

BOSTON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR IRAQI STUDIES

AUGUSTUS RICHARD NORTON, DIRECTOR

BY SARAH A. TOBIN

ASSISTED BY EKATERINA ANDERSON

AND LISA JENKINS

# The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Lessons from the Iraqi Refugee Experience



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INSTITUTE FOR IRAQI STUDIES  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP:  
THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS  
AND LESSONS FROM THE IRAQI REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

March 29, 2013

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## Workshop Participants and Staff

### **Participants:**

- **Mr. Ethan Corbin**, (Tufts University; and Research Fellow, Belfer Center, Harvard University)
- **Dr. Lindsay Gifford** (National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellow, UCLA; and Visiting Scholar, University of San Francisco)
- **Professor Asmaa Najim A. Nassir Al-Hadidi** (Humphrey Fellow at Boston University; and Diyala University)
- **Ms. Rafif Jouejati** (Spokesperson, Local Coordination Committees in Syria; Director, Foundation to Restore Equality and Education in Syria)
- **Professor 'Abbas Kadhim** (Naval Postgraduate School; and Visiting Senior Fellow, BUIIS)
- **Ms. Vicky Kelberer** (Boston University)
- **Dr. Muhamed H. Almaliky** (Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Harvard University; and, University of Pennsylvania Hospitals)
- **Professor Augustus Richard Norton** (Boston University)
- **Ms. Heidemarie Woelfel** (Boston University)

### **Rapporteurs:**

- **Dr. Sarah A. Tobin** (Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Islamic Studies, Wheaton College, MA)
- **Ms. Ekaterina Anderson** (Boston University)
- **Ms. Lisa Jenkins** (Boston University)

### **Support:**

- **Mr. Michael Carroll** (Assistant Director, Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations, Boston University)

## Workshop Schedule and Speakers

- 9:30 a.m. Light breakfast
- 10:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions
- 10:15 a.m. “Overview of the Syrian Refugee Crisis” by Ms. Vicky Kelberer
- 10:30 a.m. “The Syrian Refugee Crisis” by Ms. Rafif Jouejati
- 10:45 a.m. “International Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis” by Mr. Ethan Corbin
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee break
- 11:10 a.m. Discussion
- 11:30 a.m. “Iraqi Refugee Perceptions of Urban Violence” by Dr. Lindsay Gifford
- 11:45 a.m. “From Ghawgha'is to Iraqi-Americans: the Two-Decade Metamorphosis of Iraqi Refugees in America” by Professor ‘Abbas Kadhim
- 12:00p.m. “Iraqi Refugees: Experiences of Resettlement in America” by Ms. Heidemarie Woelfel
- 12:15 p.m. “A Personal Account” by Dr. Muhamed H. Almaliky
- 12:30 p.m. Working lunch
- 12:45 p.m. Comments by Professor Asmaa Najim A. Nassir Al-Hadidi and Discussion
- 1:45 p.m. Concluding Comments by Professor Augustus Richard Norton
- 2:00 p.m. Workshop concludes

# Foreword

Sitting comfortably in Boston, even after the bombing of the Marathon in April 2013, the dire circumstances of Syrian refugees may be hard to fathom. Credible estimates reveal that one of every six Syrians has fled their home, or what remains of their home, often with little more than what they might carry in their arms or wear on their back. Millions have sought safety in other towns and villages, and many have been forced to flee several times to escape the crossfire of rival opposition fighters and government forces. About one and half million Syrians now find a measure of safety in neighboring countries: some in the relative order of well-run camps, but many others are not nearly so fortunate. Even after escaping from predatory militias and vengeful military assaults, victims continue to be prey for criminals, sexual predators, sectarian vigilantes or allies of the Syrian government.

A number of governments that have pledged contributions have failed to deliver fully on their promises, and neighboring countries, not least Jordan and Lebanon, are strapped for adequate resources and justifiably fear that violence inside Syria will spread to their own citizens. The Syrian refugee crisis is a humanitarian crisis on the scale of some of the world's worst natural disasters of recent years, and this man-made disaster threatens structural political damage far from its epicenter.

Borders may appear as definitive lines on a map, but family ties, tribal links, sectarian affinities and trading ties routinely transcend Syria's borders. Along the Syria-Lebanon border, for instance, one finds Lebanese villages within Syrian territory, and the Iraq-Syria border is notoriously porous. In my own travels decades ago I well recall visiting Turkish border towns, such as Kilis, which survived as entrepôts for trade with Syria and Iraq.

