Governance of the Global Refugee Regime

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Executive

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Table of Contents

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World Refugee Council research papers are policy documents commissioned by the Council from world-renowned experts to help inform the World Refugee Council and its final recommendations. The measures and concepts in these documents do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Refugee Council.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ExCom	Executive Committee of the Program of the UNHCR
G20	Group of Twenty
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services (WTO)
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IDP	internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
R20	Refugees20
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees/UN Refugee Agency

Executive Summary

The global refugee regime is founded on clear norms relating to protection and solutions for refugees, with organizations, namely the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), mandated to work with states to realize these norms. In contrast with the enduring support for these norms and the growth of the regime's primary organization over the last 60 years, governance of the regime remains diffuse. States retain ultimate control over the implementation of global norms on their territory. Outcomes for refugees are increasingly shaped by politics in fields that fall outside the scope of the refugee regime. In addition, the regime contains no binding obligation on states to cooperate to ensure the functioning of the regime, despite long-standing recognition that such cooperation is essential. The authors argue that these weak and diffuse governance arrangements contribute to unpredictability in the regime's ability to realize its objectives of protection and solutions for refugees. In response, they propose enhanced governance arrangements for the global refugee regime that include a forum for dialogue between key actors, the capacity for political facilitation between actors, enhanced capacity for analysis and evidence-based planning, and oversight and accountability. They argue that enhanced governance of the refugee regime will contribute to enhanced protection and solutions for refugees and more predictability for states and the international system as a whole.

Introduction

Principles relating to the protection of refugees predate the modern state system and have evolved alongside the state system over the past 350 years (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam 2007). Many of these norms were codified in the modern global refugee regime, which emerged in the aftermath of World War II and in the early days of the Cold War (Loescher 1993; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo 1989). But, while the modern refugee regime sets out norms and organizations around which the behaviour of states is expected to converge, there are several features of the governance of the regime that result in challenges for the implementation of the regime's core functions.

Among those challenges, this paper suggests, is that the regime itself, as distinct from its component organizations, has always lacked a clearly defined system of governance. First, responsibility for the governance of the regime is diffuse. Individual states are responsible for the implementation of the regime's norms within their own territory and jurisdiction, while decisions taken in parallel policy fields, such as security, development and migration, have a considerable impact on the functioning of the refugee regime. Second, governance of the regime has often been conflated with governance of the regime's primary organization, the UNHCR. Third, weak governance arrangements for the regime itself have hampered important forms of coordination, dialogue and political engagement, all necessary for the regime to facilitate international cooperation and the realization of the regime's core objectives of protection and solutions for refugees.

In response, this paper has three objectives. First, it outlines the origins, elements and main gaps within the refugee regime. Second, it offers a diagnosis of the current impasse facing the regime. Third, it sets out recommendations for new governance arrangements to address both the current impasse and recurring governance challenges.[1] The central argument is that we need to "widen the lens": that is, having a clear understanding that "governance of the regime" goes beyond the mandate of any one organization opens up practical avenues for improving governance. This paper suggests that building a regime-wide governance model can complement existing governance arrangements, including by offering a theory of change for current initiatives such as the Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The model this paper proposes for enhanced governance of the regime includes a forum for dialogue between key actors; the capacity for political facilitation between actors; enhanced capacity for analysis and evidence-based planning; and oversight and accountability. Such a model would contribute to enhanced protection and solutions for refugees and to more predictability for states and the international system as a whole.

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1   For a discussion of the governance of internal displacement, see Kälin (forthcoming, 2019).

Origins and Elements

The modern refugee regime was created to respond to the consequences of World War II in Europe, which left some 55 million people displaced (Loescher 2001). In creating the regime, states recognized the right of refugees to not be forcibly returned to a country where they would face serious harm, and adopted a definition of "refugee" based on a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Reflecting the spirit of the time, article 14(1) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided that "everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."[2]

The process to create the refugee regime was conditioned by several competing perspectives on the scope and mandate for the new organization that would be at the core of the new regime: the UNHCR (Loescher 2001; Betts, Loescher and Milner 2012). The United States sought a temporary refugee agency with limited authority and narrow functions. France wanted an organization with robust operational capacity and predictable funding to assist refugees, while the United Kingdom felt that refugees should be the responsibility of host states. Following their experience with the displacement of some 10 million people following Partition in 1947, India and Pakistan argued that the UNHCR should be a strong and permanent organization with global responsibilities and the ability to raise funds for relief assistance.

The UNHCR's Statute, adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) through Resolution 428 (V) on December 14, 1950, clearly reflects the interests of the more powerful states in the international system at the time, in particular, the United States: it created an organization that was reliant on states and lacked political capacity or functional autonomy. The UNHCR was established to act under the authority of the UNGA to serve two specific functions: to ensure the international protection of refugees, and to cooperate with governments to find permanent solutions for refugees. The UNHCR's original mandate did not include the provision of material assistance to refugees. It also stipulated that the work of the High Commissioner was to be entirely non-political. The High Commissioner was to be elected by the UNGA and was required to follow policy directives issued by it and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), or a future advisory committee established by the ECOSOC, and to report annually to the UNGA. As specified in paragraph 20 of the Statute, the UNHCR was only to receive financial support from the UN budget to cover administrative expenditures relating to the office's functioning, and "all other expenditures relating to the activities of the High Commissioner shall be financed by voluntary contributions."[3] In this way, the UNHCR was made financially dependent on donor governments.

The implications of these early decisions on the mandate of the UNHCR continue to have an impact on the functioning of the refugee regime as a whole. The UNHCR's reliance on annual voluntary funds and its non-political mandate significantly constrain its ability to resist and influence the actions and interests of the more powerful states in the international system. Given the concentration of financial support from a limited number of states in the Global North, in particular the United States, American interests have played a significant role in shaping the activities of the UNHCR throughout its history. The consequences of such influence are compounded through the combination of domestic and international factors that drive US engagement in the refugee regime (Martin and Ferris 2017).

Negotiations to establish the UNHCR coincided with the drafting of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which initially defined the obligations of signatory states in very narrow geographic and temporal terms, thus allowing states to restrict the focus to those displaced by prior events in Europe. While the 1951 Convention provided a general definition of refugees,[4] it did not specify the process by which refugee status should be determined, leaving the process largely to the discretion of states. The bulk of the convention details a progressive set of refugee rights, including access to national courts, freedom of movement, the right to employment and education, and a host of other social, economic, civil and political rights on par with those held by nationals of the host country. The most significant right granted to refugees by the

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2   See www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/.

3   See www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c39e1/statute-office-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees.html.

