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Lessening the Risk of Refugee Radicalization

Lessons for the Middle East from Past Crises

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As of June 2015, the four-year-old civil war in Syria had forced more than 4 million people to flee their homes for neighboring countries. The impact of this outflow on Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey—which has received the largest number of refugees at nearly 1.8 million[1] (UNHCR, 2015b)—has received significant press coverage. Discussion in the media of the crowded camp settings in particular—more than 200,000 are in Turkish camps and more than 100,000 are in Jordanian camps—as well as about clashes inside Lebanon between armed Syrian opposition groups, has focused on the risk that the refugees are likely to radicalize and supply militants to such groups as the self-styled Islamic State. However, our review of academic research on historical cases of populations fleeing armed conflict, plus the experiences of refugee experts interviewed for this analysis,[2] illustrate that radicalization—meaning the process of committing to political or religious ideologies that espouse change through violence—and related armed militancy are not inevitable. Rather, the risk can be mitigated if the main stakeholders adopt comprehensive policies that extend beyond immediate life-saving needs and address such issues as the refugees' impact on the countries that host them. Such policies—integral to the planning for the Syrian crisis—were rare in past major humanitarian crises and even today can be difficult to implement and sustain. However, in the words of a university specialist we spoke with, "there is no [mere] humanitarian solution," particularly when a crisis lasts for years.

For this exploratory essay, we looked for *how* radicalization happens—internal and external factors and motivations, including crisis management—rather than trying to tackle the more elusive issue of *why* individuals opt to become militant. Most of our historical data focuses on groups, leaving personal motives vague. Some recent literature from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) touches on individuals, but the motives appear to differ little from the reasons nonrefugee individuals radicalize (Mercy Corps, undated). In most cases in which refugees lived in geographically

isolated, crowded camps, criminal activity occurred, and it was sometimes violent—smuggling, livestock rustling, drug trafficking, assault, murder, and rape. This Perspective does not attempt to address the role of crime except to note that crime did not necessarily translate into organized militancy or terrorism. Nor did poverty. Yes, idle young refugees in their late teens and early 20s were susceptible to radicalization, but the presence of large numbers of youth was not a threat in itself.

Rather, risks grew with a package of factors: the geographic placement and legal status of the refugees, the level of social and economic support for local populations in those locations, the preexistence of militant groups in refugee areas, and—perhaps more critical—the policies and actions of the receiving country, including its acceptance of militant organizations and its ability to provide security. Another finding was that refugee-receiving countries, naturally under significant economic, security, and other stresses themselves, do not always report refugee involvement in violent activity objectively. Some governments' accounts of violent incidents are unreliable, exaggerated through media, or biased against certain refugee populations, complicating analysis.

For the current Syrian refugee situation, we can be cautiously optimistic. Existing violence within camps appears less common than in several of the historical situations. The international community has the right ideas, with plans in place such as the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) to address many of the major risk factors, such as housing outside of camps, provision of secondary and higher education, and support for hosting communities (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] and United Nations Development Program, undated-a and undated-b). The question is: Will the commitment be sustained for the longer term? The average life of a refugee situation has been 17 years (Quick, 2011). The Syria program already is suffering significant funding gaps and it is uncertain how long donors will be able to maintain the type of comprehensive, multifaceted program the plan requires. As in other crises, donors may eventually turn to the latest short-term crisis or give priority to important but more empathetic issues—hungry young children, gender-based violence—than preventing long-term discontent and militancy. Beyond funding issues, host countries may grow impatient and tighten restrictions on refugees, as has happened in the past year in Lebanon and Jordan.[3] António Guterres, the UNHCR, said in March 2015: ". . . most of the Syrian refugees . . . see no prospect of returning home in the near future, and have scant opportunity to restart their lives in exile. . . . With humanitarian appeals systematically underfunded, there just isn't enough aid to meet the colossal needs—nor enough development support to the hosting countries . . ." (UNHCR, 2015a).

The United States is the largest donor, and all donor countries increased their pledges this year. However, some programs shown in our historical cases to be most effective in mitigating radicalization remained well below funding and implementation goals. Tight budgets are unavoidable, but what the United States and other international actors can avoid is cutting funding just because a situation has "gone on too long" or dropping some programs, such as postprimary education or support to local communities, that were absent in the historical cases. Mitigating radicalization also will require collaboration across organizations and fields of expertise beyond humanitarian aid.

"Poster Children" for Refugee Radicalization Present Mixed Picture

All of the historical cases (Table 1) we studied involved populations fleeing armed conflict or often-violent political or ethnic repression, rather than natural disasters or economic crises. Several cases stand out for their association with the rise of militant groups that spread violence beyond refugee settlements or involved direct radicalization of elements of the refugee population. For example, few would contest the fact that the Afghan-Soviet war of the 1980s and the period immediately after spawned a number of radicalized groups that went on to commit acts of violence elsewhere or that these groups sometimes recruited Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Similarly, the depredations of Hutu refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the late 1990s seem to confirm the risk that large refugee populations represent. If we look at Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Somalis in Kenya, Burmese Muslims in Bangladesh, or Eritreans in Sudan, we can point to either radicalized groups or spillover across borders. Even in these cases, however, the extent of the problem varied over time or the number of refugees directly involved was limited. Other refugees in comparable crises did not radicalize, and sometimes the facts of the radicalization examples are in dispute. The cases do show that poverty and physical deprivation have less impact on the degree of radicalization than actions or omissions on the part of the receiving country and the international community.

Table 1. Historical Cases Studied

Case	Dates	Outcome Example
1. Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh—political and economic persecution under Burma Socialist Programme Party regime	1975–1978	Little radicalization among refugees
2. Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh—political and economic persecution under State Law and Order Restoration Council regime	1989–1992	Development of radical groups, including jihadists, but mostly outside refugee concentrations
3. Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran—Soviet invasion	1978–1988	Initial low radicalization followed by direct recruitment into radical groups
4. Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran—Drought and political instability	1990s	Radical recruitment intensifies and is exported
5. Somali refugees in Kenya	1990s–2000s	Radical groups active in early period in camps, but diminishes
6. Rwandan refugees in DRC	1990s–2000s	Radicalized groups control camps, conduct cross-border attacks; violence spreads in region.
7. Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, especially Lebanon	1967–1993	Radicalized groups gain control of camps in Lebanon; conduct cross-border attacks
8. Eritrean refugees in Sudan	1974–1991	Radicalized groups control border refugee areas; conduct cross-border attacks
9. Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria	2000s	Radicalized groups from Iraq actively recruit refugees in Syria for cross-border fighting

Unless organized militant groups seek shelter with the rest of the refugee population at the beginning of a crisis, the risk of radicalization, where it exists, comes later, according to a survey of the literature and examination of our historical cases.

Our literature review and interviews revealed some insightful academic work on additional cases that provokes thoughtful comparisons: internally displaced populations in China during the Japanese invasion of the 1930s, as well as southern Sudanese in Kenya, Burundians in Tanzania, and Liberians in Ghana in the 1980s and 1990s.

