

# REFUGEE CRISIS MANAGEMENT - NEED OF THE HOUR!

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## Synopsis

In the era of globalization and fierce competition it is evident that in the time of crisis the public relation plays an evident part to keep the pace for with the moving world. This paper focuses on the handling crisis of the world especially Refugee crisis, differently by the help of PR and PA practitioner.

The paper also emphasizes on the importance of the role of Public Relation and Public Affairs in influencing laws and norm to help rehabilitate the War affected people. Our work is urgently needed as the world is confronted with a dramatic rise in the number of conflicts, with devastating humanitarian, social and economic costs.

**Keywords: Public Relations, Public affairs and Crisis Management**

## Objective of the Study:

1. To Study the role UNHSCR in refugee Crisis Management
2. To study on what has influenced governments across the world to rehabilitate the refugees.
3. To identify the importance of the role of PR/PA in influencing laws suggest some more roles in establishing laws for the benefits of refugee.

## Introduction:

We live in a cynical world, with people, countries and leaders having selfish motives in a way or another. In this world driven by survival of the fittest, we have started to become inhumane. In the race of becoming a superpower, we have already lost half of the world. The below given data evidences the above statement.

1. World War 1 Death Toll Estimate: **65 Million**
2. World War 2 Death Toll Estimate: **72 Million**
3. European Colonization of the Americas Death Toll Estimate: **100 Million**

Death is too extreme to mention, but unfortunately it is very prominent - the ultimatum, but if you are not dead, than either displaced, divided from family and friends, a war prisoner, raped, traumatized, body injured or may be exploited by human traffickers, but just not the same.

## Public Relations, Public affairs and Crisis Management

**Public relation (PR)**, is a practice for managing the communication and information between an organization and its stake holder to communicate the prospective customers, partners, investors, employees, and other stakeholders and ultimately being persuasive to maintain a certain view about the organization, the leadership, the products, or any political decisions taken. All of these is achieved by designing campaigns, writing news releases and other content, working along with the press, publishing interviews of company spokespeople, drafting speeches for company leaders, being a spokesperson, content writing, managing company's reputation (crisis management), managing internal communications, and marketing activities like brand awareness and event management.

**Public Affair (PA)** is another branch of Public relations drafting organizational policies and views on public policy, assisting policy-makers and legislators in amending or laying down better and favorable policies. They lobby on issues which could impact upon the organization's ability to operate successfully. One of the major PR responsibilities is managing crisis and situations, lobbying, advising management about public issues, and planning community events.

## War and Consequences

War is not inevitable, it is a man-made disaster and the consequences of inaction are too great: With almost 1% of the world's population displaced and homeless, seeking for a better & safer life. A global crisis is surely under way, exacerbated by a lack of political cooperation (Insert Figure 1). And as a result, following figures will surely shake you.

- Over 65 million people are displaced due to conflict, war and persecution. Among them are nearly 21.3 million refugees, over half under the age of 18 — most since World War II.
- According to UNHCR, 33, 972 people are forced to flee their homes, because of conflict and persecution.
- The majority of the world's refugees come from 3 war devastated countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia. (Insert Figure 2)
- The past few years have seen worsening trend across conflict zones, more wars killing more people and displacing more civilians.
- In last few years, civil war has forced over 15 million people to flee Syria and Iraq, 1.1 million people have been displaced in Yemen, more than 500,000 people have fled South Sudan, 190,000 in Burundi; and over 300,000 in Libya, according to U.N. Refugee Chief Antonio Guterres.
- About six-in-ten Syrians have been displaced from their homes in last few years. (Insert Figure 3)

- A quarter of the nation's schools have been destroyed — the conflict has put 2 million Syrian children out of school, according to UNICEF, some for more than four years — and more than half the nation's hospitals have been destroyed.
- The conflict in Afghanistan has resulted in the longest displacement situation in history according to the U.N. Refugee Agency, with over 2.6 million Afghans are displaced around the world.
- The South Sudan conflict which began in December of 2013, has displaced over 1.5 million people, and the rest are still enduring the consequences of it.
- In Yemen, The UNHCR estimates, that over 82% of the country's population, 21.2 million people are now classified in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. That ranks it as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.
- In June of 2016, Libyans fleeing conflict had doubled to more than 434,000 compared to September 2014. The same year, a ship carrying more than 1000 Libyan migrants capsized and killed over 800 onboard marking it as the deadliest incident in the Mediterranean in recorded history, according to the UN

### Efforts underway

To tackle this challenging situation and cover up the man-made blunders, all the countries have come together and formed various Intergovernmental Organizations as mentioned below. Every Organization formed has a core objective under which their major actions takes place. Since there are government bodies involved, they work along under the law, and that is the reason how Public Affairs can play a critical role in drafting policies which can speed up the process, extend the responsibilities and address further issues.