4   Art. 1.2 (UNHCR 2010, 14).

convention is *non-refoulement:* the prohibition of returning refugees "in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where [their] life or freedom would be threatened on account of...race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."[5] *Non-refoulement* remains the cornerstone of international refugee protection (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam 2007), and is now considered to be a provision of customary international law, binding even on states not party to the 1951 Convention. Over time, the definition of a refugee and the rights to which refugees are entitled have been updated through a combination of interpretation by particular states and by supplementary regional agreements, most notably for Africa, Europe and Latin America. Several key refugee-hosting countries, notably in Asia, are not signatories of the 1951 Convention.

In contrast with the specificity of the regime's key norms and primary organization, states sought to retain ultimate authority over refugee affairs and did not include any decision-making mechanisms for the regime itself. In fact, it was not until 1958 that the UNGA established the Executive Committee of the Program of the UNHCR ("ExCom"), initially to consist of 20 to 25 UN member states, selected by the ECOSOC "on the widest possible geographic basis from those States with a demonstrated interest in, and devotion to, the solution of the refugee problem" (UNGA 1957, para. 5). While retaining authority over the work of the UNHCR, the UNGA mandated ExCom to perform a number of executive and advisory functions. ExCom remains responsible for approving the UNHCR's budget and program for the following year; for reaching conclusions on international refugee protection policy issues; and for providing guidance on the UNHCR's management, objectives and priorities. As a subsidiary organ of the UNGA, ExCom also submits an annual report to the UNGA's Third Committee.

ExCom has become a large and cumbersome body (with 102 members in 2018), and meetings do not provide an adequate forum for organizational guidance for the UNHCR, let alone a forum to contribute to the effective governance of the regime as a whole (Betts, Loescher and Milner 2012). Notwithstanding these constraints, the broad membership of ExCom, coupled with the predictability of its regular meeting schedules and

its near monopoly on providing a formal context for multilateral discussions of global refugee issues, has, almost by default, resulted in the expectation that ExCom represents the site of governance for the refugee regime — despite the fact that this is neither the mandate nor the function of ExCom. While alternate fora for discussion have evolved in parallel to the global refugee regime over the past 40 years, including the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees and the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, and in the absence of more formal governance structures, informal networks between key donor and refugee-hosting states have come to play a key role in articulating the priorities that guide the functioning of the refugee regime.

There are also concerns about the legitimacy of ExCom. While member states are expected to have a "demonstrated interest in, and devotion to, the solution of the refugee problem" (UNGA 1957, para. 5), critics have argued that the actions of certain members represent some of the more significant breaches of the central norms of the global refugee regime, including *non-refoulement*, while several members are not party to the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol. Such factors point to the potential benefits of either re-examining the composition and role of ExCom in light of its original mandate or imagining new governance arrangements that provide more effective decision making and more legitimate accountability mechanisms to ensure that the principles of the refugee regime are upheld.

Structure of Governance

From this core set of norms, organizations and (limited) decision-making procedures established in the 1950s, the regime has continued to evolve in scope and practice. In response to requests from states, the regime's primary institution — the UNHCR — was long ago authorized to expand its activities outside Europe and to include the provision of material assistance. The geographic and temporal limitations of the 1951 Convention were subsequently removed by the 1967 Protocol, which retains the 1951 Convention's definition of refugee but decouples its association with events in Europe prior to 1951. In this way, efforts have been made to expand the global application of the rights

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5   Art. 33.1 (ibid., 30).

and obligations detailed in the 1951 Convention, while the convention has also been supplemented by regional standards and agreements.

Yet, the governance of the global refugee regime remains constrained by three main features.

First, states retain ultimate control over the quantity and quality of asylum they grant to refugees on their territory.[6] While the refugee regime provides a core definition of who qualifies for refugee status, and while the UNHCR provides operational guidance on the refugee status determination process and supervisory responsibility for the implementation of the 1951 Convention, states are ultimately responsible for granting status and determining the rights of refugees on their territory. In response to a desire to limit the number of refugees that they admit, a number of states have adopted restrictive determination procedures since the late 1980s. In an effort to limit the rights afforded to refugees, many states in the Global North have also created subsidiary categories of protection, thus granting legal status on parallel grounds short of refugee status. Increasingly, states in the Global North have also engaged in extraterritorial processes and bilateral agreements with third countries to reduce the ability of asylum seekers to access their territories in the first place. More generally, states in the Global North and South are able to determine which rights detailed in the 1951 Convention will be extended to recognized refugees. In contrast to most human rights treaties, the 1951 Convention has never had a corresponding "treaty body" or clearly defined oversight mechanism to hold states accountable for non-compliance.

Second, outcomes for refugees and displaced populations are increasingly shaped by politics in policy fields that fall outside the scope of the refugee regime. Over the past 50 years, a range of international institutions have proliferated, many of which overlap in scope and purpose with the refugee regime (Figure 1).

For example, outcomes for refugees are shaped by decisions made within regimes relating to travel, labour, human rights, humanitarianism,

development and security, each of which may claim authority over certain aspects of refugee movements. This overlapping set of regime mandates has given rise to what some have called "the refugee regime complex" — the idea that refugee governance is now subject to a series of overlapping institutions (Betts 2010).

In some cases, regime complexity offers opportunities: for instance, human rights governance offers sources of "complementary protection" that enable courts to draw upon a wider set of norms to bolster refugee rights. Likewise, development governance can leverage the participation of actors who can create opportunities to generate complementary programming encouraging the self-reliance of refugees and their contributions to local and national economies. In other areas, however, it may enable states to shift decision making on responses to refugees into regimes that better suit their interests. For example, states in the Global North have tended to address their concerns relating to the spontaneous arrival of asylum seekers as an issue relating to undocumented migrants, thus allowing them to situate asylum seekers within the travel regime and to bypass their obligations under the refugee regime, including the prohibition on *refoulement*.

Third, the regime contains no binding obligation on states to cooperate to ensure the functioning of the regime. While countries of first asylum have an international obligation not to forcibly return refugees to a country where they fear persecution, there is no binding obligation on other states to share the costs associated with the provision of asylum. This gap in the governance arrangements of the regime may be surprising, given that the importance of international cooperation has been articulated in a range of documents since the creation of the global refugee regime. The preamble of the 1951 Convention notes that "the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries, and…a satisfactory solution…cannot therefore be achieved without international co-operation" (UNHCR 2010, 13). Similar statements have been included in more than 30 conclusions of the UNHCR's ExCom over the past 35 years and in a similar number of UNGA resolutions. Specific support for the principle was also highlighted by the *Global Consultations on International Protection* (UNHCR 2001; Feller, Türk and Nicholson 2003), the 2001 *Declaration of States Parties to the 1951 Convention and/or its*

6   As defined by Alexander Betts, Gil Loescher and James Milner (2012, 85), "the *quantity of asylum* refers to the ability of individuals to physically access the territory of a state and claim asylum, whereas the *quality of asylum* relates to the extent to which refugees enjoy the range of rights granted to them by the 1951 Convention, including such rights as freedom of movement and the right to seek employment."

