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EXAMINING THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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EXAMINING THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:30 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will come to order. After recognizing myself and the ranking member, my good friend Ted Deutch for 5 minutes each for our opening statements, I will then recognize other members seeking recognition for 1 minute. We will hear from our witnesses then. And without objection, the prepared statements of our witnesses will be made a part of the record, and members may have 5 days to insert statements and questions for the record subject to the length limitation in the rules.

Before we begin with our opening statements, I would like to remind my colleagues that this hearing is meant to focus strictly on the humanitarian crisis in Syria. It is not meant to be a debate on the chemical weapons situation, the potential use of military force, or the Russian proposal. Our witnesses have joined us today to discuss their area of expertise and responsibility, and will not be expected to discuss anything beyond that scope. And I thank everyone in advance for your cooperation.

We're also very glad to have Mr. Smith joining our subcommittee today. He is the ranking member, I mean he's the chairman of the Africa Global Health and Human Rights Subcommittee. Thank you, Mr. Smith, who's been a real leader on refugee issues.

The Chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes.

While much attention and great amounts of deliberation have been focused on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict and what the proper U.S. response may be, we must also continue to highlight the increasingly dire humanitarian crisis. Since this conflict began in March 2011, the numbers of those impacted have grown exponentially and are truly shocking and devastating.

Nearly a full one-third of Syria's population is in dire need of humanitarian assistance, and has been displaced by the conflict. By most estimates there are now nearly 5 million Syrians who are now internally displaced persons. Unable or unwilling to flee Syria to find sanctuary elsewhere for whatever reason, these IDPs are extremely vulnerable.

The vast majority of them are women and children, and the elderly who end up staying in unofficial shelters, unfinished buildings, and makeshift accommodations making it extremely difficult to get them the basic necessities that they require.

There have also been over 2 million Syrians who have risked their lives to flee the fighting in Syria, and have sought refuge in other countries with over 1 million of those refugees being children under the age of 18.

Over 97 percent of these refugees flee to Syria's neighboring countries, like our ally Jordan, or to Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iraq. We have seen hundreds of thousands flee to each of these countries, and this mass influx of refugees weighs heavily on their economies and their security situations.

Perhaps the two countries most greatly impacted by the refugee crisis are Lebanon and Jordan. Lebanon is home to anywhere between 700,000 to 1 million Syrian refugees who are living with host communities or in settlements, and whose presence introduces a complex and potentially dangerous situation as we have witnessed with multiple cross-border incidents and spillover violence.

While the political situation in Lebanon already is tenuous at best, this massive influx of refugees further destabilizes the country and threatens to up-end the fragile government and pull Lebanon into the conflict, a situation that would not only have serious ramifications for regional and U.S. national security, but would severely exacerbate the humanitarian crisis.

Meanwhile, Jordan has pledged to keep its borders open to those fleeing Syria despite the heavy burden that this places on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan whose Ambassador is with us today, and I would like to briefly recognize her. Welcome, Madam Ambassador, and our subcommittee had met privately with her before this subcommittee about this refugee crisis. Jordan continues to be an important ally of the United States.

Official numbers place the number of refugees in Jordan at well over ½ million, but those numbers may be much higher, as we heard from the Ambassador this morning, due to the large number of unregistered refugees. While some Syrians live in camp within Jordan, most live amongst host communities. In fact, one camp is home to over 120,000 refugees which would be Jordan's fourth largest city.

The United States through the work of the State Department and USAID continues to provide humanitarian assistance to those impacted by the Syrian conflict. We are the single largest contributor of humanitarian assistance for the Syrian people providing aid to nearly 4 million in Syria with the assistance of the U.N. and local and international organizations and NGOs. Our assistance along with the assistance provided by our friends in the EU, the UK, and the UAE will provide food, medical care, clean water and shelter for those affected by the conflict. This is a massive undertaking and with no end in sight to the Syria conflict, it is important that we evaluate the situation and its implications for the region, as well as the programs we have in place to support ongoing and future developments.

Half of the Syrians in need are children who need something or someone to turn to. If the United States doesn't step up to assist

them, these children may turn to the Islamic extremists who would seek to take advantage of their vulnerability and radicalize them, further threatening the stability of the region, and our security interest.

For the well being of the millions of impacted, for the stability and security of the region, and for our own national security interest we must continue to seek ways to aid these millions who desperately need our help. With no end in sight to the conflict, these numbers will continue to add up, causing increased pressure on the region, and directly threatening the U.S. and our allies.

And with that, I turn to my good friend, the ranking member, Mr. Deutch of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thanks for holding this hearing on what's truly a critical issue that warrants the most serious attention.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the Jordanian Ambassador, Ambassador Bouran. Thank you for being here with us today.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria has reached staggering heights. There are now 6.8 million people in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. I would be remiss if I didn't remind everyone in this room that the death toll in Syria now exceeds 110,000, and that is just the official number.

Back in February of this year, 8 months ago, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees told the Security Council that it was a moment of truth for the international community as the situation was "escalating very quickly into a disaster that could overwhelm the international response capacity." That was 8 months ago when there were just under 1 million registered refugees. In March, the High Commissioner warned the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that all of the agencies involved in this humanitarian response are dramatically underfunded.

On September 3rd, the number of Syrian refugees passed the 2 million mark. That's the count of officially registered refugees. There are likely thousands more that go unaccounted for every day.

I'm increasingly concerned about the impact this crisis will have on Syria's children. Children under the age of 17 account for 1 million of all refugees. Many of these children have not received regular schooling in over 2 years. Some in host countries face language barriers or discrimination, while many in camps lack access to basic materials needed for education.

This is no longer just one country in turmoil, this is a full-blown regional crisis. There are over 460,000 refugees in Turkey, almost 580,000 refugees in Jordan, and over 700,000 refugees in Lebanon. Let me put that in perspective. The total population of Lebanon is just under 4½ million. The Zaatari camp in Jordan, the world's second largest refugee camp is now its fourth largest city. The United Nations-run camp is chaotic with growing lawlessness and reports of sexual abuse, violence, and extremist recruitment.

Just this week there have been reports that the number of Syrian refugees crossing into Jordan jumped nearly ten-fold last week to an average of 900 per day, its highest level in months. There are 40,000 waiting just over the border in Syria. Jordan is on the verge of an economic crisis with strains on its water supply and its elec-

trical grid. Lebanon is struggling to absorb refugees into cities and towns rather than camps, creating societal tensions as competition for jobs increases.

Last week, the High Commissioner for Refugees released a video of 1,300 Syrian refugees living in an underground parking lot in Lebanon. We could go on and on with tragic stories like this.

I understand that a humanitarian response of this scale is not easy, and I want to thank Assistant Secretary Richard and Assistant Administrator Lindborg and their staffs for their tireless work. I want to thank the hundreds of implementing partners and the NGOs that are on the ground risking their lives to provide food and medical care to the Syrian people. They are doing an exceptional job in extraordinarily difficult circumstances, and I don't think that they get the credit that they deserve. And perhaps after this hearing they will receive even a little bit more.

Despite these difficulties, the United States must continue to lead the worldwide humanitarian response effort. Assistant Secretary Richard, I have no doubt that you and your State Department colleagues have had countless meetings and phone calls with our partners around the world reiterating the need for robust and swift response as the number of refugees continues to climb. And I do believe that we have a moral obligation to help those in need. We do, but we also can't do it alone.

The United States has given over $1.1 billion. We know that many of our friends around the world can do more. Assistant Secretary Richard, I hope our discussion today will shed some light as to why there has been a relative lack of funding coming from some of our allies.

In addition to increased funding, what more can we be doing to strengthen host countries? What can we do to reduce the tensions between host country populations and refugees? Shall we continue to funnel most of our aid through the United Nations? What conversations are taking place with regional partners on the need to keep open borders, and what would be the impact of closing those borders?

Unfortunately, this crisis doesn't appear to be ending in the near future. Even if a political settlement is reached in Syria, the humanitarian fallout will likely impact the region for years to come. Despite the immediate and ongoing nature of this response, we have to plan for the long term and we have to be willing to focus for the long term.

I want to thank the witnesses again. I look forward to what I hope will be an informative and productive session, and I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Dr. Yoho of Florida is recognized.

Mr. YOHO. Madam Chair, I have no comments. I look forward to the testimonies. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Mr. Cicciline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICCILINE. Thank you, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch for holding today's hearing on the Syrian Refugee Crisis.

The current situation in Syria is deeply troubling. For over 2 years, President Bashar al Assad has attacked both rebel forces and civilians within Syria. In the past several weeks we've had

many, many discussions regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and how the United States and the world should respond to such use.

In our efforts to come up with a solution regarding chemical weapons we have largely lost sight of the other ongoing humanitarian issues surrounding this crisis. Over 2 million Syrians have been forced to seek refuge in neighboring countries, and millions of others have been displaced internally. It is clear that the international community must do more to assist those most in need, especially when one considers that roughly half of all Syrian refugees are children.

I am pleased that we will focus today on the global responses to the ongoing refugee crisis caused by the conflict in Syria. I hope this discussion will recognize the particular difficulties facing the most at risk Syrians, especially all minority groups.

The message must be clear, however. There must be an ongoing international response to this grave crisis which, of course, includes the United States, but also with strong support from the rest of the world. And I, too, want to acknowledge the Ambassador who is with us today from the Kingdom of Jordan who shared with us some important information about the challenges facing Jordan in this work, and I want to recognize the extraordinary approach of many, many generations of welcoming refugees into the Kingdom of Jordan, and the care with which they are attempting to provide services to those refugees, and the responsibility of the entire world to be part of that effort. And thank you, Madam Ambassador, for your earlier words. I look very much forward to hearing from our witnesses today on this very important subject, and I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. Mr. Smith of New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I appreciate the courtesy extended to me and others to sit in on this panel.

The Syrian civil war has become the worst ongoing humanitarian crisis on earth according to the World Health Organization. The number of refugees fleeing into neighboring countries expanding almost ten-fold to more than 2 million in the past year with another 5 million Syrians internally displaced. Civil war-related deaths have risen by almost a factor of four to well in excess of 100,000 in that same period.

Humanitarian assistance is now reaching 3.5 million Syrians across the country. Consequently, as USAID Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg will testify, the current U.N. Humanitarian Appeals for Syria represent the largest total in the history of U.N. appeals. They now comprise nearly half of the U.N.'s entire global appeals. However, the generosity of the international community has run into significant obstacles. According to a recent report by the U.N. Commission on Inquiry on Syria, there have been a string, and I quote him here, "of systematic attacks on hospitals and medical staff. Attacks on hospitals and health care facilities and their staffs were documented in Hama, Homs, Idlib, Daraa, Ar-Raqqah, and Damascus. Syrian Government forces shelled a field hospital in Hama killing and injuring medical personnel and destroying the facilities. Rebel fighters from Farouq Brigade attacked a national hospital as part of a broader offensive on Homs making

no attempt whatsoever to protect civilians, or patients, or medical personnel."

Ms. Lindborg will point out in her testimony that one of the NGOs that we partner with, there are some 37 medical staff who have been killed, 21 injured, and 13 arrested or missing. This is absolutely unconscionable for either rebels or Assad's troops to be targeting medical personnel as they try to save the bleeding and the wounded.

U.N. Commission Report cites violation of international law again by both government and rebel forces who have positioned troops, snipers, and even tanks in and around medical facilities. The Red Crescent has seen 22 of its workers in Syria killed in instances that they believe were intentional targeting.

Finally, the refugee IDP situation in Syria as a result of Syria's human rights violations that are currently going unchecked. That's why I and 15 of our colleagues last week introduced House Concurrent Resolution 51 to create a Syrian War Crimes Tribunal that will begin the process of establishing the culpability of fighting forces in Syria, and provide the certitude of punishment for those who commit these atrocities.

I thank the chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Ms. Meng of New York. Thank you.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and our witnesses for being here today. I look forward to hearing from you about the current state of the Syrian refugee crisis.

This is a great tragedy which we do have an obligation to address. It's necessary to look beyond the numbers and the stories here. We must consider the effects of the refugees on Syria's neighbors and regional stability. We must consider who the refugees are and whether they are current or future friends of the United States.

In assessing the American response we need to balance the obligation to act with a need to protect our limited resources and identify core American objectives. I look forward to the insights of today's witnesses on how best to achieve all these goals in relation to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Now I'll recognize Mr. Chabot of Ohio who is the subcommittee chairman on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair, for calling this important hearing this morning to examine a critical issue which in light of all the bad news coming out of Syria could otherwise be overlooked, and that's the refugee crisis not only affecting displaced Syrians who have fled the brutal Assad regime, but the neighboring nations who are absorbing probably millions of refugees.

We know that countries like Lebanon and Turkey, Iraq and Egypt are hosting fleeing Syrians. And Jordan, as it has historically done with Palestinians, Iraqis, and now hundreds of thousands of Syrians is again providing refuge for its neighbors.

