



SOVRANO MILITARE ORDINE OSPEDALIERO
DI SAN GIOVANNI DI GERUSALEMME DI RODI E DI MALTA

The Sovereign Order of Malta's input to the Global Compact on Refugees

The Sovereign Order of Malta is pleased to provide its inputs to the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, for consideration in the preparation of the Global Compact on Refugees.

The Sovereign Order of Malta is confident that the Global Compact will foresee a follow-up process guided by the UN Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Refugees and other stakeholders, to promote a continuing reaffirmation of the fundamental principles, enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the sharing of best practices. We believe that thanks to the report we can demonstrate that safe, orderly, and regular migration supports sustainable development, economic growth, prosperity, diversity.

The Sovereign Order of Malta's mission to uphold human dignity and care for people in need has, in the past and present, translated into assisting and supporting refugees around the globe. In the context of host countries, this has evolved into extensive assistance of refugees upon arrival and in the process of recognition of their status in the host countries. The Sovereign Order of Malta's global network develops and implements projects in many countries. We have recently appointed two new Ambassadors tasked with combating human trafficking, in order to help strengthening the commitment of the Sovereign Order of Malta in dealing with refugees and migrants as well, preventing the trafficking of humans and protecting the victims, with projects both at local and diplomatic level.

1- First of all, we would like to reaffirm the following principles:

- Refugees are human beings with inalienable rights, including those contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and succeeding covenants.
- The inviolable dignity of the human person is the fundamental right from which all other human rights flow, including those derived from International Humanitarian Law.
- All asylum seekers, regardless of their immigration status, should be able to have their basic needs met and access to essential services, including especially food and health care.
- Placing asylum-seekers in detention situations with poor conditions of space, nutrition, sanitation and access to legal help, etc., are unacceptable violations of their basic rights.
- The flow of asylum-seekers is beyond the capacity on any State to address alone and that, as a global problem, it can only be dealt with through international and regional approaches and cooperation.

- 2- The Sovereign Order of Malta would like to submit the following inputs to the Secretary General's attention:

Combating human trafficking

- Develop stronger cross border, regional and inter-regional anti-trafficking policies, including cooperation on return and readmission for those who are not recognized as refugees.
- Do not criminalize people on the move, but bring to justice human traffickers and smugglers in countries wherever they operate.
- Promote safe and regular pathways.
- Enhance anti-trafficking policies.
- Give priority to security: security of people on the move, security of people in countries of origin and transit and in host countries
- Engage with local institutions and populations for the prevention of trafficking.
- Prevention and law enforcement are needed against human trafficking, which fund other illegal activities.

Providing assistance

- Ensure full respect and protection for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of refugees.
- Strengthen the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility in dealing with asylum-seekers and promote and guarantee human rights.
- Create legal and safe avenues for refugees.
- Invest more in enhancing capacities of local civil society and aim at translating programs into concrete action at a local level.
- Strengthen the role of local authorities, particularly in urban areas

Facilitating integration

- Create appropriate policies in order to promote the inclusion of refugees into the labour market of the hosting communities.
- Adopt inclusive health policies, which could guarantee to refugees access to essential health care upon their arrival, including the registration of all births on the arrival countries in order to better identify their assistance needs.
- Develop and strengthen family reunification policies. Restoring and protecting family unity is also a vital pillar for a successful integration into the social fabric since the family usually represents a source of emotional stability and support.
- Include refugees integration policies in education, skills training, employment, and other social programmes.
- Not all needs to be done by the state. The active engagement of civil society actors and of volunteers can be extremely important in carrying out successful integration strategies.
- Invest more in enhancing capacities of local civil society and aim at translating programmes into concrete action at the local and community levels.
- Facilitate access to civil registration and documentation for refugees

Fostering cooperation

- Promote collaboration between key country players.
- Respect the principle of non-refoulement
- Recognize the right of governments to control their borders and ensure the security of their territory and population in accordance with international law, especially human rights and refugee law.
- Develop a strategy to enhance and encourage the establishment of private/public partnerships.
- Exchange factual and objective reports that analyse the situation concerning the refugee influx from a historic, legal and societal perspective.
- Increase cooperation between all actors and stakeholders collecting and exchanging data and best practices.
- Set up training initiatives for national authorities on international law, aiming at reinforcing fundamental human values on the protection of human lives.
- Develop the culture of respect of human rights.
- Address the drivers and root causes of large movements of refugees (like armed conflicts, persecution, violence and terrorism).
- Specify role of regional (AU, EU, OAS), sub-regional (Union du Magreb arabe) and inter-regional organizations (AU-EU summits)

The role of faith-based institutions:

- As a signatory and initiator of the “Charter for faith-based humanitarian action” endorsed at the WHS, the Sovereign Order of Malta would like the role of FBOs to be clearly acknowledged in the Compact.
- Emphasize the vital role played by FBOs and religion in a whole-of-society approach and endorse UNHCR’s suggestions for the “Role of faith-based institutions”
- Invite FBOs to provide cultural and spiritual space propitious to resilience, thereby combining material assistance with an ethical and spiritual dimension.
- In the case of host and refugee communities practising different faiths, FBOs can and should act as a bridge so as to ensure mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.
- Remind that due to their local roots, faith-based institutions are often first providers of material and spiritual assistance. Their access to community and cultural networks enables them to support inclusion of refugees in national and local systems and services such as housing, health care, education, social safety nets and psycho-social support.
- Underline the role of faith-based institutions in the effort of preventing forced migration as well as to assist and protect people on the move.
- Promote the adoption of policies that guarantee the freedom of religion.

3- The Sovereign Order of Malta would like to propose some concrete actions in order to implement our inputs:

- Implement border control procedures in conformity with applicable obligations under international law.
- Foster programs, which can guarantee minors to continue their studies.
- Ensure to refugees access to education and training programs, with the same standards guaranteed to citizens.
- Create courses for refugees in order to continue to study their own language and customs.
- Adopt policies which can facilitate refugees to work in the hosting country, for example giving them the possibility to open a bank account, to manage financial transactions, to start up an activity.
- Adopt resettlement policies for refugees.
- Grant refugees and asylum seekers freedom of movement, providing for instance work permits as well as travel documents which allow for their return to the host country.