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Managing Syrian displacement: The perspective from the front-line states

Presentation prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on “Integrated Approaches to International Migrations: The Perspective of Public Institutions and Public Administration.”

United Nations Headquarters – November 1, 2017

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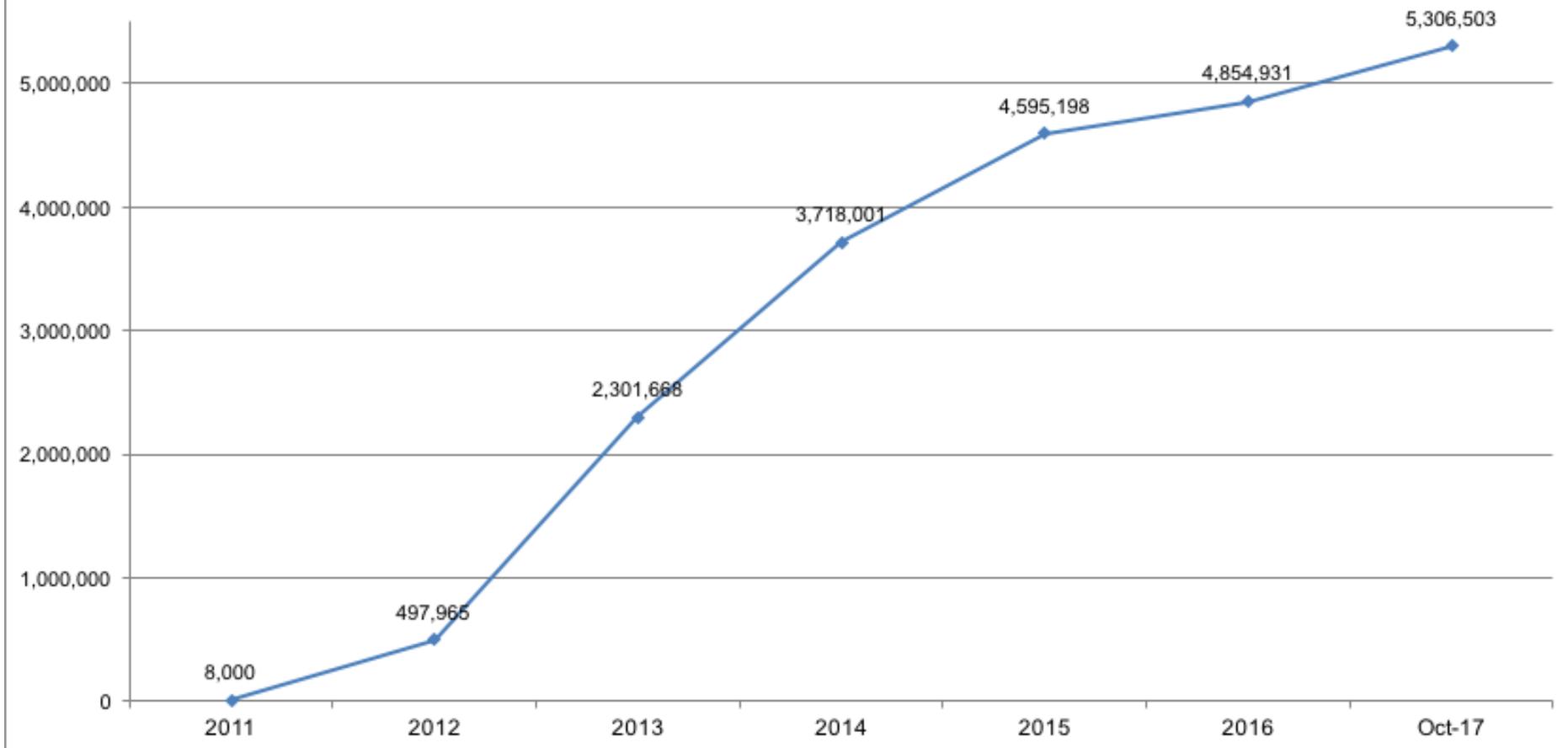
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Sustainable Development Goals and Refugees

