

Europe migration crisis calls for international action

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Italian coastguards just one day after, the number of migrants crossing into Western Europe have peaked.

Almost all of these migrants are refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and parts of Africa where war is breaking out and persecution is severe. In fact, according to the International Organization for Migration, an estimated 475,000 people have crossed into Europe by boat this year.

Within that number, 350,000 migrants sought refuge in Greece and 120,000 in Italy. With record migration rates, the death toll is also escalating. The number of deaths by sea alone in 2015 reached 2373.

Starving, exhausted, and desperate, hundreds of thousands of refugees are fleeing their homes to foreign lands just to survive. However, while many European nations, such as Germany, who expects to admit near one million refugees this year, are willing to provide asylum to victims of war, the migration crisis undeniably has placed incredible stress on Europe's resources.

Germany plans to spend at least 6 billion euros this year; however, countries such as Austria, which received 16,000 refugees, states that it simply won't be able to continue.

Austria is not alone in its reluctance to provide additional asylum. Most Eastern European nations also refuse to commit. On the other

hand, many wealthy Arab nations that are much closer to war zones have also declined to admit refugees.

As a result, world leaders today are asking themselves a most fundamental question: are countries obligated to accept refugees?

According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the answer is "yes". The treaty, adopted when thousands were displaced after World War II, defines refugees as "those who is seeking refuge from persecution".

Amended in 1967 to include refugees from all over the world, the treaty signed by over 142 nations secures the rights of refugees to not be denied of refuge unless under unusual circumstances.

"Since, by definition, refugees are not protected by their own governments, the international community steps in to ensure they are safe and protected," the United Nations' Refugee Agency stated.

Furthermore, refugees also have the right to work, education, housing, and public assistance in the states that signed the treaty. However, absent from the "list" of signatories are the Gulf states of Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.

Why are these wealthy, oil-rich nations closest to the war zones refusing to take in refugees?

According to Professor



Refugee migrants reach out for help.

photo courtesy of Daily News Service

Abdul Khaleq Abdulla at the United Arab Emirates University, these Middle Eastern nations are concerned that "having refugees also feeds into the violence in the region, which is already the most violent region on Earth."

With the security of their own people as their priority, the Gulf states are afraid that admitting refugees would only bring chaos especially considering their proximity to conflict zones and terrorist groups.

"So all in all, anything that goes in the neighborhood impacts the security and the

stability of the Arab Gulf states who are by far the most stable and the most secure," Professor Abdulla explains.

Since the Gulf states did not sign the treaty, they are under no legal obligation to take in refugees; though the morality of it all still remains in question.

Fortunately, many world leaders are taking immediate action to solve the migration crisis. In a meeting held in Vienna in light of the 71 deaths in Austria, German Chancellor Angela Merkel understands that "the world's eyes are upon us. This is a warning

for us to tackle the issue of migration quickly. We have more refugees in the world than at any time since World War II."

"We have devised a solution to this extraordinary situation together, and we attempted to resolve it together," Hungary's Interior Minister Sandor Pinter agrees.

The U.S. is also taking action in solving the refugee and migration crisis. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry confirmed at a news conference in Berlin this year that the US will increase its refugee cap from 70,000 to 85,000 next year, and to 100,000 the year after.

Congress allows controversial Iran nuclear deal to go forward

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Some Senate Republicans broke out in tears after witnessing the failure of their final effort to derail the Iran Nuclear Deal. One amendment that the Senate rejected would have required Iran to acknowledge Israel as a state and would have required Iran to release Americans held in Iran before the United States lifts sanctions.

The original deal, which was negotiated between Iran, the U.S. and other world powers (Russia, China, United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the European Union), is supported by most Democrats and opposed by most Republicans.

The negotiated deal would curb Iran's nuclear program by shrinking its centrifuge and uranium site to under what is needed to build nuclear grade weapons, but would still allow

Iran to move forward with enrichment, a huge win for Iran and its nuclear program.

A large majority of Republicans in Congress oppose this deal because it does not eliminate the nuclear program in Iran; the President combats this argument by noting that if Iran were planning to make a nuclear bomb, under his deal it would take Iran at least a year to follow through while under current conditions it would only take two to three months.

A major component of the deal states that if Iran does not comply by reducing its nuclear program, the Security Council of the United Nations will vote to reinstate the economic sanctions placed on Iran.

One of the last main points of the deal forces Iran to agree to give access to comprehensive inspections 24/7 to maximize transparency, and to make sure that, as the White House says,

"No fissile material is covertly carted off to a secret location to build a bomb."

This deal is extremely important for a few main reasons, the first and foremost being that its passed causes Iran's chances of obtaining a nuclear-grade weapon to be greatly reduced.

Next, if both sides of the agreement maintain their promises, this resolution will help to facilitate a stronger and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and Iran. A stable relationship could allow both nations to focus their combined efforts against common enemies, including ISIS and other violent groups rampant in the Middle East.

Finally, if the deal had not passed, the economic sanctions may prove to be too difficult for Iran to bear over a longer period of time, and there is no guarantee that war is not a viable option for either side.



U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry, left, talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Geneva.