

Introduction

Continental Encampment Genealogies of Humanitarian Containment in the Middle East and Europe

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Introduction

Since 2015, the Middle East has become a regional hosting zone for refugees and migrants prevented from leaving the region and returning those trying to reach Europe. A long series of preventive measures targeting ‘irregular migration’ – restrictive policies, legal barriers and fortified borders – have illegalized and immobilized refugees and migrants in what amounts to a humanitarian rebordering of the region. Advancing a new approach for analysing the genealogy of refugee internment and encampment over longer timescales, this book foregrounds the consequences of closing legal migration channels to nearly six million Syrian refugees and several other groups of refugees and migrants who remain confined in neighbouring ‘host states’, the large majority self-settled in cities and urban areas. With slim chances of returning without a lasting peace agreement, this refugee condition has since long become protracted. In addition, in Syria, several million Syrians remain internally displaced and depend on humanitarian aid. Unable to return and prevented from leaving, refugees and internally displaced are contained within the region.

Migration is an inherent feature of Middle East history, and the long-standing Ottoman Empire hosted and resettled large groups of displaced populations. Containment of refugees emerged only gradually, and antecedents of containment can be traced to the first international humanitarian interventions and first modern refugee camps which emerged on the ruins of the Ottoman

Empire, coalescing with the First World War and the emerging Middle East nation states under European colonial rule. The protracted Palestinian refugee question was a direct result of the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state and the erasure of Arab Palestine, and containment would form part of both encampment and the special refugee regime established for these refugees. Over time, and in particular after 1967, containment policies would increase and over time refugee camps became permanent fixtures of the region and gradually turned hosting zone for mass migration.

With previous displacement crises – Palestinian, Iraqi and Kurd – being confined to the Middle East region, there was an implicit assumption that in the Syrian crisis refugees would also remain in host states. Yet, in 2015 mass migration ensued as groups and individuals began their journey by boat and on foot towards and across Europe (Brian and Laczko 2014). Post-Gaddafi Libya, divided and beset by internal conflict, now became a migration corridor that provided migrants south of the Sahara with access to the Mediterranean. More than three million Syrian refugees had fled to Turkey, where they were joined by many other nationalities – Afghans, Eritreans and Iraqis – seeking to reach Europe. The migration flows from Africa and the Middle East now converged as sea routes across the Mediterranean where many lost their lives (Tinti and Reitano 2016).

By 2015, more than one million migrants reached Europe in the largest movement of peoples since the Second World War (Crawley et al. 2016). Seeking to contain the crisis, the EU and Schengen countries reinforced border patrols and stepped up maritime surveillance. In March 2016, the EU-Turkey deal instituted a new policy of regional containment targeting irregular migration via Turkey with the explicit aim of stopping and returning migrants. While only a few have been returned, the six-billion-euro agreement succeeded in halting irregular migration, thereby subjecting refugees and migrants to indeterminate containment. The agreement between the EU and Turkey has since become a blueprint for Europe's strategy of externalizing migration. The EU has also entered into several agreements, among them, new compacts, that combine job creation for refugees with financial support to host countries to limit secondary migration to Europe (Morris 2020; Lenner and Turner 2019). Some of these measures are presented as part of, or contributing to, humanitarian relief, but in fact amount to a re-bordering of Europe, by closing access routes and sealing border crossings to prevent migrants from reaching Europe and Schengen states.

In the Middle East region, host states such as Jordan use refugees as a tool to secure international aid, while Turkey has threatened the EU with opening its borders if it is not compensated. The formation of refugee rentier states (Tsourapas 2019) contributes to the retention of refugees in third countries and is an economic strategy that maintains the Middle East as a

refugee-hosting region (Anholt and Sinatti 2019). The massive Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), co-led by UNHCR and UNDP, supports Middle East host states and refugees but despite its billion-dollar budgets, living conditions in the region have continued to deteriorate. The economic aid to Syria is the UN's largest for a single crisis, but the EU has also massively increased funding for Frontex, the EU's border and coast guard agency, established in 2004 (FitzGerald 2019). Frontex also enters into bi- and multilateral agreements with third countries, which underlines the enormous growth in the EU's measures, mechanisms and funding for migration management. The complex aid architecture for the Syrian crisis has contributed to cementing the Middle East region as a hosting zone that interns migrants and refugees.

Since 2015, several European countries, with Turkey and Hungary in the lead, have erected and reinforced border barriers to deter migrants. By the end of 2016, the EU had restructured its migration management, stepped up border control of land and sea routes and concluded several agreements with third countries to deter migrants and protect 'Fortress Europe' (Andersson 2014). The many measures to limit mobility have restricted the right to seek asylum and delegitimized migration as a security threat (Bendixsen 2016; DeBono 2013). Moreover, frontline countries such as Spain have invested in coastal surveillance systems to deter migrants (Fisher 2018), while Ceuta and Melilla, the two Spanish enclaves in Morocco, use sophisticated border fortification (Andersson 2016). A 'humanitarian barrier', the high-tech fences in Ceuta and Melilla are only 18 km long, while the EU's maritime border along the Mediterranean spans 45,000 kilometres. Even with high-tech surveillance, coastal patrols and air support, the EU depends on the help from sending and transit states to limit migration across the Mediterranean and stop them before they reach the European mainland. This pre-border control has been termed 'externalization' and expanded following the Mediterranean refugee crisis to become the cornerstone of the EU's migration management with the Middle East as the main hosting solution to mass migration.