It's important to note that an unchecked influx of refugees can overload a host country's infrastructure and destabilize its own civil society, so I think it's an important issue and I look forward

to hearing our witnesses, and specifically them detailing the role our Government is playing and what kind of assistance and cooperation the region is getting from the international community.

I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Excellent opening statements, and we're so pleased now to turn to our witnesses. We've got two great panelists.

First, we welcome Ms. Anne Richard, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau on Population, Refugees, and Migration. Prior to this position, Ms. Richard was the Vice President of Government Relations and Advocacy for the International Rescue Committee, and has served in numerous positions in government, including at the State Department, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Peace Corps.

Ms. Richard has authored several monographs, reports, and opinion pieces on issues related to foreign assistance and humanitarian crises.

We also welcome Ms. Nancy Lindborg, who is the Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance at USAID where she leads efforts focused on crisis prevention, response, recovery, and transition.

Since being sworn into office in October 2010, Ms. Lindborg has led teams in response to the ongoing Syria crisis, the Sahel 2012, and Horn of Africa 2011 droughts, the Arab Spring, and numerous other crises around the world.

Prior to joining USAID, she was President of Mercy Corps for 14 years.

Thank you, ladies, for being with us, and we will begin with you, Ms. Richard.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ANNE C. RICHARD, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ms. RICHARD. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Deutch, members of the subcommittee, and also I think we're privileged to have other chairs of the other subcommittees here which shows the seriousness, I think, with which you are taking this crisis, for which we are very, very grateful. We're very grateful you're calling attention to this enormous crisis.

I want to thank you for holding this hearing, and also express our appreciation for the resources authorized and appropriated by the Congress. These funds are saving lives and easing the suffering of millions of people.

Please accept my longer testimony for the record.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection.

Ms. RICHARD. What I'd like to do is speak very quickly and briefly about the main points. This crisis is vastly different than 1 year ago, and alarmingly so. Last September we were concerned about a refugee population of about 230,000, and today it stands at 2 million, so nearly 10 times that earlier number. Combined with 4 million or 5 million people now displaced inside Syria, as you've said nearly one-third of Syria's population has left their homes.

This is now the largest displacement crisis in the world. To put that in perspective, imagine the entire population of Washington,

DC, being forced from their homes and then double that number. More people have fled the country than either of the crises in Rwanda or Bosnia. Two-thirds of the refugees are women and children.

The numbers above are shocking by themselves, but behind them are millions of individual tragedies. I have met families blown apart by the violence; fathers killed or missing, the elderly suffering from lack of medical care, children traumatized by what they've witnessed. We have seen a widow struggling to find food for her five children and toddlers horribly disfigured by bombings. Families live in shanty towns with open sewerage prey to disease and exploitation.

The point of these images is to stress that amid the discussion of the Syrian regime's atrocities and the political debates about the best way forward, our efforts, as leaders among nations, should continue and even intensify to assist the innocent Syrian civilians.

The United States is not taking on this challenge alone. Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt have allowed the vast majority of the 2 million refugees to cross into their territory. Other donors have provided important assistance, and in the midst of this tragedy U.S. assistance is saving lives and making a real difference.

The United States has provided $1 billion in aid since the crisis began. Our aid, channeled through United Nations organizations and reputable international non-governmental organizations helps get the widow with five children linked to one of our partner non-governmental organizations that provides food and medical assistance.

UNICEF efforts help insure the horribly wounded 3-year-old I mentioned got medical attention. The toys UNICEF brought made him smile for the first time in months.

Beyond food, medical care, and other traditional assistance, along with USAID, we are using innovative methods to address the urban population providing food vouchers and debit cards for use in local markets, and cash assistance to help refugees pay rent. We support programs to keep children protected and to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

Overall, we are helping millions of people, but this assistance is spread thin, many remain very difficult to reach and we have many concerns. We need to help not only refugees in camps, but also those living on their own, or with relatives in villages, or cities where hundreds of thousands of destitute families are trying to survive.

Increased assistance by other donors is critical to get help to more people, development funding from international leaders like the World Bank is needed in addition to humanitarian assistance to help the countries that neighbor Syria. Lebanon, Jordan, and Northern Iraq, in particular, need support for their economies, infrastructure, and public services.

I remain concerned about safety in refugee camps, about the spread of disease in camps, and overcrowded neighborhoods, and the many Syrian children who are not in school. And we support programs to tackle each of these challenges.

Michael Clawson of the Save the Children met with refugees in Amman on Monday. He sent me an email and told me that one 10-

year-old girl he met whose father, a taxi driver, had been missing in Syria for 1 year, and now lives in East Amman with her family said she wants to grow up and be a doctor because if something happens to you or someone dear to you, you can help them. I was so touched by that. This girl who's lost so much wants to help other people. That's the future orientation we all need to nurture in these children.

Our greatest concern, of course, is for those still inside Syria who remain vulnerable to attack and whom aid agencies often cannot reach. What good is getting aid inside Syria if the aid recipient is caught in the crossfire, bombed, or gassed by his or her own government?

It is well known that war is not ended by more and better aid deliveries. Peace must be negotiated and we salute our colleagues, American diplomats and their counterparts from other countries striving to do so. Until then, we will urgently need to continue our work and need your support, and the support of the American people in our efforts. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Richard follows:]

Examining the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Testimony of Assistant Secretary Anne C. Richard
U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees & Migration
Before the
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa

September 19, 2013

Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Deutch and Members of this Subcommittee for holding this hearing on the Syrian Refugee Crisis and for calling attention to the enormous humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Middle East. Thank you for the opportunity to update you on how the crisis has evolved and how the U.S. government is responding. I also want to express our appreciation for the resources authorized and appropriated by Congress that are allowing us to make significant contributions to humanitarian operations. As you will hear, these funds are helping to keep people alive and lessen their suffering. But there are limits to what even the best delivered aid can accomplish in such a terrible crisis, and I also want to alert you to some of the more difficult challenges humanitarians face today.

This Year vs. Last

Let me start by discussing some of the ways in which the crisis is different this year than it was a year ago.

First, the crisis has grown quickly, with people forced to flee at an accelerating pace so that the number of refugees increased from 230,000 at the beginning of September last year to more than two million refugees today. They have poured across Syria's borders into neighboring countries and even further afield (*see chart, below*) and another four-to-five million are displaced inside Syria. More people have fled their homes in Syria than fled the genocide and its aftermath in Rwanda or the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. The High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, earlier this month said that "Syria has become the great tragedy of this century – a disgraceful humanitarian calamity with suffering and displacement unparalleled in recent history."

Lebanon	740,000
Jordan	520,000
Turkey	464,000
Iraq	183,000
Egypt	117,000
Total	**2,038,000**

Neighboring countries that have allowed the refugees to cross into their territory and escape the violence deserve our thanks.

Turkey has built 20 camps for just over 200,000 refugees, and even more Syrians live in Turkish cities. Informally, some referred to the camps as "five-star" because they offered a high level of comfort in contrast to most refugee camps around the world, but the passage of time has worn down the infrastructure of the camps and frayed the nerves of camp refugees. We are grateful that Turkey has plans to build three additional camps for contingencies and is also starting to register Syrians in urban areas and providing them access to free medical care. Turkey also continues to provide humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance, food, and shelter, to internally displaced persons waiting in Syria to cross the border into Turkey.

In Jordan, refugees were initially held in short-term transit centers before being allowed to be "bailed-out" or sponsored by relatives, friends or even strangers. Over time, however, the Government of Jordan concluded that a camp should be constructed to hold the growing influx of refugees. A year ago, that camp was desert and rocks. Today, Za'atri camp is Jordan's fourth largest city. The United Arab Emirates has constructed a much smaller second camp that opened in April and construction of a larger third camp at Azraq is well advanced.

Some weeks ago I spoke to Killian Kleinschmidt, the manager of the Za'atri camp in Jordan, and we discussed the way that the needs of the refugees were changing. He maintains that some of the vandalism of communal spaces seen in that camp – such as theft of kitchen equipment and damage to latrines -- is related to refugees preferring to fix up their own areas. They want to have reliable electricity. They want to shop for and cook their own meals instead of lining up at communal kitchens. They are essentially turning tents and caravans intended to serve as temporary dwellings into more permanent homes. I agree with Mr. Kleinschmidt's recommendation: we should recognize that their displacement will not end soon and help them improve their living conditions in what really has become a Syrian city in Jordan.

In both Turkey and Jordan more refugees actually live in cities and villages than in camps. And there are no refugee camps for Syrians in Lebanon, where desperate refugees have crowded into any unoccupied building, shed or building site for shelter, placing great strain on already-stressed Lebanese infrastructure. In order to help these refugees, programs are designed differently in order to reach into the villages where they live. Aid is provided using food vouchers or debit cards so that refugees can shop in local markets. Instead of tents or containers, refugees are given cash assistance in order to pay rent for accommodations.

While neighboring countries initially welcomed the refugees, there is a growing sense among their citizens that they are inundated and could be overwhelmed. Refugees are driving wages down but rent prices up as they compete against local people for jobs and housing. They strain water and electrical systems, force local schools to run double-shifts and occupy beds in hospitals. All of this is leading to tensions in these societies. (Large-scale international aid operations can also pump money into local economies, and neighboring countries are also hosting wealthy Syrian exiles, but it is unclear the extent to which these positive economic impacts are offsetting the costs of hosting refugees.)

In recent weeks, the number of refugees crossing has decreased at some border points because refugee-hosting countries have taken steps to restrict the flow. Measures include

limiting the number that can cross per day or imposing stricter requirements for identity documents. Some crossing points have been closed completely. In response, we have asked neighboring countries to keep borders open, urged them to respect the rights of people seeking to flee the violence, and discussed different ways to help these governments cope.

On August 15, authorities in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region opened a key crossing point that had long been closed. Some 63,000 refugees have used that point to cross from Syria into Iraq.

Frankly, we no longer believe people could return easily to their homes inside Syria. For many, their homes are destroyed or their workplaces are gone. Familiar landmarks are now recalled as the scenes of tragedies and atrocities. Doctors have fled or been killed, medical centers bombed, and the services one needs for daily life have vanished. Reports based on interviews with newly arriving refugees indicate that when tens of thousands crossed into Iraq in late August, they were not fleeing fighting so much as they were leaving because they could not get sufficient food and water.

What We Are Doing

In the midst of all this tragedy there is little good news, but we should acknowledge some of the things that have gone right. First, thanks in large part to the aid that is getting delivered throughout the region, millions of people are being helped and kept alive. Babies are delivered, children fed, the wounded and sick get medical care and families find shelter. Of the $1 billion in U.S. aid provided since the crisis began, nearly half -- $488 million --has come from funds appropriated to the Population, Refugees and Migration bureau. The final aid package for this fiscal year is scheduled to be announced next week when the UN General Assembly meets in New York, and we are encouraging other donor countries to also make generous contributions.

We play a leading role in directing U.S. humanitarian aid to the organizations that help refugees. Our partners include the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the UN Children's fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and a number of non-governmental organizations. They, in turn, use contributions from the United States and other major donors to provide food, clean water, emergency shelter, and health care as well as schools for refugee children. We also support programs to help keep refugees safe and to protect their rights. This includes programs to keep children protected and to prevent and respond to instances of sexual or gender-based violence.

We are horrified by reports of sexual violence inside Syria and want victims of these attacks to get the help and protection they need. The United States is a major funder of women's health centers and mobile health clinics in places where refugees live. We also fund counseling services for survivors of sexual violence and information campaigns to raise awareness about available services. Over the past year, my colleagues and I have delved deeper into issues related to gender-based violence and are actively reviewing ways to do more to protect Syrian

women and girls by working with UNHCR, ICRC and international non-governmental organizations.

Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg, from the U.S. Agency for International Development will testify at greater length about the U.S. government's relief efforts inside Syria and the remarkable courage that aid workers from international and local aid agencies demonstrate every day in order to get aid to people in the middle of a war zone. The Population, Refugees and Migration bureau has allocated $135 million of our funding to support the activities of several international organizations (UNHCR, ICRC, UNRWA) working inside Syria. Our contributions complement the efforts of USAID and our staffs stay in close touch to ensure our funding is allocated and used wisely and it helps as many people as possible.

Issues of Concern

We also know that humanitarian aid alone will not be sufficient to address the problems bred by this regional crisis. We realize that development funding in countries like Jordan and Lebanon is essential to help keep their economies stable and to make improvements in their overtaxed infrastructure and public services. This is a topic we are discussing within the U.S. government, but international financial institutions also have a role to play, and in the coming days and weeks we will seek their greater involvement. The World Bank, for example, recently approved a $150 million emergency loan to the Government of Jordan to help address needs in host communities. The World Bank recently completed a joint assessment mission to Lebanon with UN experts to identify development projects deserving of donor support, which they plan to announce in October during their annual meetings. These and other efforts to finance development projects will assist local communities that are hosting refugees and will help foster stability in this region. The Administration recognizes the need to support neighbors shouldering this responsibility, and, in addition to humanitarian assistance, we are providing significant economic, development, and security assistance to support Jordan and Lebanon as the crisis continues.

