

Refugee Crisis in Europe and Turkey: Current Challenges and Responses



OCTOBER 10, 2017

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

Washington: 2017

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
234 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-1901
csce@mail.house.gov
<http://www.csce.gov>
@HelsinkiComm

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The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]. The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 56 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

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Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held at 1:59 p.m. in Room 188, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Nathaniel Hurd, Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, moderating.

Panelists present: Nathaniel Hurd, Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Matthew Reynolds, Regional Representative for the United States and the Caribbean, United Nations High Commission for Refugees; Luca Dall'Oglio, Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration (Washington, DC office); Philip Hyldgaard, Executive Director, A21 Campaign (Via videoconference); and Jill Marie Gerschutz-Bell, Senior Policy and Legislative Specialist, Catholic Relief Services and on behalf of Caritas Europa.

Mr. HURD. Good afternoon. On behalf of the Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, Senator Roger Wicker, and the Co-Chairman, Congressman Chris Smith, welcome to this briefing on “The Refugee Crisis in Europe and Turkey.” My name is Nathaniel Hurd, and I’m a policy advisor at the Commission.

The briefing is being broadcast live at [Facebook.com/HelsinkiCommission](https://www.facebook.com/HelsinkiCommission). And you can also participate on Twitter. The Commission’s Twitter handle is @HelsinkiComm, with two M’s.

In 2015, refugees and migrants began arriving in Europe in especially large numbers, and it developed into the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. From 2015 onwards, there have been more than 2 million Mediterranean Sea arrivals. Greece and Italy were initially the main entry points, with Greece receiving almost three times more refugees and migrants than its Italian neighbor. Now Italy is receiving about five times the number of refugees and migrants by sea than Greece. More than 11,000 people have died or gone missing on the Mediterranean route from 2015 to the present.

As challenging as the crisis has been for European host countries, it is important to note that a refugee crisis is especially acute for refugees themselves. Moreover, when people cross an international border and become refugees, they flee to a neighboring country. Neighboring countries almost always host the most refugees. That has been the

case for Turkey, a participating State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has been hosting more total Syrian refugees than any other country.

The Helsinki Commission held a hearing on the European dimension of the refugee crisis in September of 2015. Today's briefing is an opportunity to learn about the current challenges and responses. The Commission intends to hold a related briefing in December, focusing on the naval, coast guard, and merchant shipping responses to the perilous Mediterranean Sea voyage so many refugees and migrants continue to take.

Before introducing the panel, a few words about the format of this briefing. Each panelist will make opening remarks, and I will then lead an initial discussion with them. When that concludes, you—the audience—will be able to ask questions and make comments. Depending on how much time remains, I will then ask additional questions.

Now to our briefers. Matthew Reynolds, to my left, is the regional representative of the United States High Commission for Refugees to the United States and Caribbean. Before joining UNHCR in 2017, he served as the North American representative for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency. Previous positions include Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs at the U.S. State Department from 2003 through 2009. There he was the principal congressional advisor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and directed all State Department relations and operations with Congress. Before his service at the State Department, Mr. Reynolds spent 17 years in senior positions in the House of Representatives and the Senate, including as Staff Director of the House Rules Committee, and as a professional staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He received his Bachelor of Science in foreign service, and the Dean's Citation from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. Mr. Reynolds is a senior congressional fellow at the Stennis Center for Public Service at Mississippi State University. Although Mr. Reynolds grew up in India and Lebanon, I will say as a native New Englander and descendant of many generations of Bostonians myself, maybe the most important fact about him is he is a native of Massachusetts.

Welcome back to the Hill.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Thank you.

Mr. HURD. Luca Dall'Oglio is the chief of mission of the International Organization for Migration [IOM] in Washington, D.C. He's been chief of mission of IOM at the Washington, D.C. office since 2012. Mr. Dall'Oglio was previously the IOM chief of mission in Haiti. From 2003 to 2010, he was the IOM Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York. He is a sociologist by training, and has specialized in crisis stabilization and post-crisis transition and recovery. His field assignments have included the Horn of Africa, Mozambique, Haiti, Guatemala, and Kosovo. Before joining IOM, Mr. Dall'Oglio worked for UNESCO's regional office for social sciences in Bangkok. Prior to international civil service, he taught and researched at the University of Rome, as well as national and international research organizations.

Philip Hyldgaard, who you can see on the screen behind me, is the executive director of the A21 Campaign. He is a native of Denmark and is based in Copenhagen, from where he is joining us today by video. Mr. Hyldgaard oversees the daily operations of A21 in Australia, Bulgaria, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Thailand, the UK, USA, and Denmark. In 2008, Mr. Hyldgaard and A21 opened the first crisis shelter for rescued victims of human trafficking to provide medical care, accommodation, trauma rehabilitation, life skills, vocational trainings, and legal representation services through

short-term programs. This work expanded to include restoration programs across Bulgaria, Greece, Ukraine, and South Africa. The fruits of A21's work have included legal convictions, a national hotline, awareness campaigns, and key partnerships. In 2012, the State Department honored Mr. Hyldgaard as one of its TIP Report Heroes, an honor associated with its annual Trafficking in Persons Report, for his work in Greece. He holds an advanced diploma in leadership from Hillsong International Leadership College in Sydney, Australia, and served as a key leader for two years in Hillsong Ltd., which led him back to Europe to help launch A21 in Greece.

Jill Marie Gerschutz-Bell is Senior Policy and Legislative Specialist for Catholic Relief Services. She represents this international humanitarian and development organization before the U.S. Congress on appropriations, migration and refugees, human trafficking, and more. CRS is part of Caritas International, a global confederation of over 160 member organizations worldwide, including throughout Europe. From 2009 to 2012, Ms. Gerschutz-Bell served as fellow at the Woodstock Theological College at Georgetown University, where she contributed to and co-edited "And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching." Prior to joining CRS, Ms. Gerschutz-Bell served as migration policy director for the Jesuit Conference USA for five years. Selected as a young leader in immigration by the German Marshall Fund, Ms. Gerschutz-Bell was a fellow in its Transatlantic Forum on Migration and Integration. She has also worked with Casa Alianza in San Jose, Costa Rica, and the International Federation of Red Cross-Red Crescent Societies in Geneva.

Welcome, again, to all of you. We'll begin with Mr. Reynolds and then proceed down the line.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Thank you for the kind introduction.