In March, the Institute for Iraqi Studies hosted a workshop in order to gain a shared understanding of the disaster, as well as bring insights to bear from Iraq's recent refugee tragedy, which at its height directly affected one of every six Iraqis (the same ratio as Syria today). Nearly three million Iraqis remain displaced or as refugees, more than two decades after the uprising of 1991 and a decade following the U.S.-U.K. invasion, according to 2012 data cited in this report (p. 22). The Iraqi case is a reminder that what is happening today to Syrians is

likely to have longstanding consequences. In neighboring Lebanon, savage violence during the 1975-90 civil war precipitated population displacements that radically diminished the richly diverse human tapestry of the country. Many villages and urban quarters formerly known for inter-sectarian cohabitation remain far less diverse than they were before the civil war.

A thoughtful and informed group of participants contributed to making the March 29 workshop successful. Summaries of their presentation are found in this report. Several participants were able to share fresh data and offer observations from recent field-work. [Please consult the institute website ([www.bu.edu/iis](http://www.bu.edu/iis)) for the complete streaming audio archive for the workshop.] The opening presentation by Vicky Kelberer offers an incisive overview of the Syrian refugee crisis. A video of her presentation is also found on the website along with accompanying graphics.

A follow-up workshop is planned for late September at Boston University. The program and other details will be posted on the website in late August.

The Institute for Iraqi Studies is housed in Boston University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations, which provides essential administrative and logistical support. In particular, Michael Carroll, the Assistant Director, has been a steady and creative collaborator. In addition, the sure-footed Mikaela Ringquist, program assistant with the American Institute of Afghanistan Studies, which is based at Boston University, has generously donated her time to a variety of Iraq-focused programs, including a film series in 2012-13 and the March 29 workshop.

Three talented people agreed to serve as rapporteurs for the workshop: Dr. Sarah Tobin is Mellon Post Doctoral Fellow in Islamic Studies at the Department of Anthropology, Wheaton College and she led the team of rapporteurs. Ekaterina Anderson and Lisa Jenkins are both Ph.D. students in the Department of Anthropology at Boston University and they both contributed to the report. Dr. Tobin is the primary author of the report, and the report very much reflects her devoted labor as well as her perceptive insights.

