

EU Political Divisions Leave Thousands of Migrants Stranded and Abused

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Successive meetings fail to reach an agreement on how to deal with refugees from oppressed nations

Tens of thousands of migrants are living under precarious conditions in Hungary and Croatia as well as other states in the European Union (EU).

Police used water cannon and teargas to beat down migrants in Hungary. Thousands have been forced into detention centers where they are treated in a manner which has sent shockwaves throughout Europe and the international community.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said that the migration of people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia threatened the borders of Europe. He called for concerted efforts to block any imposition of quotas for the intake of migrants instead taking militarized and criminal justice approaches to the crisis which the European and North American imperialist states are largely responsible.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported on September 21 that “Viktor Orban said migrants were ‘breaking the doors’ and that a united stance was required. Ministers from Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia met to discuss an EU proposal for quotas, which they oppose.”

This article noted most importantly “Some EU countries want migrants shared out more evenly across the EU. Germany and France are among those who back plans to share the burden of relocating 120,000 migrants from Greece, Italy and Hungary.”

Illustrating the hostility of the Hungarian government, Budapest placed ads in media outlets where many migrants originate. Lebanon’s newspaper An Nahar on September 21 published a full-page announcement warning people not to come to Hungary.

This ad read in part that “Hungarians are hospitable, but the strongest possible action is taken against those who attempt to enter Hungary illegally. The illegal crossing of the country’s border is a crime punishable by imprisonment. Do not listen to the people-smugglers. Hungary will not allow illegal immigrants to cross its territory.” (Reuters)

A Hungarian legislative measure against migrants was passed recently with the support the Jobbik party, an organization that appears to be even further to the right of Orban’s center-right Fidesz party which it blocked with in the vote, passing the new measures counting 151 in favor to 12 against and 27 abstentions in the 199-member national assembly.

Orban’s government also announced it would send the military to the borders authorizing it

through legislation to utilize rubber bullets, pyrotechnical devices, tear gas grenades or net guns. These weapons are being added to an already deadly arsenal which the police have not hesitated to use against migrants including batons, teargas and water hoses.

The right-wing Hungarian leader stressed “Europe is rich but weak. That is the most dangerous combination possible. The result ... is catastrophic. Because Europe cannot defend its external borders, internal borders are shut again. We need to rethink many European inventions, institutions and treaties. But until we do we cannot sit idle. Until the EU states act as one, member states will be forced to go out of their way to fend off this brutal threat.” (Reuters)

In Croatia a similar situation is developing. Migrants have been trapped inside the country unable to travel freely into Hungary or other neighboring states.

Over 17,000 people have crossed over into Croatia during the period of September 16-21, after being forced out from Serbia and being incapable of moving into Slovenia. Croatian Interior Minister Ranko Ostojic said “The situation is impossible for us.”

Ostojic talked with the international press while standing at a camp for migrants in Opatovac on the border with Serbia saying that Croatia is the victim of Europe’s failed response to the crisis.” (NBC News, September 21)

In addition, Ostojic was scheduled to participate in a series of talks set to convene on the crisis during the week of September 21. He called upon European heads-of-state to “come here and see the situation for themselves.”

War of regime-change and the world economic crisis has created a mass migration from the Middle East, Africa and Asia, the largest of such a dislocation since the conclusion of World War II. European and North American imperialist powers act today as if they have nothing to do with the current situation involving the scattering of millions from Syria, Libya, Nigeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, South Asia and other regions.

Nonetheless, the EU leaders such as Angela Merkel of Germany and Francois Hollande of France speak as if they are concerned with the plight of those who flooding into Southern and Eastern Europe. The United States administration of President Barack Obama announced that it would take in anywhere between 10,000-100,000 people from Syria.

These empty proclamations are not improving the conditions under which the migrants are living and being treated or any reassurances to the governments in the EU who are being hit first hand with the impact of the failed policies of the Pentagon and NATO.

Reports of political talks between the State Department and the Russian Foreign Ministry on reaching a political settlement in Syria may be an effort to stem the tide of migration. The continuation of this crisis will undoubtedly place greater strains on relations among the NATO member-states in Europe and North America.

The Global Context of the Migration Crisis

These pronouncements from EU and U.S. leaders come within the context of the continued bombing and destabilization of states throughout the region where the migrants are fleeing.

Since the conclusion of World War II the U.S. has fought to maintain its position as the dominant imperialist nation. Wars in Korea, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa have brought massive deaths, injuries, economic hardships and dislocation.

Rather than allow the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America to determine their own destiny, Washington, Wall Street and their European allies have sought to prevent the genuine national independence and sovereignty of the former colonial and semi-colonial territories. Periodic economic crises have also added to the uncertainty of the viability of the post-colonial states.

Despite the ostensibly more “humane and liberal” statements coming from Germany and other governments, the Europeans appear to be totally incapable of receiving and integrating up to several million people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. In even the most advanced states in Europe such as France, Britain and Germany unemployment remains high and poverty is rising.



Rebellions resulting from racism and national oppression have occurred just over the last decade in France, Britain and Sweden. Right-wing and fascist parties have gained official positions in municipalities and within parliaments in several EU countries pushing more center-right regimes to enact draconian measures specifically directed against oppressed peoples and migrants.

120,000 people being allowed to “legally settle” in the EU states will not by any means solve the problems of migration. There are over 4 million Syrians who have been forced to leave their country and are residing in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and other states.

In addition, millions more are seeking to enter Europe through the North African and Mediterranean networks established by human traffickers. The failure of the imperialist project in Libya in the aftermath of the massive bombing and ground operations of 2011 provides fertile ground for the transfer of millions.

This crisis was precipitated by the imperialist wars of regime-change and the continuing capitalist downturn which have impacted billions internationally. Consequently, if the EU and the U.S. has not been able to create a non-racial environment for those already in these states, then the prospects for those pouring in during 2015 remains dire.

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