Figure 1: The Global Refugee Complex
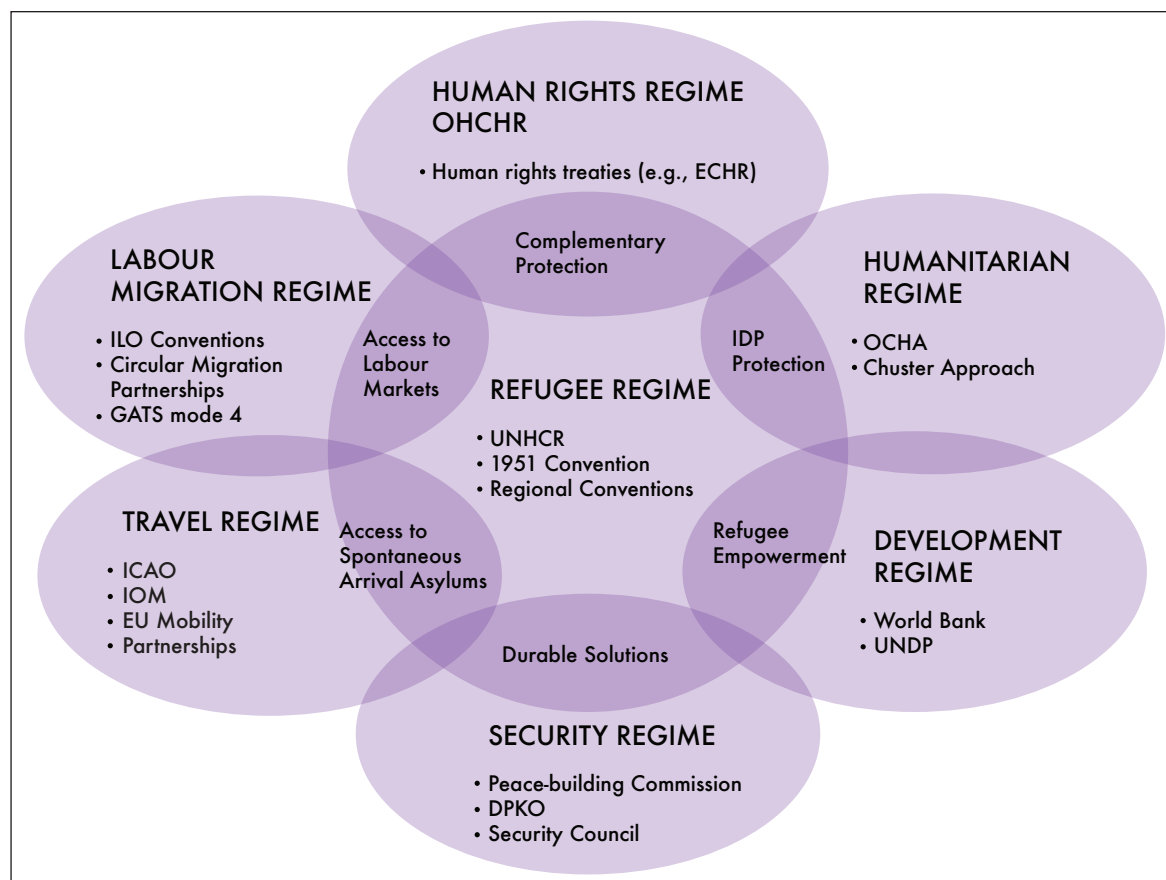
Source: Authors.

Note: The refugee regime and other international regimes, whether they relate to human mobility or otherwise, overlap. The intersections in the Venn diagram illustrate some of the ways in which decisions made in these adjacent regimes may affect outcomes for refugees. DPKO = Department of Peacekeeping Operations; ECHR = European Court of Human Rights; GATS = General Agreement on Trade in Services; ICAO = International Civil Aviation Organization; IDP = internally displaced person; ILO = International Labour Organization; IOM = International Organization for Migration; OCHA = United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; OHCHR = Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; UNDP = UN Development Programme; UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 2002 *Agenda for Protection* (UNGA 2002).

While these statements illustrate that there is broad agreement by states on the principle of international cooperation, and on burden and responsibility sharing, they do not constitute binding obligations on states. In fact, international law, by custom or treaty, does not include a duty on the part of other states to provide support to refugee-hosting states in response to the arrival or prolonged presence of refugees.

In response, the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres included this observation in his opening statement to the annual meeting of the UNHCR's ExCom in October 2015: "As we face the highest levels of forced displacement in recorded history, the institution of asylum must remain sacrosanct, honoured as one of the deepest expressions of humanity — especially now as it is being so severely tested in many parts of the world. It is my conviction that the best way to do this is through genuine international cooperation and equitable burden and responsibility sharing. In fact, if there is one Protocol that is yet to be drafted to complement the 1951 Convention, it is one on international solidarity and burden sharing" (Guterres 2015).

The significance of this gap has also been highlighted by states. For example, the Joint Statement on the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in New York on September 20, 2016, notes that "no routine mechanism exists yet to facilitate the kind of voluntary responsibility-sharing for refugees that was demonstrated today or to more comprehensively address other challenges arising from large-scale refugee crises" (The White House 2016). In response, states participating in the summit committed themselves to "develop tools and institutional structures to improve the international architecture and lay a foundation for addressing both the immediate and the long-term challenges of managing refugee flows effectively and comprehensively" (ibid.).

In the absence of such a mechanism, responsibility for refugees is the result of "accidents of geography" (Hathaway and Neve 1997, 141), with states in regions of refugee origin hosting the vast majority of the world's refugees. In fact, 60 percent of the world's refugees are hosted by just 10 states in the Global South, while 85 percent of the world's refugees are hosted by low- and middle-income countries in regions of refugee origin.[7] At the same time, just 10 donors in the Global North account for 77 percent of all financial contributions to the UNHCR.[8]

The resulting inequalities raise not only ethical questions about the equitable distribution of responsibility for refugees, but also deeper political and practical questions as to how international cooperation can be mobilized and sustained in an environment in which front-line states cannot rely on predictable support to respond to the arrival and prolonged presence of refugees. In fact, the perceived lack of international cooperation over the past 30 years, coupled with efforts by states in the Global North to contain refugees in their

region of origin, has prompted several states in the Global South to introduce more restrictive refugee policies (Milner 2009); exacerbated North-South tensions within the refugee regime (Betts, Loescher and Milner 2012); and resulted in low levels of trust and confidence between major refugee-hosting and donor states.