About This Book

Collectively, the contributions to this volume show why and how the Middle East has become a refugee-producing and hosting region where refugees and migrants are prevented from leaving. To this end, the volume's main argument is that the Middle East region today forms a regional zone of containment under the bureaucratic and benevolent governance of humanitarian agencies, host states and supranational unions (EU). The formation of camp-like containment has historical antecedents, and has evolved over time, but its main features have manifested themselves only recently, and disproportionately

as a response to the Syrian refugee crises from 2012 onwards. It is characterized by a striking combination of camps, walls, fences, humanitarian assistance, legal and bureaucratic restrictions by state and non-state actors, and security apparatuses. By scaling up sites, systems and sources of containment, a bio-political region of forced immobility emerges, one subject to a humanitarian architecture that intentionally keeps refugees inside the region and outside mainland Europe, thus recasting the Middle East as a regional zone of containment.

The link between containment and encampment requires revisiting, not only in terms of what a refugee camp 'is', but also of how it is constituted and governed. The genealogy of refugee camps demonstrates that they are premised on specific forms of containment (McConnachie 2016) and linked to forms of camp governance and extra-legal exceptionality (Agamben 1998, 2005) that segregate and disenfranchise residents (Malkki 2002). Refugee camps are therefore bio-political, that is reserved for undesirables, aliens and non-citizens – refugees, displaced persons and migrants – who as subalterns are deprived of basic civil rights and depend on humanitarian aid for their upkeep (Agier 2011). The degree and role of humanitarian governance is also ambivalent, as camps may function as sites of discipline and order (Hyndman 2000) that depoliticize and silence refugees (Malkki 1996) or, on the other hand, confirm, transform and politicize refugees' identity (Petee 2005). This reflects that refugee camps are often referred to in contradictory terms, as either sites of humanitarian assistance (Feldman 2008) or as objects of insecurity for host states (Lischer 2005). The same applies to the morphology of camps as either disciplinary sites for the 'care and control' of refugees (Malkki 2002), or rather as emergent 'proto-cities', 'city camps' or hybrid 'campscapes' (Agier 2002; Martin 2015). Segregation and containment are not only features of formal camps managed by host states and humanitarian agencies in the Middle East (Hoffmann 2017; Oesch 2017), but also of squatter camps, container camps and holding centres in Europe that likewise have become sites and symbols of humanitarian containment (Agier et al. 2018; Scott-Smith and Breeze 2020; Katz, Martin and Minca 2018). In this volume we theorize camps and encampment not only as bounded sites, but as a set of scalable traits and characteristics that can be applied to geographical regions and hosting zones serving similar functions, what we provisionally term 'continental encampment' (viz. a supersized camp or 'supercamp').

Building on the vast array of research on camps and encampments in the Middle East and beyond, this volume pursues Gatrell's argument that to understand the present refugee crises in the Mediterranean, there is a need to 'look beyond the boundedness of the modern nation state' (2016: 172). To this end the book advances a new research agenda that combines historiography with contemporary ethnography for a new understanding of refugee politics in

the region. Starting from a multi-disciplinary study of refugee camps, relief and migration policies from the 1850s until the present, the volume brings together disciplines and fields within the humanities and social sciences for a novel analysis of the regional and, indeed, global forces of humanitarian containment. In this way the volume charts a historical anthropology of forced displacement in the Middle East over longer timescales, for a new understanding of the region as a bio-political zone of containment. To this end, the contributors to this volume explore the genealogy of refugee camps, politics and containment in the Middle East through selected cases from the 1850s until the present, starting with the Ottoman Empire's long-distance resettlement schemes, followed by the first 'official' or modern refugee camps during the First World War, and the emerging refugee regime in the wake of colonial rule (1850s–1939). This is followed by an analysis of the post-war period when the modern refugee regime was instituted under the aegis of the United Nations (UN) and encampment gained pace in the Middle East and beyond (1940–1989). The final section charts the expansion of the EU's migration management and the rebordering of Europe to stop, turn back and return migrants and refugees (1990–2020). Each chapter offers an in-depth study of camps, sites and geographies of containment in the Middle East and Europe across temporal and thematic registers.