Augustus Richard Norton

Boston, May 15, 2013

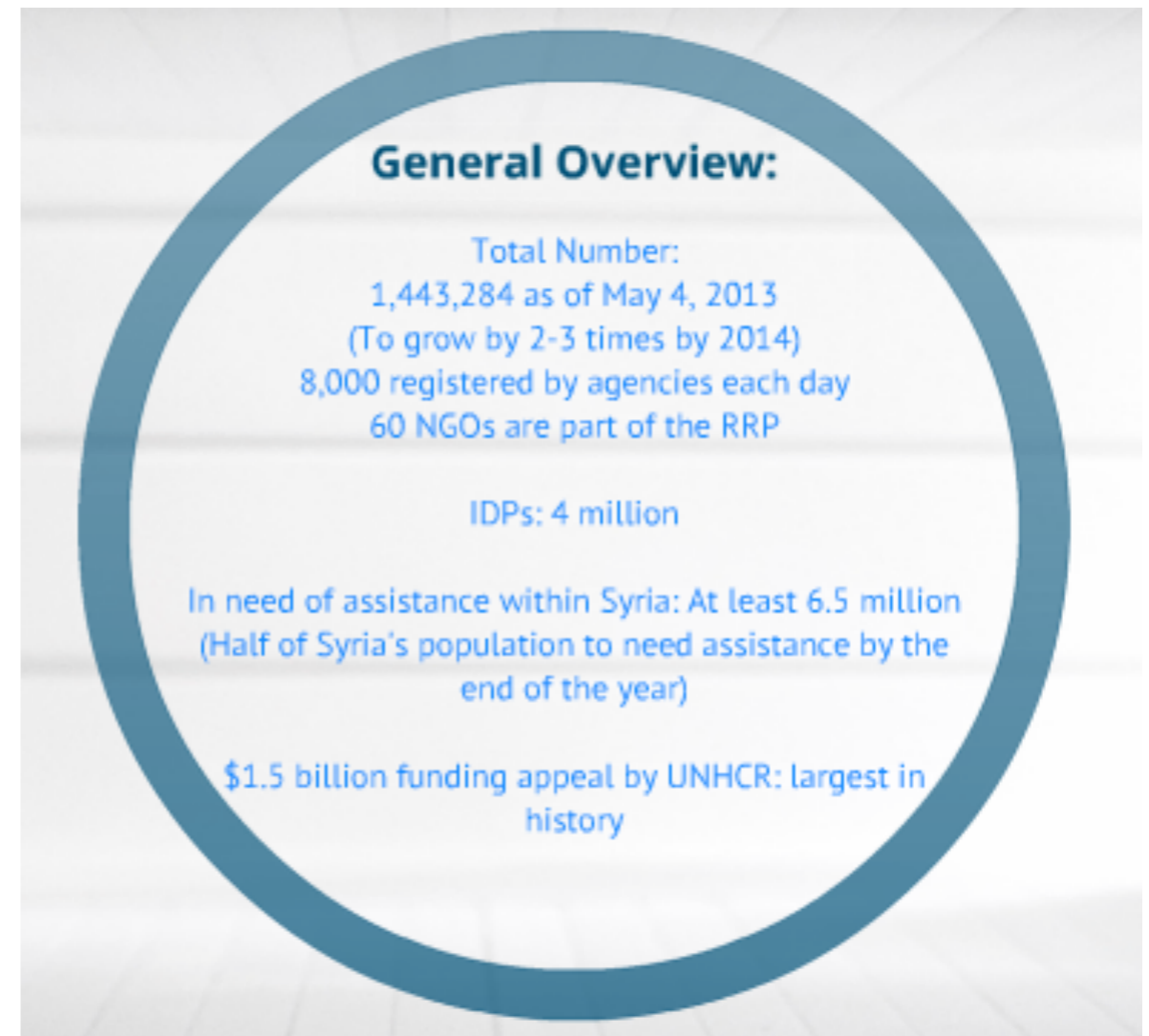


# Overview of the Syrian Refugee Crisis

## AT A GLANCE:

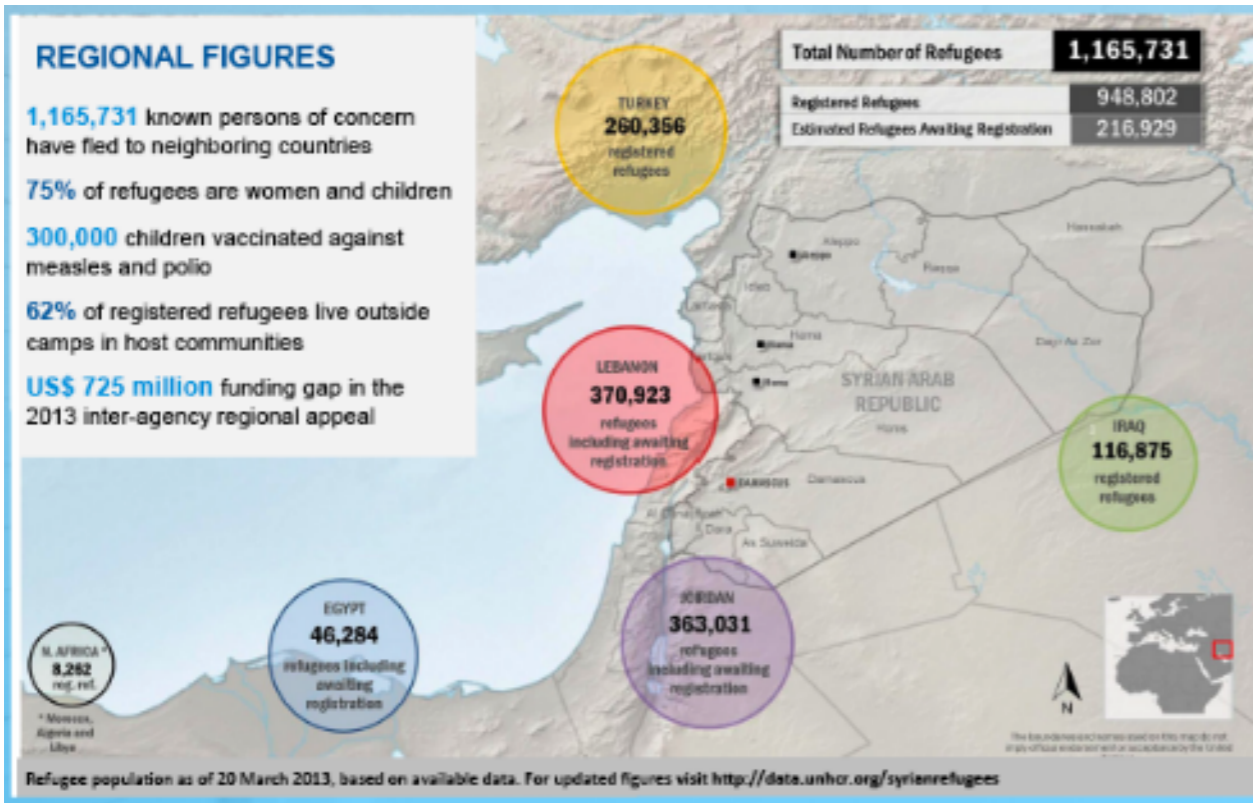
1. As of May 4, 2013, there were 1,443,284 Syrian refugees.
2. 8,000 new refugees are registered by agencies everyday.
3. 60 NGOs, among others, are servicing these refugees.
4. Over 25% of Syrians are in need of assistance.
5. 51% of Syrian refugees are children under age 18.
6. The refugees are distributed between Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq.
7. Numbers are updated frequently. For Ms. Kelberer's presentation, visit: <http://www.bu.edu/iis/>