In terms of delivering aid to the refugees, if we can convince more countries to donate to UNHCR and the efforts of other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, this will help those agencies to reach more people, especially refugees living outside of camps. It will also help these agencies to plan with more assurance and have the confidence that resources will materialize to support programs. Unfortunately, many on the roster of major donors to the humanitarian operations in and around Syria – the United States, Europeans, Japan, Canada, and Australia – are the usual donors to humanitarian causes. The one bright spot is the addition of Kuwait to the list of those supporting major relief agencies.

I remain concerned about safety in refugee camps, particularly in Za'atri. That camp grew so quickly that chaos resulted. For a time, there was no police inside the camp. Several measures have been taken to improve this situation. The Jordanian police who used to stay outside the perimeter of the camp have begun patrols on the inside. Our colleagues in the Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement are also working with the Jordanian police and UNHCR to design a training program for 600 camp residents to serve as a community patrol

under the direction of the Jordanian police. They are coordinating those efforts closely with UNHCR and the Government of Jordan.

UNICEF experts have told us that too many Syrian children are not going to school. Throughout the region, we are examining ways to increase the relatively low numbers of Syrian refugee children enrolled in schools because the risk of a "lost generation" of Syrian children is very real.

I am also worried about the spread of disease throughout camps or poor, overcrowded neighborhoods. Medical staff working in camps has been particularly vigilant to prevent outbreaks. In Jordan, more than 625,000 Syrian and Jordanian children received vaccinations against polio and measles this summer as part of a U.S.-funded program.

Palestinians who live or lived in Syria deserve special attention during this crisis. Before the conflict, 525,000 Palestinians were living in Syria. Subsequently, Palestinian neighborhoods have been severely damaged by fighting and shelling. 235,000 Palestinians have had to flee violence within Syria and 45,000 have fled to Lebanon.

Our greatest concern, of course, is for those still inside Syria, who remain vulnerable to attack. What good is getting aid inside Syria if the aid recipient is caught in the crossfire and killed by armed groups? Or bombed? Or gassed by his or her own government? We support efforts to get more aid into Syria, but that is not enough.

Conclusion

In the humanitarian community, it is well known that war is not ended by more and better aid deliveries. Peace must be negotiated, and we salute our colleagues -- the U.S. and international diplomats --who are striving to bring this conflict to a peaceful end. Until peace returns, the role of my bureau at the State Department is to support international efforts to deliver aid and alleviate suffering. To do this, we will continue to need your help and your voices speaking up in support of what we are doing and explaining to the public the importance of the aid we direct to humanitarian organizations. I might also mention that private contributions Americans choose to make to reputable charities working in the region would also be extremely helpful.

Thank you again for holding this hearing and for your interest and concern. I look forward to your questions.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.
Ms. Lindborg.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE NANCY E. LINDBORG, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE , U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. LINDBORG. Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, members of the subcommittee and guests, thank you very much for holding this hearing today, and allowing us to focus attention on the very serious humanitarian crisis unfolding in Syria and the region. And a special thanks for your continued support for the humanitarian programs here, and really around the world. This represents the best of American values, and it is making a difference in the lives of millions every day. And I welcome the opportunity to update you on the humanitarian crisis, our response, and the continued challenges because the one constant in the Syrian crisis is the continued toll on the Syrian people.

As a number of you all have noted, children are out of school for the last 2 years, women are enduring rape and violence, the one-third of Syrians who are forced out of their homes and more Syrians who are now forcibly displaced than anywhere else in the world. The pace of escalation, as noted, is truly staggering, and the numbers are hard to truly comprehend.

Just in the past year, death rates have gone from 26,000 to more than 100,000. There is an estimated 5,000 people killed every month, many of them women and children. The number who need our help inside Syria 1 year ago was 2.6 million, now it's more than 6.8 million. Imagine the equivalent of all of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Connecticut, all of those populations combined needing humanitarian assistance.

So, as the crisis has escalated we have also accelerated our humanitarian response. Since last year we have doubled the number of partners that we have working inside Syria. We've shored up systems and supply lines to increase our ability to reach people throughout the country even in conflict that continues to move around.

Our assistance is more than $1 billion region-wide, and we're reaching 3.5 million people inside Syria in all 14 governates. We're working through all possible channels to provide life saving assistance, and we're focusing on three key areas that provide a lifeline for people who are under siege inside Syria.

The first is medical care, and we started 2 years ago really focusing on trauma care. As the conflicts persisted we've had to broaden that out to meet medical needs of women and children who no longer have access to health care, and we now support about 260 medical facilities across Syria.

When warm weather hit last year we were worried about communicable diseases spiking so we established an early warning system that enables us to have early disease protection and a fast response. As noted, women and children especially at risk, gender-based violence is rampant inside Syria, so this is a special focus of our programming.

Secondly, food assistance. We are helping to feed 3 million people inside Syria, and more than 1 million refugees every month through the World Food Program and our NGO partners. We're meeting those needs using the flexible mechanisms through our Emergency Food Security Program. This lets us do local regional purchase and food vouchers. And recently there was just a flood of refugees that went into Iraq, 44,000 in 1 week. We were able to airlift 15 metric tons of USAID nutritional bars to get there fast and meet their needs.

I was recently in Beirut and Amman, and in both cities I met with groups of women, and they have these stories of having to grab whatever they could as the bombs are falling. They're grabbing shoes, clothes, their children, they're watching bombs destroy their homes and their villages. So, they often have nothing, and they're rotating as they flee conflict often two to three times being displaced, so we also focus on vital relief supplies, as well as clean water and sanitation as they are displaced around the country.

Three enormous challenges; the first is access. We are not able to reach everywhere we need to inside Syria. We've seen some breakthroughs with cross line assistance, but a recent U.N. Cross Line trip to Aleppo supposed to take 3 hours, it took 3 days because they had to navigate 50 checkpoints along the way. At every chance we continue to push for greater humanitarian access, including cross-border.

The second is security. Aid workers continue to be targeted. One of our partners, as Mr. Smith noted, has lost 37 medical staff, 21 injured, 13 arrested. Let me underscore that we would be nowhere without the courage of the humanitarian aid workers. Thank you for honoring them. They risk their lives every single day. And the most profound security environment means that we have to prioritize the safety of our partners and the communities that they serve.

The third challenge is resources. As noted, this is an enormous appeal. It's a protracted crisis that is now a regional crisis and an international crisis that requires the entire international community to step up to the plate. We're working to develop a comprehensive platform that enables us to bring our development assistance in line with our relief assistance, particularly in the communities in Jordan and Lebanon where the refugee burden is stressing key infrastructure. Our contingency funds like the USAID Complex Crisis Fund is being deployed to help communities meet these needs.

Humanitarian assistance will not end the bloodshed, but it is saving lives. It's helping alleviate suffering. It is a critical lifeline to people in need, and we will remain very committed to providing that kind of assistance.

Thank you so much for your support, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lindborg follows:]

Examining the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Testimony of U.S. Agency for International Development
Assistant Administrator Nancy E. Lindborg to the
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on the Middle East & North Africa
September 19, 2013

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the ongoing U.S. response to Syria's humanitarian crisis and the great challenges we still face. Thank you also for your continued support for our humanitarian programs around the world, which make a positive difference every day in the lives of millions. And I am pleased to be here today with an important colleague, partner, and friend in this effort, Assistant Secretary Anne Richard.

Introduction

The one constant in the Syrian crisis is the continued toll on the people of Syria—the children who haven't been to school for two years; the women who have endured rape and violence; and the millions of families who have been displaced from one village to the next as they flee the shifting lines of conflict.

The pace of escalation is staggering. In just one year, the number of reported deaths has more than tripled, from 26,000 to more than 100,000. The number in need inside Syria jumped from 2.5 million people to more than 6.8 million. This is roughly the equivalent of the combined populations of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Connecticut all in need of humanitarian assistance.

Almost one-third of the population of Syria has now been forcibly displaced, many of them multiple times. One year ago, there were approximately 1.2 million people in Syria displaced from their homes and 238,000 registered refugees in neighboring countries. There are now approximately 5 million people displaced inside Syria and over 2 million refugees. More Syrians are now forcibly displaced than people from any other country in the world.

As the crisis has escalated, the United States has accelerated our response. Since this time last year, USAID has scaled up our partners inside Syria from 12 to 26 and—to cope with a conflict with shifting lines—shored up systems and supply lines to increase our ability to reach people in need throughout the country. With President Obama's Eid announcement in August of an

additional $195 million in humanitarian assistance, the United States is now contributing more than $1 billion in humanitarian assistance inside Syria and regionally.

I traveled last month to Jordan and Lebanon to highlight the continued commitment of the United States to help alleviate the extraordinary suffering of the Syrian people. I also focused on confirming our support for the communities in Jordan and Lebanon that now host a staggering number of refugees, and where basic infrastructure—including water, electricity, schools and hospitals—is stretched to the limit.

Today, I would like to update you on three critical areas: the current status of our humanitarian response, the primary challenges faced by the humanitarian community, and the effort underway to address the significant impact of growing refugee populations on host communities.

The U.S. Humanitarian Response

U.S. humanitarian assistance in Syria is reaching 3.5 million people across all 14 governorates. Working through all possible channels—the United Nations, international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local Syrian organizations—to reach those in need, our humanitarian programs are providing life-saving supplies and services.

We coordinate closely with other donors and the humanitarian community to ensure our collective response effort is effective and efficient. We have also worked to build the capacity of the Syrian Coalition's Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU), which has proven an essential partner in reaching Syrians in need in opposition-held and contested areas.

At USAID, our humanitarian assistance is focused on three key areas: emergency medical care, food assistance, and the provision of much-needed relief supplies. All of our programs seek to provide a special focus on reaching the most vulnerable populations—including women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly—who often face extraordinary levels of violence and abuse.

Medical Care

For almost two years, USAID has provided emergency medical care to those caught in the crossfire. We started with a small-scale operation focused on urgent response. But as the conflict persisted, we saw the need for a sustained infrastructure to meet ongoing needs. Today, we support 260 medical facilities across Syria. These field hospitals and makeshift clinics have treated more than 460,000 patients and performed more than 113,000 surgeries. We saw the need

for more medical staff capable of saving lives, so we trained 1,280 Syrian volunteers to provide emergency first aid care.

Last spring, with the onset of warmer weather, dysfunctional systems and communicable diseases on the rise, USAID worked with partners to establish an early warning system for communicable diseases that require early detection and fast response to prevent devastating consequences.

Sadly, women and children often fare the worst in war. In Syria, gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious concern in the growing crisis. USAID medical support includes services for GBV survivors through women's health centers, mobile clinics, and outreach teams that provide health and psychosocial services to women who desperately need it. Home-based support is provided to vulnerable women and children living on the front lines and unable to travel for care. And we work with our partners to find often simple but life-changing solutions, such as supporting all-purpose women's washing and gathering spaces in camps for the internally displaced.

I also want to make a special note of the humanitarian heroes working on the front lines of this effort, especially the health workers who continue their efforts despite health facilities being targeted. Doctors, nurses, and volunteer health workers risk their lives daily to save others. Just last week, we heard reports of a health facility near Aleppo that was bombed, killing 11 health workers and patients. Unfortunately, these reports are all too common in this brutal crisis. We continue to provide support that ensures stipends, bandages, gauze, medicines, and training, but the Syrian health workers are providing the constant supply of courage.

Food Assistance

The United States is the largest donor of emergency food assistance to those affected by the Syrian crisis, including those who have fled to neighboring countries. Through the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) and NGOs, U.S. food assistance currently helps feed three million people inside Syria and more than one million refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt each month. Inside Syria, this emergency assistance provides a lifeline for the most vulnerable in areas where access is most constrained by insecurity. And through our Emergency Food Security Program, USAID is able to deliver food assistance rapidly through a variety of flexible mechanisms—including local and regional purchase and voucher programs—that allow us to efficiently and effectively meet the food needs of Syrian refugees in the neighboring countries.

As civil war disrupts everyday life, USAID is working to address daily needs and to stay flexible. Since January, USAID has supported delivery of approximately 18,000 metric tons of food by NGOs to conflict-affected Syrian families not reached by WFP in Aleppo governorate,

feeding over a quarter of a million people on a daily basis. In late August, as more than 44,000 Syrian refugees crossed into the Kurdish region of northern Iraq in a single week, 15 metric tons of special nutritional bars from USAID were airlifted in on the first WFP-chartered relief flight.

Relief Supplies

Many Syrian families left home with nothing but the clothes on their backs. On my recent trip to Beirut, I met with a group of women who had terrible stories of grabbing what little they could as bombs tore apart their homes and villages. Many of them spent weeks or months in different villages and cities before finally crossing the border.