Wars, Displacements and the First Camps (1850s–1939)

Refugee management is not a European invention. The final century of the Ottoman Empire was one of wars and displacements as millions of Circassian, Tatars and other ethnic groups had been displaced in conflicts between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. As Dawn Chatty shows (Chapter 1), the Ottoman government's response to mass displacement combined *realpolitik* with humanitarian practices. She argues that this was a nascent refugee regime that preceded those instituted in Europe by the League of Nations. The Ottomans avoided the use of formal refugee camps, instead transferring refugees to other parts of the Empire in long-distance resettlement schemes. The Ottoman state saw immigrants and refugees as potential citizens and taxpayers, as well as instruments of state security and internal border control. Ottoman migration management was, however, deeply implicated in population politics after the empire turned against Christian minorities. The former subjects were recast as internal enemies, a process that culminated in the Armenian and Assyrian genocide in 1915 and presaged the dissolution of the empire (Adamiak 2018; Fratantuono 2019; Hamed-Troyansky 2017).

The first modern refugee camps emerged in the Middle East during the First World War (1914–1918), which presaged the region's role in the global history

of the refugee camp. Benjamin White (Chapter 2) explores the history of one of them, the Baquba refugee camp near Baghdad in present-day Iraq. From 1918 to 1920, the British Army ran camps for Armenian and Assyrian refugees in the region. The camps were established to protect Christian minorities, but already by this time, refugee camps were simultaneously sites for disciplining and ‘civilizing’ their residents and illustrate the paradox of supporting ‘refugee livelihoods’ in a context that delimits them. White argues that this period gave rise to the modern refugee camp, but not to the humanitarian containment with which the Middle East has been so closely associated since 1948. Indeed, the key to humanitarian containment in refugee camps lies exactly in the transition from colonial empires to nation states and the co-evolution of international organizations and nascent refugee protection regimes.

The first formal refugee camps in the Middle East were run by the British and French military. They were an adaptation to humanitarian ends of the military technical expertise at the time, but they also formed part of a longer camp genealogy. The earliest camps were late eighteenth-century prisoner-of-war camps, followed a hundred years later by internment camps and camps for forced migrants (McConnachie 2016). The history of internment camps is closely linked to the expansion of the British Empire. Camps thus became part of and spread with the British Imperial policies, with the first workhouses for the poor in Britain considered early prototypes of camps in the colonies (Forth 2017). In British India, camps were used for interning the sick and victims of famine, and as instruments of colonial rule, they are early examples of how emergency aid was linked to control and internment (Herscher 2017). From British India, the refugee cum internment camps were reintroduced as a war tactic during the Second Boer War between the British and the Dutch Boers in South Africa (1899–1902), where combatants, their dependents as well as natives were interned as part of the British army’s scorched earth tactics (Forth 2017). The concept of internment and (re-)concentration camps travelled within African colonies and beyond (Mühlhahn 2010); the same applies to the associated counterinsurgency tactics, technologies and techniques like blockhouses, barbed wire fences and enclosures, innovations that enabled containment (Forth 2017; Katz 2017).

In the Middle East, formal refugee camps were not the only forms of encampment. Many refugees lived in informal or unofficial refugee sites, like rural settlements, agricultural colonies, orphanages and self-settled encampments. In practice, such categories of encampment were blurred, because as time passed, one site could serve several refugee populations and more than one purpose (Ibrahim 2021). As part of the post-First World War settlement, the victorious allied states established the League of Nations in 1920 as an instrument to maintain world peace. Watenpaugh (2010, 2015) has termed the international responses to forced displacement and genocide in the Middle

East as the ‘birth of modern humanitarianism’, merging humanitarian relief with the objectives of colonial expansion and control to aid displaced Christian groups. One of the major relief organizations aiding the Armenian refugees was Near East Relief (NER), an American organization that ran a network of orphanages and refugee camps stretching from Athens to Aleppo (Rodogno 2014).

The end of the First World War caused turmoil and human suffering that toppled governments and redrew national borders, which led to large refugee crises. In the new nation states emerging from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, the rules governing who belonged to a state, and who did not, were redefined. The Russian Civil War (1917–1922), the Greco-Turkish war (1919–1922) and the subsequent forced population exchange between Turkey and Greece displaced and resettled millions. In Greece, camps were set up to accommodate the refugees, but the large majority were resettled in cities and in the countryside (Bozkurt 2014; Efiloglu 2014). In 1921 the newly established Soviet Union revoked the citizenship of Russians living abroad, and of refugees from the Russian civil war. In 1922 Fridtjof Nansen was appointed the first High Commissioner for Refugees, and the League issued the ‘Nansen passport’ that provided select stateless groups with travel visas to European states. The passport constituted the first step towards an international refugee regime (Long 2013).

