

# 2015 European Refugee Crisis



*Fairfield University*

Model United Nations

Highschool Conference 2019

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2019 FUMUN Conference! My name is Zola Bernardi and I will be serving as the chair for the 2015 European Refugee Crisis. I am a sophomore with a major in Economics and a minor in Spanish. I am excited that you have chosen to be a part of this wonderful event. During the conference you will be challenged to work with members from other schools to devise a solution to this European crisis. Don't be afraid to speak up and advocate for what you believe is right. Enjoy your time!

My name is Sara McDonald and I am a first-year student at the Dolan School of Business with a major in Accounting. This is my first experience co-chairing a committee, so I am very excited to hear your solutions and help you grow as a delegate.

The goal of this committee is to focus in on the following points regarding the crisis: Middle Eastern refugees, the treatment the refugees received from European governments, and the economic/political toll taken on the European Union. You want to find the cause and effects of how this crisis came to be and how it affects both of these two regions of the world. Consider news perspectives that may not be portrayed on American television. Go into this with an open mind and the willingness to advocate for the human rights of these refugees.

It is a well known fact that many of the refugees seeking help were traveling from Syria due to the civil war occurring in their country. During this time, the government and rebels were in a brutal war with one another and common civilians or anyone that dared to differ from rulings was deemed a threat. People traveled by foot, boat, and other means for hundreds of miles to reach where they thought they would not only be safe, but also greeted with open arms.

Once these refugees arrived in masses to the countries in the European Union, they were not greeted as expected. These European countries were not prepared for the large numbers of people that were to come and as a result the refugees were then integrated into "refugee camps". The conditions at many of these camps were not livable and often resulted in the spread of disease or illness among its members. These refugee camps were ultimately deemed a failure of the government's attempt in the eyes of many people.

The citizens' perspectives of their government drastically declined and approval ratings fell when the treatment of these refugees became public information. The stigma around a refugee, and what the original purpose of their trip was, began to change in the minds of many. It is important to consider not only European mindsets when thinking about refugees and what the public thought of them in 2015. The European Refugee Crisis changed the political system forever.

## Focal Questions:

1. What groups/nationalities were predominantly involved in the refugee crisis and why?
2. How were these refugees treated once they reached government facilitated refugee camps?
3. What are some solutions to aiding refugees the government has yet to consider or fund?
4. Are there any key political, social, or economic factors that have influenced this crisis to occur?
5. Refer to news and personal stories, how has this crisis affected families and children specifically?
6. What are ways the European Union can ensure the safe and smooth transition of migrants into European life upon their arrival?
7. Explain the political dynamics in the migrants' countries of origin.

## Key Sources:

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sm.pop.refg>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/sep/15/refugee-crisis-hungary-launches-border-crackdown-live-updates>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34216883>

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2015/12/56ec1ebde/2015-year-europes-refugee-crisis.html>

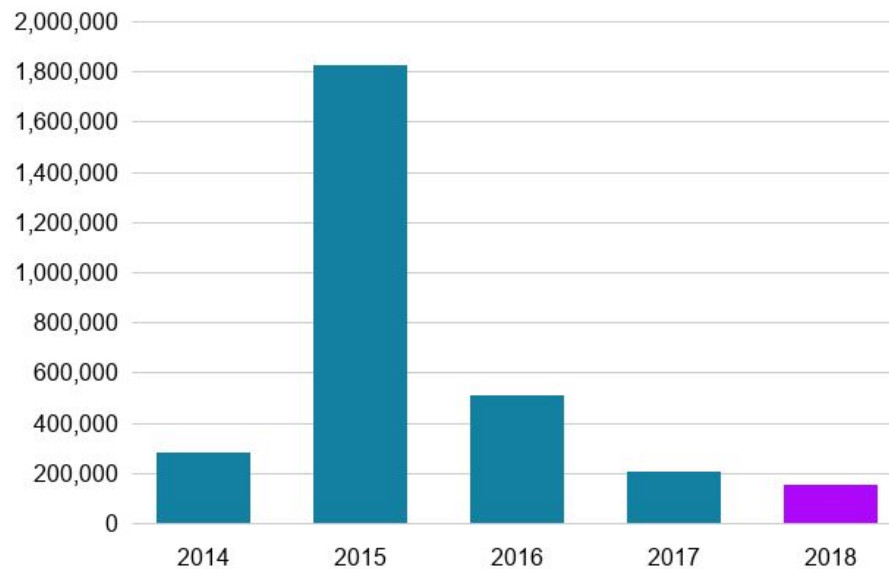
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/832501530296269142/pdf/127818-V1-WP-P160648-PUBLIC-Disclosed-7-2-2018.pdf>

<https://www.unhcr.org/ph/13427-seven-years-timeline-syria-crisis.html>

<https://time.com/4026380/europe-migrant-crisis-questions-refugees/>

\*Remember you should have a solid understanding of this committee before coming to the conference. Feel free to use sources other than those listed here.