1. *United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)*
2. *World Health Organization (WHO)*
3. *Organization for prohibition of chemical Weapons (OPCW)*
4. *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*
5. *International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)*
6. *European Union (EU)*
7. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Crisis (UNHCR)*

Among the above listed organizations, United Nations High commissioner works directly for refugees and address their issues. The office of the UNHCR, also known as the UN Refugee Agency, has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and is a member of the United Nations Development Group. UNHCR established on 14 December 1950 and succeeded the earlier United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The agency is formed to lead and co-ordinate international cohesive action to protect refugees and resolve their problems worldwide. Its primary objective is to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of refugees. The objective is to ensure that everyone can exercise their right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state they seek for, with an option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. The mandate is to provide international protection to refugees on a non-political and humanitarian basis, and find a permanent solution for them. They are committed towards increasing refugees' access to livelihood opportunities and reducing dependency on humanitarian aid.

UNHCR also maintains a database of refugee information. The database contains biometric data, like fingerprints and iris scans and is also used to determine aid distribution for recipients. UN unveiled a draft based on principles focused on human rights, non-discrimination; right to information, rescue and assistance, returns, violence, access to justice, border governance, detention, family unity, women migrants, child migrants, right to health, adequate standard of living, data, right to education, monitoring and accountability, decent work, migrants' human rights defenders, and international cooperation.

### Case Study: Attitude Vs Altitude

#### *Trump's Wall*

US President, Trump's "wall" along the Mexico border is a series of fences and walls that will cost around \$22billion, taking more than 3 years to construct, according to U.S. Department of Homeland Security internal report seen by Reuters. The plan laid out in phases of construction of fences and walls covering a little over 1,250 miles (2,000 km) by the end of 2020. Trump's Department of Homeland Security chief, John Kelly, said in recent Senate testimony, a "physical barrier will not do the job". He went on to say it can be part of a strategy. "If you build a wall, you would still have to back that wall up with patrolling by human beings, by sensors, by observation devices."

The U.S. government would have to pay to maintain the wall, which could cost as much as \$750 million a year, according to an analysis conducted by Politico. And then if it wanted to man it with personnel that would be an additional cost — border patrol has an operating budget of \$1.4 billion for 21,000 agents. There's one more aspect to Trump's plan that could make it even costlier — he is talking about a wall, not a fence. If he really means what he says, "the price would go up quite a bit," Rosenblum said.

#### *Merkel's Immigration*

Humanity dictates that the rich world admits refugees, irrespective of the economic impact. But the economics of the influx still matters, because it colors perceptions of the new arrivals. A German official said, the country can sustain up to 500,000 or more new asylum-seekers every year, amidst hundreds of thousands of people from war-torn countries are making their way to Europe to chase a better life. (Insert Figure 4). Germany has a long history of outsiders representing a net positive for the country's economy. The 6.6 million people living in Germany with foreign passports paid \$4,127 more in taxes and

social security on average than they took in social benefits in 2012 generating a surplus of 22 billion euros that year, according to one report.

Germany has one of the world's most rapidly aging and shrinking populations. With one of the world's lowest birthrates, the country relies on immigration to plug a growing workforce hole. According to one expert quoted in Deutsche Welle last year, the German economy needs to attract 1.5 million skilled migrants to stabilize the state pension system as more Germans retire. Evidence suggests that immigration has only a small impact on employment or wages. Unskilled workers and existing migrants are most vulnerable, as they are the closest substitutes for the new arrivals. But the effects are still measly. These barriers suggest that it will be awhile before refugees pay more in tax than they receive in state support. A study of Australian refugees found that they paid less tax than they received in benefits for their first 15-20 years of residency. Of course, the newest arrivals in Europe could be very different. Information on their education is scarce, but there are some glimmers of evidence that they are relatively skilled. Still, given that most European countries redistribute income from rich to poor, as long as they are poorer than the average native, they will probably receive net transfers. "We will profit from this, too, because we need immigration," German Labor Minister Andrea Nahles said. "The people who come to us as refugees should be welcomed as neighbors and colleagues."

