2nd Annual UNA-NCA Peace and Security Roundtable

BEYOND CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Peace and Stability in the Post-2015 Development Framework

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Foreword

We have seen tremendous progress over the past year in peace and security policy. The United Nations recently adopted its landmark Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – a revolutionary initiative that replaces the successful Millennium Development Goals framework that expires at the end of this year. The SDGs revolve around people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership among its 17 goals. The UN has also adopted the report of High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, with its strong emphasis on the role of conflict prevention, stabilization and early peacebuilding, and mediation and using people-centric and regionally tailored strategies.

However, the refugee crisis resulting from the Syrian conflict that is now boiling over into Europe and elsewhere is a stark reminder that nowhere else is the challenge to humanitarian response and sustainable peace – and even these latest policies – greater than in the Middle East. Traditional approaches to humanitarian relief, recovery, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding are all too limited in the midst of such complexity and violent conflict and the haven it is creating for unprecedented levels of violent extremism, human trafficking and other destabilizing illicit activities. Even UNHCR's vision of durable solutions is severely constrained by crippling resource shortfalls, in the face of the millions of people making up the largest refugee crisis since the end of World War II.

This past May's "Beyond Crisis Management in the Middle East" Roundtable was a remarkable gathering of expertise and discussants to help move our field to a new paradigm in the way we approach peace and security in this most difficult region. Among the consensus points was that subordinating development assistance under a state-centric "Countering Violent Extremism" approach risks undermining the effectiveness of both the international effort and U.S. foreign assistance – in full agreement with the statement AfP and 40 other partners later sent this past summer to the White House to modify its CVE policy to a more people-centric approach.

Participants considered civil-military relations, identity-based conflict, the role of the private sector, and governance, resonating with the themes AfP's Charles Hauss explores in his new book, *Security 2.0*. This Roundtable's carefully organized panels sought a better understanding of the relationship between regional and local actors, and then considered the role of international responders and practitioners in public and private realms. What emerged was a framework for more successful, strategic dialogue and multi-sectoral approaches – as much from the bottom up as the top down, as the recommendations of this report reflect.

This dialogue will continue in a number of forms, including the next Roundtable on "The U.S. Role in Evolving UN Peacekeeping" this fall, as well as subsequent Roundtables next year.

Our sincere thanks go to Institute of World Politics for hosting this Roundtable, as well as our partners from the UN Association of the USA National Capital Area Chapter and Global Communities for co-sponsoring this highly important discussion.

And, of course, our profound thanks to Jeffrey Hoffmann and Christopher Holshek for organizing these impactful Roundtables and writing this report.

Melanie Greenberg

President & CEO

The Alliance for Peacebuilding

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Executive Summary

On Thursday, May 21, 2015, in collaboration with the Institute of World Politics and co-sponsored with the Alliance for Peacebuilding and Global Communities, the United Nations Association – National Capital Area's (UNA-NCA) Peace and Security Committee and Human Rights Committee hosted an event and discussion entitled "Beyond Crisis Management in the Middle East: Peace and Stability in the Post-2015 Development Framework."

Traditional, state-centric approaches to humanitarian response, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding have seen no greater challenge than in the population crisis resulting from the Syrian conflict, now the largest refugee crisis since World War II. The failure of local, regional, and international actors to address conflict drivers and instability and to respond adequately over the past five years, is now, clearly apparent in the enormous pouring of Syrian and other migrants into Europe, further generating significant logistical, financial, societal, and political pressures on European countries and the EU in general.

As the crisis has unfolded, among many initiatives, including the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, the United Nations Crisis Information Management Strategy (CiMS) is based on the recognition that governments, the UN, international financial institutions (IFIs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses and the media all have significant experiences and added value in such complex crisis response situations. Yet, no single agency, country, or other actor has the capacity or sole mandate to address or strategize for these crises.

The UN, the target audience of this report, has started another round of brokered peace talks on Syria along with a 70th year anniversary General Assembly that has started to convene including a UN Secretary General Middle East Situation Report scheduled for November 23, 2015. In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, it is vital that international actors and organizations facilitating this process work in a comprehensive and coordinated way that goes beyond crisis management to wider peacebuilding approaches, which includes planning and shaping U.S. foreign policy.

Goals for the roundtable discussion included:

- Understand the situation and approaches to mitigating the impacts of the Syrian conflict from the regional and local points of view including socioeconomic development needs in the border areas of Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon;
- Look beyond conventional security responses to the crisis through peacebuilding and statebuilding perspectives, including best practices and constraints to delivering effective assistance and a review of non-traditional and private sector investment initiatives;
- Identify gaps in current policy approaches and capacities among major regional and international actors and suggest an integrated strategy that establishes goals, commitments, and coordinating principles to guide national and international interventions in areas impacted by Syrian refugee migration; and,
- Build Post-2015 Agenda related political momentum for change and trust among host countries of refugees, development partners, and civil society.

To accomplish these goals, this forum consisted of three panels focused on the impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis in the Middle East to understand the problem from regional and local perspectives, to highlight the international response, and to engage the public-private sector practitioners.

The overlying theme of the event was best summarized in an NGO Statement released in response to the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) emphasizing that civilian-led development, prevention and peacebuilding that support locally-led solutions to the root causes of insecurity are chronically underfunded, especially in relation to military efforts. However, subordinating development assistance under a CVE approach also risks undermining the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance. Furthermore, efforts to reduce extremism within communities are not being accompanied by sufficient progress or coordination on governance reforms, social inclusion and accountability by governments and institutions, and the over-reliance on military or aggressive security responses to threats when social and political solutions are needed can fuel grievances, encourage violence and undermine CVE objectives.[1]

As a result of the discussion, several recommendations were developed in this report, which are further linked to proposed collaboration with several Working Groups (WGs) established by the Atlantic Council Rafik Hariri Center's Middle East Strategy Task Force (MEST). Solutions focused on rebuilding societies including refugee camp development, better integrated planning for efforts like economic recovery and revitalization, and the establishment of more aggressive education programs, especially for the young children who remain on waiting lists to attend school.