## Illegal border crossings into the EU



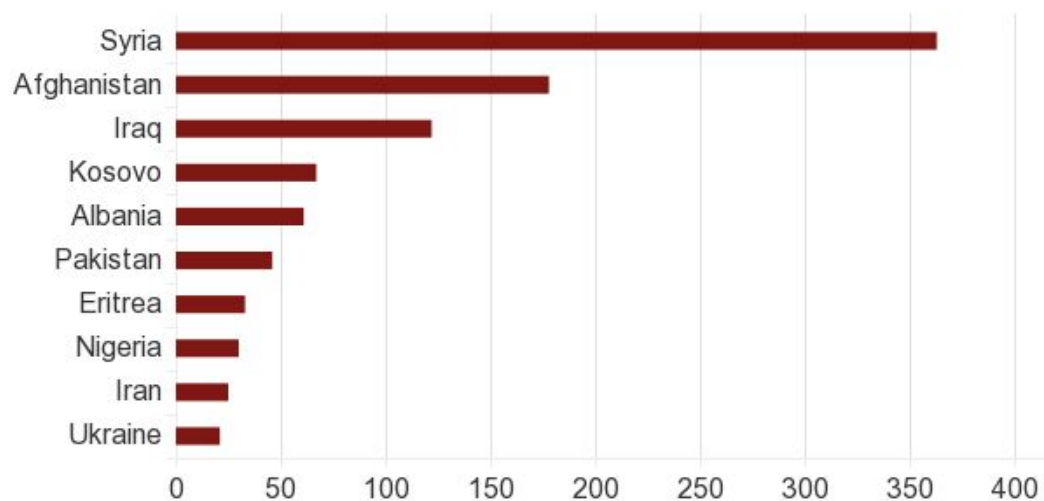
Note: 2018 figures are a preliminary estimate

Source: Frontex



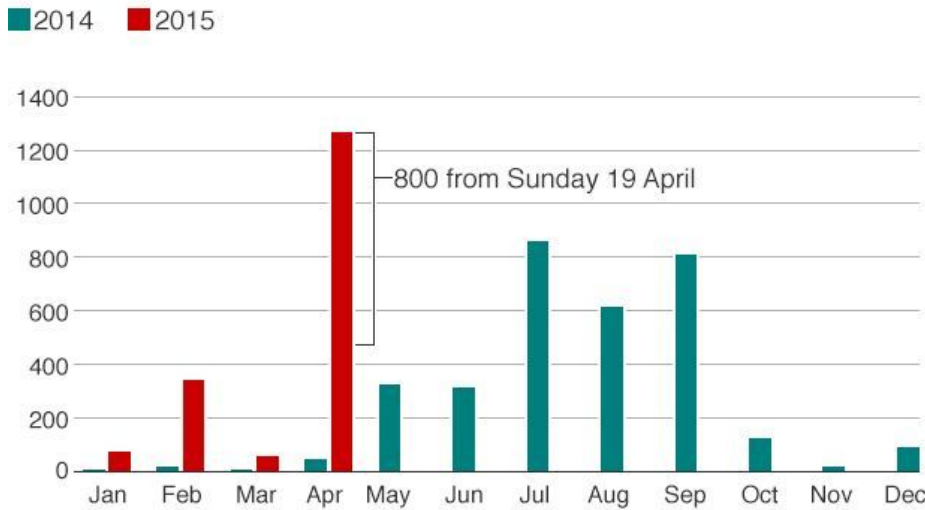
## Top 10 origins of people applying for asylum in the EU

First-time applications in 2015, in thousands



Source: Eurostat

### Migrant deaths in the Mediterranean by month



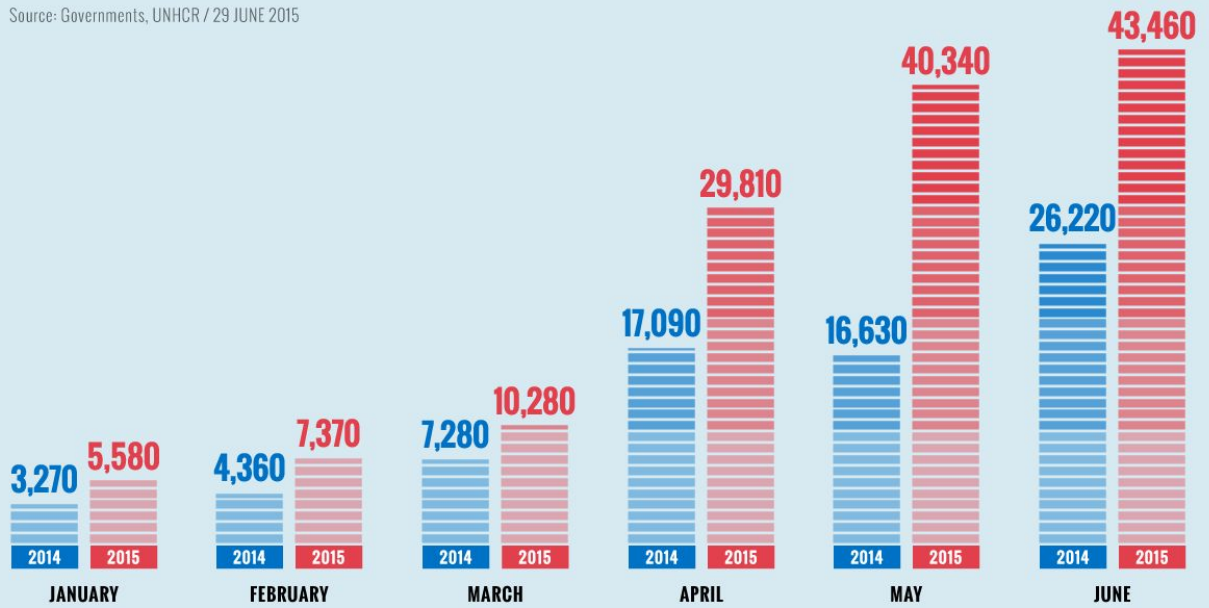
Source: IOM



### Refugees and migrants arriving by sea in Europe (2014 and 2015)



Source: Governments, UNHCR / 29 JUNE 2015



SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

**CHILDREN CAUGHT IN WAR**



Almost half (48%) of Syrian refugees are children who've lost everything.