A "Broken" System?

The prevailing lack of trust between key states in the refugee regime highlights the significance of the governance gaps that have been largely present in the regime since its inception. Despite the absence of mechanisms to ensure political facilitation and dialogue between key actors, there are iconic moments of success for the regime, such as the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees or the International Conference on Central American Refugees (Betts 2009). While these examples illustrate that cooperation is possible and that political facilitation and issue linkage across policy fields can leverage comprehensive solutions for large and complex refugee situations, they also highlight that such successful outcomes have resulted from a very particular set of circumstances, where the interests of the more powerful states in the international system were made to align both with the interests of states in regions of refugee origin and with the needs of refugees. Given that the history of the refugee regime contains more examples of limitations than of successes, and given the downward trajectory of the regime's performance over the past 30 years, it is increasingly clear that the regime's current instruments and mechanisms are unable to reliably ensure protection and solutions in response to large and complex refugee situations.

In this context, there has been an emerging debate about whether the global refugee regime is "broken" or not. For some, the European and Syrian refugee crisis of 2015-2016 revealed fundamental flaws in the institutional architecture. With systemwide non-compliance with the regime and endemic collective action failure, there is a need for an institutional rethink. For others, the problem lies not with the system but with states' increasing failure to comply with the rules. On one level this debate is partly semantic, but

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7   There were 58 million "persons of concern" to the UNHCR in 2015, of which 14.4 million were refugees. The top 10 refugee-hosting countries (ranked by the number of refugees hosted) were Turkey (1,828,848), Pakistan (1,540,854), Lebanon (1,172,388), Iran (979,441), Ethiopia (702,467), Jordan (664,102), Kenya (552,272), Uganda (428,397), Chad (420,774) and Sudan (322,638) (UNHCR 2015a).

8   Of the US$2.27 billion contributed to the UNHCR in 2012, the top 10 donors (and their contribution as a percentage of total contributions) were the United States (35 percent), Japan (8.0 percent), the European Union (7.0 percent), Sweden (5.0 percent), the Netherlands (4.5 percent), the United Kingdom (4.3 percent), Norway (3.7 percent), Germany (3.0 percent), Canada (2.8 percent), and Denmark (2.5 percent). The remaining 23 percent of contributions came from 66 states, seven international organizations, 16 UN funds and more than 50 private donors (UNHCR 2013).

it matters because of the policy prescriptions that follow. If the system is seen as broken, the response is to seek radical institutional reform. If it is states, rather than institutions, that are the problem, the solution may be to work to mobilize greater support and political will for the existing organizations, norms and structures.[9]

Given the challenges currently facing the regime, there may be a temptation to simply wait for the status quo ante to return. Once populist nationalism has subsided, for example, support for the existing regime might return, and perhaps the system will then function as effectively as it did during parts of the twentieth century. Indeed, it could be argued that support for the regime goes through peaks and troughs and that demands for change — such as during the funding crisis of 1989, in the aftermath of the Cold War and following September 11, 2001 — can be endured. But is the current context fundamentally different?

Diagnosing the Impasse

At past moments of significant human displacement, states have cooperated in the provision of protection and solutions. From the aftermath of World War II, to the Hungarian Revolution, to the migration of the Vietnamese boat people, to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, states have contributed because refugees were both valued morally *and* considered useful politically (Loescher 2001). Morally, liberal democratic states maintained a commitment to the principle of refugee protection (Gibney 2004). Politically, whether to discredit countries of origin, advance geopolitical interests, promote regional security or mobilize diasporic action, refugee protection frequently advanced national interests. The UNHCR was often able to draw upon this combination of appeal to values and interests to facilitate international cooperation at moments of crisis.

Today, only a minority of states appear to morally value refugee protection. Increasingly greater numbers of even liberal democratic states call into question the relevance of the 1951 Convention,

and refugee protection is subordinated by national security and immigration concerns. Meanwhile, the nature of "political utility" has changed. Refugees continue to be instrumentalized by political elites, but the trend now is that the political value of refugees is viewed as more about stirring xenophobic sentiment and mobilizing populist nationalism within domestic politics. As noted by Matthew J. Gibney in 2001, "as asylum becomes part of the cut and thrust of domestic politics, government leaders [find] themselves facing more pressures to restrict entry. With little incentive to resist…governments [have] implemented an increasingly retrograde set of control measures to prevent and deter the arrival of asylum seekers" (Gibney 2001, 7). Eighteen years later, the trend continues.

Indeed, certain structural features in world politics suggest that these trends are more than simply fleeting. Historically, the vitality of the refugee regime has been sustained by three structural factors: US hegemony, full structural employment in the Global North and monopoly statehood in the Global South — each of which is no longer present to the same extent.

So, how are these trends playing out within the regime? States are seeking different and divergent goals through the refugee system but have learned to adopt a common language within international institutional debates. Many states now play a so-called "two-level game" (Putnam 1988): using the same language at the intergovernmental level while holding divergent underlying goals at the national level. As a result, common rhetoric masks the divergence of interests, motivations and behaviours, which often have little underlying concern for enhancing access to protection and solutions for refugees.

First, for a growing number of states in the Global North, success in the refugee regime is measured in terms of control and the ability to contain refugees in their region of origin. The political usefulness of the regime stems from its migration containment function. Australia, for example, makes a significant commitment to the UNHCR's budget and to resettlement places, and yet its own asylum policies are clearly driven by a significant immigration control agenda. The same can be said for many European governments, whose backing of the refugee system is mainly a means to "enhance protection in the region of origin" and thus reduce movement to Europe.

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9   For a discussion of generating political will in support of protection and
      solutions for refugees, see Crisp (2018).

Second, many refuge-hosting states in the Global South have learned to engage in performance that is both outward- and inward-facing. Outwardly, government elites see the refugee system as a means to engage in "extraversion": seeking resources and concessions that can be domestically reallocated to garner political support and to minimize the range of costs associated with the prolonged presence of refugees. Inwardly, and notably since the structural adjustment and democratization of the late 1980s, many host states have been forced to be more accountable to their domestic electorates for the allocation of scarce resources to non-citizens. The refugee regime has frequently been used by political elites in the Global South as a means to reconcile this tension between the domestic and the international: to extract concessions that strengthen their own power at the domestic and regional levels (Milner 2009).