As stated by Shelly Pitterman, the keynote speaker from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *"there is a growing realization that the situation cannot be fixed, or perhaps even contained, just by the traditional humanitarian responses. The emergency response has to happen, of course, when thousands of people cross a border or a bridge, to seek some security from the war. But the situation in the Syria-Iraq mega-crisis is one of 'protracted emergency' - and I fear the same prevails in Yemen and Libya."*

To further put a spotlight on the crisis, on September 2, photographs of Alan Kurdi, a 3-year-old Syrian who drowned off the shores of the Mediterranean, shocked and offended the conscience of the world. Alan's death highlights the brutal effects of the Syrian civil war and the mounting refugee crisis it is spawning: since the onset of violence 4 years ago, over 10 million people have been driven from their homes. In desperation, tens of thousands of people are risking death again to flee to Europe.[2]

To reverse this trend, the UNHCR and the international humanitarian community introduced an innovative framework to appeal for assistance called the Refugee Response and Resilience Plan (3RP). This plan "brings together the plans developed under the leadership of national authorities…to ensure protection, humanitarian assistance and strengthen resilience."[3]

To open remarks, Pitterman emphasized that these problems cannot be contained merely with conventional humanitarian methods; instead, a multi-dimensional response is required, for example, by calling for additional institutional framing for existing humanitarian initiatives from organizations such as the World Bank. He concluded that, "*there is a growing realization that the situation cannot be fixed, or perhaps even contained, just by the traditional humanitarian responses.*"

[1] Paraphrased from the joint statement, accessible here
[2] Resolution entitled, "Global Civil Society Leaders to Obama: Take The Lead at UN General Assembly to Tackle Root Causes of Syria Crisis." 24 September 2015.
[3] Strategic Overview of the 3RP in Response to the Syria Crisis

Keynote: The Realities of the Refugee Migrations and Impacts

Dr. Shelly Pitterman, Washington D.C. Director for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Shelly Pitterman, Head of the Washington D.C. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office, kicked off the event by highlighting a range of problems currently plaguing the Middle East from the lack of education opportunities to the spread of xenophobia. As stated by Pitterman, "*there is a humanitarian mega-crisis happening in Syria and Iraq, a 'perfect storm' that has regional and broader international security implications. We read about it every day in the newspapers and the situation reports from the field. The numbers of refugees and displaced persons has risen to unprecedented levels.*"

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), by mid-2014, an estimated 10.8 million of Syria's 22 million population was affected by the conflict and in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.5 million internally displaced, often multiple times – 50% more than in 2013 (See Table 1).[4]

To continue introducing the first panel, Pitterman laid out the immensity and complexity of the challenge in the region. He discussed the "*human loss, bloodshed and fear it has caused and emphasizing the number of people killed, the brutality of the wars, the devastation of infrastructures – roads, residences and hospitals – and the targeting of doctors. He also pointed to the loss of educational opportunities for a whole generation of children, the violence against women and children, the abuse by traffickers, the spread of xenophobia, the destruction of cultural heritage, and the attacks on humanitarian workers, in particular the first responders of the Red Cross.*"

Despite the negative impacts, he said some countries hosting Syrian refugees in the Middle East have demonstrated remarkable generosity, providing services and safety. As of the date of the event in May 2015, Pitterman noted that Turkey now hosts the largest number of refugees in the world; Syrians have joined Palestinians to make up more than one-fourth of the population of Jordan; Lebanon has the highest per capita ratio of refugees in the area; and Syria and Iraq have among the largest numbers of internally displaced refugees in the world. This has placed decisive strains on these countries, further threatening to destabilize the region.

UNHCR 2015 planning figures for Syrian Arab Republic[1]

Type of population	Origin	January 2015		December 2015	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Afghanistan	1,200	1,200	1,000	1,000
	Iraq[2]	126,580	24,500	113,670	22,000
	Somalia	900	900	800	800
	Various	600	600	500	500
Asylum-seekers	Afghanistan	120	120	80	80
	Iraq	850	850	740	740
	Sudan	400	400	290	290
	Various	740	740	590	590
Internally displaced	Syrian Arab Rep.	6,500,000	3,500,000	6,500,000	4,000,000
Stateless	Stateless	150,000	-	140,000	-
Total		6,781,380	3,529,300	6,757,670	4,026,000

1. PoC planning figures in this table are based on trends and registration data from early 2014. In light of the evolving situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq, updated projections will be presented in any forthcoming appeals for supplementary requirements in 2015 for the Syria and Iraq situations, including the 2015 Regional

Table 1. UNHCR 2015 Planning Figures for Syrian Arab Republic

Pitterman also highlighted that the majority of these Syrian refugees are not in camps. They are living with families or renting homes, but most are still living in substandard conditions. Additionally, refugees cannot put their technical or vocational skills to use, their economic activities are floundering, and their possessions are diminishing. According to Pitterman, *"There is now more evidence of poverty and increased vulnerability*

[4] 2015 UNHCR country operations profile: Syrian Arab Republic | www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486a76.html

among refugee populations, notwithstanding everything that we are doing. The borders are more controlled than ever before, and there is an important secondary migration of refugees toward Europe, in particular; one that is fraught with unknowns and dangers of unsafe sea travel and smuggling."

To address these strains and effects, host governments outside of bordering countries have also received refugees in schools and health centers and given some refugees the right to work. However, he criticized the lack of initiative among particularly the Gulf States to take a region-first approach and allow these refugees to fulfil labor demands in their own countries versus the migrant laborers from Asia as one example. He also encouraged more Gulf States to help finance humanitarian assistance in the affected countries.

As an overall assessment, he said governments are collaborating well with international agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), emphasizing that, "*the National NGOs play an instrumental role in service delivery*." He finalized opening panel comments by discussing the funding and programmatic gaps that further challenge the refugee crisis conversation today - and which will only become exacerbated tomorrow.

Syrian refugees in the eastern Lebanon border town of Arsal last winter. In an effort to move away from more traditional camps, UNHCR and host governments have encouraged refugees to settle alongside local communities in both urban and rural settings so they can more easily access and work with the local economy and community. Photo by theguardian.com.

Furthermore, he set the theme for the remainder of the forum stating, *"a rebalancing is required and important shifts are needed in approaches with bilateral development agencies and international financial institutions."* He said there are some promising steps being taken by the World Bank, for example, which need more backing and institutional framing. The governments which have provided such generous humanitarian support over the years, and some that have not, will need to see that it serves 'collective good' to ensure that those frontline states providing asylum to hundreds of thousands of refugees are offered additional help to sustain efforts. This includes growth of their economies and the sustaining of a peaceful environment for asylum in the face of nearby threats that pose significant risks to regional and international security.

Panel 1: Regional and Local Perspectives

The first panel was moderated by Dawn Calabia, UNA-NCA Advisory Board Member, and focused on gaining a better understanding of the refugee flows from regional and local perspectives. This panel stressed the importance of understanding the preventive measures required before a refugee crisis becomes a destabilizing societal issue. Dr. Michel Gabaudan, President of Refugees International, began the discussion by detailing how refugees put pressure on state institutions and their public services. Dr. Gabauden concluded that this should not be a job for humanitarian agencies, but instead a responsibility of the host country.

Nader Al Suhaim, Economic Counselor and Director of the Jordan Economic and Commerce Bureau, focused his remarks on the immense pressure on the Jordanian government. The refugee crisis in Jordan is demonstrated by the fact that refugees make up 22% of the population, equivalent to 1.4 million people. He emphasized the stress on the education sector, highlighting that currently 35,000 students are waitlisted for schools. His biggest concern with regards to the influx is the risk of a lost generation, which could create another wave of extremism in the region.

