

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ambassador John Bass

FROM: Lena

DATE: May 9, 2017

RE: The US should help Turkey expand its refugee programs

Summary:

Turkey has too many refugees without access to basic services. Out of the three million refugees, 2.7 million are living outside of camps and 1.7 million are unassisted by the Emergency Social Safety Net, which is a refugee aid organization run by the Turkish government (Turkey: Refugee Crisis). Due to the large number of refugees, Turkey needs more volunteers and more funds to help resettle refugees and improve systems to integrate refugees into society. By working to accommodate refugees, Turkey can turn this problem into an opportunity to make itself look good in the political world. The United States should help by fundraising and sending volunteers to help grow the ESSN, as well as by working with the Turkish Government to create and pass bills to make the refugee process run more smoothly.

Background:

Turkey is being flooded with refugees because of the conflict in Syria, its neighboring country. The UN considers Turkey a safe country, so refugees cannot seek asylum elsewhere after going to Turkey. This has left Turkey with a sudden influx of refugees, but insufficient programs and funding to handle the amount of refugees arriving (Why Don't Syrian Refugees Stay in Turkey?). As a result, refugee poverty rates are increasing and children are not going to school. 80% of refugee children in Turkey are not currently enrolled in school. Refugee camps are filled way past their capacity of 200,000 people, yet refugees continue to be sent to Turkey. Therefore, millions of refugees are arriving without a place to live or access to the services they desperately need that the refugee camps provide. Also, Turkey does not classify the Syrian refugees as refugees because they are not from Europe (Broomfield). This mindset has to change for the wellbeing of refugees. There are a few nongovernmental organizations assisting refugees, as well as a few organizations run by the government. Some of these are the European Commission, the Turkish Red Crescent, the World Food Programme, and the Turkish Emergency Social Safety Net (Turkey: Refugee Crisis). Being a powerful country, the United States should assist Turkey in dealing with the refugee crisis. Working together with Turkey to solve this crisis will be beneficial for both countries. Turkey will benefit because it will become capable of helping more refugees, and therefore decreasing the amount of people living on the street. Also, the refugees will eventually help the economy. The United States will benefit because relations between the two countries will be better. Currently, military relations between Turkey and the United States are not as strong as they used to be, and the United States military bases in Turkey are at risk of being shut down. The United States needs Turkey as an ally because because of its strategic

placement in the Middle East, so providing Turkey with assistance in regards to a humanitarian crisis could help future relations between the two countries. Therefore, the US should feel obliged to help Turkey during this humanitarian crisis to ensure its military bases stay open and ensure that there is peace between Turkey and the United States (Tattersall).

Proposed Steps:

To begin the process, the United States should meet with Turkey to convince them to agree to receive the help. The United States has to work with Turkey because the plan will only work through cooperation with the Turkish government. If we force this upon Turkey, then it will most likely not continue after we leave. Also, that would not help relations. After Turkey agrees to the plan, the first step for the United States is to create a large scale fundraising group that directly benefits refugees. For example, Catholic Charities is a US based nonprofit organization working to help refugees who have resettled in the United States. It helps refugees resettle, find jobs, receive job training and receive necessary counseling. They also help refugees find legal services and get involved in the local communities. Their goal is for refugees to become self sufficient again. It is nationwide in the United States (Welcoming Newcomers). If the government were to make a nonprofit refugee organization similar to Catholic Charities but on a larger scale and focused on resettling refugees in foreign countries, then funds could be raised to go towards refugees in countries like Turkey. After funds have been raised, laws and regulations to indicate how the money should be spent need to be enacted. The second step is to work with the Turkish government to expand the ESSN and pass bills to benefit refugees in Turkey, including a bill to recognize forced immigrants from Syria as refugees. This is important because cooperating with the government will help to keep the peace and increase the possibility of long term change being enacted. Also, it is very important to recognize these people as refugees because then they can have access to services that immigrants do not have access to. With an increase of people in need of services, Turkey will need more people to provide these services. The third step is to send volunteers to Turkey to help distribute the services funded by the aforementioned organization and to work with volunteers that are currently in Turkey. Volunteers are an essential part of this plan because they can help build shelter and educate refugees. Two of the biggest problems for refugees in Turkey are lack of shelter, food, and necessities; and the absence of education. Volunteers can work to build camps to provide shelter to the millions of refugees without it. They can also help gather and distribute necessities, such as food and drinking water. The third thing volunteers can do is teach refugees. Many refugee children have been out of school for an extended period of time. Some might have never attended school in their lifetime. Adult refugees are often in need of education and job training to help them learn the native language. Volunteers will be helpful teaching refugees the necessary information they need to be able to successfully integrate into society (Turkey: Refugee Crisis).

Recommendation:

The crisis in Turkey is a problem that the United States can help solve. By raising money, working with the Turkish government, and sending volunteers, the United States can help the refugees. This will help Turkey because it will decrease the number of uneducated people and the number of people living on the street. It will also increase the number of people working in

Turkey because more refugees will have the necessary training and language skills to maintain a job. It will help the United States because it will keep relations between the countries stable. Turkey is a valued political ally, and in their time of need, the United States should step up and help them. The United States has the ability to help the refugees, which will in turn further solidify the alliance between the two countries and ensure that the United States military bases in Turkey stay open.

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