Ms. Kelberer provided an extensive presentation on the background and context for the discussion on the Syrian Refugee Crisis, as well as a country-by-country report of the scale and impact.



As of May 4, 2013, there were 1,443,284 Syrian refugees. This number is expected to grow by two or three times by the end of 2014. 8,000 new refugees are registered by agencies everyday, and 60 NGOs, among others, are servicing these refugees. It is estimated that over 25% of Syrians are in need of assistance. As we are now entering the “exponential growth





phase” of the refugee crisis, it is important to note that 51% are children less than 18 years of age; most Syrian refugees are women and children. Within the Middle East, the refugees are distributed primarily between Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. The remainder of the presentation gave a country-by-country breakdown of these specific situations.

**Jordan:** There are 448,370 Syrian refugees officially in Jordan, and 470,000 refugees at the estimation of the Jordanian government. The refugee camps in Jordan are overcrowded, which is prompting protests and internal strife within the camps. One of the unique conditions of the Syrian refugee situation in Jordan is that borders are closed to Palestinians refugees seeking entry from Syria.

## Country Profile: Jordan

Syrian Refugees: 448,370\*  
(470,000 estimated by Jordanian govt.)

Other refugee populations:  
1.9 million permanent Palestinian Residents  
(338,000 in camps), borders closed to Palestinians

Camps: Al-Za'atri, al-Azraq and Raaba al-Sarhan\* (\*under construction), \$400 million of own funds

Main Issues: Health, schools, energy and water; continued border access; overcrowding & unrest



**Turkey:** There are 324,770 official Syrian refugees in Turkey, and 400,000 at the estimation of the government. 17 out of 23 of the region’s refugee camps are in Turkey, which

## Country Profile: Turkey

Syrian Refugees: 324,770\*  
(400,000 estimated by Turkish govt.)

Camps: 17 out of 23 total refugee camps in region

Funding: \$750 million of own funds

Main Issues: Cross-border attacks; Kurdistan; international funding; IDP camps; capacity