Pitterman challenged the traditional narrative that refugees represent a problem to the fabric of society. He asserted that the solution lies in making refugees an asset to the host state by allowing them to utilize their professional skills. He stated, *"popular opinion is often led to view the refugee presence as the root problem when, in fact, it's outside destabilization and/or societal breakdowns where the refugees live that are the real concerns and, in some cases, the threats to sovereign security."*

Panel 1 (L-R). Mr. Nader Al Suhaim, Economic Counselor and Director of the Jordan Economic and Commerce Bureau, Dr. Michel Gabaudan, President of Refugees International, Ms. Dawn Calabia, UNA-NCA Advisory Board Member and Dr. Shelly Pitterman (UNHCR)

Pitterman emphasized the need for coordinated mechanisms for mobilizing resources for relief as well as recovery, which led to the introduction of the Refugee Response and Resiliency Plan (3RP). The 3RP in response to the Syria Crisis is an international appeal aimed at addressing refugee protection needs, the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable, and the longer-term socio-economic impacts of the Syria crisis on neighboring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. The 3RP is a USD 5.5 billion funding appeal, comprising of USD 1 billion for host government requirements and USD 4.5 billion for agency requirements for UN agencies and NGOs. The appeal is based on the assumption that 4.27 million Syrian refugees will resettle in the region by the end of 2015, and aims to assist more than 20 million other members of impacted local communities from 2015-2016. *For more 3RP details, see Annex A of this report.*

Panel 2: International Response

Panel 2 (L-R). John Filson, Senior Policy Manager, Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP); U.S. Army Colonel (Ret.) Christopher Holshek, AfP Fellow and UNA-NCA Peace and Security Committee Co-Chair; and Dr. Stefania Pifannelli, Deputy Director, UN Information Centre (UNIC)

Discussion of 3RP provided a transition to Panel 2 for a dialogue on the *International Response*. Moderated by U.S. Army Colonel (ret.) Christopher Holshek, Co-Chair of the UNA-NCA Peace and Security Committee and Senior Fellow for the Alliance for Peacebuilding. Col. (ret.) Holshek centered the conversation on the transition from crisis to stability and launched the debate by emphasizing the need to build civil society with a bottom-up approach that considers humanitarian

PEACEBUILDING 3.0

Peacebuilding can provide the interoperability between different actors and institutions in dynamic complex systems. Peacebuilding 3.0 is about understanding how complex and dynamic context work and then shaping them toward better outcomes. It creates environments in which all actors in a conflict zone and in the international community "listen to the system" and recognize the role they play in ameliorating or exacerbating conflict. People already understand the need for integrated intervention. Peacebuilding 3.0 addresses the challenges of actually building interoperability. The work of David Ronfeldt, who has developed a framework for the evolution of societies, is used as a foundation for PB 3.0, which includes:

- **Tribes** – denoted by the structure of extended families, clans and other lineage systems. This form's mode of interconnectivity and communication is oral storytelling.
- **Institutions** – hierarchical in nature, as exemplified by the army, the Catholic Church and the bureaucratic state. This form's mode of interconnectivity and communication is written and printed books, records and commands.
- **Markets** – symbolized by merchants and traders, responding to forces of supply and demand. This form's mode of interconnectivity and communication is mobility provided by infrastructure.
- **Networks** – as found in today's web-like ties throughout the world. Networks provide greater and denser interconnectivity.

While not yet fully defined, in thinking about the concept of Peacebuilding 3.0, new tools, new capacities and new practices, all integrated together are required. This could include social data mining, transmedia, new stories and storytelling practices. The peacebuilding field will need new theories of change and to engage in new conversations. For example, how does the peacebuilding community take on cyber issues? Who will orchestrate that conversation? Peacebuilding 3.0 will be a system that will create its own change and peacebuilders need to be designing for emergence, not engineering solution paths.

Source: http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014-AfP-Annual-Conference_Managing-Complexity-and-Designing-for-Peace_DRAFT_4Jun14.pdf

Table 2. Peacebuilding 3.0

assistance as "early peacebuilding," akin to how the UN now considers peacekeeping. He argued that peacebuilding requires a long-term strategic and generational approach; thus, he agreed with Shelly Pitterman that a multi-year funding mechanism would be crucial.

John Filson, Senior Policy Manager of Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP), contended that peacebuilding should include development and security components within the framework of post-2015 development goals in a norms-building approach. This includes tackling the worst symptoms of conflict and poverty and incorporating more trust in international engagement. Many of these points were touched on in the recently released AfP's Joint NGO statement on the President Obama Administration's "Countering Violent Extremism" (CVE) strategy, to be discussed with White House, National Security Council, State Department, and USAID officials during this year's UN General Assembly that began in September 2015.

While the NGO statement welcomed the effort of the February 2015 White House Summit on CVE and the 9-Point Action Agenda, Filson cautioned that the CVE strategy risks repeating the same mistakes as other post-9/11 stabilization initiatives: prioritizing securitized responses over investments to address the structural causes of instability, and creating confusion and working at cross-purposes by coupling the two lines of effort. One of the concerns mentioned is that civilian-led development, prevention and peacebuilding that support locally-led solutions to the root causes of insecurity are chronically underfunded, especially in relation to military efforts. The statement also cautioned against the subordination of development assistance under a CVE approach that risks and undermines the effectiveness of pure U.S. foreign assistance.[5]

Furthermore, Filson noted that AfP introduced Peacebuilding 3.0 during its 2014 Annual Conference, at which Melanie Greenberg, CEO and President of AfP, explained that *"the world is changing in ways that require new, dynamic systems approaches to peacebuilding. Many institutions seem to be recognizing a void in dealing with challenging, interconnected wicked problems not amenable to linear solutions."* See Table 2 for more details.[6]

[5] NGO Statement, "U.S. Humanitarian, Development and Peacebuilding Statement on the U.S. Global Countering Violent Extremism Agenda." July 20, 2015. The Administration's 2014 Counter-terrorism Partnership Fund is a notable example. Created to "support a sustainable and effective approach for combating terrorism, with a focus on enabling and empowering partners facing terrorist threats." 85% of requested funds were to be allocated to the DoD, with 15% allocated for civilian authorities. Of this 15%, 100% went to the Department of State, roughly 90% of which went to NADR, a bureau that does not generally sub-grant to civil society. More broadly, for the FY16 fiscal year, the U.S. development budget will be roughly $22 billion compared to roughly $585 billion for the Department of Defense. For an in-depth review, see, Adams and Murray, Mission Creep: The Militarization of US Foreign Policy? (2015: Georgetown University Press, Washington DC).

[6] 2014 AfP Annual Conference Exploring New Frontiers in Peacebuilding: Managing Complexity and Designing for Peace. May 22, 2014.