As Nathaniel noted, I am relatively new with UNHCR, so don't quiz me too hard. I'm still absorbing a lot. And I also want to kind of apologize in advance because I have the feeling some of us may overlap on certain statistics or comments because we're all focused on the same area here. But at least for some of us, we're all one U.N. and partners, so we're all in it together.

As you know, as introduced, I represent UNHCR, which is the U.N. refugee agency, and it's a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. We work to ensure that everybody has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge, having fled violence, persecution, war, or disaster at home. Since 1950, we have faced multiple crises on multiple continents, and provide vital assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless people, many of whom have nobody left to turn to.

By the end of 2016, there were 65.6 million individuals who were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. That's an increase of 300,000 people over the previous years, and the world's forcibly displaced population remains at record high.

To start off, I'd first just like to thank you and thank the United States and the American people for its very strong, continued, extraordinary financial and political support to UNHCR. The United States is our largest supporter and our largest donor, and our work would be impossible without the support we receive from the U.S. So thank you. We're here in Congress. I know it's important. So thank you.

UNHCR's mandate clearly outlines our role in assisting those forcibly displaced. Refugees are specifically defined and protected in international law. Refugees are people outside their country of origin because of feared persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and who, as a result, require international protection. Their situation is often so perilous and intolerable that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as refugees with access to assistance from states, UNHCR, and relevant organizations.

There are other categories, such as migrants. And we have Luca from IOM who is the expert on that.

Looking towards Europe, in the first half of 2017, over 105,000 refugees and migrants entered Europe via three Mediterranean routes, and over 2,400 are thought to have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean Sea. And this is just the first half of 2017. Arrival numbers are up 20 percent higher than 2016, but they have slowed significantly as of mid-July.

Now, why is that? Various factors are likely to have contributed to this decrease in sea arrivals, including increased engagement by Libyan authorities, especially the coast guard, to prevent departures. Changes in power dynamics involving authorities, militias, and smugglers in Libya may also be a factor. But 95 percent of sea journeys have departed so far this year from Libya. The risk of dying is one in 39 leaving Libya through the Mediterranean route.

All routes, including land routes, are dangerous. There'll be numbers thrown around. I'll throw some numbers out at you here. About 12,500-plus have arrived in the EU through the Eastern Mediterranean route, which is Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus; 83,000-plus through the Central Mediterranean route to Italy; 9,000-plus through the Western Mediterranean route to Spain.

These are sort of mixed flows, and you'll see we'll be talking about different types, or different kinds of folks making these perilous journeys. But it's interesting to note, of the flows arriving from Libya, 23 percent of those arriving in the EU from West Africa—that's more of The Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria—qualifying for some sort of international protection, whereas 73 percent of those coming from the East Africa trend—which would be Somalia and Eritrea and so on—qualify for international protection. So you can see there are some differences in some mixtures. Today, the most common nationalities that we're seeing are Nigeria, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Bangladesh, and still the Syrian Arab Republic.

For those who are crossing to Europe via the Central Mediterranean—we believe that greater regional support for Italy is required, as well as increased efforts to address the root causes of movement via Libya, provide support for countries receiving and hosting refugees and transit countries, renew efforts to find solutions and protection for refugees before they reach Libya, and take steps to address smuggling and trafficking.

In July, UNHCR launched an appeal to help provide meaningful alternatives to refugees and others undertaking dangerous journeys to Europe. These include scaling up existing activities or implementing new ones to provide effective ways and means to protect refugees and asylum seekers along the various routes leading to Libya. While European leaders discuss responses to the current situation, more concerted efforts are needed as part of a regional response.

With so many lives at risk, UNHCR, like the others, stress the vital importance of rescue-at-sea operations undertaken by all actors involved. Further work is needed to remove obstacles to existing legal pathways, including family reunification. Greater numbers of legal pathways would offer a feasible alternative to irregular journeys for a larger number of people, something that currently makes more people reliant on smugglers and undermines anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking initiatives. While some progress has been reported, with some states taking steps to investigate allegations of human rights abuses at borders, further measures are required to address the continued reports of such practices in some countries in the region.

For those already in Europe, more needs to be done to strengthen access to asylum procedures and effective protection. This will prevent refugees from undertaking dangerous onward journeys. In addition, further steps are needed to strengthen identification and assistance for unaccompanied and separated children, including improving registration, age assessments, and guardianship systems; access to legal representation; as well as broader care arrangements. Within the European Union, it is also necessary to speed up and extend emergency relocation schemes, as well as ensure timely family reunions and implementation of the humanitarian and discretionary clauses within the Dublin regulation.

Our meeting today is discussing not only Europe, but also Turkey. In Turkey, as you know, there are 3.1 million Syrian refugees and over 330,000 refugees of other nationalities registered in Turkey. That's registered. The Turkish disaster and emergency management presidency is currently managing 23 camps in 10 provinces in southeastern Turkey, hosting over 230,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees. The remainder, well over 90 percent, is spread throughout Turkey, mostly in large urban areas. Turkey remains the largest hosting refugee country worldwide for the third consecutive year. This is a heavy burden for Turkey, and its response is commendable.

The great majority of refugees, as I mentioned, are living in urban areas throughout the country. Whereas the protection and legislative framework is appropriate, with some specific challenges, and access to basic rights for all persons of concern is theoretically in place, these high numbers have placed a strain on national capacities, especially with regard to registration, health and education. Access to livelihoods for all groups concerned remains a major challenge, particularly as the urban refugee populations become impoverished as the situation becomes protracted.

Notwithstanding, Turkey remains committed to host the refugees present on its territory, and has confirmed its open-door policy. In reality, access is given to medical and most vulnerable cases, and the border with Syria, though, is strictly managed. I just want to underline the importance of maintaining opportunities for resettlement and other legal pathways for the most vulnerable among the refugee population, both Syrian and non-Syrian, from Turkey, because this is an important site of international solidarity and responsibility sharing with Turkey. It's important.

I want to bring all this together in conclusion to go back to the global picture, because never before has there been such a universal convergence around the need to reshape how we engage in refugee crises, bringing tried and tested elements and new ones together in one framework. The traditional humanitarian response needs to adjust the Comprehensive Refugee Response framework, which was annexed to the New York Declaration, offers a new model for response. In concrete terms, this process will result in more predictable support to host countries and communities, more resettlement places, and other legal

pathways to third countries, and greater engagement in solving conflicts and their root causes so that voluntary repatriation becomes a real and sustainable option.

