increased unemployment (Pasha 2019). Jordan was already facing heightening tensions and insecurity as the refugees arrived. The country has not been able to properly support the refugees living within its borders. Today, ninety-three percent of the Syrian refugees living in

Jordan are living in poverty (UNHCR Canada n.d.). Because the UNHCR is waiting for repatriation, these refugees will continue living in poverty indefinitely.

Turkey has received a majority of the refugees. There are currently more than 3.5 million displaced Syrians living in Turkey (UNHCR Canada n.d.). Turkey is the asylum country which has been affected the most by the Syrian Refugee Crisis. As a result of anti-refugee sentiments in the country, violent acts are becoming increasingly common in Turkey, near its border with Syria (Can 2017, 175). The violence in Syria has indirectly spurred violence in Turkey. Furthermore, the strength of the People's Protection Units in Syria has also caused Turkey to fear that the Kurdish minority within its own borders will try to form its a sovereign country by taking over Turkish territory (Lynch 2018, 123). The Syrian Civil War demonstrates how conflicts which create refugee crises can easily spread across borders.

Because the war has been so long-lasting, it will take a long time for Syria to recover once it comes to an end. Because of the destruction of the war, the Syrian government will have to focus on rebuilding the country, rather than assisting refugees. Furthermore, Syria has a population of about twenty-one million; as of 2018, over six million of these citizens had been internally displaced, and almost another six million were refugees (Berti). If refugees are repatriated after the conflict ends, the Syrian government will be overwhelmed. The country would not only have six million repatriated refugees to assist; the six million internally displaced persons would also need assistance.

One recent conflict has caused even more Syrians to become internally displaced. President Bashar al-Assad has been heavily targeting the city of Idlib, in northwestern Syria, which has caused a significant number of Syrians living in the area to flee to other parts of the

country (Ulgen 2020). Almost one million residents of Idlib have retreated to the Syrian-Turkish border (Yee & Saad 2020). There is a possibility that these internally displaced persons could cross over the border with Turkey, and both Turkey and the UNHCR could be further overwhelmed by a new wave of Syrian refugees.

Instead of de-escalating, the conflict in Syria is heightening. President Al-Assad is targeting Idlib because it is the last area in Syria which is controlled by a resistance group fighting against the government (Yee & Saad 2020). If the war was still only being fought by pro-government and rebels forces, the end of the war may be near. However, the Syrian War has already evolved in so many ways that defeating resistance groups in the country will not end the fighting.

Al-Assad's attacks on Idlib only threaten to prolong the war. In February 2020, an air strike killed 33 Turkish soldiers in Idlib, and the international community now fears that Russia may become involved in the war in response to the air strike (Economist 2020). Turkey openly declared war against Syria for the first time since the beginning of the war because of the deaths (Gall 2020). Before the fighting in Idlib, Turkey had supported rebel groups, but had not officially declared war against Syria.

Now, the Syrian War has evolved again. The Syrian government is not only fighting Kurdish militias in Syria; now, they must fight a war against Turkey, as well. Both Turkey and Syria have strong international allies. Syria is supported by Russia, and Turkey is part of the NATO alliance with many countries, including the United States (Gall 2020). The future of the Syrian War might involve these allies. As the war continues to escalate, Syrian or Turkish allies could easily be pulled into the fight.

The end of the Syrian War is not close. In fact, the war may now spread and uproot people in surrounding countries. If war is fought on Turkish soil, the Syrian refugees living there could be forced to flee once again. If the war transforms from a civil war to an international one, the hope of repatriating refugees will be even more unrealistic.

The conflict in Syria will not end any time soon. However, even when it does end, it will not immediately be safe or viable for refugees to return. The government will have to deal with rebuilding the country and with the psychological impacts of the war before repatriation can happen.

Syria's economy and infrastructure have both suffered heavily as a result of the war. According to the International Monetary Fund, the Syrian GDP is less than fifty percent of what it was at the outset of the war, and it may take more than twenty years from the end of the conflict for the GDP to return to what it was (Gobat & Kostial 2016, 1). Because the economy has suffered so greatly, the government will not have the money to rebuild the country or to assist refugees and internally displaced persons until the economy recovers.