The post-war settlement led to a new political and territorial order in the Middle East. The League established the mandate system to govern the former Ottoman and German territories. The new states, Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, were designated as ‘class A’ mandates, implying their ‘readiness for self-rule’. While the aim of the mandates were formulated as helping these states to achieve independence, they were under British and French colonial rule, which fundamentally affected refugee policies in the Middle East. Several refugee camps were established in the Middle East during this period, but camps were not the main tool for managing refugees. Most of the displaced groups in the territories the British and French took over from the League – Kurds, Yezidis, and Arabs – were not interned in camps, but rather were resettled and sedentarized in the former Empire’s borderlands (Robson 2016: 246). Yet the selective use of refugee camps shows how the British and French handled displaced populations according to their religion and ethnicity. Indeed, European and American missionary organizations had long been working among Christian groups which contributed to the creation of ‘minorities’ as distinct groups within the empire. They singled out Christian groups such as Assyrians and Armenians for protection in camps, and camps became a new kind of political space, designed to represent the concept of national identity and to demonstrate ‘the international order’s commitment to universal national sovereignty’ (Robson 2016: 254). Camps and refugee management

policies included techniques and elements of containment, surveillance and governance, but it was not until the transition from colonial empires to nation states and evolved international organization and refugee regimes that containment would become a more prominent feature.

Encampment and Control (1940–1989)

During the Second World War, encampment of European refugees was extended to the Middle East, with several temporary camps stretching from Casablanca to Tehran. Many of these camps were under the aegis of British Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration (MERRA). In Morocco and Algeria, camps were set up for refugees from Spain, including Republican veterans of the Spanish Civil War and Sephardic Jews who had lived in Greece or Turkey prior to the population exchange of 1923 and then relocated to Spain. Several MERRA camps were also set up in Egypt, mainly for Greek and Yugoslav refugees (Bieber 2020), but also Romanians, Italians and Czechoslovaks. Further east, Greek refugees were settled in camps in Nuseirat and Haifa in Palestine, and in Beirut and Aleppo (Ibrahim 2021). Some of these camps had previously hosted Armenian refugees, and some would later be re-used for Palestinian refugees, pointing to the continuity of camp-based relief in the region.

To resolve the massive displacement crisis in the wake of the war, new institutions and conventions were established, most importantly the United Nations in 1945, which had powers and functions transferred from the League of Nations. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1950, with a mandate to provide protection and assistance to persecuted individuals rather than groups. The new regime was designed as a temporary solution for European refugees displaced during the Second World War, and until 1967 it geographically excluded refugees outside of Europe (Gatrell 2013). In a wider context, key rationales behind the emerging refugee regime were decolonization and East-West ideological and geopolitical rivalry (Loescher 1993: 53–54). A major aim of international aid was to prevent the spread of communism and the threat of revolutions toppling allied states. International assistance also provided a means to build relations with allied regimes, including former colonies, to secure spheres of influence (Barnett and Weiss 2008: 11–12, 23–24).

The Palestinian displacement is an example of refugee crises breaking in the wake of colonial rule. The Balfour Declaration (1917) and the UN General Assembly to partition Palestine (1947) established Israel in 1948 as a state for the world's persecuted Jews, at the expense of the local population of Palestinians, now becoming a 'refugee nation' (Siddiq 1995). About two-thirds of the Palestinians were displaced to neighbouring countries, and Arab

Palestine was wiped off the map. One third of the Palestinian refugees were settled in refugee camps while property and homes were confiscated, and villages razed in the new Israeli state. Many Jewish immigrants and refugees were first sheltered in ‘transit camps’ before being permanently resettled and moved into houses, towns, villages and cities, testifying to the role of camps in the Israeli state-building project (Katz 2016, 2017). In 1967 a new refugee crisis broke following the Six-Day War, displacing hundreds of thousands from the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan and Syria where seven new camps were established.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established in November 1949 with a temporary humanitarian mandate to assist and integrate the Palestinian refugees. Over the next decades, UNRWA’s temporary humanitarian mandate would be prolonged in anticipation of a just solution (Schiff 1995). Drawing on original sources from UNRWA archives, Kjersti G. Berg (Chapter 3) analyses the establishment and operation of camps in the 1950s and after 1967. While host county security was the main concern, 1967 is a turning point where camps become more explicitly politicized and where UNRWA approached camps as a permanent solution. This testifies to the temporal dilemma inherent in prolonged refugee relief, thereby transforming the refugee question into a humanitarian one, leading to a kind of humanitarian containment, based on continued aid and encampment. For refugees, however, camps became sites of the Palestinian revolution and came to symbolize both their right of return and the legitimacy of reclaiming their homeland. The long-term encampment of Palestinians (a.k.a. ‘Palestinization’) has affected later responses to refugee crises in the region and made the Middle East synonymous with the hosting of refugees. Paradoxically, it may also have led to a wider acceptance of protracted encampment of refugees in other crises across the world.

The period of decolonization led to new waves of displacement and encampment in the Middle East and North Africa. One example is the Algerian war of independence from France (1954–1962), which displaced more than a million Algerians to camps in Tunisia and Morocco. After the UNHCR intervened under French colonial rule (Loescher 2017: 81), this set a powerful precedent for widening the agency’s geographic scope. In 1967 the UN member states ratified the so-called ‘Protocol on the Status of Refugees’. This extended the category of refugee to include people displaced outside Europe, and the mandate of the UNHCR was extended globally, except for Palestine. The expansion of the mandate, the acceptance of the new status quo after the war in 1967 and UNRWA’s continued role in the newly occupied territories together signalled that encampment would serve as the primary mode of addressing the problem of refugees in the decolonizing world (Robson 2022). The decision built on three key developments in the previous decades: first, on

UNRWA's perceived success in delimiting the political fall-out from the unresolved Palestinian refugee question; secondly, on UNHCR's containment practices in its campaigns in Tunisia and Morocco; and finally, on the perceived threat from alternative refugee instruments in Africa, which were exploring broader protection regimes for the Global South (Robson 2022).