All elements must be worked on together with equal determination. Significantly, this is being planned while the Secretary-General's peace and security reforms are taking shape, embedding conflict prevention and mitigation and efforts to sustain its peace as the core task of the United Nations. This is, therefore, a unique juncture, an opportunity that must not be lost. Development action and financing are central to the new model to enhance policy dialogue and to expand service delivery and boost economic opportunities for refugees and host countries. Together, these can build resilience and self-reliance and pave the way toward solutions over the mid and longer term.

Thank you.

Mr. HURD. Please.

Mr. DALL'OGGIO. Thank you. And thank you for your generous opening remarks and thank you for your comments, which very much echoed mine, although I would perhaps focus more on the so-called central Mediterranean route, because that is where migrants, more than refugees, are coming from.

But first of all, let me thank the Helsinki Commission for the invitation and convening this very timely and important discussion. Now we call it the U.N. Migration Agency—since joining the U.N. system in September, we see ourselves part of the broader U.N. community. The U.N., as an agency, is engaged in the promotion of safe and orderly migration policy and practices, being very much an operational agency, and humanitarian response to displacement and forced migration.

As I said in the briefing, nearly 140,000 migrants and refugees have entered Europe by sea this year—until two days ago, October 8th, when I looked at the latest statistics—with over 170,000, or 75 percent, arriving in Italy, the rest being divided between Greece, Cyprus, and Spain. Compared to last year, we had a decrease of almost 55 percent. But they've mostly focused on Greece. In spite of the intensification of search and rescue operations, the human toll remains unacceptably high. And over 2,700 migrants and refugees have died or gone missing along the Mediterranean shores, most of them along the central Mediterranean route.

Only a few days ago, you might have seen in the news, that a Tunisian military vessel had hit a boat carrying some 70 migrants, allegedly all Tunisians. And many of them are still missing, while a few corpses have been recovered. New migration routes are also opening up. And the issue is extremely complex. The demographic and the social composition of the migrants and refugee flows are interesting, but also alarming. Their vulnerabilities are high, and the worst not only because of their source country, but also because of the process of migration.

If I could have a very broad generalization, you could say that while the eastern Mediterranean flows are driven by war and conflict, the central Mediterranean route is primarily composed of West African nationals driven by a complex mix of issues including social, economic, environmental factors, compounded by demographic trends that we can expect to last for the coming decades, as opposed to the drivers of migration from the eastern Mediterranean route.

Arrival by sea through the central migration route by country or region shows the following nationalities in decreasing order: Nigeria, 16,000 this year; Guinea, 1,500; Bangladesh; Ivory Coast; Mali; Eritrea; Gambia; Senegal; Sudan; Morocco; and Ghana. The

central migration route remains rife with vulnerabilities, either because of the composition of the flows or because of the—as I mentioned—the migratory process itself. As many as 75 percent of the children and those who traveled on the central Mediterranean route suffered at least one indicator of exploitation, violence, or abuse, according to a joint U.N.-UNICEF report, “Harrowing Journeys,” we just released a few weeks ago.

In terms of policy and relations with the European Union, the complexity of irregular migration flows across the Mediterranean and through Northern Africa requires a comprehensive approach in the broad partnerships between countries or regions of transit and destination as well as civil society, diaspora, academia, private sector. Since 2015, IOM has been deeply engaged in various aspects related to the development of the European agenda on migration, either as a provider of policy recommendations or as an operational partner.

It may sound obvious, but it’s important to reaffirm that in this context the U.N. overarching view is that the goal of sound migration policy should not be a reduction of irregular migration or address security concerns, or combat transnational organized crime. Rather, successful policy must be based on ensuring all of the above in a manner that upholds the migrants’ rights and increases their protection and well being.

Here are a few considerations for related policy development. First, demographic trends indicate the Europe needs migrants, including legal pathways for migrations with specific protection needs and vulnerabilities, but also lower-skilled economic migrants. Saving lives and reducing dangerous journeys will require safer legal migration channels available to migrants seeking work, as they constitute the majority of the central Mediterranean route. The number of arrivals over the last few years is manageable for Europe.

For Europe as a whole, acting in solidarity with frontline states, swift implementation of the EU relocation scheme and the realization of a balanced, common European asylum system are key in this regard. At the end of September, the U.N. had assisted 30,000 asylum seekers throughout the European Union emergency relocation scheme from Italy, and most of them from Greece. The scheme was set up two years ago to relocate 106,000 asylum seekers from two frontline states—Greece and Italy. It has been implemented at a snail pace scale.

Efforts to address the crime of human trafficking and migrant smuggling are extremely necessary. And yet, they need to be carefully planned and executed to avoid unintended consequences that may increase the risk for migrants and profit for criminals. Irregular flows will not be stopped by action to combat smuggling and trafficking alone. Without legal avenues and better information delivery, the market for smuggler’s services will continue.

Fourth, we also need to stress the relevance and importance of assisted voluntary return organized by U.N., reiterate that assisted voluntary returns and reintegration options are an important protection measure and a durable solution for vulnerable stranded migrants along the route, which also supports the integrity of the asylum system.

Lastly, the U.N. welcomes the commitment to further increase resettlement as a measure to enhance legal pathways for those in need of international protection and the commission’s proposal for a new resettlement scheme. However, if resettlement is to become a credible option and an alternative for those seeking to risk their lives at sea, the number needs to be far higher than currently planned.

Just a couple of final comments concerning the situation along the central Mediterranean route, principally Libya and Italy. Until the situation in Libya improves, Italy's geographic location and the fact that its ports are those closest and safest for the search and rescue international operations. Now, this should not translate into being the sole responsibility for receiving, assisting, and accommodating people rescued at sea.

While all states must respect international maritime law and rescue people in distress at sea, at the same time the reception of rescued migrants cannot be seen as an issue only for Italy, but a matter for Europe as a whole, in line with European principles and the 2015 European agenda on migration, which more generally aims at strengthening solidarity and cooperation between member states.

Libya remains the most urgent scenario where international action should occur. Saving lives is the highest priority and a legal obligation. It is imperative to help the Libyan Coast Guard to improve their capacity to save lives and respond in a more humane way to the needs of migrants they rescue. While we applaud efforts to improve capacity for rescue of lives at sea, we strongly caution that this must go hand-in-hand with measures to dramatically improve conditions for migrants in Libya. Rescued migrants brought back to Libya must therefore have their rights respected and needs attended with adequate provision of protection and assistance, health care, screening for vulnerabilities, legal options, and other information.

