MENARA Working Papers
No. 28, December 2018

EXPLORING REFUGEE MOVEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL CONTEXT: RESPONSES TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN LEBANON AND TURKEY

Karim Makdisi (coordinator)
Rabih Shibli, **Carmen Geha**,
Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and **Gülşah Dark**

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No 693244

WORKING PAPERS
No. 28, December 2018

EXPLORING REFUGEE MOVEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL CONTEXT: RESPONSES TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN LEBANON AND TURKEY

Karim Makdisi (coordinator),
Rabih Shibli, Carmen Geha, Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and Gülşah Dark[1]

ABSTRACT

Refugee movements are not a new phenomenon in the Middle East and North Africa. The history of the region has been shaped by waves of displacement and refugee crises, and the most recent, the dramatic case of Syria, is still in process. This article investigates refugee movements in the region and their impact on regional dynamics by focusing on two important case studies: Lebanon and Turkey. It explores each country's response to the Syrian refugee crisis in detail, while addressing the role of relevant stakeholders, such as international organizations, civil society and government, in humanitarian relief efforts as well as in refugee protection and management.

INTRODUCTION

This work builds on the separate study by Shaden Khallaf within the MENARA project's research component titled "Old and New Refugees in the Middle East". Together, they explore case studies that address and contextualize the waves of displacement and refugee crises in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a region that has experienced complex conflict and transitional phases throughout its contemporary history. The most recent wave occurred following the Arab uprisings, beginning with Libya in 2011, then Yemen and Iraq, and finally the dramatic case of Syria – the largest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. However, this was preceded by two other prominent waves: the world's largest and most protracted one, that of Palestinian refugees starting in 1948; and the Sudanese, Somali and Iraqi situations in the 1990s and early 2000s. While these crises all have their own particularities and contexts, as Shaden Khallaf's study and this one show, there are also clear commonalities, particularly as the international debates have been crystallized by the recent seminal report "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants", published by the United Nations (UN), which reaffirms the importance of the international protection regime, as well as the need to enhance mechanisms that protect people on the move and to support host communities.

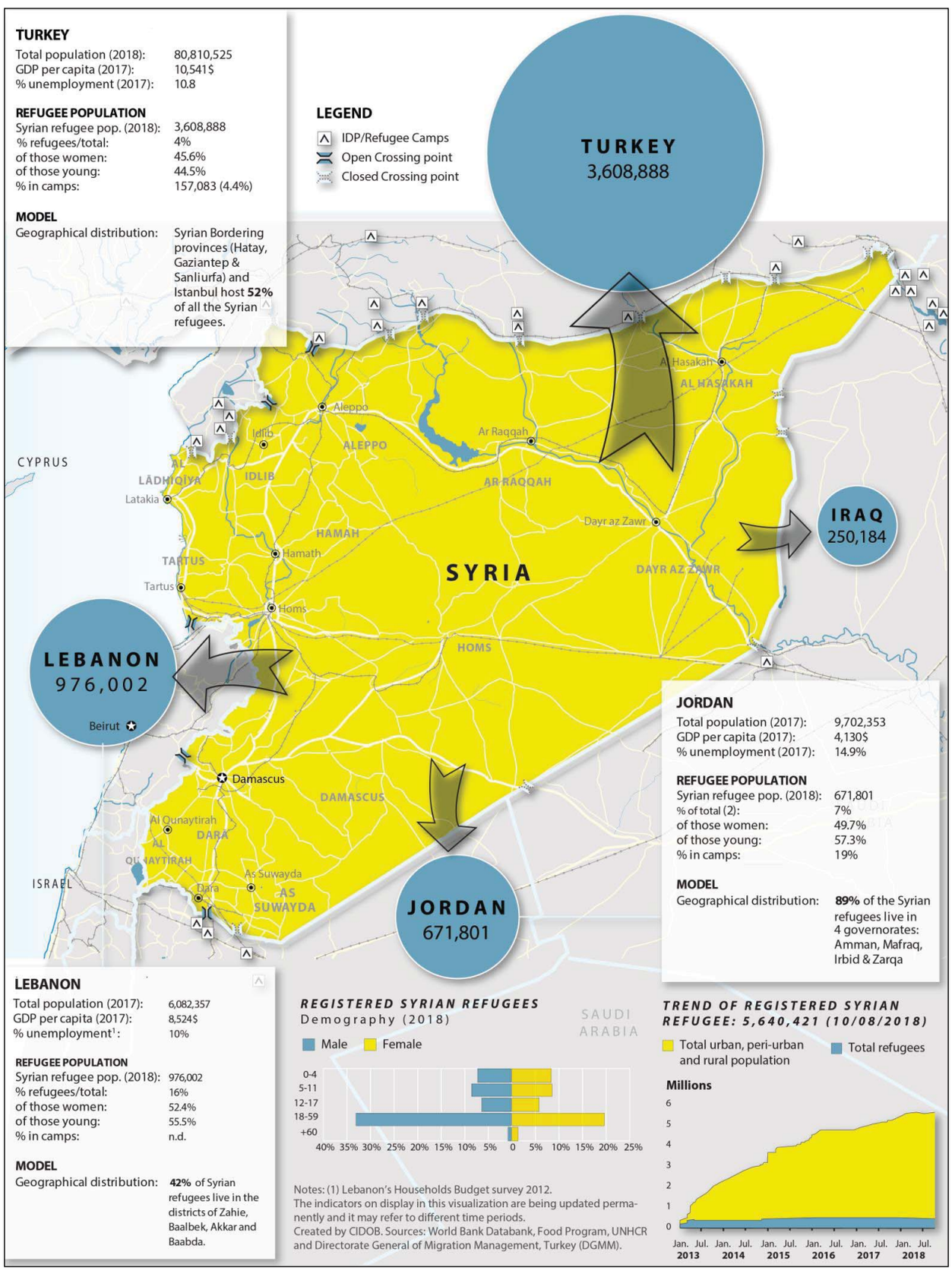
In the first part of this study, Rabih Shibli and Carmen Geha of the American University of Beirut delve into the complex case of Lebanon, which hosts the highest number of refugees per capita worldwide. They explore how Lebanon responded to the Syrian crisis between 2012 and 2018, a

1 Karim Makdisi is Associate Professor of International Politics in the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Rabih Shibli is the Director for the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service at AUB. Carmen Geha is Assistant Professor of Public Administration at AUB. Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar is a founding member of the Center for Public Policy and Democracy Studies (PODEM), Istanbul. Gülşah Dark is Project Officer at PODEM. Karim Makdisi authored the introduction; Rabih Shibli and Carmen Geha authored Section 1 on Lebanon; Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and Gülşah Dark authored Section 2 on Turkey.

period in which it took in 1.5 million refugees. They explore the contradiction between the UN's praise of Lebanon's model of generous hospitality and resilience despite a tumultuous political and security situation, and the country's troubling political reality and absence of a rights-based policy framework to handle the refugee crisis. Lebanon, they assert, has improved its stance since 2016, but overall the country has merely been lucky in its ability to absorb the shocks from the crisis. They contend that as calls for the return of refugees intensify, the Lebanese government must take measures to develop a clear national strategy.