From the mid-1960s, the Cyprus conflict displaced many as refugees in camps, while the war in 1974 partitioned the island and was followed by population transfers that became permanent as unification failed (Papadakis, Peristianis and Welz 2006). In 1975, Sahrawis were displaced from Western Sahara to Algeria following a short war with Morocco, which annexed their homeland (Herz 2013; Farah 2009). In the Kurdish–Turkish conflict (1978–present), widespread human rights abuses contributed to the massive displacement of three million Kurds that destroyed and depopulated villages. During the Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988), a Kurdish rebellion was crushed, with about one million remaining displaced as of 2009. The many crises not only displaced millions but established the Middle East as a major refugee-producing and hosting region.

The 1980s marked the beginning of the new camp era in Africa, as the camp model replaced the resettlement of refugees in rural areas. Now Western countries sought to prevent refugees from reaching Europe, while the African host countries aimed to isolate refugees from the local population for political and economic reasons (Betts and Collier 2017). The 'New Wars' displaced large groups as refugees in cities across Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. The collapse of communism also changed perceptions of refugees: they were no longer victims of totalitarian states, but poor and desperate opportunists and therefore a threat to host states, which reinforced encampment as the default emergency response. During the 1980s, the role of UNHCR changed; now it would explicitly confine refugees to camps, with severe restrictions on freedoms, a policy which prevailed—well into the 2000s. The camp approach was also expanded by UNHCR's role in South Asia and deepened by its lack of funding and policy irrelevance towards the end of the Cold War (Lipman 2020). This made the UNHCR embrace camps as part of its 'care and maintenance' policy (Betts and Collier 2017: 59).

In the many crises that followed in the early 1990s – Iraqis in Turkey, Somalis in Kenya, Rwandans in Tanzania – camps became the norm (Horst 2006). In the post-cold war period, the international refugee regime changed, and as one example, the advent of the 'new wars' increased the role of humanitarianism substituting for, or integrated with, military engagements. During the Kosovo conflict (1998–1999), at the time Europe's biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War, and shortly after, during the Bosnian war (1992–1995), more than two million internally displaced were 'contain[ed] through charity' (Barnett 2011: 179).

Re-Bordering and Return (1990s–2020)

The 1990s marked the beginning of a major turn in terms of humanitarian containment of refugees, namely the European Union's (EUs) systematic 'migration management' aimed at keeping migrants outside continental Europe and within the Middle East region. The Schengen convention and Dublin regulations abolished the internal border checks and established common border, visa and asylum regulations (FitzGerald 2019: 165). To deter immigration, EU member states concluded more than 300 bilateral readmission agreements, most of them with recipient countries and 'buffer states' like Libya and Morocco. From 2000, the EU formalized several agreements with countries in regions around the world where migration control and migration management play a key role. Key among these was the EUs framework for external migration policy, the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), which, despite its name, seeks to curb migration and strengthen border control (FitzGerald 2019).

The new security agenda that emerged after 11 September 2001 focused on strong border regimes to manage migration and control refugee mobility and restrict their ability to seek asylum (Betts and Loescher 2011). An example of this is the international response to the massive displacement crises following military interventions in Iraq. The first Gulf War (1991) and later the US invasion of Iraq (2003) displaced two million refugees – Iraqis, Kurds and other minorities – as well as three million internally displaced persons who were held back in what have been termed 'collection zones' (Peteet 2011). Most of the Iraqi refugees remained in the region, primarily in neighbouring Jordan and Syria, with the majority as urban refugees in Damascus and Amman (Sassoon 2010; Hoffmann 2016). Syria, a major host state, resisted plans to establish refugee camps for the displaced Iraqis and, as argued by Sophia Hoffmann (Chapter 5), the UNHCR manufactured vulnerability where there seemingly was none. Unable to set up camps, the UNHCR instead instituted and lavishly funded the NGO model with a collection of aid interventions that became the new model for tackling urban refugees and urban crises, a model the organization had limited experience with and initially had no desire to engage in. Hoffman posits that the UNHCR misread the country's authoritarian landscape, and that the UNHCR's humanitarian approach foregrounded the difficult and destabilizing presence of refugees, hence the need to contain them in camps, a strategy the host country opposed. The case of Syria demonstrates the role of national priorities in shaping UNHCR policies and may have contributed to the UNHCR's 'alternatives to camps policy' (UNHCR 2014). Still, refugee camps have remained a mainstay in the region's host policies due to security concerns and as tools for host countries to secure foreign aid (Turner 2015). Since the onset of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the Middle East region

has hosted more than five million Syrian refugees who could neither return to Syria nor proceed legally to Europe. While the UNHCR considers 10 per cent of the Syrian refugee population to be in need of resettlement, on a global scale less than 1 per cent of the world's refugee population has been resettled in developed countries (Betts and Collier 2017: 129). With miniscule opportunities for resettlement, many therefore resort to irregular migration. Syrian refugees, but also several other groups of refugees and migrants, have been stuck in the region and beyond in host states in North Africa and island enclaves traversing the Mediterranean and the Aegean.