This Study compares policies signed by two great leaders, one who is open to accept immigrants and other who wants to stop people from entering the country. Eventually, both the countries are going to land up spending billions of dollars. But then, it is the influencer, who influences the decisions and pens down the policy. It may benefit Germans in a long term, as the research says, and this is what the World needs right now. Countries need to look at long term benefits while implementing policies and developing strategies for Migrants.

## **Undertaking by PR/PA professionals**

### **1. Funding for refugee**

Funding is the utmost requirement for helping refugees to settle down, providing them, with basic amenities, food, shelter, clothing, helping them rehabilitate, providing them transport, security costs hell lot of money. One of the major responsibilities of the PR individual is to gather enough fund, so that all the activities are carried on smoothly, without coming to halt. Gathering fund could be done through many activities, through different channels, like funding raising events, donations from powerful and reaching out to people and leaders, charity events, campaigns along with philanthropist, and other similar activities. Amount of money spent on advertisement is not less, and still the awareness is not created. Major thing that is missing is they lack in defining target audience or specific group of people, and if not done carefully then we have to say even advertisement has failed.

Public Affairs department can work with the government involved in the war/cold war and neighboring countries to help rehabilitate the Victims and Refugees by simply convincing them to set up refugee camps, providing protection to civilians and keeping them out of War Zone. PA practitioner can influence economically stable countries, to allocate some amount of budget for humanitarian aid, the least which can be assured. Canada allows refugees to settle if they have the sponsorship of at least five Canadian citizens, on the condition that those citizens provide financial and emotional support.

### **2. Xenophobia**

Xenophobia is fear of a stranger or a foreigner. The people from the host countries are unfriendly towards migrants citing to the factors like job insecurity, wealth distribution, race and caste, culture and many others.

(Insert Figure 5)

Europeans overwhelmingly disapprove of how the EU is dealing with the refugee issue, with low marks given by people in all 10 European countries surveyed by Pew Research Center in 2016. The highest levels of disapproval came from the Greeks (94%), Swedes (88%) and Italians (77%). The strongest support for EU management of the refugee crisis was in the Netherlands, with 31% approval.

Public Relation practitioners could use this platform in educating and creating awareness in the world, about the people seeking for asylum. They are humans, though they are Foreigners. PR people can start a campaign, understand issues of people from the host countries and try to address those issues. They can use direct channels to reach out to the people but has to be specific to the host country/countries, rather than addressing the world. Every country's population might have different issues.

### **3. Protection for/from migrants.**

This lack of protection makes the Rohingya very vulnerable to becoming victims of organized crime, and in 2015 the discovery of mass graves containing the bodies of Rohingya refugees on the border with Thailand made news headlines around the world.

In Germany, numerous local politicians and mayors began to receive death threats from the locals, in some cases leading them to resign out of fear for their safety or that of their families. Many displaced people arriving to Italy by sea are coming from Libya facilitated by human traffickers, who exploit migrants and refugees by charging them thousands of dollars for their help and subject them to violence and abuse. Growing anti-immigrant sentiment was also reflected in the rise of right-wing extremism. After years of decrease, support for extremists grew again, with an estimated 23,000 right-wing extremists in the country in 2016, many violence oriented. In just a year, right-wing attacks on asylum shelters increased more than fivefold—

from 170 in 2014 to nearly 900 in 2015—and arson attacks on asylum shelters increased from 5 to 75 over the same period, according to Germany’s internal intelligence service.

People have a feeling of insecurity towards the migrants, because they might take away their jobs, their house or perhaps hybrid their culture too. And thus, most of them are reluctant about migrants. It is the job of government to provide protection to both citizen and migrants from each other. Public Affairs professionals can help to standardize a migration law which is globally approved. This crisis could only be handled, if the host population accepts the standardized migration laws, that would be make migrants entering a host country feels safe.

#### **4. State of limbo to obtain asylum**

One of the most persecuted minorities on the planet, the Rohingya Muslims are present in great numbers in two countries, Burma and Bangladesh, yet do not have their right to citizenship recognized in either. Nearly 35 million Kurds reside in a mountainous region between Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Turkey. Kurds do not identify as Arabic, and most of them are Sunni Muslims, according to the BBC. Will they try to escape a war, run for their life, protect their families or wait for their asylum application to get accepted?