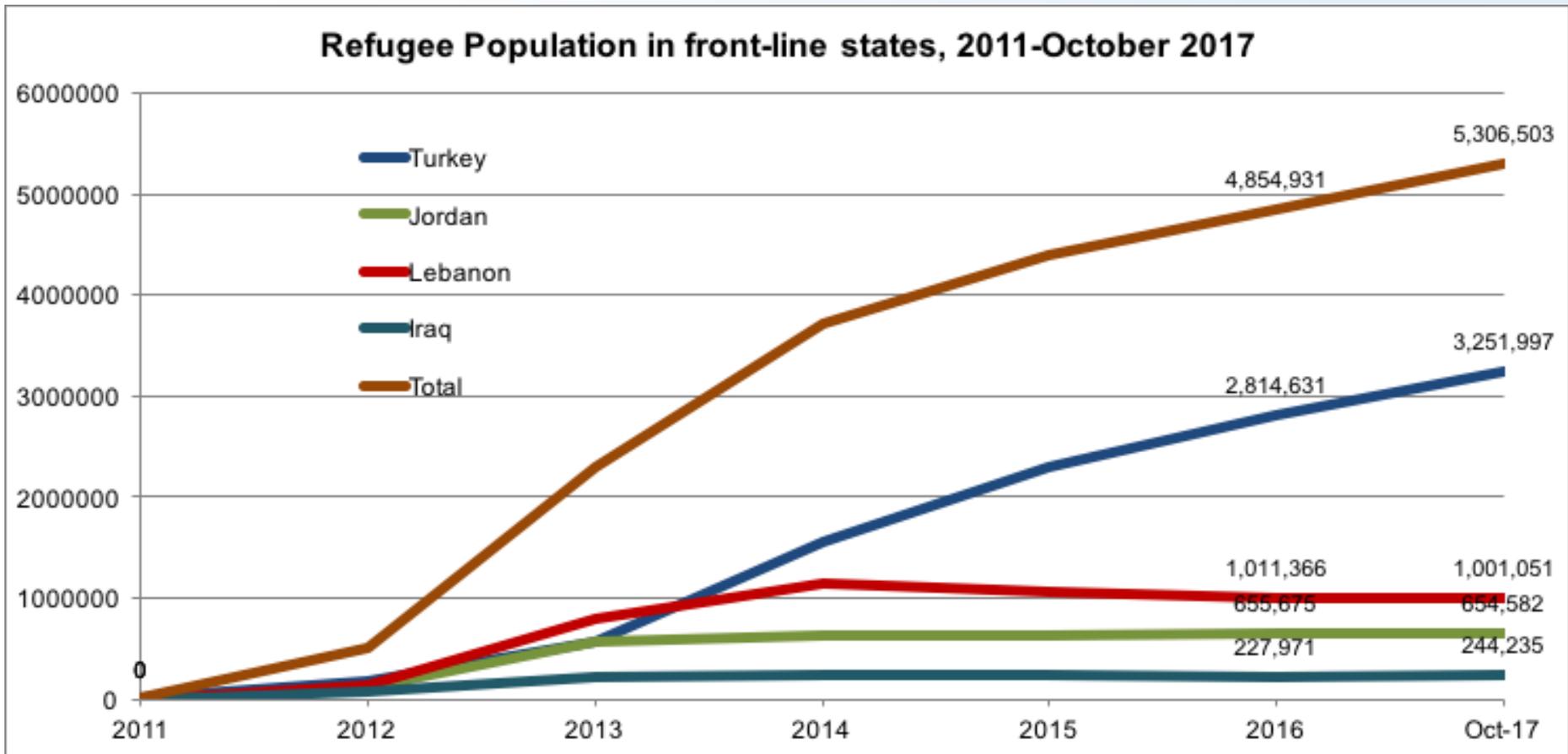
- The linkage recognized by [The New York Declaration](#) adopted in September 2016 by the UN Summit on Migrants and Refugees as well as the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) and the [A Global Compact on Refugees on responsibility-sharing of refugees](#) that the UNSG is tasked to prepare to ensure *inter alia* “build refugee self-reliance”.
- A similar approach is reflected in the adoption by the Leaders’ Summit following the New York Declaration where [47 states committed to](#) “providing refugees with enhanced access to education, lawful employment, and to existing social services in the countries in which they live.”

