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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2013]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The current situation of Syrian refugees in the receiving countries

Currently, the UNHCR has registered more than 1,738,208 Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraqi Kurdistan and Egypt. About 201,149 refugees are waiting for their registration at the moment. In total, over 1,932,357 persons are estimated to have escaped from the Syrian Arabic Republic to these countries. Their journey is arduous because they have to pass illegally the heavily guarded Syrian borders at night. Sometimes they need the help of smugglers to cross the border because some parts of the area are covered with landmines.

Although the refugees have access to vital food, medicine, water and medical care the camps are bursting at the seams. The help of the receiving countries is no longer guaranteed because except Egypt none of the receiving countries has signed the UN convention on refugees. Meanwhile, basic resources are running short, the level of frustration is increasing as well as the security risks for the refugees.

By the end of 2013 the number of the refugees will rise over more than 2 million people. According to UNHCR, a rate of US\$2.98 billion is needed to deal with the supply of these people.

Syrian refugees in Turkey

425,656 Syrian refugees have found shelter in Turkey. 75% of them are women and children who are especially vulnerable to the hardships of the war. Since January the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey rose by over 270.000 people. The rapid increase in the number of asylum seekers is a financial and bureaucratic challenge for Turkey that demands increased efforts regarding funding and additional relief supplies.

Until now there are camps in the region of Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Adana, Adiyaman, Osmaniye and Malatya. Most refugees are in Gaziantep (130,342 people) and Sanliurfa (105,253 people). Although the Turkish government tries to protect these people, there is an increasing danger of violent attacks on refugees as well as the infiltration of the camps by radical Islamist groups. Moreover, the danger of ethnic tensions inside as well as outside the camps has concerned the refugees and the local population increasingly. Furthermore, the Syrian regime placed internationally banned landmines at the Turkish border, thus blocking several highly frequented escape routes.

Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Until now, 584,608 Syrians are officially registered as refugees in Lebanon. Currently, Lebanon shelters the biggest amount of Syrian displaced persons. In total, their number exceeds more than 690,000 people including those who are still waiting to be registered officially. Like in Turkey they majority (78 percent) consists of women and children who are urgently in need for shelter, medical and protection from sexual harassment. 196,081 refugees are currently located in the governorate of Northern Lebanon. 199,356 live in Bekaa. 113,010 found shelter around Beirut and 76,161 are registered in southern Lebanon.

Still, the Lebanese government rejects to construct refugee camps because it fears they could turn into heartlands of rebels. Thus, most of the refugees live with host families or relatives. About 20 percent are living in collective, shared or rented accommodations. They

receive support for their daily supply and their children are able to attend school. However, public agencies and schools are overburdened by the rapid increase in new arrivals. They are not able to deal with the huge amount of refugees demanding their help. In June 2013, just 38 percent of the primary-age Syrian children and only 2 percent of the secondary-age Syrian children attended school. Moreover, difficulties occur with the distribution of aid supplies. Because the refugees are not living in camps they are scattered over several regions and places. Moreover, security concerns and rejection by the local population against the refugees are steadily increasing and causing sometimes violent confrontations between refugees and locals. Radical Islamist groups are trying to abuse this instability for their agenda spreading violence through armed attacks and aggressive rhetoric. Additionally, Lebanon is hardly able to finance costly treatments for refugees with heart problems, cancer and diabetes. Currently, just in cases of emergencies refugees are able to receive treatment.

Syrian refugees in Jordan

In August 2013, the UNHCR registered 462,437 refugees in Jordan. 54,553 were waiting to be registered. Since January this year 257,153 people have arrived in Jordan. 79 percent of these displaced persons consist of children and women who are strongly relying on the support of aid organizations. Moreover, 53 percent of the registered refugees are under the age of 18. Last October, 36 percent were single men. Therefore, a camp only for men was established.

There are several camps in Jordan. Some are located in the Irbid governorate like Bashabshe, Cyber city and some others. Since July 2012 the Za'atri camp is open. It has a capacity for more than 120,000 people. Currently, more than 123,000 refugees are registered in this camp. Constantly, the camps are overcrowding. Bashabshe which is designed to host about 500 people is currently hosting 1,500 to 2,500 people. The distribution of food is an increasing problem in the camps. Also the supply of water, sanitation and medical care becomes increasingly difficult because of the uncontrolled and rapid increase of incoming refugees to Jordan. The hospitals are overcrowded and not able anymore to give proper treatment to all incoming patients. They lack staff, place and equipment as well as medicine. The agencies and aid organizations have to take reasonable measures to protect these scarce resources and distribute them in the most sustainable manner right now. To avoid epidemic diseases the conditions have to improve immediately. There is a growing number of children between 12 to 18 years who are not attending school but work for the livelihood of their families. Violence against women and children increases alarmingly. The state has to train police officers and soldiers to handle these situations. But the Jordanian government is financially unable anymore to provide proper conditions for such a huge amount of people. There are not enough aid organizations to assist the agencies. Basic goods like food, water and fuel are rapidly getting scarce. The international community has to intervene right now to prevent a humanitarian crisis in Jordan.

Syrian refugees in the northern part of Iraq

Constantly, the numbers of refugees in Iraq are increasing. After opening the Peshkhabour Semalka bridge that is closed to the Sahela crossing point more than 20,000 people arrived to northern Iraq within four days. In total, 150,000 people foremost Kurds came to the northern part of Iraqi. Most of them (96,872 people) are registered in the city of Dohuk. In Erbil 38,651 people and in Sulaymaniyah 13,735 people found shelter. Currently, the biggest problem is the exploitation of Syrian workers. The refugees earn less than the Iraqi

Kurds, sometimes their payment is refused completely. Moreover, there is a lack of transportation facilities which makes it difficult for patients to reach hospitals for medical treatment. Also violence and sexual harassment against women is a matter of concern. Therefore, the authorities in the northern part of Iraq need more financial support to educate security forces and to deal with the rapid increase of arriving refugees.

Syrian refugees in Egypt

In Egypt, 89,901 refugees are registered 19,908 people are waiting for their registration. About 66 percent are women and children. The majority lives around Cairo. With the current political situation in Egypt these people are facing an increasing threat because of the chaotic circumstances the country experiences at the moment. Thus, there is a high possibility that many of these refugees are going to leave to other countries again.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the Human Rights Council to urge the international community:

- To offer financial support to prevent a region wide humanitarian crisis in the receiving countries. Currently, the political situation is tremendously tensioned containing the urgent threat of an extension of the Syrian civil war to other countries.
 - To provide the displaced persons with proper medical, psychological and financial support to regain the ability to integrate in a peaceful society. The supply of basic goods like water, food and fuel has to be guaranteed.
 - Put more resources into protecting women and children. Therefore, special education for soldiers and security forces should be provided. International aid organizations as well as the state agencies have to be supported financially by the international community.
 - To prevent genocide the weak parts of the societies first and foremost members of minorities need special attention to be protected. Therefore, the international community has to advocate the immediate stop of all warfare in Syria.
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