

CONCLUSION

I hope that it is now clear that there are good reasons to believe that we have moral obligations, that these obligations extend to refugees, and that these obligations consist in protecting basic human rights and dignity. This is in part why I think that Western liberal democracies have moral obligations to refugees that require we rethink our policies around their treatment during their displacement, both in the short and the long term. As I think will be clear after reading the stories of refugees in the rest of the book, our current treatment of refugees, on the whole, would not stand up to moral scrutiny on any considered view of morality. For the most part, we have not treated them with the basic moral consideration most people would agree is owed to other human beings.

Of course, many questions about morality and our treatment of refugees remain. But having established the importance of thinking morally about our treatment of refugees, we can move on to more specific questions about what we owe them. For example, given how long people remain refugees, do economically prosperous democracies have an obligation to resettle refugees? If not, how should they support refugees living in other countries, countries that are themselves quite poor? How should liberal democracies be permitted to treat refugees who arrive on their territory as asylum seekers? Answering these questions requires that we engage in moral thinking about how we can provide the minimum conditions of human dignity to refugees in a world that has largely ignored their human rights.