

Council meeting of the Socialist International
Luanda, 27-28 November 2015

Declaration on the refugee crisis

The Socialist International is greatly concerned by the plight of refugees around the world, which has become an extremely grave humanitarian crisis. The Council therefore reiterates the absolute commitment of the SI to the human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, as enumerated exhaustively in its Charter on the rights of Migrants. Special care needs to be administered to the most vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors and women.

The Council urges the European Union to find a collective response to the arrival of refugees, with all member states fulfilling their ethical responsibility to facilitate the redistribution of asylum claims. The EU needs to develop a unified asylum policy. The adoption of an EU asylum status would be a positive step in this direction. A consequence of the absence of a comprehensive policy is that many member states continue to show a complete lack of solidarity with refugees and seem determined to abandon their collective ethical and legal responsibility. We abhor the violations of human rights and xenophobic and anti-immigration discourses witnessed in some states, which have refugees and migrants as their target. These practices and attitudes have placed an excessive burden on front states in the region such as Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq as well as on entry point countries such as Greece and countries in the Balkans. Ninety percent of displaced people are displaced within or into another poor country and the pressure on these states is only going to increase. Only ten percent of all global refugees seek refuge from a poor country into a rich country.

A great many of the refugees and migrants in the world today are fleeing conflict, and extensive conflict resolution efforts are needed in addition to urgent humanitarian assistance. The persistence of conflicts, terrorism and insecurity, and a lack of democracy and governance completely inhibit opportunities and prospects, must be addressed if the refugee crisis is to be brought to an end.

Lack of support for refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria risks fuelling a new cycle of disaffection, alienation and radicalisation among young people who feel vulnerable, abandoned and unwanted. This only makes it more urgent to ensure the necessary resources are available for large-scale humanitarian assistance to provide as a minimum for the alimentary, sanitary and educational needs of those forced to flee their country.

We are more than aware that the refugee flow will continue and even increase. The lack of a coordinated policy from the EU and the international community will further exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. We call on the international community to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with the root causes of the recent refugee exodus. In particular an agreed roadmap for transition to a peaceful and democratic Syria is of utmost importance. This roadmap for Syria needs the full cooperation and participation of both the international community and the regional and neighbouring countries. Accepting and respecting such a roadmap would be a major step to peace in the region. It would give hope and real prospects for many refugees to return and participate in the reconstruction of their country and the construction of a democratic Syria.

The SI reiterates that although the media attention has highlighted the refugee exodus towards Europe from Syria, this is a global issue affecting many parts of the world. According to the United Nations, the continent of Africa has the largest number of economic refugees. Refugees in Africa are leaving their countries because of wars and the economic and social consequences caused notably by underemployment. Tens of thousands of Africans are leaving their countries in search of a better

life in Europe, attempting to cross the Mediterranean where, regrettably, many of these young people perish. We challenge the European Union and European governments to take the necessary decisions faced with this drama, both to ensure a better reception for refugees in Europe, and to monitor the conditions of their exit from their countries on the African continent.