A guideline is to be established; a simplified procedure is to be followed. Life cannot be in a state of Limbo for any human, will they ever get asylum in a host country or not. Public Affairs people can work together with different intergovernmental organizations, with different countries and can draft migrating procedure and laws, which could be accepted by every member country. And help the migrants with a hustle free procedure.

#### **5. Leaders coming to a consensus on a policy**

Each of the crises discussed is different, but they are united by the fact that they have been going on for a long time, stagnating because of a lack of political will to fix things. Politicians perceived as too open to refugees risked repercussions. After years of high approval ratings, Merkel’s popularity plummeted from 75 percent in April 2015 to below 50 percent in February 2016. In August 2015, at the height of the asylum seeker inflows, an angry crowd in the Eastern German town of Heidenau received Merkel by chanting “traitor to the people” (Volksverräter)—another term coined by Nazis to discredit opponents of the regime and justify their execution.

It requires brave political leaders to identify the challenges and do something about them, Mr Skretteberg said. Donald Trump, for instance, should realise “tens of thousands of Mexican kids need protection, they don’t need a wall”.

As we have seen in the case study, two great leaders belonging to the great economies could actually resolve half of the issues if worked together. But unfortunately, they do not for whatever reasons they thought of. Only a PA professional can bring all these leaders together, by addressing their concerns and creating a common platform. If you are a member of particular organization let’s say UN or EU, then you have to adhere to the regulations set up by these organizations. Every country in the world should be ready to accept Migrants in proportion. It is a job of PA practitioner to evaluate every country’s capacity to accept the migrants and get them out of the state of Limbo. No matter how big or small the country is, no matter how rich or poor, there is always a scope to habitat humans at the least. If you are member of any such organization, then you have to accept the Migrants, no is not for an option.

#### **Making the World a Better Place**

World is a very fragile place, very vulnerable often prone to number of crisis, affecting every living creature in a way or another. Situations, if not dealt carefully and timely can lead to a major catastrophe, and one of the situation seen and agreed in the recent time is refugee crisis. It should have been handled carefully by our leaders bringing their conscience together and working for a common cause, but unfortunately it was made a subject of politics and economics. There was a race, race to be a super power, and in this race, humanity got diminished the only factor that makes us human. And eventually, they all drowned so deep in their pride and duties that they forgot to save the planet and its habitats. They are not the only one to be blamed, but it is also us, who has left the world Vulnerable. We almost forgot, that it is not an individual who will be held liable for this situation. At the end of the day when the time has come, whole world will have to answer to action/s of one or all, and then it really won’t matter, who started this or who is responsible for this, it is only going to respond and affect us in every possible way, ways we couldn’t even imagine. There is no redemption to this, or perhaps extinction is the only redemption.

It was a high time for the world to notice and acknowledge a global refugee crisis being at its epic, when they witness a picture of drowned Syrian boy (Aylan, 3yr) on the coast of Turkey. The drowned boy, who was migrating along with his elder brother (Ghalib, 5yr) and his parents to Canada illegally, as their asylum application was unaccepted. The child along with 12 other people including his brother and mother drowned when their ferry capsized in the Sea. His father trying to save his family, but failed, and survived only to tell this horrific story. Officials found the body, and the picture went viral over the internet, thanks to social media. This was the time for the world to come to its sense and acknowledge that we are facing world’s biggest ever Refugee crisis. The incident was shocking and very inhumane. Do we need this kind of incident as an eye-opening scenario. Somewhere in the past, war was given more importance than its consequences.

Is it a right thing to do? denying people of their rights to travel and migrate. World is a place meant for everyone, irrespective of boundaries drawn and number of regions created, as we all belong to a common race and a greater species called humans. Unfortunately, humanity has just diminished in the race of survival, the place which is meant for all has been divided into addresses. Every country has its own set of laws and regulations, as if the land and the life is their own creation and inception.

When we say globalization, it's not just a term coined to pool global talent. It is being acceptable to the people of any race, country or gender. Not everyone is meant to be a techie, doctor, lawyer or any degree holding person. World is fill with people of different skills, that could be a farmer, or a labor or any of the many other professions. We cannot deny an admission to an asylum seeker, no matter where he belongs from or based on his race education or demography. If there needs a law for a controlled environment, then the law governing migration should proportion the quota of migrants.