Managing Encampment

Refugee camps have increased in both number and extent since the start of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2012. More than forty new refugee camps have since been set up in Iraq, Turkey and Jordan, while Lebanon's 'no-camp policy' reflected concerns of becoming a future host state (Knudsen 2017). Except for in Turkey, both International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR run refugee camps and shelters on behalf of host countries and have vastly increased the budgets and scale of their operations. While the state-run refugee camps in Turkey are open, strict entry and exit controls were introduced in Jordan's refugee camps, where their location, layout and management reflect security considerations as do the entry and exit controls to immobilize residents. In 'model camps' such as Azraq in Jordan, humanitarian agencies have embraced new digital technologies that not only ease management but can control individuals (Hoffmann 2017), which testifies to the growing role of biometrics in humanitarian relief (Lindskov Jacobsen 2017; Herscher 2016).

Despite the many refugee camps established since 2012, only about 5 per cent of the Syrian refugees are camp based. Indeed, the distinction between urban refugees, camp dwellers and self-settled refugees is one of degree, even though most camps are maintained by UN agencies. This is evident in Kamel Doraï and Pauline Piraud-Fournet's analysis (Chapter 4) of settlement patterns and mobility trajectories of Syrian refugees living in Jordan. Tracing the journeys of two Syrian households over a five-year period, they demonstrate how both camp and out-of-camp residency imposes limitations on the households' economic viability, with income and labour opportunities constrained by family structure and market conditions. In this way both non-camp- and camp-based refugees are faced with restrictions that delimit mobility and constrain settlement options to form inter-linked zones of socio-spatial containment.

The vast majority of Syrians in the Middle East are not living in camps, but in cities and towns but this does not mean that they can move about freely.

Outside of the formal refugee camps, throughout Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq, informal settlements, often with camp-like features, have emerged. In these informal settlements, poverty and bureaucratic restrictions effectively contain displaced populations. All the countries in the Middle East restrict refugees' mobility and right to work (Janmyr 2016). The disenfranchisement of refugees is one of the reasons why many are living in squalid slums, shelters and squats (Knudsen 2019). To survive they depend on parallel systems for food, housing and healthcare under the auspices of the UN system (World Bank 2017) and are funded by many donors supporting the Syrian response plan, providing examples of how aid underwrites containment in Middle East host states.

This can be seen from Are John Knudsen's analysis (Chapter 6) of urban architectures of containment in Sabra, one of Beirut's largest informal areas hosting generations of refugees. The micro-analysis of select tenement buildings in Sabra shows that resident refugees are caught in a roundabout movement within the confines of urban poverty zones. Accounts from tenants and landlords rentals demonstrate that humanitarian aid sustains urban informality, with migrants and urban poor serving as a captive tenant base. Tenants move, resettle and traverse urban poverty zones, yet do not leave them and instead experience a city-based containment, one of the constituent elements of regional encampment.

While refugee camps have proliferated throughout the Middle East (Agier 2014; Feldman 2015), an extensive network of informal camps and shelters has grown up across Europe (Scott-Smith and Breeze 2020; Katz, Martin and Minca 2018; Agier et al. 2019). At one point more than 400 different migrant centres were registered in Europe and almost 500 when centres in the Middle East are included (Migreurop 2019). At the same time European countries have built a series of state-run asylum centres and emergency shelters to control and contain asylum seekers, leading to a 'campization' of refugee accommodation (Kreichauf 2018). The network of informal migrant camps and shelters in tandem with state and EU-run camps and facilities have, together with border patrols and naval missions, served to deter, divert and deport migrants and refugees by combining on-shore migrant management with off-shore processing.

Humanitarian Borders

Since the 1990s, there has been a technologization of border management especially along Europe's contested border zones and offshore sites (De Genova 2013; De Genova and Peutz 2010). Lesbos lies in one of the most contentious border zones, and since 2015 it has been an EU 'hot spot' and a major site for wresting control of the migration route via Turkey, while also serving as a bridgehead for sorting, processing and returning asylum seekers. Those

who for various reasons cannot be returned or who do not meet the asylum requirements are not allowed to proceed to the mainland and remain in burgeoning internment camps, such as the EU-funded Moria camp on Lesbos, the largest camp in Greece until it was ruined by fire in late 2020. Hot spots can be analysed as a key element of humanitarian borders (Moreno-Lax 2018; Ticktin 2016), since they serve as the first port of landing for many migrants and contribute to the externalization of migration management that is typical of current EU policies. As shown by Antonio De Lauri's analysis (Chapter 9), humanitarian Lampedusa is the main example of the EUs 'hot spot' policy instituted in select islands and ports in the Aegean and Mediterranean. Deconstructing the 'hot-spot' approach, De Lauri details its consequences at the intersection of border practices and humanitarianism in the 'irregular' maritime migration across the Mediterranean. Humanitarian re-bordering reflects a conceptual shift from legal borders and adds a new dimension to the theatrical functions of borders that helps to explain why tragic migrant fatalities generate humanitarian compassion rather than political action, thereby contributing to offshoring's role in containing maritime migration.