The United Nations Response

Along with UNHCR, Dr. Stefania Piffanelli, Deputy Director of UN Information Center with extensive experience at the UN Secretariat level, drew attention to the significance of preventive diplomacy in her remarks. Dr. Piffanelli, who also served with the Peacebuilding Commission and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) including a posting at UNDP Lebanon, argued that states descend back into chaos once peacekeeping forces leave because there is a massive gap in resources between peacekeeping and development. "You can bomb extremists," Dr. Piffanelli stressed as she discussed the U.S./allied CVE approach, "but only defeat them with governance." She admitted that the nature of politics in donor nations makes it difficult to justify funding for conflict prevention though she maintained that soft power is more productive, sustainable, and cost-effective than military power in peacebuilding. Dr. Piffanelli admitted, as did Shelly Pitterman, that the UN is not a preferred intervening actor in the Middle East and North Africa. More than limiting multilateral approaches that must be linked with bilateral engagements, the Syrian crisis implies a need for the UN to review its approach to security-development linkages along the lines of the recent UN High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations as well as the Post-2015 Development Agenda, in particular with respect to the UN's convening role at the regional level.

In 2014 during the UN's announcement to launch a USD 7 billion appeal for the Syrian refugee crisis, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that all sides in Syria's civil war "continue to ignore the most basic principles of humanity. The international community has become number to its impact with the vast numbers, regional reach and sense of political impasse."[7]

In comparison, in March 2015, the U.S. Representative to the UN, Ambassador Samantha Power, announced more than USD 507.8 million in new U.S. government funding to meet humanitarian needs in Syria and neighboring countries. *For more details, see Annex B: USAID Syria Country Page.*

Panel 3: Public-Private Partnership in Development

While humanitarian needs grow and the appeals reach unprecedented levels, more money is committed but not enough to keep up to the demand. There is some diversification of the donor base, but the bulk of the funding is still American and European. UNHCR and its partners reach more people and provide more assistance, but many are still being left behind. The need in the region for relief and recovery is far outpacing OCHA-coordinated appeals, let alone the international response to them.

The third panel, moderated by Albert Santoli, a faculty member of the Institute of World Politics, revolved around the role of public-private partnership in development. Santoli began by discussing the importance of NGOs as the bridge between public & private sectors in addressing the gaps in communications. He also spoke about the need to identify and eliminate destabilizing agents in conflicts by targeting their donors. *"Who are the paymasters of the chaos?"* he asked.

Panelist Colonel (ret.) Michael Dziedzic, Fellow of World Engagement Institute, seized upon this point and singled out rogue states as the source of conflict. Mr. Dziedzic contended that a coordinated multilateral strategy is needed to address the critical risks created by a power structure to prevent the corruption of the

[7] Westcott, Lucy, "UN Launches $7 Billion Appeal for Syrian Refugee Crisis." Newsweek, Dec 2014. www.newsweek.com/united-nations-launches-7-billion-appeals-syrian-refugee-crisis-292861

security force. Col. (ret.) Dziedzic concluded his remarks by urging the UN to overcome its sensitivity to intelligence and utilize intelligence-based policing to identify and dismantle criminal networks.

David Weiss, President and CEO of Global Communities, explained the critical role of NGOs in their concentration on practical solutions to rebuild civil society in Syria. He addressed pressing issues like food security and the use of enhanced community-level teams, which he emphasized are a pathway to build local governance and civil society from the ground up as an antidote to both instability and the violent extremist organizations that exploit it. Weiss maintained that the core approach must center on enhancement of community resilience, and more importantly, helping the displaced population carry on with their daily lives. Weiss stated, "*It's not about ending the conflict for interveners as much as it is building trust and empowerment to structure local actors to end it. The objective is to empower the community in preparation for the end of the crisis.*" In concluding the panel, he stressed the need for balance between security, development and community resilience along with a level of responsibility at the corporate level, which he believed should be contextualized in a greater transparent and accountable corporate strategy.

Global Communities' approach provides a true example of a mixing of both commercial and non-profit private sector investment to good effect. Just this year, the NGO's microfinance institution in Lebanon, Vitas s.a.l., received the Overseas Private Investment Corporation's 2015 Impact Award for Access to Finance for its partnerships with entrepreneurs in Lebanon. According to their 2014 Annual Report, Global Communities supported more than 7,500 communities and 2.5 million people worldwide. The work included training for over 1,000 local organizations, 49 national government departments, and 463 local, regional, and municipal governments. The cooperation generated over 180,000 days of employment for people in these communities and disbursed more than 94,000 loans to entrepreneurs, home owners, and others in need of credit.[8]

Col. (ret.) Holshek ended the discussion by stressing the need for a common strategic framework that contextualizes disparate international, regional, and local approaches to security and peacebuilding around and eventually inside Syria. Channeling his recent *Foreign Policy* article, he warned that "whoever gets to the gaps in governance and civil society first and best will be the winner in the epic struggles of identity now taking place in the Middle East and other at-risk places."

Following the panel discussion, IWP hosted a reception where Mohammed Alaa Ghanem, Director of Government Relations and Strategist of the Syrian American Council, spoke about the crisis in Syria. Mr. Ghanem shed light on the origins and gravity of the Syrian conflict, and urged the community to lobby and advocate for U.S. leadership in resolving the conflict. *See Table 3 for overview of the Syrian Civil War origins.*

Panel 3 (L-R). U.S. Air Force Colonel (Ret.) Michael Dziedzic, Fellow of World Engagement Institute; Albert Santoli, Faculty of IWP; and David Weiss, President and CEO of Global Communities

[8] www.globalcommunities.org

The Origins and Evolution of Bashar al-Assad and Syria's Civil War

Skimming over the era of Saladin as the Sultan of Egypt and Syria, the French Syrie Mandate known as Jabal al-Druze, and the United Arab Republic (UAR), following Syria's independence in 1946, on March 8, 1963, a *coup d'etat* brought the Ba'th (rebirth) party and Syrian military officers to power. This meant a new State authoritarianism, imposed by the Syrian regime that favored union with Egypt. Syrian Air Force General Hafez al-Assad's arrival into power in 1970 came with promises of economic reform and the softening of restrictive policies. Assad grew up in a poor Alawite family and attended the Homs academy. Political scientist Elie El-Hindy said, "Assad's long rule reflected his ability to play religious and ethnic groups against one another. He said Assad "had a very special character, a special charisma, and a special intelligence that enabled him to control Syria. During this time, some in Syria had mentioned to El-Hindy that they were better off with a dictator than with internal conflicts or Israeli occupation."

Alliance with the United States

Assad also managed a strategic Cold War balance with the U.S. and Soviet Union. For years, he continued Syria's alliance with the Soviet Union until 1990 when he allied Syria with the U.S. and joined the invasion of Iraq during the U.S –led Gulf War in 1991. The U.S. , Soviet Union, and Israel were willing to temporarily cooperate with Syria in this era.

However, after Hafez's death in June 2000, his son, Bashar, had become President at age 35 and later ran unopposed, receiving 97.29 percent of the vote. Syrians had high hopes but youth unemployment and poverty rates rose significantly. This was due to Bashar's attempt to liberalize the economy and loosen his father's dictatorial policies. This attempt to reform became known as the "Damascus Spring," which posed a direct threat to the old-guard Baathist military and intelligence officers who exercised the real power, so they put pressure on Assad to stop the reform. This allowed for an opposition alliance to form in 2005 under the name, "The Damascus Declaration for Democratic Change."