Furthermore, the conditions in detention centers are unacceptable. There must be alternative to detentions. And as I was mentioning before, access to voluntary humanitarian return, as well as resettlement. Last but not least, it's important to prioritize stabilization efforts in the south of Libya, which can also provide income-generating activities for those local communities as an alternative to being involved in smuggling and trafficking.

Thank you.

Mr. HURD. Thank you.

Mr. Hyldgaard.

Mr. HYLDGAARD. I would have preferred to be next to you all. But we have got to thank technology for this opportunity. Thank you so much to the Helsinki Commission and Chairman Wicker and Co-Chairman Smith, and Nathaniel Hurd for this opportunity to be part of this briefing. It's an absolute honor to share this podium, at least virtually, with such distinguished fellow panelists.

And in an effort to not be repetitive, I'm going to attempt to give more of a first-hand encounter from on the ground in Greece, and share some of the stories that we have encountered as a grassroots organization here. As mentioned, my name is Philip Hyldgaard, and I'm the executive director of A21. A21 launched in 2008 as a group organization fighting human trafficking. And today, we're an international NGO based in 12 locations across 11 countries around the world. Focusing solely upon anti-trafficking efforts, A21 has a three-pronged approach to addressing the crime of human trafficking, which is identified as our three Rs—reach, rescue, and restore.

And just briefly, our main strategy is focused on the vulnerable, and provides a targeted prevention in both demand and raise massive awareness. Our rescue strategy targets the lead justice system by equipping frontline professionals and law enforcement with training and resources to see who's identified and assist in prosecutions—and centers in Pattaya, Thailand, and our three national hotlines in Bulgaria, Greece and South Africa.

And finally, our core strategy, assisting survivors to live independently. A21 is passionate to see survivors of human trafficking helped and restored. Every day we're providing community-based care to survivors in six countries, with individually tailored programs to ultimately see survivors live an independent life.

I had the pleasure to launch our first operational office in Thessaloniki in northern Greece in 2008, and managed the office there for eight years. In mid-2015, when Greece was confronted with this refugee crisis, we at A21 found ourselves right at the center of it. At the same time, little did we know that close to a million refugees would arrive that year alone, and right at our office there, comprising 85 percent of all refugees reaching Europe that year. This extreme flow has continued into 2016 and now into 2017. Greece, already crippled by a lengthy economic recession, was at the breaking point around this time.

I'm going to kind of switch gears, get on my screen and show you some pictures. I'll never forget the day in August 2015 when I first arrived at the unofficial border crossing in Idomeni in northern Greece. 15,000 refugees sitting on a dirt field with no water, no electricity, no shelter, no security, food, or medical supplies. It was just complete chaos, as the Greek police could do very little to stop all these refugees from crossing through the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, as another 9,000 to 50,000 refugees would arrive every single day.

I met thousands of Syrians who had the most horrific stories to tell of losing everything, surviving the escape from ISIS, then surviving the journey through Turkey, and finally surviving the deadly crossing in a rubber boat to Greece. I met a gentleman who told me how he had lost eight of his factories back in Syria. I met a volleyball player who was on the national team of Syria. I met a math professor from University of Homs. I met a father who had been forced by smugglers to cross the border in the middle of the night with his five little children. The boat sank, and he simply did not have enough arms to rescue all of his children. I met a single mom with her two children, as seen here in this picture, with her son, with a broken arm and a broken leg, both in a cast.

All these people, rich and poor, all refugees from the same war and conflict. We just knew we had to do something. So that same day we met with the local mayor, and started working with the people who were starting to come on site there, including UNHCR and IOM, the person here in this briefing today. Three days later we installed 500 metric tons of gravel to set the foundation for this camp that later became famous on the news for being one of the busiest crossings in the whole crisis. We also dug a two-mile water line, and designed, built, and installed our first of 15 water containers, all within a matter of 10 days after coming on site. For the first time, these large open containers feature 20 sinks with clean water, solar-powered lighting, which was the first light on site. For the first time, there was a just a little spear of hope on that site, as people could find a safe place with light.

We are not a humanitarian organization. We are fully focused on human trafficking. But we recognized that these were extremely vulnerable people to human trafficking. We knew that human traffickers are always looking for vulnerable people who won't be noticed if they go missing, and that no one would look for. Over the past two years, we have provided 14.8 million portions of drinking water and over 700,000 warm showers to refugees in Greece. But in these water stations, we've placed prevention materials on the wall—on the mirrors and on the walls and inside shower cabins, warning refugees of human trafficking and advertising a hotline number in multiple languages.

Close to 200,000 refugees have been reached with this vital prevention information. This information has already saved dozens of lives, as we saw after a single call to our hotline in Greece, where a refugee called in distress that he and others were held prisoners in a barn and were being extorted for money at gunpoint. We were able to extract the GPS coordinates from the call and pass it to law enforcement, who engaged Interpol, who quickly conducted a raid on the barn and rescued 77 refugees out of this place.

Unfortunately, not so many have been this lucky. Our staff has viewed several human corpses found with surgical cuts right down their chest, with their organs removed, including their eyes, only to be dumped in a bush near the border. Europol estimates that up to 10,000 children have gone missing in Europe with the refugee crisis alone. We simply do not know where they are or what happened to them.

A21 designed a comic book for children that had drawings warning about trafficking and encourages children to stay together as a family. And though we've distributed over seven and a half thousand of these comic booklets to children, refugee children, we cannot reach them all. A21 has trained over 1,200 frontline professionals and law enforcement officers working at camps in Greece on how to identify victims of human trafficking. And we've seen 102 victims become identified and assisted through these efforts alone.

The political challenges around this crisis are, of course, immense. And though the EU-Turkey agreement has slowed the flow of refugees into Greece, the refugee stream continues in both Greece and now more so in Italy, as we've already heard, a crossing that's even more dangerous than that of Turkey because of the distance in the water. I have stood, myself, on the shores of the Greek island of Tilos and witnessed with my own eyes as a boat of 50 refugees arrived from Turkey onto the shore in a rubber boat, which was vastly overloaded, over capacity, and only stayed afloat by its occupants constantly scooping seawater out of it. Each person arriving had paid \$2,500 U.S. to get a seat on the vessel to smugglers. And the whole deal had happened under great stress and often at gunpoint.