The problem is that the confluence of these underlying objectives compounds the impasse of the refugee regime. While the distribution of the world's refugees could be seen as a "distribution of labour" — with states in the Global South hosting refugees, and states in the Global North providing the necessary resources — chronic shortfalls in funding to refugee assistance programs highlight the fragility of such logic. Several major refugee-hosting states argue that while they have implemented the wide range of programs requested by the international community, support from donors remains inadequate and unreliable. While states like Lebanon and Jordan have opened their borders, offered (qualified) economic freedoms to refugees and provided access to some of their public services, they have not received the corresponding support in terms of responsibility sharing from the international community. In the absence of sufficient support from external actors, these states are now suggesting the need for more restrictive approaches.

The result is a growing "trust gap" within the refugee system, in which states are increasingly skeptical of the multilateral refugee system. Meanwhile, intergovernmental debate, such as the efforts in 2018 to build consensus on a new Global Compact on Refugees,[10] continues to be couched in a common language of protection and solutions. States have learned a common, legitimating language that often veils their actual

10   See www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html.

behaviour. These common statements have become the "signifiers" for a range of objectives that in reality diverge widely. While the common language enables "consensus" to be reached rhetorically and on paper, it may do little to concretely change state behaviour or advance collective outcomes within the refugee regime.

Much of the language within current reform efforts represents a positive step forward. The Global Compact on Refugees, for example, reaffirms important principles for international responsibility sharing in key areas relating to protection and solutions, but contains no binding obligations to ensure the reliable realization of these principles. In a context in which the difference between states' expressed commitment and their actual behaviour is increasingly stark, the challenge must be to develop governance mechanisms that ensure that foundational norms and principles translate into outcomes in practice. Here, the Global Compact on Refugees, for example, needs to be supported by a theory of change that translates principles to practice, and by the development of governance mechanisms that can facilitate interest convergence, commitment and compliance. Unlocking such change, this paper's authors believe, depends on broadening the lens of what constitutes refugee governance, and on building complementary governance arrangements that can facilitate cooperation and coordination across the policy fields that underlie refugee policy.

Enhancing Global Governance for Refugees

The overarching purpose of a regime is — or should be — to facilitate collective action in the provision of global public goods. To achieve this, regimes need to include mechanisms and instruments capable of influencing state behaviour, irrespective of the wider political context. In many instances, this mechanism for collective action may take the form of an international institution that can influence state behaviour through expertise and incentives, but it might also include mechanisms to encourage and facilitate political dialogue between states to encourage and incentivize cooperation in fulfilling the objectives of the regime.

As such, the starting point for enhancing global governance for refugees should be to ask which functions effective institutional design and governance arrangements need to fulfill to contribute to this broader goal. The four functions needed to facilitate collective action are dialogue, facilitation, expertise and oversight.

First, a forum for dialogue is needed to enable open and transparent deliberation between key refugee-hosting and donor states and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and refugees themselves. The Global Forum on Migration and Development represents a good template for how such a dialogue can build trust and facilitate intergovernmental consensus building.[11] At the moment, no such forum exists specifically for refugee issues and displacement. The UNHCR's ExCom is a cumbersome governance body, and the High Commissioner's Dialogue is an ad hoc meeting, focused usually on a specific thematic topic rather than on addressing specific refugee situations. As noted above, the UNHCR's ExCom does not provide a forum for political facilitation or the governance of the refugee regime as a whole. Dialogue is needed across sectors, policy fields and organizations, as well as between states.

Second, the capacity for political facilitation is needed. This function is effectively a brokerage role: to identify principled yet practical bargains that can meet states' interests while advancing refugee protection and solutions. In the past, the UNHCR has sometimes been effective in playing this role, notably in the context of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (1988 to 1996) and the International Conference on Central American Refugees (1987 to 1995), both at the end of the Cold War (Betts 2009). However, the refugee regime currently lacks a consistent ability to engage in political analysis, provide clarity of vision, and engage with — and leverage — the divergent political interests of states. Throughout the Syrian and European refugee crises, for instance, the United Nations was limited in its ability to demonstrate the leadership necessary to get states around the table and propose workable multilateral solutions. That said, the role of political facilitation and brokering is not a role that the UN system can be expected to play across all contexts.

Third, capacity for knowledge, analysis and data needs to be developed. Effective collective action relating to refugees relies on insights from history, law, economics, political science and anthropology. It also requires the capacity for ongoing learning, including through quantitative data collection, monitoring and evaluation, along with robust evidence upon which decisions can be made and alternatives debated. Many of these functions are currently missing in the refugee regime, while others — partnerships for knowledge and data management, the connections between information, performance management and a theory of behavioural change — need development. While international organizations may not have the capacity or scope to create internal think tanks, the governance of the overall regime requires the ability to analyze complex information and offer analytical leadership.

Fourth, oversight and accountability are needed to ensure compliance with international norms. There are a variety of ways to achieve this. Currently, the UNHCR has supervisory responsibility for the 1951 Convention, but state compliance with and implementation of international refugee law norms are chronically inconsistent. A range of other tools may be available to buttress compliance and accountability, whether to law or other forms of standards. These include treaty bodies and courts, toward the formal end of the spectrum, or indexes and metrics, toward the informal end of the spectrum. Third-party monitoring and evaluation of the role played by states, international organizations and NGOs could contribute to a system based on constant learning and innovation.

Recommendations

Some of these functions are met to some degree under the current regime, but imperfectly and with significant scope for improvement. Once the key functions have been identified, the next step is to ask where they should reside. While there is recognition of the enduring importance of norms central to the global refugee regime, it is also clear that innovation is required to foster more effective cooperation between states and other key actors, to realize the implementation of these norms. To this end, what actions are

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11 For an overview of the structure and governance of the forum, see https://gfmd.org/process/operating-modalities.

necessary and possible in the short to medium term to enhance the four functions of the governance of the refugee regime outlined above?

New Governance Mechanisms

First, a new governance mechanism or forum is required to facilitate dialogue, consensus building and debate between key actors, in particular, major refugee-hosting and donor states, on all issues relating to forced displacement. Such a forum must go beyond the functioning of the UNHCR's ExCom, and should allow participation by actors engaged with policy fields germane to displacement, such as humanitarianism, migration, human rights, security and development. It should also enable participation by refugees, NGOs, the private sector and other key stakeholders. The forum could become a source of robust debate and innovation, enabling the regime to iteratively adapt and progress. Such a forum could mobilize support for specific refugee situations and for the functioning of the refugee regime as a whole.

