

BROOKINGS DOHA CENTER

UPROOTED, UNPROTECTED:
LIBYA'S DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

Doha, Qatar

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BARAKAT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the open dialogue session at the Brookings Doha Center. My name is Sultan Barakat and I'm the deputy director of research here at the BDC. I'm also senior fellow at the Center for Policy Studies in Brookings and an associate professor at the University of York in the UK.

I have the pleasure of being asked to moderate this very distinguished panel this evening on the issue of displacement in Libya.

Before I introduce our speakers, and I will be giving each of them seven to ten minutes to speak first, I would like to just give a broader idea on the difference between internally displaced persons and refugees, because this issue will come up again and again during our discussion today.

Although we will be focused on displacement in Libya, the issue, as I'm sure you are all aware, applies to many other countries, unfortunately, in our region today. In fact, probably the largest number of

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displacement today is within our region, be it internally displaced or refugees. And from that perspective, I think our discussion tonight is very, very important and a lot of the issues you hear about Libya you can scale up to Iraq, Syria, and probably reflect some of the issues that are taking place in Yemen today, and they are all very much related.

We -- our evening is taped by al Jazeera and will be broadcast at a later stage, so please feel free to ask questions, but keep that in mind as you frame your question. Our colleagues here are open to take all sorts of questions, and I'm sure that some controversial issues will inevitably come up, and will be able to deal with them accordingly.

To my mind, and please correct me if I'm mistaken, because you are the experts on this subject, the main difference between internally displaced and a refugee is their ability to cross a frontier, a boundary. Refugees, those who are able to cross that political frontier, and as such, receive particular type of protection and assistance that is already

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specified under international law, and IDPs are those people who are unable to do it, but they have been displaced for one reason or another, could be fleeing conflict, prosecution, in some cases could be displaced by development projects, but are unable to cross that political marker, if you like, on the ground in terms of boundaries from one state to another.

Now, aside from the ability to cross the boundaries, I think the experience is very much the same, and I speak here as a second generation refugee and someone who has had, over many years in my early life, to move from one context to the next, the experience of being uprooted is very much the same. You move away from your community, you move away from your environment, you're most likely to lose your livelihood, you're most likely to lose members of your family, you may have -- you may end up in a very hostile environment, whether within country or outside the country, and you find yourself, and quite often literally overnight, being in need of others and at

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the receiving end of assistance, nationally, internationally, and so on, and going through what, to a lot of displaced people and uprooted people, is often a very humiliating experience.

And internationally, and I've been in this subject for about 20 years working in postwar reconstruction, and it really defeats me crisis after crisis to see how incapable the international community has been to deal with those crises, particularly in a dignified way, to put the issue of dignity at the center of our response to displacement.

Refugees, of course, are largely protected by the 1951 refugee law, but even that, I think, it's time to place it -- and I hope that this is something that will come up in our discussion -- we need to place it within context and see what can be done to improve on it.

The 1951 Refugee Convention was created within Europe for Europe at the time in a specific context when there were people coming in in few numbers, and now we find ourselves having to deal with

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tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands sometimes fleeing persecution and conflict, and ending up in some of the very poorest of countries around the world, countries like Jordan, Pakistan, Kenya are having to deal with an enormous number -- a huge number of displaced, uprooted people, and they obviously, clearly, do not have the resources to cope with this and that does impose a dilemma.

Unlike refugees, IDPs do not have that legal protection, but of course they have other forms of protection to do with international human rights laws and international humanitarian law in the case of conflict, applies to them as civilians within those contexts, and ever since the Bosnia war, I think, was it, the former-Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the issue of internally displaced persons have come to a lot of peoples' attention, organizations' attentions, and specifically the lack of protection for them, and a lot of effort has been made to develop what we call the guiding principles for IDPs or internally displaced persons, to which we're very proud as

Brookings to have played a role.

The Brookings Internally Displaced Program, to which Megan is associated, has been going on for more than 20 years and it's played a very important role in developing those guiding principles and in tabling them internationally and really making them much more effective.

So, in principle -- and we will hear from our colleagues in practice in a few minutes -- we are much better equipped on the legal front to deal with the issue, but the practicalities of it, the politics, the contextuality of it, from one crisis to the next, unfortunately does not necessarily lead to the positive effects that our colleagues have had in mind when the guidelines were originally developed.

With that, I would like to move to our speakers. I will be introducing them one-by-one and asking them to speak for about seven minutes, if possible, on a specific angle of the issue of Libyan displacement, and then we will take some questions and open the debate to the audience.

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We'll start with my dear friend and colleague, Dr. Ibrahim Sharqieh. Dr. Sharqieh is the deputy director here at the Brookings Doha Center and he's a fellow at the Foreign Policy in Brookings, and an associate professor with Georgetown University.

Dr. Sharqieh, for the last 10, 15 years, has been working on issues of conflict resolution, reconstruction, and displacement, and he has authored many important analysis papers focused on Yemen and Libya that were published by the BDC, and is just about to publish what I think will become a landmark, really, in the discussion around reconstruction, one of the first books to look into the issues of transition following the Arab Spring and where those transitions have led in the last couple of years.

With this, I would like to give the floor to Dr. Sharqieh, please if you could give us seven minutes focused on framing the issue of internally displaced persons in Libya specifically.

DR. SHARQIEH: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, everyone. And actually, I would like

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before I begin on the Libyan displacement, I would like to remind our audience that we previously -- almost a year ago we had another event, a similar discussion here on issues of refugees and displacement, and that was on the policy (inaudible) refugees that we dealt with previously, and in particular, actually, we focused on the policy and displacement in the (inaudible) refugee camp in Lebanon and Jordan.

It's still available online on our website and we discuss the issues -- the issues that the (inaudible) refugees are facing, and I'm sure you heard the news how, you know, the humanitarian disaster at the (inaudible) camp that keeps coming back to the front scene, three in Syria at the refugee camp and the rest of the neighboring countries.

So, today I'm land that we are here to discuss another issue of displacement (inaudible), which is the Libyan displacement and here, in my seven minutes, I will try to focus on the internally displaced, the IDPs in Libya, and as Dr. Sultan said,

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when we refer to IDPs we refer to those that they leave their homes and remained within the country, so they remained within Libya, did not cross the borders to Tunisia or Egypt or, you know, to the rest of the world.

So, yes, believe it or not, there is a serious displacement issue in Libya today, that actually it started back in 2011 in the process of removing the Kaddafi regime from power in addition to the refugees outside of Libya. The number of IDPs in Libya in 2011, which was the highest, reached 550,000 in 2011, which was the peak, the highest number of IDPs in Libya.

Now, with the removal of Kaddafi from power and the end of the Kaddafi regime, the number, of course, started to decrease and people started to go back to their homes. And as a result, actually, in 2014, the number of IDPs dropped from 550,000 to 56,000, which is -- which means almost 500,000 returned to their homes that were internally displaced in Libya, and the 56,000, obviously, are -- were the

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most difficult cases, in particular 40,000 from Tawergha and about 7,000, 8,000 from the Mashashita tribe and some others also in Libya.

