Syrian Refugees in Turkey

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About Syria...

• The Syrian Arab Republic
• Population: 22.5 million (2012), including refugees
• Now?
• The official language is Arabic

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria%E2%80%93Turkey_relations
Graffiti War on Syrian Walls, Feb 22, 2011

- March, 2011, pro-democracy protests
- July, 2011, security forces opened fire
- March, 2015: 220,000 death, UN

"The people want to bring down the regime"

Clanet, Christian (10 June 2011). "Inside Syria's Slaughter: A Journalist Sneaks into Dara'a, the 'Ghetto of Death'
Temporary Protection

- An open border policy
- Unlimited stay
- No forcible returns

Geneva Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees

generally limited
· 1951, Geneva Convention; time limitation, geographical limitation
· 1967, Protocol; time limitation, geographical limitation

Cannot register with UNHCR in order to apply for asylum in a third country
## Registered Active Caseload Breakdown, as of July 2015*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFGHANISTAN</td>
<td>49,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRAN</td>
<td>20,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRAQ</td>
<td>106,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMALIA</td>
<td>4,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS</td>
<td>10,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>191,591</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Syrians are hosted under the temporary protection regime outlined by the Government of Turkey. Therefore the numbers are not included in the statistics

2.5 million
85%
Turkish refugee camp 'nicest' in the world
The journey is too difficult but....
Syrian Refugees in Turkey - Hande Bahadır

Syrian Arab Republic is located south of my country and Turkey shares its longest common border with Syria (1). Their official language is Arabic which cause a language barrier between us.

In March 2011, a group of Syrian boy thrown in prison for writing a graffiti on their school walls (2). The graffiti was saying “the people want to bring down the regime”. Their arrests sparked the uprising in Syria (3). Entrance of Syrians into my country initially started at these times with 252 and this is still continuing today. As of June 2015, Turkish government reported that there are 1.8 million Syrians in Turkey. But the real number is probably much higher than they say. According to the reports of the non-governmental organizations more than 2.5 million Syrian refugees live in Turkey.

I need to remind you in truth Syrians in Turkey are not refugees, they are guests and they are protected under the temporary protection regime. Under this regime Syrians are to be provided with protection and assistance in Turkey, which includes unlimited stay and protection against forcible returns (4).

Turkey is a signatory of the Geneva Convention (1951) but Turkey accept only those who come from Europe as a refugees, because of the geographical limitation. Turkey originally accepted the convention with both the time and the geographical limitations. With the New York Protocol(1967), Turkey lifted the time but kept geographical limitation (5). Asylum seekers from outside of Europe are assessed with cooperation with UNHCR. Such asylum seekers are granted temporary protection until the decision. Those asylum seekers who are accepted as refugees are resettled to a third country. However Syrians in Turkey are not treated like asylum seekers coming from non-European countries. They cannot register with UNHCR in order to apply for asylum in a third country. One of the cause of that policy is that it is very difficult to process asylum applications for such a huge number. Another comment for this situation that Turkish government aims to prevent interference of international bodies in Turkish control.

Now in Turkey by July 2015, there are approximately 190 thousand refugees and asylum from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Somali (6). They are waiting for resettlement to a third country. To be honest by Syrian crisis we have forgotten these refugees and asylums. They are no camps for them, they are not allowed to leave the country, they can’t work “legally” and we hear nothing about them in the news.

I told you before unofficial numbers are estimated there are 2.5 million Syrians in Turkey. We don’t know the real number, because significant percent of them come to Turkey by illegal ways. There are so many unregistered people. Some of the people that I talked for my research don’t want to be registered because some of them want to go to European countries as soon as possible. Some of them are scared of ISIS or Assad soldiers. Some of them are unregistered because of the language barrier and they don’t know the registration system. When should they go, where should they go. Anyway the numbers that I gave mean that Turkey hosts a Syrian refugee population of 3.1% of Turkish population. I know 2.5 million refugees is a small number when we compared tis number with Turkey population.
which is over than 78 million. But the refugees represent a significant percent of the population in some southeastern border towns. For example there are 90,000 Syrian refugees in Kilis, while there are 110,000 Turkish residents (7).