To be successful, such a forum must be relevant to the states on whose behaviour the regime most depends. In practice, a relatively small number of states determine outcomes for refugees. Just 10 host countries host 60 percent of the world's refugees. Meanwhile, just 10 donor states provide around 80 percent of the UNHCR's funding and over 80 percent of resettlement places. It is these 20 countries that currently have the greatest impact on outcomes for refugees.[12] Building on the analogy of the Group of Twenty (G20),[13] one could envisage an R20 ("Refugees20") as a potential supplementary governance forum for the refugee regime. The political engagement of these core state actors would be crucial for the success of such a forum, even as the specific membership of the group might change over time to reflect changing realities.

Recent developments may present the opportunity to create new governance mechanisms that perform the function of an R20 within the multilateral structures of the UN system.

Specifically, following the adoption of the New York Declaration in 2016, the UNHCR was tasked with the development of a new Global Compact on Refugees.[14] The final text of the Global Compact on Refugees (UNGA 2018), affirmed by the UNGA through UNGA Resolution 73/151 on December 17, 2018 (UNGA 2019), includes two new mechanisms that have the potential to engage and leverage the interests of key actors within the refugee regime and to provide a context for political facilitation and dialogue, if properly implemented.

First, the Global Compact on Refugees establishes a "Global Refugee Forum" (UNGA 2018, para. 17), a periodic meeting at the ministerial level involving all UN member states and other actors, including the private sector, civil society and refugees. The Forum would meet every few years to leverage financial contributions; third-country resettlement commitments; changes in national policies and practice; and other contributions. The Forum is presented as a mechanism that can engage states at a political level to leverage additional support for the functioning of the global refugee regime.

Second, the Global Compact details how refugee-hosting states can request the activation of a "Support Platform," a mechanism intended to mobilize "financial, material and technical assistance" (ibid., para. 23) for situation-specific commitments to support protection and solutions. During the consultations leading to the Global Compact, the UNCHR proposed that each manifestation of the platform would be activated and assisted by the UNHCR upon the request of host states, and would seek to engage a key group of states and other stakeholders to leverage a range of capacities and interests to mobilize a response to an individual refugee situation.

These two mechanisms could have the potential to create a forum for dialogue, political facilitation and the development of political analysis and expertise — but only if they are developed and implemented in tandem and if key states from the imagined R20 play a leading role in their initiation and support their implementation. In contrast, these two mechanisms will likely have limited impact if they are implemented independently from each other: the Forum would lack the specificity to leverage the political interests of states, while

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12 See UNHCR (2018). This is not to suggest that active participation in the refugee regime should be limited to these 20 states. In fact, as argued in the UN High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing's 2016 report to the Secretary-General, *Too Important to Fail,* the base of traditional donors to humanitarian programs needs to be significantly broadened. Until this happens, however, the traditional donor states will continue to demonstrate significant influence over the direction of refugee assistance programming.

13 See https://g20.org/en/g20/how-it-works.

14 For an overview of this process, see www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html.

the platforms would lack the ability to engage with the range of state interests that could be leveraged to enhance protection and solutions.

Through the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, states, the UNHCR and other actors should view the Support Platform as a mechanism that derives its political authority from the Global Refugee Forum and engages with the full range of issue areas that can enhance protection and solutions for refugees. If key refugee-hosting and donor states both invest politically in the work of the Forum, it has the potential to provide a viable context for meaningful dialogue and political facilitation. The Global Compact on Refugees specifies that the first Forum will be convened in 2019 and will be "co-convened and co-hosted by one or more state(s) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with an invitation to the United Nations Secretary-General to participate" (ibid., para. 17). In this way, the meaning and parameters of the Forum could be significantly shaped by the first states to serve as co-conveners with the UNHCR.

The first meeting of the Global Refugee Forum should launch specific working groups mandated to unlock solutions for specific refugee situations. In identifying the situations that can be unlocked and in forming the membership of the working group to include affected host states; key donor states; other interested states in the region; and other stakeholders, including refugees, the private sector and civil society, such working groups could engage with the range of actors and interests needed to develop comprehensive solutions to protracted refugee situations (Loescher and Milner 2008).

The prominence and authority of such working groups would be enhanced by the level of political support that would need to be secured during the preparations for the Global Refugee Forum itself. At the same time, they would serve the operational function currently envisaged by the Support Platform while providing a concrete context in which new commitments are being sought. Moreover, such a function would help realize an approach proposed by states in

adopting the ExCom's Conclusion 109 in 2009.[15] These situation-specific working groups could effectively function at the level of host state capitals to engage relevant stakeholders with interests in the situation, including refugees, to develop comprehensive, integrated responses. Plans developed by these working groups could then be brought back to the next meeting of the Forum, thus providing a tangible basis for issue-linkages, political facilitation and the additional contributions the Forum is designed to leverage.

Such an approach could provide the necessary mechanism for dialogue, facilitation and expertise — but only if key states demonstrate leadership in implementing these mechanisms and investing political capital in the convening of the first meeting of the Global Refugee Forum in 2019. The success of these mechanisms will also require the UNCHR to allow states to play the leading role in creating opportunities for political facilitation and issue linkages. In this sense, the R20 would be a coalition of the willing, committed to working within the new structures to help create the context in which cooperation may be enhanced and effective outcomes pursued — for both refugees and states.

If, in contrast, these mechanisms prove unable to support the kind of dialogue and political facilitation outlined above by the second meeting of the Forum, it will then be necessary for key states to establish an R20 mechanism, which would function in parallel with the existing decision-making mechanism of the global refugee regime — just as the G20 functions in parallel with the international financial institutions.

Recommendation One: The Global Refugee Forum and the Support Platform, detailed in the Global Compact on Refugees, should be supported by states and other stakeholders as new governance mechanisms that, if combined, could provide the necessary mechanism for dialogue, facilitation,

15 ExCom Conclusion 109 (2009), operational paragraph (o): "While reiterating that there is no 'one size' which fits all protracted situations, *affirms* that good practices and lessons learned in protracted situations could prove valuable; and recommends to UNHCR, host countries, countries of origin, resettlement countries and other stakeholders the use of 'core' or 'working' or 'reference' groups, or other similar mechanisms which may be established in the Field and/or in Geneva as appropriate, as a useful methodology to identify appropriate innovative, practical solutions, built around particular situations or themes, within a sub-regional, regional or multilateral context, for specific protracted situations." See www.unhcr.org/excom/exconc/4b332bca9/conclusion-protracted-refugee-situations.html.

expertise, delivery and oversight. Prominent refugee-hosting states and donor and resettlement countries should lead in convening the first meeting of the Forum in 2019, through which working groups would be authorized by the Forum to work in regions to develop responses to specific refugee situations and to report back to the next meeting of the Forum with proposals that could benefit from political and material support.