World and Syrian displacement characterized by urban settings

- Over 60 per cent of the world's 19.5 million refugees and 80 per cent of 34 million IDPs live in [urban environments](#).
- In the case of front line states for Syrian refugees who are in urban or urban like settings [is over 90 percent](#).
- According to UNHCR's [Global Trends](#) overwhelming majority of refugees live in developing countries (84 %)
- This increases the urgency of an integrated approach to the protection of refugees

Number of Syrian Refugees, 2011-October 2017

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Syria Regional Refugee Response Plan, updated on October 19, 2017



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Syrian Refugee Response, updated on October 19, 2017.

Economic impact on Syria

- 2014, Syria's GDP was half of what it was in 2011; 50% of children out of school in 2014-2015, 57% of hospitals damaged/destroyed (2013), attacks on health facilities, 35% of water treatment plants damaged.
- As of October 2016, 60% of the labor force is unemployed. This roughly equals 3.5 million people, with 3 million of them having lost their jobs as a result of the conflict.
- Overall poverty rate is estimated to be at 83% in 2014, with 2/3 of the Syrian population living in extreme poverty. Poverty rate increased by 85% in 2015 alone. Life expectancy has dropped from 70 in 2010 to 55.4 in 2015. Mortality rate increased from 4.4 per thousand in 2010 to 10.9 per thousand in 2015.

“Even if the conflict were to end tomorrow, it would take 30 years for Syria to recover the standard of living it had before the war.”

-United Nations

Macro-economic impacts on front line states

- Local employment ↓ ↑
- Fluctuating prices (inflation, rental, basic food items)
- Public services (e.g.: health, education)
- Public expenditures ↑
- Economy adversely affected (growth rates, tourism, trade)

Syrian displacement generates major development challenges across SDGs.

Two critical public policy areas are affected:

1. Employment

2. Education

The two are closely interrelated to adopting an integrated approach and building “refugee self reliance” especially as the situation in front-line states is becoming protracted. (SB-2017 survey % 70 Turks believe refugee will stay ([p. 71](#)))

Question: how can public administration and public institutions promote an integrated approach to responding to the needs of refugees?

- National level public institutions
- Local government institutions
- Stakeholders: civil society including NGOs, INGOs, business etc..
- International agencies

Employment and access to livelihood

- Informal employment (Estimated [half a million](#) and one million ([SB 2017, p. 103](#)) in Turkey)([Deputy PM](#) claims factories would stop without them)
- Child labor
- Exploitation
- Local public resentment resulting from competition ([reports](#) suggest mixed impact on local employment) (in Turkey fear by locals that Syrians take away jobs % 51,1 and that they do harm to the economy % 72.2% [SB 2017, p. 62](#))

Some progress in opening up labor markets in Jordan and Turkey but challenges persist

- Legislation (Turkey) or policies (Jordan) adopted opening national labor markets to refugee labor
- Few permits issued so far (45K Jordan, 14K Turkey (another source puts it at 8K (SB 2017, p. 102))
- Cumbersome and expensive procedures
- Vocational training in Turkey expanding
- Self-Employment with Syrian capital in Turkey growing but obstacles remain (8.8 % self-employed or employer, SB 2017, p. 104)

Possible “best practices” to overcome challenges

- To overcome local public opinion resistant
- critical to develop approaches/projects (e.g. Jordanian-EU compact) benefiting local communities critical
- Emphasis on “whole-of-society approach” (NY Declaration) critical for developing “program of action” for Global Refugee Compact.
- [Made by Refugees Special Zones](#) companies employing both refugees and locals enjoying duty free access to EU, U.S. and G20 countries
- Business/local government [partnerships assisting refugees](#) to better prepare for formal employment