Three and a half to 5,000 refugees have lost their lives or gone missing every year crossing these waters. That's over 15,000 people since January 2014. And as I'm standing there, helping refugees ashore in Tilos, I look out and see the Izmir-Tilos ferry cross on the exact same route with plenty of space, safety, and a ferry ticket price of just \$26 U.S.

The Syrian refugee crisis is known as the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War. And the need for support, medical care, food and shelter are still significant. But there is a byproduct of this, and of any humanitarian crisis. And that is vulnerable people, people who are easy targets for traffickers, who are looking for the next prey, whether they sell organs, forced labor, sex trafficking, or other forms of exploitation.

Just last week, a woman from Congo who had been traveling through what she called the Libyan route, through Turkey and into Greece, in a prevention session with our staff that we facilitate, said, and I quote, "Every woman that has passed through Turkey has been a sex slave there," while the other women around her were nodding their heads in agreement, and some were too ashamed to even make eye contact with us. We must not neglect this side of this crisis, and continue to provide protection and safety for refugees, targeted prevention materials, training for frontline professionals to identify victims, and care for those who were exploited along the way.

Thank you for your time and effort to raise awareness and take action around this really important issue. Thank you very much.

Mr. HURD. Thank you.

Ms. Gerschutz-Bell.

Ms. GERSCHUTZ-BELL. Thank you very much, Nathaniel, and to the entire Commission, for hosting this hearing; and, Phil, for those stories, really putting a face on all of the numbers that Mr. Dall'Oglio and Mr. Reynolds laid out for us. I think you've all provided an excellent overview, and so what I'd like to share with you today is the response of Catholic Relief Services in partnership with our Caritas partners along the frontline states in Southern Europe.

As Nathaniel pointed out, Catholic Relief Services is a member of Caritas International, which is 160-some members strong throughout the globe. CRS last year served about 120 million people in 112 countries.

We particularly appreciate this opportunity because two weeks ago Pope Francis launched a two-year campaign called Share the Journey, in which we hope to promote a culture of encounter with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. You have probably heard Pope Francis poignantly point out that our world faces a crisis of solidarity. So it is our hope that a culture of solidarity engendered by this campaign will, in turn, engender greater political will to protect migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, and enable them a path toward self sufficiency.

CRS and our Caritas partners are privileged to encounter and understand the struggles of migrants and refugees in our work. Their physical challenges have been widely reported, but we also hear of some of their psychological scars. Twenty-six-year-old Miray went to Europe from Turkey also in a boat. When she was explaining why she fled Syria, one of the things she said to us was, "you reach the point of 'do I have feelings anymore?'"

So CRS has worked with our local Caritas partners, as I mentioned earlier, in South-eastern Europe. In the fall of 2015, when we started to see the significant increase of asylum seekers, migrants, refugees, the mixed flow into Europe, we worked with these local agencies to help them scale up quickly. Due in large part to the church's unparalleled network, Caritas agencies were able to adapt to the routes of asylum seekers as they shifted in the region. We continue this work today.

I will focus on those partners in that region. Of course, there is the work of Caritas partners in Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, and Germany who have done their own work, of course Germany largely receiving and resettling refugees there.

CRS and our partners have assisted more than 400,000 refugees and migrants across Greece, Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, and Bulgaria, and provided assistance to other vulnerable groups in these countries as well. So that is both short-term humanitarian needs, as well as longer-term assistance to help refugees rebuild their lives. We also are working with local governments to help build their capacity and other NGOs' capacity.

Now, before I go into some of the details of that work, I just want to put it into context of the work that A21 or that Phil just outlined. When we talk about the risk of so many of these migrants and refugees of falling prey to traffickers, we think of a lot of the humanitarian work and development work as protecting these vulnerable populations. If they are in school, if they have work and livelihoods, they are much less likely to fall prey to victims of trafficking.

To that end, I should just note that we deeply appreciate Representative Smith's Trafficking Victim Protection Reauthorization Act this year, in part because it really focuses on prevention of trafficking.

When it comes to food and emergency living supplies, our network has prioritized the use of vouchers and pre-paid debit cards to allow people to buy items in local markets. As many of you know, cash allows families to prioritize their own needs, and it offers a sense of control and respects their dignity.

Caritas Serbia, just to give one example of humanitarian assistance, is present in eight major government facilities, providing food, hygiene items, clothes, laundry services, psycho-social support, and animation activities. Caritas is currently providing breakfast and soup to 60 percent of all refugees coming through the country and 30 percent of migrants. They have particularly focused on unaccompanied and separated children, which we've heard there needs to be more protection of.

When it comes to information integration, protection, and reconciliation, CRS has supported language classes, financial courses, job placement, and other support for refugee integration into local communities. Caseworkers help new arrivals to register their children in school, seek medical help, and access other services.

I should point out, Nathaniel asked me to compare a response in the developed world to a response in the developing world, and this is one area where the contrast is quite stark. In a place like Europe, we can help newcomers to access existing government services. In a more developing context, we would be standing up these services—the health care, education services, et cetera. Even if there are gaps in the government services, very often in the developed world they can stand up and fill that gap relatively quickly, the government can.

CRS and Caritas also provide information, translation, and legal resources to refugees. At least 10,000 people have availed themselves of these services, including gender-based violence and trafficking prevention, and counseling for children and their parents.

Shelter is an area where CRS has a particular sort of signature response when it comes to humanitarian assistance. So across the region we provide vulnerable people with safe, quality, and affordable housing.

In Greece, for example, we have worked with Caritas to provide transitional shelters for asylum seekers. We're using a model that was very successful in northern Iraq, where we identify vacated apartment buildings and then we negotiate with the landlords, so they allow us to use the space and we provide necessary repairs so that asylum seekers and others can live there.

In Bulgaria, Caritas Sofia runs a housing program for refugees who've moved out of camps.

In Serbia, we've renovated 13 barracks and one reception center for asylum seekers. So we estimate that about a thousand asylum seekers are living in these facilities at any given time.

I want to move now to some policy concerns of Caritas Europe. Caritas Europe is the sort of European umbrella of Caritas International. And all of these comments are theirs, because we abide by the principle of subsidiarity, which means they speak for themselves. We do not speak for them. These are all regarding international protection within Europe.

