

ADNAN'S FATHER

Q&A

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1. Who is a refugee?

A refugee is defined by the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees "as a person who has a justified fear of persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, affiliation to a particular social group or political opinion. Anyone who claims to be a refugee can apply for international protection (asylum) but not every asylum seeker is recognized as a refugee. This status has no legal claim and is decided on the basis of the legislation of the country where the refugee applies for asylum. However a refugee is primarily a person who for the above mentioned reasons left his/her country, family and friends to find out a safer place to live.

Whether the refugee is on their journey or is in the country where they apply for international protection, their rights to basic human rights is still the same. In addition to the primary needs of food sleep there are also the rights to feel safe, have a family life, be self-sufficient, be able to communicate, maintain human dignity and be employed in a meaningful activity with the need to belong somewhere.

2. What is Asylum?

Asylum or the term International Protection that is now used, is where safety is provided for people fleeing from persecution. A successful asylum seeker is called a refugee. As long as his international protection lasts, he can acquire permanent residence in and have similar rights and obligations as citizens of the with a few exceptions. Asylum seekers can get a place of asylum as well so-called Subsidiary Protection, which is usually granted for one to three years. In 2017, this temporary form of protection was granted for 118 applicants. States that provide the protection to refugees are called the host countries. Most refugees seek protection in the neighboring countries of their home state. They often live in refugee camps, where they wait for the time when the conditions in their homeland will be improved so much that a return for them will be safe.

3. What is the situation in Syria? How do ordinary people experience the Syrian conflict?

The security situation in northern Syria (Aleppo, Idlib) is not stable even after 8 years of war. Every second person had to flee his home and 50 percent of the country's basic infrastructure does not work. Market prices have multiplied, people do not have jobs, the country is looted and devastated. Millions of people who have had to leave their homes do not have access to basic food, drinking water, shelter, education or job opportunities. The long-term loss of livelihoods, has also affected those who remained in their homes. Continuous fighting and bombing significantly damaged the local infrastructure. Civil services continue to operate in safer parts of the regime-controlled country. However there is poverty coupled with the economic pressure from internal refugees and the forced contributions to the military. More than 12 million people in Syria depend on humanitarian aid. According to estimates 11.7 million people need humanitarian aid, more than half of Syria's population suffers from food shortages and 2.1 million children do not go to school. The fact that 1.2 million people now live in difficult-to-reach areas, where armed clashes are often ongoing makes the possibility of delivering humanitarian aid more difficult.

4. Why couldn't Adnan's father work as a doctor in Denmark, what was his original profession?

To be able to work in a new country is for any refugee or foreigner dependent on many things. The language skills of a stranger in a new country play a big role. If they speak English they have a great advantage, especially in multinational large firms, but knowledge of the local language proves to be crucial in finding a job. Added to this, is the obligation for more qualified professions to recognize a foreign diploma of education. Very often refugees need to sit a probation exam if they want to return to their profession, dentist, pharmacist, etc. These exams take place in the language of the new country and are often designed by local doctors/pharmacists etc who resent greater competition in their field and do not want to take new colleagues into their respective ranks. So Adnan's father needs to master Danish first, and then have his foreign education recognized as a doctor, and then also pass his probation exams. This will probably take a number of years. It may therefore be that in a new country, people who work manually and do not need a perfect knowledge of a new language and a recognized education find work more quickly in their profession. In the Czech Republic, for example, the best goldsmiths include refugees from Armenia.

5. How do refugees most often deal with the course of migration? What indicators could suggest that someone adapts better than anyone else? (E.g. age, trauma, education, etc.)

Refugees deal with their perilous situation in the country of origin by escaping and are generally grateful to the new country for its acceptance and the possibility of a fresh start for themselves and their family. It is always easier if newcomers understand English and soon adopt the language of a new country. What matters is the presence and support of the family, not only of the immediate family, but also of other relatives or acquaintances who have lived in the new country for some time and can explain everything to the new refugees and possibly help them find their first jobs. That is also why refugees most often go to countries where they already have someone. The age also plays a role in integration, the younger people and children adapt more quickly, the traumas experienced make it difficult to reintegrate. The health status also plays a major role, with many refugees coming to a distressed state after a difficult journey or ill-treatment in their country of origin (e.g., war refugees). Non-profit organizations and volunteers are also very helpful in integrating the newcomers.

6. What are the most open and closed countries where accepting migrants is the hardest? Is Denmark different in anything?

Countries and societies that already have a longer-term experience with newcomers and are used to the arrival of refugees and immigrants, tend to be more open to refugees. For decades, Western European countries have accepted refugees from the communist east, including about 200,000 people from the former Czechoslovakia and also refugees from dictatorships and wars in Africa or Asia, and therefore have structures and a culture of acceptance built in. Schools, employers and neighbors in Denmark, for example, are far better prepared for newcomers than people and institutions in countries and cities that have been closed and homogeneous for decades. Economically, the most successful countries are those that can attract and quickly integrate both refugees and the best „brains“ from around the world, and have long experience of such an inclusive approach. The accepting system works well in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, as well as Germany or Switzerland. Problems in accepting refugees are dominant in countries where people and institutions are not prepared for foreigners, or where politicians deliberately label refugees and foreigners as a menace to a society. It is also problematic to place refugees in places where there is a large concentration of social problem such as poverty, social exclusion or unemployment.

LINKS

Association for Integration and Migration www.migrace.com

Centre of integration of foreigners, z. s. www.cicpraha.org

UN High commissioner refugee agency (UNHCR) – www.unhcr.org

Resources:

CSO - Data of foreigners and international protection

EUROSTAT - Statistics of asylum seekers in EU 2013, 2014.

Exnerová,V. and coll. - Global security and development. Available online on

http://www.rozvojovka.cz/globalni-bezpecnostarozvoj_226_21.htm.

OSN - UN Convention on the Status of Refugees.
