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Alan Kurdi: A Political Chaos

With Civil War raging across Syria, migration into the EU has reached a record high. Political refugees have become innocent bystanders trapped in the middle of a heated governmental debate. As Europe takes its leisurely time to question how to effectively deal with this mass influx, the rights and views of the people actually affected have been practically ignored. Although in many senses a highly economic and political issue, the personal, human impact of migration policies have been practically ignored and instead, the issue has been hidden amongst queues of paperwork in a horrific attempt to simply forget these struggling people. Daunting as the decision may seem, many government echelons have decided that this crisis is merely a "financial imbalance" with the poor, desolate people of Syria left simply as a nagging overhead. They debate and debate and debate but always failing to reach any workable consensus. Whilst these discussions go on, can we really ask those who have nothing, literally nothing, to turn around and walk straight back to what they have tried so hard to escape? The EU holds a fundamental principle to protect and secure peace, although from recent actions it would certainly be hard to tell.

In terms of numbers alone, the EU has received just over one million migrants. With a population of five hundred million, this relatively small proportion has set governments against each other and reopened cracks in the supposed relative stability of Europe. These statistics also prove to be a worrying predication of the state of the EU itself as this numerically small problem has left many political leaders with a despondent outlook on the real condition in which European affairs lie. Some of these political critics have wrongly accused migrants of "taking advantage" of the situation by trying to reach wealthy states in a bid to improve their own futures. But we can clearly see how this accusation, alike the insignificant actions taken by these leaders are fundamentally flawed. To begin with, any migration efforts, either suspect of legitimate, are intended to build towards a greater future as the volatility of their home country has forced drastic change. Secondly, the EU has surreptitiously managed to dull down the reality of the conditions now faced by migrants. They are held in conditions similar to that of imprisonment, in transition camps that really hold no promise of transition. These holding zones are the literal embodiment of EU failures. They are an international aid nightmare in which the unstoppable flow of migrants are simply bundled up and passed through endless legal procedures that hold no legal weight and are aimed at utterly the wrong target: just another pathetic arrow drawn from the EU's quiver of distractions and shot into the sand.

It is painfully obvious to see that what is so desperately needed is a unilateral approach to this ever expanding crisis. The aims to avert this crisis have, on the whole, ignored the real source of the problem. Syria is in the middle of a violent, frankly unimaginable Civil War in which over 250,000 people have so devastatingly lost their lives. So far the world has responded with proxy support, only recently pledging to offer training, obviously a real game changer. It is surely a sad state of affairs when the moral inaction of the EU has to be compared to the physical actions of Russia. In the case of Russia, they have pledged support to a brutal military dictator who hides his true aims under the guise of the Alawite religion. However disrespectful Russia's decision to protect this leader is, they have

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at least made a decisive choice towards trying to change the heart of the problem. They may see this problem as the migrants themselves but they have at least made no attempt to hide their feelings. Meanwhile, the EU promotes itself as an "ever closer union", yet we are still waiting to see the products of this pledge, as the European response so far has been anything but united. This disunity in the luxurious European camp has come principally in the form of closing the doors to those seeking help. A vain attempt to block out the real problem at hand and pretend, like some childhood game, that what can't be seen can't do any harm. This real problem is the lives of such migrants, real, human, important lives. These infantile actions have spread across the breadth of Europe, in a dangerously unprecedented manner, taking temporary effect in Germany, France, Denmark countries previously held in high esteem for peaceful resolution. As these borders slam shut, the migrant crisis now threatens to undermine the EU's supposedly border free Schengen area. We can now see how this supposed minority are starting to have their own impact on European daily life as it is clear to see that the longer the migration crisis remains unsolved, the longer the EU will continue to suffer from its own cooperative failings.

Whilst the political rumblings in Europe continue to churn, and propaganda drives us away from the harsh reality, it is easy to forget about the thousands of helpless refugees stuck in camps along borders, gazing into the false promises of the EU. The continuous flow of migrants has to point towards the ongoing terror faced in countries such as Syria as normal families risk their own and children's lives in a bid to reach the promises of Europe. However flawed these promises may be, the gruelling journey faced by migrants into Greece is one fraught with danger, deception and ultimately death. During the wintry conditions of 2015 the death rate soared in the Aegean Sea as 365 migrants died or went missing crossing from Turkey to Greece.

Just one of those 365 was Alan Kurdi.

Alan was a 3 year old Syrian boy who was fleeing from the grip of an ISIL controlled Syria into the supposedly safe hands of the European Union. His family had placed their life-long savings into the hands of illegal traffickers who provided all the obligatory equipment; fake life jackets, overcrowded inflatables and particularly choppy conditions. They had given up literally everything for the faint hope of safety. Safety was all they wanted, but what they most certainly didn't get. Alan Kurdi became one of the hundreds of victims here; simply a name and a small, lifeless body to the rest of the world. Yes, you probably thought about him for a few hours, maybe even stretched to a day. But inevitably the struggles of a comfortable life begin to take over again and we are carefully guided away from the true horrors of the crisis. If it seems like you are always reminded of the economic and political ramifications of the crisis, you are certainly right and this is no mistake. The more human the crisis is the more fractious it becomes. If ordinary people are forced into caring it's a political nightmare. These organised gangs see no trouble in their actions and in fact face very little confrontation. To them, the migrants are simply objects to be moved, tracked and moved on again. A human perspective always changes the focus of the debate and so unsurprisingly European political discussions have attempted to dehumanise the problem in a way terrifyingly similar to the twisted justifications of traffickers.

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But at least the EU has started an attempt to reach a solution (with the imperative words being started and attempt). As the migrant crisis grimly falls into another round of dread and despair, the state of any viable solution now lies in the hands of recently convened talks in Brussels. These sketchy ideas rest mainly on the hopes of a military settlement in Syria, a prospect made more remote than ever given Russia's recent backing of President Assad. Meanwhile the barriers placed in front of migrants only compound the situation in Syria and temporarily displace the centre of the problem. By decreasing the availability of mainland Europe, migrants will simply gather in bottleneck numbers in Turkey, Greece, and their surrounding islands, a country that is already economically destroyed and not known for its political supremacy. This analysis of the EU's failed ideas may not seem entirely fair but a Belgian politician pretty accurately summed up their efforts when advocating the opinion that a clear resolution could be to push back migrant-laden boats coming from Greece and therefore rid Europe of the problem once and for all. Such a preposterous suggestion can be easily passed off as farcical but it does imply a dangerously sinister approach from EU leaders who are supposedly taking charge of this devastating crisis. The political nuances of these discussions have already dragged on for months whilst the migrants stuck in camps are still trapped, still hopeless and still in fixed transit.

So far, the EU has practically ignored the possibility of wider involvement from other continents which could enable both economic support and a provision of refugee places. When Europe itself was faced with conflict during the period of World War Two, more than 40 million refugees culminated from the European nations with a significant number migrating to Asia. This historical precedent has been somewhat ignored by current advisors whom many of which see the Syrian migrants as opportunists trying to break into the economic promise of the EU. Can you imagine the reaction if refuge was refused to Western citizens? It is safe to say that people would care an awful lot more. However, this idealistic view of equality must accept that the world has inevitably changed and conditions are different. Although what remains the same, no matter of country, race or political opinion, is the contentious nature of the migration. This has and will always be a challenging issue, politically, morally and socially. There will never be one easy answer, one simple solution or quick fix but if no change is initiated this stalemate will continue to sweep destructively through Europe: the politics must be addressed, qualms appeased and desperate people saved as the sadly recognisable figure of Alan Kurdi has come to epitomise the unacceptably abysmal state of European affairs.