Now, with the launching of the operation of General Haftar back in May 2014 and, you know, the beginning of the current civil war in Libya, unfortunately the number of IDPs started to increase again and again, and what we have today, actually, in Libya, the number has, according to UNHR, is almost 400,000, the number that has reached again. Of these 400,000, there are 269,000 of them in the western part of Libya, 90,000 in the eastern part of Libya, and about 18,500 in the south. Spread -- the 400,000 IDPs, they are spread all over about 35 towns and cities inside Libya, so you can see how scattered this population and this community all over Libya.

Now, living in these 35 different centers, towns, and cities, and other centers, IDPs face harsh circumstances, they face -- one of the issues, the very first one that comes obviously is housing and where they're living. There are, in Libya, some

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refugees, some IDP camps that were established over the past years to house those displaced IDPs from their homes, there is -- near Tripoli and near Benghazi and several other places, but not everyone managed to have a refugee camp or an IDP camp in the different parts of Libya. So, they're scattered in different places in Libya.

So, housing has emerged as a challenge and whether this is an option is given to the IDPs. Another challenge that the IDPs face, they are sometimes caught up in the crossfire, especially during this time, in the fighting between the different militia groups, whether it's in the west or the east and other parts of Libya. So, which is an example of what happened in the al Falak camp near Airport Tripoli, which was one of the examples where IDPs were caught up in this crossfire.

In Benghazi, as well, you see the shelling, you know, from the different fighting (inaudible) where also IDPs are caught up in this.

Another major challenge of the conditions

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were actually restricted movement where there is difficult movement for many of them to move around the country, and I can give an example here, from one of the IDP camps that I personally visited, near Tripoli, and it's called Jenzure IDP camp where mostly the IDPs in it come from Tawergha and if, you know, some of you are familiar Tawergha residents, you know, they have dark skin, so they're easy to identify once they leave their IDP camp and they told to me, they said to me about like the difficulties, the harassment, the discrimination, or the difficult treatment they encounter once they leave their IDP camp.

Actually, there is state security at the entrance of the camp that in order to enter and to be -- you know, to visit the camp. This has actually affected other aspects, so led to other aspects of suffering that IDPs encounter in Libya where their children going to schools, they started also according to IDPs of this camp as they explained to me, they encountered difficult treatment and being singled out in the schools, which also tend to be a challenging

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experience for the children in schools, that in some places, actually, where education has then emerged as a serious challenge, a serious problem for IDPs also started to affect their daily living and the education of their children, they started to establish some schooling system within some IDPs whether it's in this Jenzure camp, or in others.

So, there is disruption in education and also as a result in health services, and all the other aspects that they encounter and whether they're receiving the proper health and education.

Now, how do you go about this, what do we do about this? In my view, the ultimate solution to IDPs and to the issue of displacement in Libya, there will have to be a successful transition where national reconciliation, a transitional justice law are established, are achieved, and then you are able to really permanently, long-term, provide long-term solutions for this issue. Unless we achieve this, which is unfortunately -- is not now on the horizon, especially now after the current civil war that we

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have in Libya, so the very first impact of the (inaudible) is that has put this solution on hold for now, because obviously, actually, with the division of two governments, to parliaments, and two presidents in the country, so we started to have, again, the whole process of transitional justice and reconciliation has been put on hold.

I am hoping that the current national dialogue or peace talks or negotiations that has taken place by the UN, sponsored by the UN in Morocco, Bernardino Leon and, you know, the rest of his team, is that this, if successful, would lead to some improvements of addressing the issue of displacement in Libya, but this has not happened yet.

In the meantime, until we reach that state of national reconciliation, there has to be known that the two parties in the current civil war in Libya bear a legal responsibility for the protection of the IDPs in Libya, whether it's in the west or in the east, so this has the -- they both bear legal responsibility on that. Another thing, the state in Libya must step in,

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and in this case I should say the two states, unfortunately or sadly speaking, they should -- whether it's the government or the parliament, they should also take responsibility and provide the support, at least the humanitarian aspect and health and education, to prevent further deterioration of that.

And the very last solution I would also like to emphasize for the IDPs here is a political -- or the representation, actually, in the current peace talks that are taking place. To what extent the IDPs or the refugees, the displaced community in Libya are really represented in these talks that Bernardino Leon is sponsoring and managing between the different parties, and there are many different ways of how we can ensure representation of IDPs.

And I'm here not asking for IDPs to emerge as a political party, and they need representation as part of this, but at least that the parties that are leading the negotiating or in the peace talks in Morocco is to ensure that they are fully aware of the

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circumstances of the IDPs because based on, again, my visit and my observation of the IDP camps, actually no one understands the IDP's situations and the refugee's situations like the IDPs themselves.

So, whether it's by direct involvement or representation of the IDPs in these talks or whether through the parties in dialogue visiting and ensuring they understand from the IDPs themselves their conditions and their needs and their perceptions, their views of possible solutions, or by involving consultants that they can also involve or be involved in advising on the situation and the solution, the durable solutions for the IDPs.

And with that I will stop here because, again, for me, it doesn't matter how you ensure representation, but it's important to ensure their voices and their perception are heard. Thank you.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you so much.

(Applause)

MR. BARAKAT: You'll get your opportunity in a minute. I actually would like to extend your time,

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just give you one more minute to explain, are these groups identified in terms of sectarian, religious? Are there particular groups that have been displaced as a result of the conflict in Libya? And whether that trend that you saw, 500,000 dropping to 50,000 and then picking up to another 450,000 -- are these the same people being displaced again or these are newly generated displacement? Just very briefly.

DR. SHARQIEH: Thank you. Very briefly, actually, it was before the current civil war was easy to identify the causes of displacement or the causes of IDPs in Libya because it was mainly about pro-regime and anti-regime, so it was a division within those lines.

MR. BARAKAT: So, it was political?

DR. SHARQIEH: Exactly, so those who aligned with the Kaddafi regime and those who aligned against the regime. Now the causes are so many, actually, there are large numbers that they're just leaving their neighborhoods actually because of vicious civil war and fighting that's taking place. So, and of

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course there are many other reasons, not only the brutality of the fighting, but also there are tribal, there are ethnic, there are political, several other reasons that goes to the displacement now, which, again, I think made it more complicated than understanding it in the past as within -- along regime or political lines.

MR. BARAKAT: Great. Thank you so much. Our next speaker is Houda Mzioudet. Houda is from Tunisia, is a very active journalist and commentator who has contributed to many media outlets, it's a very long list, I cannot mention it all, but it's been quite important, and covered issues in Libya and Tunisia with a special focus on the issue of displacement.

Houda, I should have mentioned that Houda, Ibrahim, and Megan are working jointly on a publication to cover the issue, which will soon be available and we will be emailing you all when it's ready, and Houda has been the recipient of many awards over her distinguished career from the Fulbright,

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Bridge Council, and other organizations.

We asked Houda to specifically focus on those displaced that have managed to cross the border into Tunisia to try and frame up the issues they face, the challenges ahead of them, and give us a perspective of how it feels. Thank you.

MS. MZIOUDET: Thank you very much, Sultan, for this introduction. Well, if I have to speak about Tunisia as a country that has a tradition of welcoming refugees from different parts of the world, Libyans have not been considered as refugees for Tunisians in general because historically they had -- Tunisia and Libya, they do share very strong ties, whether through marriage or through immigration, a lot of Libyans, you know, since the Italian War in 1911 to Tunisia.

With the Libyan revolution things change a little bit because it was part of the Arab Spring change that Libyans rose against Gaddafi and then we saw the first wave of Libyans coming into Tunisia shortly after the NATO strikes in Libya, especially from the western Nafusa mountain areas, but also from

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the western part of Libya because it's neighboring Tunisia.

At that time, there were two types of -- people who fled Libya, there were sub-Saharan African foreign workers, but also Southeast Asian foreign workers who fled Libya, and then the Libyans who have also fled the country, and the number at the time was between like 650,000 and one million people, these are kind of more or less estimates.

UNHCR, but also Tunisia Separatist Society, Tunisia Red Crescent, they played a role in trying to alleviate the suffering of these people who fled the country. With Libyans who fled Tunisia at the time, a lot of them, they found refuge within Tunisian families in the south of the country given that the south of Tunisia has got also historical ties with Libya for a long time.

So, there was this tradition of welcoming Libyans, not as refugees, but almost like part of the family, and that did not pose any problem for Tunisia. Actually, Tunisia got the support of the United

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Nations, but also other organizations like IOM in trying to absorb all these masses of people coming into their country that has just, you know, came out of a revolution and trying to build its democracy.

The issue that was posed at the time was how to quantify the whole issue of Libyans, whether -- the number but also there was no clear framework from the -- whether the United Nations, but also Tunisian government, on how to classify Libyans, whether they are refugees or exiles, so that was the big -- the most complex thing to deal with when looking at the issue of Libyans in Tunisia.

Things got even more complicated last summer with -- after the General Haftar operation when, unlike the first wave of Libyan exiles in Tunisia who were -- generally, some of them -- well, a good number of them, they were part of the former Gaddafi regime, the second wave of last summer, they included people from different ideologies or different political leanings. So, things get even more complicated.

The main challenges that I think of that

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Libyans in Tunisia do face is the fact that they do live in a state of limbo. They don't know -- they don't have a clear status. They just live without -- they just live illegally in the country. The positive side of that is that because Libyans, they do not need a visa to come to Tunisia, so they can live underground, but the problem is that they cannot take any jobs, they cannot do -- like, they cannot make their -- I mean, the state of limbo is quite complex for them, you know, to get out of it.

Tunisian authorities have been very lenient in not driving these people away from the country. Probably this kind of humanitarian approach of Tunisian authorities gave them -- probably lessened the fear that they may be extradited to Libya because some of them, they were living in this constant fear that they may be extradited as what happened to the former Gaddafi prime minister, Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi who had to be extradited to Libya and that created an uproar in Tunisian public opinion that was very angry that the former Tunisian president Moncef Marzouki has

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signed the decree of sending them somebody who would be -- who would have his life, you know, in jeopardy because of the chaos that the country was witnessing, you know, with militias wreaking havoc here and there.

With the Tunisian democratic transition trying to -- especially with the Tunisian constitution that stipulated that there will be no extradition of any Libyan to -- or any person who feels that his or her life is being in danger to Libya, that kind of puts some kind of framework to -- legal framework, at least, to the issue of Libyan exiles in Tunisia.

But the main challenge right now in Tunisia is, first, in how can Libyans be assisted, especially the ones who have no means to survive or to live as, you know, like any Tunisian citizen, because a lot of them, they don't -- they lost trust in the Libyan authorities and they cannot even approach, you know, the Libyan embassy to ask them for help. Things got worse, actually, since last summer because before -- since 2011, they more or less were living through those means, trying -- I mean, for some financial

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means. Some of them, they could probably approach the -- some Libyan civil society people or the prime minister's office for displaced Libyans or Libyans abroad, they maintained some kind of relationship between those Libyans and Tunisia or even in Egypt, but since last summer things got even more complicated and because there were other factors coming, you know -- because of the situation elsewhere, let's say, talking about here, the fact that United Nations thought that Libya -- at least in (inaudible) that the crisis in -- with Libyans within Tunisia are not that important because there are other pressing issues in countries like Syria, so that kind of, you know, made the issue not even, you know, being probably very difficult to solve.

But the Tunisian authorities as well, they haven't been very -- they didn't try to find long-term solutions to those Libyans in Tunisia because there is -- first, because they couldn't try and find, you know, a legal framework to their presence in Tunisia, but also at the same time, Tunisia has not been

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recognized as a host country by international community and the only way for Tunisia to get assistance from international community to deal with the Libyans in Tunisia crisis is through this recognition on how to assist it through different programs.

I mean, these are the challenges not only for the Libyans in Tunisia, but also from the Tunisian authorities. Civil society is doing a good job, they're trying to help, you know, those -- some of the Libyans who want to get themselves heard. Tunisian media are publicizing and writing articles about the plight of some of these people, but in general, they remain in the shadow, underground, and it's very hard, even sometimes, you know, to get an exact number. We have so many different conflicting figures coming from sometimes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sometimes the Ministry of Interior, sometimes talking about, you know, one million and a half Libyans in Tunisia, which represents almost 10 percent of the Tunisian population, which is huge. This number, you know, is

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actually making -- putting a lot of pressure on Tunisian economy, but also on -- it's driving a lot of Tunisians to consider Libyans in Tunisia as a burden on them economically. That does not mean that there is a strong anti-Libyan feeling, but it's just this kind of uneasiness and how this crisis is affecting Tunisia economically speaking.

There was just recently a more or less serious study by a Tunisian market research company that was carried out with a German NGO on the number of "Libyan residents" -- Libyans who have permanent residence in Tunisia and they put up the number between 300,000 and 400,000, so it's still huge difference between the one million and a half that was given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but these are just estimates in general.

So, that's the biggest challenge and how to quantify, you know, the whole -- the Libyan exiles issue and the fact that they know how to make the presence of Libyans or -- in Tunisia, you know, has become legal so that we can find a long-term solution,

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even short-term ones, but for the time being, there is something concrete that could make or probably lessen the issue of the presence of Libyans in Tunisia, you know, to find solutions to that.

I think that's it.

MR. BAKARAT: Thank you very much, Houda. Another clarification question. What deterred Tunisia as a sovereign state from giving them the status of refugee? Why did they opt for a guest status, not refugee status? Very briefly?

MS. MZIOUDET: Well, the reason is because, you know, Libyans are not considered as actually refugees, at least in Tunisia -- for Tunisians or for Tunisian authorities. This kind of very confusing description --

MR. BAKARAT: It's very difficult for Libyans to get a visit visa to Tunisia before?

MR. MZIOUDET: No, actually, that's the thing, because Libyans don't need a visa to come to Tunisia, so there is this kind of easiness to come into country, to Tunisia, you know, as visitors, but

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also as, you know, visiting family members, so there is this kind of blurring line between being a refugee and being an exile. There wasn't that --

MR. BARAKAT: We'll come back to this because it's becoming a trend in the Arab world, I think, whether it's Lebanon, Jordan, opting to welcome people as guests, also put them under control of the state because you can always -- the guest visa comes to an end and they have to come and renew it. We'll come back to this in our discussion. Thank you very much.

I'll move to our third and last speaker for this evening, Dr. Megan Bradley is an assistant professor of political science and international development studies at McGill University in Montreal and is a non-resident fellow of the Brookings Institution associated with the program that I mentioned earlier, the Brookings LSE Internal Displacement Program, which played an important role in developing the concept of protection for internally displaced people.

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Megan has published widely, and I'm not going to mention all the publications, forgive me, but I would like to mention a book that I know very well, and it's the one on reparations, justice, and responsibility, in which Megan addresses the legal issue and the issues related to transitional justice to those people who have been displaced and in particular looks at what would be the sustainable solution for that kind of displacement.

And from that kind of perspective we would like to ask Megan to consider the Libya displacement issue as a whole, both internally and refugees, people who have crossed into Tunisia and elsewhere, and to give us a perspective on the durable solutions. What does the future look like? Who can do what to make sure that this issue of displacement is addressed effectively, particularly now that I think it has moved beyond being just a humanitarian crisis into a strategic crisis. I mean, the very unfortunate death of migrants over the last few days, the news that we get, people trying to cross from Libya into Europe, is

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of a strategic interest to Europeans, I'm sure, at the moment, and it is partly there because this can of worms has just opened in the whole of North Africa. Megan?

MS. BRADLEY: Great. Well, thank you very much, Sultan, for the very generous introduction and thank you to everyone for joining us this evening.

I have to start by recognizing the obvious, I suppose, which is that on a certain level it seems very naïve to be talking about durable solutions for the displacement crisis in Libya at the moment. Clearly, there are no durable solutions to the crisis without security, without a political resolution to the conflict.

With that said, it's also important to be taking this moment to look towards the future and think about the kinds of questions that will inevitably come up when it comes time to try to actively promote durable solutions to the conflict. It's also important to recognize that when we talk about durable solutions for Libyan IDPs and exiles or

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refugees, it's important that we think about the relationships between these two populations.

Too often, the international community focuses on durable solutions for IDPs separately from refugees without recognizing that these crises are interconnected and that in resolving them we need to take a holistic approach.

So, what do I actually mean when I'm talking about durable solutions? This is a term that's often used in the context of the humanitarian system that is involved in responding to refugees and IDPs.

Vis-à-vis refugees, there are three so-called durable solutions to displacement. The first is local integration in the country of asylum, so refugees would have the opportunity to stay and to become citizens in the country where they've sought shelter. The second is resettlement to a third country, so refugees would move on to another state, typically in the west, and have the opportunity to become citizens there. And the third is voluntary repatriation in conditions of safety and dignity.

So, Sultan mentioned the importance of thinking about the dignity of refugees and IDPs while they're displaced. I would also stress that it's absolutely essential that we think about dignity in the context of the durable solutions process.

Now, when we think about the displacement situation of Libyans in Tunisia and other neighboring states at the moment, part of the difficulty in thinking about this durable solutions framework is that, as Houda mentioned and discussed in some detail, Libyans are not, for the most part, explicitly recognized as refugees from a legal perspective. So, this is going to shape the extent to which these different solutions are available to them.

I think the assumption is is that return is going to be the predominant solution if and when the time comes. That's certainly part of the broader international trend around durable solutions. I think it's something that we can expect in the context of the Libyan situation as well.

In terms of IDPs, durable solutions pertain

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to three somewhat parallel avenues for resolution in comparison to what we have for refugees. So, first is that IDPs might stay in the community where they've sought shelter, second, they might relocate elsewhere in their country of origin, and third, they may also choose to return voluntarily in conditions of safety and dignity to their original homes. So, there are, again, three options there.

For IDPs, as well as for refugees or exiles, again, I think its return that will be the predominant approach here. If we look at earlier stages of the displacement crisis in Libya, in particular the major uprootings in the aftermath of the revolution that Ibrahim discussed, we saw that return happened remarkably quickly, actually, and that's because Libyans, as citizens of a relatively well-resourced country, were for the most part able to draw on their own personal resources to make that return movement possible. So, in a sense, they financed their own durable solution.

In the context of the system more broadly,

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this is actually very rare. Typically, refugees and IDPs lack the financial resources to make these return movements possible themselves, and I think what we need to be aware of as we think about the future of the Libyan displacement crisis is that for Libyan exiles and for Libyan IDPs at the moment, many of these people continue to rely on their own personal resources and particularly for the exiles, this is not a sustainable situation. Many are not able to work and their resources are running dry, so the longer the displacement crisis continues, the more and more likely it will be that they're going to need, perhaps, considerable assistance, especially from the international community, to make durable solutions possible.

So, I would like to highlight quickly four points to bear in mind when we're thinking about durable solutions to the Libyan displacement crisis. The first pertains to the voluntariness of return. Now, under international law, as I mentioned, the return of refugees, also IDPs, absolutely has to be

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voluntary and undertaken in conditions of safety and dignity. The Tunisian government has been, like many of the governments in the region, tremendously hospitable in terms of opening their borders and keeping the borders open for Libyans who are searching for asylum, whether that's formal or informal.

What we need to be aware of is that as these crises become more and more protracted, what we see in countries around the world is that hospitality runs thin, you know, as we would expect, and as we would understand, so it's absolutely essential, as Houda mentioned, that a process be initiated to try to better understand the extent to which Libyans in Tunisia qualify as refugees and therefore should benefit from protection against any form of premature return.

This question of eligibility for refugee status is a very complicated one from a legal perspective, but what I think is quite clear is that the vast majority of Libyan exiles do have legitimate safety concerns and should, from a human rights and

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humanitarian perspective, benefit from protection against enforced returns.

So, it's important that on the one hand we recognize the hospitality and generosity of the Tunisian government, and on the other hand, also support that government as they develop policies and stronger practices as now a major host state in the region. This is a role that Tunisia hasn't historically had to play and organizations like UNHCR have a major responsibility in terms of supporting Tunisia as they develop their policies and respond in such a way so that it's absolutely certain that we have safeguarded against any form of premature return.

Second, in terms of resources, as I mentioned, many Libyan exiles and IDPs are relying on their own resources, which is not sustainable, so we'll need to be thinking more about increased donor contributions to respond to the situation of the displacement of Libyans. Now, you know, from a donor perspective it's very difficult to think about considering spending more money given the scale of the

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crises in Iraq and in Syria. I think that the reason why we haven't heard as much as we probably should have about the Libyan crisis is because of the magnitude of the need elsewhere in the Middle East. But, you know, this really isn't a successful or sufficient explanation for ignoring the very real needs that the Libyans face.

Third, in terms of transitional justice and reconciliation, it's important that we recognize in recent years there's been increased interest in, and I think, understanding of, the links between displacement and transitional justice processes, the recognition that these processes need to take displaced populations and their concerns seriously. What we saw in earlier stages of the Libyan displacement crisis is that previous laws like the political isolation law were actually undermining the resolution of displacement because of the sense in which they were perhaps overly punitive.

It's important that we think about how to strike the right balance between ensuring that these

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laws and processes are not overly punitive, but that they do insist on an appropriate degree of accountability.

More broadly, I think the challenge for traditional justice as it relates to displacement in Libya is to try to push back against the attribution of collective responsibility for past wrongs. This is particularly important in the case of the Tawergha who are collectively being held responsible for a set of grave human rights violations. Now, of course it's essential to uphold accountability, but you can't expect a whole community to be painted with the same brush of culpability.

There are also restitution issues that are going to have to be considered, land restitution issues that were incredibly complex pertaining to the ways in which the Gaddafi regime used land claims to pit enemies against one another. This is a process that can certainly be considered in some detail in advance, so, as we're waiting for the political process to get some more traction, this is something

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that I think players in the region would do well to consider in more detail.

And last, there's the issue of delivering current support to the displaced Libyans in ways that can help set the groundwork for durable solutions. So, this means trying to ensure that Libyan exiles have their children in school, are able to equitably access healthcare, in effect that they're not living in the shadows.

In the United States, for example, there were long experiences in the 1980s and up into the 1990s of the challenges that came with populations of Central American exiles who came into the United States without status living in the shadows and the ways in which this kind of situation results in sometimes the development of criminal gangs, which become transnational. It's important to look back at these historical examples and think about what they might mean for the contemporary Libyan case.

So, just to conclude, when we think about recommendations for durable solutions, I think it's

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clear that there needs to be increased investment from the international community, particularly through UNHCR, in supporting the Tunisian government especially, also making sure that we're capitalizing on opportunities to support civil society development. Returnees can be important political players when the time comes for them to go back to their countries of origin, so it's important to think about durable solutions as an investment in the future peace and stability of Libya.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you very much. I understand why, maybe, from a U.S. perspective, as one of the largest donors, Tunisia may not be a priority today, but it beats me to understand why Europe has not stepped in to, a, shake the hands of Tunisia and say, thank you very much, you've just taken the pressure off me, whether it's 400,000 or 50,000 or 80,000, and step forward to aid in a much more proactive way. Do you know what's going on in the European mind, aside from the fact maybe there is not one coordinated foreign policy strategy?

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MS. BRADLEY: I think if I knew what was going on in the minds of European donors I would be in a lot of demand these days. You know, I think that you're absolutely right. There's a huge role for Europe to play in the crisis in the Mediterranean including the boat that tragically sank this week, really should be pushing the Europeans to think about how they can be more strategic in supporting Tunisia and the relationship between Tunisia's efforts as a host state and the Mediterranean crisis more generally.

You know, I think that in a sense the Tunisian government perhaps has not been as forceful as it might in making its case. I think that there are many public and perhaps also government officials who don't actually realize how much the Tunisian government has done in terms of carrying the weight of the situation, you know, which is not to say that they should necessarily be complaining, but I think that it should be understood how much they are doing and that the European donors have a responsibility to step in.

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MR. BARAKAT: Thank you. And talking about being more forceful, Ibrahim, those displaced within Libya, you've mentioned they're kind of concentrated in about 35 centers. I take it those are displacement centers -- camps, or are these just -- could be urban centers --

MR. SHARQIEH: Towns.

MR. BARAKAT: They would be towns and shanty towns and so on. Now, are those displaced people organized socially in any way? I mean, do they have their own social political structures? Are they trying to exert any pressure on the government of Libya to react to their plight?

MR. SHARQIEH: Thank you. That's a good question. Actually, it depends on the group itself. There are more organized displaced communities -- there are more organized displaced communities inside Libya than others. One of the most organized that I saw, actually, was the Tawergha, back to Tawergha community, that they had actually inside the camp, they had a spokesperson, they had, when I was there,

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an information center. They have an exhibition of pictures and like making their case through pictures, which was very powerful, actually, because they're communicating their message and their demands and their issues through pictures, whether their contribution to the Libyan revolution and fighting alongside with revolutionaries against Gaddafi or whether the torture that some of their prisoners received in some places. Highly, highly organized, and actually they have a very clear message about what they want and about their demands, and also communicating with the state, with the government at the time. Not only this, but even recently, actually, they made their way through the national dialogue -- the UN sponsored national dialogue with Bernardino Leon where they actually made some progress of going there and ensuring that their voices are heard, that they're present, and all of that, and this spoke directly with -- they had their major problem is with (inaudible) and they were able actually to make some deals of like prisoner exchanges or free prisoners

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that they were able to make.

This is like the most organized. Now, on the other hand, in other places, there is (inaudible), there's basically that -- the fleeing the tough areas of the clashes and the -- between different parties, and they don't have -- they rely fully on the states or on UNHCR.

MR. BARAKAT: Right. Thank you. And Houda, in our traditions, guests are always welcome, but after the third day we have the right to ask why you're here. You know, the first three days you let them in, you feed them, you warm them, you do everything, but after the third day you start asking questions. And in the case of Tunisia and having moved on to --

SPEAKER: (off mic)

MR. BARAKAT: That's in Egypt -- (laughter) -- having experienced this sort of extended displacement and acted as a host for such a long time, I mean, we heard it's running thin. People are eating their own resources, their own savings, but also

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they're becoming a burden on their host communities. I assume they are sharing some of their schools, medical services, et cetera, and this is all adding pressure on the host community.

When do you think -- what will make the breaking point? Are these communities in any way politicized those displaced communities from -- do they bring the politics of Libya into Tunisia? Is it playing a role in Tunisia? Has there been any reaction given the makeup of the Tunisian government, the Islamists and so on? Things have changed since then. In what way those people are likely to be affected?

MS. MZIOUDET: Well, Libyans in Tunisia -- Libyan exiles in Tunisia, at least the ones who claim to belong to the former regime, they were accused at one time of trying to stir problems within Libya, and so the Tunisian government had to take a very firm stance last year of telling them that, you know, no Libyan is -- has got the right to talk to -- you know, to engage in politics because that will create

problems between Tunisia and Libya at the time.

Yes, Tunisians at one time they were tired, you know, with seeing so many Libyans in the country and that created some kind of tensions within Tunisians themselves, not because of their presence, but mostly because the fact that, you know, their permanent almost stay in Tunisia has put a strain on maybe renting -- also on the economy of the country that, you know, rent right now in Tunisia is running so high, especially in big cities like Tunis, but also other cities like (inaudible), et cetera, and so that put Tunisia in a very critical position that it has to deal with Libyans in Tunisia in more serious way -- tough way, as it were.

Most of those -- a lot of those Libyans in Tunisia, they are surviving on their own means. Some of them, they have -- their family is sending them money, still visiting them, so that they are able to survive. Unfortunately, others are not able, you know, to make end's meet. There were even some tragic stories of some Libyan women engaging, unfortunately,

you know, in elicited activities like prostitution, which shows -- but these are just very, very small cases.

And so the situation is quite dire because, you know, they were expecting to come to Tunisia and, you know, once the conflict is over they will go back, but when they saw that, you know, their presence has lingered over the last four years, then things have started to get a little bit complicated for them, and right now things even got worse with what happened last summer, that there was the second wave of, you know, Libyan exiles in Tunisia coming. Some of them, you know, they were able to approach the Minister of Interior, maybe register -- apply for residency, but there were very few cases, again, of Libyans who approached the UNHCR to seek refugee status even though they were pushed, actually, by the UNHCR and that I interviewed, you know, back in 2014, they were pushing them, you know, to come forward and register themselves, but in general a lot of them they just refused that straight away.

So, I don't know. Have I answered your question one or less? Sorry.

MR. BARAKAT: It's very interesting response and it reminds me of what went on in Jordan immediately after the Iraqi displacement, despite the good effort of the United Nations, desperate effort (inaudible) to register people, because the more you have on your books, the greater the amount of assistance that comes your way. They were able to register about 40,000 or 45,000 Iraqis in the whole of Jordan, which was totally unrealistic, of course. But it's a very good point and I'm sure our audience will help us explore the issue in much more detail.

We have about 25 minutes for questions and answers. I will take a couple of rounds of questions. If you could please, as you ask the question, introduce yourself and you can even help me more by addressing the question to a specific speaker. If not, I will do that. Please.

SPEAKER: Thank you so much. (Inaudible),
Libyan citizen, politician, and political analyst. I

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would like to thank you very much for really explaining the Libyan refugee case very, very well. You were quite clear, Houda, thank you so much for your points.

I think we don't really have legal refugees since they do live on their own resources and I think this is the main case here. There is only small percentage, I guess, in Tunisia where they do struggle and try to really break the -- break the barrier for finding, really, the means to support themselves. But ironically I think, and this is the missing point here, which is, all Libyans, they still have their own salary goes to their bank accounts, even those refugees who live outside. So, the current government or the two governments, they didn't really sit and stop or really banned those -- who runs away from Libya because of whatever -- their own doings (inaudible), they didn't really stop their salary from going to their bank accounts and then their family, they channel their money to either Tunisia or to Egypt.

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So, thank you so much for what you explained and I think it was very clear and the (inaudible) was so high. Thank you.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you, Dr. Osama. Please.

SPEAKER: My question to Dr. Ibrahim Sharqieh. So, I mean, the Egyptian --

MR. BARAKAT: Please introduce yourself.

SPEAKER: Dr. (inaudible), Egyptian dissident against totalitarian regime of Egypt. Thank you, (inaudible). Ibrahim, I mean, the Egyptian factor, you mention that 50,000 to 500,000. I know that Libyans who fought against Gaddafi were about 40,000, so who are receiving the assistance or aid about half million. You know that Libya about six million, yeah? There are in Libya about 1.5 million Egyptians or two million. So, you didn't mention totally because most of them are employed. Fifty thousand who came back after this heinous attack of the (inaudible) against Libyan people.

So, there are a half million Libyan living in Alexandria now. Are you considering them from the

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displaced? Do you mean only this is the displaced Libyan nationals or all displaced on the Libyan (inaudible)?

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you so much, Dr. Zakaria. Thank you. Are there any other questions? Salman?

SPEAKER: I'm Salman (inaudible). I have a question first related to Europe. You've already mentioned it. Thursday, I believe European leaders come together for an emergency summit. Maybe they should have had this some time ago, but -- and they've already come up with some sort of ten point plan. How would you assess that, all three of you, in terms of really dealing with this crisis?

And secondly, linked to that, I think it's Fredericka Mulreni, she said that we're dealing with a country that doesn't have the ability to control its borders, and of course, sort of linked to that, all the migrants who are coming across are not just Libyans, through land routes, it's from a number of other places. What can Libya do in that respect?

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MR. BARAKAT: Thank you very much. I'll come back to you now. We've heard two very interesting questions, almost disagreeing with each other. Dr. Osama was saying there are no refugees, people are out there working, and Dr. Zakaria mentioned half a million in Egypt that he would like you to consider as refugee. I mean, aside from the numbers, because if we agree there's half a million in Egypt and a million and a half in Tunisia, then there are many -- not many left in Libya itself.

But let's see in terms of the concept, why are those in Tunisia looked at specifically as people in need who have been displaced by the conflict while those in Egypt are not considered as such? And I don't know who would like to take this. Megan?

MS. BRADLEY: I think this is an important issue and I'm glad to have the chance to address it. From an international law perspective, it's very important to recognize that being a refugee has nothing to do with one's own personal financial resources, it has to do with being in need of

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international protection that cannot be accessed through one's own government, so, because of a war or because of persecution, someone has to seek shelter outside of their own country.

This can be a problem that faces rich people, it can be a problem that faces poor people, we tend to think of refugees as poor people because they are the ones who go and try to access assistance from UN agencies like UNHCR or from NGOs, but it's really important to recognize that these kinds of protection concerns can also be faced by people who have their own resources, but they may still need legal protection.

So, the case of the very high profile extradition that Houda mentioned is a case in point. Having your own financial resources does not necessarily protect you from (inaudible), from being returned back to a country where you may face harm, and so this is part of the *raison d'être* of the refugee system, is to protect people, whatever their level of resources might be, from early return to a

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situation where they may face violence.

In terms of -- could I also try to respond to the question about Europe and the ten-point plan?

MR. BARAKAT: Please.

MS. BRADLEY: I think that any ten-point plan that does not include massively increased resettlement opportunities for the millions of refugees who are displaced across the region is not going to stem the tide of people trying to access Europe by boat at the moment.

You know, it's very difficult to convince western countries to open their borders to large resettlement, but there are historical precedence for this, and I think that if the European states want to take seriously the crisis in the Mediterranean, they need to be thinking about first, much more significant resettlement opportunities for refugees, and second, alternative labor -- legal labor migration opportunities that are accessible for people in need from these zones.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you. Houda and then

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Ibrahim.

MS. MZIOUDET: If I might add something. You know, Dr. Osama talked about that Libyan's presence in Tunisia, they still receive salaries from the government. I do have a little reservation about that because some of them that I met, but also the ones who probably spoke to the media or probably that we hear about, they said that they had their salaries being withheld because they were suspected of probably having -- being part of the old regime or probably committed, you know, a serious crime, in particular that was the main issue, but I'm not saying that all, but to some of them they did say that they had their salaries withheld and that pushed some of them, unfortunately, to destitution and living in utter poverty because they cannot get their salaries.

Now, regarding the description of Libyans, if they are refugees or if they are exiles in Tunisia, if we have probably to apply what the UN, you know, describes people who left their countries and are unable to return, we can talk about Libyans being de

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facto refugees in Tunisia because of the permanence now of their stay in Tunisia, but also by the fact that some of them, they decided to stay in Tunisia given the current circumstances even though they were thinking that they would be coming back, you know, within one or two years. Now things have gotten worse in Libya with the civil war there.

So they had their children being schooled in Tunisia, the Libyan embassy in Tunisia, they did a good move by setting up four schools in the biggest cities in Tunisia, Sfax, Tunis, Hammamet and Gabes, where mostly they live, and so -- and the Tunisian Ministry of Education is trying to reintegrate Libyan children in the Tunisian system, and that, you know, for Tunisia, is something -- it shows that there is this will to make this integration succeed for Libyans. And economically it will bring something for Tunisia because unfortunately the Libyan crisis has become beneficial for Tunisian economy because it's brought a lot of money, you know, but at the same time it is a big test for Tunisia to see how it can deal

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with this new situation because it has never had to deal with it before.

So, that's one thing I wanted just to point out.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you very much. Ibrahim?

MR. SHARQIEH: Thank you. And actually I'm not surprised by this kind of discussion on whether do we really have refugees or not, because actually this is the problem, actually, and it isn't presented in the strongest form of -- and making it or adding complexity to the issue, whether we really have refugees or not, actually.

Now, the solution or the current arrangement, actually, which is in my view it's wrong, is that there is unwritten and convenient arrangement for all parties involved in the current status, meaning, that the refugees -- I call them refugees and that's how I see them, I call them refugees -- they're very scared and concerned about being returned home, especially after the extradition of Baghdadi Ali Mahmudi and whether -- and there is no state in Libya.

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They hear about torture in prisons and all of that.

So, they decided voluntarily is not to register in any form or in any way so they won't be identified, because I spoke with some of them, which is their major concern, they're scared of being sent home.

Now, unfortunately, this status -- and here I'm very critical of the UN on this arrangement -- it's a convenient set up for UNHCR, right, is that because they're not registered as refugees, so we don't have to worry about them, right, and I had the conversation with UNHCR representatives in Tunisia about this issue and they just denied or reject strongly to treat them or deal with them as refugees, and the answer was, always, is that unless they come to us and register as refugees, we cannot help them. And I said, well, you know, in essence, they are refugees, they said, okay, well, we can't do anything for them because they're not registered as refugees and unless they come -- but you know there is a political issue here, but again, that is working just

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fine for them because the UNHCR doesn't have to support them, doesn't have to worry about them.

Now, for the state as well, the Tunisian state, also because treating them as refugees -- refugees comes with a set of rights and responsibilities, so it's working just fine for the state is not to treat them as refugees, which is, unfortunately, the policy that was deliberately done in other countries, like, for example, in Lebanon, treating Palestinian refugees crossing from Syria until now as tourists. Right? So, that is the status of Palestinian refugees and after 12 months they become illegal tourists in Lebanon.

So, this is the best arrangement working for the state because -- which is a question that you mentioned, Sultan, before, is that there is a trend in the region of treating the refugees as guests or as -- you know, they're just so scared of the term refugees because refugees, again, there is a protection component, there is a rights component, there is a number of solutions, which they refuse.

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And in my view, this is wrong because this is going to cause long-term problems for the Libyans and for the Tunisian state, for the state, because I'll share with you this story very quick about what this means for a half million refugees living in Tunisia that they are not recognized as refugees and compromising their rights on education and health and all of that.

One of the Libyans that I spoke with, she told me this -- this is a short story -- she said, when I was a child, her father was in the army and Gaddafi imprisoned her father for two, three years in prison with no reason, with no -- you know how Gaddafi used to do business, so she said, even during these three years, his salary continued, we remained in our home -- actually, we didn't -- he just put him in a prison for no obvious reason, but all our rights were kept and we stayed at home and no other suffering.

She said, since I was a child, I devoted myself to fight this regime of what he did to my father, and she said that the regime created

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opposition by the fact that I, as a child, experienced not seeing my father for three years.

Now, here is -- having this story in mind, and she became this person active in the opposition later on against Gaddafi regime. Now, you have half million people that are or -- or higher, we don't know the exact number -- that are raised away from their home and denied or not able to go back home and living under different harsh circumstances, you are raising a generation, actually, on some sort of anger and outrage against their home country, of, you know, the way that they're deported and they're not able to return. This is long-term problem that you're facing for the Libyan society itself, because, I mean, studies of identity, people will live under circumstances for a long period of time, believe it or not, they develop a different sort of identity.

And this becomes alarming, and I'm talking about here for that society -- for the Libyan society of having large number of people living under different set of conditions and how they're going to

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treat their home society and also for the Tunisian society, how they are going to survive the coping mechanism to survive and what this means for security and all of that.

So, this is a bad arrangement what is happening now, it should be recognized, it should be registered, they should receive their rights whether it's from the UNHCR, whether it's from the Libyan state or two states, or from the Tunisian government, because this convenient arrangement for everyone is exploiting, in my view, and I might be wrong, exploiting the fears of the Libyans living in Tunisia and just -- the numbers are very, very hard to have exact numbers because of this issue that they refuse to register and we don't know where they are.

There are estimates of 500,000 also in Egypt. Egypt and Tunisia have been the largest two countries where they receive Libyan refugees.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you very much. I couldn't really interrupt you being the deputy director here, but I'll come back and press you on the

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issue of giving the status, because if for a minute I take the side of the governments and advocate on their behalf, we have a set of governments that are already poor, have very limited carrying capacity in terms of natural resources, services, et cetera, are mostly constructed around extremely delicate social balance in the case of Lebanon -- Muslim, Christian, Shia, Sunni -- in the case of Jordan -- Palestinian, Jordanian, northern, southerners, et cetera -- and I'm sure the same maybe applies to Tunis, and they're, again and again, asked to step up their act and to register as refugees knowing that the refugee law, which many of those countries do not even sign it and they don't recognize it, require you to provide protection, assistance, and preferably durable solutions, which often, in our region, translates as settlement.

There hasn't been any temporary displacement in the Middle East so far. People -- and this is why I was very interested in your observation that people come to Tunisia but they go back and they come back

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again.

In the Middle East, people cross boundaries and then they settle. So, I think all of that combined has made governments very, very anxious about taking that political decision and they find it convenient, as you suggested, to give a tourist visa because you can check on these people. If they want to extend their stay, they have to come back to the police office or immigration office for an extension.

Now, I don't want us to discuss that because I'm not acting on behalf of governments. I would like to ask you, what is the Libyan responsibility in this? I mean, I was surprised today to hear that every Libyan national continues to receive a paycheck despite the collapse of the government. So, someone is still there signing those checks and the accounts are operating. So, what about the Libyan responsibility to those people?

And Libya is not necessarily a poor country, and potentially a very rich country, and used to spread its benefit all over Africa. Who is asking

Libya to live up to its responsibility in relation to its own citizens, both inside the country and outside the country?

MS. MZIOUDET: I think it's very complex, unfortunately, now because since last summer fighting resumed with Operation Dignity, the country has -- the turmoil right now -- I mean, the stalemate that Libya is in makes things even more complex. We have -- we can say we have almost two de facto governments in Libya right now and Tunisian authorities, in particular, they don't know who to address regarding the Libyans in exile issue.

The Libyan embassy in Tunisia, we don't know who is running that embassy --

MR. BARAKAT: But who signs those checks?

MS. MZIOUDET: But that's the problem because we don't know --

MR. BARAKAT: Well, they just left it going --

MS. MZIOUDET: I mean, I would believe that, you know, that things have been left as they are

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because right now there is another serious issue with the second wave of displaced Libyans, you know, who came to Tunisia and things are being made even worse than before.

So, as long as there is no security in Libya, I mean, securitizing Libya at the moment is a priority, then the question of Libyans in Tunisia will be solved, but for the time being, it's not the case.

I do have a very cautious, maybe optimistic approach, at least of what's going on right now with the UNSMIL talks by Bernardino Leon in Morocco that there is some kind of advanced progress in the dialogue between the Tobruk parliament and the Tripoli government by GNC. I hope they will put the issue of Libyans in Tunisia into their agenda as a priority as well, but for them, security is a big issues. That makes things even more complicated to solve right now, that's why there's this kind of hands-off policy from the Libyan parties -- when I talk about parties I'm talking just -- we don't know who they are, whether they're government of Tripoli or the government of

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Tobruk.

