

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The ongoing conflict in the country of Syria continues to cause displacement within the country and across the region since 2011. The conflict between the government of Bashar Al Assad and opposing forces, and the existence of the Islamic State (IS) were became the starting reason of continuing conflict. The conflict has become a major issue in international world as it seems not nearly come to the end and the actors continued to grow. It pushed people to leave the country of Syria to neighboring countries and others through a dangerous journey across region like Europe.

Since 2013, the conflict in Syria has produced the largest number of refugees, and considered as the world's largest source of refugee in 2014. For several reasons, Europe has been the top destination for refugees for seeking international protection, included for Syrian refugees. The number of Syrian refugee in Europe keeps increasing each year, and it reached more than half a million in 2015. However, the influx of Syrian refugee in Europe turned out to the different view toward the impact of refugee arrival by its majorities. There seemed to be rejected and unsatisfied from the European majorities toward the refugee arrival and its handling by the European Union (EU) that led into the refugee crisis in Europe.

United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) is a unit of the United Nation (UN) with the special mandates toward the refugee cases. The

UNHCR coordinated with the EU and European countries in responding to the Syrian refugee crisis that happened in the Europe region. The effort made by the UNHCR was its roles to achieve its vision and mission as a humanitarian organization like what already be explained in the previous chapter. So, there were two main roles of the UNHCR as an actor and an arena, and other roles which were as an initiator and facilitator.

As an actor, the UNHCR determined the action in responding to the refugee crisis in Europe through its utilization of authority and the establishment of strategic objectives. The UNHCR was in a unique position within the UN's system, its profile was raised when the UN Secretary General asked the agency to coordinate humanitarian action and became an UN's leading humanitarian agency. The success of UNHCR in assisting refugee during World War II, Cold War, and some cases such as the Yugoslavia crisis made the organization became an important actor relating to refugee matters and being trusted by international society. By utilizing its authority, the UNHCR could involve in the development of national legislation relating to asylum and refugee protection.

There are three types of authority in its utilization. First, the UNHCR as an organization which created by the member state is delegated authority of its member states relating to refugee matters. It means that the member states are given their authority or allowed the UNHCR involvement on state behavior relating to the refugee protection. Second, the UNHCR as an organization based on its instrument, the 1951 Convention, was created by its member states to set the same standard for refugee protection, and the cooperation duties between the

member states and the UNHCR itself. Third, based on its specialized and experiences in giving assistance to refugee, UNHCR was trusted to handle the refugee matters and directly mandated by the General Assembly became the humanitarian leading Agency. So through delegation, moral claim, and expertise the UNHCR have the authority to act, which provides the basis for its involvement and influence on refugee matters in regional or national level.

Moreover, how UNHCR can maintain its communication with member states in responding the situation was through its field office. The leadership role here is very important to negotiate and consult with the country authorities and as the informer for the UNHCR HQ. The position and authority of UNHCR is demonstrated not only in the 1951 Convention as its instrument but also in some EU's treaties. The close relations between the UNHCR represented by its representative in field office also led into the establishment of some agreement with the country concerned. The experiences on handling the refugee assistance by UNHCR also made the organization trusted by the country on developing the national legislation relating to asylum and refugee protection.

Besides utilizing its authority, the UNHCR also coordinated with the European countries established strategic objectives to improve the protection system and refugee assistance in responding to the refugee crisis in Europe. There were three main strategic objectives during 2013 until 2015. Those were building and maintaining affective asylum and protection system, preventing and resolving situation of stateless, and securing durable solution. Although the third one could not fully be implemented for Syrian refugees because of the ongoing conflict

situation, but the UNHCR encouraged the European countries to give special attention and provide more resettlement places and humanitarian admission for Syrian refugees.

The other role of actor capacity was an initiator, in which the UNHCR made an effort to propose the refugee issue in international society with the aim was to find the best solution together. The influx of the Syrian refugees in Europe through the dangerous routes by the refugee was one of the urgent issues to be discussed. Played as an initiator, the UNHCR initiated the establishment of the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria since 2013 in Kuwait. Through the conference, the UNHCR provided updated information about the situation inside Syria and the regional impact of the conflict. The aim of the conference was for the needs of Syrian refugees, the neighboring countries as the affected states, and host communities as its support. Besides that, the conference also focused on the supporting the neighboring countries such as Turkey in which as the main transit to Europe in order to improve the assistance and protection system, so it could decrease the life risking of the Syrian refugees to reach Europe.

The role of initiator could not be separated from the role of facilitator which is part of the arena capacity. To discuss the Syrian refugee crisis became the international issue, the UNHCR and its partners need a forum for discussion to find the best solution. That forum is the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference which held in Kuwait since 2013. Through the conference, the UNHCR facilitated European countries, and other international partners to talk

over the Syrian refugee crisis, gather the financial aid, and find some solutions together. The conference also becomes the opportunity forum or arena for demonstrating how the humanitarian assistance should be carried on and urging the donor parties to show their solidarity.

Besides facilitating its international partners a forum for discussion, the UNHCR also coordinated with the government of the affected states such as Turkey to facilitate the Syrian refugee by building camps. The camps facilitated the refugee with the accommodation, education, health, and social service. The EU also made the effort to fund for supporting Syrian refugees in Turkey and other states with the aim to help the Syrian refugees applying for asylum in Europe legally. This effort was also to decrease the flow of refugees to Europe and to prevent them risking their lives at sea to reach Europe.

Thereby, the research question “how did the UNHCR respond to Syrian refugee crisis in Europe during 2013 – 2015?” of this research had been answered. The Syrian refugee crisis in Europe during 2013-2015 was responded by the UNHCR as a humanitarian organization with the special mandates toward refugee cases done through its utilization of authority under the UN mandate, UNHCR’s instrument, and some EU’s treaties, establishment of strategic objective in Europe, and its role as facilitator and initiator.