In the second part of the study, Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and Gülşah Dark of the Centre for Public Policy and Democracy Studies (PODEM) explore Turkey's response to the Syrian refugee crisis. They state that Turkey, which has never before experienced such a large and extended refugee flow and is mindful of its national interest, has become a "humanitarian actor" that hosts the world's largest refugee population, including over 3.5 million registered Syrians. Accordingly, Turkey has shifted its policymaking from short-term humanitarian protection to long-term integration planning through education, employment and civil society channels. Gündoğar and Dark make the point that although national policy has retained its discourse of hospitality, it has also had to accommodate a security narrative on migration, particularly since 2015 when the migration threat reached the European Union (EU). This section delves into the post-2015 period, when Turkey was no longer able to hold back the large numbers of Syrian refugees who were trying to cross the Aegean Sea to enter Europe illegally. The authors show how a 2016 EU–Turkey refugee deal was in reality a "swap policy" aimed at strengthening overall bilateral relations between Turkey and the EU, which increasingly securitized migrants. It therefore drew criticism for politicizing a humanitarian issue. Gündoğar and Dark suggest that the deal was neither a failure nor a success, but that the overall reaction of the EU to the Syrian refugee crisis was insufficient. They conclude that since 2011 Turkish policies with respect to Syrian refugees have increasingly reflected the reality that the Syrians are not "short-term visitors" in the country, and thus have looked to medium- to long-term integration policies and plans.

Figure 1 | Map of Syrian refugee population in border hosting countries



1. CRITIQUE OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS RESPONSE: THE CASE OF LEBANON

Rabih Shibli and Carmen Geha

> We are putting a time table and locations of where refugees will return; there should be major movement on this file in the coming 6 months; don't be surprised if half of the refugees are back. (Interviewee 1).

The war in Syria has triggered the largest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. More than 5.6 million Syrians have fled the country as refugees, and there are 6.1 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in the country. Neighbouring Lebanon is host to approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees who have fled conflict and violence since 2011. Lebanon, which hosts the highest number of refugees per capita worldwide, is not a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention. But despite a tumultuous political and security situation, the UN has lauded Lebanon for its resilient response, hailing it as a major international pillar and a model of generous hospitality (Geha 2016). In 2014, then UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, who is now UN Secretary-General, stated that "Lebanon is a key pillar in the international framework for the protection of Syrian refugees, and without it, that entire system would collapse" (Guterres 2014).

This article explores Lebanon's response to the refugee crisis since 2012. We argue that the resilience paradigm has masked a troubling political reality manifested in the absence of a rights-based policy framework to handle the refugee crisis. Syrian refugees in Lebanon are stuck amid the polarized politics of the March 8 Alliance (pro-Assad regime) and the March 14 Alliance (anti-Assad regime). These divergent views on the Syrian regime and the revolution in Syria were a major cause of the prolonged political deadlock in Lebanon between 2013 and 2016. After the election of President Michel Aoun in 2016 and the 2018 parliamentary elections, the stance of the Lebanese government on the crisis became more solid. But Lebanon may have been lucky in its ability to absorb the shocks from the crisis thus far.

We contend, however, that as calls for the return of refugees intensify the Lebanese government will need to take measures to develop a clear national strategy. This article is based on a qualitative study of semi-structured interviews with senior politicians, advisers, municipal councillors, ministry personnel and civil society representatives (see Annex 1).

1.1 A WEAK AND INCONSISTENT RESPONSE

> Why do we have Syrians in Lebanon from regions that are more than 2000 km far; why didn't they simply cross to Jordan and Turkey instead? We witnessed unorganized displacement to Lebanon. (Interviewee 2)

During the first four years of the crisis, Lebanon had an open-border strategy with Syria, accommodating a massive influx of refugees. In 2012, the Baabda Declaration announced Lebanon's policy of neutrality, stating its aim to "eschew block politics and regional and international conflicts"

(National Dialogue Committee 2012), and interpreting the refugee crisis as a "humanitarian cause, not a political one" (Alabaster 2012). By the end of 2013, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had registered over 1 million Syrian refugees in its database. Within less than a year, however, the Baabda Declaration had been breached as Hezbollah, a major party in the Lebanese government, declared that it was actively fighting inside Syria alongside the Assad regime. This occurred in tandem with the first postponement of parliamentary elections in Lebanon in 2013, followed by a two-year vacancy in the Lebanese presidency (Salloukh 2017).

Initially, the minister of Social Affairs was assigned as the government's liaison with the UNHCR, and it took until late 2014 to put the first Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) in place. The consecutive LCRPs detailed the needs of refugees and host communities, and established road maps for the government's response (Government of Lebanon and UN 2014, 2017, 2018). According to a Ministry of Social Affairs representative, "Until 2015 things were chaotic and government wasn't present; but the updated 2018 version of the LCRP 2017–2020 (compared to the 2014 document) gave more sovereignty to the state" (Interviewee 7). However, the LCRP does not provide adequate operational mechanisms that define specific roles and responsibilities for national and local government authorities within the coordination mechanisms set by international institutions and donor governments.

The Syrians' status remained vulnerable to the whims of Lebanese politicians and to the decentralized response of municipalities in already impoverished communities. Lebanon's policy of non-encampment meant that refugees were settled in informal locations with no regulatory oversight (Janmyr 2016). Decentralizing the crisis to local-level councils meant that some municipalities imposed haphazard curfews and searches on Syrians with no governmental oversight (Fakhoury 2017). A massive wave of donor aid kept municipalities functioning and enabled them to undertake some activities that were far from a rights-based response. "We feel that the Syrian presence in the village is a burden; they have taken everything. They opened their own shops, the labour force, such as plumbing, mechanical repair and such jobs," explained one municipal councillor (Interviewee 3).

