

MIGRATION CRISIS

RESOLUTION Year: 2015

WHEREAS, millions of people have been displaced in the Middle East and North Africa by violence, war, persecution and political turmoil, the fallout of which has had a disproportionate impact in Europe, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; and

WHEREAS, this is a crisis of massive proportions that requires swift and decisive action; and

WHEREAS, communities and countries that have stepped up and agreed to host refugees have seen a rise in suspicion, xenophobia and religious intolerance, while other countries have closed their borders to refugees entirely; and

WHEREAS, the White House has pledged to lift the number of worldwide refugees that the United States accepts to 100,000; former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has called for the admission of 65,000 Syrians; 18 mayors from major cities—many with large AFT locals, including Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City and Philadelphia—have pledged to open their communities to greater refugee resettlement; and joint statements from 72 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 14 U.S. Senators have added to the growing wave of public support; and

WHEREAS, the United States and the countries in the Gulf, which are among the world's richest countries and are deeply engaged in conflicts in the Middle East, must accept a fair share of refugees; and

WHEREAS, the AFT believes that the United States is a nation whose past and future are based on building bridges, not walls, as we have consistently voiced our support for the rights of migrants and their families through various AFT policy resolutions, including “**International Humanitarian Crisis at the U.S. Border**” (2014) and “**Support a Fair and Just Immigration Policy**” (2008), and have supported Education International in passing “The Right to Education for Displaced People, Refugee and Stateless Children” (2015) and “Migration, Professional Diversity and Racism” (2015):

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers expresses its solidarity with first responders in the transit and resettlement countries, including staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and all workers whose unions are affiliates of Education International, Public Services International, the AFL-CIO and the International Trade Union Confederation; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT will continue to work with all parties to promote a global migration policy that emphasizes human and labor rights and inclusive development that addresses important issues such as quality of life and having opportunities to use the knowledge and skills they bring with them from their home countries; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT will be diligent in pressing the U.S. Congress and the Obama administration to take bold leadership action, and that we will inform and engage AFT membership as events move forward:

- the AFT will lobby the U.S. government to join with our German and other European allies and declare our intentions to rapidly resettle hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, as well as greatly increase foreign assistance to support international refugee agencies and frontline countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; and
- the AFT will communicate to the U.S. interagency delegation to the U.N. Global Forum on Migration and Development about the urgent need to work with allies on developing a common global strategy of fair-share resettlement across countries including the United States; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT will provide guidance and support (such as teaching materials) to our affiliates in host communities in the United States as they support families and children seeking to make a home in our country, which includes attending school and participating fully and with dignity in our economy; and

RESOLVED, newly developed Sustainable Development Goals for promoting sustainable human, social and economic development.