Education of Syrian children in Turkey

- Dual system of TECs vs Public Schools finally being merged with emphasis on teaching Turkish (59 % of 833,000 in schooling [p. 23](#))
- **According to an education official:** “The TEC model was generated during that period for a population of 250,000 and thinking that this population would return to their country. Today, 3 million Syrians are living in our country and we do not foresee that many of them would return to Syria. Therefore, we need to have long term planning in [sustainable] education.” [\(pp. 44-45\)](#)
- TECs to be merged into public schools in three years
- Eventual integration of growing population of Syrian children entails major physical (more than 26600 additional classrooms) and trained teachers (including currently > 13000 Syrian teachers)

Education-related challenges

- Ambiguity over “curriculum” (Turks or Syrians)
- Cultural issues schooling for girls and resistance to “co-ed”
- Resistance from locals over “mixed” schools (30 % in Turkey against enrollments to schools of refugee children, [SB 2017, pp. 86-7](#))
- Job insecurity among Syrian teachers over closing of TECs
- Fears among Turkish teachers on professional advancement and employment
- Improving enrollment rates especially at higher levels (ages 6-9 years old average 90%, 14-17 years old drops to below 20 %, [p. 23](#))
- Integrating women into vocational and adult education

Challenges transitioning from humanitarian assistance towards ensuring SDGs - I

- Vertical & Horizontal integration some progress but a lot more needed
- Cities & Local governments central to “integration” but legal, political, budgetary obstacles
- Rich local and Syrian civil society awaiting better coordination with national, international agencies & INGOs
- INGOs challenged in dealing with “strong state” but persistent complaints over registration
- Public complaints about inadequate international support but quiet cooperation reported from the field

Challenges transitioning from humanitarian assistance towards ensuring SDGs - II

- Inadequate coordination for Vertical & Horizontal integration frequently raised and reported
- Transparency and accountability [problems](#) in procurement and delivery risk undermining development efforts
- Access to data and sharing of data (e.g. critical for needs assessment or statistics for work permits) among national agencies and with the larger body of stakeholders frequently [raised](#)

Recommendations

- Greater regional cooperation among public institutions of front line states
- Constructive narrative and dialogue between national governments and international community to serve better the cause of refugee protection and integration
- Constructive narrative framing refugees “[beyond a burden](#)” to seeing them as a “gain”
- Don’t take public opinion for granted engage public in a dialogue in line with “whole-of-society” approach
- Public objective and fair “certification” process for NGOs & INGOs
- Recognize the [centrality of cities](#) to “integration” of refugees & encourage cooperation between frontline cities and refugee hosting Western cities

Thank you!

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Book: *The Consequences of Chaos: Syria's Humanitarian Crisis and the Failure to Protect* by Elizabeth Ferris and Kemal Kirişci,

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/books/2016/the-consequences-of-chaos>

Forthcoming mid-November: *Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance* <https://www.brookings.edu/book/turkey-and-the-west/>

SB 2017:

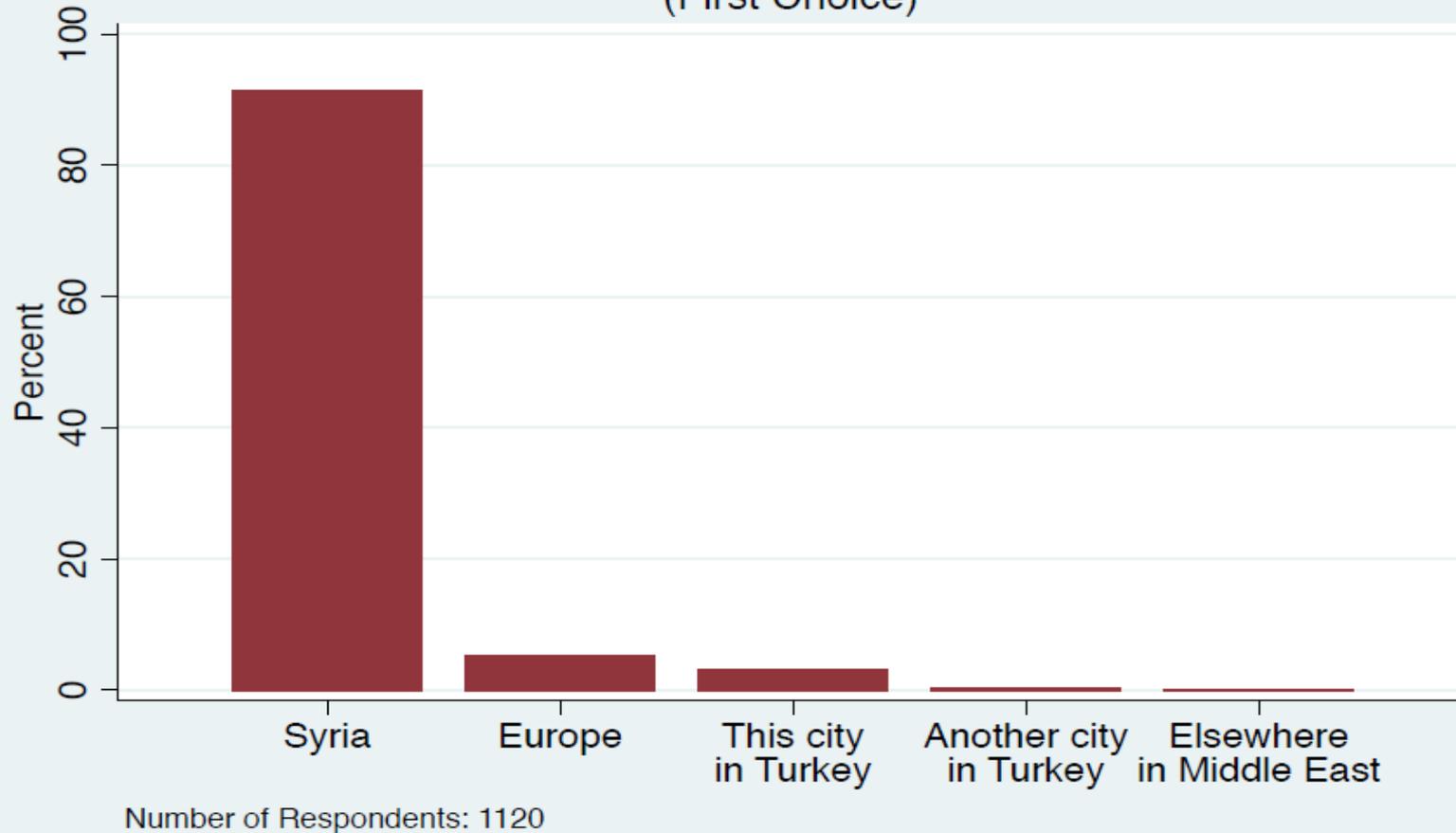
Syrians Barometer 2017, M. Murat Erdogan,
Director, Hacettepe University Migration and
Politics Research Center, forthcoming

Public opinion based on 2089 individual Turkish
surveys and 1235 Syrian household surveys
involving 9680 individuals between April and
July 2017.

Kristin Fabbe, Chad Hazlette, Tolga Sinmazdemir, “What Do Syrians Want Their Future to Be?,” *Foreign Affairs*, May 1, 2017