Our assistance provides basic supplies especially critical for those who are displaced and seeking refuge, often in abandoned buildings and schools. Clothing, kitchen sets, blankets, mattresses, and bedding provide a lifeline. Last spring, as summer approached and temperatures rose, we focused on providing clean water, improving sanitation, and stepping up hygiene education and supplies to thwart the spread of waterborne disease. Last winter, we provided blankets, heaters, and warm clothes to the displaced as well as host families. With many more now in need, we—along with the international community—are now designing winterization kits and coordinating distribution plans to quickly deliver supplies to families in need before winter sets in.

Key Challenges

Humanitarian assistance faces three substantial challenges: lack of access, rising insecurity, and the mounting need for more resources.

Access

The single-greatest factor limiting humanitarian aid remains the ongoing, intensifying conflict, which continues to prevent safe and secure access for aid workers and aid organizations. With the international community, we are working to reach all those in need in Syria, but there are areas we are unable to access or access consistently. At every opportunity, we continue to push for greater humanitarian access, including access across borders to reach the most vulnerable groups of Syrians.

In recent months, we have seen breakthroughs in the delivery of assistance across battle lines. Through delicate negotiations with the Syrian Government and opposition factions, and with the critical partnership of the Syrian Coalition, approximately 30 U.N.-sponsored convoys have reached displaced Syrians through cross-line operations. These efforts must continue, but they

are logistically complicated and increasingly dangerous, with multiple checkpoints, rising criminality, and increasing numbers of armed militias. In July, the U.N. documented a cross-line trip from Damascus to Aleppo that would normally take three hours and instead took three days to pass through the 50 or so checkpoints now along the route.

As a result, less aid is reaching hard-hit areas, and for the first time, we are starting to see an increased number of children displaying signs of acute malnutrition. This further underscores the need for direct, cross-border delivery if we are to reach those in need more quickly.

Security

Security remains a constant concern, and humanitarian aid workers continue to be targeted for detainments and killing. Our top priority is providing life-saving aid, so we must provide it in a way that protects both recipients and the courageous aid workers who provide it. Further endangering aid workers would mean undermining the international humanitarian effort itself.

Threats and attacks on medical workers and clinics remain especially prevalent, and some medical facilities have been destroyed completely. A recently released report by the U.N. Commission of Inquiry on Syria also cites a string of systematic attacks on hospitals and medical staff. In the last year, on one of our NGO partner's medical teams alone, 37 medical staff have been killed, 21 have been injured, and 13 have been arrested or are missing. Despite these risks, aid workers continue their heroic, life-saving work every day.

The profound security concerns in Syria mean that most of our assistance is provided without branding. We brand U.S. assistance when and where possible and continue to work to find ways that we can safely inform the Syrian people that the United States is responding as the leading donor and the largest, most proactive provider of humanitarian assistance. In April 2013, USAID began providing heavy-duty plastic sheeting branded with the USAID logo to internally displaced persons in spontaneous camps in northern Syria. To date, USAID-branded sheeting has been distributed in Atmeh, Bab Al Hawa, Karama, and Qah camps.

Meanwhile, we are amplifying our message of solidarity and support through official visits to the region with intense media engagement targeting Syrians inside Syria, as well as neighboring populations affected by the crisis.

Resources

The current U.N. humanitarian appeals for Syria total the largest ever in the history of U.N. appeals and comprise nearly half of all the U.N.'s current global appeal. Neighboring countries

are already staggering under the rising costs of hosting more than two millions refugees, and traditional donors have all given generously, led by the United States. Never before has it been so important for all countries to step forward in support of the people of Syria. As we look at a protracted regional crisis, it is imperative to see this as truly an international crisis with help required from all quarters. A recent U.N. report estimates that Syria's development indices have been rolled back 35 years because of this crisis. Even if the conflict were to end tomorrow, all expectations are of a recovery that will take a decade or longer.

This week, the United States joined fellow donors in Stockholm to discuss the staggering costs of this crisis, chart a clear and coordinated path to meet a rapidly growing set of needs, and determine how to ensure the rest of the world's humanitarian crises are not forgotten. An important development is the idea of a comprehensive platform to more effectively coordinate development funds with humanitarian resources in supporting neighboring countries. With strong support from the host governments, efforts are underway to map where shared investment in critically stressed infrastructure can benefit refugee populations as well as hosting communities. Consolidating and coordinating our resources will ensure our efforts are more sustainable and serve to benefit long-term stability and economic development in these countries.

Host Communities

The United States has already moved to direct key contingency and development programs in support of stressed host communities. These efforts were a key focus of my recent travel to Jordan and Lebanon, where in some cases Syrian refugees now outnumber the Jordanian or Lebanese people in villages, and vital resources like water are already scarce. In both countries, we see that the poorest communities clearly overlap with the greatest concentration of refugees. Tensions between locals and refugees over resources is a real threat to stability in both countries, so we are paying close attention to key infrastructure, health, and education programming and ramping up efforts to help ensure delivery of essential services at the local level so host communities directly benefit from our assistance.

While in Jordan, I visited Mafraq, an area in the north where many refugees are now living outside Za'atri camp. I met with leaders of community-based organizations running water management programs made possible by USAID's Complex Crises Fund (CCF). These programs not only help families to access clean water themselves but also to improve water use efficiency, meaning they can provide water for their livestock and sustain their livelihoods. Domestic water supply in Jordan is among the lowest in the world, barely meeting basic household needs for sanitation, cooking, and cleaning. The CCF program supports community-

based organizations in 12 governorates throughout Jordan in efforts to enhance water catchment, preservation, and infrastructure. It is helping the country to cope.

More recently, USAID launched a $21 million Community Engagement Project in Jordan that works closely with communities to identify their most pressing challenges and shape meaningful solutions. The program just issued its first set of 29 grants to address growing community needs and basic services: school infrastructure, public parks preservation, lighting, medical equipment, and youth clubs.

In Lebanon, where an estimated one fifth of the population is now Syrian refugees and the spillover effects of the crisis may be the most acute, USAID is similarly focused on water and education as well as a value-chain development program to advance agriculture in heavily affected areas like the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon's northeast. With approximately 250,000 Syrian refugees of school age currently in Lebanon and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) predicting this number could climb to 550,000 by the end of the year, USAID's $75 million education program is essential to help meet growing needs of the most vulnerable.

Conclusion

Humanitarian assistance will not end the bloodshed in Syria. Yet it is saving lives and helping alleviate the very real pressures this protracted conflict has put on the lives of everyday people. As we continue to work with the international community toward a political solution, the United States remains fully committed to a strong and flexible humanitarian response—and to coordinating closely with our international development partners—to help the Syrian people and Syria's neighbors endure this crisis. And, we must continue to press for greater access and security for aid workers. We continue to be deeply appreciative of Congressional support to provide the resources that makes our humanitarian assistance work possible in the region.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you to both of you for the great work that you do, and all of the folks that you help.

I wanted to ask two questions, one on radicalization and another one on gender violence. As you have pointed out, the vast majority of those impacted by this crisis have been women, children, and the elderly. Alarmingly high number of Syrian children not in school, and refugee and IDP kids seek anything to latch onto to attempt to escape their hardships, and sometimes that would embrace—they could embrace a radical extremist form of Islam that is prevalent in the region, and is always looking for new recruits, vulnerable, angry youth.

What can our agencies, USAID and the State Department do, and other agencies, to insure that these kids don't embrace this extremist ideology, but instead embrace the values of peace, of freedom, respect for human rights, religious freedom? Are we winning this battle, and what more can we do that we aren't doing now? How can we work with agencies like UNICEF to reach these children and get them the education that they need so we don't see, as you referred to in your written testimony, Ms. Richard, a lost generation of Syrian children?

And next on gender violence, as you pointed out there have been terrible reports of gender-based violence, forced or coerced child marriages in some of the Syrian refugee communities. What can we do? What are we doing in conjunction with other international NGOs and the U.N. to expand and improve services to respond to gender-based violence, increased access to safe spaces, awareness that there is access to professionals who can provide support to victims? And what can we do to empower girls, and women, and raise awareness of their rights, and give them other options rather than having to enter into an all too early marriage? Thank you, ladies.

Ms. RICHARD. Well, on the issue of children, we have programs in all of the places that refugees are arriving to help the children, especially, because we don't want to see them idle or just left out in the open, or preyed upon by adults or others. So, in Jordan where children make up approximately 54 percent of the refugees, U.S. funding supports programming for safe spaces for children, access to schools, and provides childhood immunizations. And I visited some of the safe spaces for children in the Zaatari camp, and kids there were like kids anywhere. They were playing, they were happy, they were singing. It's a nice counterpoint to some of the horrible things I see, to spend time with kids when I travel. And some of that is run by UNICEF with our funding, and it's a really good program. And there's several of those in Zaatari, and I think we need more.

In Lebanon, we are—more than 115,000 children have received counseling and trauma services from UNICEF, and we're trying to—because children there in Lebanon are not in camps, we're trying to reach them in the places where they are, and they're living in very overcrowded conditions. And we're very concerned that throughout the region children are not going to school. And going to school is one of the safest places for children to be, and it keeps them interested and educated, and gives them a future.

It's important to point out, perhaps, that in Iraq recently we were talking about the influx of over 60,000 new Syrian refugees.

U.S. humanitarian partners are identifying children separated from their families to reunite them with their families, and that's a very important piece of the humanitarian work, as well, is bringing families back together.

I want to quickly also before turning to Nancy mention that we are very concerned by reports of gender-based violence, including sexual violence. We're working very closely with the humanitarian partners.

One of the basics is that we build into our aid programs a focus on the needs of women and girls so that they get their basic needs covered, shelter, food, clothing, water and sanitation. And then they're not just pushed to the side by the biggest guy in a camp or in a distribution line.

We encourage all our humanitarian partners to consult with women and girls, ensure they have access to assistance, address their unique needs, and identify the risks.

In addition to that, though, we try to fund specialized services and support aimed at preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, abuse. This includes medical and counseling services for rape survivors. We already mentioned the safe learning and healing spaces for children, particularly girls, in efforts to raise awareness about the rest of urgent issues like early marriage. So, it's not just one thing, it's a range of services. And as Nancy knows, because we've been talking about this practically on a weekly basis lately, we need to as humanitarian agencies do a better job of preventing bad things from happening in the first place, in the early stages of a crisis, and not just help the victims later on. So, we're trying to really focus on that piece in the coming days. Thank you for your question.

Ms. LINDBORG. Well, as you can tell this is an issue that we're very seized with, and all the approaches that Anne identified we're working with our partners inside Syria, as well. There's the additional challenge, of course, of people moving around, a lot of the schools are occupied by internally displaced families, but we do work through all of our partners with an emphasis on being very aware of specific gender needs, and trying to provide that protection. The child services through our network of supported health clinics and hospitals, there's a focus on providing assistance for victims of rape or gender-based violence, and making sure that the right kind of supplies are available both in our emergency supplies and through our health clinics.

Psycho social counseling is really important, as well, because the trauma that people go through, it will have generational impact, so it's critical that as much as possible people get the kind of help they need.

I would just add one thing, and that is we're also really concerned about trafficking of young girls. And through our mission in Jordan, we have a program that is working to raise the awareness of this as an issue to pay close attention to. Nothing is more horrifying than thinking of being a young girl in Tunisia who ends up being trafficked in Zaatari camps, so these are the kinds of issues that we are absolutely seized with.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much for your answers. Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I laid out some questions in my opening statement that hopefully we'll be able to get back to, but I wanted to just go in a different direction for a moment.

I am incredibly thankful, as we said earlier, for the tireless work that's being done now by the Bureau, and by USAID, and all of our partners, but I'm concerned about this constant stream of reports that we get. And I want you to chime in on this, that the Syrian people continue to think that the United States isn't doing anything. We've heard reports that in refugee camps countries like South Korea and Saudi Arabia are openly proudly branding their assistance, dramatically less than ours, while we may have a tiny U.S. flag under the U.N. logo indicating that we're one of many countries that contribute to funding to the U.N.

Equally troubling is when the President or Secretary goes on TV and pledges hundreds of millions of dollars to the crisis, and then even though we're the largest donor and one of the only donors to actually fulfill—to meet all of our pledges, the Syrian people see no direct U.S. assistance, and think that not only are we doing nothing, but then think that we're making false promises. Is that accurate, are those reports accurate?

Ms. LINDBORG. You know, we have paid a great deal of attention to looking at all the ways that we can help the people of Syria understand that the people of the United States are standing with them, and in an environment where our aid workers are being targeted. So branding is one part of the solution, and we have been able to get branded plastic sheeting into the IDP camps in Northern Syria.

We're also——

Mr. DEUTCH. I'm sorry, branded plastic?

Ms. LINDBORG. Branded plastic sheeting which is used—big, heavy duty plastic sheeting that's used for shelter for people who need temporary shelter. It's a staple of the relief world.

We've also just negotiated with WFP to ensure that all of the vouchers and all of the electronic cards that they use in our food programs in the refugee camps have the U.S. flag and the U.S. logo on it, so that will start in Jordan in a couple of weeks, and then we'll move that to Lebanon, as well. It's accompanied with a campaign of posters and banners.

Mr. DEUTCH. I'm sorry. How many people will receive those cards?