The Lebanon File: Daraa to ISIS

By this time, Assad was well versed on the Lebanon File to include the reduction of Syrian troops by 50% with more than 800,000 Syrians working in Lebanon. Along with the forced withdrawal of troops in Lebanon that shook up politics inside Syria, numerous Arab regimes saw their absolute domination evaporate as the Arab Spring awoke in Tunisia. In March 2011, the first anti-government demonstrations began in southern Syrian near the Jordanian border that led to the death of two protestors following the arrests of several pre-teen school children for writing anti-regime graffiti on the walls of their school.

To date, the ongoing conflict that began in 2011 has created one of the most pressing humanitarian crises in the world. As of early February 2014, an estimated 9.3 million people in Syria, nearly half the population, have been affected by the conflict. To add to the strife, in June 2014, the survival strategy of the Assad regime paid a major dividend: The eruption of the self-proclaimed Islamic State from bases in eastern Syria into Iraq. The IS movement has led to a U.S.–led coalition air campaign against the Islamic State, which according to an Atlantic Council report, "has yielded limited, short-term gains, such as inflicting causalities on ISIS and cutting its oil revenues." The report concludes by suggesting that the campaign may well be harming more critical, longer term U.S. interests in Syria.

Sources: Margesson, Rhoda and Chesser, Susan G. "Syria: Overview of the Humanitarian Response." Congressional Research Service, February 25, 2014; Erlich, Reese. "Inside Syria: The Backstory of Their Civil War and What the World Can Expect." 2014; Kawakibi, Salam. "The Syrian Crisis and its Repercussions: Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees." European University Institute Migration Policy Centre, 2013; Itani, Faysal. "Defeating the Jihadists in Syria: Competition before Confrontation." Atlantic Council Rafik Hariri Center for Middle East Report, April 2015.

Table 3. The Origins and Evolution of Bashar al-Assad and Syria's Civil War

Recommendations

The UN Crisis Information Management Strategy (CiMS) was based on the recognition that governments, the UN, International Financial Institutions, NGOs, business and media have significant experience in crisis response. Yet, no single agency, department or actor has the capacity or sole mandate to address or strategize for these crises, as the situation around Syria shows. With UN-brokered peace talks on Syria starting up, it is vital that international actors and organizations facilitating this process work in a comprehensive and coordinated way that goes beyond crisis management to wider peacebuilding approaches, which can be viewed in some areas as socio-economic development.[9] This leads to several recommendations, each annotated with a checkmark and description that follows. These include:

- ✓ **Engage in integrated planning with the proposal to use the Atlantic Council Rafik Hariri Center's Middle East Strategy Task Force (MEST) Force as a foundational base.[10]**

Under the bipartisan Co-Chairmanship of former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former U.S. National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, the Atlantic Council convened the MEST in February 2015 to examine the underlying issues of state failure and political legitimacy that drive violent extremism and threaten fundamental interests broadly shared by the peoples of the region and the rest of the world. The appropriate blend of Senior Advisors and individual Working Groups offer an optimal formula in collaboration with additional planning initiatives like the 3RP, World Bank Economic and Social Impact Assessments, and other NGO-private sector, country/regional-based plans and strategies. Further recommendations and a summary of the problem set(s) are categorized with a designated Atlantic Council MEST WG as followed:

MEST Working Groups: Rebuilding Societies: Refugees, Recovery, and Reconciliation in Times of Conflict and Politics, Governance, and State-Society Relations.

- ✓ **Develop and transition refugee camps under the assumption Syria will never be the same: schools, jobs, and a way of life. Host follow-on forums with UNHCR, Embassy Representatives, The World Bank and public/private sector stakeholders to specifically discuss socioeconomic solutions needed.**

It was highlighted by our honourable guest from the Kingdom of Jordan that the Za'atari Refugee Camp (if a city) would be the third largest, next to Amman. This included 35,000 students on a waitlist to attend school. According to the UNHCR's 2013 Za'atari Governance Plan, addressing the immediate needs of vast numbers of refugees arriving day after day has meant that the initial focus of the camp management was on life-saving activities - providing shelter, food, water and health services.

[9] http://ict4peace.org/the-crisis-information-management-strategy
[10] www.atlanticcouncil.org/programs/rafik-hariri-center-for-the-middle-east/middle-east-strategy-task-force

Looking to the future, the 3RP initiative has done a remarkable job of creating the initial "bottom-up" tools and highlighting the successes of each country plan including the development and use of an inter-agency information portal. The initial 3RP Strategic Plan integrates and is aligned with existing and emerging national plans, including the Jordan Response Plan 2015 to the Syria Crisis, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, the Iraq Strategic Response Plan (SRP), and country responses in Turkey and Egypt. Through the 3RP effort, needs, targets, approaches, objectives and resources are identified, and responses implemented, at the country level.

However, through each of these stages of planning, the question must be asked if the local host government is ready to empower a leadership structure that will govern and establish a rule of law framework. The goal of this framework would eventually integrate with each country's existing sovereign political system such as the election of a mayor, establishment of a city budget and development of infrastructures using UNHCR's refugee camp governance plans as a base. Essentially, in the case of Jordan, this could involve the use of tools and methodologies summarized in one of Amman's past City Development Strategies and their current ©rePlan effort, which won the World Leadership Award in Town Planning during the World Leadership Forum in 2007.[11]

- ✓ **Additionally, as a specific recommendation, since the 3RP plan serves as an optimal driver, conduct an assessment to determine if the 3RP is appropriately staffed for sustained implementation. This assessment could begin with the evaluation of the Program Management Office ensuring the integration of the correct mix of culturally attuned experts and liaisons from the appropriate countries along with other organizations internal to UN like UNDP and the DPKO from a peacebuilding perspective, the World Bank, European Union, U.S. and to serve as an NGO extension?**

  If it is determined to not be a sustainable program office would the UNHCR benefit from initiating an Expression of Interest to establish a long-term strategy and consulting team?

MEST Working Group: Security and Public Order

While the first recommendation proposes that development begin as if Syria will never be the same, MEST has developed a notable report titled, "*Setting the Stage for Peace in Syria: The Case for a Syrian National Stabilization Force (SNSF).*"[12] However, as stated in the report it will take time for a credible and effective Syrian national command authority to emerge, and it will be an arduous process. Meanwhile, over 3 million refugees will remain in sub-standard conditions and/or unsettled in the refugee encampments. This is why the transition and development of a "camp to city" initiative must begin immediately with aggressive goals established over a 2-3 year timeframe. More details can be reviewed in the MEST report, which includes the proposed force structure of an SNSF and design and implementation phases of a Syrian Advisory Task Force (SATF).

