

Why is Syria a War but Not Afghanistan? Nationality-based Aid and Protection in Turkey's Syria Refugee Response

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This article argues that, following the most recent influx of Syrians, refugee reception and aid policies in Turkey has shifted to be differentiated depending on the nationality of refugee groups. This research relies on a case study methodology and assesses changes in reception and aid access policies undertaken in Turkey post the Syrian influx and European Union (EU)–Turkey deal. In doing so it critically analyses differentiated access by refugee nationality, specifically Syrians and Afghans. This begins with an analysis of differences between refugee groups in how protection status is issued, followed by an investigation of differentiated access to programmes and assistance, and the role that EU-led negotiations and aid programmes play in re-enforcing Syrian-focused inclusion. Through a methodology that combines a review of law, policy and relevant literature and semi-structured interviews with key informants, this article makes two conclusions: first, that policies in Turkey unfolded to differentiate and distinguish Syrian refugees, against other refugee groups, as part of the response to the influx. Secondly, as objects of migration diplomacy between the EU and Turkey, aid and assistance programmes for refugees were also distinct by citizenship and re-enforced this differentiation, characterising the response by a condition of nationality-based aid.

More information

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