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Europe's Double Standards for Refugees in The Ukraine Crisis

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Abstract

During the last decades, the symptoms of racial discrimination were shown clearly in the attitudes and behaviors of European countries. The Ukraine crisis has the final touch of racial discrimination against the refugees. This article tries to identify Europe's double standards for refugees who fled from Ukraine as it has been invaded by Russia with a focus on what met the refugees. The color of skin, eyes, and the origins of any person will determine the way the European countries might treat him on borders or inside refugee camps.

Keywords: Double Standards, Refugees, Racism, Human Rights, Europe, Ukraine Crisis.

Introduction

In December 1948, the world witnessed a historic event when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thirty articles focused on ensuring human dignity, security, rights, and freedom. This article attempts to identify the reality of these rights after 70 years of their adoption when millions of refugees may not know about it, and only know about it. This article also focused on double standards in dealing with refugees. The good side of the story is that the European Union has opened its arms to all refugees from Ukraine and provided them with all facilities, including temporary care permits and social protection. Not only that, but senior European officials, including the US Secretary of State, went to receive them in a scene that exposes the behavior of the West towards the suffering of refugees from developing countries,

standing at the gates of Europe, at a time when the United Nations is calling for more humane treatment of all refugees from anywhere and everywhere.

The bad side is there are some mistreatments of the refugees who are not Ukrainians. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has strongly criticized the double standards of European countries towards refugees. Europe has invested all its energy to receive refugees from Ukraine. Rather, it decided to give them temporary protection, work permits, and social welfare services¹. All this happens in scenes that contradict the mistreatment of refugees from developing countries. United Nations statistics revealed that the European Union received, in just ten days, about one and a half million Ukrainian refugees, while the number of Syrian refugees received during ten years did not reach about a million refugees.

This is the premise of the main question in this paper. What is currently happening with Ukrainian refugees is it an example to follow, or what should happen with all refugees? The prominent question here is why this distinction appears in this case.

Good for Ukrainians bad for others:

First of all, it must be said that what is currently happening to Ukrainian refugees is what is stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and this should happen in all cases that cause asylum. The exception is what happened to other refugees in the past years through the international community, which recognized general human rights. The international community and all countries participating in the United Nations must deal with refugees in accordance with these established standards. These standards are respected for human beings, respect for refugees, and taking into account the special cases that occur to them. There are very large financial and logistical capabilities available to the United Nations, as well as to many countries of the world, especially rich countries², to

¹ Jurić, T. (2022). Predicting refugee flows from Ukraine with an approach to Big (Crisis) Data: a new opportunity for refugee and humanitarian studies. pp:6-8.

² Fandrich, C. M. (2012). Refugee resettlement in America: The Iraqi refugee experience in upstate, New York. Cairo Papers on Migration and Refugees, (Paper 1/July 2012).

deal with these exceptional cases that occur due to wars and natural disasters³. This is what should happen and the exception is what happened before the Ukrainian crisis.

The United Nations declared that the European-wide welcome for refugees should be offered to all refugees from everywhere in the world. Statements by some European politicians and media correspondents revealed clear European discrimination in favor of white-skinned refugees, which prompted the UNHCR to demand the West deal more humanely and compassionately with those fleeing their country, regardless of their nationality, skin color or religion. The statements issued by European politicians show that most of them relate to discriminatory attitudes related to the refugee crisis, with which many people sympathize. There are observations that cannot be hidden about these behaviors that express hidden tendencies that this crisis has shown⁴.

A number of scholars have opinions saying that these behaviors are not hidden, but are clearly visible to all. In Europe and the West, white-skinned and blue-eyed people were generally treated in a more positive way, unlike refugees of other nationalities and races. The sources of these behaviors and policies are the adoption of these ideas and the claim that there should be discrimination among all refugees. Even worse, some Europeans say that there must be a division among people⁵. This is evidenced by their statements to the media, and that the standard should not be the same. They believe that there are Europeans and there are non-Europeans.

The recurring question that has been raised recently is whether this new racial discrimination appeared during the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, or is it from ancient times. Historically, it appeared in the US war in Vietnam and in the wars that took place in Latin America and then in Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya, and Somalia. So, what are the risks at this stage, as it appeared on the surface and floated clearly?

³ UNHCR Bureau for Europe. (2013). A NEW BEGINNING: Refugee Integration in Europe, Outcome of an EU funded project on Refugee Integration Capacity and Evaluation (RICE). Financially supported by the European Refugee Fund of the European Commission. Retrieved from: <https://2u.pw/1gFFp>

⁴ Monitor, E.-M. H. R. (2022, March 3). Europe's official, media handling of Ukrainian crisis exposes deep-rooted, racist policy against non-Europeans. Euro. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://2u.pw/DzIAS>

⁵ MacMaster, N. (2001). Racism in Europe: 1870-2000. Macmillan International Higher Education. pp: 78-81.

In fact, there have been many cases in the European community that showed hatred towards some refugees of different nationalities, such as Arabs, Afghans, and other African nationalities who sought refuge in Europe because of some international or local crises in their countries⁶. Western and European readiness to receive white European refugees shows that this was responded to by opening safe corridors for refugees. Eight safe corridors were opened for Ukrainian refugees⁷, but this was not done for refugees of other nationalities, such as Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis, and others. Moreover, there has been no movement in this regard to address these policies that are anti-refugee.

Discrimination of International Organizations:

New demands were launched to explain the discriminatory treatment of international organizations, even though they were originally set up to help and accommodate refugees. This request relates to the discriminatory behavior of these organizations is discriminatory against certain groups of people. What is meant by the racism of international organizations is the quick or slow movement of these organizations to deal with the refugees. Therefore, the phenomenon has taken on an international dimension that is greater than the behavior at the level of a number of countries.