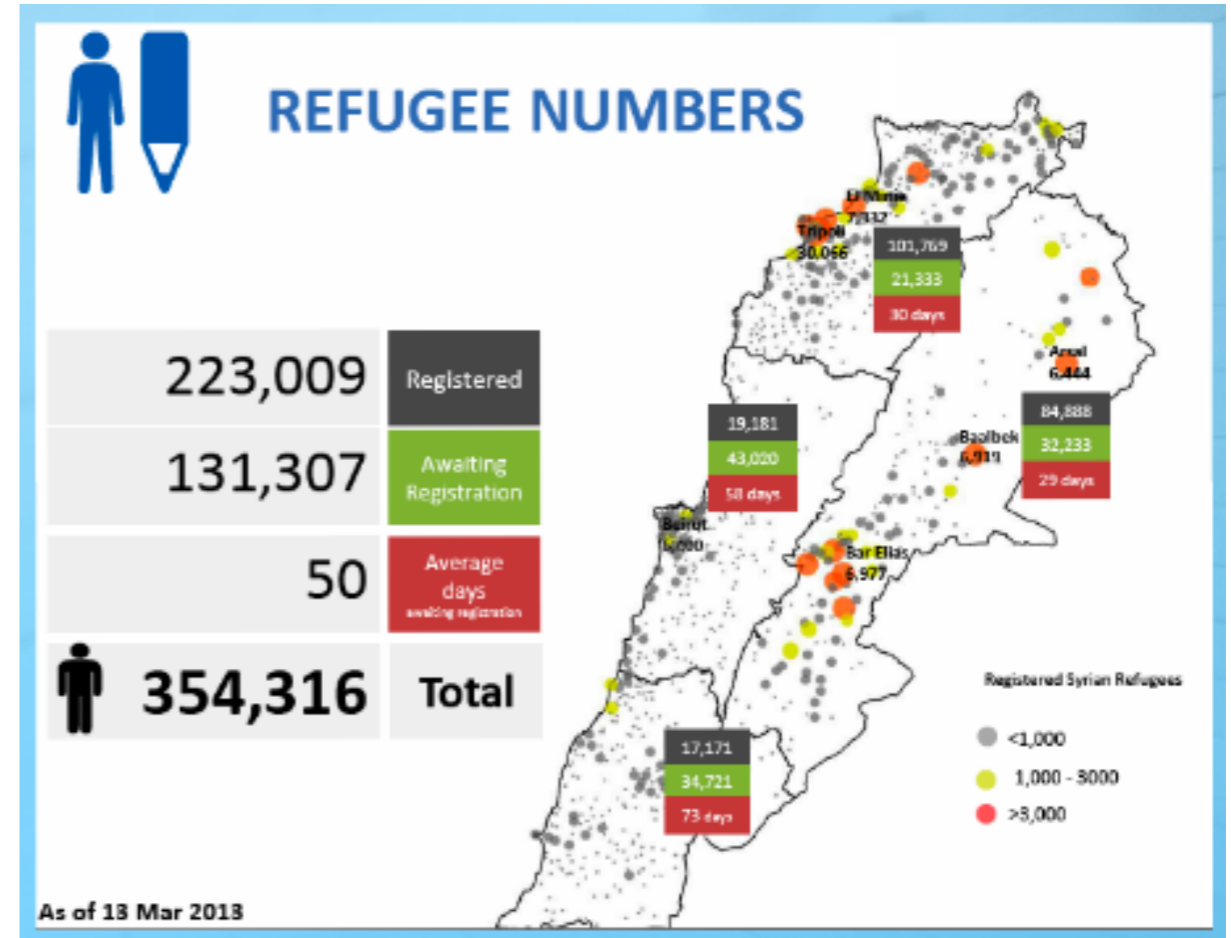






has decided to halt any construction of new camps. The main issues are cross-border attacks by pro-regime forces and unrest in Kurdish areas.

**Lebanon:** There are 455,665 Syrians displaced in Lebanon, and over 1 million estimated by the Lebanese government.



## Country Profile: Lebanon

Syrian Refugees: 455,665\*  
(1 million estimated by government)

Other refugee populations:  
400,000 Palestinians

Camps: 12 Palestinian camps, none for Syrians

Main Issues: Health, schools, energy and water; shelter- no right to even set up tents, not given refugee status; political tensions and violence; multiple displacements; 40-50% unregistered

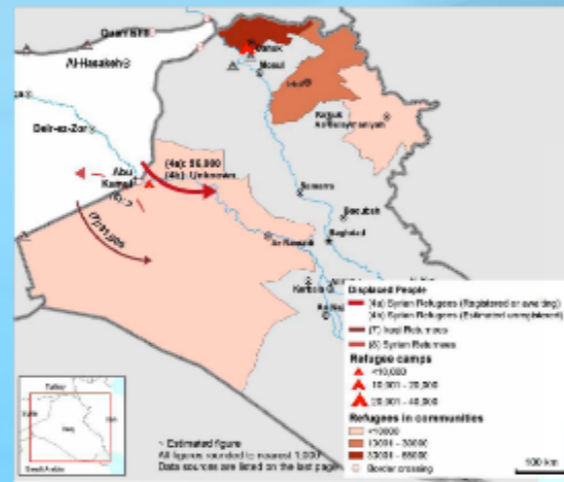
Source: UNHCR

The primary issues, however, stem from the fact that refugees are not given refugee status, and instead are referred to as “displaced Syrians.” There are no refugee camps for Syrians, and the refugees are living amongst the populace, often hosted by individual families, which makes their identification and assistance more difficult. Furthermore, Syrians are not allowed to construct shelter, including tents.