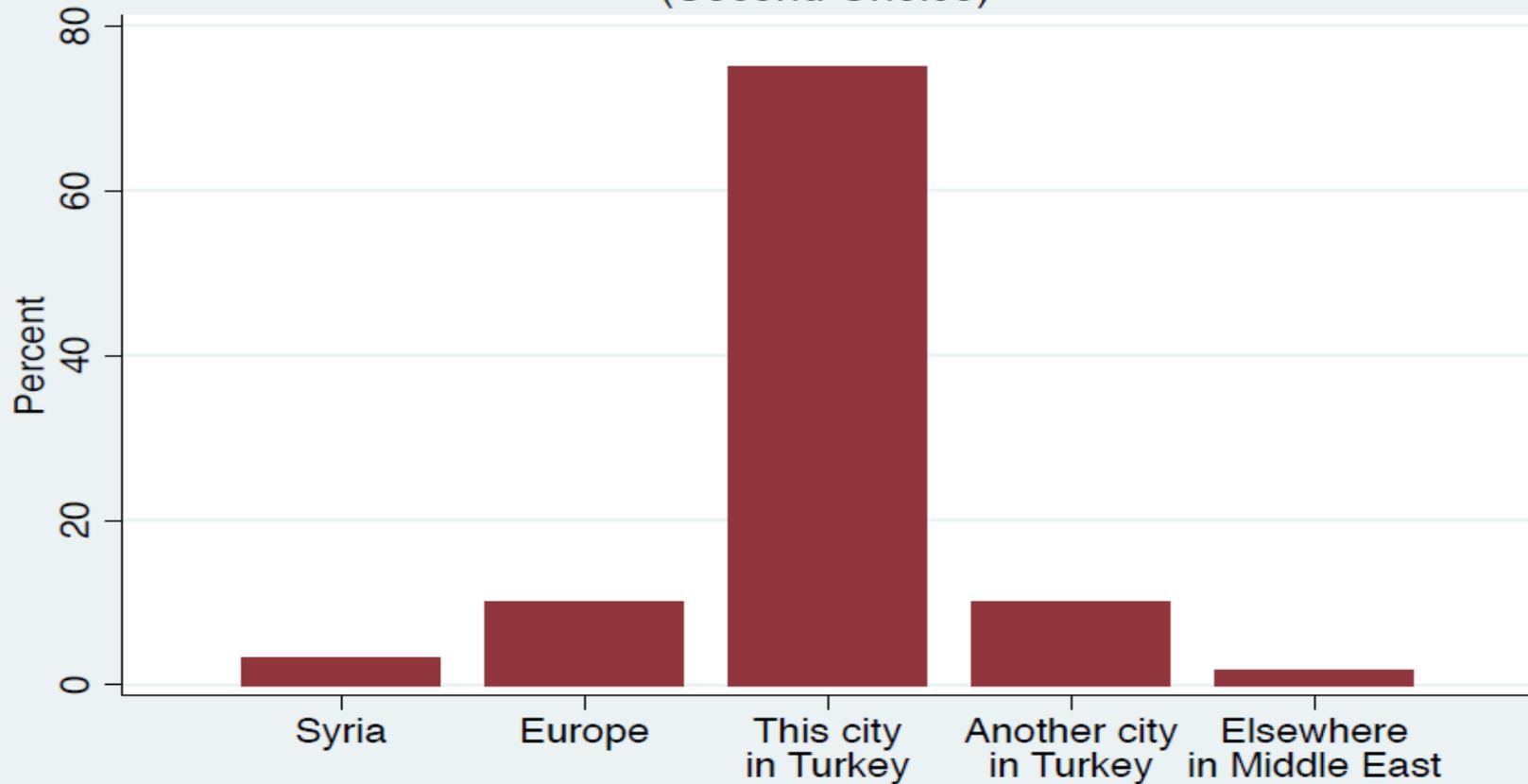
Kristin Fabbe, Chad Hazlett, Tolga Sinmazdemir, “Civil Reactions to Violence: Settlements, Side-Taking, and Security Concerns Among Syrian Refugees in Turkey,” presented at the Brookings Institution on May 22, 2017.

Ideally, where will you be living in 5 years? (First Choice)



Source: Kristin Fabbe, Chad Hazlett, Tolga Sinmazdemir, "Civil Reactions to Violence: Settlements, Side-Taking, and Security Concerns Among Syrian Refugees in Turkey," presented at the Brookings Institution on May 22, 2017.