Ms. LINDBORG. We feed—it will probably be close to 1 million people who receive those cards.

Mr. DEUTCH. Okay.

Ms. LINDBORG. And it's in Jordan and Lebanon. And then we'll—as I noted, we got the USAID nutritional biscuits airlifted almost immediately to the refugees in Iraq.

We also—our partners are working inside Syria with MOUs with the relief committees and with the bakeries in many instances so there's awareness at the community level that the assistance is coming from the American people.

We continue to also do media campaigns. Anne and I have both traveled repeatedly to the region. I was just there a few weeks ago. One of the main things we do is Arab language media, and media

that beams directly into Syria, so that they hear repeatedly that we are providing this assistance, and we're working with our partners to provide all kinds of social media information, and we do a regular update of the Syria diaspora.

Mr. DEUTCH. I appreciate that, and I applaud those efforts, and anything we can do to be helpful, please let us know.

Ms. LINDBORG. These kinds of hearings are helpful, as well, so thank you for holding this hearing because it does allow us to put an underline on all the assistance that the United States is doing.

Mr. DEUTCH. Great. Circling back to something I had brought up earlier. Assistant Secretary Richard, with a few exceptions the international response to the difficulties in Syria has been on the whole disappointing. The U.N. appeal for Syrians is less than 50 percent funded, most donors aren't meeting their pledges, many wealthy countries are donating very little, if anything at all, to relief efforts.

I understand that in addition to implementing relief assistance, the Bureau is essentially responsible for humanitarian diplomacy, as well, so what efforts are the State Department and the Bureau leading to implore our allies to fulfill their funding needs? And is the humanitarian crisis being stressed in every major diplomatic meeting around the world? Is this on the agenda in every major meeting where we are involved?

Ms. RICHARD. We are working to get this on the agenda of every major meeting we possibly can, and we're making real pests of ourselves on the 7th floor of the State Department. And I can say with assurance that we're getting on the agenda——

Mr. DEUTCH. I'm sorry, I'm almost out of time, but you're making pests of yourselves to whom?

Ms. RICHARD. To the people that handle the paper up there, because we keep running down the hallway with talking points about the urgency of asking everyone the Secretary meets with to please support the humanitarian efforts that the world is putting together.

Mr. DEUTCH. I would just in my last remaining seconds, if I could have 15 additional seconds, Madam Chairman, it is—there should be no reason that you should have to pester anyone at the State Department to make sure that on the agenda of every meeting taking place is the greatest humanitarian crisis taking place in the world today, and the role that the United States is playing to help address it. And I yield back.

Ms. RICHARD. I agree with you, and I think it's probably my own zealous nature that I'm over-papering the 7th floor more than they need because they're allies in this, of course. And this week we had a meeting in Stockholm on Monday of the U.N. Emergency Directors. My deputy was there. Next week we have several meetings around the U.N. General Assembly that will focus on the humanitarian piece of this. And the week after we'll be in Geneva for the Executive Committee meeting of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Normally, I leave the delegation to that. I asked Bill Burns, our Deputy Secretary, to lead it this year, so he's flying in for Monday because of the importance of this. And it wasn't a very hard thing to convince him.

Mr. DEUTCH. And even if we are, and you are not here to talk about chemical weapons, but if the current negotiations and the agreement, if everything plays out exactly as we want, and every last bit of chemical weapons is removed from Syria in 3 months, 6 months, in 1 year, whenever it is, this crisis will remain. And that's the point that I am so glad that you continue to press and will do so especially at the U.N. when the General Assembly meets. Thanks, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Deutch. Mr. Smith, the chairman of the Africa Subcommittee, is recognized.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And thank you, Secretary Richard, thank you, Ms. Lindborg, for your extraordinary efforts on behalf of those who are suffering each and every day.

I have just a few questions. Has the targeting of medical personnel been the subject of diplomatic efforts, of Secretary of State Kerry, and what has been the feedback? I mean, it seems to me if there's anyone in this crisis that you don't go after the people who are trying to save other people's lives. And what can be done to increase security aid? That was my first question.

Second, I know, Ms. Lindborg, you mentioned the issue of trafficking, and I thank you for doing so. And I'm wondering in the refugee camps themselves are there plans in every one of those camps? We know that the nefarious networks of human trafficking love to prey upon people in vulnerable situations whether it be manmade like war, or nature-made like a tsunami, or whatever. Is there a specific protocol established in these camps to ensure that the traffickers are not going in and kidnaping especially young girls?

Last year, thirdly, I chaired a hearing on the plight of Christians in Syria. And the consensus among our private panel was that this is a genocide. The Christians are not dying because they're in the way or it's collateral damage. They are being deliberately targeted precisely because they're Christians, and many of the rebels are the ones, particularly al-Qaeda rebels, are the ones that are doing it. And I'm wondering in the population in the refugee camps and the mass exodus that's occurring if there is a breakdown not only by ethnicity, but especially on the religious side, Sunni, Shia, and Christian, which would be helpful to know who is it that's fleeing? Maybe it's everyone, but is there any kind of effort to break that down?

Fourthly, the NGO partner, I don't know if you wanted to identify them, maybe for reasons you wouldn't want to, who have suffered and died.

Then, finally, on surveillance. We know in large numbers of people in the refugee situation all get pulled into a camp like this that there are infectious disease challenges. And I'm wondering if any have emerged yet, and whether or not CDC is tracking to ensure that something does not have a breakout?

And you did mention the psychological trauma, Ms. Lindborg. How are people identified? You know, you did mention in country, at least, you know, we've got 260 medical facilities. How are they dealt with? What kind of medical, psychological treatment are we providing in the international community?

Ms. LINDBORG. Thank you for those questions. Let me tackle some of them, and I'll turn the camp questions over to Anne.

Starting with the disease surveillance, what we were most concerned about, and this in inside Syria, not in the refugee camps, were as the system broke down that there would be an emergence of polio, of measles, schistosomiasis, and those kinds of diseases, cholera, that once they emerge they can quickly spread. So, CDC has been very active working with us along with the Syria Opposition Assistance Coordination Unit to set up a system that does allow that kind of early detection. It's about communication and then having the ability to do the fast response.

On the psycho social question, you know, inside there's less ability to do more sophisticated psychological counseling, but it's an opportunity to help bring people together in spaces where they can move past the more direct trauma. There are a variety of faster techniques that help people deal with trauma, and engage in activities that give them a more hopeful way forward and feel safer.

On the Christian questions, you know, we are working throughout the country on the basis of need. There are definitely Christian communities, particularly in the so called Christian Valley in Homs, Tartus, and Aleppo, and we have definitely seen needs. We are able to provide assistance.

We see that people as they leave whether inside Syria or in the surrounding region, they tend to go to places where they feel safe. And sometimes that's based on ethnicity, but not always.

I met with a woman in Beirut who had fled her home, and she was so upset at what her country had become. She said I don't recognize this division, this hatred between people. This is not who we are as Syrians. So, even as this happens I think there is still a basis of Syrians who really want to return to a place where there's not that tearing between divisions.

The targeting of medical workers, I can only echo your absolute unconscionable comment. This is unconscionable, and it is happening with a variety of people doing that targeting, both the regime and some of the more extremist groups. There is, unfortunately, not an easy fix for that. We wish there were. I think accountability will have to be a part of the larger set of accountabilities that come out of this kind of a war.

Mr. SMITH. Is it being raised at the diplomatic level?

Ms. LINDBORG. Absolutely. This is something that we will raise at the UNGA meetings next week, that Anne mentioned. It's part of needing better access and better security. The humanitarian crisis, as Mr. Deutch said, this will not go away, and we need to look at all the ways that the international community can come together to provide greater security and greater access for these people who have suffered now for 2 years.

Ms. RICHARD. Can I add on to that? You know, we fund the International Committee of the Red Cross, it's one of our major partners in responding to crises overseas. And they're throughout the region, including inside Syria. And one of their campaigns that preexist the Syria crisis is that we have to stop harming medical personnel, medical facilities, hospitals, clinics, patients, the doctors in crises. And we've seen in Syria that they've been actually targeted to a horrible effect because the facilities have been harmed,

and then the doctors have fled, so it's a real challenge getting the medical care into the country that is so desperately needed there.

This is one of the things we've talked to Valerie Amos about, the Emergency Response Coordinator, the U.N.'s top humanitarian, and she was looking at ways through discussions in the U.N. Security Council to try to get agreement on the importance of some basic humanitarian principles. And as you know, it's been very, very difficult to get Security Council resolutions produced. And you know, I'm sure you're quite well aware of the sort of dynamic up there, but we have not given up. We keep trying to look for opportunities, and next week is one, to get agreement among the major countries involved on some basic protections for people.

On trafficking, we are doing a couple of things. One is, our partners like UNICEF, like Save the Children that work focused on children in the camps are trying to make sure that someone is keeping an eye on the kids and that they're given safe places to go.

The flip piece of that is trying to enhance the security of a camp like Zaatari camp, and we're working with the Jordanian Government, the Jordanian authorities to have more police patrols inside the camp, more training for police. And then also we've got a program that I mention in my testimony, my written testimony with our sister bureau, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau to train refugees so that they can have a community watch to enhance their own security. But one of the reasons people allow their daughters to be trafficked is because they think that their situation is desperate, and so we have got to get them to feel like they have a future and that this is not the best option for their daughters.

Finally, on Christians fleeing, you know, I think we're all more sensitized to religious minorities in the Middle East since the Iraq situation, and this conversation with the committee on the importance of keeping an eye out for minorities has been, as you all know, has been an issue of the last few years, and that's no different now with the Syrian crisis. You know, it's a majority Muslim region, but having traveled to the region, there is a tremendous history of—you know, when I went to Syria, I kept realizing all the place names were from St. Paul's travels, so we have to be aware of different groups in the region and their different needs, and tailor our response to their needs.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Smith. Mr. Cicciline.

Mr. CICCILINE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I have four questions I'll just set out, and then whoever is in the best position to answer them. Of the 6.8 million people who are currently in need of humanitarian aid, what is your best estimate as to the percentage of individuals that are actually receiving assistance? Two, to follow-up on Mr. Deutch's question, we hear very often about sort of lack of understanding of the United States effort. Obviously, we're leading in terms of our financial support. Many countries have not fulfilled their commitments, many in the region that would seem to have a greater interest in stability even than we do don't seem to be doing their part. So, what's your assessment as to why that is happening, why these donor countries

are not either fulfilling their obligations? Who should be investing in this humanitarian assistance in a more substantial way, who are not? And I'm saying name names, I think it would give the international community—we should create a list of shame of countries who are not doing their part.

Third is this question of how we identify the support. I recognize the efforts you've described with going on to social media and saying what we're doing, but if those in need are not getting things, if the things that are improving their lives, water, food, housing don't bear the symbols of the United States, it sounds a lot like the first time they're hearing about U.S. assistance is in the military strike which is problematic. So, I think we want to hear about what we're doing to be sure people understand that we are fulfilling our responsibilities as humanitarians.

And, finally, everyone I think who has looked at this humanitarian crisis recognizes it is a long-term problem, as Mr. Deutch mentioned. And what are we doing to kind of think about and plan the international effort to respond to this more long term?

So, I thank you for your testimony, and I look forward to hearing your responses.

Ms. LINDBORG. Those are all excellent questions, and of the 6.8 million who are estimated to be in need, it varies how many are reached by which kind of assistance. Food is obviously a daily need, some of the others are a one-time distribution. We estimate that the U.S. assistance reaches about 3½ million people throughout Syria. The World Food Program alone has targeted about 2 million people to be reached.

We know that our combined international humanitarian assistance is not enough to meet all the needs. We know that there needs to be more, and as I think we've all noted, the pace of the needs are escalating faster than our ability to have the funding or the capacity to meet the needs. And this is part of the crisis dimensions that we're dealing with.

In terms of donors who haven't stepped up to the plate, you know, we were very heartened in January that Kuwait sponsored the U.N. pledging conference, and followed that up with a $300 million contribution. We need the rest of that region to similarly step up, and to do so in a coordinated way so that it is a part of the ability to maximize the effectiveness of our overall assistance.

This is absolutely long term, and as Anne mentioned, we were at a meeting on Monday, our Deputy is in Sweden to look at how do we build a comprehensive platform. We are seeing in places like Lebanon, for example, that there's a convergence of the highest poverty levels of Lebanese with the greatest number of refugees. And by doing that kind of joint mapping and joint planning between the entire community, the World Bank, our development actors, our humanitarian actors, we can maximize the impact of our collective assistance so that we're investing in infrastructure that assists communities as they bear the weight of these refugees, as well as the refugees.

Ms. RICHARD. On a couple of additional mentions, perhaps, in terms of the commitments I want to reinforce this praise for Kuwait because they not only made a big pledge of $300 million and held the pledging conference, they followed through quickly with

the funding, and they funneled it through the United Nations and other international organizations meaning that they took a seat at this combined enterprise of international response that we are such a leader on, and so they didn't go it alone, or go off and do something uncoordinated. So, that is really the kind of response we're looking for from other countries, so the U.S., Western Europe, Kuwait, but then also Japan and Canada have really been the leaders in responding. And I mentioned that group to a bunch of Ambassadors and left Japan off, and I got a little visit from the Economics officer at the Japanese Embassy and he showed me how much they had done, and it was very impressive, so I want to specifically mention Japan today.