Recommendation Two: If, by its third meeting, the Global Refugee Forum proves inadequate in promoting dialogue and the forms of political facilitation necessary to leverage more reliable protection and solutions for refugees, key host and donor states should establish an R20 mechanism, which would function in parallel with the ongoing work of the UNHCR's ExCom.

To be successful, these mechanisms would require the support of a politically engaged secretariat with the capacity to work beyond specific institutional interests, and to identify and engage with the political interests of states and propose forms of innovation that leverage these interests to enhance protection and solutions for refugees. Such a secretariat should also support policy-engaged research, and the capacity to collect and analyze complex data. At the moment, no single organization or network adequately plays this role within the refugee regime. There remains scope for an organization or network to build this kind of capacity, and to create complementary relationships among a range of knowledge functions: data management, research, monitoring and evaluation, and performance management, for example. This capacity may be developed within the UNHCR, but only with mechanisms to ensure that it can function independently from the UNHCR's own institutional interests.

Recommendation Three: Any new governance mechanism for the refugee regime needs to be supported by a politically engaged secretariat that can provide high-quality political analysis and policy-engaged research.

Ensuring Coherence

New governance arrangements are required to ensure coherent and reliable responses from the wide range of actors implicated in the full cycle of refugee movements, from addressing root causes and internal displacement, to marshalling more

robust responses to displacement situations, to making collective efforts to find durable solutions.

Addressing the root causes of displacement necessitates engaging actors involved in conflict prevention, human rights promotion, governance reform and enhancing economic opportunity and inclusion. In order to ensure more robust responses to displacement, protection and assistance needs must be addressed, refugees need to be empowered through cooperation between humanitarian and development approaches, and host communities and states need support from multiple actors. To support durable solutions for refugees, sustained engagement is required from regional and international actors responsible for conflict resolution; peacekeeping; peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction; and human rights monitoring.

This range of functions cannot all be contained within the refugee regime, or even within the remit of humanitarian actors alone. Instead, such comprehensive responses require the sustained engagement of peace and security, development and other actors, both within the UN system and beyond, including through regional organizations. While a central role for states in mechanisms, such as the proposed Global Refugee Forum outlined above, may enhance this collaboration, the history of competition between such actors suggests the need to leverage the authority of the UN Secretary-General to enhance collaboration and cooperation across the UN system.

Recommendation Four: To ensure comprehensive and collaborative responses across all stages of the refugee cycle, governance of the refugee regime should be supplemented by an authority — such as a special representative of the UN Secretary-General for displaced persons. This authority would be tasked with ensuring sustained engagement and complementarity across the UN system and with regional organizations, while also working not only to ensure the sustained engagement of other actors and more predictable efforts to address root causes of displacement but also to respond to displacement once it occurs and work with a broad range of stakeholders to find solutions for displacement.[16]

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16 Such a position could potentially also reinforce the governance of internal displacement. See Kälin (forthcoming 2019).

Accountability

A response to persistent problems with compliance, enforcement and accountability within the existing refugee regime is also needed. States do not consistently comply with their obligations, as detailed in the core instruments of the regime. For example, while the 1951 Convention provides for socio-economic rights, such as freedom of movement and the right to work for refugees, many states do not fully extend these rights to refugees, thus constraining the capabilities of refugees and making them reliant on international assistance. Likewise, while *non-refoulement* is regarded as the foundation of the current regime, many states engage in *refoulement*, either by forcibly returning refugees to countries where they fear persecution or by preventing the arrival of refugees to their territory in the first instance.

New mechanisms are required to ensure compliance with international norms. Such mechanisms should incentivize compliance by providing access to additional forms of material support for high performers, and imposing costs for non-compliance, ranging from "naming and shaming" to more material costs. What are possible mechanisms to ensure higher rates of compliance?

At the formal end of the spectrum, the refugee regime can learn from mechanisms that arguably enhance compliance in other regimes (World Refugee Council 2018). These include the UN Human Rights Council's universal periodic review; the review conference mechanism that supports the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee review committee model. These accountability mechanisms have demonstrated that peer review among states can foster greater compliance. What is lacking so far is the political will to adapt one for refugees.

The performance of states can also be evaluated using indexes and metrics, including those developed by civil society actors. These measures could assess state behaviour according to rights and obligations central to the regime, including the principle of *non-refoulement* and socio-economic rights, for example, allowing refugees the right

to work and freedom of movement.[17] In a more ambitious sense, such measures could also include an assessment of the level of contribution each state should be expected to make to the functioning of the refugee regime, including through financial contributions and refugee resettlement spaces.[18] While the legitimacy of these measures may be questioned by states, they could provide a means of holding states to account by tracking behaviour over time. High-performing states could be rewarded through a range of incentives, while costs could be imagined for consistent underperformers.

Recommendation Five: The refugee regime should establish mechanisms to ensure more consistent state compliance, including through authoritative and legitimate monitoring, enforcement and accountability mechanisms to address the causes of displacement and the provision of protection and solutions.

Addressing Gaps

Finally, there are important gaps or limitations with the regime itself. The most significant gap in the regime is the absence of a binding obligation on states to share the costs associated with granting asylum, despite the importance of international cooperation, as articulated in the Preamble to the 1951 Convention. Given that more than 35 UNGA resolutions have reaffirmed the importance of international cooperation when responding to refugees, it is clear that the norm of international cooperation has been recognized by states, yet the practice of responsibility sharing remains discretionary. Neither formal norms nor informal modes of political facilitation currently exist to ensure consistent and predictable collective action.

There are several possible ways to address this gap. One approach is incremental, through a "Framework Convention for Refugees" that could include a "mechanism designed to distribute more equitably between States the responsibility to provide protection and durable solutions for refugees" (Wall 2017). Such an approach could

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17 See, for example, DARA's "Refugee Response Index," https://daraint. org/2017/01/25/5420/refugee-response-index-rri/, and *The Global Refugee Work Rights Report* (Asylum Access and the Refugee Work Rights Coalition 2014).

18 For example, Oxfam International made a statement to this effect at a side event ("Five ambitions for the Global Compact on Refugees: an operational INGO stocktaking") during the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges on December 13, 2017 (on file with authors).

start with a reciprocal agreement within a core group of refugee-hosting and donor states, such as the R20 noted above. The success of such an approach would encourage other states to join over time, especially if participation in such an approach resulted in material benefits for host states and enhanced predictability for donor states.

A second approach would be to pursue the recommendation António Guterres made in his remarks to the ExCom in October 2015, namely, to draft an additional protocol to the 1951 Convention to specify state obligations relating to international cooperation and responsibility sharing. Given the current level of mistrust between states, however, it is highly unlikely that negotiations of such a protocol among 193 UN member states would result in a successful document.