First, as has already been discussed, there is a need for greater responsibility sharing within Europe. It's very clear that because of the lack of responsibility sharing among European governments, we have seen this crisis. It's not a crisis of numbers. This is how Beth Ferris of Georgetown has put it. She says it's a crisis of our system; it would be

manageable if we had a better system. And, by the way, it would protect people further, as Phil pointed out.

As you know, an estimated 80 percent of the world's refugees are hosted by developing countries. And when the flight began into Europe in larger numbers, it represented a mere 0.2 percent of the European population. And yet, most countries—with the noble exception of Germany—reacted with a stance of deterrence and containment. Caritas member organizations do suggest that greater responsibility sharing would help to address this concern. And one data point which illustrates this is that only 28,000 people have been relocated from Greece and Italy out of the 160,000 quota that was agreed to by member states in 2015.

So Caritas, not surprisingly, is of the opinion that the Dublin system is broken, and more solidarity is needed among member states to welcome those in need of protection. As Caritas Europe's Secretary-General has said, we cannot leave refugees waiting for relocation in Greece and Italy. They are very vulnerable and risk becoming prey for human traffickers.

The very related point is that refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, need safer avenues to come into Europe. These tragedies in the Mediterranean have made this point in a very sobering way. Any of us who have kids, I think, when we saw the face and the lifeless body of the young boy who was all over the papers, I think we could always see our own children or grandchildren in his face.

We do recommend—and I'll get to this with the recommendations later—increased and better safe pathways for entry into Europe.

I want to drill down a little bit more into hot spots and the Safe Countries of Origin list. Caritas has stressed the need to abide by human rights and international law, particularly the right to asylum. The 2015 European Agenda on Migration established what they call a hot-spot approach, which aimed to ensure better collaboration between national authorities and European agencies to identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants. This was to facilitate relocation, and the idea was that it would ensure a fair distribution of refugees among member states.

But Caritas is concerned by the implementation of this hot-spot approach, because it has observed cases of illegal practices of discrimination where people coming from sub-Saharan countries are directly issued with a return decree upon their arrival without having even the opportunity to submit a claim for asylum. In other cases, people are detained for months while their cases are being processed.

The hot-spot system is a sort of no-land policy where people are classified on a national basis against international and European law. Caritas Europa believes that discrimination on the grounds of nationality gravely endangers the individual right to asylum and is concerned about the lack of access to asylum procedures. This is very—similar to the concern about the Safe Countries of Origin policy.

EU countries have developed national Safe Country of Origin lists, which presume, based on the general political situation in a country of origin, that a sufficient guarantee exists that neither political persecution nor inhumane or humiliating punishment is being carried out. But Caritas Europa members have observed that asylum seekers from countries of origin deemed safe receive less favorable procedural treatment than those from non-EU countries. If applicants from safe countries are unable to provide sufficient evidence to refute the presumption of safety in their cases, their claims can be judged as

unfounded or manifestly unfounded. They consequently become subject to accelerated procedures or shortened periods for appeal.

The concept of safe third country is effectively, therefore, being used to delineate en masse entire populations of people perceived as worthy of receiving asylum protection from those considered safe to return home.

So we offer seven recommendations. First, Caritas urges the European Commission and European agencies to stop the hot-spot practice and to ensure that the right to individual examination of applications is guaranteed.

Caritas urges European agencies working in hot spots to inform asylum seekers on procedures such as collecting private data and taking fingerprints.

Caritas urges the Commission and EU member states to refrain from using the Safe Country of Origin concept, including through the adoption of national lists.

Caritas urges EU member states to expand safe and legal pathways, including through resettlement, humanitarian visas, humanitarian corridors, family reunification or community sponsorship schemes.

We at Caritas also encourage the EU to strengthen its responsibility-sharing agreements among member states. And in a related measure, we encourage all receiving governments, including the United States and the EU, to support a robust global compact on refugees that ensures responsibility sharing and protection of vulnerable migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Sixth, CRS urges all donor governments, including the U.S. and European governments, to fully and robustly fund international humanitarian and development assistance to refugees and asylum seekers and the communities which host them. It should be noted that the U.S. Congress has responded in recent years to the increasing needs, and we urge them to continue that. We also urge Congress to work with the Trump administration to implement the reforms that were outlined at the World Humanitarian Summit last May of 2016.

I'll leave it at that, Nathaniel, because I know we're short on time.

Thank you.

Mr. HURD. Thank you.

As I mentioned at the top, I'll lead a discussion in the beginning. I'll ask each of our speakers, in the order in which they spoke, two baskets of questions. And then we'll open it up to questions from the audience. I'll say now and remind you that if you could come to the microphone when it's time for audience questions, we would be very grateful. Otherwise Mr. Hyldgaard won't be able to hear you and we won't pick up the audio for our video.

So starting with you, Mr. Reynolds, you mentioned the need to support Italy in particular. There has been that reverse numbers-wise from Greece as the initial main point of entry to Italy. What do we know about why that shift has taken place?

And then, secondly, governments are making decisions about refugees and migrants in the broader context of very real security challenges. Groups like ISIS have stated very publicly that they intend to use large flows of people as cover for sending operatives to Europe. Obviously, safety and security is one of the primary functions of government. And so I'm wondering in particular, when UNHCR engages with governments, what are the primary security concerns that they raise specifically related to refugees? And in UNHCR's view, what do you think is the best way for them to address those issues while

at the same time meeting and respecting their obligations related to refugees? So that's your basket.

Mr. Dall'Oglio, you mentioned sea rescues and your recent reports. We are, as I indicated, going to be having a briefing here at the Commission in December focusing specifically on the response of navies, coast guards and the merchant shipping industry.

What is IOM's assessment of the response from those different actors to date? Are there ways that you think that they can and should improve? How do you think governments like the United States, which has ongoing relationships, particularly with its counterpart navies and coast guards, can work with them to help strengthen their response?

I want to ask a version of the question that I just asked Mr. Reynolds about security. You had sort of indicated that, in the view of IOM, the basis of sound migration policy should be sort of the rights and the welfare of the migrants and of the refugees. But again, at the same time, this is happening in the broader security context, debates and discussions within governments themselves, within their countries, and then also between governments.

So, similarly, how would you recommend they best address the security concerns that you know they have and are going to address, while at the same time respecting the rights of and their obligations in particular of refugees?