A number of reports demonstrate that municipalities were able to alleviate tensions, provide housing and shelter and coordinate with civil society organizations to address the needs of both refugees and host communities (Mercy Corps 2014). But such reports leave out the sentiments of tension and frustration on the part of the Lebanese authorities. According to one municipal councillor:

> Foreign donors have funded public gardens in our town but they demanded through the funding that the main labour force should be Syrian refugees. On the other hand, there is no help at all from the government, the drinking water of the town is suffering, and we only have electricity for six hours. (Interviewee 4)

The decision to decentralize the response to the local level without providing support to municipalities also meant that accountability and transparency in this process were completely lacking. The LCRPs also fell short on mapping out other types of initiatives, funding and programming, and this meant among other things that Islamic faith-based organizations were excluded from sector

working groups' meetings. "Our school was first established with the support of Kuwait; for the second year, we had to secure funds from local donors", explained the head of a local organization in Saida, who stated that this group was not part of the network with UNHCR but resorted to coordination only when necessary (Interviewee 5).

Chaired by a former prime minister, Tammam Salam, a Crisis Cell that included the Ministry of Social Affairs as well as the ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs was set up and mandated to "follow up on the refugees' conditions and adopt procedures to deal with the influx of Syrians in cooperation with concerned administrative bodies".[2] The Ministry of State for Refugee Affairs was later added to the Crisis Cell (Zaatari 2016), which never even achieved a quorum to convene and declare a unified response strategy. In effect this ministry "does not have, neither an executive body, nor a budget; it is just an office for the minister of state for refugee affairs", explained a representative (Interviewee 7). In practice, the members of the Crisis Cell held divergent views about the nature of the conflict in Syria and what needed to be done to institutionalize a response plan.

As the crisis evolved, in 2015, the government closed the borders and requested that UNHCR stop registering refugees. As a UNHCR spokesperson said:

> This is a big challenge for us since those who approach don't necessarily have the capacity to afterwards verify if they are still or not since we do not register them. This is why now more than before we are advocating with the Lebanese government to allow us to resume registration. (Interviewee 6)

The discourse of Lebanese politicians regarding the Syrian refugees changed drastically in 2016 and in the lead-up to the 2018 parliamentary elections, fuelling rising tensions and framing refugees as the cause of unemployment and instability. In April 2018, Prime Minister Saad Hariri represented Lebanon at the international donor conferences CEDRE[3] and Brussels II, declaring to the international community that Lebanon would continue to accommodate Syrian refugees in exchange for adequate international funding for both refugee and host community needs (Azar 2018). Only two months later, this stance was challenged by Minister of Foreign Affairs Gebran Bassil, who ordered a freeze on residency permits for UNHCR staff and threatened to take further measures against the organization, accusing it of impeding the return of refugees to Syria.[4] Bassil's position was buttressed when President Aoun (his father-in-law) accused the UN and the EU of advocating for "a disguised settlement (of refugees in Lebanon) that contradicts our constitution and sovereignty".[5] While the "safe and dignified return" slogan is often repeated in Prime Minster Hariri's statements (Lebanese Ministry of Information 2018), President Aoun's references to an "existential threat" and "immediate return" point to an upheaval in the country's

2 "Cabinet Forms Committee on Refugee Crisis, Seeks Establishing Camps in Syria or Border Regions", in *Naharnet*, 23 May 2014, http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/131954.

3 For more information, see France-Diplomatie website: *Lebanon - CEDRE Conference (6 April 2018)*, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/lebanon/events/article/lebanon-cedre-conference-06-04-18.

4 "Lebanon Freezes UNHCR Staff Residency Applications in Row over Syrian Refugees", in *Reuters*, 8 June 2018, https://reut.rs/2sXsAXx.

5 "International Community 'Dismayed' at Lebanese Allegations on Syrian Refugees", in *Reuters*, 14 June 2018, https://reut.rs/2LQHUgm.

fragile demographic and sectarian composition,[6] which is being caused by the protracted stay of Syrian refugees (Francis 2017).

1.2 PROBLEMATIZING REPATRIATION

> We want to provide them hope and solve their problems
> so that they can return home without being forced to.
> (Interviewee 7)

The biggest challenge facing the incoming government is to manage the process of refugee repatriation. According to a UNHCR representative, "we need to make sure that people are not involuntarily forced to go back. We have to respect the choice of individuals. It is very important that everyone abides by this principle" (Interviewee 6). "We need to keep the memories of Syrians positive on how [the] host country treated them", explained one adviser to the prime minister (Interviewee 1). But the current debate addressing the right of Syrian refugees to return home is quite complex. Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system has historically allowed its politicians to pursue contradictory versions of a foreign policy. Understanding the politics behind repatriation options in Lebanon is central to problematizing this issue and making sure that any option will ensure a safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees. Three main political issues have emerged as influential in any decision by the incoming Lebanese government.

First, there needs to be a nuanced understanding of who the Syrian refugees are in Lebanon. In the absence of any data on registration since 2015, UN officials and Lebanese politicians cannot accurately assess the status and location of refugees. Moreover, refugees are not a single unified entity. "We cannot only look at them as numbers. These are children, women, men, whose lives have suddenly changed," explained one adviser to the president (Interviewee 2). Among Syrian refugees there are stark socio-economic and political differences. Any strategy should also specifically address the needs of refugees who cannot return to Syria because of the likelihood that their lives will be threatened. It was recently reported that hundreds of Syrians had been tortured to death in the regime's prisons. The Lebanese government at present lacks any strategy to address this issue. "We do not know what will happen if some refugees will have to stay," explained a senior governmental adviser (Interviewee 8).

Secondly, the government should aim for consistency in the current options for return. At present, Syrians have three options for return: (i) general security has begun facilitating the return of hundreds of Syrians in coordination with UNHCR; (ii) Hezbollah has opened centres to organize refugee return in coordination with the Syrian regime; and (iii) plans have surfaced for a USA–Russia deal to facilitate the return of a sizeable number of refugees without direct negotiation between the Lebanese government and the Assad regime. But diverging political views are already surfacing regarding these options. According to an adviser to the president, "Only the Lebanese Government can handle this matter. Hezbollah might be able to achieve something in the areas under its control in Syria but cannot do anything in other areas" (Interviewee 2). Another adviser to the prime minister stated that political parties cannot be trusted to handle the process of return: "When 3,000 daily will need to return, these small political party offices cannot handle

6 "Aoun: Refugee Crisis an 'Existential Threat'", in *The Daily Star*, 31 October 2017, p. 2.

this burden" (Interviewee 1). But having three different tracks to manage the return process is illogical. While Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement are in favour of formal diplomatic ties, Future Movement and other groups are opposed to normalizing relations with what they consider a murderous regime.