Deprivation Doesn't Explain Radicalization

Survival is the refugees' highest priority in the immediate term. Refugees are traumatized when they depart their countries of origin and are desperate for basic necessities, such as food, water, shelter, and physical security. Especially where large numbers of people are involved, the international donor community is usually responsive, with established procedures in place to bring in supplies—even if access, timeliness, or funding levels pose problems in some places. Unless organized militant groups seek shelter with the rest of the refugee population at the beginning of a crisis, the risk of radicalization, where it exists, comes later, according to a survey of the literature and examination of our historical cases. At that point, those well-practiced humanitarian interventions will not solve the problem.

Combinations of Factors Raise Risk

For each case we selected 16 variables that we thought might be common to any refugee situation in our effort to identify those most relevant to radicalization: reasons for leaving the country of origin; ethnic and religious differences; numbers of refugees; legal status; principal NGOs involved; receiving-state policies; sending-state policies; type of settlement/housing; organization of refugee facilities; employment; education; refugees' external contacts; criminal activity; security arrangements; presence of armed groups; and political organization among refugees. We did not specifically compare how long the refugee cases lasted; this subject came up in the academic literature, which suggests that prolonged situations increase risk (Loescher and Milner, 2005). Another avenue for further study could be comparing actual international funding levels with estimated needs for each case; flagging support came up as a concern in interviews, but the point at which the issue becomes critical was not discussed in terms of percentages.

Comparison of the 16 variables within the nine main and four supplementary historical cases showed that although such conditions as overcrowding, hunger, poverty, and local crime certainly risk refugee alienation and can increase general violence, specific combinations of factors drawn from the variables can be more relevant for predicting what conditions are most likely to contribute to radicalization. Six groupings of factors proved relevant across

the known "worst cases." The groupings overlap somewhat—security, for example, usually is a host-country responsibility—but we separate them here because policy responses or lines of responsibility would be different. Certain combinations, as suggested later, appear more critical than others based on the cases, but further study would be needed to define a hierarchy or identify "windows" in developing crises in which a specific change or intervention could head off radicalization.

- *Host country's administrative, legal policies:* The policies and laws of the state receiving the refuges influence all the other risks. Initially welcoming, a government may react to a growing refugee population by imposing legal restrictions that limit or eliminate refugees' rights and opportunities. In many cases, refugees cannot resettle and become citizens. Often they are confined to camps. The increasing number now living outside camps may be prohibited from legal employment and education services. Some host countries will not acknowledge or register refugees—or, in some cases, children born in the host country. The government may worsen discontent by harassing ethnic groups associated with the refugees.
- *Political and militant organizing:* The host country, sometimes with the cooperation of international relief organizations, also might directly or indirectly encourage radicalization by allowing political wings of militant groups to participate officially in relief efforts or by supporting a faction and/or conducting military operations in the refugees' home country. Preventing radicalization can be impossible if armed groups arrived with the refugees and were not disbanded. Alternatively, militant groups or individuals may insinuate themselves among the refugees without host-country acquiescence.
- *Security:* The risk of radicalization can be higher if the receiving country is unable or unwilling to provide policing for the camps and surrounding area. It is worse if militant groups take over camp security and/or are able to cross at will into the country of origin for armed activities.
- *Shelter:* If refugees are housed together in crowded camps where food may be scarce, sanitary conditions difficult to maintain, and resources limited, the risk of radicalization could be higher—even more so if the camps are in isolated rural areas. There is some additional risk if the camps are close to the border of the country of origin. The risk is not necessarily eliminated for refugees outside of camps.
- *Local economic conditions and resilience:* When relief materials and services arrive for the refugees, the surrounding population often feels disadvantaged when their own government is not providing comparable items and services for them, and may prey on the refugees, escalating violence. Refugees in some locations compete for jobs in the local economy and may not have the same legal protections as host-country nationals. The economic risks are worse in rural areas where there are few economic opportunities for anyone, but are not absent in urban locations. Local resentment can persuade the host government to increase controls on refugees.
- *Conditions for youth:* There is no question that militant groups often focus on recruiting refugee "youth" (usually defined as between 15 and 24 years old), and youth on their own can become politically aware, perhaps activist or even violent. Radicalization can begin before age 15. The risk increases if young people have few opportunities for education beyond the primary level or for

Table 2. Critical Factors in Historical Cases

Country of Origin	Destination	Ethnic Group	Dates	Estimated Numbers (millions)	Host Country Legal Policies[a]	Political/ Militant Organizing[b]
Myanmar	Bangladesh	Rohingya Muslims	1975–1978	0.25	Hostile	L
Myanmar	Bangladesh	Rohingya Muslims	1989, 1991–1992	0.25	Hostile or neutral	M
Afghanistan	Pakistan Iran	Afghans (Pashtun 94 percent)	1978–1988	1978–1981: 3.7 1984–1988: 2.8	Iran: Inclusive Pakistan: Neutral/ Inclusive	L/M/H
Afghanistan	Pakistan Iran	Afghans	1990s	6.2	Pakistan: Neutral Iran: Neutral	M/H
Somalia	Kenya	Somalis (different clans)	1990s–2000s	0.4–0.5	Neutral/ Hostile	H/M
Rwanda	DRC/Zaire Uganda Tanzania	Hutus; Tutsis and local groups	1990s–2000s	1	Neutral	DRC/ Uganda: H Tanzania: M
Palestine	Lebanon Syria Jordan	Arab	1948–1982	1950: 0.75 Current: 5 million	Lebanon: Neutral/ Hostile Syria: Neutral Jordan: Neutral to Inclusive	All three countries: M/H
Eritrea (Ethiopia	Sudan	Tigrinya	1974–1991	0.25	Neutral	H
Iraq	Syria Jordan Lebanon	Arab, with some tribal divisions	2000s	Total: 2 (2008)	Syria: Neutral Jordan: Neutral Lebanon: Neutral/ Hostile	Syria: H Jordan: L Lebanon: L

NOTES: Red background or text indicate "worst cases," with concern diminishing through orange and yellow to green.

[a] *Inclusive:* Receiving nation party to international conventions, previous instance of cultural or migrant worker exchange; refugee access to some employment/freedom of movement; some assimilation into local communities.
Neutral: Refugee or asylee status recognized (refugees may be removed from local populations with little to no resettlement in country), limits on refugee movement or employment.
Hostile: Does not officially recognize refugee status, host population violence toward refugees; some forced repatriation; resettlement or integration banned; law enforcement/legal bias against refugees.

[b] *H (High):* Armed groups present among refugees; extremist political organizations recruit/disseminate propaganda in refugee areas or control refugee camp leadership; and/or host government condoned extremist activity in or around refugee encampments.
M (Moderate): Some political organization of refugees; creation of social or cultural organizations; Limited militant activity or transfer of competing groups from country of origins noted.
L (Low): Little to no organization among refugee populations.