For you, Mr. Hyldgaard, the risk of trafficking obviously doesn't start when somebody arrives in Europe. It starts often in the country of origin. I'm wondering if you might be able to walk us through the different risks that refugees face, starting in the country of origin, to human trafficking. Then specifically, what can be done at sort of each point along the way, from country of origin to country of destination, to try and help prevent and mitigate some of those risks?

There was something—I'm trying to remember if you said this in your oral remarks—certainly it was something that came up in our exchanges prior to this. You mentioned that Europol estimates that up to 10,000 children have gone missing in Europe through the refugee crisis alone. We simply do not know where they are. That's obviously a startling and striking statistic.

Did most of these children arrive in Europe already unaccompanied, or did they arrive with an adult and were eventually separated from that adult? Who is doing what to find these children? And then what happens when a child is found, especially to reunite the child with the family?

Then for Ms. Gerschutz-Bell, you mentioned two of the core principles of Catholic social doctrine, subsidiarity and solidarity. You mentioned the response of Caritas, but particularly with an eye towards subsidiarity, there has also been a response from individual dioceses, individual parishes, convents, monasteries, et cetera. I'm wondering if you could say a little bit about that as well.

Then also, related to the issues that you raised regarding how individual countries, sort of on their own but also in relation to other countries, how they sort of manage refugee flows, how many people they accept in a given year, et cetera. I'm wondering in particular what you think the role of civil society should be in those debates and discussions. They're obviously happening at a governmental level. What's the role of civil society?

One final note: If any of you would like to field a question that may not have been given to you directly but was posed to somebody else, please feel free to do that. So please.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Great. Thank you.

With regard to Italy versus Greece, sometimes there are lots of answers. I think part of the answer comes to the nature of the conflict in Syria, where you've had changes in that conflict. You had a very, very large flow of people, but various borders and ways to escape Syria have been closed where they weren't before; for example, the Lebanese border. And there's more restrictions and difficulty getting to the Turkish border. So you have a change in some of that nature.

You also have perhaps been looking more as the Libya route as the easier access today for flows of people, where it's harder relative to the Turkish agreement, the Dublin agreement, and the Turkish—more individuals staying in Turkey and tightening of other borders. Libya is pretty conflict-open, so there's a lot of different areas that people are going through there. Remember, I pointed out that 73 percent of that eastern African flow are people still in search of protection. The flow that they're coming with, whether it's from South Sudan or from Somalia and so on, is coming up through Libya, where conditions are appalling, but they're there. That's the flow.

Just because, in a way, the nature of the various migrants and refugees, though some of their origins and so on may have changed, there's still a significant amount of people in dire need of international protection. They're trying to find the safety, and that is Europe. When one is tightened up, the other becomes more of a flow.

So that kind of segues maybe into national security. You know, UNHCR has always recognized, and I think we all recognize, that individual countries certainly have the right to protect their borders and need to protect their borders, and national security is very important. And there's a couple of steps that are involved.

First of all, you have to look at the nature of who the refugees are. The vast majority are women and children. And that's not really a strong national security challenge if you're a six-year-old coming off of a rubber boat. We still recognize very much that there are national security concerns. That's where the national governments in Europe and others are going to be doing their screening and checking and so on.

Another answer, though, partly is that you need to have a little bit of a multilayered approach to some of this as well. You look at the flow that's coming through Libya, which is 95 percent of the sea route today. One of the things that UNHCR and others, IOM, we're all looking at is trying to also address the origins and the flow of people.

Once you get to Libya, you are already in a very, very dangerous and difficult situation. We'd like to try and see if we can't help the capacities of the original transit countries, resettlement and safe haven in places like Niger or Mali, where there can be some capacity.

Just to use an analogy, we kind of have that situation almost leaving from Central America today, where people are finding, in the transit country of Mexico, safe haven and asylum. So the same kind of regional approaches can also work in Africa. But we also recognize security is a very important factor. But I think we should also look at again really who comprise the demographics of most of these—particularly the refugees, which is what we're focused on. They are the most vulnerable of people. They're fleeing for a reason. They're not the combatants. It's an important issue, but that shouldn't be used as a red herring or as a façade to say we can't help, we can't do anything, we can't allow people access.

Mr. DALL'OGGIO. Thank you for your question.

Mr. HURD. Please.

Mr. DALL'OGGIO. Briefly, on the response and search-and-rescue operations, we've been critical of the reduction of the scope and the mandate of search-and-rescue operations carried out by EU member states. We've been advocating for Triton operations to have a larger scope, more resources, and increased outreach to areas outside the territorial waters.

I think, to a certain extent, some of this criticism that has been voiced by civil-society organizations like IOM has been heard. Now we need to work with coast guards of the participating countries to ensure that the standards for search and rescue are well kept, that there are trained personnel onboard, that operation of interdiction and disembarkation takes into account vulnerability of migrants, how to distinguish among the possible migrants on board those most in need of protection. These are all areas where we are working on. We ourselves were recently engaged jointly with NATO in some of this training for staff onboard of these vessels, and particularly when operations include also the coast guards or the navy of northern African countries, which is particularly relevant.

Now, here is also an area where, of course, countries such as the U.S. can have an important function in mentoring and providing technical assistance to countries of the southern Mediterranean shores to make sure that both technically and in terms of capacity is adequate to factor humanitarian concerns into their operations, I think, is a very important area of international and bilateral/multilateral cooperation for the U.S. also.

Now, looking at the security concerns, I think in some ways I would also echo my friend from UNHCR. I mean, obviously, the issue is not to operate in a crisis mode but to operate in an orderly, safe, regular mode. And there are ways of turning away from the current state of affairs and promote legal pathways to migration, working directly in the countries of origin. This has been done in the past in Europe as well.

Everybody might recall the migration from Albania when thousands of people boarded vessels to reach in that mode Italian shores. Eventually a number of programs from Tunisia and from Albania were set up where people would have access to quota or other systems of managed labor migration, which now can extend also to countries of West Africa. As already has been said, once people are already on their way through Niger and Libya, most of the damage has already been done. People will be, obviously, subjected to smuggling and trafficking links, and exposed to operations that, of course, are, by definition, irregular and dominated by criminal gangs, often with the support of local powers.