**Iraq:** It is estimated by that there currently are over 142,395 Syrian refugees in Iraq. The ongoing civil conflict within Iraq has rendered nearly one million Iraqis as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). There are three refugee camps for Syrians, which are not accessible for the Iraqi IDPs, including those

# Country Profile: Iraq

Syrian Refugees: 142,395  
 Other refugee populations:  
 1 million Iraqi IDPs, Iraqi returnees from Syria  
 Camps: Domiz, al-Qaim 1-3\*, al-Walid (\*under construction)  
 Main Issues: Ongoing civil conflict, sectarian/regional tensions; sensitive regions- Kurdistan and al-Anbar;  
 Recent cross-border attacks, esp. massacre of Syrian soldiers 3/3/13



## Demographic Data of Registered Population

Registered Total Population

**920,289** Individuals

Demography

Male (51%)	Age	(49%) Female
9%	0-4	9%
10%	5-11	9%
7%	12-17	7%
24%	18-59	23%
1%	60+	2%

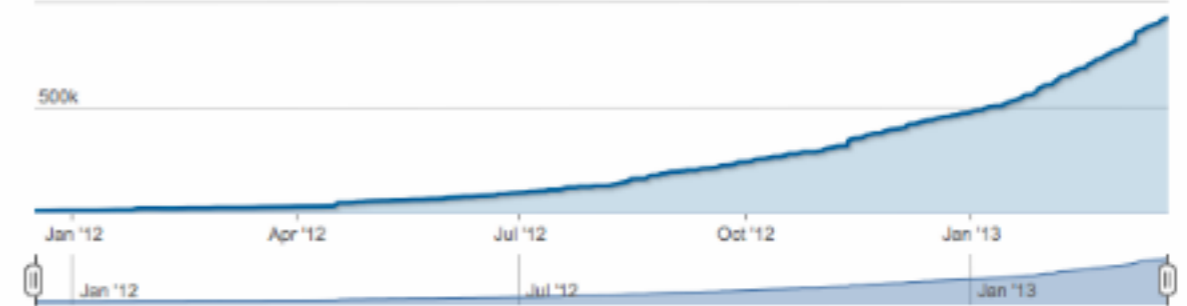
\* Sources are detailed in each country page

\*\* Household data may be unavailable for some locations

### Total Syrian refugees registered or awaiting registration

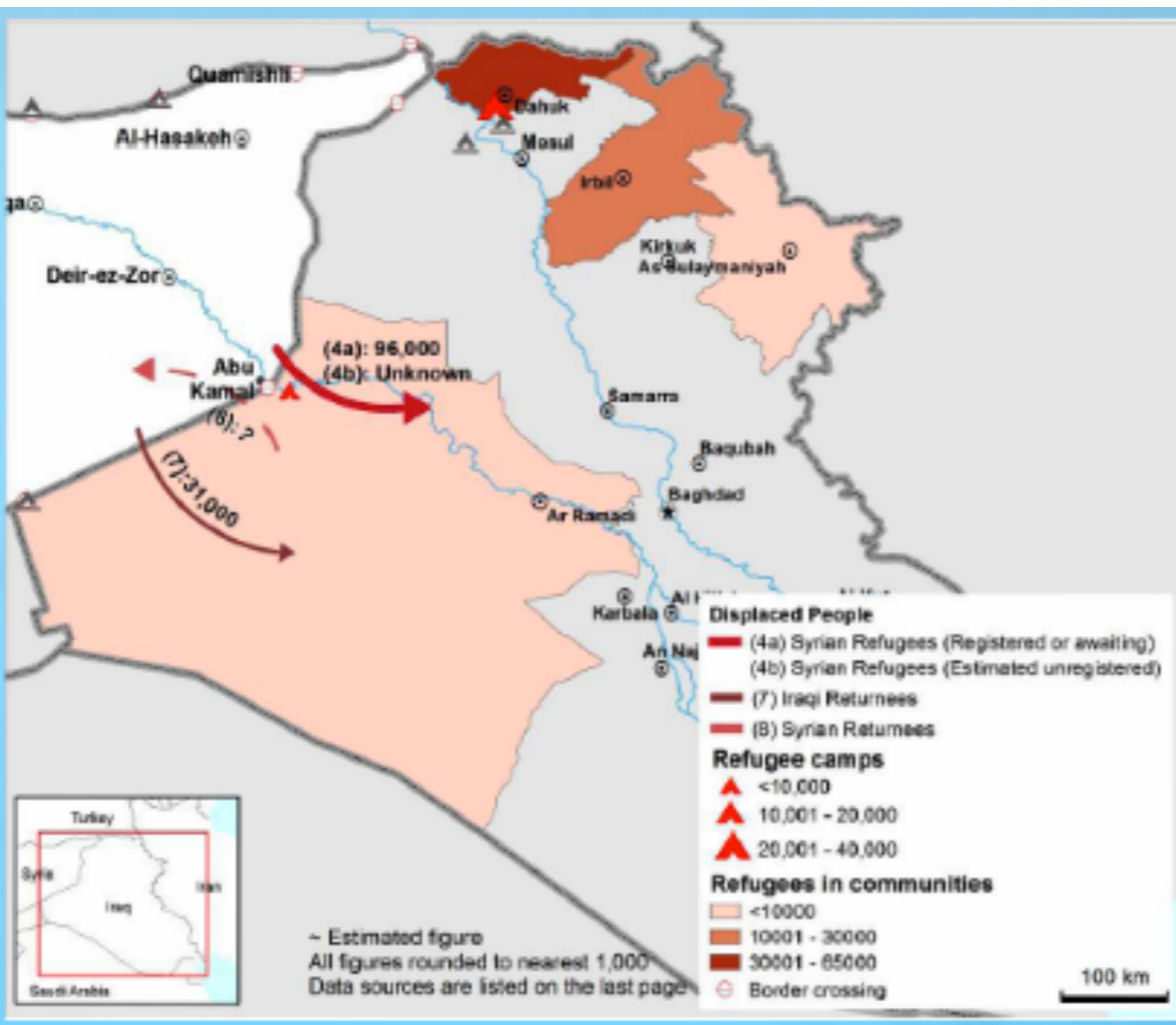
The total number of registered refugees and individuals awaiting registration is 1,175,915. This includes 8,262 Syrian refugees registered in North Africa.