It will be correct if we analyze the Syrians in Turkey in 3 groups. First group is the refugees which are living in the camps, second group is which are not in the camps but live in southeastern towns and the third which are living in the middle or west parts of the Turkey.

About 220,000 Syrians are living in the 25 government-run camps. The remaining, approximately %85, of the Syrian refugees are living outside the camps, mostly in southeastern cities which are near the Turkey—Syria border. There are important differences between Syrians in and outside of the camps. The services provided in the camps are managed by Prime Minister Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency.

For example all the Syrians (which are registered) receive an ID card, which provides access to free health care services in Turkish clinics, but it is only theoretically possible. There is no problem for Syrians who are living in the camps. They can access to health services whenever they want. But outside of the camps, whether they have an ID card or not, it can be hard to access to health services. Mostly they don’t know how they can use the health service. Maybe because of the language barrier or don’t know where to go. When they reach to health system, there are another problems. Doctors can’t speak Arabic, Syrians don’t know Turkish. To solve this problem Syrians clinics were opened by the government of Turkey. Interpreters are working full time in these clinics, but these clinics are working like a referral center. Also some patients, mostly women, don’t want to tell her problem while the interpreter is in the room, if the interpreter is a man. When I visited one of the Syrian clinic in İzmir, a pregnant Syrian woman came, and she didn’t want to talk with interpreter because of her beliefs, her religion. Doctor of the clinic and I had tried to understand the problem by body language. As I said before these clinics work as a referral center, not for treatment. For example a Syrian come there because of headache, doctor refers him or her to neurology policlinic of hospital. There aren’t interpreters in most of them. If there is an interpreter, usually only one interpreter for whole hospital, it isn’t enough for every clinic. Another problem is drugs. In the camps and in some towns free medicines are given by the governship. But for example in İzmir Syrians have to buy their medicines by themselves. Some non-governmental organizations are trying to provide some medicines, medicines for diabetes or hypertension. But mostly refugees have to buy the medicines with their money.

One of the important barrier is language. In some camps there are Turkish course. Also in the southeastern part of the Turkey some people can talk Arabic and Kurdish. But in the west and middle part very few people know these languages. So the social integration becomes impossible.

Turkey is a country with so much diversity in culture, people. There is a big differences between east and west part of the Turkey. The majority of the refugees are from the northern Syrian city, Aleppo, which has always had strong ties to south east region of Turkey(8). So host community and Syrian refugees have a lot in common. But the west part of the Turkey is really different so social integrations between locals and refugees become
impossible in the west part of the Turkey. Differences in cultures, languages, or life styles between Syrian refugees and us which make social integration more challenging are more pronounced in the west part of the Turkey.

Turkey won praise for providing a high quality response in its refugee camps. But the majority of the Syrians are living outside of the camps. We are providing almost nothing to these people. Refugees who are out of the camps are unhappy, scared and desperate. They are trying to find a house, find a job but they can’t.

In these days European countries face an acute refugee crisis. According to the BBC, more than 100,000 people from the Middle East and North Africa reached the European Union’s borders in July alone (9). More than half a million are expected to arrive by the end of 2015. Last week, Denmark’s Liberal Party government offered to pay Turkey to halt Syrian refugees who want to come to Europe. The German minister said Syrian refugees could go to EU countries from the Turkish camps based on the characteristics of them (10). It means that you’ll be taken in if you’re a 30-year-old doctor but left out if you’re an illiterate and sickly 70-year-old. Rich Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Dubai have told nothing about refugees yet.

Now in Turkey we are killing them by our system. Turkey urgently needs to integrate its Syrian refugees. But we are not such a powerful country. We are not such a rich country. Now we became the victims of universal open door policy. Millions of Syrians need our help. And we need your help and assistance.
Resources:


