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National Responses to the Syrian Refugee Crisis: The Cases of Israel and Cyprus

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The Syrian refugee crisis began in March 2011, when the Arab Spring reached Syria's borders and the Assad regime violently countered protesters demanding social justice and democracy. After more than 11 years of civil unrest and chaos, the Syrian conflict has created the world's largest refugee population. To date, that war has resulted in the displacement of approximately 13.2 million people, including 6.6 million refugees, 6.2 million internally displaced people, and 140,000 asylum seekers (Ghadbian 2021, 52–55; Kapusnak 2014, 209–210). The Syrian refugee flows have sparked a dangerous rise in exclusionary populism, right-wing nationalist movements, and national security concerns (Alecou and Mavrou 2017, 1–2; Filc 2018, 124–131). Anti-immigration and anti-asylum seeker sentiments have continued to rise in affected countries (Moscovitz 2016, 140–143; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 2–3). This escalation has stemmed from concerns arising from perceived threats to national security caused by Syrian 'outsiders,' which has resulted in their 'othering'. It has also arisen from post- 9/11 perceived linkages between Islam and terrorism that have framed refugees from the Middle East as possible 'terrorists' and 'security threats' (Moscovitz 2016, 145–147; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 24). The rising salience of these sentiments has allowed various far-right political parties, including in Israel and Cyprus, to gain political power and recognition during the past decade. These have adopted harsh immigration policies and othered and excluded immigrants from Syria (Baider and Kopytowska 2017, 216–219; Charalambous and Christoforou 2018, 452–455; Fischer 2020, 971–973; Ariely 2021, 1089–1091).

Israel and Cyprus are located at the geographic intersection of multiple cultures, making these two states destinations for refugees as they travel to seek permanent asylum in Europe (Trimikliniotis 2013, 441–445; Yaron et al. 2013, 145–147). Unfortunately for asylum seekers, both Israel and Cyprus do not have accommodating asylum policies and are ranked amongst the worst countries in the world for refugee integration and acceptance into civil society (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 18–20; Kalir 2015, 581). This chapter examines how political actors have sought to securitize Syrian refugees in Israel and Cyprus and how the governments of those states have responded to those efforts and companion nativist claims directed at the displaced.

The Israeli Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis

National security is a predominant concern in Israeli politics and policy and that has been so since the state's establishment in 1948 (Yaron et al. 2015, 145–146; Ziegler 2015, 175–176). After the Holocaust, the Israeli leaders viewed themselves as morally obliged to provide a haven for Jews from around the world, thus prompting the nation's aspiration to create an ethnocentric, Jewish majority state as the only way to preserve its identity (Zeedan 2019, 3–4; Kalir 2015, 580–583; Paz 2011, 8–10). The 1950 *Law of Return* sought to realize that goal, stating that any Jew could apply and automatically be granted citizenship in Israel without length of residency or language requirements (Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6; Afeef 2009, 3). This policy approach has produced a strong sense of ethno-nationalism within the country's population and has also made immigration a hotly contested issue, as ethnically

different refugee and asylum-seekers have been perceived widely as potentially disrupting the integrity and security of the Jewish majority state (Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7; Kalir 2015, 580–583).

Indeed, refugees and asylum seekers are viewed in the general population as a possible threat to Jewish identity (Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7). Israelis distrust and marginalize Middle Eastern asylum seekers and refugees due to their nation's historical conflict concerning Palestine (Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7; Ziegler 2015, 175–176). Although specially targeted asylum seekers and immigrants are not subject to this policy, including the Alawites and the Druze, these populations are quite small and permitted for very specific reasons, which we treat below (Yaron et al. 2013, 147–152; Ziegler 2015, 175–176; Theodorou 2016; Halabi 2013, 265–270; Myhill 2011; Weinblum 2019, 699–700). To date, the Israeli government has not accepted any Syrian refugees and it has likewise offered limited humanitarian assistance to displaced Syrians in the name principally of preserving its national security (Kapusnak 2014 209–210; Boms and Karolina 2019, 683–687; Lewis 2018; Sales 2015).

Israel's ongoing securitization of non-Jewish immigration is deeply rooted in the nation's ongoing conflict in Palestine (Paz 2011, 8–10; Kalir 2015, 585– 588). The latter began with the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, which displaced 750,000 Palestinians and aggravated pre-existing tensions. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a serious security issue in Israel due to multiple wars and armed conflicts concerning unresolved territorial and resource claims. The Israeli government has characterized Palestinians as a collective threat to the country's Jewish identity and national security and has long enacted and enforced legislation to prevent such individuals from entering its territory except under strictly regulated conditions (Ziegler 2015, 176; Paz 2011, 8–10). The 1945*Prevention of Infiltration Law*, for example, stated that any 'infiltrators' caught entering Israel illegally with the intention to cause harm, and who were nationals of an enemy country, which included Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, and inhabitants of Palestine, would be deemed enemies of the state and could be sentenced to up to five years in prison (Kalir 2015, 587; Yaron et al. 2015, 145–146).

The word 'infiltrators' in the 1945 *Prevention of Infiltration Law* is now often employed to describe all asylum seekers and refugees, even though the term had been used originally to describe interlopers with malicious intent (Kalir 2015, 587; Yaron et al. 2015, 145–146). Put differently, the Israeli government has adopted policies that have resulted in the 'Palestinianization' of all refugee groups, with the result that all refugees, especially those from nations in the Middle East, are viewed through the lens of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, and a priori defined as members of opposition groups aiming to destroy Israel (Duman 2015, 1236–1237). Israel is also concerned that allowing some refugees and asylum seekers into the country could provide a legal mechanism for Palestinians to return *en masse* (Duman 2015, 1238; Paz 2011, 8–10). In this sense, and with that fear foremost in mind, Israel's anti-immigration stance can be interpreted as a self-preservation strategy. In summary, Israel's securitization of the refugee issue, based on a desire to preserve the Jewish identity of the country, has been used to discriminate against, delegitimize, and 'other' Syrian refugees.

Israeli Policies and Attitudes on Immigration

Although successive Israeli governments have either enacted or vigorously enforced legislation prioritizing Jewish immigrants, including the 1950 *Law of Return* and the 1945 *Prevention of Infiltration Law*, Israel has nonetheless also sought, at least nominally, to harmonize its domestic laws and actions with international legislative mandates concerning refugees and asylum seekers (Kalir 2015, 587; Yaron et al. 2015, 145–146; Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7; Afeef 2009, 3–4). One such mandate is the 1954 *UNHCR Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, which states that signatory nations will honor 'international law with regard to the establishment of Refugee Status Determination processes and the treatment of refugees' (Yaron et al. 2015, 149–150). Nonetheless, Israel has not incorporated this mandate into its national law and has not translated its international obligation into Hebrew, meaning the Israeli government has essentially ignored its obligation. In addition, Israel has failed to honor several additional Convention provisions, including Article 26, by adopting its 'North to Hadera, South to Gedera' policy, which prevents asylum seekers from moving freely within the nation. Israel also failed to honor Article 33 of the Convention in its now withdrawn 'Hot returns' policy, in which its military and officials engaged in refoulement of asylum seekers, that is, their forced return to their countries of origin (Yaron et al. 2015, 149–150). In short, while Israel has ratified multiple international mandates addressing universal refugee and asylum seeker rights, its

governments have rarely followed those policies, and instead, have implemented initiatives designed to maintaining a mainly religious and to a lesser extent a linguistically homogeneous Jewish population (Kalir 2015, 580–587; Yaron et al. 2015, 149–150; Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7; Afeef 2009, 3–4).

Right-wing Israeli political groups have promoted negative attitudes concerning refugees and asylum seekers based on their embrace of nativist sentiments and fear of the 'other' (Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 144–145; Duman 2015, 1237–1238). These groups have branded refugees and asylum seekers as 'infiltrators,' 'terrorists,' and 'criminals' in efforts to delegitimize their rights, racialize them, and frame them as a threat to the Israeli state and population (Moscovitz 2016, 150–156; Duman 2015, 1237–1244). Right-wing political groups have garnered surprising support for these claims among journalists and political leaders alike (Yaron et al. 2013, 147–154). Israeli media often frame refugees and asylum seekers as 'dehumanized entities' (Tirosh and Klein-Avraham 2019, 382). In addition, such individuals are often used as scapegoats for other social and economic problems, including increasing crime, rising unemployment, and limited access to social services (Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 143–148).

While many parties and officials have tended to treat refugees in these terms, some groups are portrayed as greater threats than others. These include Eritrean and Sudanese Darfuri asylum seekers (Yaron et al. 2015, 147–154; Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7). Israel experienced an influx of 50,000 such asylum seekers between 2005 and 2013 and in response to international pressures the Israeli Government granted a share of them Temporary Group Protection in accordance with its obligations under the 1954 *UNHCR Convention* (Yaron et al. 2015, 147–154; Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7; Weinblum 2019, 701–702). Many Sudanese Darfuri and Eritreans have experienced severe hardships while residing in Israel, including an inability to find stable work, living in a permanent state of poverty as a result of protracted unemployment, and enjoying quite limited access to health care (Kalir 2015, 585–590). Alongside political and economic marginalization, some in the Israeli media have also socially constructed the Eritreans and Sudanese Darfuris as 'infiltrators' and participants in 'criminal' networks (Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 149–152). Overall, these individuals have been popularly systematically criminalized and racialized and therefore are further categorized as public health and safety threats (Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 149–157; Weinblum 2019, 699–702). Furthermore, right-wing politicians and some media sources have accused these individuals of being economic migrants (even though a majority have been denied access to steady employment) and therefore not 'true' asylum seekers (Orr and Ajzenstadt 2020, 149–157; Weinblum 2019, 701–702).

The 'Good' Immigrants

In contrast to an overarching negative depiction of refugees and asylum seekers, government officials and party leaders have portrayed some migrant groups in 'positive' or 'neutral' terms, including, as noted above, the Alawites, a small Shia sect, and the Druze, also an outgrowth of Shia Islamicism, but whose members no longer consider themselves Muslim (Hercowitz-Amir et al. 2017, 6–7; Afeef 2009 3–4; Myhill 2011; Rathauser 2019; Eglash 2015; Halabi 2013, 265–270; Zeedan 2019, 1–5). The Alawites' village, Ghajar, was originally located in the Golan Heights, but after Israel occupied that territory during the 1967 Six Day War, the Alawites agreed to become Israeli citizens (Rathauser 2019; Rathauser 2019; Myhill 2011). The Alawites have maintained a distinctive identity within Israel and are often the subject of popular discrimination (Shmuel et al. 2017, 69–70).

The other exception to Israel's generally severe approach to immigration and refugees is the Druze community which, like the Alawites, is a sect with no theological or territorial objections to the Jewish state (Eglash 2015; Halabi 2013, 265–270; Zeedan 2019, 1–5). As a result, Israel has formally granted members of the Druze community citizenship (Eglash 2015; Halabi 2013, 265–270; Zeedan 2019, 1–5). Israel granted the Druze the right to serve in the nation's military in 1956 and they were the only group, besides Jews, accorded that right at the time. Compulsive military conscription was a huge turning point in the Druze's ethnicization and officially separated them from other members of other Arab minorities in Israel (Halabi 2013, 269–270; Zeedan 2019, 1–5). Israel formally designated the Druze as a separate ethnic category for purposes of citizen identification, further distinguishing them from perceived 'bad Arabs' (Halabi 2013, 269). Although the Druze have always been disadvantaged socioeconomically compared to the broader Jewish population, they share strong emotional and political ties with that population. They are also in a much better position politically, economically, and socially relative to other ethnic groups in Israel (Saguy et al. 2019, 673).

Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Israel

Syria and Israel have formally been at war throughout the latter state's existence. Consequently, Israeli leaders perceive Syria as a key political and national security threat (Kapusnak 2014, 207–209). Since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and prior to the 2011 Syrian Civil War and ensuing mass displacement, the Syria-Israel border had remained relatively stable in practice in recent years, if not accepted formally by Syria. However, relations between Israel and Syria had not been politically stable during the years leading up to the civil war due to the Assad regime's involvement in various proxy conflicts aimed at unsettling and nettling Israel (TOI Staff 2015; 'Israeli- Palestinian Conflict').

Given Israel's generally unwelcoming policies toward non-Jewish asylum seekers and refugees, it is not surprising that the nation's government has not granted asylum to any Syrian Civil War refugees (TOI Staff 2015). In fact, Israeli officials stated that they would not allow any 'infiltrators,' 'illegal migrants,' or 'terrorists,' into their territory, claiming that Israel was too small and did not have the demographic or geographic capacity to manage an influx of Syrian refugees (Sales 2015). Despite not accepting Syrian refugees, Israel did supply food, medical supplies, and fuel to Syria's displaced in the form of 'Operation Good Neighbor' (Boms and Karolina 2019, 684; Eglash 2018). However, it should also be said that Israeli leaders justified that effort as a means by which to protect the Israeli-Syrian border from asylum seekers and ISIS terrorists, to support the Druze community, and to remain on good terms with the international and European Union communities (Boms and Karolina 2019, 683–687).

Cyprus and the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Syrian refugees and asylum seekers seeking succor or passing through Cyprus have found themselves enmeshed in social, economic, and political conditions unleashed by the 1974 *de facto* division of the state, and the multiple crises facing Cypriot government officials (Charalambous 2018, 25– 27; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 2–10; Hajisoteriou 2020, 31–32). Right- wing political groups have pressed anti-immigration agendas and have typically othered would-be refugees and asylees in Greek-Cypriot society. However, certain immigrants have been accorded special standing in Cyprus, including wealthy individuals specifically (Rakopoulos and Fischer 2020; Charalambous 2018, 33–38; Milioni et al. 2015, 175–179; Charalambous and

Christoforou 2018, 452–455). Overall, the Cypriot response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been marginal at best, as the nation has accepted only a small number of refugees and otherwise intentionally limited the government resources available to such individuals (Alecou and Mavrou 2017 1–2; Fischer 2020, 970–971).

Historical Developments Shaping Securitization Politics of Cyprus

During the 1960s and 1970s, the two largest ethnic communities in Cyprus, the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots, became embroiled in ethnic violence (Charalambous and Christoforou 2018, 452–455; Charalambous 2018, 31–33; Drousiotou and Mathioudakis 2019, 22–31). Those tensions reached a breaking point in 1974 when a Greek junta-instigated coup led to a Turkish invasion of the island's northern region, which split the nation into two separate territories and displaced thousands of people (Charalambous and Christoforou 2018, 452–455; Charalambous 2018, 31–33; Drousiotou and Mathioudakis 2019, 22–31). The unresolved and continuing tensions between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, in conjunction with the unsettled issue of the country's potential reunification have been at the heart of what is now often called the 'Cyprus problem' (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 2–10).

The 'Cyprus problem' has served as a major political framework to reinforce nationalist sentiments amongst the Greek-Cypriot population against Turkish Cypriots, alongside any groups perceived to be unfamiliar 'others,' which have included refugees and asylum seekers (Charalambous and Christoforou 2018, 452–455; Charalambous 2018, 31–39; Drousiotou and Mathioudakis 2019, 22–31).

Greek Cypriot decisions on what constitutes citizenship in the Republic have primarily been employed to marginalize and discriminate against Turkish- Cypriots, as well as refugees and asylum seekers (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 2–10). The Greek Cypriot population exhibits a strong sense of ethno-nationalism. Those individuals tend to

believe they are the island's 'true' inhabitants and to view others as interlopers as a result. This perception has played a large role in the othering of Turks and other groups in Cyprus. This nativism has been heightened by the existence of the UN controlled 'Green Line,' which Greek Cypriots perceive as the division between an 'inferior' Turkish culture and a 'superior' Greek one. Many asylum seekers have illegally crossed the 'Green Line' into the Republic of Cyprus, thus further stigmatizing the division of the two territories and Turkish-Cypriots in the process, even if/when those crossing illegally into the Republic are not Turkish Cypriots (see Charalambous 2018, 31–39).

Another critical turning point in the securitization of migrants and refugees in Cyprus arose from the Republic's 2004 accession into the European Union (Fischer 2020, 965; Kadianaki et al. 2018, 408). Cyprus joined the EU with the goal of solving the 'Cyprus problem' and of increasing its economic prosperity in the wake of multiple economic crises. Many of the country's goals for its membership were never realized, however, with the EU unable to resolve the 'Cyprus problem' and economic concerns continuing to plague the nation as well (Fischer 2020, 965–966).

The Cypriot government was required to adopt some of the EU's immigration policies to become a member of that group. Those included providing asylum seekers the 'right to asylum' and allowing refugees and migrants access to social services. These stipulations forced the Republic to provide intercultural education and social security services for those groups in its legislation. Joining the EU also turned Cyprus into an attractive initial destination for asylum seekers, with the country acting as a gateway to other, more prosperous European Union nations. Although formally Cyprus' Union membership has required the Republic to relax its most onerous requirements concerning refugees and asylees, the country's government continues to undermine those individuals' access to basic services by othering them in public rhetoric, discriminating against them in practice, and by a failure to encourage their social integration into Cypriot society (Fischer 2020, 964– 974; Kadianaki et al. 2018, 408).

An Overview of Immigration in Cyprus

Cyprus had historically been a country of net out migration until the 1990s, when mass tourism brought many employment opportunities to the island. That growth also drew the attention of would-be immigrants (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 2–10). The rapid uptick in tourism created economic development and labor shortages, prompting policymakers to shift their stance toward immigration in 1991 to allow for low-skill temporary laborers to enter the state (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 2–10; Trimikliniotis 2013, 445–446). These individuals were supposed to work in Cyprus temporarily and although they received the same employment terms as other Cypriots, they were restricted to positions in specific sectors unappealing to the nation's citizens and were otherwise discriminated against socially and politically (Trimikliniotis 2013, 453–456; Alecou and Mavrou 2017, 6–9). As a result, the labor migrants had little opportunity to integrate into Cyprus' society (Alecou and Mavrou 2017, 6–9).

As a general proposition, Cyprus is notorious for its restrictive refugee policies, which have included inhumane detention policies, excessively bureaucratic support processes, and a very low probability that asylum applicants would be granted that status. Overall, Cyprus is ranked amongst the least successful nations in the world in the long-term integration of foreigners (Fischer 2020, 964–974; Milioni et al. 2015, 156–157).

All of this said, and perhaps paradoxically, depending on their classification, some migrants are not as marginalized politically, socially, and economically as others, and are even able to join the social elite (Trimikliniotis 2013, 453–456; Trimikliniotis 2018, 20–24). Immigrants in Cyprus are generally categorized as either subaltern migrants, who are laborers willing to work in otherwise undesirable temporary jobs, or elite migrants, who are highly skilled and/or wealthy business people (Trimikliniotis 2013, 447). The latter group is treated much differently than subaltern migrants. Indeed, an investigation in 2020 revealed that these individuals, primarily from Eastern Europe, were bypassing Cypriot immigration processes altogether to purchase 'golden passport' citizenship applications directly from government officials. The only requirement to receive a 'golden passport' was that applicants invest millions of dollars into high-end real estate located on the island. Although this 'golden passport' practice has *officially* ended according to government officials, its existence demonstrates Cyprus' preference for certain types of immigrants and an elitist mentality concerning who could be eligible to enter that class (Rakopoulos and Fischer 2020).

After Cyprus' accession, the state experienced an increase in EU citizens exercising their right to free movement into

and out of the country and, as noted, an overall increase in labor migrants and immigrants. Those trends coupled with the 2009-2013 economic crisis, prompted right-wing politicians and media outlets in the Republic to mount an anti-immigration campaign (Trimikliniotis 2013, 447–450). Right-wing populism grew in Cyprus alongside the weaponization of immigration and the use of asylum seekers and refugees as scapegoats for economic and other social problems, including rising crime and unemployment rates (Milioni et al. 2015, 33–38).

Elements of the Greek-Cypriot media as well as rightist political and social groups have cited economic concerns to frame asylum seekers and refugees as 'welfare exploiters,' 'job stealers,' and 'burdens'. Moreover, these same organizations and officials have portrayed asylum seekers and refugees as threats to the national and collective identity and labeled them 'barbarians,' 'terrorists,' and 'invaders' (Baider and Kopytowska 2017, 216–219; Kadianaki et al. 2018, 408–409). Due to the political, economic, and social hardships faced by asylum seekers and refugees in Cyprus, many such individuals actively seek other options. As such, many asylum seekers view Cyprus as an 'accidental,' as opposed to a 'final' destination, perhaps ugly evidence of the relative success of Cyprus's deterrence policies (Fischer 2020, 966–967).

In summary, asylum seekers, refugees, and labor migrants are disenfranchised politically, economically, and socially in Cyprus, except for a few very wealthy individuals. As a group, they are popularly portrayed as threats to the nation's economic and national security as well as to its identity.

The Educational Exclusion of Migrant Populations

Asylum seekers and refugees are poorly integrated into Cyprus' civil society generally and especially within the Greek-Cypriot public-school system (Charalambous et al. 2013, 79–80; Theodorou 2014, 255–256). Intercultural education is a relatively new phenomenon in Cyprus and began to be offered only when the nation was admitted to the Union (Charalambous et al. 2013, 82–88). Prior to 2004, education in the Republic was largely framed by the 'Cyprus problem' and included a curriculum focused on maintaining an ethnocentric viewpoint of the Greek-Cypriot identity, maintaining a strong Hellenocentric national identity, and reproducing negative representations of Turkish-Cypriots (Charalambous et al. 2013, 82–88). Although intercultural education has been introduced into the Cypriot education system, it has yet to be fully integrated in practice, and there is still a strong Greek-Cypriot ethnocentric narrative and negative association of the 'other' being dispensed in Cypriot classrooms (Theodorou 2014, 255–256).

Asylum seeker and refugee children confront exclusion and an overall lack of integration in the Cypriot public education system, including language barriers and a focus on assimilation rather than accommodation (Lambri et al. 2020, 6; Michalinos 2012, 195–196). Additionally, some Greek-Cypriot children in Cyprus are affected by othering narratives and the 'Cyprus problem,' when they express tolerance toward asylum seeker and refugee children (Michalinos 2012, 198–199). The rhetoric and reality surrounding children's integration and inclusion in education is connected to debates on citizenship and economic development as popularly contextualized within the 'Cyprus problem' (Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2011, 13–16).

Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Cyprus

The Syrian Civil War affected Cyprus via an increased volume of asylum applications entering the nation's Asylum Services System (Fischer 2020, 966–967). In fact, in 2017, Cyprus received the greatest number of such applications, 1,762, from Syrian refugees among EU nations, but accepted only 21 of those (Fischer 2020, 966–967). During the past decade, Cyprus has accepted a limited number of temporary asylum seekers from Syria, but its overall asylum rejection rate is one of the highest in Europe, reaching 51.18% in 2018 (Fischer 2020, 966–967). Moreover, applications that Cyprus has accepted required an average of 18–24 months to process to decision (Drousiotou and Mathioudakis 2019, 22–31).

Conclusions

Israel and Cyprus have many similarities when it comes to their political, economic, and social responses to asylum seekers and refugees. Both countries are examples of how refugees and asylum seekers can be portrayed and

thereafter perceived as threats to a country's military, societal, political, and economic security regardless of whether they innately represent such threats in fact. Both Israel and Cyprus have mandated that refugees and asylum seekers may only temporarily be granted asylum. Despite nominal obeisance to international and EU agreements, each has also enacted policies designed to make it difficult for these groups to access the social services they need to survive. In both states, asylum seekers and refugees have been widely pilloried and 'othered' by right-wing political groups claiming that they threaten the identity of the dominant ethnic group, the Jews in Israel and the orthodox Greek Cypriots in Cyprus. These groups have employed negative rhetoric and descriptors such as 'infiltrators' and 'barbarians' to dehumanize and delegitimize these displaced individuals.

Asylum seekers and refugees have also popularly been blamed for causing social and economic problems in both states, including rising crime rates and undue and undeserved use of state-sponsored fiscal sources and welfare services and supports. Middle Eastern asylum seekers and refugees have been singled out for special opprobrium in Israel because of fears inhering in its long-lived conflict with neighboring nations and Palestinians. A similar dynamic has unfolded in Cyprus rooted in its long-standing conflict with Turkey. Cyprus and Israel have each granted certain migrant groups exceptions to their otherwise punitive policies. For Cyprus, that group has been those who possess wealth and promise to invest some share of it in the Republic. Israel has meanwhile accorded the Druze and Alawites similar special standing in its refugee policy. These exceptions notwithstanding, most asylum seekers and refugees in Israel and Cyprus are routinely racialized, ostracized, and kept separate from civil society. Finally, neither of these states has sought to engage in meaningful integration efforts for the few they have elected to support.

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