



Ban Ki-moon Calls for UN to Expand Legal Pathways for Syrian Refugees

Speaking at the UN's "High-Level Meeting on Responsibility Sharing for Syrian refugees" in Geneva on March 30, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said, "the United Nations must do everything in its power to help Syrian refugee children — and all refugees." Among the steps Ban proposed was "expanding legal pathways for refugees into a greater number of countries."



Ban said: "We are here to address the biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time."

The refugee crisis to which Ban referred began in 2011 when large numbers of refugees began fleeing the civil war in Syria. However, it reached mammoth proportions in 2015 when more than a million migrants and refugees crossed into Europe. While EU nations initially welcomed the refugees, the ceaseless wave of tens of thousands of them finally placed an unbearable burden on the host nations. Incidences of lawlessness and crime among the migrants have spread, budgets have stretched to the breaking point by providing services to the refugees, and the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels by members of ISIS who entered Europe along with the refugees has caused widespread fear.

During his talk, Ban stated that the "international community" launched a new approach to refugee-related issues at the London Conference on Supporting Syria and the Region last month. This approach, he said, is based on three broad principles:

First, we must give Syrian refugees hope of a better future, and the tools to build lives for themselves. We are working with our partners on initiatives that should create job opportunities and get all Syrian children back into school.

Second, we must give greater financial and political support to the communities that are hosting them, so that they are stronger and more resilient than ever.

And third, we must share the responsibility, including by expanding legal pathways for refugees into a greater number of countries.

Ban announced that he will be convening the World Humanitarian Summit on May 23-24 in Istanbul, where refugee displacement will be high on the agenda.

That summit, said Ban, will be followed by a gathering of world leaders at the High-level summit of the General Assembly on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, in September, and the United States Presidential Summit on Strengthening the International Response to the Global Refugee Situation, to be convened by President Obama.

A post on the State Department website notes: "President Obama will host a Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis during high-level week at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016."



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Some of what Ban said was encouraging. He noted that last month in London “donors generously pledged \$11 billion at the International Conference on Supporting Syria and the Region.” However, it was not stated how much of this amount came from governments and how much (if any) came from private donors. The United States announced in February that it would provide an additional \$925 million in aid with the Secretary of State John Kerry saying \$600 million would go to the UN. This is problematic on two accounts. First, while private donations to charity are always to be commended, foreign aid of any kind is not authorized by the U.S. Constitution. Second, it is even worse for our government to give money to the UN than directly to humanitarian NGOs, since the UN has a history of using its resources in a manner that threatens the national sovereignty of its member nations.

As Ban attempts to marshal the resources of the UN to deal with the refugee crisis, it is worth consider some statements made by former Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) in an article posted by *The New American* last September: “[The Real Refugee Problem — and How to Solve It.](#)” Paul notes, in part:

The reason so many are fleeing places like Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq is that US and European interventionist foreign policy has left these countries destabilized with no hopes of economic recovery. This mass migration from the Middle East and beyond is a direct result of the neocon foreign policy of regime change, invasion, and pushing “democracy” at the barrel of a gun....

Here is the real solution to the refugee problem: stop meddling in the affairs of other countries.

There were two major operations launched by the United States and it allies that caused the destabilization along the Iraqi-Syrian border that led to the refugee crisis. The first of these was the 2003 invasion of Iraq that removed Saddam Hussein from power. In early 2014, with no strong government left to maintain security throughout Iraq, ISIS drove the post-Saddam Iraqi government forces out of key cities in Western Iraq and captured the city of Mosul. That year, the deteriorating situation in Iraq prompted an influx of Iraqi refugees into northeastern Syria.

The second destabilizing operation was U.S. support of the rebel forces trying to unseat Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Speaking on the *This Morning* program on CBS in 2015, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) warned that it was a mistake for the United States to arm the anti-Assad Syrian rebels:

It’s a mistake to arm them. Most of the arms we’ve given to the so-called moderate rebels have wound up in the hands of ISIS, because ISIS simply takes it from them, or it’s given to them, or we mistakenly actually give it to some of the radicals.

Paul said that the rebel fighters in Syria were focused on overthrowing Syrian President Bashar Assad’s regime, rather than fighting ISIS.

It is the ongoing civil war in Syria that has caused so many of the refugees who have fled from ISIS in Iraq and the fighting between ISIS and the rebels on one side and Assad’s government on the other, to flee to Europe. As Ron Paul said, the reason so many are fleeing places such as Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq is that U.S. and European interventionist foreign policy has left these countries destabilized.

Since Ban is so intent on making the UN the champion of these refugees, we must also look at the UN’s role in destabilizing Iraq under Saddam Hussein. On November 8, 2002, several months prior to the U.S.-led invasion that began on March 20, 2003, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1441, offering Saddam Hussein “a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations” that had been set out in several previous resolutions. The resolution stated that “...false statements or omissions



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in the declarations submitted by Iraq pursuant to this resolution and failure by Iraq at any time to comply with, and cooperate fully in the implementation of, this resolution shall constitute a further material breach of Iraq's obligations."

Four days later, President George W. Bush addressed the UN General Assembly and outlined a catalogue of complaints against the Iraqi government, including:

"In violation of Security Council Resolution 1373, Iraq supports terrorist organizations that direct violence against Iran, Israel, and Western governments.... And al-Qaeda terrorists escaped from Afghanistan are known to be in Iraq."

In what has been called his war ultimatum speech delivered from the Cross Hall in the White House on March 17, 2003, Bush cited Iraq's violation of UN resolutions several times as justification for the invasion of Iraq:

"We have passed more than a dozen resolutions in the United Nations Security Council."

"On November 8, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441, finding Iraq in material breach of its obligations, and vowing serious consequences if Iraq did not fully and immediately disarm."

"In the case of Iraq, the Security Council did act, in the early 1990s. Under Resolutions 678 and 687 — both still in effect — the United States and our allies are authorized to use force in ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. This is not a question of authority, it is a question of will."

"Last September, I went to the U.N. General Assembly and urged the nations of the world to unite and bring an end to this danger. On November 8, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441, finding Iraq in material breach of its obligations, and vowing serious consequences if Iraq did not fully and immediately disarm."

Bush lamented that some permanent members of the Security Council had threatened to veto any resolution that compels the disarmament of Iraq: "The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours."

The legality (both under U.S. law and international law) of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq has been questioned by many. Defenders of the invasion's legality have argued that it was fully legal because authorization was implied by the United Nations Security Council.

Americans should be more concerned about the Bush administration's action of going to war without a congressional declaration of war, as our Constitution requires. If he had secured such a declaration, no "permission" from the UN would have been required.

If the UN did not authorize the invasion, however, it certainly acquiesced by leaving the ambiguous resolutions in place and failing to register any formal objection. Therefore Ban's attempts to make the UN into a hero when it comes to the Syrian-Iraqi refugees should be viewed with skepticism, since the UN's role in destabilizing the region was partially responsible for their plight in the first place.

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