

Terms of Reference

Law and Politics of “safe zones” and forced return to Syria

Part 2: Refugee politics, refoulement and safe zone scenarios in Lebanon

Introduction

As the Syrian crisis enters its seventh year, more than half of the Syrian population has been displaced by the violence with a large number of them residing in Syria’s neighbouring countries. Turkey (2.9 million registered Syrians), Lebanon (1.01 million registered Syrians) and Jordan (657 thousand registered Syrians)¹ are currently hosting the largest number of Syrian displaced. But as displacement becomes more protracted and a sustainable solution to the crisis remains unsure, popular support for the large scale presence of Syrian displaced in neighbouring countries is reducing. As a consequence, calls for returning Syrians to their home country – including to designated “safe zones” – have been increasing.

This prompted the Durable Solutions Platform to develop a study to unpack the political dynamics behind the push for return to Syria from neighbouring countries and develop different returns scenarios result from this push. To do so, the research will have three major components:

1. Analysis of past experiences with “safe zones” from a humanitarian perspective including practices related to the return / refoulement of displaced to these areas
2. Analysis of refugee politics in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, including deportation / refoulement practices
3. Future scenarios for forced return to Syria, including through the establishment of so-called “safe-zones” in Syria

This consultancy relates to points number (2) and (3) and entails an analysis of refugee politics and refoulement practices in Lebanon, identifying different scenarios of how safe zones may become part of these policies.

Purpose of the study

The Durable Solutions Platform was established with the objective to do research that assists humanitarian actors in developing long-term strategies for Syrian displaced in the MENA region. In this regard, research into political processes that impact on future solutions scenarios forms a key output area. The purpose of this research project is to assess how evolving policies impact future returns scenarios for Syrian displaced. The research outputs would help humanitarian actors to apply the principles for voluntary, safe and sustainable returns, which forms a key concern of the Durable Solutions Platform. The research will form a starting point for dialogue with stakeholders on the principles for voluntary, safe and sustainable returns.

Research questions

¹ Numbers per March 2017, UNHCR, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

Further to the research aims mentioned above, the research project as a whole will address the following research questions. This particular consultancy is expected to address the research questions under part (2) below, for Lebanon:

1. Analysis of “safe zones” from a humanitarian perspective

- What is the legal framework for refugee returns to countries experiencing active conflict, including the establishment of “safe zones”?
- What were political drivers behind the establishment of safe zones in the past and how were these zones operated?
- How was return of displaced to these safe zones organized and how did humanitarian actors respond?
- What lessons can be drawn from past safe zones?

2. Analysis of refugee politics in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan

- **What are the key drivers of political decision-making regarding Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey?**
- **How has the national legal framework that governs national refugee policies developed as a result of these drivers?**
- **What patterns can be observed in deportation / refoulement practices regarding Syrians in the past years and how will these likely develop in the future?**
- **What are major political and social trends and how are these expected to impact on long-term scenarios regarding refugee policy and protection?**

3. Future scenarios for forced return to Syria

- What different scenarios exist for the establishment of “safe zones” in Syria and the return of displaced?
- How can lessons from past safe zone experiences be translated into recommendations for the Syrian context?

Output of the consultancy and linkages with the wider research project

The research under this consultancy is expected to result in a paper that addresses the abovementioned research questions on the basis of literature review with respect to the Lebanese context and, if needed, data collection through interviews. The anticipated length of the paper is around 10,000 words.

The paper forms part of a larger research project that is anticipated to generate three additional papers (a lessons learnt paper from past safe zones and case studies on Lebanon and Jordan). The paper will be published together with these additional papers in a comprehensive report, which will be translated into Arabic. Coordination between the different parts of the research project will be done by the Durable Solutions Platform and will require the consultant’s participation in an inception meeting (end-April), a findings meeting once papers are near-completed (between end-May and mid-June) and a launch event (early July). These meetings are anticipated to be in Amman or another city in the Middle East and any costs associated to travel and logistics will be covered by the Platform.

Work plan and expected time frame

The work plan is anticipated to contain the following components:

Component	Maximum time anticipated
Inception meeting	1 day
Desk research	5 days
Fieldwork / interviews	7 days
Analysis and write-up	8 days
Findings meeting	1 day
Launch event	1 day

Time frame for deliverables:

Contracts granted	Wednesday 19 April
Inception meeting	Tuesday 25 April
Draft paper / initial findings	Friday 26 May
Findings meeting	Between 26 May and 10 June
Launch of the report	Between 3 July – 7 July

Profile of the consultant

The consultant must have demonstrated expertise on the national political context, in particular pertaining to refugee policy. Research experience on refugee politics, a track record of relevant publications and a demonstrated ability to do policy relevant research are essential for this consultancy.

Call for proposals opens	Friday 7 April
Call for proposals closes	Friday 14 April
Contracts granted	Wednesday 19 April

Documents to be submitted:

- Organization profile and cv of researcher / researchers
- Short work plan (1 page) and budget
- Sample of comparable work