Also, on the issue of letting people know that we're doing things, you know, we are doing more I think this time than ever before in refugee camps to include the U.S. flag which is such a recognizable brand on the projects that we're funding, but also when refugees come across the border from Syria into Jordan, the first flag they see, of course, is the Jordanian flag on the uniforms of the border patrol who are helping them across, but then the second flag they see is the U.S. flag on the side of the bus run by the International Organization for Migration that takes them and brings them to places where they get care. And that's because we are the leading donor to the International Organization for Migration. But we will continue to do whatever it takes to get the message out. The social media has so many different avenues, we're doing all of them from Twitter, to Google Plus hangouts and things that I don't even understand the technology for. If we're asked, we do it.

I do think this is a long term problem. You know, 1 year ago what we were hoping was that the fighting would end quickly, change the dynamic inside Syria and people could go home. We no longer say that. I think this is something that we'll be working on for years ahead.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Cicciline. Mr. Weber is recognized.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you.

Regarding the trafficking of young girls, in the Texas legislature we were able to pass a bill where we were able to do a lot of things about human trafficking, so that's one of the things that we remain pretty focused on. Lots of questions about that.

Is there anybody keeping records about the perpetrators? Is that just out of the question when something like this happens? You know, in the Texas legislature we were able to begin to train law enforcement that when a young girl was caught in prostitution, the first thing we ought to be looking at is was she sex traded, and not just assume that she's guilty of a crime. Are we able—is there any semblance of being able to do that in these refugee camps and areas, and is anybody keeping records on it, either one of you.

Ms. RICHARD. Well, I think, you know, it varies. Like we said, in Lebanon there are no camps, you know, and Syria and Lebanon it's more spontaneous settlements, so that's probably the most tricky places to keep an eye on people. In Turkey there's very good security. You know, the Turks have built over 20 camps now, and have run them on a certain level that is very safe, and just much more generous than sort of the norm in the rest of the world. So, in Jor-

dan the issue has been the security of this large camp that's the size of a city, and as the High Commissioner has said, when you have a city with no police force it's very, very dangerous, so that is why we have been taking all these extra measures in recent months to—there's now—the Ambassador is here so she probably is more expert on this than I am, but I was talking to our Ambassador just the other—our Ambassador in Amman the other day about this. There is a fence around it now that is complete. There is a ditch, there is a wall, so there's a lot of things being done so that people can't just disappear. They can't just be walked off and no one has ever heard from them again.

Mr. WEBER. I know that there's rankings, and forgive me, I don't remember where they are, but we rank countries that are good on human trafficking and that are bad on human trafficking. How do these—how does Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, how do they fit in? Do we know?

Ms. RICHARD. We will get you that.

Mr. WEBER. Yes.

Ms. RICHARD. And I'm very familiar with that report.

Mr. WEBER. Right, absolutely.

Ms. RICHARD. It's sort of a brother organization of ours, the J/TIP Trafficking Persons.

Mr. WEBER. Right.

Ms. RICHARD. We were just talking about the report yesterday but I don't know the answer to that question.

Mr. WEBER. Well, I mean, I guess you can say they've been—the countries have been gracious enough to open their borders and let people in, so we can't expect them to police like you said the fourth largest city with no police force. Are the U.N. peacekeeping forces involved at all?

Ms. RICHARD. No, the responsibility is for the Jordanian police, so we have a lot of conversations. When I go over I meet with the Ministry of the Interior in addition to the folks who are involved in planning and humanitarian response, and so they are doing a lot right now. It's not that there's no—there was no police inside the camp, and now there are—the police that was around the perimeter is doing patrols on the inside. And they're getting additional training from the British. The Canadians have built them a barracks, and what we are doing is trying to help the refugees themselves to enhance their own protection in a way that in U.S. neighborhoods is normal, the idea of having a community watch.

Mr. WEBER. Right.

Ms. LINDBORG. I would just add that, you know, counter trafficking in persons is a significant global initiative that both State and Aid are engaged in. And it really involves both the security aspect, the border controls. It's also the kind of awareness and alternative vision of options that's important for families and for the girls themselves. And through the USAID mission in Jordan, there's a new program going forward that is specifically about raising awareness about this issue in Jordan, because it is a relatively new problem that's emerged through this crisis.

Mr. WEBER. And forgive me, what is the weather like over there, are they in winter, summer? You know, what are we looking at here in the next few months?

Ms. LINDBORG. So, that's a good question. We were very concerned because it gets very hot during the summer, which is why we were worried about communicable diseases and water sanitation issues. It also gets quite cold in the winter, so we are gearing up now for winterization campaigns to ensure especially that displaced families have those essential supplies, warm clothes, warm place to stay to survive the winter.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Are we able—I know that in my reading was it Lebanon or Jordan had agreed to keep their borders open, which is good for refugees flowing in, but what about coming out? Do we have checkpoints to keep young girls, for example, from being trafficked outside?

Ms. RICHARD. All of the neighbors had open border policies initially, and over time as the numbers have just swelled, there are concerns that too many refugees are arriving, so we are working with these countries to insure that they are not alone in handling this influx, and that we can provide them assistance through AID bilateral assistance, through aid directly to the refugees, and we're trying to now enlist more and more of the development institutions, like the World Bank to help these countries manage this flow so they don't have to shut down their borders, because that would be a terrible move from the perspective of humanitarian response.

So, right now about 2,000 per night are crossing into Lebanon, about 100 to 200, no, actually more, 250 to 300 per night crossing into Jordan, 850 per night into Turkey, 1,000 a day now into the Kurdish regions of Iraq now that—since the end of August that's been the case. And we have less specific numbers on Egypt. And are people going back into Syria? Yes, smaller numbers are going back into Syria.

What we're concerned about is it's a risk being taken by people who are perhaps the head of a family who wants to check on their house or their property. It's a dangerous thing for adults, men who decide to go back and fight. And what we are trying to prevent happening is children going back and young boys wanting to go back and fight, because that seems like an attractive thing to them. So, we are working—our organizations that we fund are working to try to convince children not to go back in. And it is a very—particularly there I think the Syria/Jordan border, it's a very—there are flows in both directions.

Mr. WEBER. Forgive me, Madam Chair, for taking so long but you bring up an interesting point about going back and fighting because one of the discussions during the discussion about Syria, one of the points raised was why don't the people who have been displaced, particularly the men and the young boys—now, there are those who joined World War II and they were 16, 17 and lied about their age. So, I don't know what you're calling young boys, but one of the discussions was why doesn't those who are losing their country, why don't we arm them and equip them to fight alongside the rebels and let them go back and fight for their country? What are you considering to be a young boy?

Ms. RICHARD. I was thinking of teenagers, you know, 11, 12, 13, 14. And we really don't want children to——

Mr. WEBER. Right. No, I got you. Okay. Thank you. Madam Chair, I yield back. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Mr. Grayson of Florida is recognized.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thanks, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Administrator. I'm going to ask you what in some respects are hard questions, but only in the hope that you will have really good answers.

If you look at the polls you see that the Federal spending that has the least support among the public is foreign aid. Why is that?

Ms. RICHARD. My own sense is, having worked on this for a long time, is that the term foreign aid is seen as a bad thing because it's associating people's minds with all of the 60 Minutes programs that showed, you know, kleptocrats during the Cold War, you know, carting off funds. And when we talk to the public about what we're doing, humanitarian assistance for schools, for vaccinations for children, for keeping people safe, keeping children from being trafficked, feeding people, shelter, there's tremendous support for doing that.

So, on the specifics of what we're involved in, I think there is support. Of course, we rely on you and Congress to tell us what you're hearing from your own constituents. Foreign aid is only 1 percent of the Federal budget, and the money that we're talking about today is a tiny fraction of that. And we really appreciate the fact that we got sufficient funding this year to do a lot of good and save a lot of lives in the Middle East and around the world.

What is up in the air, as you know, is what happens in the next few weeks with the next year, the Fiscal Year '14 budget. So, again, we're depending on you and your colleagues to help us.

Ms. LINDBORG. I would just add that oftentimes when you asked people if they support foreign assistance or not they say no because they think it's about 20 percent of the budget. So, if people understand that it's less than 1 percent of the budget, their support levels go way, way up, which has been demonstrated through a variety of polls over the last decade.

Mr. GRAYSON. All right. Assistant Secretary, Assistant Administrator, if we did have an audience of millions here which we don't, but if we did have an audience like that and you had a chance to tell people what are the virtues and the benefits of this kind of spending, what would you want to say? What would you want people to understand?

Ms. LINDBORG. You know, I think this is a fundamental value that the American people hold very dear, which is that we respond when people are in trouble, that we provide the kind of fundamental life saving assistance that we would want to have were we to be in a similar situation of despair and need. And it is an extraordinary amount of generosity that we see in the American people whenever there is this kind of life saving need. Just as the human level, Americans are extraordinarily focused on providing that kind of assistance.

I would also say that there's a security dimension to this, that it's in our national security to provide the kind of assistance in a crisis that has gone from being a Syrian crisis, to a regional crisis, to an international crisis.

Mr. GRAYSON. Assistant Secretary?

Ms. RICHARD. You know, we see that when Americans are put in touch with whether it's through a photograph or a really compel-

ling piece of journalism, or a Skype conversation, or put in touch with the people who our aid is helping, they really want to continue that because you can see the children that are going to get an education who might not otherwise, or you see the mother who is now widowed who has to feed her children getting the food that she needs, and we're the top donor to the World Food through AID, the food to feed them. So, people in America are incredibly generous on situations like this, but they don't always hear about it or get a chance to see that. And I think this is where we have a responsibility to talk about, but also we can use your help as allies in explaining that.

I was thinking about Congressman Smith's passport. It's probably got so many additional pages in it, it's probably about this thick right now from his travels. And I think that we don't always do a good job, we in the Executive Branch don't always do a good job explaining in plain English the benefits of our programs.

The other thing we have to mention is that we monitor and evaluate where our aid goes, and how it's being used. And we are very much under pressure not to allow a cent of it to go to waste, fraud, or abuse, so that's why we have a lot of safeguards, more than other countries do, to make sure our aid is well spent. And when I travel, that's one of the things I'm looking at.

You may have heard, I worked at the Office of Management and Budget once upon a time, so I know how precious the taxpayer money is. We make sure that none of it is wasted or very little of it, as little as possible is wasted.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thanks. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Grayson. Mr. Cotton is recognized.

Mr. COTTON. Ms. Richard, Ms. Lindborg, thank you very much for your time and your hard work for our country.

The Syrian refugee crisis is staggering in its scale. If I read your testimony correctly, Ms. Richard, we're talking about 4 million to 5 million internally, over 2 million externally, which is somewhere around a quarter to even a third of Syria's population. Do you have any estimates, either of the witnesses, on what a possible worst case scenario is?

Ms. LINDBORG. You know, we keep surpassing our worst case scenarios. A year ago the worst case scenario was far less than what it is right now. We are looking at numbers that will continue to escalate, and we stopped putting a worst case scenario out there, but rather looking at trying to put into place the kind of systems that can absorb continuing escalation of need, including, for example, looking at how do you pull a comprehensive platform together to bring a variety of resources, World Bank, development resources to work alongside our relief funding so that in the neighboring countries we can address the growing impacts of stresses on basic infrastructure by the refugees on water, and electricity, schools, clinics. So, what we're turning to now is looking at all of the ways where we can find the additional capacity in the international system to respond to the growing crisis.

Mr. COTTON. Ms. Richard, I'm sorry, I'm going to reclaim my time, but I would just ask if you agree with this estimate, it's hard to have a worst case scenario at this moment?

Ms. RICHARD. I regretfully agree with that assessment.

Mr. COTTON. Okay.

Ms. RICHARD. And, also, we put a big emphasis with our partners on contingency planning for the worst case scenario.

Mr. COTTON. Yes. Have you noticed either in your travels or your analysis sectarian patterns to the refugee camps that are outside of Syria, whether some are predominantly Sunni, Shiite, Alawite, and so forth?

Ms. RICHARD. I mean, most of the refugees are Sunni.

Mr. COTTON. Yes.

Ms. RICHARD. So, the camps themselves are mostly Sunni, but we're—as we were saying before, we're very sensitive to keeping an eye out for the welfare of minority groups, and will continue to do so. And, you know, if the situation changed inside Syria, you could see the makeup of the refugees shift, too.

Mr. COTTON. Yes.

Ms. RICHARD. And our desire is to help whoever needs help. That's the humanitarian principle that we pursue. We give aid based on need, and not based on membership in a particular group.