Also of note is the growth of a militarized border management in the form of a global border and migration industry of professional actors – companies, firms and agencies – that build and operate detention centres, exercise border control and carry out deportations (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sørensen 2013; Lemberg-Pedersen 2013). The willingness to receive refugees and migrants is low in Europe, especially in 'frontline states' such as Greece and Italy which receive the most refugees and migrants (Cabot 2018). Some EU countries will not accept any, others only very few quota refugees or internal EU quotas of migrants, ultimately forcing the EU to abolish the Dublin regulations in late 2020 in favour of a new system of migration governance.

To wrest control with regard to irregular migration, around 1,000 km of new border fences have been set up in Europe since the 1990s. More than ten EU states have built such fences, most of them in Eastern Europe, with new border barriers in Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria aiming to seal off the 'Balkan corridor' (FitzGerald 2019). Despite the closing of the Balkan corridor, following the EU–Turkey deal in March 2016, migrants were able to continue their journey using a network of informal camps, asylum centres and reception centres (Minca, Šantić and Dragan 2019). However, many were also caught up in a roundabout movement and unable to reach their European destinations (Tazzioli 2017; Brigden and Mainwaring 2016). Basing her work on fieldwork in Bosnia and Serbia, Synnøve Bendixsen (Chapter 8) shows how the Balkans have become a waiting zone and a transit space where legal obstacles, bureaucratic hurdles and border closures interrupt migrants' journeys. By 'going on the game', migrants draw on a multiplicity of strategies to overcome border closures, pushbacks and barriers established by the EU and Schengen

member states to deter migrants and other refugees, turning the Balkans into a bio-political zone of enforced immobility.

The unwillingness to host refugees in Europe and the high costs of keeping them out have led governments and policy makers to search for alternatives by interning them in host states in the Middle East (Betts and Collier 2017). To ease the migratory pressure on Europe, the EU provides financial support to Turkey to act as a buffer state for more than three million Syrian refugees amidst growing xenophobia (Rottmann and Kaya 2020). As shown by Rebecca Bryant (Chapter 7), Turkey has leveraged its large refugee population to gain monetary and administrative concessions from the EU and has threatened to ‘open its borders’ to exert pressure on the EU. The EU–Turkey deal (2016) has turned the country into a ‘buffer state’ that has reduced migration options, with fewer migrants reaching the Schengen zone and more being intercepted and returned during transit. This has dampened migration aspirations, and normalized long-term settlement in Turkey, especially among the youth, to the point of becoming a new form of implicit containment.

The new displacement crises and mass migration have also prompted new and controversial proposals for solutions that aim to isolate refugees in territorial or transnational state-formations with roots in the Middle East (Cohen and Van Hear 2020). The historical roots of extra-territorial (‘off-shoring’) policies can be traced to Australia’s Pacific Solution that from 2001 deported migrants to detention centres in Nauru and Manus (FitzGerald 2019), a practice that has been likened to the creation of an enforcement archipelago (Mountz 2011). Australia’s Pacific Solution has been universally condemned as inhumane and breaching international conventions, but in 2004 several European states proposed a strategy resembling Australia’s: the ‘Mediterranean solution’ would reward states in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region for becoming part of Europe’s policy of exclusion (Marfleet 2006: 275). Since then, several Western European countries have proposed to set up EU-funded camps in Middle East ‘host states’ (FitzGerald 2019: 215ff), thus becoming a region that bridges the North-South divide through a system of detention and return.

Conclusion: Continental Encampment

This introduction has charted the genealogy of camps and encampment in the Middle East from the First World War to the present, demonstrating their historical expansion from temporary enclosures to permanent fixtures, first within states under colonial administration, later under nation states, turned designated host states, and ultimately as integrated ‘partners’ in Europe’s migration policies. The Middle East has long been a refugee-producing and

hosting region. It was the site of the first refugee camps as well as humanitarian interventions catering to displaced and persecuted groups from the late Ottoman period and onwards. Using humanitarian assistance to stabilize a region considered politically volatile has many historical precedents, and the colonial legacy points to a continuity of European and international involvement both responding to, and contributing to, recurring refugee crises – Armenian, Palestinian and Syrian – with refugee camps framed as a humanitarian response to displacement. The region’s historical legacy, and in particular the Palestinian refugee question, has made it synonymous with protracted displacement and long-term encampment.

