

PROJECT PROPOSAL



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HELPING REFUGEES
ARRIVE AT THEIR DESTINATION SAFELY



*„PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN
PROTECTION TO THE MOST
VULNERABLE REFUGEES.“*

REFUGEES ON PLANES CONTRIBUTES TO SOLVE THE CURRENT REFUGEE CRISIS.

SUMMARY

In 2016, up to two million refugees are expected to seek asylum in Europe. Many of the refugees entering Europe from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Eritrea and Afghanistan are assisted by illegal organizations and smuggler networks who help facilitate the travel from outside the Schengen zone to countries of the European Union and the Schengen space. The current situation is unsustainable, increases the risk of terrorism and supports inhumane treatment of people as well.

Refugees on Planes (or ROP) will provide efficient and immediate humanitarian protection to the most vulnerable refugees, and will also include services for their temporary or longterm integration. The project plans to fly up to 200,000 mainly Syrian refugees from the Middle East and Turkey to Germany and other European countries within a oneyear time frame. These actions will contribute to reduce drastically illegal migration and will significantly increase security in the receiving European Union and disrupt the criminal businesses of smugglers.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The aim of this civil society initiative is to replace over time illegal migration with a controlled, structured and safe movement of refugees and wouldbe asylum seekers to Europe. We offer safe passage to Germany and other countries, a streamlined legal and screening process before refugees arrive and a comprehensive integration process upon arrival.

Once an agreement is reached with EU governments for our planned largescale and direct airlift of refugees, we hope to send a clear message to refugee communities around the world, of a viable alternative to illegal migration and the use of criminal people smuggler networks, in order to reach Europe. In this way, we hope to contribute to a reduction in the ongoing humanitarian crisis of stranded refugees, reduce the uncontrolled flows, and ultimately, prevent more tragedies at sea.

Our aim is to provide the highest security standards as well as a safe passage for refugees from host countries to the receiving states.

The initial pilot phase will commence in March 2016, with 25,000 Syrian refugees airlifted directly from Jordan to Germany as part of an approved scheme of priority humanitarian cases. Once the Jordan operation is successfully underway, ROP plans to roll out the project to Turkey with similar refugee target figures. Over time, we plan to expand the program to other locations, such as Lebanon and North Iraq.

This project is in line with recent discussions and proposals put forward by the Dutch EU Presidency and the European Stabilisation Initiative, as well as, by international experts and think tanks advocating for an expedient solution to the refugee crisis in Europe.



OPERATIONS

ROP is a privately sponsored joint initiative of a consortium of Berlin, international and Jordan based NGOs and civil society in Europe at large. To kickstart the operation in Jordan and Germany, ROP aims to raise EUR 250,000 to initially fund up to three charter flights, setup the local structure in Amman and Berlin, recruit staff, and begin the local screening process.

ROP plans to raise most of its funds from a combination of public contributions from receiving countries, as well as from airfare contributions by the refugees, who will in turn be able to access humanitarian loan structures. Voluntary contributions will also be sought from airline related service providers. A highprofile crowdfunding campaign will kickoff the ROP initiative in style! In Jordan, ROP will work with a local team, aid organizations and partners, such as the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), the Mulham Voluntary Team and the German Embassy in Amman. The identification and screening process for candidates will be based on the existing security setup and formats already in use by other governments; in this manner allowing for a controlled transfer of refugees, based on best practice.

As regards to Germany, all activities will be planned with the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) in Nuremberg, and locally with the Berlin Senate, so that refugees automatically enter the regular asylum process once they arrive in the country.

In association with German private business sponsors, and German NGOs specialized in refugee-related work, ROP will coordinate program and packages in support of the arriving refugees. Our partners will help to facilitate a comprehensive resettlement program and an integration package to assist refugees with their social, cultural and economic integration into Europe.

Once the process is underway, *Refugees on Planes* plans to expand the program beyond Germany, in particular, to those who have accepted the official EU quota system. Other civil society networks in Europe have declared their readiness to approach their respective governments to allow them to receive groups airlifted through this project and to contribute to the Dutch EU Presidency's plea for an orderly transfer of refugees.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

In 2016, up to two million refugees are expected to seek asylum in Europe. It is clear that the situation for refugees living in wartorn countries in the Middle East, or in neighboring host countries, will only get worse, increasing the pressure to escape. The Geneva talks will, if at all, provide only limited progress for peace in Syria and the year will remain extremely difficult for millions of affected Syrians.

Almost all EU governments are currently engaged in political negotiations with countries holding large refugee populations, such as, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Europe continues to struggle over the formulation of an uptodate and relevant immigration policy in order to contend with the unfolding humanitarian crisis.

Many measures are being introduced to help stem the flow, but are having little effect. Since the beginning of this year, already 52,000 have made the Aegean Sea crossing and at least 250 have perished in the attempt.

