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*The latest in our occasional series of expert comment and analysis, by GSF Advisory Board member, **His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal**, who served as Crown Prince of Jordan from 1965-1999 alongside his brother, the late King Hussein of Jordan. As always, the views expressed are those of the author and not of Global Strategy Forum unless otherwise stated.*

Encouraging The Will To Stay: A Sustainable Approach To Forced Displacement

Lord Heseltine has made a timely suggestion that the world is in need of a new 'Marshall Plan' for developing countries to reduce immigration. In 2004, I strove alongside other members of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the US Senate to consolidate the 'Greater Middle East Initiative': a plan for peace and stability in the region. We established that there is an absence of security in this part of the world. In my statement, I proposed the development of a Marshall Plan – in the region, for the region – to enhance human security and promote peace.

It is high time we revive this proposal. As the world grapples with the ramifications of global conflicts, increasing hordes of refugees are attempting the perilous Mediterranean

crossing in pursuit of safety. Meanwhile, legislation to 'stop the boats' and other anti-immigration policies are gathering momentum. Applying temporary methods to a long-term problem does not work. It has never worked. Promoting stability, by strengthening local governance and infrastructure, is essential to incentivising 'the will to stay'.

The problems of governance are evident: poverty, slow economic development, illiteracy, infant mortality, inadequate healthcare, mismanagement of resources, and democratic shortcomings. These complex challenges perpetuate a cycle of displacement and instability, prompting millions to seek refuge elsewhere. In bolstering institutions and services, including education and healthcare, a locally-styled 'Marshall Plan' for sustainable economic and social development would create empowered stakeholders who are not compelled to flee their homes.



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Whilst a 'Marshall Plan' for Western Asia and North Africa must be home-grown, the cooperation of other states is needed. Security in terms of water, energy, food, healthcare, and the ecosphere should be prioritised, especially considering the alarming news of funding cuts for the World Food Programme. In addition, we must incorporate a structure for arms control based on transparency.

For this to work, we must embrace a common minimum agenda. This means recognising the sovereignty of citizens and involving them in shaping their own futures. It means a concerted effort to control population growth, bring justice to development, and foster economic growth with equity. It means reducing the wealth gap and ensuring social inclusivity and equal opportunities. It means generating learning and market opportunities that align with upcoming market trends and demands, particularly in the fields of renewable and green energy, to prevent brain drain and encourage the youth's will to stay.

By fostering partnerships that involve all stakeholders, resources can be pooled, and expertise can be shared to create a truly comprehensive and sustainable solution for the refugee crisis. In the global context of war and conflict, climate change, and food insecurity, the refugee emergency is only getting worse. Only when we develop long-term solutions that address the root cause of forced displacement will we be able to build societies where social resilience based on self-reliance, inclusive security, and above all, human dignity, prevail.

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