Lastly, the government should work towards reframing the image of refugees as only being a burden. As explained one municipal councillor:

> The Lebanese community is benefiting a lot from the Syrian community, the rent of the land is much more than it used to be, if we want to take into consideration that the land was used for agriculture before now and now it's being used for rent which yields a much higher profit. (Interviewee 4)

Syrian refugees are considered an existential threat to sectarian demographics in Lebanon. But continuing to blame refugees for Lebanon's weak infrastructure and public services will only fuel more tension. Lebanese politicians should act as opinion leaders and highlight the need for refugee protection as a prerequisite for the stability of the country. A discourse that frames the crisis as an opportunity, for example economically (Harb et al. 2018), is neither accurate nor useful in this case. But a discourse that links refugee protection to Lebanon's internal civil peace is increasingly needed.

Inconsistent policy frameworks are not new to Lebanon, but the next phase in the case of the Syrian refugees will require a re-examination of Lebanon's positioning vis-à-vis the crisis. The refugees may have survived against all odds, and Lebanon may have been proved to be resilient, but this has been despite the absence of a clear policy position and not because of it. The question of return, or of resettlement, of refugees cannot be left to the whims of politicians, but political dynamics should be considered in the design of any policy, as long as the basic premises of a safe, dignified and sustainable return are at the heart of such a policy.

2. TURKEY'S RESPONSE TO AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and Gülşah Dark

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE REFUGEE PROTECTION FRAMEWORK IN TURKEY[7]

From the time the Syrian conflict began, Turkey has not dealt with it merely as an issue of regional policy; and given that it shares a long border with Syria, Turkey has been directly influenced by the unfolding events in its neighbouring country. With the onset of a refugee flow to Turkey as early as June 2011, another dimension was added to the crisis. Turkey has become a "humanitarian actor" at regional and global level, delivering constant humanitarian relief and assistance as the conflict intensified in Syria; and it has evolved into a country of immigration, being previously no stranger to asylum seekers or refugees,[8] and host to the world's largest refugee population, including over 3.5 million registered Syrians.[9]

When the civil war broke out in Syria, Turkey maintained an "open door policy" for Syrians who were fleeing the country (see Davutoğlu 2013a), immediately housing them in well-equipped refugee camps,[10] and providing generous humanitarian aid, primarily through the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), along with other state-led humanitarian institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the international community.[11] Turkey has spent over 30 billion US dollars to date in its efforts to address the flow of Syrian migrants. The main feature of Turkey's mass-migration management in the early years of the conflict was its references to the displaced Syrians as "guests", primarily made to highlight the temporary aspect of the situation (Memişoğlu and Ilgıt 2016: 323).

Within the current geopolitical scene, Turkey has been trying to pursue a balanced policy that takes into account both the conflict's humanitarian consequences and its own national interests. The Syrian refugee crisis therefore impelled Turkey to take up "a foreign policy line that was not only strategic and security-oriented, but also strongly humanitarian in nature" (Kanat and Üstün 2015: 39).[12]

---

7 For this case study the authors carried out in-depth interviews in Istanbul and Gaziantep in 2018.

8 For in-depth accounts on migration dynamics of Turkey, see Kirişçi (2014), İçduygu (2015).

9 According to the December 2018 data by the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), 3,618,364 Syrians are currently under temporary protection in Turkey. According to the 2017 DGMM data, after Iraqis (at 70,364), Syrians (at 65,348) compose the second largest group of foreigners with residence permits in Turkey. See up-to-date data on residence permits and temporary protection in the DGMM website: *Migration Statistics*, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/migration-statistics_915_1024. Please also note that Figure 1 above shows the November 2018 data.

10 There are more than twenty temporary protection centres active mainly in Turkey's south and south-eastern regions, including the cities of Gaziantep, Mardin, Adıyaman, Şanlıurfa, Malatya, Adana, Mersin, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis and Osmaniye.

11 UN agencies including UNHCR and UNDP support Turkey's response to the refugee crisis through a Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. The EU also supports the response activities through the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

12 For an overview of Turkey's "humanitarian diplomacy", see Davutoğlu (2013b).

The Syrian conflict, followed by a mass influx of refugees primarily to neighbouring countries as well as to Europe, led to reforms in Turkey's migration and asylum framework, including two important legislative developments: the adoption of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013,[13] and the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) in 2014. Defining the provisions for the entry and exit procedures of foreigners, the LFIP identifies four international protection categories: refugees, conditional refugees, subsidiary protection and temporary protection (Memişoğlu 2018: 11). Accordingly, Syrians have not been granted official refugee status but have been offered temporary protection status, in line with Turkey's geographical limitation to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, meaning that only those fleeing as a consequence of "events occurring in Europe" can be given refugee status.

Given that this was the first time Turkey had experienced a refugee flow of such magnitude and duration, a thorough social integration plan for Syrians, most of whom have gradually moved to urban areas from the accommodation camps,[14] and improved social interaction with the local community became urgent issues that had to be addressed by means of an effective policy mechanism. To ensure decent living conditions for Syrians, their access to social services, social aid and the labour market has been specified in the temporary protection regime. In 2016, another regulation was passed to grant work permits to Syrians under certain conditions and with some limitations.[15]

In the same year, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey announced that Syrians living in Turkey could be granted citizenship (Al-Shamahi 2017). Based on figures provided by the Ministry of Interior, more than 12,000 Syrians had been given Turkish citizenship as of September 2017, and the number is expected to reach 50,000.[16] The selection criteria for citizenship include having professional skills that will contribute to the country.

2.2 TURKEY'S RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS: DISCOURSE, PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

2.2.1 POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Despite the enormity of the challenges posed by the protracted refugee influx, the discourse of hospitality adopted by the authorities in Turkey has remained an important aspect of the policy approach towards Syrians. An expert at a Gaziantep-based development agency pointed out that political language greatly affects how much Syrians trust the country in which they have taken

13 See Article 91 (Temporary Protection), *Law No. 6458 of 4 April 2013* (Official Gazette No. 28615 of 11 April 2013), http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/eng_minikanun_5_son.pdf.

14 According to the DGMM data, 157,083 Syrians are currently accommodated in camps. Istanbul, Şanlıurfa and Hatay are the top three cities drawing the highest number of Syrians under temporary protection (respectively 557,694, 453,628 and 443,631). A large part of the Syrian population in Turkey is concentrated in the south and south-eastern regions. See DGMM website: *Migration Statistics: Temporary Protection*, cit.

15 According to the *2016 Labor Statistics* of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the total number of work permits granted to Syrians between 2011 and 2016 was 20,981 (İçduygu and Diker 2017: 22-23). For further reading, see also Kadköy (2017).