Mr. COTTON. Yes. I do worry significantly about the prospect of radicalization especially of young Sunnis within these camps. In the recent debate over what course of action to take in Syria, some argued that Bashar al Assad was actually a bulwark against al-Qaeda on the ground in Syria, and I have to strongly disagree based on my own personal experience in Iraq. I was there in 2006 before the surge at the worst of the Sunni-Shiite violence, and in my experience there's nothing that drives Sunnis who are otherwise not a part of al-Qaeda, don't support it, don't agree with what it does, into the hands of al-Qaeda affiliated groups more than Shiite extremist violence and western indifference to that violence.

We saw that in the neighborhoods I patrolled with my soldiers in Iraq. Sunni Iraqis who are not predisposed toward al-Qaeda but they went to them for protection from Mugtada al-Sadr aligned militias from Shiite neighborhoods. And I worry greatly that we're seeing that kind of radicalization of the young Sunnis in these camps that could come back not just as a humanitarian matter, but could come back to harm the United States as those young fighters are radicalized and try to strike back against the United States, or against the West. What do you see along those lines in the camps?

Ms. LINDBORG. Well, I would just add before Anne talks about the camps, that one of the things we hear a lot from our partners is that particularly in the opposition held areas, the local communities have almost everywhere organized to try to meet their own needs and recreate social fabric and government. And one of the things that we're seeing is it is absolutely important that there be a continuous connection and stream of assistance that goes to those communities so they don't turn to some of the other more extremist sources of assistance. So, that's absolutely I think a piece of what will be important to continue.

Ms. RICHARD. Yes, just to echo what Nancy said, and specifically in the camps, our programs are trying to keep children in a safe place and have them educated, and with people who are interested in their best interests and nurtured so that they are not attracted by extremist elements.

Mr. COTTON. Thank you both for your efforts. Eager to help in any way I can, because I do believe that in the long term 8- and 9-year-old Sunnis in these camps are being radicalized by what they see happening in Syria, and Western indifference to it is a grave national security threat to our country.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Cotton, I agree. Mr. Schneider would be next, but he's going to jump over so that Mr. Connolly can be recognized due to a previous engagement.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Schneider. I appreciate the courtesy, and welcome to both of our panelists.

Would we assess the response of the donor community as disappointing in terms of the provision of humanitarian assistance for the swelling refugee population from the Syria conflict?

Ms. RICHARD. I think the response of the donor community has been the usual in that the same leading donors are leading this time, and the funding raised for Syria is about the same—this is what Valerie Amos has told us, for what was raised for the whole world last few years. So, the problem is the usual is not enough. This is such an extraordinary crisis, it's having regional impact. It is a major displacement of populations that needs much more than the usual. It needs people, governments, countries stepping up and doing much more than the usual.

We are fortunate in that in Fiscal Year 2013 we were provided sufficient funding from the Congress to lead in the response to this, and we need to encourage other emerging donors to step forward and to do more, and surpass the usual. And the one example we've given is Kuwait, which in the past was not a member of this major donor set, and has become one in response to this crisis. And we want to see more countries do that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Presumably, we're pressing the Saudis and others to respond in kind.

Ms. RICHARD. Absolutely. We are pressing major governments in the region, and also elsewhere around the world to do more.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Do I have it correct that about 70 percent of the refugees from the conflict are actually not in camps, they're living in villages in the host countries?

Ms. RICHARD. 70 to 75 percent of refugees are not in camps. All of the refugees in Lebanon are not living in camps. They don't have camps. And in Jordan and Turkey, really the majority of refugees are outside the camps. The reason you hear about camps is because for a photojournalist, the easiest way to find refugees and photograph them is to go to a camp, but when we travel we also meet with refugees in homes in Amman, or in Mafraq, or in Istanbul, so we are meeting with the refugees where they are. And that for aid workers becomes a challenge, is trying to get aid to them where they're living.

Mr. CONNOLLY. That's right. And if I were the host country, I might also while wanting to be welcoming, the numbers are so substantial and the radicalization that was just—potential radicalization that was just referenced might be of concern to me in terms of stability for my own country, might it not?

Ms. LINDBORG. It is, and that's one of the reasons that we have increased our assistance to the host communities. There is an in-

credible stress on the infrastructure of countries like Jordan and Lebanon on their water, their electricity, schools, and clinics, so we have in collaboration with those governments pivoted our USAID assistance to put more focus on supporting those communities that are hosting the refugees. And we've used our contingency funds, like the Complex Crisis Fund, as well as our education and our health programming to look at all the ways to help communities who initially very generously welcomed the refugees. And as the burden has become greater and greater, the possibility of tension emerging has increased, so we're very focused on providing the kind of support that Jordan and Lebanon need to cope with this influx of refugees.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And isn't there another concern which is that the Syrian regime could see these refugee populations whether in camps or not in camps as a hotbed of sedition and opposition, and perhaps be tempted to engage in military action against them? How concerned are we, Madam Assistant Secretary, about that prospect? And have there, in fact, been incursions by the Syrians to that effect?

Ms. RICHARD. Every time I travel in the region and meet with government officials, they point out to me how close the borders are to their population center, certainly in Southern Turkey that's the case. Beirut, Lebanon is a short drive from Damascus, in Northern Jordan I've been up to the border and seen people come across from Southern Syria, so being there and realizing how close the population centers are really drives home this point of the security concerns that the neighbors have.

What my sense is, is that the Syrian regime has focused its voracity on the people inside Syria and that is why they are fleeing to the camps. There have been, as you well know, you know, some incursions across the border with Turkey, that Turkey has responded to. That's not my portfolio, but it's something that is brought up every time we travel and we meet with government officials.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you for your courtesy. And, Mr. Schneider, thank you especially for your courtesy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. And Mr. Schneider continuing his mitzvot for the day, now yields to Ms. Meng of New York.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you, Mr. Schneider.

This question could go to either witness. I'm trying to get a sense of who the refugees are exactly, and what life is like in these refugee camps. There was an article in the New Yorker by David Remnick on Zaatari and the refugees, and an excerpt says the refugees are border people. Many of them are traders, smugglers accustomed to shuttling around Jordan, Syria, Turkey, and Lebanon. He quickly discovered that the smugglers hardly stop work when they go to the camp. The battle wings didn't get UNHCR tents by accident. What is your impression of this characterization?

Ms. RICHARD. I read the David Remnick article, I thought it was fairly accurate in its overarching description of the crisis, and specifically the Zaatari camp. You know, the Zaatari camp sprung up

in a very short time, a period of a few short weeks, and has been growing ever since, so it wasn't a planned community done in a calm situation. So there's been a bit of catch up to enhance the security there, and to control all the things flowing in and out of there. And right now it's a much more secure place than it was months ago. But it is absolutely true that people in Southern Syria normally traveled across the border with Jordan. Many Syrians were living in Jordan before the outbreak of violence. There are relatives of people on both sides of the border.

In the early days before the camp was set up, I was visiting transit camps that received refugees when they first came across, and they could be bailed out by relatives or friends, and many had relatives or friends, or even strangers, you know, well spirited Jordanians who went to these transit centers and said I'll take some people into my home. I'll help these Syrian brothers. So, there is—in normal times there's a great deal of back and forth across those borders. Right now, the border patrol is very focused on who's coming across, and we want innocent civilians who are fleeing violence to get across, and they are also, of course, equipped to keep out bad actors. And that's a very difficult thing to do. The border patrol, from visiting them I know this, they have been equipped because we have such good relations, military-to-military relations from the U.S. and Jordan, they have topnotch ways of observing the border, but it's a very dangerous place right now, I think.

Ms. LINDBORG. You know, I would just say I thought the article was very well written and capturing the human dimension, and there was one piece of it that I want to underscore, and that is alongside the trauma that these families experience, the women, the children, there's also a dimension of helplessness and boredom that sets in for children who aren't able to go to school. And this is true whether you're in an internally displaced camp inside Syria, or outside. And that's a part of what informs some of the programs that we seek to do, is to provide an alternative to helplessness and boredom which is a feature alongside a lot of the trauma and the physical pain that these folks have experienced.

Ms. MENG. Thank you. And just to continue a little bit on what Mr. Grayson mentioned, and what you mentioned about the American flag, how do the refugees view America, and what we're trying to do to help them? And what can we do in Congress to help you to do an even better job on marketing that goodwill?

Ms. RICHARD. In my conversations with refugees, part of the message that they're giving us is thank you, but part of the message is that they're really concerned about their relatives inside Syria. More than anything else, that's the main message that I get, is concern for inside Syria. And they talk less about their own personal needs, and they talk about their desire to see an end to the fighting inside.

So, you know, as an Assistant Secretary, when I travel now I'm in a bit of a security cocoon, and I'm also meeting with people. I can't wander around camps like I used to, so I'm perhaps not the best person to ask but, you know, they are very brave sometimes of pushing me as a representative of the United States to do more, to do more, but mostly less for themselves and more for their relatives they've left behind.

Ms. LINDBORG. I thank you very much for that question. And in terms of how you can help, I mean, first of all, I would echo the thanks that both of us have already said, the support that Congress is providing that enables these programs to go forward is absolutely essential. It's lifesaving. It's having an enormous and profound impact. Thank you for this hearing. It gives us yet another opportunity to highlight the fact that the American people are standing by the Syrian people. And we would welcome all the ways in which all of you can be a part of amplifying that message. That's something that we spend a lot of time doing when we travel to the region, is just letting the Syrian people know that they are not forgotten. And I wanted to say that to Mr. Cotton. We have—we spend a great deal of time and energy making sure the Syrian people know they are not forgotten. We are there, and we are providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance every day throughout the region, and inside.

Ms. MENG. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. Now, we saved the best for last here. Mr. Schneider, thank you so much. He will be our wrap up, and our closer. Thank you.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thanks to both of you for spending the time here, sharing with us your perspectives and experience. This has been an incredibly informative hearing. The questions, but in particular the answers to the questions have been crucial, so thank you.

I'm going to go to where you started. You said this is vastly different than it was 1 year ago, and that our worst case scenarios 1 year ago have long since been exceeded. And we sit with a question here and so many more questions I know that follow behind it. The most important thing I'll emphasize is that the Syrian people need to know that we do care. This is, I think, our fourth hearing on Syria, at least. We will, I'm sure, have more, and that doesn't count how many meetings and conversations we continue to have. It is something that has our attention because it is important to the region, to the world, and to the United States.

Assistant Secretary, you talked about the long term, that this is going to be an issue for a long time, that camps, there's a generation being created in these camps as refugees. Even though we can't describe what the worst case scenario is, I wonder if you could possibly describe long term what's the best case scenario, 5, 10, 15 years from now?

Ms. RICHARD. What we need is for Syrians to be able to go home and to restart their lives. Their houses have been destroyed, some of them their jobs have been destroyed. If they worked in a pharmaceutical factory, they've all been leveled. And if they had a workplace, their colleagues have been sent all over the region, so we need them to put their lives back together again, restore the pipes that transport clean water to their homes. But I'm particularly worried about children. Children going uneducated means that you have a whole generation then who ought to be the future leaders of Syria, who will not be equipped to do that.

You know, I also worry about college age youth because they ought to be in school learning things so that they can be the future engineers, they can be the future problem solvers, and they're not.

They're stuck in camps, or they're out trying to work in low wage jobs, perhaps in places where they're not well appreciated to let their families survive. This is a tragic poor use of human capital. We should be—this is the future of Syria, and they are not where they should be, and we're very concerned about it.

Ms. LINDBORG. Just a quick footnote to that. There's a recent U.N. assessment that shows that Syria in 2 years has lost 35 years of development gains, so even if the conflict ended tomorrow, conservatively, optimistically we're looking at about a decade to rebuild some of the essential infrastructure,

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Right. And to take off on the 25 years, that's 35 years of infrastructure, that's 35 years of building communities, preparing them for a 21st century that has been knocked back, and that's going to take that time to go forward.

Obviously, one of the concerns I have that I think many of us share on the committee, we need to be there for the long term. We have to be engaged, the region has to be engaged. Syria is too critical of a state in a region with so many issues all around it. What do we have to do to make sure that we don't lose the focus that you have brought to this issue now for a couple of years?

Ms. RICHARD. This is a perennial problem for Americans in responding to major crises overseas, is that when the crisis leaves the headlines does our interest dry up, and does our support dry up? So, this is why in addition to caring about Syria, both of us care about things happening in the rest of the world, as well. We care about Afghan refugees still living in Pakistan. We care about the Horn of Africa, so we're trying to make sure that other crises are not forgotten or other longer term protracted situations are not forgotten, at the same time we focus a lot of our attention on Syria.

And this is where I think the Congress can be helpful, is to raise the profile of this crisis, but at the same time understand in authorizing and appropriating programs that we are looking at situations that we're trying to resolve that happened many years ago. It also means that the U.S. not do it alone, that we do it with other donor governments, that we work together in coalitions, that we continue to build this international group of donors. And that's partly why in looking at the so called emerging donors, we want to bring more countries along on the Syria crisis, but then have them stay with us and care about whatever tomorrow may bring, as well, and work with us on a global scale.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Well, thank you. I'm out of time. If I can close with one thought. You said, Assistant Secretary, that the usual is not enough, and I think nothing could be more true. That's one of the most important things I'll take from this hearing. But I want to thank the two of you because not usual, but extraordinary efforts are undertaken with your leadership. So, thank you very much, and thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Excellent closing remarks. And, of course, all of these issues have an impact on our U.S. national security interest, on the stability of our allies, like Jordan and Israel throughout the region, so thank you very much for the important work that you do day in and day out.