We agree there are many Intergovernmental organizations, NGO's and volunteers working on various issues on this planet, but the fact remain that efforts are not enough to put the world out of pain and agony. There has been lot of efforts by intergovernmental organizations, but mostly focused on advertisements and corporate funding, but what we need is public affair people regulating migrating laws. Funding has been good for the intergovernmental organizations, where they lack is influencing governments to accept the migrants, giving humongous scope in the field of PR and PA which can be utilized in full potential for the benefits of migrants, helping them in rehabilitating from red zone. Acceptability should be increased through drafting legislation, creating awareness among the people, implement laws to smother the migration process making it friendlier. Countries should start accepting the migrants in a friendly and empathetic way killing the Xenophobia. Countries indulge in war should be responsible for rehabilitation of people from the red zone area

A great patriot once said, "When one half of a nation is sunk in misery and worn out by hard distress, or even depraved or degenerate, the nation presents such an unattractive picture that nobody can feel proud to belong to it. It is only when a nation is sound in all its members, physically, and morally that the joy of belonging to it can properly be intensified to the supreme feeling which we call national pride."

Need of the hour is we must mobilize political leaders to heed early signs and warnings and take precautionary action to avoid looming conflicts. We must build more creative and flexible frameworks for international diplomacy. So as to make the world sound in all its members physically and morally, and have a supreme feeling of global pride.

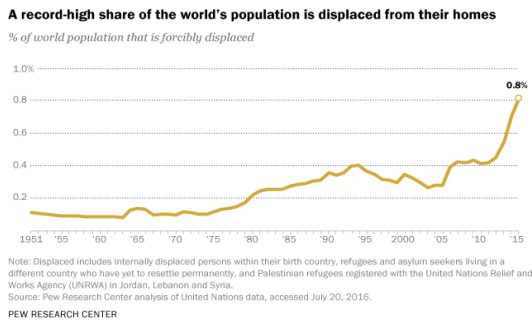
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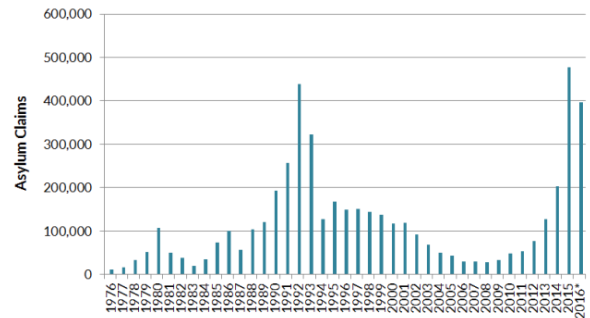
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**Figures**

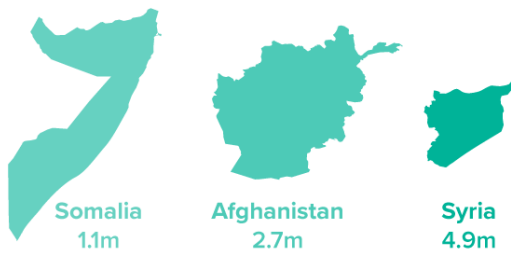


**Figure 1:** Refugee Crisis has left almost 1% of world population displaced



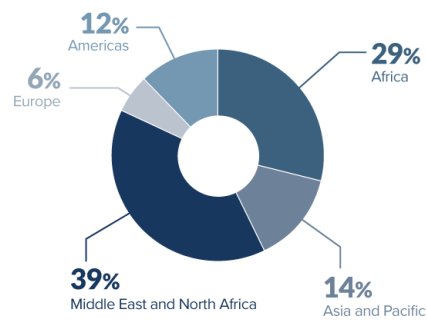
**Figure 4:** Asylum Claims in Germany, 1976-2016

**53%** of refugees worldwide came from three countries

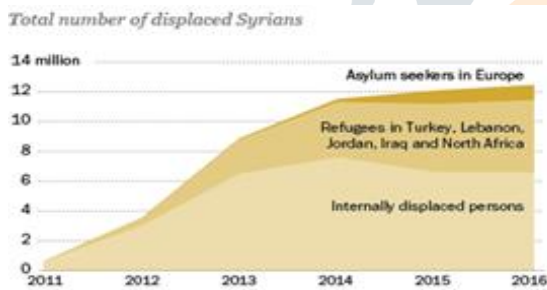


**Figure 2:** Majority of Refugee from the World.

**Where the world's displaced people are being hosted**



**Figure 5:** Refugee Hosting Nation across the globe



**Figure 3:** Syrians Refugee at large across the globe