16 "Turkey Processing Citizenship for 50,000 Syrians", in *Anadolu Agency*, 22 September 2017, http://v.aa.com.tr/916789.

shelter:

> The evolution of political discourse towards the Syrians in Turkey has three main stages; these are (1) the rhetoric on the relationship between "*muhacir*" and "*ensar*";[17] (2) being a "guest"; and (3) "temporary protection". Turkey's initial response eased the fear of rejection among the Syrians. (Interviewee 1)

It is also possible to trace this welcoming discourse in the statements of officials in the parliamentarian debates: "The number of refugees in the camps as well as outside of them was rising steadily [...] Refugees are called in Turkey 'guests'. Moreover, multiple services are provided by Turkey in the camps, such as health services at polyclinic standard".[18]

Although authority over refugee policy is relatively centralized in Turkey, the direction of political discourse, which is not independent from regional developments, shapes the perception of and the debates about Syrians. The security narrative on migration has become visible within political circles since 2015 owing to the growing tension in Syria, the heightened terrorist threats and the migrant crisis reaching Europe. A Syrian civil society organization (CSO) expert in Gaziantep noted that the Syrians appear to have mixed feelings about Turkey's involvement in the Syrian war, but claimed that political discourse was not a source of tension between Syrians and the host community (Interviewee 2).

Most recently, statements by political parties ahead of the June 2018 presidential elections, in which Turkey was transformed from a parliamentary regime to an executive presidency, further illustrate how the refugee issue has become entwined with Turkey's foreign policy agenda in the region. Incumbent President Erdoğan, leader of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), mentioned in a statement that Turkey's military efforts in Syria's Afrin and Idlib areas will allow Syrian refugees in Turkey to return home safe and sound.[19]

On the other side, the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) presidential nominee promised to improve the living conditions of Syrians in Turkey, but also to send them back to Syria after first establishing a relationship with the Syrian regime and assigning an ambassador to Damascus. Addressing the refugee issue as a "national security problem", the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) focused attention on the new waves of refugees that were the result of the regime's attacks in Syria (Nesibe Kotan 2018).

The Syrian population in Turkey appears to be divided over the issue of returning home, as shown in a recent study that highlights the "generational differences on perceptions of returning to Syria" (Memişoğlu 2018: 23): "When we look at the youth or women, they are willing to stay in Turkey and be granted citizenship. The elderly or adult men hope to return home while some favor dual

17 "*Muhacir*" refers to the Muslim people who migrated from Mecca to Medina in 622, while the word "*ensar*" refers to Medina's local people, who welcomed and helped the newcomers.

18 Statement by the then head of AFAD, Fuat Oktay, in European Parliament and Turkish Grand National Assembly (2013: 16). See also Demirsu and Müftüler Baç (2017: 14).

19 "Turkish Efforts in Afrin, Idlib Will Allow Syrians to Return Home", in *Daily Sabah*, 9 February 2018, http://sabahdai.ly/wsKPZY.

citizenship. The age and sex appear to play a greater role" (Interviewee 1).

Finally, at a public level, social cohesion appears to be a primary factor in determining the discourse towards Syrians as well as perceptions of them. The cultural affinity between Syrians and the Turkish community is generally highlighted in previous studies (Memişoğlu 2018, Erdoğan 2017) and the Syrians in Turkey appreciate the sincere support and empathy that is shown to them by local communities (Memişoğlu 2018: 18). Local communities' perceptions, however, can be negatively influenced by stereotypes that appear in various media outlets as well as Syrians' prolonged stays that are a result of the ongoing conflict.[20] The experts interviewed primarily stressed the role of CSOs (both Turkish and Syrian) in acting as a bridge to foster communication and interaction between the two communities (Interviewees 1, 2).

2.2.2 CURRENT EXPERIENCE OF REFUGEE PROTECTION AND INTEGRATION

The changing nature of the refugee crisis has forced Turkey to address the reception and integration of Syrians as a multi-dimensional issue, engaging with it in economic, social and legal contexts. The extended presence of Syrians has thus shifted policymaking from short-term humanitarian protection to long-term integration planning through education, employment and civil society channels, accompanied by certain challenges.

In the current context, the Syrians in Turkey have expressed gratitude for the tolerant attitude of the state and the host community, mentioning Turkey's Middle Eastern and Muslim identity as an important aspect of the relationship (Memişoğlu 2018: 16), a sentiment that was also expressed in the interviews. However, the perceived ambiguity of the Syrians' legal status, especially regarding their legal rights and obligations, is one of the factors that has negatively affected their sense of belonging and ability to envisage future prospects. Factors such as level of communication with immigration authorities, general awareness of the public about temporary protection and access to reliable information on legal rights relate to this process (Memişoğlu 2018: 13). In addition, for the purpose of controlling mobility, prior permission is required for Syrians to travel within Turkey and abroad, as noted by local migration authorities in Istanbul. A migration specialist in Gaziantep noted that Syrians have become more aware of their rights over time (Interviewee 3).

As far as the social aspects of integration are concerned, the role of and initiatives taken by local bodies were highlighted during the interviews. Community centres set up by the municipalities in a number of cities provide invaluable support to Syrians, offering among other things legal advice, psycho-social care, translation services and professional training. These centres also host events that aim to improve relations between the refugees and the host community.[21] Some municipalities have also formed special assemblies to allow Syrians to participate in decision-making processes (Bilgehan 2017), where they can gather to express their problems and expectations, or have

20 For example see: "Suriyeliler şimdi de esnafın kabusu oldu" (Syrians now a nightmare for shop-owners), in *Akdeniz Manşet*, 21 May 2017, http://www.akdenizmanset.com.tr/ozel-haber/suriyeliler-simdi-de-esnafin-kabusu-oldu-h137579.html; and Ali Ekber Şen and İbrahim Maşe, "Suriyelilerin gürültü yapmayın cinayeti" (Murder committed by Syrians because of noise), in *Milliyet*, 16 May 2017, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/suriyelilerin-gurultu-yapmayin-gundem-2451109.

21 "Syrian, Turkish Women Share Traditional Meals in Istanbul", in *Daily Sabah*, 18 October 2017, http://sabahdai.ly/rSOA8i.

assigned Syrian "*muhktars*" (i.e. the head of a neighbourhood or village) to neighbourhoods in order to coordinate communication with the host community (Interviewee 2).

Fulfilling the educational needs of Syrian school-age children and youth remains a priority, and initiatives in this area are mostly welcomed among the Syrian community.[22] Certain challenges voiced by the Syrians include the quality of education at temporary education centres,[23] the need for experienced teachers who are able to support traumatized students and the lack of awareness among school administrations about the need to establish good communication with Syrian parents and students (Memişoğlu 2018: 22). Moreover, in terms of employment opportunities, further action is needed to ensure access to jobs and fair working conditions as well as recognition of previous professional qualifications, and to encourage Syrian entrepreneurs to establish businesses in Turkey (Saferworld 2015).