Alongside, there is one particular force, the Peshmerga, that has been effective in, at a minimum, holding the dotted-line border. This constitutes the need to initiate decision making on the fate of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which leads to the following key recommendation:

- ✓ **Collaborate with other partners like the National Defense University to host a panelist forum to start the conversation and discuss diplomatic tools to empower a growing Republic and its Peshmerga. Tools could range from the construction of military bases to the establishment of a free**

[11] www.replan.ca/project/amman-plan
[12] Hof, Frederic C., Kodmani, Bassma, and White, Jeffrey. "Setting the Stage for Peace in Syria: The Case for a Syrian National Stabilization Force." Atlantic Council Report, April 2015.

trade zone hinged on energy development and distribution. The time for a KRG under Baghdad's control is diminishing.[13,14]

Finally and interestingly under this MEST WG, one of their recommendations complements a conversation from this forum's third panel calling for the development of an intelligence capacity. Specifically,

- ✓ **Review initial planning to form a Criminal Intelligence Cell. While the MEST recommendation calls for a SATF intelligence organization and structure, this might be a firm capability added to a UN Observer mission in Erbil – attached to the mission, this type of cell will be co-led by INTERPOL and UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).** However, and important to emphasize, a criminal intelligence cell alone has no utility, instead there must be a hybrid special court where crimes against the mandate can be tried, including any linkages with the Shabiha's criminal networks. An organization like PAX Advisory, Inc. could offer specific advice and counsel in this area. As stated by Dziedzic from the forum, "criminalized power structures are the leading spoilers of peace and stability operations. We chronically overlook this problem, squandering the 'golden hour.' There are actionable steps to address this recurrent risk to mission success that would require no new revenue sources." Further background and access to the PAX toolkit can be viewed at: *www.paxadvisory.com/resources/policy*.

MEST Working Group: Religion, Identity, and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

- ✓ **Leverage mass and social media as well as traditional information networks to saturate audiences at policy, operations, and beneficiary levels to understand the drivers of instability as well as UN-sponsored and bilateral efforts being made to address them as well as to alleviate human suffering. This includes the integration of strategic communications strategy with organizations like The Turkcell Group, Orange Jordan, and Touch telecommunications companies.**

Today's World Wide Web (WWW) has created an unprecedented volume of information, big data, and unprecedented connectivity, which is giving people access to big data and each other; digital technologies are allowing people to operate differently and participate in everything in a whole new context; and emerging visualizations are helping people see and understand the world in new ways. Essentially, the remainder of the 21st century will see this ontology emerge in even greater capacities. Because of this interconnectivity on a global scale, we are now forced to engage in a set of conflicts without any clear solutions or end states. This requires crossing the traditional boundaries of what we do and who we do it with (AfP Conference, 2014).

In April 2013, the Northwestern University in Qatar commissioned a survey of over 9,000 people in eight Arab countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Qatar, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the UAE to understand the Middle Eastern perspective. At the time, the people surveyed believed the quality of journalism had changed for the better, including the quality of news reporting in the Arab world. Participants of the survey claimed they spent an average of 3.2 hours a day on social networks with more than 90% of Internet users in the countries

[13] Caryl, Christian. "The World's Next County." Foreign Policy, January 2015. http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/21/the-worlds-next-country-kurdistan-kurds-iraq

[14] Groll, Elias. "Mapped: The Islamic State's Territorial Losses and the Beginning of a United Kurdistan." Foreign Policy, July 2015. http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/07/mapped-the-islamic-states-territorial-losses-and-the-beginning-of-a-united-kurdistan

mentioned above who were active users of social networking sites. This was further broken down by specific applications: Facebook (94%) and Twitter (52%) respectively.[15]

These facts demonstrate that "media matters" and is influential in the Middle East and there are higher chances of the use of a social media networking site than there is the review of a printed text. With regards to printed text, particularly school textbooks, more attention and care should be given to accurate and unbiased depictions of history.

Finally, Hollywood and other filmmakers should do more to portray these facts and goodwill stories in addition to the existing depictions of unsatisfactory conditions in the encampments, like *Salam Neighbor*. An example of a goodwill story was *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen,* a 2011 British film about a fisheries expert recruited by a consultant to help realize a sheikh's vision of bringing the sport of fly fishing to the Yemen desert. Furthermore, "Revolution," the new single recently released by Pop star Helen Abdulla, known as the Kurdish Shakira, is inspiring Iraqi Kurdish forces (Peshmerga). Abdulla's video has garnered more than 742,000 views on YouTube since its May 28, 2015 release.[16]

- ✓ **Because both the problem and the solution are primarily non-military, the U.S. administration should lead an effort this Fall during the General Assembly for Security Council and UN-backed actors in the region to approve a resolution that will build a comprehensive and integrated CVE strategy framework that more resembles the items addressed in the joint NGO statement referenced earlier to include:**

1. Announce robust financial commitments to civilian-led prevention and development activities and programs like the UNHCR 3RP at the UN General Assembly side-meeting on CVE and reinforce these commitments in the FY17 Budget Request to Congress. Investments should be multi-year and include research & learning budgets and adaptive management structures to advance the evidence base for effective approaches. Sustained commitments should also be made to increase USAID's resources, both staffing and programmatic, to give prevention strategies a chance for success.

2. Ensure that security operations do not work at cross-purposes with development and peacebuilding efforts.[17] The draft 9-Point Action Agenda should be amended to include the CVE objectives of all relevant USG agencies, including the Departments of Defense, State (in its entirety, including DRL and the Pol/Mil Bureau), Treasury, Justice, and Homeland Security and USAID. Additionally, the GAO recommendation for an evaluation to be conducted on CVE efforts by the Department of State's Counter-Terrorism Bureau should be implemented immediately.[18]

3. Reverse cuts to democracy and governance programming and advance new monitoring & evaluation frameworks for measuring governance improvements across bilateral and multilateral assistance programs. To successfully address grievances, including those that may lead to violent extremism,

[15] Dennis, Everette E., Martin, Justin D., and Wood, Robb. "How People in the Middle East Actually Use Social Media: Facebook is big, LinkedIn not so much." The Atlantic, April 2013. www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/04/how-people-in-the-middle-east-actually-use-social-media/275246

[16] Luv, Helly. "R*evol*ution." www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLMtTQsiW6I

[17] On 16 March 2015, the EU adopted Council Conclusions on the EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat under which it is specified that 'Humanitarian aid and longer term assistance must remain distinct from military operations and reach all people in need. It will remain strictly separate from and not subordinated to other strands of EU actions.' We see this as best practice for replication.

[18] Government Accountability Office (2015), State Department, Preliminary Observations on the Bureau of Counterterrorism's Resources, Performance, and Coordination. For further rationale, see: Government Accountability Office (2014), Combating Terrorism, State Department Can Improve Management of East Africa Program, Lesley Anne Warner (2014), The Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership: Building Partner Capacity to Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism; and Stimson Center (2014). Lessons Learned for Stabilization in Syria.

community-level programming must connect to meaningful reforms around the particular motivating grievance, which often lie with a state.

4. In line with Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 23: Security Sector Reform, uphold commitments to rights-based governance in all bilateral assistance. U.S. security assistance to other states to counter or prevent violent extremism must emphasize and ensure the protection of human rights, citizen security, and equal justice under law.[19]

5. Reform counterterrorism laws and regulations that prevent humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organizations from working to reduce the propensity of communities to support violent extremism. For American NGOs, this includes the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and related Executive Orders, the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, Export Administration Regulations, and partner vetting systems (PVS and RAM).