And with that, the subcommittee is adjourned. Thank you, ladies.

Ms. LINDBORG. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 12:19 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

September 12, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Thursday, September 19, 2013

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT: Examining the Syrian Refugee Crisis

WITNESSES: The Honorable Anne C. Richard
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable Nancy E. Lindborg
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
U.S. Agency for International Development

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *the Middle East and North Africa* HEARING

Day *Thursday* **Date** *09/19/13* **Room** *2172*

Starting Time *10:40 a.m.* **Ending Time** *12:19 p.m.*

Recesses ____ (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Examining the Syrian Refugee Crisis

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

(See attendance list)

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

Chairman Chris Smith (R-NJ)

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

QFR - Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL)
QFR - Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC)

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:19 p.m.*

Subcommittee Staff Director

Hearing Attendance

Hearing Title: Examining the Syrian Refugee Crisis
Date: 09/10/2013

Noncommittee Members

Member	Present
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana (FL)	X
Chabot, Steve (OH)	X
Wilson, Joe (SC)	
Kinzinger, Adam (IL)	
Cotton, Tom (AR)	X
Weber, Randy (TX)	X
Desantis, Ron (FL)	
Radel, Trey (FL)	
Collins, Doug (GA)	
Meadows, Mark (NC)	
Yoho, Ted (FL)	X
Messer, Luke (IN)	
Smith, Chris (NJ)	X

Member	Present
Deutch, Ted (FL)	X
Connolly, Gerald (VA)	X
Higgins, Brian (NY)	
Cicilline, David (RI)	X
Grayson, Alan (FL)	X
Vargas, Juan (CA)	
Schneider, Bradley (IL)	X
Kennedy, Joseph (MA)	
Meng, Grace (NY)	X
Frankel, Lois (FL)	

Questions for the Record
Submitted by the Honorable Adam Kinzinger
To the Honorable Assistant Secretary Anne C. Richard

Question 1:

According to a UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) report, Iraq has seen a sudden influx of Syrian refugees, which began on August 15. From that date through September 12 an estimated 60,000 Syrians arrived in the region through the border crossing of Peshkabur and Sahela. These new arrivals added to the already existing 149,258 refugees already settled in the region's Domiz camp and among host communities. UNHCR has estimated that more than 1,100 people will cross the border by early October. According to this same report, the Domiz camp is already overcrowded and cannot accept any additional refugees. There is an additional camp in Dara Shakaran, in the Erbil governorate that is due to be completed by the end of September. It was originally set up as an option for vulnerable refugees currently residing in host communities, but is largely having to take in new refugees. Additional camps are under construction, but local communities are hosting over 105,000 refugees, placing a significant burden. What is the United States doing to help these host communities, and how is it helping the UN and other partner organizations open up these camps? With the winter months quickly approaching, what problems does the U.S. anticipate the KRG will deal with in refugee camps which have not been winterized or prepared due to shortfalls of assistance?

The Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) hosts more than 97 percent of the Syrian refugees in Iraq, most of whom are Syrian Kurds. The majority of Syrian refugees in Iraq are outside camps in host communities, living in rural villages and urban centers. The United States is providing nearly $45 million in humanitarian aid to international organizations in Iraq to support Syrian refugees in camps and host communities.

Support to Host Communities

More than 50 percent of all registered Syrian refugees in Iraq are in Dahuk province. Domiz camp, the largest Syrian refugee camp in the IKR, had a planned capacity of 25,000 refugees, but is now overcrowded, with an estimated population of 45,000 people. A new camp, Kawergosk, established immediately after August 15, is hosting over 15,000 refugees. Two camps (Dara Shakran and Gawilan) opened on September 29 and have begun welcoming refugees; other camps are under construction.

The majority of U.S. assistance goes to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Program (WFP) for refugees living in the IKR. This assistance provides support such as a WFP food voucher program at Domiz camp; education; water and sanitation; and special programs aimed at protecting children. U.S. support to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has assisted with the transportation of newly arrived refugees to temporary transit centers and onward to refugee camps.

Support to Refugees in Camps

Preparing for winter is an integral part of the work of partners in Iraq, as it is elsewhere in the region. Appropriate shelter, sanitation, and clothing are key elements to ensuring refugees are kept warm and healthy throughout the winter. UNHCR and IOM are working to improve infrastructure and shelter in camp and non-camp areas. In addition, they are providing winterized tents and household items, including blankets. UNHCR is sending a site planning team in October to Al Obaidy camp to assess its winter preparedness. A recent joint UNHCR/UNICEF mission to five settlements in Dohuk Governorate identified needs for hygiene kits and winter items that will be delivered before winter. We will continue to support aid agency efforts to ramp up winterization efforts in Iraq, protect refugees from harsh weather and urge other donors to help meet this critical need.

Question 2:

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has continually been a friend and ally of the U.S. on fighting the global war on terrorism. This is largely due to the royal family's support for the U.S. and our shared interest of rooting out terrorists and destroying them at the source. As we know, the Zaatari Camp is now Jordan's largest city, with an even higher number of Syrian refugees dispersed throughout the country living on the streets or with host families. The latest estimates by the UNHCR reveal that there are at least 531,768 total persons of concern in Jordan, with the actual number presumably much higher. As a veteran of OEF and OIF, I appreciate that the Jordanians have stood with us in our time of need. The royal family is losing ground because of the current crisis, and if the Hashemite Kingdom falls the U.S. stands at the risk of losing one of our best allies in the Middle East. What more can the United States do to alleviate this burden and ensure that Jordan is stable? What are UN partner organizations doing specifically in Jordan to alleviate this problem? Assistant Administrator Lindborg, does USAID have any specific contingency plans to counter the threat of the Kingdom falling?

It is critical to regional stability to keep borders open to all those fleeing the violence in Syria. We believe this international aid will demonstrate that the countries hosting the refugees are not alone. The U.S. government is committed to continuing to help Syria's neighbors, including Jordan, cope with refugee inflows. The pace of refugee outflows is alarming – the sheer number of Syrian refugees has risen from 191,000 a year ago to more than 2.1 million today, with more than 525,000 refugees present in Jordan. Local governments, social services, and civic organizations are severely strained as they seek to accommodate arriving refugees. Cities and villages face overcrowded schools, shortages of hospital beds, and an inability to provide public utilities.

Humanitarian Aid

The United States is providing more than $1 billion in overall humanitarian assistance to address the Syria crisis. Of this, nearly $159 million has been directed to international organizations working in Jordan to assist refugees and host families with shelter, food, health care, basic necessities, education, and protection. In discussions with UN humanitarian agencies, such as

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), we have urged them to incorporate into their programs support for over-burdened communities that are hosting refugees. For example, U.S. government funding to UNICEF helps offset the cost of Syrian children attending public schools and provides remedial classes to help children integrate into Jordanian schools.

Support to Jordan's Government

The United States is providing additional support to Jordan beyond our humanitarian assistance. In March, the President announced a $200 million cash transfer to Jordan to expand government services and help reduce the financial strain on the sectors directly affected by refugees. This is on top of an additional $100 million cash transfer provided last year to help Jordan address its economic challenges stemming from regional instability. In addition, the Administration plans to support an estimated $1.25 billion loan guarantee to advance Jordan's economic development and reform program. These actions, in conjunction with Jordan's $2.1 billion International Monetary Fund program and $150 million World Bank loan, directly support stability in Jordan.

Development Assistance

The United States is also funding USAID programs specifically designed to address strains in Jordanian communities hosting a large number of displaced Syrians. This includes:

- a $20 million water conservation and small scale municipal water infrastructure renovation program in the northern governorates,
- $11 million to fast-track expansions of up to 20 schools receiving large numbers of Syrian students and launch new remedial math and reading programs to equalize all students' basic skills,
- an awareness-raising campaign to reduce early marriage, human trafficking, child labor and gender-based violence,
- built and renovated schools and hospitals, supported construction of major water infrastructure,
- a recently launched rapid-response community engagement project to address community-level stressors (including those exacerbated by the influx of refugees) such as employment, housing costs, and service delivery.

Question 3:

Recent reports have suggested that there is growing anti-Americanism in refugee camps. These refugee camps which have been commonly described as not fit for rats are becoming a breeding ground for anger towards the United States, and ultimately terrorism. Currently, most view the United States, and I would suggest largely because of President Obama's inaction, as hypocrites. Over one million of the refugees in these camps are children. Assistant Secretary Richard, what plan, if any does the State Department have to counter anti-American views and promote educational programs for children specifically, in these camps in order to lessen this threat?

Counter Anti-American Views

Humanitarian assistance supported by the United States helps to address potential drivers of radicalization by:

- providing for the basic needs of refugees, such as food, shelter, and healthcare so that they will not feel compelled to turn to untrustworthy sources for help,
- Ensuring that aid is distributed in a neutral and needs-based manner and not based on affiliation with any group or political belief
- ensuring that international standards are met and aid is provided in a humane and dignified manner,
- encouraging refugees to be actively involved in all aspects of life in the camps, including safety and security, selecting community leaders, and setting up local dispute resolution mechanisms,
- where safe to do so, displaying the U.S. flag on U.S.-donated materials and taking other steps to communicate to refugees the major role the US is playing in delivering aid.

Programs for Children

The Administration is deeply concerned about the well-being of refugee children. All refugee camps have both formal and informal education programs, including schools run by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which teach according to the Syrian or host country (where Arabic-speaking) curriculum, and safe areas for children, such as playgrounds, soccer fields, basketball courts, arts and craft centers, and libraries. Counselors are available to help children of all ages and their families deal with the trauma and disruption of this conflict. There are also vocational training programs for young adults to help them focus on developing skills that will be in demand when they return home such as construction, auto mechanics, computer training, etc.

Countering Recruitment Efforts & Enhancing Camp Security

There have been anecdotal reports of recruitment of fighters in Syrian refugee camps. We are aware that host government officials and humanitarian agencies are working together to counter recruitment efforts in a difficult operational environment. Maintaining the civilian nature of the camps and enhancing camp security are crucial to help prevent camps from becoming recruitment sites. In Jordan's Za'atri camp, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) is working with the Jordanian police, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and refugees living in the camp to design a training program for camp residents to serve as an unarmed community patrol under the direction of the Jordanian police.

INL's $10 million community patrol program for Za'atri camp will train groups of Syrian refugees over six months to engage in basic patrolling in support of the Jordanian Public Security Directorate's overall security efforts. Training will take place over three-week courses at the Jordan International Police Training Center. The goal is to improve communication and trust between the refugee community and the Jordanian security forces, and to deter and respond to crime. The Syrian refugee trainees will not be armed but will work closely with Jordanian police patrolling inside the camp.

Questions for the Record
Submitted by the Honorable Joe Wilson
To the Honorable Assistant Secretary Anne C. Richard

Question 1:

We know that 95% of the Syrian refugees registered in Iraq are located within the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. According to a recent CRS report, preparations are underway for a new camp in the Erbil Governorate. The office of the Governor of Dohuk has also made a proposal to open a new camp in the eastern part of that governorate to ease crowding at the Domiz camp. Both of these governorates, I should mention, are in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The United States has long had historically strong ties with the semi-autonomous Kurdish Regional Government, who is overseeing the programs delivering aid to many of, if not most, of these refugees? There are approximately 220,000 Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region, but only approximately 7,000 refugees throughout the rest of Iraq. What safeguards do we have in place that ensure that the money we are sending to Baghdad is in fact getting to its intended destination of the KRG who are providing the hands on assistance to these refugees? Is there any mechanism through which we could send this money directly to the KRG and bypass the bureaucracy in Baghdad?

U.S. humanitarian assistance does not go directly to the Government of Iraq (GOI) in Baghdad nor directly to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), but to trusted international humanitarian organizations. The United States has provided nearly $45 million in aid to international organizations in Iraq for the Syria humanitarian response. Of this assistance, the majority goes to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Program (WFP) to assist refugees in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR). UNICEF, UNHCR, and WFP assistance includes support to refugees living in camps, including a WFP food voucher program at Domiz camp; education; water and sanitation; and special programs aimed at protecting children. These partner organizations have strict reporting guidelines and monitoring mechanisms to ensure – to the greatest extent possible – that assistance goes directly to vulnerable refugees. The KRG prefers that all assistance to Syrian refugees go to current and future camps, where it is easier for the KRG to monitor and assist the refugee population. The State Department advocates for assistance to all refugees based on need, whether they are living in or out of camps. The Department is in frequent contact with the KRG and the Iraqi federal government through our Embassy in Baghdad and Consulate-General Erbil to assess needs and we are pressing the federal government to provide increased assistance to the KRG.

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