### Registered Population By Date



who have been forced back into Iraq after fleeing to Syria during the last decade. Cross-border attacks launched both by Iraqis and by Syrians constitute one of the most destabilizing elements for those in the camps.

There are many points of concern during the Syrian conflict. It is hard to locate, track, and register the refugees, particularly in diverse urban areas. By some estimates, 70-80% of refugees are registered, however many estimates place that number much lower. There are concerns about appropriate levels of capacity and funding, the legal status of Syrian refugees, particularly in countries with difficult and complicated histories with other refugees including Lebanon and Jordan. Refugees, both inside and outside of camp contexts are in



need of resources and at risk for heightened levels of violence. In many instances, the host countries are often no better for the refugees than they had experienced in Syria.

The host countries also have concerns. One is a concern that refugees will increase violence as they are perceived to be the “carriers of conflict,” a drain on resources, and in competition with pre-existing refugee populations. Concerns are also launched as to the status of the refugees: will they become semi-permanent or even permanent residents of the host country?



# The Syrian Refugee Crisis

## AT A GLANCE:

1. Rafif Jouejati described her work with the Syrian LCCs (Local Coordination Committees) and her visit to the Atmeh refugee camp.
2. Her work with 80 groups across Syria involved helping distribute resources and relief supplies and creating capacity building projects for activists as well as media-based documentary work.
3. In the presentation, Ms. Jouejati described issues of basic food and water, health, safety, security, and education in the Atmeh refugee camp.

Rafif Jouejati described her work with the Syrian LCC (Local Coordination Committees) and, specifically, her visit to the Atmeh refugee camp, which is on the Syrian side of the border with Turkey.

As Ms. Jouejati described, 18% of refugees are under the age of four, and many people have been displaced within Syria multiple times. For example, some were displaced from Homs to other areas and then were forced back to Homs. She also mentioned that 1,000 refugees flee to Lebanon every week alone.

During her trip to the Atmeh refugee camp, Ms. Jouejati went as part of an LCC assessment team. She is working as part of a loose network of 80 groups across Syria. With her particular group, Ms. Jouejati articulated a primarily media-based volunteer role that would document the number of people dying during or as a direct result of protests. Initially, the group would conduct weekly tallies, but now the number has risen to as many as 150-250 people per day, primarily because of the Assad regime's indiscriminate use of live ammunition, cluster bombs, Scud missiles, and chemical weapons in a pattern of intensification of weaponry. She has also worked with LCCs involved in helping distribute resources and relief supplies, as well as to create capacity building projects for activists. Her team has largely focused on documentation efforts, particularly of detainees and their stories and conditions of imprisonment.

Ms. Jouejati referred to the Foundation to Restore Equality and Education in Syria, which was started by Syrian expats and has conducted important work such as building tents for people who were displaced and living in the forest without any shelter at all.