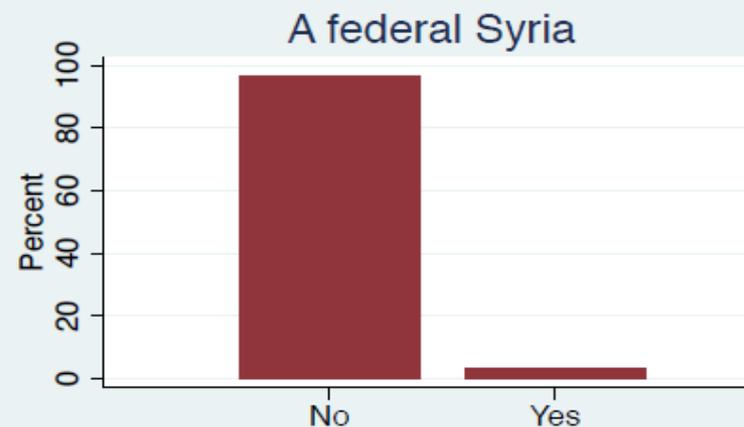
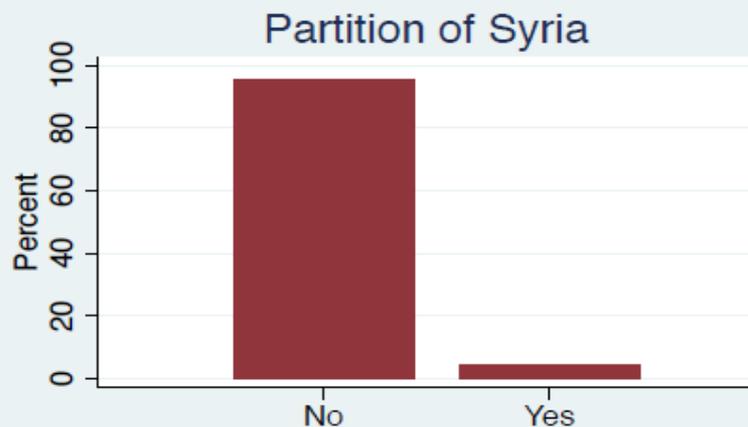
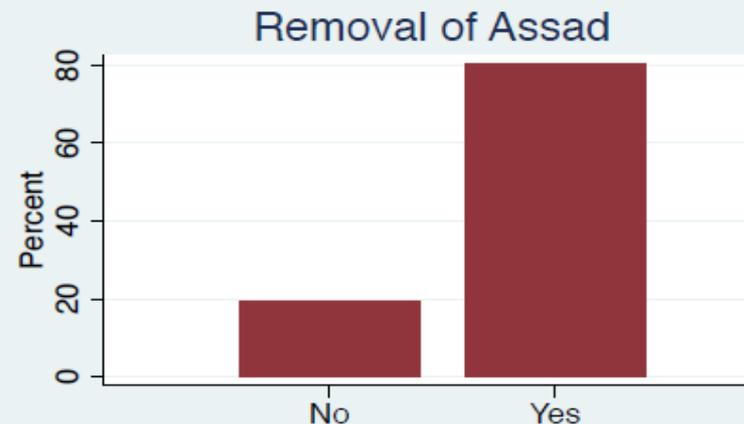
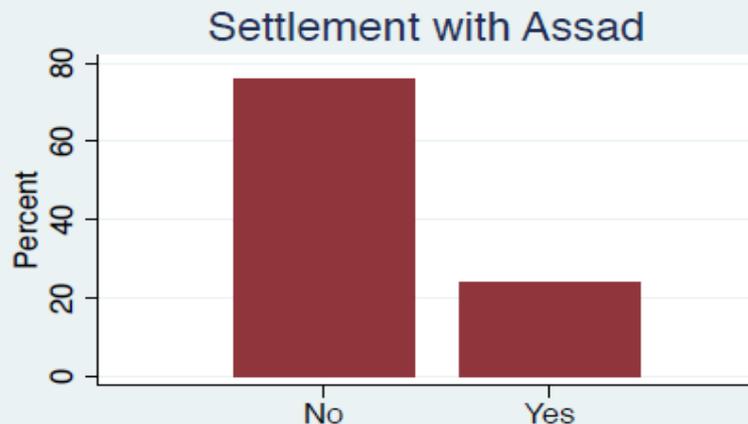
Ideally, where will you be living in 5 years? (Second Choice)



Number of Respondents: 1120

Source: Kristin Fabbe, Chad Hazlett, Tolga Sirmazdemir, "Civil Reactions to Violence: Settlements, Side-Taking, and Security Concerns Among Syrian Refugees in Turkey," presented at the Brookings Institution on May 22, 2017.

Which resolution is ideal to end the conflict?



Source: Kristin Fabbe, Chad Hazlett, Tolga Sınmazdemir, "Civil Reactions to Violence: Settlements, Side-Taking, and Security Concerns Among Syrian Refugees in Turkey," presented at the Brookings Institution on May 22, 2017.