

Refugees in Europe

It's Crisis for Refugees and not for Europe

Europe is experiencing significant influx of refugees as a back-lash of the war crimes it committed, while its leader in committing these war crimes, US imperialism, has again escaped due to its geographical location.

Hundreds of thousands of people have forced to leave their habitat in the Middle –east and Africa and to cross borders to reach Europe risking their lives along the way. At least 350,000 migrants crossed the EU borders in January-August 2015, in addition to 280,000 during the whole of 2014. Nearly 60 per cent of refugees are from Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea. They are also from Libya, Sudan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Kosovo, Iraq, Somalia and other countries. All these countries are victims of aggression and civil wars stoked by the imperialist powers.

Most direct routes are fraught with dangers. More than 2,600 people have drowned in the Mediterranean this year trying to reach Greece or Italy in rubber dinghies or fishing boats. Many from Africa take longer and hazardous route to Italy by boat. Two boats carrying about 500 migrants sank after leaving Zuwara in Libya on 27th August. The bodies of 71 people, believed to be Syrian migrants, were discovered in an abandoned lorry in Austria on 27th August. A ship wreck off Italy's Lampedusa Island killed about 800 people on April 19.

Under an EU rule, refugees are required to claim asylum in the state where they first arrived. The EU formulated an asylum policy after much bickering between the members states which plans to relocate 120,000 migrants arrived in Greece and Italy. According to the plan, France has to accept more than 65,000 people and UK nearly the same number. But France had agreed to accept just 24,000 and UK 20,000 over five years. Germany agreed to take more than its quota. This plan is not comprehensive: five times as many migrants have already arrived in Greece this year as the 50,400 who would be relocated to other countries by the plan. The EU countries are divided over how to share the refugee burden both financially and socially.

It is being placated as though the refugees are creating crisis to the European countries with sudden influx recently. The problem of refugees has not started at a time when the picture of three-year old boy's crumpled body face-down washed ashore the Turkish coastline. It is important to remember that it started long back with Europe's wars. The discovery of oil, the establishment of tyrannical regimes to ensure smooth flow of oil to West, the imposition of Zionist Israel in Palestine, encouragement of Islamic fundamentalism to subvert democratic movements, occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, and economic sanctions to cripple the economies of Iraq and Iran – all have led to the killing of millions of lives and millions fleeing their homes. It is crisis for refugees who lost their homes, livelihoods and lives of their dear ones. It is not the crisis for European regimes. Moreover, their philanthropic attitude betrayed its original aim, when Angela Merkel argued that immigrants bring prosperity, and her opponents countered that they need working-age immigrants (meaning plunder of their labour cheaply). Exactly for this reason, they planned to relocate a fraction of the immigrants.

This becomes evident when you look at the larger picture. According to the annual report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), worldwide forcible displacement due to armed conflicts and persecution is at its highest level in recorded history reaching to 59.5 million people by the end of 2014 with an annual increase of 2.3 million.

Of the 59.5 million forcibly displaced people, 19.5 million are refugees living outside their country, 1.8 million are asylum seekers and 38.2 million are internally displaced persons. Roughly 51 per cent of the world's refugees are children below 18 years. Worldwide one in every 122 people is now displaced.

The report also noted the armed conflicts that have created this human catastrophe. The most devastated region is the Middle-East, in particular Syria. Since the US-stoked civil war started in 2011, 11.6 million Syrians became refugees-globally “one out of every four refugees is Syrian, with 95 percent located in the surrounding countries”.

Syria became the world’s largest source country of refugees during 2014, outnumbering Afghanistan, which had held this position for more than 30 years. Concurrently, an influx of roughly 1 million Syrian refugees caused Turkey to become world’s largest refugee-hosting country, exceeding Pakistan, which for over a decade has given asylum to the majority of Afghans fleeing war and sectarian violence wrought by the ongoing US-led war in Afghanistan.

The cumulative impact of imperialist intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria had created a situation where “Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Iran hosted more than 5.2 million or 36 per cent of all refugees worldwide”, according to the report.

Across Africa, violent conflicts has erupted or reignited in numerous countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (over 4 million displaced), South Sudan (2.4 million), Somalia (2.3 million), Nigeria (1.38 million), the Central African Republic (1.49 million). Ivory Coast (121,000) Libya (371,000) Mali (427,000) and Burundi (335,000).

While the imperialist military intervention caused the catastrophe, the brunt of the burden is being born by the neighbouring countries. According to the report, in 2014, the developing regions hosted 86 per cent of the world’s refugees, while those in the subcategory of Least Developed Countries hosted 25 per cent of the global total.

For the vast majority of refugees, the horrific condition from which they flee are often found to be only marginally better in the country where they ultimately find asylum. The UNHCR says that it was able to spend only one fourth of what actually needed to provide them with immediate relief.

It is well known that US imperialism has since 1980 sponsored Islamic fundamentalist organisations directly or indirectly. Even today, despite proclamations about ‘war on terrorism’, the US imperialism is working in tandem with Islamic fundamentalists in several countries to stoke civil unrest so that it can intervene in those countries. Also, it is resorting to wars of aggression, military intervention, economic sanctions and acts of bullying to bring the change of regimes that serves its interests. This is the main and primary cause for the refugee crisis we are witnessing for the past decade.

As Lenin pointed out, imperialism means predatory war. Unless and until the people of the world fight to finish imperialism and brush aside it into dustbin of history, with their revolutionary upsurge to change the capitalist system to socialist system, the ravages of war continue to haunt the world people, and there will not be peace in their lives.