[c] *3:* A challenging security situation internal and external to refugee camp; host nation lacks capacity and/or willingness to police criminal groups; external militant groups present; part of protracted conflict; limited to no border security; international agencies(UN, NGO's) barred; high level of criminal activity.
2: Refugees policing within own community with some UN or NGO assistance; moderate host nation policing capability; limited local banditry/looting; some international assistance for police training.
1: Small number of security challenges or good host country policing capability; or refugees able to provide for own security.

Security[c]	Shelter[d]	Local Economic Conditions/ Resilience[e]	Conditions for Youth[f]	Outcome
1–2	Rural	Poor	Poor	Little radicalization among refugees
2–3	Rural; some urban and ad hoc	Poor	Poor/ Average	Development of radical groups, including jihadists, but mostly outside refugee concentrations
2–3	Rural/ Urban/ Ad hoc	Iran: Moderate Pakistan: Poor/Moderate	Poor/ Average	Initial low radicalization followed by direct recruitment into radical groups
3	Pakistan: Rural Iran: Urban	Poor/Moderate	Poor	Radical recruitment intensifies and is exported
3	Rural	Poor	Poor/ Average	Radical groups active in early period in camps, but diminishes
3	Rural	Poor	DRC: Poor Rwanda: Poor Tanzania: Poor	Radicalized groups control camps, conduct cross-border attacks; violence spreads in region.
Lebanon: 2–3 Syria: 1–2 Jordan: 1 –2	Rural/ Urban	Lebanon: Poor Syria: Poor/Moderate Jordan: Moderate/Good	Poor/ Average	Lebanon: Radicalized groups gain control of camps; conduct cross-border attacks Syria: Radical groups in country, but regime control Jordan: Effort by radicalized groups to control country thwarted after 1970
2–3	Rural/ Urban	Poor	Poor	Radicalized groups control border refugee areas; conduct cross-border attacks
2–3	Urban	Poor/Moderate	Poor/ Average	Syria: Radicalized groups from Iraq actively recruit refugees for cross-border fighting

[d] *Urban:* rented dwellings in towns or cities; with or without integration into local community.
Rural: formal camps or settlements removed from local population centers.
Ad hoc: Unofficial encampments or settlements outside population centers or informal migration into towns and cities.
[e] *Poor:* Local economy lacks employment opportunities for locals or refugees; food and/or consumer goods scarce.
Moderate: Refugees fill some gaps in economy, although still competition for local resources; small degree of international financial/other support or sharing of refugee aid.
Good: Refugee NGOs cooperate with local businesses; international aid to boost local economy.
[f] *Good:* Unlimited/Unobserved movements; high availability of vocational/skills training tied to local economy; good secondary and some higher education opportunities.
Average: Some freedom of movement; limited advanced academics; some secondary education or vocational training available locally or provided by international organizations.
Poor: No freedom of movement outside designated refugee areas; no educational opportunities beyond primary school; vocational training lacking or divorced from economic needs; high unemployment or employment only in “make-work” jobs; youth restricted to camp environment; heavily dependency on foreign aid.

employment in more than "make work" jobs, if they perceive discrimination, or where radicalized groups provide the training.

What Happened in Our "Worst Cases"?

The historical cases analyzed for this Perspective demonstrate the impact of the combinations of factors, as summarized in Table 2. In all but one of them, groups with violent ideologies that had either accompanied the refugees into the host country or originated within the host country built a base of new recruits that spread violence beyond refugee areas. Afghan refugees in Pakistan in the 1990s, Palestinians in Lebanon from the 1960s to 1983, Palestinians in Jordan through 1970, Rwandan refugees in Zaire/DRC and Uganda, and Eritrean refugees in Sudan stand out as "worst cases." Radicalization activity was also of concern among Rohingyas in Bangladesh in the 1980s and early 1990s, Afghans in Pakistan in the 1980s, Somali refugees in Kenya in the 1990s, and Iraqi refugees in Syria in the 2000s.

Host Country Administrative, Legal Policies Key

In all cases reviewed in which radicalized groups emerged from refugee situations, the receiving countries pursued inconsistent, sometimes punitive, policies in dealing with refugees—often, but not always, as their numbers escalated in proportion to the host country population. There were often unintended consequences. When the first major waves of Afghan refugees appeared in Pakistan and Iran in the 1970s, both countries were relatively welcoming. Camps were established informally in Pakistan, and refugees were permitted to leave the camps for employment or trade around the country. Afghans developed a transportation industry in Pakistan and ran small retail establishments. Iran, which avoided camps, opened up educational and health services to refugees. That changed when the number of refugees exploded after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—especially when refugees stayed after the Soviet withdrawal into the 1990s. Iran reduced benefits, but Pakistan took stronger measures, relying increasingly on camps in the border areas, such as the the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and what was then the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). Initially working with UNHCR, Pakistan later would restrict UNHCR activities and push new camps to the tribal areas, according to a refugee specialist who worked with Afghan refugees in the early 2000s (Langenkamp, 2003). Islamabad had little ability to provide security or humanitarian assistance to refugees.

Neighboring countries used refugees from Palestine for their own political ends in the Arab-Israeli conflict. They were not signatories to the 1951 international convention on refugees and, in any case, the agreement did not apply to Palestinian refugees from the creation of Israel in 1948 (Stranahan, 2000, pp. 170–186).[4] Palestinians are managed separately from UNHCR by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and, it should be noted, themselves rejected integration into neighboring countries, at least initially. Lebanon labeled them "stateless people," not refugees, confined them to camps, denied them opportunities to resettle, and

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restricted the occupations in which they could work. Syria was more accommodating, allowing them to move around the country and work, although they could not become citizens, which restricted their ability to travel abroad to seek work, for example (Tiltnes, 2006, p. 145). Jordan, which hosts the largest number of Palestinian refugees, has granted most of them citizenship (UNRWA, 2014).

Political and Militant Groups Help Radicalize

The risk of radicalization appears to increase significantly when extremist political and armed groups either intermingle with the fleeing civilians from the beginning or gain entrée to the refugees as part of official humanitarian relief efforts. In Kenya, Somali clan factions and the Islamist group al-Ittihad al-Islami were merely transplanted to camps during the 1990s. In the DRC case, some Rwandan Hutus were already militarized, including both extremist militia members and Rwandan armed forces personnel, when they arrived. UNHCR and NGOs had been helpless to separate them from civilians as they fled the new Tutsi government's consolidation of control in Rwanda, coercing frightened civilians to accompany them.

Host countries also can inadvertently or purposefully grant radicalizers legitimate access to refugees. Shanghai city authorities included the Chinese Communist Party among a consortium of NGOs providing for internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing the Japanese invasion in the 1930s. Using this overt access, the communists were able to disseminate propaganda through educational programs and "little teahouses"—party-organized centers for singing, storytelling, and discussion of current events—and develop covert means to provide military training to the IDPs with greater ease than in other Chinese cities (Stranahan, 2000, pp. 170–186). Pakistan during and after the Soviet occupation encouraged NGOs associated with Islamist militant groups to register and educate the refugees, linking access to aid and "membership in one of the seven mujahideen parties that Pakistan recognized" (Haqqani, 2005, p. 190). Islamabad also turned a blind eye to recruitment for the war in Afghanistan (Langenkamp, 2003, p. 233).

Lebanon in the 1960s allowed Palestinian political groups to organize the refugees as part of a broader humanitarian effort. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) essentially controlled the camps from 1969 until 1982. According to Laleh Khalili of the University of London, "joining armed factions entitled young men and women to privileges henceforth unknown," including learning to read and write (Khalili, 2007, p. 741). The refugees absorbed the liberation narrative that the militants promoted, and Lebanon became a staging ground for attacks into Israel and for planning terrorism globally.

In Zaire/DRC, humanitarian organizations worsened the risk of radicalization by providing food to Rwandan militia members that they then distributed, thus inadvertently helping to legitimize the militia members' cause, according to an academic study (Lischer, 2006). These organizations also distributed equipment, such as satellite communications and vehicles, that "ended up in the hands of militia members."[5]

A host country can also become involved in the conflict. When Rwanda was torn by ethnic tensions between Hutus and Tutsis, neighbors took sides. Uganda, hosting Tutsi refugees, refused to resettle them even among those of similar ethnic origin and encouraged an invasion of Tutsis back into Rwanda in the early 1990s. When Hutus led the 1994 genocide and were later driven into Zaire, President Mobutu Sese Seko supported their aims because of his

own alliances with Hutu ethnic interests in eastern Zaire. Then, when Mobutu was forced out and the country became the DRC, his successor backed the Tutsi cause in Rwanda. These policies helped prolong a series of regional crises and complicated resettlement of the refugees back in Rwanda even after peace agreements.

Security Gaps Hard to Fill

Heightened security in areas where refugees are concentrated could help block access by radical groups, but lines of responsibility for refugee security are often unclear and host country capabilities insufficient. Receiving countries are responsible for overall policing around refugee areas. The United Nations and NGOs cover what is termed "protection" within camps but are not capable of dealing with major violence. Host governments naturally are concerned about the risk that a large influx of refugees could increase general crime and insecurity. The literature and interviews indicate that, given options, hosts often want to place refugee encampments as far away from major population centers as possible—even if that means further stretching of what limited law enforcement capabilities they have.

Lebanon's Palestinian camps are an example of how these installations can become isolated "islands of insecurity" (Knudsen, 2005). In northeastern Kenya, the geographic remoteness of the Dadaab complex means that military, police, and courts are scarce and local criminal activity is almost impossible to stop. Refugees in these situations often become victims of gender-based and other forms of violence with little recourse for protection. According to an interviewee with experience in Kenya, "Policing was left to the host country and they don't care about it . . . Camps just don't have a proper mandate to do proper policing, nor have the funding."[6] In the 1990s, Somali clan and Islamic militant organizations stepped in to fill or take advantage of the security gap.

In Palestinian camps, UNRWA considers policing to be the responsibility of local authorities, but Lebanon lacked the capacity to monitor camps in its territory from the earliest post-1948 period through the 1975–1985 civil war, and security fell to various Palestinian groups via a shared committee that gave militants a seat at the table. In the 1990s and 2000s, Lebanon's inability to police the camps, plus the experience that Palestinians gained fighting in the country's civil war, contributed to the rise of both al-Qa'ida–associated factions and the Salafi-Jihadi militia 'Usbat al-Ansar, particularly within the Nahr al-Barid and 'Ayn al-Hilwah camps (Sogge, 2014, pp. 1, 15–17 and passim). The groups included non-Palestinians as well as Palestinians (Knudsen, 2005, pp. 228–230).

In Jordan from the late 1960s to 1971, when armed Palestinians dominated by Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) set up a sort of state within a state and tried to overthrow the monarchy, refugee camps were caught up in the violence. After the militants' 1970 "Black September" ouster, however, Jordan avoided Lebanon's level of trouble thanks to its stronger security apparatus. Similarly in Syria, the Al-Asad regime maintained tight control over Palestinian refugees until the recent war.

Security is not really the role of NGOs assigned to provide "protection" within the camps, and NGOs were helpless to act quickly in Zaire/DRC in 1994. Leaders of the brutal Hutu Interahamwe militia and ex-Rwandan army personnel took over leadership of the camps, becoming a state-in-exile. Government officials in east and central Africa contributed to the insecurity. Mobutu allowed the Hutus to bring tanks over the border. The Museveni government supported the Tutsi insurgency, and Ugandan local

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police succumbed to bribery. Security forces in any of the countries also could be abusive and exploitative. Tanzania, in contrast, was able to police its border, contain Rwandan refugees, and deter militarization, although it deliberately turned a blind eye for a time to Burundian refugee activities, according to an interview.[7]

Camp situations in which refugees independent of armed factions are able to create governing bodies to administer justice can contribute to better security but are not without risks. Sudanese refugees in Kenya transplanted a familiar traditional justice system, but its decisions could be arbitrary and over time fell under Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) influence. Somali refugees initially recreated courts that sometimes reflected clan or gender biases. In Afghan refugee camps in the 1980s, power shifted away from traditional leaders and systems to a new class of maliks, according to a study by Louis Dupree, including both wealthy, self-made men able to work with governments and a warrior class of mujahidin. The new leaders often demanded payment to deliver rations (Dupree, 1983, p. 233).

A combination of refugee self-empowerment, tightened internal security in camps, and security assistance to host country police forces is showing some success in mitigating risks if it is tailored to local needs. Around 2000, UNHCR created a guard force in Kakuma camp in which locals and Sudanese refugees cooperated; today, UNHCR is helping Kenya with police training (Crisp, 2000, p. 613). Training Tanzanian local police to work with UNHCR in the 1990s was at least temporarily effective in providing security in Burundian refugee areas.[8] As for camp governance, elections to administrative positions in the Dadaab complex in Kenya have increased representation of the female and youth populations. In Juba, South Sudan, the United Nations staff has tightened security within the main camp and controls entry in cooperation with government security forces. According to an interview, this has deterred militancy but restricted mobility and economic opportunities for refugees, increasing refugee frustration, violent scuffles, and petty crime.[9]

Living Conditions Limit Opportunities

The longer refugees are confined to camps and the lower the likelihood that the initiating crisis will be resolved quickly, the greater the risk of radicalization and waning host country commitment appears to become. International donors also often become frustrated with supporting camps, according to the literature. Wanting to promote refugee self-reliance and reduce dependency, they cut aid outlays, but may not create alternative resources or work opportunities even as populations grow. Where repatriation is possible, money to do so may be lacking. Host governments may resist resettlement or forbid refugees from farming or setting up businesses and might even insist—as Kenya did—that refugees settled in urban areas

move to camps. Militants may fill the vacuum, offering resources or an opportunity to fight for a cause in the home country. Militants are likely to target camps close to borders of conflict areas, as in the DRC case, but historically even those set substantially back, such as Kakuma in Kenya, served as rear bases (Crisp, 2000, pp. 613–623).

Elimination of camps can break up the pool of potential recruits for radical groups, but may not sufficiently mitigate the risk. More than 50 percent of refugees worldwide now live in urban areas, only a third in camps, the United Nations reports. UNHCR reports that refugees may be at sea in an unfamiliar culture, lacking identity documents, unable to access social services, and pushed into slums far from refugee aid organizations. UNHCR has been moving since 2009 to better assist refugees living among the general population in cooperation with local governments and civil society organizations, pioneering the effort among Iraqi refugees in the Middle East (UNHCR, undated-d; UNHCR, December 7, 2009).

Local Resentment Increases Tensions

The degree of hostility from local citizenry toward refugees can influence a host government's policy decisions regarding refugees' rights, or spark violence against refugees that can complicate security arrangements and be exploited by radicalizers. Whatever the host government's official policy, at least a portion of the country's citizenry in the cases we examined actively opposed taking in refugees, harbored ethnic biases against them, or grew irritated over time that refugees received goods and services unavailable to most of them. Liberian refugees in Ghana became a focus of tit-for-tat violence, according to an interview, because they were attacked by local people who assumed they were criminals, not because they instigated the trouble. The local population appeared jealous that the refugees received food and other resources they lacked.[10]

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Bangladeshis resented that fact that large numbers of Rohingya Muslims from Burma, many of whom lived outside of camps, were competing with them for scarce economic opportunities in an especially poor and densely populated country. Dhaka forcibly repatriated Rohingyas several times over the past couple of decades. In the 1990s, refugees in camps in Bangladesh faced abuse from local security guards and their rations were withheld in an effort to force them to return to Burma. Refugees were recruited in that period into the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) and other radical groups, with some sent to help foreign extremists, possibly including al-Qa'ida, in Pakistan (Selth, 2004, p. 114). As many as 200,000 also fled to makeshift camps that are hard to monitor (Azad and Jasmin, 2013, p. 29).

Local fears sometimes have been justified—refugees will work for less money because, lacking documents and social services, they cannot demand more. At other times, however, refugees fill a niche in the local economy: Afghan refugees in Pakistan in the 1960s and 1970s brought over heavy trucks that strengthened the commercial transportation sector there and established small retail shops in urban centers that answered a demand for consumer goods (Farr, 1985).

Aid organizations and donor countries have begun trying to integrate refugee support with assistance to the general population. In May 2012, locals in Kenya blocked roads around the refugee camps demanding jobs, and the NGO CARE now is leading an effort to develop banking and environmental improvements around the Dadaab camps.

Refugee Youth Confront Limited Opportunities, Discrimination

There is no question that militants look to able-bodied youth, mainly young men with few other options, as potential recruits. The literature we examined mainly addressed radicalized groups, not individual recruits, and interviews stressed that an individual's susceptibility to a radical pitch is difficult to measure and context dependent. The findings of studies of radicalization among nonrefugees, which generally play down the impact of economic deprivation alone and stress a combination of personal factors and peer influence, suggest that refugee youth should differ little from their peers in the general population of host countries (Della Porta, 1995; Helmus, 2009, pp. 90–94).

What we can glean from the historical cases and other literature is that narrowing opportunities appear to increase the risk for refugee youth and can take several forms; for example, access to higher education, access to employment, and social entrée. Which issue has the greatest impact on the individual varies, but refugees' options for education and employment are even more constrained than those of the local population, and refugees usually have personally witnessed trauma. Moreover, outside their homeland, they miss traditional "coming of age" cultural milestones marking their transition to adult responsibilities. Aid organizations are less likely to highlight the older youth demographic to donors. What

There is no question that militants look to able-bodied youth, mainly young men with few other options, as potential recruits.

youth programs there are too often stress recreational activities to "keep them off the streets," rather than teaching participants means of earning a livelihood, according to a youth expert.[11] A 2005 study noted an increased presence of Islamist groups in Lebanon's Palestinian camps from the 1990s on, partly attributable to lack of outlets for youth there (Knudsen, 2005, p. 221).

Vocational training, moreover, is often divorced from the needs of local industry and secondary education is entirely lacking, as was the case for Rohingya in Bangladesh. Crime rose among youth in Somali camps in Kenya in the 1990s and early 2000s when secondary education was dropped for budget reasons (Crisp, 2000, p. 628). For urban refugees, school fees or transportation expenses to secondary schools may be out of reach, as is the case for Iraqis in Jordan, where the dropout rate can be high for those over the age of 15 and psychosocial counseling has been rare (al-Qdah and Lacroix, 2011). Refugee access to universities is even rarer. Lebanon restricts higher education for Palestinian refugees or charges high fees, and UNRWA's educational services are unable to fill the gap (Martin-Rayo, 2011). When donor funding for Afghan refugees fell off in the 1990s, Islamist groups took over educating youth in the camps in the NWFP (Langenkamp, 2003, p. 233).

Access to education and employment alone may not be enough, some studies suggest. As in nonrefugee situations, a youth's personal experience with bias and injustice can increase his susceptibility to

Refugees as Terrorists: A Closer Look at Recent Cases

Separating fact from anecdote and propaganda in evaluating historical cases of refugee involvement in terrorism is tricky. Media reports of terrorist attacks perpetrated by refugees often lack specifics. In particular, it can be hard to verify the connection to specific refugee populations. Police investigations in some countries are skewed by ethnic and other biases. Historical cases of refugee involvement in criminal activity or cross-border insurgency—some already mentioned—are easier to document than recruitment for international terrorism that might threaten U.S. interests.

Are Governments Using Refugees as Scapegoats?

In a few of the historical cases, host governments, fearing refugee violence almost from the beginning, tended to find the terrorist connection they were looking for, sometimes with and sometimes without evidence. Dhaka's suspicions that refugee camps were breeding grounds for Rohingya Muslim extremists spurred several forced repatriation efforts during the era of repression in Burma. Indeed, militant Rohingya groups operated in Bangladesh. The RSO, which drew international jihadist sympathies in the 1980s and 1990s and developed ties to the extremist Harakatul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI), al-Qa'ida, and Afghan Taliban, is one (Selth, 2004, pp. 114–115 and Danish Immigration Service, 2011, p 33). However, the RSO appears to have initially organized itself within Burma. Although it found safe haven in Bangladesh, its direct ties in the 1990s to the main refugee concentrations, such as in Cox's Bazar along the border, were limited and have not persisted. A Danish study in 2011 found a lack of ideological knowledge and little, if any, formal organizing among registered refugees beyond extended family ties (Danish Immigration Service, 2011).

The Kenyan government has been particularly outspoken in accusing Somali refugees of involvement in terrorism and, after first attempting to push all the Somalis into the Dadaab camp complex, is now pressing to close the camps and repatriate the refugees. It is true that the Somali-based al-Shabaab group (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen), which joined al-Qa'ida in 2009, has conducted several bloody attacks in Kenya, but it is by no means clear that Kenyan-based Somali refugees have been involved. Press reports of the investigation into the attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall in 2013 revealed that one of the perpetrators had once been a refugee in Kakuma camp and that another suspect may have made a phone call to someone in Dadaab. The head of UNHCR in Kenya said he knew of no connection (Straziuso and Odula, 2013). Al-Shabaab's massacre of students in Garissa in 2015 spurred Nairobi's most recent call to close Dadaab, but so far all the Kenyan-based ethnic Somali suspects have been Kenyan citizens, not refugees (Yusuf, 2015; Allen, 2015).

radicalization. A study published by the Belfer Center comparing Somali refugee educational opportunities in Yemen and Kenya found that Somalis in Yemen were discriminated against in local schools and thus more likely to be radicalized than in Kenyan refugee camps, even though access to jobs was better in Yemen (Martin-Rayo, 2011). Similarly, a large 2015 study by the NGO Mercy Corps of youth (both nonrefugee and refugee) in three different regions found "no direct relationship between joblessness and a young person's willingness to engage in, or support, political violence." Rather, experience with injustice was a more important driver. Mercy Corps recommends "holistic" solutions, including combining "intercommunity peace building and governance reform" with jobs training and psychosocial counseling (Mercy Corps, undated, p. 50).

What Programs Might Work?

Our case studies strongly suggest that reducing the risk of radicalization goes beyond merely providing adequate, sustained humanitarian assistance, and requires a multipronged approach that gives refugees viable choices for their future as well as protection from abuse in the place of refuge. However, according to interviews, there is no system as yet to evaluate each situation in sufficient depth to create such an approach. Nor will the exemplar for one region necessarily work in another.[12] Any effective program will require the collaboration, sharing of information and alignment of objectives among donors' and NGOs' traditional and nontraditional partners and enlist the local population and host government as much as the refugees.

The political and diplomatic arenas are critical as always. Refugee crises traditionally have been resolved in three ways, according to the literature and the experts we interviewed:

- resolving the original conflict in the country of origin and returning refugees to their homes
- permanently settling the refugees in the host country, perhaps with an option for citizenship
- resettling them in a third country.

Where the first option is unlikely—Palestinian refugees are an example—the longer a crisis goes on, the more receiving countries tend to limit refugees' other options, such as precluding citizenship, higher education, or employment. Other governments and international donors succumb over time to budgetary pressures by cutting food handouts to camps or social programs in urban settings. They urge refugees to become more self-sufficient, but do not always provide a way to facilitate that. Where there have been instances of violence among the refugees, for whatever reason—for example, the Somali case—governments tend to pull back on the second and third options. All these responses raise the risk of recruitment into extremist groups.

Economics and finance are also important, even if they are not the main drivers of radicalization. Refugees seek means to support their families and skills that might be useful for the longer term. Those needs must be fulfilled within the country of refuge, where refugees compete with local people for both jobs and consumer goods. This means that attempted solutions should engage local players not usually directly involved in refugee issues, such as the business community. Development assistance ideally should be available to nonrefugees as well. Interviewees recommended that funding streams by donors need to be flexible and less "siloed" to do this successfully. Another common problem with international relief funds is that they are available at the start of a crisis but dwindle over the

long term. Policymakers and stakeholders can increase their dialogue about long-term financial planning for refugee crises.[13]

Jobs and education are only a partial answer. Psychological and security needs are key components. Refugees have experienced trauma in escaping their country of origin and often face abuse, humiliation, and powerlessness in their place of refuge. This arena is where militant groups are likely to step in and try to radicalize vulnerable populations with narratives, often aimed at youth, of empowerment through violence. Providing refugees opportunities to participate in their own governance, such as in camp administration, can mitigate this, but only if the system is not controlled by a closed elite, corrupt officials, or extremist groups. The Mercy Corps study found that graduates of civic training were *more* likely to take a radical path in the face of authorities' abuse or corruption (Mercy Corps, undated).

Implications for the Syria Situation

The Syrian refugee crisis, which has already persisted for more than four years, appears on track to become one of those long-term intractable situations in which the risk of radicalization can be expected to increase, judging from the historical examples. The flow of people out of Syria continued at a high pace in the past year, but there is reason for some optimism. So far the refugees have avoided several of the most serious risk factors. The United Nations—both UNHCR and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)—and major donors have developed a Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) that directly addresses several potential risks, such as local resentment (UNHC and UNDP, undated-b).[14] The plan calls for a "new aid architecture" and breaking down of "financing silos." The question is: Are these plans sustainable? Here, we take a closer look at the historical risk factors in this current context.

Host Country Administrative, Legal Policies

As in past cases, the success of the plan greatly depends on host government cooperation. The circumstances and policies of the main receiving countries—Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt—differ. Lebanon and Jordan have taken in the largest number of refugees per capita, and although informal camps exist in Lebanon and formal ones in Jordan, the majority of refugees are settled among the general population. Turkey, with the largest number of refugees, including 22 camps, with others planned as of earlier this year for the influx from Kobane fighting, last year enacted the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, and enacted other legislation protecting refugees and asylum-seekers in its territory (UNHCR, undated-d, p. 58). In Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), hosting 97 percent of the Syrian refugees there, grants them freedom of movement and the right to work, although it is unclear what impact the KRG's growing role in fighting against the Islamic State will have on future priorities (UNHCR, undated-d, pp. 24, 31). As part of its overall regional program, UNHCR is making a concerted effort to register refugee births to prevent future stateless persons.

Planning has not prevented negative actions by host governments. Egypt imposes tight visa requirements, with Syrians lacking documents facing long detention or deportation to third countries (UNHCR, undated-c, p. 18). Lebanon in May 2015 stopped UNHCR from registering any additional refugees, leaving new arrivals in limbo. In January 2013, Lebanon and Jordan all but closed their borders; the following year, Jordan stopped refugees

According to interviews, facilities for Syrian refugees have not experienced the kind of violence we found in the historical cases, and local security services have been able to fulfill their obligations in most cases.

trying to leave camps and escorted them back.[15] Both countries are unable to escape involvement in the Syrian conflict. Syrian influence in Lebanon has always been strong and the Lebanese Shia group Hizballah provides military support to the Assad regime. In 2015, Jordan ramped up airstrikes against the Islamic State in retaliation for its killing of a pilot. Syrian refugees in Iraq outside the Kurdistan region are caught in the middle of an internal war with many IDPs already.

Political and Militant Organizing

The international community is trying hard to detect and deter militant groups, with studies and messaging. In camps in Jordan last year, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNHCR conducted their first assessment of children associated with armed forces and armed groups and created posters and other literature to persuade children and families to resist recruitment pitches (UNHCR, undated-d, p. 36; see also material from UNHCR, undated-b). In part to prevent militant abuse of aid resources and other corruption, vouchers and debit cards are given directly to Syrian refugees in most cases—both camp-based and urban—to shop for food and consumer items, and identities are registered with biometric data, such as iris scans.

The risk that militant groups will gain entrée has not been eliminated, however. In Jordan, a group of what UNHCR terms "former combatants"—defectors from the Syrian Army, some associated with the Free Syrian Army, some not—had been housed in a special camp since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, probably with the idea that they might be useful to Jordan either politically or militarily in dealing with Syria. In late 2014, however, Jordan decided to close the camp and integrate most of the 2,500 men with the general populations in the Za'tari and Azraq camps, ostensibly to deter organizing or to reunite them with their families (al-'Alimat, 2014). Turkey, whatever Ankara's policy, has been a well-known base for Syrian opposition groups, including the Islamic State, and a transit point for foreign volunteers. In previous years, reports for the UN Secretary General found that many groups, including "FSA [Free Syrian Army], ISIS [Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/al-Sham], Ahrar Al Sham, YPG [People's Protection Units], and Jabhat al-Nusra," were trying to recruit children under the age of 18 for "combat and non-combat roles" (UNICEF, undated).

Security

According to interviews, facilities for Syrian refugees have not experienced the kind of violence we found in the historical cases, and local security services have been able to fulfill their obligations in most cases. UNHCR in Duhok, Iraq, recently held awareness sessions on refugee protection for personnel from the Kurdistan

Police, Security, Border Guards and the Department of Residency. In Jordan, an interagency "Amani" campaign was launched in 2014 to raise awareness via NGOs and government organizations on ways to protect communities from gender-based and other forms of violence. The Jordanian government set up a sharia court office and national police presence in Za'tari camp, with other facilities to follow (UNHCR, undated-d, p. 36). On the negative side, a Lebanese reform activist organization found that some north Lebanon municipalities heavily affected by the crisis had created their own security forces that abused the refugees.[16]

Shelter

Living conditions vary and include rural camps, such as the Za'tari facility in Jordan, and some unofficial tented settlements, as in Lebanon, but 80–90 percent of refugees have settled among the local populations. As in any crisis, the first difficulty in urban locations is in identifying and registering the people and giving them access to housing and services. UNHCR also points out that in most locations, Syrians that arrived in urban areas with money now have spent it, have turned to substandard housing (UNHCR, undated-c, pp. 16–17), and, according to a recent report on Jordan, "are now employing or at risk of employing the most severe coping strategies; including resorting to sending family members (including children) out to beg and working in informal or dangerous jobs" (UNHCR, 2015a, p. 26). Shelter anywhere can be precarious, and refugees in informal situations in Lebanon are at particular risk of the type of bulldozing of pop-up settlements that occurred this year in France.

Local Economic Conditions and Resilience

The 3RP plan attempts to address the refugee burden on the population of each country, in infrastructure, education, and health services, in an effort to avoid the kind of resentment that triggers violence. In 2014, more than two million people in affected communities received direct or indirect assistance. In Jordan, that has included improved water and sanitation facilities, including in local schools and public areas around camps, and rehabilitation of housing with rent support in urban areas (UNHCR, undated-d, p. 34). In Egypt, 135 educational facilities received refurbishment or funding for maintenance, and in northern Iraq, vocational training is provided to local people as well as refugees (UNHCR, undated-d, pp. 19, 25). In Lebanon in 2014, confidence-building activities—training of "change agents," creating conflict resolution and dialogue mechanisms, and implementing host community support projects—were generally "positive," according to UN assessments. Nonetheless, the report says: "While instances of violence remain limited, assessments show that there is a high level of tension between host communities and Syrian refugees, with the possibility of further polarization—highlighting the need for greater investment in the Sector" (UNHCR, undated-d, p. 55). Although the UN does not name a location, parts of northern Lebanon in the past year have witnessed

The 3RP plan attempts to address the refugee burden on the population of each country . . . in an effort to avoid the kind of resentment that triggers violence.

violent clashes between armed Syrian opposition groups as well as tensions between local people and refugees.

Conditions for Youth

The international community has committed to "No Lost Generation"—that Syrian children will not miss out on an education wherever they are and will be readied for jobs. Most receiving countries are cooperating. Syrians in Iraq are permitted access to local schools and in Duhok have been admitted to the university, with treatment equal to locals, according to the college. Assessments are being made of labor market needs there (UNHCR, undated-d, p. 25). Refugees received education grants in Egypt up to the university level. In Jordan in 2014, UNHCR targets were met for "post-basic" and higher education as well as "life skills" training for youth beyond school age or unable to access education. Some youth gained access to psychosocial counseling (UNHCR, undated-d, pp. 38–39).

There were setbacks for refugee youth in 2014, however. A massive midyear influx of refugees in Iraq meant that school facilities there often were commandeered as shelters, and the high price of food in some areas forced parents to withdraw their children from school. Education funding in Egypt dropped and employment opportunities have proved very limited. In Lebanon, relatively few Syrian refugee children had access to education (UNHCR, undated-c, p. 16–17, 27, 50).

Of the greatest concern, when UNICEF interviewed ten children at Za'tari camp (two of whom had actively tried to escape) for its study of children and armed groups, it found that the children wanted to join militarized groups like the FSA. The children gave political or nationalist reasons, but they also complained that the camp situation was too restrictive and boring, with a lack of educational opportunities (UNHCR, undated-d, p. 36; see also UNHCR, undated-b).

Sustaining Regional Plans to Avert Radicalization

Although most basic humanitarian needs for the Syria crisis have been met, underfunding and underperformance have plagued several UN Syria programs that were otherwise on track to mitigate the historical risk factors we have identified. As of April 24, 2015, the 3RP overall was only funded at 19 percent (UNHCR and UNDP, undated-a). Surprisingly, given Turkey's position as host to the largest number of refugees, in 2014 (as in previous years) Turkey was the lowest-funded country in the region, at 39 percent. That figure even extended to its livelihood, education, and psychosocial support programs (UNHCR, undated-d, pp. 58–59). Throughout the region last year, more than half of refugee children did not benefit from education. Despite the fact that community resilience is a key goal of the regional plan—and a means to discourage violence—as of late last year, only 10 percent of the goals on employment assistance, income generation, and business development had been met, while the conflict also has been damaging host countries' economies, trade, and investment (UNHCR, undated-d, pp. 7–11). This has increased local tensions and the propensity to see refugees as an inherent security risk. One interviewee said of recent Jordanian attitudes: "Everything is attributed to them [refugees], but if you ask for specific examples they can't give one."[17]

At the end of March 2015, the Third International Pledging Conference for the Syria crisis (Kuwait III) obtained significant increases in commitments for 2015 and 2016 from major donors, an increase of $1.2 billion, for a total of $3.6 billion. Washington

alone pledged $507 million, the largest amount. Although the UN goal was $8.4 billion, the pledges, according to UNHCR and UNDP, overall demonstrated support for the more-flexible and better-integrated programs of the 3RP compared with past modes of handling refugee crises. Other types of fundraising would continue in parallel (UNHCR and UNDP, undated-b).

Our study of historical cases is just preliminary. More work is needed to identify specific best practices in handling rapidly developing refugee emergencies to prevent armed groups from gaining influence, ensuring the cooperation of receiving countries, and balancing funding for programs, such as those that support youth, with other requirements. What the cases show is that refugee radicalization can occur but is not a given, and preventing it requires the kind of package of measures the 3RP is aiming at. No single focus will avert radicalization, and we know that limiting opportunities for refugees in more than one way at the same time will add to the risk. Of course, the needs of the crisis, the needs of the individual refugees, and the burden on host countries are overwhelming and full funding is likely beyond the capacity of the international community. That means an inevitable narrowing of choices for refugees.

What the United States and other international actors can do is try to persuade host nations from falling into old traps, like pushing refugees out of sight in remote and lawless regions. International responses to rapidly developing emergencies ideally should include expertise in militancy and terrorism, not just in humanitarian aid, to try to prevent current or former armed groups' gaining access to refugees. The donor community can more closely question host countries' accusations of the threat from refugees, to avoid inadvertently condoning existing anti-refugee biases. It should think twice about cutting budgets just because a situation has "gone on too long"—most refugee crises have lasted longer than anticipated—and look even more closely than it does now at which smaller programs, such as post–primary education and training, really work. As the experts we talked with stressed, this approach will require collaboration among organizations that are often in competition. The Syria programs are trying to avert known pitfalls, but shadows of old attitudes persist and must be raised and addressed head-on to ensure that the militancy and terrorism that succeeded past refugee crises will not occur this time.

Notes

[1] The outflow accelerated significantly from mid-2014. Lebanon is hosting nearly 1.2 million and Jordan more than 600,000. The Lebanon figure does not include registered Palestinian refugees, some 80,000 of whom also fled Syria; they are handled by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

[2] The authors interviewed six refugee specialists with varied backgrounds, including both academic teaching and writing and work with United Nations or nongovernmental organizations dealing directly with refugees. Their collective experience encompasses Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East, including countries neighboring Syria. Because most of these individuals expressed a desire to remain anonymous, the authors chose not to name any.

[3] Jordan was increasingly enforcing encampment in December 2014. As of July 2012, Syrians officially were not supposed to live outside camps, whereas previously they could be sponsored to live in the community, according to a project manager at a university who has focused on refugee crisis and migration issues, including working directly with refugee populations across the Middle East, where the interviewee has instituted refugee monitoring programs (project manager interview, March 16, 2015).

[4] The 1951 Refugee Convention spells out that a refugee is someone who, "owing to a 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 to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR, undated-a).

[5] Interview with an expert on the Central African region and the Horn of Africa, who in the past decade has published a wide-range of articles on refugee issues, including refugee migration movements, local refugee governance policies and human rights issues, January 29, 2015. See, also, Harpviken and Lischer (2013, pp. 89–119): The authors identify three methods that militants use to ensure commitment: socialization of the population, control of distribution of resources, and "security entrapment" to ensure that members cannot defect without risk to their lives.

[6] Interview with academic specialist in refugee issues in Africa and the Middle East, January 21, 2015.

[7] Interview with Central African expert, January 29, 2015.

[8] Interview with Central African expert, January 29, 2015.

[9] Interview with an experienced technical director for an international refugee center who specializes in facilitating refugees' access to employment and education, March 9, 2015.

[10] Interview with expert who has analyzed refugee crises in East and Southeast Asia and Africa for more than a decade and has extensive experience traveling and working directly with refugee populations in more than 30 countries, January 28, 2015.

[11] Interview with refugee center technical director, March 9, 2015.

[12] Interviews with refugee center technical director, March 9, 2015; and with a university professor who has researched refugee-related conflict resolution and peace building operations in consultation with prominent international organizations such as UNHCR, focusing mainly on the Horn of Africa and Thailand, February 12 and 19, 2015.

[13] Interviews with refugee crisis expert, January 28, 2015; university professor, February 12 and 19, 2015; and refugee center technical director, March 9, 2015.

[14] The *Strategic Response Plan* addresses acute humanitarian needs inside Syria, with the following objectives: (a) promote protection of and access to affected people in accordance with International law, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL); (b) provide life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian assistance to people in need, prioritizing the most vulnerable; (c) strengthen resilience, livelihoods, and early recovery through communities and institutions; (d) strengthen harmonized coordination modalities through enhanced joint planning, information management, communication and regular monitoring; and (e) enhance the response capacity of all humanitarian actors assisting people in need in Syria, particularly national partners and communities (Humanitarian Country Team, 2014).

[15] Project manager interview, March 16, 2015.

[16] According to the NGO Beyond Reform and Development, "Lebanese municipalities in these areas have been taking security matters into their own hands by recently recruiting between 150 and 200 policemen who are employed and armed in order to terrorise Syrian refugees. Such a situation can prove very explosive in the short term." Cited in El Mufti (2015, p. 9).

[17] Project manager interview, March 16, 2015.

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About This Perspective

This Perspective examines nine historical situations in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia in which populations fled violent conflict or repression, supplemented by a briefer examination of four additional cases, to identify key drivers contributing to the development of ideologically motivated militancy among refugee populations. What kind of governmental or nongovernmental interventions most inhibit radicalization, defined as the process of committing to ideologies that embrace violence? Which add to the problem? What risks emerge when these factors are applied to the current Middle East crises? This is a preliminary, exploratory study that does not attempt to be exhaustive in examining the historical cases or surfacing all variables. Our intention is to spur policymakers and planners to move discussion of refugee radicalization from assumptions to a more systematic and rigorous consideration of the major risk factors and ways those can be mitigated. The project team drew from academic and nongovernmental organizations and United Nations literature on the selected conflicts and interviewed a small group of current or former refugee specialists from several disciplines who have studied and had experience with either the historical cases or a key problem set emerging from the literature.

The RAND research team is grateful to the university and nongovernmental organization specialists we interviewed who offered their time and knowledge about what can be a sensitive subject to set us on what we hope is the right course in understanding the problem of radicalization in this context. They also came back to us later with suggestions for other literature to research that proved very fruitful. We also want to thank RAND colleagues who have worked on either the refugee or the radicalization issues and provided invaluable insights. We cannot thank reviewers Vaughn Bishop and Mary Tighe enough, not only for seeing through the faults of this paper, but also for offering specific changes that moved the study to a level we could not have achieved otherwise. Any remaining flaws are ours alone.

This research was sponsored by the U.S. government and conducted within the Intelligence Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community.

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PE-166-OSD (2015)