On civil society's role in integration, there is a general need to enhance the capacity of local CSOs supporting the Syrian community and to strengthen ties with Syrian CSOs (Interviewee 2). It was also noted that international CSOs could be given more opportunity to actively address the refugee issue (Interviewee 1). Improving the capacity of local bodies, including the provincial migration management offices, was among the steps considered necessary to render better service to the Syrians.

2.3 DOES EU–TURKEY COOPERATION ON MIGRATION MATTER?

The Syrian refugee crisis became a critical issue for Europe when large numbers of Syrians began trying to cross the Aegean Sea to reach Europe through illegal trafficking. The EU was able to distance itself from the refugee crisis until mid-2015, mainly because Turkey successfully undertook the initial emergency hosting measures. However, as the civil war in Syria grew more complicated and refugees' hopes of "going home" faded, Syrians started to look for alternative options.

In 2015, the number of migrants (not only Syrians) who had reached Europe illegally was around 1 million (IOM 2015), while official reports counted 4,000 deaths among those attempting the journey.[24] It is estimated that by the end of 2016 80 per cent of the illegal crossings started in Turkey and ended in Greece or Bulgaria (Ott 2017). Applications for asylum in Europe also increased dramatically in 2015 when compared with 2011 figures.[25]

---

22 As of December 2018, there were around 1.68 million registered Syrians in Turkey between the ages of five and twenty-four. See DGMM website: *Migration Statistics: Temporary Protection – Distribution by Age and Gender of Registered Syrian Refugees Recorded by Taking Biometric Data*, updated 13 December 2018, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik.

23 Temporary education centres in Turkey enable Syrian children to continue their education, and there is an ongoing effort to transfer all Syrian students to the public school system. According to data from the Ministry of Education (2018), 608,084 Syrian students are continuing their education in Turkey.

24 Experts note that the real number of people who lost their lives on the way to Europe is much higher than the official figures.

25 Syrian citizens comprise the largest group seeking asylum in Europe since 2013. The number of Syrians applying for asylum started to drop in 2017. In 2017, the number of Syrian first-time asylum applicants in the EU-28 fell back to 102,000 from 335,000 in 2016, while the share of Syrians in the EU-28 total dropped from 27.8 per cent to 15.8 per cent. See Eurostat (2018).

Table 1 | Asylum applications in the EU, 2011–2017

Year	Claims received
2011	309,040
2012	335,290
2013	431,095
2014	626,960
2015	1,322,845
2016	1,260,910
2017	712,235

Source: Eurostat, *Asylum and first time asylum applicants - annual aggregated data (rounded)*, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?wai=true&dataset=tps00191.

EU regulations stipulate that third-country nationals need to make their asylum application to the country of arrival, indicating that Greece, Bulgaria and Italy will bear most of the burden associated with the Syrian refugees. The miserable scenes of refugees held in temporary centres with deplorable living conditions and the harsh criticism targeted at the EU forced it to take action. The first EU response was a policy to share the burden of refugees by replacement. However, that plan did not prove successful, and the EU's image was tarnished when refugees were ruthlessly pushed back from the borders of Central Europe.

The EU–Turkey refugee deal of 18 March 2016 was the result of the EU's response to these challenges.[26] This deal is not only concerned with refugees but is also aimed at advancing negotiations between Turkey and the EU, especially on visa liberalization for Turkish citizens. It was intended to rejuvenate the bilateral relations between the EU and Turkey, and thus drew criticism for adding a political dimension to a humanitarian issue.

In terms of the refugee issue, the deal is labelled a "swap policy" by many experts. The core of the deal is that Turkey will accept back the illegal migrants from Greece, and for every Syrian Turkey gets back the EU will receive one Syrian from Turkey according to their criteria. In addition, Turkey will exert greater effort to stop illegal crossings, and the EU will contribute 3 billion euro to Turkey, which could be followed by another 3 billion euro in the coming years.

The deal was immediately criticized by human rights groups and a number of political groups across Europe. Human rights groups focused on the agreement's lack of a long-term safety plan for the refugees. It was seen as a desperate effort by the EU to stop migrants reaching its borders, with no regard for the refugees' lives. The dire conditions of the detention centres have not been remedied, especially in Greek ports, and the smuggling across land borders continues. Moreover, the deal relies on a bilateral readmission agreement between Turkey and Greece, which makes the consensus more fragile. Although the EU may have been aiming at creating a model for Mediterranean refugee management, the criticism it has received may prevent such agreements in the future.

26 For details see European Council (2016).

Certain members of political groups, meanwhile, criticized the leaders who were supporting the deal for giving concessions to Turkey in accession negotiations, thus instrumentalizing the Syrian refugees for a political cause.

On the other side, the deal was not without its positives. The main aim of the deal was to stop people risking their lives in attempting to cross the Aegean Sea to illegally land in Europe, and it partly managed to do so:

- In 2015, around 870,000 refugees (not only Syrians) crossed the Aegean; this number dropped to 170,000 in 2016 and to around 30,000 in 2017.
- The number of people dying while trying to cross has been considerably reduced.
- Around 18,000 Syrian refugees from Turkey have been resettled in the EU (mostly in Germany and the Netherlands).[27]

The outcome of the EU–Turkey deal should be seen as improvements in the lives of Syrians making a life in Turkey. However, as of mid-2018, the value added of the deal is questionable. The release of the promised funds to be used in Turkey is subject to a long bargaining process that will define how the funding will be used. The funding is distributed via projects in Turkey, not in a direct aid format, and this adds more bureaucracy to an already slow mechanism. During the March 2018 Varna Summit, the EU approved the second allocation of 3 billion euro to Turkey, but the controversy over the first allocation is ongoing. The government of Turkey has announced that only 1.85 billion euro of the first allocation has been spent so far.

While it is necessary to acknowledge the efforts of the EU to help the most vulnerable refugees in Turkey through a number of programmes and partnerships, such as the World Food Fund, the Turkish Red Crescent and the UN, it is questionable whether the EU is taking an equal share of the burden to improve the lives of the Syrians in Turkey. It is again the Turkish government that is responsible for ensuring the future of Syrians living in the country.