So intervene at the source, trying to set up regular migration channels, trying to promote labor migration and other forms of migration, whether it's a student visa, family reunification or other aspects. Also work with the national authorities and border communities on immigration and border-management systems throughout the countries of the migration flows.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Hyldgaard?

Mr. HYLDGAARD. Yes. To your question about the risks that are involved that refugees are facing both in country of origin, on their way through are obviously multiplied and will also, lastly, reflect what route they take, what their country of origin is, because human traffickers are very clever in exploiting the unique vulnerabilities of individual ethnicities. It can be cultural views. It can be religious views. It can be, obviously, their financial situation. Poverty is obviously the biggest factor and vulnerability when it comes

to human trafficking, as people are searching for a better life, a better opportunity, which leaves them very vulnerable to human trafficking of all kinds and make them prepared to take a certain amount of risks, as would be natural, to find a better life.

I would say in the country of origin, some of the most significant risks are schemes of jobs or employment offers, or even studies in Europe that are being sold to them. It could be for example, they are in a poor situation. This could happen in the streets of African countries or even the Middle East. A smuggler will tell of a very lucrative opportunity to basically make it to Europe. In some countries that, for example, have a religious belief in, for example, voodoo, voodoo schemes and so on, will undergo oaths and what have you before they will go on their journey, which will turn on them later on to exploit them.

But also, as refugees are traveling through these countries and transiting through, their risks can change. We have many examples of traffickers and recruiters working within refugee camps. We were even involved in a situation where a recruiter was dressed and posed as a doctor within the camps, offering help, and through that were recruiting and offering fake opportunities and ways into Europe.

We have many examples of that, and especially in Greece now, where their northern border has been closed since early last year. You have a lot of refugees who were told and informed they had family members ahead of them showing how they could travel through Greece, and further into the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and into Western Europe, and suddenly overnight this border closed and now they're kind of stuck in Greece.

And so, of course, there are official processes to move refugees and for them to find asylum. But, obviously, if you already have X amount of family members sitting in, let's say, Germany, they're quite eager to get out of these refugee camps and be reunified with family members. And this process can, of course, take a few months. And so if someone walks in with an offer of, "I can bring you to Austria, I can bring you here, I can create documents for you for a very cheap price," then that is a very lucrative opportunity for someone, and again they are at the complete mercy of their smugglers, who can easily take advantage of them. Again, many, many stories, and unfortunately so many stories we never get to hear because they literally will end up in the situations.

And then, finally, of course, upon arrival, as they're going through their asylum process, many, of course, aren't allowed to work or hold a job, and are trying to support family members who may be left behind. And again, they are very vulnerable to job offers. It could be in lumber or in the sex industry, and will have very little security or perhaps an inherent fear of authorities or police, and feel that they have no choice but to do exactly what these traffickers are saying.

As to your other question of the number that I quoted in my statement from Europol, this was first reported about a year ago by The Guardian newspaper. It's actually a very low number if you look at some of the numbers that have come out recently. UNICEF in May reported that 170,000 unaccompanied minors have filed for asylum in Europe alone. And so 10,000 would be a very low number, and would really reflect unaccompanied minors that simply are unaccounted for.

What happens to them and what efforts are taking place is really hard to say. Specifically in a general term, that depends on what's happening in each country. But I would highlight Red Cross's efforts in family reunification. Red Cross will be present in many

of these camps and places. Besides, there are other great organizations who will have international resources to connect unaccompanied minors with family if they succeed. But that's all dependent on families being alive and being able to report that they're missing their children, and through that can be connected if these children are found.

It really highlights the extreme vulnerability that is there. The difference between a person going missing, let's say, from my own country, in Denmark, where every single news outlet will be talking about nothing else if one person goes missing, and here we have literally thousands of children that have gone missing and we never hear about it, we don't know their names, and there are no pictures on milk cartons or on websites about anyone looking for them. So this is a very serious situation.

Mr. HURD. Thank you.

Ms. GERSCHUTZ-BELL. Thanks, Nathaniel, for those questions.

In the church, Pope Francis is sort of somewhat famous as saying pastors should smell like sheep, meaning that they should really be out amongst their flock as pastors sort of dealing with the everyday life that people are dealing who worship in the church. I think that's very applicable when we look at how he led the church's response to the flight of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers into Europe.

He called on the bishops throughout Europe to have their diocese take up his call to express the gospel in concrete terms and take in a family of refugees. And he even took in two refugee families into the Vatican, which those of you who have been there know is very small, actually, in terms of physical space. He said it's not enough to have courage, you hang in there, but we actually have to do something about it.

So to your question about, you know, the solidarity, based on that call, parishes, monasteries, diocese throughout Europe did respond. We've seen it here in the United States too. Just to give one example, aside from Europe, there is a diocese in—I think it's Nebraska; I've got to double-check—where the parishes are taking up regular collections and providing assistance to some of the refugee-hosting parishes in Lebanon, so directly sending support and assistance.

I think that answer very much leads to my answer to your second question about the role of civil-society organizations as governments look to managing refugee flows. For those of us on the ground, like Catholic Relief Services, we do believe we have an obligation as encountering the most vulnerable to speak up when governments are failing to meet their obligations or what they have promised to do. Sometimes it's easier to be the people on the outside, right, because the government can get 90 percent of the way there. And we're going to say here's the 10 percent where you're failing. But we do believe that that's our job.

Then faith-based organizations like Catholic Relief Services also think that an additional part of that work is to make the moral arguments, to help people see what does it mean to be a good society and to respond well and call those governments to live up to the better parts of who we are as human beings, particularly in places that are wealthier. The church has always maintained that wealthier countries do have an obligation to help those in need. This comes out in all kinds of policy ways.

So while the church does acknowledge that governments have not only a right but a responsibility to protect their borders, ultimately it calls on governments to weigh their need to respond to people in need and the sort of ultimate moral law with national laws, which would argue for closing borders.

Mr. HURD. Thank you.

I have many more questions, but I will leave them for another time.

Well, again, I want to extend my thanks to the panelists, both those here physically present and those being beamed in all the way from Denmark late at night. Thank you for sticking with us.

I particularly want to thank Commission Chairman Wicker and Co-chairman Smith for their support for this briefing; and also my colleagues Stacy Hope, Jordan Warlick, and Mae Dewhurst for their help in pulling it together.

Thanks again to all of you for being here today. Thank you. [Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 3:18 p.m., the briefing ended.]



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