Many of the refugees entering Europe from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Eritrea and Afghanistan are assisted by illegal organizations and smuggler networks who help facilitate the travel from outside the Schengen zone to countries of the European Union and the Schengen space.

While on route, refugee families, especially women and children suffer prolonged human hardship, and many die making the dangerous seavoyage from Turkey or from North Africa, or the trek through the Balkans. Last year alone, more than 3,500 refugees lost their lives while attempting to travel by sea to Europe.

THIS IS WHERE ROP PLANS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

REFUGEES ON PLANES TEAM MEMBERS AND JOINT VENTURES

ROP is a nonprofit organization based in Berlin initiated by David Rodriguez Morato, former CEO of Delivery Hero Germany.

It is a joint venture of various operational partners, including an international independent thinktank; German NGOs; an air transport broker firm; a legal advisor; as well as local and international NGO partners in Jordan and Europe. It is a civil society venture and will expand its participation once operations commence.

The main actors and partners of *Refugees on Planes* are:

David Rodriguez Morato, Founder of Refugees on Planes e.V. (under registration) in Berlin;

Kilian Kleinschmidt, Founder and Chairman of IPA Innovation & Planning Agency Association in Vienna and former Senior UN Official in Jordan and various other countries;

Armin Truger, CEO of Pro Sky in Cologne;

Emad Zand, CoFounder of Refugee Air in Stockholm;

Prof. Dr. Martin Reufels, Partner of Heuking Kühn Lüer Wojtek Lawyers in Cologne;

Daniel Kerber, More than shelters (MTS), Hamburg & Berlin;

Dr. Juan Diaz-Prinz, Berlin Representative, MeditEUr;

Katharina Dermühl, CoFounder MigrationHub, Berlin;

Monis Bukhari, Founder 'Das syrische Haus in Deutschland,' Berlin;

Sima Gatea, SINGA Deutschland, Berlin;

JHCO Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization, Amman;

Mulham Voluntary Team, Amman.

INTENDED DELIVERABLES

The project aims to offer a safe, organized, initially weekly, and later daily air transport service of mainly Syrian refugees and asylum seekers initially to Germany as part of a legal transfer on humanitarian grounds. The actual numbers of refugees transferred must be high to prevent refugees from seeking other illegal alternatives for their voyage.

At the start, *Refugees on Planes* (ROP) will organize weekly flights to Berlin of 150-200 Syrian refugees each from Amman, based on a German government approved number of 1,000 refugees.

After the first month and the first 1,000 refugees are successfully transported, 24,000 more Syrian refugees will be flown from Jordan during the following 5 months.

After the first 3 months of operations, *Refugees on Planes* plans to expand to Turkey, followed by Lebanon and North Iraq, and organize the transfer of up to 75,000 refugees within the following 46 months.

By the end of 12 months, more than 200,000 refugees are expected to have arrived in Germany and other EU countries under this project, a sufficient number to send clear signals that resorting to illegal and criminal means is no longer necessary.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS IN JORDAN AND SECURITY SCREENING

In order to ensure smooth coordination with the Jordanian government, ROP will engage the services of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization for Relief & Development (JHCO). JHCO is expected to assist with the orderly transfer of the refugees to the airport in Jordan, and will be responsible to ensure that security protocols and regulations are respected by all parties involved.

ROP's professional local team will work to improve the current security and screening process and will use formal interviews to establish the identity of candidates for the transfer.

ROP will be assisted by the Mulham Voluntary Team, and if necessary, through JHCO, seek the support of the Jordan Intelligence organization to cover the security aspect of the process. Only refugees that have permanently lived in Jordan for the past four years will be preselected.

The aspect of **urgency** will be reflected by the selection of the most vulnerable, poor, life-insecure Syrian refugees with special health needs, disabled or elderly, women alone with young children and families.

With an extended questionnaire of up to 200 questions, ROP will collect the relevant information on skills and the willingness to live and seek **integration** in Germany. The identification and screening methodology will be shared with the German authorities before it is put into practice.

Once the refugees have been selected and cleared by local authorities through JHCOROP will submit the list to the German authorities, i.e. the German Embassy or directly to BAMF in Nuremberg to seek approval of the preselection list.

PREREQUISITES TO START THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE PROJECT AND THE COUNTRY OPERATIONS

- i) An overall acceptance of the concept presented by 'Refugees on Planes,' Berlin.
- ii) An approval for the first 1,000 selected Syrian refugees to be transferred from Jordan to Germany under the described scheme.
- iii) A second approval to continue with the operation from Jordan with additional 24,000 Syrian refugees.
- iii) A third approval for an additional 100,000 to 150,000 mainly Syrian refugees from Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq.

CONTACT //

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