The Syrians in Turkey are critical of the EU's response to their plight. A Syrian lawyer working to help the newcomers in Gaziantep complained about EU aid, saying, "Some of their funding already goes to their own bureaucracy created to monitor; this is just a face saving show at the end" (Interviewee 4). Another Syrian said, "It is their visibility that matters, not us".[28] A Syrian female NGO professional in Gaziantep further stated, "Europe does not care about us, they just want to keep us out" (Interviewee 5).

Another dimension of the problem is that EU leaders have overtly securitized the refugee issue in their rhetoric, often referring to migration and terrorism within the same framework (see Zalan 2015, Gorondi 2017, Beck 2017). This has been evident in the internal discussions about refugees that have taken place in many European countries. The language used by European leaders has helped to create an impression among the public that "migration brings terrorism". The Syrians

27 European Commission, *Operational Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement* (as of 5 December 2018), available on the European Agenda on Migration webpage as the latest "State of Play – EU-Turkey Statement Implementation", http://europa.eu/!YC64jH. See also Karakoulaki (2018).

28 Insight from a Syrian participant to a workshop held in Gaziantep on 24 October 2017. For more information on the workshop, see Memişoğlu (2018).

in Turkey often mention that "We very well know that we will be treated as potential criminals in Europe, but some still want to go to Europe for the future of their children".[29]

Two years after the deal was signed, it is neither a failure nor a success. Besides the deal, the overall reaction of the EU to the Syrian refugee crisis was insufficient. The EU was late to acknowledge the humanitarian tragedy at its borders, and when it finally decided to do something, its response was (and still is) national security-oriented rather than prioritizing a humanitarian responsibility. This is not to underestimate the efforts of the EU and UNHCR to improve the lives of Syrians in Turkey; however, in the light of the EU's capacity and defining principles, the support it has provided has been limited and falls short of meeting its own human rights criteria.

2.4 THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF REFUGEE PROTECTION IN TURKEY

With the Syrian crisis entering its seventh year, Turkey's policies to accommodate Syrians who have fled the war increasingly reflect the reality that the Syrians are not short-term visitors to the country. The immediate action plans were effective and were able to stop more human tragedies from occurring at Turkey's border. It took time for the pace of events in Syria to become clear and consequently for Turkey to plan for the management of its Syrian population. At the onset of the Syrian crisis, the international community hoped that the situation would not turn into a brutal civil war, but unfortunately it turned out otherwise.

Turkey has been taking action to couple the immediate humanitarian assistance with medium- to long-term integration policies and plans, which are still being improved. Legal status, social inclusion, education, access to public services and participation in economic life are the main issues facing its Syrian people. While steps have been taken in each of these areas, migration is a dynamic phenomenon that requires continuous effort.

The critical threshold for integration policies seems to be acknowledging at both official and public levels that the majority of Syrians will be staying in Turkey and that all communities will need to learn to live together. Turkish society has a very good record of this to date, which should help to facilitate any integration plans.

This is not to say that society has no concerns about the Syrians and that no tensions exist. However, the level of social acceptance is remarkably high in Turkey and has prevented the outbreak of any mass protest against the Syrians. The official rhetoric here is helpful as well. Turkey officially tries to maintain a balanced language regarding the Syrians to counteract a possible reaction from society at large. The Syrians are not antagonized, but at the same time they are not privileged.

It should also be kept in mind that integration will not occur in a matter of a couple of years. It has not yet been acknowledged that the displacement of people has international consequences, and therefore that a collective effort is necessary if it is to be successful.

29 Insight from Syrian workshop participants, Gaziantep, 2017. Ibid.

REFERENCES

Alabaster, Olivia (2012), "Mikati Seeks $178 Mln for Syrian Refugees", in *The Daily Star*, 4 December, p. 4

Al-Shamahi, Abubakr (2017), "Turkey Begins Process to Give Citizenship to Eligible Syrian Refugees", in *TRT World*, 14 January, https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-starts-to-give-citizenship-to-eligible-syrian-refugees-274649

Azar, Georgi (2018), "Lebanon Secures Over $11billion at Paris Conference", in *An-Nahar*, 6 April, https://en.annahar.com/article/787174

Beck, Martin (2017), "Securitization of Refugees in Europe", in *E-International Relations*, 18 September, https://www.e-ir.info/?p=70659

Bilgehan, Zeynep (2017), "Refugees in Istanbul Hold Regular Meetings to Find Solutions to Problems", in *Hürriyet Daily News*, 5 December, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/refugees-in-istanbul-hold-regular-meetings-to-find-solutions-to-problems-123609

Davutoğlu, Ahmet (2013a), *Address at the High Level Segment Meeting During the 64th Excom Meeting of UNHCR, Geneva*, 30 September, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/address-by-h_e_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_-at-the-high-level-segment-meeting-during-the-64th-excom.en.mfa

Davutoğlu, Ahmet (2013b), "Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy: Objectives, Challenges and Prospects", in *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (November), p. 865-870

Demirsu, İpek and Meltem Müftüler Baç (2017), "The Turkish-EU Cooperation on the Refugee Crisis: The Turkish Perceptions in the Parliamentary Debates", in *PACO Working Papers*, No. 7 (August), https://ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs/research/paco/working-papers/pacowp07.pdf

Erdoğan, M. Murat (2017), *Syrians Barometer 2017. A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Turkey. Executive Summary*, Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center, 6 December, https://mmuraterdogan.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/syrians-barometer-executive-summary.pdf

ESI–European Stability Initiative (2017), *The Refugee Crisis through Statistics*, 30 January, http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20The%20refugee%20crisis%20through%20statistics%20-%2030%20Jan%202017.pdf

European Council (2016), *EU-Turkey Statement*, 18 March, http://europa.eu/!Uv88TM

European Parliament and Turkish Grand National Assembly (2013), *Minutes - 72th Meeting of the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee*, Brussels, 27-28 June, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/119976/72nd%20EU-Turkey%20JPC%20EN.pdf

Eurostat, *Asylum Statistics*, data updated April 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics#Citizenship_of_first-time_applicants:_most_from_Syria_and_Iraq

Fakhoury, Tamirace (2017), "Governance Strategies and Refugee Response: Lebanon in the Face of Syrian Displacement", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (November), p. 681-700, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743817000654

Francis, Ellen (2017), "Hostility Grows Towards Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", in *Reuters*, 28 August, https://reut.rs/2iDnvSj

Geha, Carmen (2016), "The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Lebanon's Endemic Deadlocks: Trading Reform for Resilience", in *Middle East Institute Essays*, 17 March 2016, https://www.mei.edu/publications/syrian-refugee-crisis-and-lebanons-endemic-deadlocks-trading-reform-resilience