So, it's very complex. We don't know who Tunisian government is dealing with and I cannot really project into the future and see how things will go in the country in the next, maybe, few years if the security situation remains so dire.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you so much. We started five minutes behind schedule so we have five minutes more and I can take another round of questions.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible), political analyst and a social worker. Looking at the complicated complexities as discussed over here, how do you see the role of those stakeholders, the parties who would very much advocate for freedom and Libyan freedom from Gaddafi. How do you see their role now in present situation?

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you. We'll take another question. Please. Dr. Osama will have more chance during the break during the reception.

SPEAKER: Thank you for the discussion. I think I enjoyed the discussion here. First of all,

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it's so strange that I'm the Libyan ambassador, I've been ignored by the Center to invite us to this lecture, first of all. Secondly, the situation in Libya, it's very complicated. The matter of refugee is tied with the stability and Libya, since the revolution, actually didn't have any stability, it was for just short period of time, but after that, it is unstable situation actually in Libya.

And there is a conflict almost in every city in Libya. The matter of refugee, it's not just the refugee outside Libya, there is a refugee inside Libya right now. I'm from Benghazi. My family now is refugee inside Libya, I mean, they destroy all buildings and especially in a city like Benghazi and some other cities too.

The situation actually very tied with the stability and since there is no stability and there is no court, there is no forces -- central forces to control everything, even the border that we have also tremendous immigration, legal immigration going through Libya because it has a long border with five

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countries and everybody comes to Libya because there is no control on the border.

The situation, it has to be worked with the stability in Libya to solve the problem of the refugee.

Also, there is a some Libyan people outside Libya, in Tunisia or in Egypt, they are working against the government, either one government or two governments because they are supporter of Gaddafi for 42 years of dictatorship, and after that, to move to a democratic system, it is very hard.

Democracy is a culture, it is not just like a suit, you wear it and it is already, this is the problem. It's very complicated situation in Libya and unless there is stable situation, in Libya, and one government controlling everything, then the problems will continue. Thank you so much.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you so much. And we're very honored you were able to make it to this evening and I look forward to speaking to you more during the reception.

The issue of this division between the two governments, I mean, I don't know how the embassy works, (inaudible), maybe you can explain that to us later, but clearly the state institutions work at some level and don't at another, and how do you see that playing within the issue of displacement and in relation to the questions that were asked as well? Megan?

MS. BRADLEY: Well, it's a very difficult question. To go back to the point that Ibrahim raised in his opening comments, again, from a legal perspective, which is obviously sometimes completely divorced from practice, the actors -- the armed actors that control a particular territory have responsibility for people who are displaced within that territory.

So, in a very complicated political situation, as the Ambassador, I think, very eloquently emphasized like what's going on in Libya right now, one thing that is at least clear is that from a normative perspective, both actors have

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responsibilities -- the militias have responsibilities towards people who are in the areas under their control, so to the extent that the conflict is, amongst other things, also about the pursuit of legitimacy, those actors should be taking seriously the situation of people who are displaced in the areas where they hold control.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you so much. Ibrahim?

MR. SHARQIEH: Just -- thank you, your Excellency, and I agree with you completely, actually. Unless there is a political solution, unfortunately, I don't see that there is a solution for the displacement problem, because as we discussed at (inaudible) with the Libyans in Tunisia, actually much of the fear and the (inaudible) is driven by the lack of security and the lack of a political solution in Libya and many of them told me, actually, if we know that there is a rule of law and there is a court system and that we are going to be trying, in Libya, within the justice system, we have no problem (inaudible).

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But I cannot guaranty or I cannot even predict what is going to happen to me if in the case of, you know, the situation in Libya and with this political problem. So, yes, there has to be a political solution first and foremost in order for this to be resolved, and in the current civil war even, I mean, the entire process of a transition has been put on hold.

Before the current civil war started, I met with state institutions in Libya and I saw how they were working on developing truth and reconciliation commission and transitional justice and different institutional reforms and on the reforming the judicial system, but that all has stopped because, I mean, we have two governments and state institutions are split and then there is (inaudible), so first and foremost, your Excellency, yes, there has to be a starting point, a political solution.

But in the absence of this, what do we do? If we're talking, again, about, for example, the civil war in Lebanon, it lasted 15 years, but I pray not for

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this to be the case in Libya, but if this continues beyond -- now, we're almost five years. If this continues -- and, again, my concern is about the long-term, developing a generation, a generation that develops its own identity different from those Libyans that they live in Benghazi and in Msallata and in Tripoli and how this is going to cause a structural split within the Libyan society, a structural division within the Libyan society. That is going to set the stage for long-term conflict and divisions within Libya and at the same time, undermine security in the neighboring countries.

That's where the problem is.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you very much.

MR. SHARQIEH: And what has to be done about it now.

MS. MZIOUDET: Just very quick. Reality on the ground right now is that there is no viable actor to talk to in Libya. Tunisia, for example, is finding itself in a very critical position, doesn't know who to address when it comes to the Libyans in Tunisia.

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Is it going to address the Tobruk parliament or the Tripoli government? Even the fact that you need a foreign policy has tried to find a balance, you know, between not recognizing, actually, you know, whether Tripoli government, but for its own interest it had to deal with both sides to secure, first of all, the Tunisians in Libya -- there are 50,000 Tunisians in Libya, their fate may be very complex, they may be in danger because of the current situation.

So, that explains, you know, why this -- the absence of stakeholders in Libya, whether from militias or politicians or from both governments, makes things even more complex and the issue very difficult to solve, and here I reiterate the call more or less of the international community of -- especially the European Union, as Megan has said, that they need to take the issue of illegal immigration also, but the Libyan displaced in neighboring countries, whether Tunisia or Egypt, very seriously because it is impacting the whole region and I hope, you know, it will not cause anymore tragedies because

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the whole political vacuum right now in Libya is giving rise to those -- to the rising number of a lot of sub-Saharan African immigrants to go to Europe because of the absence of any solution to the current crisis. Thank you.

MR. BARAKAT: Thank you very much. Thank you, the three of you. It seems to me with the current trend of protracted conflicts in our region, the issue of displacement is not going to go anytime soon and maybe it is time that we push for more regional solutions to the issue.

I think we have relied far too long on international solutions, legal frameworks, et cetera, which are all very helpful, have been very good, but experience after experience have proven that they're not that resilient or reliable, really.

It's time maybe to think in terms of regional arrangements. You see this with the Maghreb countries coming together, providing joint carrying capacity that could cope with displacement in Libya, the Gulf countries joining with Jordan maybe to try

and think of solutions that -- where the Syrians are not becoming such a critical issue within Jordan, and that does require breaking barriers within the region.

I hope this event has gone a small way towards doing that and that both our audience and our viewers can see the importance of this issue and the importance of debating these kind of questions.

At the Brookings Doha Center, we're hoping over the coming year or so to develop a research agenda targeting the issue of humanitarian issues in general and hopefully the displacement issue in particular because of its strategic importance.

With that, I would like to bring this to a conclusion and please join me in thanking our three speakers, Megan, Ibrahim, and Houda. Thank you so much.

(Applause)

Please do join us for a drink next door and we can continue with our discussion for another half an hour or so. Thank you very much.

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