6. Commit to establishing voluntary USG-NGO Guidelines for implementing the CVE Agenda through joint USG and NGO dialogues that include local community stakeholders. Parallel to existing Civil Military Guidelines, the CVE Guidelines would include a clear delineation of expectations and standards for USG engagement with non-governmental actors, consistent with local priorities.

MEST Working Group: Economic Recovery and Revitalization

At the request of the Government of Lebanon, the World Bank, in collaboration with the UN, the EU, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Economic and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was created. Through the ESIA, facts were determined that are vital to future planning. An example of this was the surge in demand for public services that had projected the increase in public expenditures by USD 1.1 billion due to the Syrian refugee population increase in Lebanon.[20]

While the first phase of the ESIA focused on the stabilization needs of Lebanon, the second phase plans to focus on the identification of policy recommendations, programs and projects to mitigate the impact of the Syrian conflict.

- ✓ **The development of future ESIAs should be expanded into regionalized areas like the refugee encampments and other locations where populations have increased due to migration including Europe and the United States.**

Alongside, there are multiple initiatives across the globe that could offer socio-economic development solutions. David Weiss and Global Communities provided a solid understanding of NGO impacts; simply more must be done to leverage the private sector and investments. This particular effort could range from the leverage of Citi Group financing who also have locations across the Levant to other UN initiatives like the expansion of Technology Bank initiatives and the leveraging of unique consulting and strategy management services such as the Booz Allen Hamilton Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Division.

[19] Hoffmann, Jeffrey S. and Holshek, Christopher. "2013 Civil Affairs XIX Roundtable Report: Military Support to Peacebuilding." Alliance for Peacebuilding, February 14, 2014.
[20] "Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict." World Bank Report, September 2013.

In conclusion, there is a growing realization that the situation cannot be fixed, or perhaps even contained, just by the traditional humanitarian responses. The emergency response has to happen, of course, when thousands of people cross a border or a bridge, to seek some security from the war. But the situation in the Syria-Iraq mega-crisis is one of "protracted emergency," which haunts the future of other areas in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. There has to be a multi-dimensional response that takes into account the situation, still so precarious, of the large numbers who arrived a couple of years ago and those who arrived more recently, as well as the new waves of displacement.

One day there will be political solutions that will allow the refugees and displaced persons to return and rebuild their homes. Even if there are no signs now that the conflicts will end soon, a conference like this, focused on peacebuilding and recovery, can never be too early. However, if a comprehensive political solution is not reached, the number affected is expected to grow well beyond 2015.

Annex A: Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan

The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis is an international appeal aimed at addressing refugee protection needs, the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable, and the longer term socio-economic impacts of the Syria crisis on the neighboring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. The 3RP is a USD 5.5 billion funding appeal, comprising of USD 1 billion for host government requirements and USD 4.5 billion for programmes implemented by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The appeal is based on the assumption that 4.27 million Syrian refugees will resettle in the region by the end of 2015, and aims to assist more than 20 million other members of impacted local communities this year. However, a shortage of funds is hampering the appeal. More than 200 partners in the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) in Response to the Syria Crisis are calling on the international community to deliver on their pledges.

Against the USD 4.53 billion required for programmes implemented by UN agencies and NGOs under the plan, only USD 1.06 billion – 23%– has been received as of the end of May. This leaves a gap of some USD 3.47 billion.

"This massive crisis requires far more solidarity and responsibility-sharing from the international community than what we have seen so far," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres. "*But instead, we are so dangerously low on funding that we risk not being able to meet even the most basic survival needs of millions of people over the coming six months.*"

Already, as a result of the funding shortfall, 1.6 million refugees have had their food assistance reduced this year, 750,000 children are not attending school, and lifesaving health services are becoming too expensive for many, including 70,000 pregnant women at risk of unsafe deliveries. Some 86% of urban refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line of USD 3.2 per day,[21] while 45% of refugees in Lebanon live in sub-standard shelters. Almost half of all those affected by this crisis are children and many of them, along with their families, struggle to cope with the distress caused by the violence and upheaval they have experienced.

The 3RP partners warn that if more funds are not forthcoming soon, up to 130,000 vulnerable families will not be provided with cash assistance to help them meet their basic needs and vulnerable people will stop receiving their monthly food vouchers altogether. The delivery of water and wastewater services for millions of people across the region will be in jeopardy. Up to 1.7 million people may face winter this year without fuel, shelter, insulation, blankets or warm clothes, which would be a repeat of for those refugees including children, lost their lives during the harshest winter the region had seen in four decades.

Halfway through the year, with less than a quarter of the required funding received and with winter just around the corner, 3RP partners urgently need funding certainty to plan and respond in time.

According to UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, ***"Lessons learned over the past four years of response to the Syria crisis show beyond doubt the importance of integrated humanitarian and development approaches based on building resilience. A well-funded 3RP will support stabilization by helping people get jobs, have access to microbusiness opportunities, and improve food security for families."***[22]

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[21] 3RP Event News Release (Amman, Jordan), "UN agencies and partners say funding shortage leaves Syrian refugees and host nations without vital support." June 2015, http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/news/un-agencies-and-partners-say-funding-shortage-leaves-syrian-refugees-and-host-nations-without-vital-support/

[22] Ibid.

Annex B: USAID Syria Country Page (Fact Sheet)

The United States remains committed to helping the innocent children, women, and men affected by the ongoing conflict in Syria. Total U.S. humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflict in March 2011 is now more than $3 billion. The United States remains the single-largest donor of humanitarian aid for those affected by the Syrian crisis, which has become the biggest humanitarian emergency of our era.

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TO SYRIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FY 2012-2015*

USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	$684,090,176
USAID/Office of Food for Peace (FFP)	$1,532,621,303
State/Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)	$1,893,855,086
Total U.S. Government (USG) Assistance to the Syria Humanitarian Response	**$4,110,566,565**

**These figures are current as of August 4, 2015*

On July 31, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) announced $65 million in new funding for the UN World Food Program (WFP) Syria response, which every month provides emergency food assistance to approximately 4 million people inside Syria and approximately 1.6 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. Of the $65 million, USAID/FFP allocated $47 million for WFP regional refugee operations, primarily in Jordan and Lebanon, and $18 million for WFP operations inside Syria. The funding helps avert cuts in WFP assistance, due to persistent funding shortfalls, that would otherwise have begun this month.

As of June 30, the conflict in Syria had killed nearly 11,100 people in 2015 alone, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights. Attacks by the Syrian Arab Republic Government (SARG) and pro-SARG forces account for the majority of deaths, including nearly 7,000 civilians. In addition, attacks by armed groups have resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 civilians; of these, an estimated 945 deaths resulted from attacks by the Islamic State. At least half of the 230,000 deaths in Syria recorded since the conflict began in 2011 are civilians, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reports. In July, the SARG conducted nearly 6,700 airstrikes, including more than 3,600 barrel bomb attacks, killing approximately 800 civilians and injuring at least 3,000, according to SOHR.