Gorondi, Pablo (2017), "Hungary's Leader Calls Migration 'Trojan Horse' of Terrorism", in *Business Insider*, 7 March, https://www.businessinsider.com/ap-hungarys-leader-calls-migration-trojan-horse-of-terrorism-2017-3

Government of Lebanon and UN (2014), *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-16*, 16 December, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/node/58928

Government of Lebanon and UN (2017), *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020*, 17 January, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/53061

Government of Lebanon and UN (2018), *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 (2018 update)*, January, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/61740

Guterres, António (2014), *Remarks to the International Support Group for Lebanon Meeting*, Paris, 5 March, https://www.unhcr.org/531983299.html

Harb, Mona, Ali Kassem and Watfa Najdi (2018), "Entrepreneurial Refugees and the City: Brief Encounters in Beirut", in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 1 February, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fey003

İçduygu, Ahmet (2015), "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Long Road Ahead", in *MPI Reports*, April, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/node/15264

İçduygu, Ahmet and Eleni Diker (2017), "Labor Market Integration of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: From Refugees to Settlers", in *The Journal of Migration Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January-June), p. 12-35, http://www.gam.gov.tr/files/5-2.pdf

IOM–International Organization for Migration (2015), *Irregular Migrant, Refugee Arrivals in Europe Top One Million in 2015: IOM*, 22 December, https://www.iom.int/node/70049

Janmyr, Maja (2016), "Precarity in Exile: The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", in *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (December), p. 58-78, https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdw016

Kadköy, Omar (2017), "Syrians and Labor Market Integration: Dynamics in Turkey and Germany", in *GMF On Turkey*, February, http://www.gmfus.org/node/11265

Kanat, Kılıç Buğra and Kadir Üstün (2015), "Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Towards Integration", in *SETA Publications*, No. 49, http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20150428153844_turkey's-syrian-refugees-pdf.pdf

Karakoulaki, Marianna (2018), "EU-Turkey Deal: The Burden on Refugees in Greece", in *Open Migration Analyses*, 11 April, https://openmigration.org/en/analyses/eu-turkey-deal-the-burden-on-refugees-in-greece

Kirişçi, Kemal (2014), "Syrian Refugees and Turkey's Challenges: Going beyond Hospitality", in *Brookings Reports*, May, http://brook.gs/2bm90fZ

Lebanese Ministry of Information (2018), "Hariri: Lebanon is Committed to Reforms, to Resolution 1701 and to the Disassociation Policy", in *National News Agency*, 22 June, http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/92499/nna-leb.gov.lb/en

Memişoğlu, Fulya (2018), "The Syrian Community in Turkey: Perspectives, Prospects and Policies", in *PODEM Publications*, May, http://podem.org.tr/?p=4794

Memişoğlu, Fulya and Aslı Ilgıt (2017) "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Multifaceted Challenges, Diverse Players and Ambiguous Policies", in *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 317-338

Mercy Corps (2014), "Engaging Municipalities in the Response to the Syria Refugee Crisis in Lebanon", in *Mercy Corps Policy Briefs*, March, https://www.mercycorps.org.uk/node/30893

National Dialogue Committee, *Baabda Declaration*, 11 June 2012 (A/66/849–S/2012/477), http://undocs.org/S/2012/477

Nesibe Kotan, Bilge (2018), "As Turkish Elections Near, Refugees and Migrants Feel on Edge", in *TRT World*, 23 June, https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/as-turkish-elections-near-refugees-and-migrants-feel-on-edge-18381

Ott, Andrea (2017), "EU-Turkey Cooperation in Migration Matters: A Game Changer in a Multi-layered Relationship?", in *CLEER Papers*, No. 2017/4, http://www.asser.nl/media/4085/cleer17-4_web.pdf

Saferworld (2016), "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Challenges to and Opportunities for Longer-Term Integration. Workshop Summary", in *Saferworld Briefings*, 29 February, https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1051

Salloukh, Bassel F. (2017), "The Syrian War: Spillover Effects on Lebanon", in *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring), p. 62-78

Turkish Ministry of Education (2018), *Bakan Yılmaz: 608 bin Suriyeli çocuğun eğitime erişimi sağlanmıştır* (Minister Yılmaz: 608,000 Syrian children have access to education), 31 January, http://www.meb.gov.tr/bakan-yilmaz-608-bin-suriyeli-cocugun-egitime-erisimi-saglanmistir/haber/15549/tr

Zaatari, Mohammed (2016), "Syrians Question Power, Purpose of Minister for Refugees", in *The Daily Star*, 20 December, p. 3

Zalan, Eszter (2015), "Europe's Populists Link Terrorism with Refugees", in *EUobserver*, 17 November, https://euobserver.com/migration/131142

ANNEX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

LEBANON

Interviewee 1: Adviser to the Prime Minister, male representative, Beirut, August 2018

Interviewee 2: Presidential adviser, male representative, Baabda, August 2018

Interviewee 3: Municipal civil servant, male representative, Bekaa, August 2018

Interviewee 4: Municipal civil servant, male representative, Bekaa, August 2018

Interviewee 5: Civil society expert, male representative, Saida, August 2018

Interviewee 6: Expert at UN agency (UNHCR), female representative, Beirut, August 2018

Interviewee 7: Minister, male representative, Beirut, August 2018

Interviewee 8: Ministry adviser, male representative, Beirut, August 2018

TURKEY

Interviewee 1: Expert at a development agency based in Gaziantep, female representative, Gaziantep, March 2018

Interviewee 2: Syrian CSO expert, male representative, Gaziantep, March 2018

Interviewee 3: Migration specialist, male representative, Gaziantep, March 2018

Interviewee 4: Syrian lawyer, male representative, Gaziantep, November 2017

Interviewee 5: Syrian NGO professional, female representative, Gaziantep, March 2018

Interviewee 6: Migration studies specialist, female representative, Istanbul, May 2018

Middle East and North Africa Regional Architecture: Mapping geopolitical shifts, regional order and domestic transformations (MENARA) is a research project that aims to shed light on domestic dynamics and bottom-up perspectives in the Middle East and North Africa amid increasingly volatile and uncertain times.

MENARA maps the driving variables and forces behind these dynamics and poses a single all-encompassing research question: Will the geopolitical future of the region be marked by either centrifugal or centripetal dynamics or a combination of both? In answering this question, the project is articulated around three levels of analysis (domestic, regional and global) and outlines future scenarios for 2025 and 2050. Its final objective is to provide EU Member States policy makers with valuable insights.

MENARA is carried out by a consortium of leading research institutions in the field of international relations, identity and religion politics, history, political sociology, demography, energy, economy, military and environmental studies.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No 693244. This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.