



UiO : **Norwegian Centre for Human Rights**
University of Oslo

IARR

Beyond Encampment:

Managing Mass Migration in an Age of Urbanization

International Expert Workshop

2 November 2018

University of Oslo, Faculty of Law

Introduction

In the past four years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number of people uprooted by conflict and dire living condition, often traversing multiple regions on their way to safety. In response to the challenges posed by these patterns of conflict and migration, states and regional organizations have attempted to limit the influx of refugees and migrants and instead focus attention and resources on cooperation projects in and agreements with the countries of origin. One outcome of this approach was the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, followed by a 'mini-EU-Africa-summit' headed by French president Macron and German chancellor Merkel, with state leaders from Chad, Libya, and Niger as representatives of some of the most important countries along the main migration routes. The UN Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants, respectively, constitute the latest, and most comprehensive initiative in that regard thus far, to be adopted in the course of 2018. But some of these agreements have tended to disregard some decisive points, if mass migration on a global scale is to be addressed: Irrespective of the level of border control, barriers, or cooperative agreements with transit countries, people will still tend to flee and seek access to more secure countries, though not necessarily in Europe or the global north. In fact, the vast majority of those uprooted flees to and stays in neighboring countries, and today most of the people seeking refuge migrate towards and live in urban centers, not in (refugee or IDP) camps, and for those, viable solutions need to be found. This expert meeting aims to take stock, compare across regions, and explore avenues and concepts to accommodate the growing number of people fleeing and staying within the respective regions and, not least, in urban areas.

Beyond Encampment

Traditionally, refugee camps have been erected in response to the mass outflow of people fleeing conflict and hardship. Usually, these camps were built outside urban centers. In fact, local authorities and refugee agencies have often been working against refugees' access to cities. Initially intended as an emergency response, in reality large numbers of camps have turned into semi-permanent (non-) solutions to those forced to linger on in such temporary, confined and artificial habitats. While camps may make it easier for the authorities or aid organizations to

provide certain services (food, medical aid, education) to the vulnerable populations residing there, in the long run, living in aid-dependency contributes to poverty, which may lead to protracted refugee situations and in turn provide fertile soil for new conflicts, including with host communities. Furthermore, there are numerous good reasons why refugees and other people uprooted by conflict might prefer to live in cities and why that is indeed preferable to sprawling refugee camps. One is avoidance of ‘the transmissibility of despair through generations, and of its not infrequent translation into active militancy’ (Goodwin-Gill, 2014: vii, in Akram and Syring, 2014).

Also, the world is becoming increasingly urban. Not only does the majority of the world’s population today live in urban areas, also people fleeing conflict or dire straits predominantly now inhabit urban centers in their host countries. In fact, according to UNHCR, more than 60 per cent of the world’s 28.5 million refugees and 80 per cent of 40 million IDPs now also live in urban environments, and countries in Central and Eastern Africa face particularly high concentrations.

Hence, despite the considerable number of camp residents worldwide, they are outnumbered by those living, or dwelling, in urban areas, and any approach towards alleviating the pressure on host communities and improving the living conditions for those living in the region, needs to take these realities into account. In that context, the concept of (long-term) refugee camps is outdated. Rather, focus needs to be on refugee and migrant populations acquiring skills that render them self-sufficient and may enhance the chances of circular migration, thus eventually benefiting host communities and countries of origin alike.

Mass Migration and Urbanization

For the many millions who fled their homes for various reasons and are already living in neighboring countries or are internally displaced, there is an urgent need to find long term and creative, innovative solutions. Failing to improve the living conditions also of these populations might lead to the implosion or explosion of crises situations in their host countries or communities, thereby providing fertile soil for new conflicts and a perpetuation of flight situations. Furthermore, the majority of those who left their homes now live in urban areas (in the countries or regions they fled to), and often will (have to) stay there for a very long time. That may involve taking—to a much larger extent—the local host population into account when formulating livelihood and development policies for ‘uprooted people’, and rather conceive of the local population and the ‘refugee/migrant’ population as one ‘population of concern’.

Looking at innovations in urban agriculture, smart solutions to energy efficiency, or new ways of integrating refugees and forced migrants into the labor market, into urban life, letting them also take part in making and changing the city, could form part of the solution. While there are some encouraging and innovative approaches to accommodating refugees, promoting local integration, useful co-habitation, and mutually beneficial self-reliance (cf. e.g. Uganda, incl. ‘REHOPE’ – Refugee and Host Population Empowerment framework) or even group or organization-based rights (cf. also Albania, PMOI example) – and these important developments may also relate to other country cases – further study on those issues is needed. Facilitating discussion and advancing our understanding of these and related topics will be at the core of this expert meeting.

Conveners:

Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
Tom Syring, Human Rights Research League

Venue:

Professorboligen’
University of Oslo
Faculty of Law
Karl Johans gate 47

Draft Programme:

Nov. 2, 2018

- 09:00-09:15 Welcome & Introduction
- Gentian Zyberi, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
Tom Syring, Human Rights Research League
- 09:15-10:45 Session 1: The Global Compacts and Mass Migration Management:
Solving or Re-Framing the Problems?
- Morten Bøås, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI): 'Tackling
Global Refugee Crises: The Need for Radically Changing the System'
- Stefan Salomon, University of Graz, Austria: 'The Global Compacts and the EU
Agenda on Migration'
- Zeina Zerbé, Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, Lebanon: 'The Psychology
of Exile: Refugee Life and Trauma'
- 10:45-11:00 *Coffee break*
- 11:00-12:30 Session 2: Beyond Encampment: Novel Approaches to Accommodating
Refugees and Forced Migrants - Legal and Organizational Developments
- Eva Dick, German Development Institute (DIE) & TU Dortmund University,
Germany: 'Urban Governance of Forced Migration'
- Steven Schneebaum, Johns Hopkins University, USA: 'Collective Refugee
Status and Autonomous Organization'
- 12:30-13:15 *Lunch break*
- 13:15-14:45 Session 3: Global Trends and the Challenges of Urbanization: Lessons for
Livelihood and Development Policy
- Giulia Maci, European Centre for Development Policy Management, Belgium:
'Urbanization in Africa and Implications for EU Development Policy'
- Samar Muhareb, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, Jordan:
'Legal Approaches to Enhancing Social Cohesion and Host/Refugee
Community Relations'
- 14:45-15:00 *Coffee break*
- 15:00-16:30 Session 4: Fighting Root Causes of Flight: Integration, Circular Migration, and
the Promise of Technology

Charles Martin-Shields, German Development Institute (DIE), Germany:
'Access to Digital Technology and Migrant Integration in Urban Settings'

Martin Suvatne, Norwegian Refugee Council, Norway: 'Enhancing Lives: New
Technologies, Smart Solutions, and Restitution'

16:30-17:00

Plans for Further Research and Collaboration

17:00-17:15

Concluding remarks