These policies have legal effects and consequences against the people who lead these institutions for the benefit of the people who have been discriminated against. This is a clear violation of the article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. These politicians may be considered perpetrators of the crime of racial discrimination against persons who did not receive the necessary care for refugees and asylum seekers. The reason for the quick or slow reactions of the international organization is strictly related to the countries hosting or supporting financially or creating such organizations.

Calls for refugees whose applications for refugee status have been rejected for a long time began to move to file claims and complaints before the courts to obtain this status and

⁶ Lentini, A. (2004). Racism and Anti-racism in Europe. London: Pluto Press.p:305.

⁷ Malbon, J. (2022, March 11). "we heard bombs": Terrified Ukrainians escape through temporary corridors. CTVNews. Retrieved March 26, 2022, from <https://2u.pw/KDWBx>

these rights⁸. There is even a claim that they can obtain compensation in relation to their case, in addition to gaining the appropriate legal status and human justice stipulated by law. It is strange how international institutions can take sides against the principles for which they were established, by taking sides on the basis of nationality, color, race, and religion among the refugees.

There are opinions among some scholars that the Europeans believe that they are the center of the world by being the dominant and the strongest. They consider themselves better than others, and they talk about an educated Ukraine and a civilized Ukraine is not like other nations from the developing countries that they are less civilized and educated. Such discrimination is very appalling and is punishable by international law. There are clear calls that are politically adopted towards dividing the human being from the first level and others at the second and third levels. When black refugees are prevented from boarding trains and white people are allowed to do so, this is a clear distinction. When the welcoming way of receiving Ukrainian refugees is justified that they are neither Afghans nor Syrians and that we should receive them in this way as well, it is blatant discrimination⁹.

Here are some opinions of some European politicians, officials and others that express discrimination and double standards against refugees:

One of the Bulgarian officials says that Bulgaria is ready to accept Ukrainian refugees, as these are not like the refugees we are used to. These are Europeans, smart and educated, and we are ready to welcome them, this is not the usual refugee wave. People with an unclear past none of the European countries are concerned about¹⁰.

Another example of a satellite channel asking their correspondent why Poland accepts these numbers of Ukrainian refugees while it was standing in the way or refusing entry to refugees of other nationalities and countries, such as during the refugee crisis in 2015. The

⁸ Staff, U. N. H. C. R. (2015, January 10). What happens if my application is refused? UNHCR Cyprus. Retrieved April 3, 2022, from <https://2u.pw/L7BTd>

⁹ Staff, E. P. (2022, March). Fighting structural racism: 07-03-2022: News: European parliament. Fighting structural racism | 07-03-2022 | News | European Parliament. Retrieved April 3, 2022, from <https://2u.pw/d7dBU>

¹⁰ Staff, A. H. [AlHadath]. (2022, March 2). موجة انتقادات واسعة للتفريق في أوروبا بين جنسيات اللاجئين [Video]. #أوكرايا #روسيا #الحدث. <https://2u.pw/JI9uf>

reporter replied: Because the Ukrainian citizen is of course not like the Syrian citizen, the Ukrainian citizen is a white Christian citizen, so entry is allowed to Poland¹¹.

Despite our arrival in the twenty-first century, when researching the origins of this problem, why is this prejudice in the civilized world still constantly practicing the theory of superiority, is it religious, ethnic, or cultural.

These ideas originally go back to the medieval period, when these behaviors and ideas were used against the Europeans themselves. Then it turned toward people of other cultures, races, and religions. Then it was reached to speak about it towards the Arab and Islamic world through the words of some European officials. This is what is heard loudly today on television stations and the media. One of the recent historical examples of behavior expressing racist ideas when looking at the French veto against Turkey with its request to enter the European Union¹². The French argument was that Turkey had a large number of Muslims. In contrast, France and the other European countries accepted it forcefully into NATO because it had a strong military arsenal. Looking at another example in the Bosnia and Herzegovina war, even though they are Europeans, European countries have not dealt with them as they do with the Ukrainians now. Although they are Europeans, their religion is Islam. Therefore, this issue goes back in its origin to an ancient enmity between the West and the East. That is why these behaviors come out again. This is not hidden in Europe. Indeed, the Russian-Ukrainian crisis has revealed the prejudices.

Legally who takes responsibility for these discriminatory prejudices against the peoples of the world? The institutions were established by these countries that practice these discriminatory activities and behaviors against the peoples of the earth. The countries themselves who bear the legal responsibility for the consequences of practicing these injustices are the same countries that violate international laws, local laws, and international agreements that have ratified and adopted them. Europe appears to be a lover of international peace and security.

¹¹Staff, A. A. A. [Akhbar Al Aan]. (2022, February 28). "بيض وعيونهم زرقاء ومتحذرون" .. العنصرية ضد العرب في أوكرانيا [Video]. YouTube. <https://2u.pw/5zero>

¹² Staff, F. (2011, November 25). France says blunt "non" to Turkey. France24.Com/. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from <https://2u.pw/7Uyxi>

Conclusion

The expected result of the discrimination behaviors of Europe in the future will lead to negative consequences in European societies due to the discriminatory policy in these attitudes against refugees of non-European origin. Therefore, European societies represented by their governments should review themselves in this matter. There have already been painful discriminatory incidents of refugees intentionally drowned in the Mediterranean by the Italian police. Other refugees have been detained and rejected at Poland's border and are disappointed¹³. These and other incidents caused the deaths of a number of them, and no one from European countries or from international human rights organizations moved a finger. This is a very serious issue that predicts more serious consequences represented in the expected reactions of the refugees whose rights have been undermined due to the behavior and policies of these countries and international organizations. What makes the matter worse is the absence of international public opinion, especially European public opinion, regarding the refugee issue, whose basic rights have been trampled upon.

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