The number of refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria to neighboring countries exceeded 4 million on July 9, confirming the crisis as the world's largest refugee crisis under the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees mandate in nearly a quarter of a century. The latest increase in Turkey's refugee registration numbers—from 1.77 million in mid-June to 1.8 million in early July—propelled the regional total to more than 4 million. Turkey is hosting nearly 45% of the Syrian refugees in the region.[23]

[23] www.usaid.gov/crisis/syria

Annex C: Resolution titled "Global Civil Society Leaders to Obama: Take the Lead at UN General Assembly to Tackle Root Causes of Syria Crisis."

Dear President Obama,

On September 2 photographs of Alan Kurdi, a 3-year-old Syrian who drowned off the shores of the Mediterranean, shocked and offended the conscience of the world. Alan's death highlights the brutal effects of the Syrian civil war and the mounting refugee crisis it is spawning: since the onset of violence 4 years ago over 10 million people have been driven from their homes. In desperation, tens of thousands are risking death again to flee to Europe.

As the leaders of humanitarian, human rights, and faith-based organizations who work with and for those who have fled Syria, as well as those still trapped by the violence, we come together to ask that you urgently lead the international community to address both immediate symptoms of the crisis as well as the root causes of conflict. A bold, new, and comprehensive plan is essential to address not only the needs of the millions who have fled Syria, but to end the violence that is causing this global catastrophe that shows no prospects of fading. Seizing the urgency of the moment and the opportunity of the upcoming United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the U.S. should work with allies to create a comprehensive plan that encompasses these four core points:

Announce that the U.S. will resettle 100,000 Syrian refugees in FY2016: We ask that you ensure that the United States, founded as a nation of immigrants, rises to the occasion and offers protection and a warm welcome to Syrians in desperate need of asylum. While your recent announcement to increase the total number of refugees resettled in the United States is a commendable first step, the scale of the Syrian crisis demands bolder action. America should remain committed to its proud tradition of offering refuge for those fleeing the horrors of war. We urge you to demonstrate greater U.S. leadership on this issue and announce that the U.S. will resettle 100,000 Syrian refugees in FY2016**.** This figure is in line with precedents set by the United States in the cases of Vietnamese, Cuban, and Russian Jewish populations fleeing during times of conflict and would transform the lives of tens of thousands of people who have suffered in the face of appalling conflict and send a strong signal to other countries to follow suit.

Put an end to the bombardment of civilian areas: Attacks targeting civilian locations such as schools, markets, and hospitals remains the primary force driving Syrians across borders in search of safety and security. It is critical that the U.S. take immediate and concrete actions to ensure civilians inside Syria are protected from these horrific attacks. As a first step, the U.S., in its role as a leading member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), should proactively support passage of the French-proposed Resolution, which includes measures to establish a mechanism to track and publically expose indiscriminate attacks by any means against civilians, including barrel bombs, mortars, and car bombs, and to lay down clear consequences for violators.

Devise and implement a comprehensive regional development and reconstruction plan: While the U.S. should take pride in its generous humanitarian response, including its provision of $4 billion in humanitarian assistance to Syrians, the vast scale of the crisis demands a more robust and comprehensive funding plan. Syria's neighbours continue to shoulder a disproportionate number of refugees and need our support. The United States took a leadership role both diplomatically and financially for European recovery following the Second World War through the Marshall Plan. A similarly proportional response is needed for a comprehensive recovery and support plan for Syria and its neighbours. The U.S. should work with allies and the United Nations to lead in a funding and development plan for Syria and its neighbours, mirroring the scale and commitment of the Marshall Plan instituted to repair war-torn Europe, to meet the urgent needs of refugees in the region and foster their resilience. Such a plan should move beyond humanitarian emergency relief to include sustainable development projects, education, livelihood programs, and reconstruction.

Prioritize a political solution with human rights at the heart: Finally, the U.S. must put the pursuit of a political solution to the conflict in Syria as its top diplomatic priority. The institution of an Iran nuclear deal has opened new diplomatic channels to pursue peace for Syria. These developments have given you an opportunity to step up efforts towards a political solution with human rights at its heart**:** until the conflict is resolved, Syrian civilians will continue to be killed or flee the country – and it will not be safe for them to return. Russian military deployments in Western Syria only adds to the urgency. Reigniting the political process is the only way that the killing of Syrian civilians will end, that the problem of the Islamic State will be fully addressed, and that the Syrian people will be able to realize their ultimate dream: a safe return home.

Alan's death was a dramatic wake up call for the international community. This is a moment that urgently demands U.S. leadership to establish a bold, comprehensive plan to deal with this crisis. We stand ready to support your efforts to achieve these ends.

Sincerely,

1. Better World Campaign - Peter Yeo, President
2. CARE USA – Michelle Nunn, President and CEO
3. Center for Victims of Torture – Curt Goering, Executive Director
4. Conference of Major Superiors of Men – Eli McCarthy, PHD, Director of Justice and Peace
5. Doctors of the World USA – Miranda Sissons, Executive Director
6. Friends Committee on National Legislation – Diane Randall, Executive Secretary
7. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDIH) – Karim Lahidji, President
8. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect - Dr. Simon Adams, Executive Director
9. Global Communities – David A. Weiss, President & CEO
10. Hope for Syria – Mazen Kawji, President
11. International Rescue Committee – David Miliband, President and CEO
12. Islamic Relief USA - Anwar Khan, CEO
13. Jewish World Watch – William Bernstein, Executive Director
14. Karam Foundation – Lina Sergie Attar, Co-Founder and CEO
15. Mercy Corps - Neal Keny-Guyer, CEO
16. Muslim Public Affairs Council - Salam Al-Marayati, President
17. Oxfam America - Raymond C. Offenheiser, President
18. Physicians for Human Rights – Donna McKay MS, Executive Director
19. Presbyterian Church (USA) - Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
20. Rahma Relief Foundation – Imam Chadi Zaza, President
21. Refugees International – Michel Gabaudan, President
22. Save the Children – Carolyn Miles, President and CEO
23. STAND – Francesca Freeman, Student Director
24. Swasia Charity Foundation – Dr. Mazen Tinawi, President
25. Syrian American Council – Mirna Barq, President
26. Syrian American Medical Society - Dr. Ahmad Tarakji, President
27. Syrian Community Network – Suzanne Akhras Sahloul, Founder and President
28. Syrian Expatriates Organization – Mazen Hasan, MD, Chairman
29. Syria Relief and Development – Dr. Jihad Qaddour, President and CEO
30. United for a Free Syria – Yahya Basha, M.D., Chairman
31. United Nations Association of the United States – Chris Whatley, Executive Director
32. United to End Genocide – Hon. Thomas H. Andrews, President and CEO
33. Watan USA – Mouna Hashem, Executive Director
34. World Vision US – Richard Stearns, President