Following the onset of the Syrian displacement crisis in 2012, the Middle East became one of the world’s premier refugee-hosting regions. This extended the region’s hosting role by instituting a series of measures that can be labelled containment, an outgrowth of the EU’s externalization policies whose main function is to prevent migrants from reaching mainland Europe. The Syrian displacement disaster is a multi-dimensional crisis that was followed by mass migration within the region and towards Europe. The Syria crisis represents a new migration dynamic, with more refugees and migrants destined for Europe enabled by new resources (capital, credit), providers (smugglers, firms) and networks (mobiles, internet), allowing more people to migrate than when relying only on familial ties and social networks. The rapid status transition from refugee to migrant that typifies current displacement crises (Valenta et al. 2020) demonstrates that refugees patiently waiting out crises in neighbouring ‘host states’ is a thing of the past, hence the need for new measures to contain them.

Mass migration has placed new and unforeseen pressures on Europe’s internal and external border controls. The EU and member states have created impenetrable border defences that can best be described as a containment strategy that aims to stem the flow of refugees and asylum seekers while increasing the hosting capacities of third countries by combining economic incentives (international aid) and concessions (visa and trade) to incentivize Middle East states to carry the burden. Aiding refugees in middle-income countries is costly, yet still much cheaper than resettling them in Europe. This is one reason why EU member and non-member states seek to contain refugees in proximate, that is, neighbouring countries termed ‘host states’. The Syrian displacement crisis has demonstrated the fallacy of the host-state paradigm, which lacks grounding in international and refugee law. The EU’s measures to prevent onwards migration to Europe have expanded the Middle East’s role as a refugee-hosting region and instituted bilateral treaties to return those who succeeded. Despite more than one million people reaching Europe in 2014–2015, border closures, naval missions and off-shore processing have since sharply reduced the number of entrants and deterred many from trying.

Since 2015 there has been a re-bordering of Europe and a collapse of the internal asylum procedures enshrined in the Dublin Agreement. Member states have violated their responsibilities under the EU's common asylum system, turning away migrants and refugees at the borders, and have used 'push backs' and 'hot returns' in combination with fortified borders to stop migrants in their tracks. There has also been a growth of militarized border management by a global border and migration industry by private contractors – companies, firms and agencies – that build and operate detention centres, exercise border control and carry out deportations.

The EU has entered into several new agreements, so-called 'compacts', which provide financial support to host countries to curb secondary migration to Europe. This has been claimed as a win-win solution for both parties but is directly linked to the role of the EU in managing migration and securing cooperation from sending and host states as part of externalizing Europe's border management. This made the countries in the Middle East an integral part of the EU's migration management policy and turned host countries into buffer states. By 2016 the Middle East refugee 'crisis' had been contained, migration routes closed, and border controls reinstated. At the same time there has been a massive increase in European centres, shelters and (informal) camps, both in cities and border areas. In this way, unwanted populations are kept in check by an institutionalized landscape of camps delimiting migration from the Middle East. Refugee camps minimally involve entry and exit controls (walls, fences), identity verification (biometrics) and humanitarian aid to sustain livelihoods. The rapid growth of refugee camps in Middle East host states, both formal and informal, has been associated with many more refugees living in urban areas and cities who likewise face restrictions on labour, mobility and residency, and therefore depend on parallel systems for food, housing and healthcare under the auspices of the UN system.

The measures used to prevent refugees and migrants from leaving the region, and to return those who do, have made the Middle East region a zone of containment, where millions remain displaced indefinitely. Continental containment is a new response to mass migration, one that differs from previous forms of crises responses in its geographic reach, the magnitude of people interred and the range of measures – economic (humanitarian), political and legal – used to effect it. The policy implications of regional containment are dire, with the Middle East turned into Europe's refugee and migrant hosting zone, thereby preventing many from accessing legitimate asylum procedures or being pushed back or returned without due process. This transformed Middle East 'host countries' into permanent holding zones and buffer states, with the EU evading its responsibilities under international law by paying third countries to serve as long-term hosts. The multi- and bilateral donors not only use aid to sustain refugee livelihoods, but they also compensate 'host states' for

serving as ‘buffers’, a strategy that is miscast as strengthening resilience but is primarily a containment strategy that could endanger the stability of host states.

The UN’s humanitarian appeal for the Syria crisis is the largest in the organization’s history for a single crisis. The UN and aid agencies manage huge aid portfolios that sustain refugee livelihoods, but also serve to immobilize them, a process compounded by donor fatigue as time passes. With more funds to return migrants and less going to ‘host countries’, the result is a well-known scenario: indefinite containment and impoverishment. This gives the Middle East camp-like features, where mixed groups of refugees and migrants subsist on humanitarian aid, with restrictions on mobility in ‘host states’ and internationally, across regions and divides. This represents a move from Africa, which was once termed a ‘continent of camps’, to the Middle East region as a new ‘continent as camp’. In this way, continental encampment is an inevitable result of preventing refugees and migrants from reaching Europe and makes humanitarian containment a new type of ‘durable solution’ to mass migration.

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