



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
*of the United States of America*  
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**Input to the UN High Commission on Refugees:**

**“Youth Recommendations on the Syrian Refugee Crisis”**

**Submitted: October 24, 2016**

**A. Introduction**

The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), a program of the UN Foundation, is a membership organization dedicated to informing, inspiring and mobilizing the American people to support the ideals and vital work of the United Nations. For 70 years, UNA-USA has worked to accomplish its mission through its national network of chapters, youth engagement, advocacy efforts, as well as educational programs and public events. Independent from the U.S. government, UNA-USA and its sister organization the Better World Campaign represent the single largest network of advocates and supporters of the United Nations in the world.

UNA-USA is pleased to send these recommendations to UN High Commission on Refugees.

**B. Methodology**

This input was compiled through the UNA-USA Case Competition at the University of California, Los Angeles. Observations and recommendations are from the Maya Yang, Samantha Libraty, Christopher Warren and Jasmine English, members of the winning team. Participants were asked to share their research related to the topic as well as offer constructive observations, idea, and recommendations.

The findings below are a summary of the solutions proposed during the case competition.

**C. Key Findings**

*“Recommendation on the Syrian Refugee Crisis”*

1. *Relocation*

(1a) Cities, and city institutions, are the key actors that can meet the practical needs of refugees: short-term shelter, healthcare assistance, basic education, language training and so on. Cities, therefore, should play a role in the relocation process that reflects their role on the ground. There are two components to this recommendation. The first centers on the international decision-making process. The majority of decisions are made by national governments, but it is city institutions: school boards, chambers of commerce, community leaders, that have on-the-ground knowledge of what works and what doesn't. Therefore, summits, bilateral, multilateral meetings should involve cities' key figures working alongside European



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and front-line states' national governments. The second recommendation centers on the opportunities for information-sharing between cities, across receiving countries. City governments have knowledge of effective relocation strategies. Sharing best practices offers a promising avenue to speed the replication of these strategies. This information sharing could, for example, take place at an international forum attended by key players from receiving cities.

### 2. *Aid*

(2a) Communities which need the most aid should gain community partners to administer food and medical aid for example. Large-scale aid, such as foreign monetary aid, is still needed to augment projects and support smaller projects. Coordination is key to use aid wisely. One recommendation is to better utilize smart phones and the Internet in order to administer aid. Syria has 13.9 million mobile phone users, which comes out to roughly 81 out of 100 who have access to mobile phones. Refugees are able to connect to aid through communication strategies, such as sending notifications for food aid within a community. It should be noted that the armed insurgency that began in 2011 has led to major disruptions to the network and has caused telephone and Internet outages throughout the country; however, that should not be a factor in using the Internet and mobile devices to connect refugees to resources.

### 3. *Post Conflict Solutions*

#### (3a) Government:

After the end of the war, there needs to be UN-supervised elections created through political process/discourse involving all *Syrian* stakeholders (including opposition groups, army, current government, etc). In addition, the new government needs to ensure the following:

- Protection of all minorities
- Existence of multiple political parties
- Equal (not proportional) representation of all parties in government
- Allowing the people to elect a committee to amend the constitution
- Guarantee basic freedoms - speech, religion, media

Such conditions should be applied through linkage. As international monetary organizations provide reparation grants to Syria, they must do so only under certain conditions: eg. UN-supervised elections, proper use of funds. Upon discovery of 'rule-breaking,' these organizations should stop grants immediately. Such rules should be highly suggested amongst private sector organizations, but should not be enforced upon.

#### (3b) Education:



# UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION *of the United States of America*

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There should be the creation of an international financial institution (eg. IMF, World Bank) dedicated to educational needs. Such an institution should fund regional actors and local organizations. Its provision of funds to Syria's neighboring countries should serve as monetary incentives to permit refugees, displaced citizens to complete schooling (K-12) in their country's schools.

### (3c) Infrastructure:

International bodies should regularly involve groups such as the Future of Syria and their project, National Agenda, in regular peace-talks. Future of Syria's project consists of a diverse group of engineers, architects, conservation/developmental experts that are constantly meeting together and creating mass reparation blueprints regarding infrastructure reparation in Syria. They should be invited to work alongside the political and social experts so they can constantly update their blueprints to fit the various potential outcomes of the war and nation.

### (3d) Economy:

There must be increased international and ground cooperation in economic restoration processes. There risks the possibility of international elites, powerful governments, etc., to provide funds for specific purposes benefiting them, rather than entirety of Syria. Hence, the need for ground, local governance regarding monetary allocation with supervision and guidance of international organizations, rather than specific countries. This ensures that the allocation of funds are used fairly. The ground governance should work with these international organizations and provide bi-annual reports on allocation purposes and results, ensuring transparency and effectiveness of funds distribution.

## 4. *External Influences*

(4a) The Geneva Peace Talks are not talks about peace, they are talks about alliances. Taking advantage of diplomatic alliance forming is crucial because at this point, it appears that we are going to be in a never ending battle with Bashar Al-Assad. Assad has no intentions of stepping down as President of Syria nor is a future democratic election on his agenda at this moment so we must continue to play this diplomatically and not let another leader fall and let a country delve into post-civil war chaos. Coming to the realization that we need to be coming together and pointing our guns at the greater threat, The Islamic State of Syria (ISIS), is the most important aspect. Allowing this terror group to continue to control portions of land to not good for anyone and needs to be addressed immediately. The fracturing of ISIS will allow us to be able to give access to education and resources to the refugees still in Syria that need help.