The cost to rebuild damaged infrastructure in the country could be monumental. By 2014, up to 75 billion dollars in damage had been done to the country's infrastructure, and in 2016, the IMF estimated that it could take up to 200 billion dollars to rebuild all of the damaged infrastructure (Gobat & Kostial, 20). That number is likely to be much higher as of now. It will take a long time for Syria to recover from the devastation of the war. However, the country currently does not have any plans for rebuilding damaged cities (Katkov & Kaplow 2019). How long after the war ends will it take for Syria to even begin the process of reconstruction?

The psychological toll that the war has taken on Syria is also an issue which will take a long time to resolve. The impact of years of civil war will be felt on “social, political, economic, and humanitarian levels” for years after the war ends (Berti 2018). Every aspect of Syrian society will be affected by the legacy of the war. It could take generations for citizens to regain a trust in their government and for the ethnic and religious conflicts which the war exposed to be mitigated.

It would be unconscionable to repatriate refugees and force them to return to a country which has been so destabilized, even if the official conflict which forced those refugees to flee has ended. The end of the war in Syria is only the first step in the processes which would need to occur for Syrian refugees to be able to safely return to Syria.

While the Syrian War continues, refugees remain in camps. Although camps are only meant to be temporary solutions, Syrians who fled the country have remained there for almost a decade. The largest camp for Syrian refugees in the world is Za’atari in Jordan (Pasha 2019). Over 160,000 refugees live in Za’atari (Al-Hourani, Azzam, & Mott 2019). The conditions in Za’atari are very poor, and refugees should not be forced to remain there because the UNHCR hopes that repatriation might be possible one day.

When the UNHCR built Za’atari, the government of Jordan prohibited the use of permanent building materials, such as concrete and cement (Pasha 2019). Although the Syrian refugees who live in Za’atari have been there for a prolonged amount of time, they must live in makeshift shelters. They do not have proper housing, and the government’s refusal to build solid structures demonstrates hostility toward the refugees who have found themselves in Jordan.

The government also created laws which make it illegal for the refugees to leave the camp and enter Jordan (Pasha 2019). The camp is more like a prison than a place of refuge. The psychological toll of living in the camp, where refugees have their movements restricted and the UNHCR struggles to meet refugees' basic needs, is large. A disproportionate number of refugees living in the camp suffer from mental disorders, including depression, and report feelings of social isolation and insecurity (Al-Hourani, Azzam, & Jaber 2019). They need to be offered a durable solution which will allow them to leave the camps and have a chance at happiness.

There are many issues in Za'atari which affect women and children in particular. These issues are especially damaging to the overall population of refugees in the camp because women and children make up eighty percent of the refugee population (UNHCR Canada n.d.). Teenage pregnancy is extremely common in the camp (PRI 2017). Sexual assault is also common. One reason sexual assault is common is that there is a lack of security to prevent it and a lack of rules forbidding it (Al-Hourani, Azzam, & Mott 2019). The Jordanian government and the UNHCR are not doing enough to protect the women who live in Za'atari. Another reason sexual assaults occur regularly in the camp is that refugee women must walk significant distances in the dark. The camp does not have electricity, and facilities, such as bathrooms, are placed far away from the areas of the camps where people live (Pasha 2019). If a woman needs to use the bathroom in the night, she must walk alone through the dark camp. Women in Za'atari actually suffer urinary tract infections at an increased rate because they avoid trips to the bathroom during the night (Pasha, 2019). The layout of the camp puts these women's safety at risk.

One of the worst issues facing women and girls in Za'atari is forced prostitution. In Za'atari it is common for families to force their daughters into prostitution because so many

refugees are impoverished; this practice is especially common with girls under the age of fourteen (Al-Hourani, Azzam, & Mott 2019). Because of the feelings of insecurity in the camps, young girls suffer. Children in Za'atari are also frequently forced to perform physical labor for the same reason (Al-Hourani, Azzam, & Jaber 2019). Because there is so little chance of legal employment for refugees in Za'atari and the UNHCR is unable to meet the needs of the refugees living in the camps, children must perform manual labor or sex work to provide their families. The Za'atari camp is a dangerous environment for children, and they deserve a durable solution which will end the abuses they are facing.

Young girls in other refugee camps face similar struggles. In Lebanon, young girls get married because they fear being sexually assaulted if they do not have a husband to protect them; nearly fifty percent of girls between the ages of fifteen and seventeen are married (PRI 2017). Sexual assault is common fear among refugee women in many different camps; it is not only Za'atari where it is common.

Overall, Syrian refugees in all camps are living in poor conditions. They have had their humanity stripped from them and see themselves as “passive receiver(s) of aid” (Pasha 2019). They no longer feel as if they are in control of their own lives. They are not able to change their circumstances or work towards a better future. Syrian families are patriarchal, and many refugee men feel intense shame because they are unemployed and cannot provide for their families (Al-Hourani, Azzam, & Jaber 2019). Syrian men living in the camps are demoralized and feel like they are unable to do what is expected of them as the leader of the household.

Children are unable to get proper educations in the camp. The majority of Syrian refugees experience months or years where they are unable to go to school, and many still do not have

access to an education currently (UNHCR Canada n.d.). Without an education, these children do not have a chance of building a good future for themselves. They are destined to remain in poverty for the rest of their lives.

Refugees do not get all of the necessary resources they need while they are in camps. In 2018, less than one million Syrian refugees, of the over five million total Syrian refugees, received proper winter items, such as blankets, plastic sheets for insulation, and winter clothes (UNHCR Canada n.d.). Only a small portion of the total refugees were actually prepared for the winter. The UNHCR simply cannot meet the needs of all the refugees created by the Syrian War.

Statistics show that refugees living in the camps are significantly less happy than those who fled Syria, but avoided registering as refugees and living in camps. Those in refugee camps had less self-respect and lowered self-esteem; they also had more anxiety and fear (ALharbi 2017). Refugee camps foster a negative self image because refugees feel as if they have no purpose while living in the camp. They cannot get an education, gain new skills, or find employment. Refugee camps are necessary as a way to immediately help refugees when they first leave their home countries; however, they are not and should not be permanent solutions for refugees.

Although the UNHCR has not started a large-scale program to resettle Syrian refugees, because they are waiting for repatriation, there is still evidence which suggests resettlement of Syrian refugees could be highly successful. The United States has a strong community of Syrian immigrants. On average, Syrian immigrants in America make \$7,000 more per year than American-born citizens make (Kallick, Roldan, & Mathema 2016). Syrian immigrants have proven to have high earning potential in the United States. Furthermore, eleven percent of Syrian

immigrants in the United States are business owners; only three percent of citizens who were born in America are business owners (Kallick, Roldan, & Mathema 2016). Syrian immigrants are entrepreneurial and have experienced great successes after immigrating to the United States. The United States' existing Syrian population could assist incoming refugees and help them integrate into American society.

In Canada, many Syrian refugees have already been resettled, despite the UNHCR's focus on repatriation back to Syria. Canada's "Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program" allows Canadian citizens to sponsor a refugee; the refugee can live in Canada, as long as a private citizen is willing to pay their expenses for their first year in the country (Silverberg 2019). Individual citizens can find refugees to bring to Canada themselves. The refugees are then given time to find employment, learn English or French, and become comfortable in Canada because their expenses are taken care of for one year. Many of the refugees who have entered the country through this program already have earned college degrees, have learned new skills, and have started businesses in Canada (Einhorn 2017). They have been able to provide for themselves in ways they were unable to while still in camps, and they are now contributing to the Canadian economy.

During 2015 and 2016, over 26,172 Syrian refugees came to Canada (Hamilton, Veronis, & Walton-Roberts 2019). One Canadian businessman, Jim Estill, spent \$1.1 million resettling eighty-nine Syrian families (Silverberg, 2019). Although the UNHCR has not pushed for resettlement of Syrian refugees, a significant number of Syrians have been resettled because Canadian citizens have taken the initiative to bring them to Canada.

Syrian refugees who have been resettled in Canada have been successful in integrating into Canadian society. Ninety percent of the refugees resettled in Canada reported that they had strong feelings of belonging in Canada (Hamilton, Veronis, & Walton-Roberts 2019). The refugees who have been resettled report positive feelings towards their current situation, as opposed to the negative feelings reported by Syrian refugees in camps.

The success of the Syrian refugee resettlement program in Canada has also inspired other nations. Britain and Argentina have begun to develop similar programs (Kantor & Einhorn 2017). Countries around the world are able to see that refugees in Syria need a durable solution which is reliable, and individuals are supportive of resettling Syrian refugees within their borders.

The Syrian refugee crisis demonstrates the unreliability of repatriation as a permanent solution for refugees. Countries surrounding Syria continue to be overwhelmed by the influx of Syrian refugees into their borders, and Syrian refugees continue to live in poor conditions in refugee camps. Although repatriation was expected to occur by now, it has proved to be impossible. The cases where Syrian refugees were resettled have proven to have positive outcomes. The Syrian Refugee Crisis is similar to the Bhutanese Refugee Crisis; large-scale resettlement is necessary to end the crisis.

In both the case of the Bhutanese Refugee Crisis and the case of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, repatriation was unreliable and unrealistic. In Bhutan, the government was completely unwilling to allow repatriation, even though Bhutanese officials entertained repatriation talks.

The Bhutanese Refugee Crisis highlights the idea that, for many refugees, repatriation will never be a feasible option without a regime change.

In Syria, the conflict has evolved and is still on-going. Repatriation is impossible, and Syrian refugees are still waiting for a permanent solution to assist them. The Syrian Refugee Crisis highlights the way in which these crises can drag on for longer than expected and prevent repatriation.

The idea of repatriation as the most desirable solution for refugees has only prolonged the suffering of the refugees in both these cases. The Bhutanese refugee crisis lasted much longer than it should have because the UNHCR wanted to wait for repatriation. The Syrian refugee crisis is still ongoing because the UNHCR thinks repatriation may be possible at some point in the future. The Syrian Refugee Crisis will only be alleviated when the UNHCR begins to emphasize resettlement in their response, as they did in Bhutan.

Conclusion

Repatriation should not be considered the ideal strategy for assisting refugees because it is so unlikely in many cases. Resettlement offers refugees a durable solution when repatriation is not an option. If the United Nations, and the UNHCR in particular, began to focus on resettlement, rather than repatriation, refugee crises could be solved more quickly.

Resettled refugees have access to education and employment opportunities which they would not have access to in the camps. As refugees who have been resettled are employed, they gain self-reliance and are less dependent on humanitarian aid (Hansen 2018, 139). Resettling refugees removes them from camps and lessens the burden on the UNHCR. Refugees are then able to provide for themselves, instead of relying on aid and hoping they will receive enough

assistance to meet their basic needs. They are also able to start building permanent lives and to gain a sense dignity.

Resettled refugees also move out of their country of asylum. This allows them to enter countries where the refugee population is not as large, and the government is better able to provide resources and assistance to them. Furthermore, it relieves pressures on the countries hosting large numbers of refugees in camps, and, as a result, on the regions where refugee crises are occurring as a whole. Resettlement makes the growth and spread of a refugee crisis less likely.

Resettlement is also a strategy which is always available. At any given point in time there will be countries which are willing and able to take in refugees. Unlike repatriation, refugees will not have to wait for the resolution to a conflict which is not even guaranteed to be resolved in their lifetimes.

Unfortunately, only a few refugees are able to be resettled each year because the UNHCR does not place an emphasis on resettlement. If the UNHCR shifted focus from repatriation to resettlement, more refugees may have been helped. Because the UNHCR is responsible for coordinating refugee assistance and for determining who is eligible for resettlement, the onus for improving and increasing resettlement would fall on the UNHCR.

Ultimately, repatriation is a good idea in theory. Returning refugees to their home countries is a noble goal to aim for; however, it is often unrealistic. The situations which cause refugee crises are not quickly resolved and can often cause more, new conflicts.

In 1951, when the UNHCR was founded, repatriation was much more likely. At that time the international community was making major efforts to rebuild Europe and to make European

countries safe for refugees to return to. Today, though, repatriation is not as likely. The UNHCR does not enter the countries refugees are fleeing from and work to resolve the conflict. Instead, they wait until the conflict resolves itself.

Repatriation was only a preferable method when the international community was actually focused on ending the conflicts refugees were fleeing from and assisting their war-torn nations. Considering the realities of contemporary refugee crises, resettlement is the best option available for providing meaningful and reliable assistance to refugees.

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