A third possible approach would be to negotiate side agreements between subgroups of states, so-called "interest-convergence groups," to respond to refugee situations at a regional or subregional level (Hathaway and Neve 1997). Such responses could further cooperation on the principle of "common-but-differentiated responsibility" (Dowd and McAdam 2017), whereby states could provide incentives for other states to fulfill their obligations under the agreement, for example, by hosting refugees in exchange for financial support (Schuck 1997). Discussions on such approaches, however, need to be mindful of past criticisms relating to the difficulty of upholding refugee protection standards through such a decentralized approach (Anker, Fitzpatrick and Shacknove 1998).

Regardless of which approach is pursued, the historical record clearly illustrates that the continuation of a refugee regime premised on discretionary and piecemeal contributions by states will remain inadequate. While the development of mechanisms ensuring more reliable contributions to the costs associated with granting asylum arguably remains unlikely in the short term, it is essential that efforts to develop approaches to responsibility sharing that are predictable, equitable and sufficient in both scope and scale are sustained. Given that the Global Compact on Refugees remains premised on voluntary contributions, further work is needed to address this perennial gap. The ultimate indication of renewed trust between key actors within the regime would be a new political agreement on responsibility sharing, manifest in a binding obligation.

Recommendation Six: Notwithstanding the potential benefits of the Global Compact on Refugees, the reliability of the refugee regime would benefit from additional instruments and mechanisms to ensure that burden and responsibility sharing for refugees is ultimately predictable, equitable and sufficient in both scope and scale.

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About CIGI

We are the Centre for International Governance Innovation: an independent, non-partisan think tank with an objective and uniquely global perspective. Our research, opinions and public voice make a difference in today's world by bringing clarity and innovative thinking to global policy making. By working across disciplines and in partnership with the best peers and experts, we are the benchmark for influential research and trusted analysis.

Our research programs focus on governance of the global economy, global security and politics, and international law in collaboration with a range of strategic partners and support from the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, as well as founder Jim Balsillie.

À propos du CIGI

Au Centre pour l'innovation dans la gouvernance internationale (CIGI), nous formons un groupe de réflexion indépendant et non partisan doté d'un point de vue objectif et unique de portée mondiale. Nos recherches, nos avis et nos interventions publiques ont des effets réels sur le monde d'aujourd'hui car ils apportent de la clarté et une réflexion novatrice pour l'élaboration des politiques à l'échelle internationale. En raison des travaux accomplis en collaboration et en partenariat avec des pairs et des spécialistes interdisciplinaires des plus compétents, nous sommes devenus une référence grâce à l'influence de nos recherches et à la fiabilité de nos analyses.

Nos programmes de recherche ont trait à la gouvernance dans les domaines suivants : l'économie mondiale, la sécurité et les politiques mondiales, et le droit international, et nous les exécutons avec la collaboration de nombreux partenaires stratégiques et le soutien des gouvernements du Canada et de l'Ontario ainsi que du fondateur du CIGI, Jim Balsillie.

About the World Refugee Council

There are more than 21 million refugees worldwide. Over half are under the age of 18. As a growing number of these individuals are forced to flee their homelands in search of safety, they are faced with severe limitations on the availability and quality of asylum, leading them to spend longer in exile today than ever before.

The current refugee system is not equipped to respond to the refugee crisis in a predictable or comprehensive manner. When a crisis erupts, home countries, countries of first asylum, transit countries and destination countries unexpectedly find themselves coping with large numbers of refugees flowing within or over their borders. Support from the international community is typically ad hoc, sporadic and woefully inadequate.

Bold Thinking for a New Refugee System

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) led a consensus-driven effort to produce a new Global Compact on Refugees in 2018. The World Refugee Council (WRC), established in May 2017 by the Centre for International Governance Innovation, is intended to complement its efforts.

The WRC seeks to offer bold strategic thinking about how the international community can comprehensively respond to refugees based on the principles of international cooperation and responsibility sharing. The Council is comprised of thought leaders, practitioners and innovators drawn from regions around the world and is supported by a research advisory network.

The WRC explores advances in technology, innovative financing opportunities and prospects for strengthening existing international law to craft and advance a strategic vision for refugees and the associated countries.

The Council will produce a final report grounded by empirical research and informed by an extensive program of outreach to governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

À propos du Conseil mondial pour les réfugiés

Il y a en ce moment dans le monde plus de 21 millions de réfugiés, et plus de la moitié d'entre eux ont moins de 18 ans. En outre, de plus en plus de personnes sont forcées de quitter leur pays natal et partent à la recherche d'une sécurité, et elles sont alors confrontées aux limites importantes qui existent quant aux possibilités d'accueil et à la qualité de ce dernier. À cause de cette situation, les réfugiés passent maintenant plus de temps que jamais auparavant en exil.

En ce moment, le système de protection des réfugiés ne permet pas de réagir adéquatement à la crise des réfugiés d'une façon planifiée et globale. Quand une crise éclate, les pays de premier asile, les pays de transit et les pays de destination finale se retrouvent sans l'avoir prévu à devoir composer avec un grand nombre de réfugiés qui arrivent sur leur territoire, le traversent ou en partent. Et le soutien fourni dans ce contexte par la communauté internationale est en règle générale ponctuel, irrégulier et nettement inadéquat.

Des idées audacieuses pour un nouveau système de protection des réfugiés

Le Haut-Commissariat pour les réfugiés (HCR) des Nations Unies a dirigé des efforts découlant d'un consensus et visant à instaurer un nouveau « pacte mondial pour les réfugiés » en 2018. Mis sur pied en mai 2017 par le Centre pour l'innovation dans la gouvernance international (CIGI), le Conseil mondial pour les réfugiés (CMR) veut compléter ces efforts.

Le CMR vise à proposer une réflexion stratégique audacieuse sur la manière dont la communauté internationale peut réagir de façon globale aux déplacements de réfugiés, et ce, en se fondant sur les principes de la coopération international et du partage des responsabilités. Formé de leaders, de praticiens et d'innovateurs éclairés provenant de toutes les régions du globe, le CMR bénéficie du soutien d'un réseau consultatif de recherche.

Le CMR examine les progrès techniques, les occasions de financement novatrices ainsi que les possibilités pour ce qui est de renforcer le droit international et d'y intégrer une vision stratégique pour les réfugiées et les pays concernés.

Par ailleurs, le CMR produira un rapport final fondé sur des recherches empiriques et sur les résultats d'un vaste programme de sensibilisation ciblant les gouvernements, les organisations intergouvernementales et la société civile.