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**DO YOU THINK THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA ARE PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF REFUGEES.**

Protection is commonly defined as all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, namely human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law.

Protection is primarily the responsibility of states and its agents. In the case of a state or government that is unwilling or unable to protect its own citizens for any given reason, these individuals have the right to seek asylum elsewhere, which is stipulated in the 1951 Geneva Convention’s definition of a refugee. The 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol are at the cornerstone of the international legal framework for refugee protection as they establish the main principles on which refugee protection is based – such as the Principle of non-refoulement and the principle of Non-discrimination. The fundamental principle of non-refoulement plays a very important role in the international refugee protection system. It prohibits the return of a person (including by non-admission to the border) to a State where his life and safety might be in danger. To some degree, non-refoulement involves the admission of the person who is still an asylum seeker on the territory of the State to which he is seeking refuge. No protection can really be conceived without this territorial or geographical dimension, which gives legal protection its meaning. Non-refoulement is in a way the very foundation of the protection system. It is included in Article 33 of the Convention of 28 July 1951.

**EUROPE**:

About three-quarters or more of adults in Spain, the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom support taking in refugees from countries where people are fleeing violence and war, according to a global survey conducted in the spring of 2018 that included 10 EU countries. Similar shares in Germany and Sweden – which saw large influxes of migrants seeking refugee status in 2015 and 2016 – back taking in refugees.

There is also majority support for taking in refugees in Greece and Italy, which have been main entry points into Europe for migrants in recent years. Notably, people in these countries generally expressed negative views toward refugees following the 2015 migration surge. EU member states have constructed an increasingly impenetrable fortress to keep irregular migrants, mostly asylum seeker out irrespective of their motives and regardless of the desperate measures that many are prepared to take to reach its shores. In order to “defend” its borders, the EU has funded sophisticated surveillance systems, given financial support to member states at its external borders, such as Bulgaria and Greece, to fortify their borders and created an agency to coordinate a Europe-wide team of border guards to patrol EU frontiers. Individual member states themselves are taking drastic measures to stop irregular arrivals.

People in Poland and Hungary are less likely to support taking in refugees. About half in Poland (49%) voice support, and only about a third (32%) say the same in Hungary, where thousands of migrants sought asylum in 2015. In June, Hungary’s parliament passed legislation that made it a crime to assist asylum seekers and refugees – one reason why the European Parliament recently voted to pursue sanctions against Hungary for not upholding core EU values. The EU is grappling with how to handle the ongoing arrival of migrants seeking asylum on its shores. Nearly all of these migrants arrive on the Mediterranean shores of Greece, Italy or Spain; more than 2 million migrants have entered Europe this way since 2009. About half have come from the Middle East-North Africa region, including large numbers of Syrians and Iraqis displaced by conflict. Hundreds of thousands from sub-Saharan Africa have also arrived. Most migrants apply for asylum after arriving in a European country in hopes of gaining refugee status. Asylum seekers then often wait for months, if not years, to have their applications processed. Those who obtain refugee status receive permission to stay in the country a year or longer, and many receive help to integrate. Not all asylum seekers receive refugee status. Rejected applicants who do not appeal the decision are required to leave Europe either voluntarily or through deportation, though some remain in Europe without authorization. While people in some EU countries support taking in refugees, there is widespread disapproval of how the EU has handled the refugee issue, the survey finds. In Greece, Sweden, Hungary and Italy, about eight-in-ten or more disapprove of the way the EU is dealing with the issue. Discontent with how the EU is dealing with the refugee issue comes as Austria holds the European Union’s presidency through the end of 2018. Austria is advocating for policies that prevent migrants from entering Europe without authorization and applying for asylum. Migrants and refugees are being expelled unlawfully from Bulgaria, Greece and Spain, without access to asylum procedures and often in ways that put them at grave risk. They are ill-treated by border guards and coastguards. In addition, some EU countries are using the threat of lengthy detention as a deterrent for those thinking about coming to Europe. Western European countries have funded reception and detention centres for migrants and refugees in countries where there are serious concerns about access to asylum procedures in detention, such as Turkey and Ukraine. They have put in place readmission agreements with countries of origin and transit, allowing those who manage to arrive in Europe to be sent back more easily. Such operations come with human cost and suffering of the refugees (death, trapped in transit, loss of connection with family, hunger and diseases).

European Union has taken some measures to prevent illegal migration, ranging from controlling outside borders to engaging in civilian and military operations in conflict zones. In terms of controlling the borders, several agencies were created, such as Europol (the European Police Office), Eurojust (the European judicial cooperation body), to deal with immigration, terrorism, human trafficking, organised crime and any other international crime. Additionally, Frontex, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders, was entitled with border security.

Many of the refugees have testified on the hardship and suffering they endure in Turkey, with no escape route.

**NORTH AMERICA:**

United States government has imposed new security vetting procedures on refugees before they can be admitted into the country, which has greatly lengthened waiting times and left many refugees in dangerous situations for prolonged periods. In 2017, for the first time in modern history, the United States settled fewer refugees than the rest of the world. The prospects for refugees hoping to resettle in the United States changed abruptly in 2017. In January of that year, President Trump signed an executive order that suspended the entire U.S. refugee admissions program for 120 days. In addition, the Trump administration suspended indefinitely the entry of Syrian refugees into the country and lowered the FY 2017 refugee admissions ceiling from 110,000 (set under the Obama administration) to 50,000. The admissions ceiling was lowered to 45,000 in 2018 (with fewer than 50 percent admitted) and again to 30,000 in 2019. Refugee resettlement numbers per capita also differ across countries. The U.S. resettled about 70 refugees for every million of its own residents in 2018, lower than the rate in many other nations. Canada led the world on this measure by resettling 756 refugees per million residents. Australia (510), Sweden (493) and Norway (465) also had much higher resettlement figures per million than the U.S. Resettled refugees do not enter their destination country until they have legal permission to do so, because they apply for refugee status while in another country. Refugees are referred by UNHCR and other nongovernmental organizations. The refugee approval process for the U.S. can take several months or years while security checks on prospective refugees are completed.

With the election of Donald Trump, the United States has been taking harsh measures and blocking refugees and those freeing from conflict. Countries have tried to justify their increasingly harsh migration policies on the grounds that they are having to cope with more than their own share of refugees, and refugees have become a great burden. Canada resettled more refugees than the United States in 2018, the first time the U.S. did not lead the world on this measure since the adoption of the Refugee Act in 1980, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of new data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).