Referring to her visit to the Atmeh refugee camp, Ms. Jouejati recalled slipping across the border from Turkey to Syria and into the camp. (Atmeh village is controlled by the Free Syrian Army.) The refugee camp held 17,000 people at the start. However, everyday hundreds of women and children arrive. At the time of her visit, 40 toilets were operational in the camp. The refugees all receive a basic breakfast from the Turkish government, and then a late afternoon lunch, which is prepared by three volunteers in one kitchen, which is supposed to supply all the refugees with meals while lacking a floor (it is a mud floor), and consisting of walls that are cement with large gaps. The roof is tin. The three volunteers begin cooking at 5:30am to serve more than 17,000 people, beginning at 4:30pm.

The camp is notably overcrowded. One major concern is the density of young children, who can often be seen playing in the mud and garbage. Some children are in schools, which consist of cement blocks or tents without flooring. There are three schools for 8,500 children, including an Islamic school in which the subject matter includes Qur'an, math, science, and then another section of Qur'an. There is a second school "for strangers," which is a "foreign school" with curriculum in math, science, English, and computers (when they have electricity).

A primary issue that Ms. Jouejati discussed is that the most requested medications were for birth control. The prevention of unwanted pregnancies is a top priority; at least 60 women had been raped and are now carrying children conceived by the rape. Another pressing health issue is the proliferation of diseases caused by contaminated water, limited hygienic facilities and malnutrition including cholera, scabies, and leishmaniasis.

There are also security concerns as there are 16 tracts of tents (~1,000 tents), and each tract had a leader. However, tent residents are largely unhappy with the leadership and camp administration, particularly given the large amount of theft and smuggling, in addition to physical violence (such as rape, which is mentioned above) and domestic violence.

The U.N. estimates that there will be 3 million refugees by the year's end, which, based on the experiences to date, is an underestimate. The speaker emphasized that the Atmeh residents intend to return home.

# International Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis

## AT A GLANCE:

1. Mr. Corbin discussed several reasons that the international community has not been able to adequately address the conflict in Syria.
2. Mr. Corbin elaborated on the refugee situations in neighboring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan.
3. In the presentation, Mr. Corbin discussed the balance of power between Assad's regime and the resistance.
4. In conclusion, Mr. Corbin highlighted several important issues related to international aid efforts.

Addressing the international response, Mr. Corbin discussed several reasons that the international community has not been able to address the dire situation in Syria adequately. He discussed the situations of countries accepting Syrian refugees, the difficulties facing any type of military intervention, and the aid situation, which is complicated by internal politics and economics in Syria. Although Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq have absorbed many of the displaced Syrians, there are several conditions that make it difficult for entities like UNHCR to document refugee movements or needs accurately. For example, Lebanon accepts many Syrians across the borders not as refugees but as “guests.” Furthermore, these countries do not have the capacity to absorb and accommodate the needs of the Syrian refugees. Even within Syria, it is difficult to gauge where the internally displaced are relocating.

Turkey, in collaboration with the United States, has taken the lead in the treatment of Syrian refugees. Turkey has spent 1.5 billion USD and the Turkish camps are considered “lavish” for refugee camps as they include televisions and facilities for recreation. This type of support is in line with the more recent “neo-Ottoman” policies of the Turkish government toward the Middle East. However, the Turkish government has spent too much money too soon and is now reaching the brink of their financial capacity for refugee support.

Political leaders in Lebanon have started to use the escalating refugee crisis as a means of galvanizing intra-communal fears in the country. Recent propaganda videos circulating among the Maronite community claim that, left unchecked, the cur-



rent Syrian refugee flows will provoke a degree of political and social destabilization in Lebanon similar to that of the early 1970's when the country was inundated by Palestinian refugees and armed groups.

Neighboring Jordan is also stretched to its limits, and it does not have the resources to support the refugees. Jordanian refugee camps are considered among the region's worst in terms of health, security, and living conditions. The U.S. plans to help expand and coordinate these and other new camps in Jordan and to utilize development aid.

The international community also faces a dilemma in terms of any form of military intervention. Any form of intervention on the part of the United States or its allies would entail significant risks and likely ensnared them in a dangerous game of escalation.

As the Syrian civil war continues to escalate, the ability of either side to make significant gains is diminishing. The balance of conventional military power still largely rests on the side of the government's loyalist forces. The size and scope of the government's remaining military capacity is difficult to gauge, but it maintains a loyal praetorian force of well over 100,000 troops with significant firepower and maneuver. A recent study notes that it would require an estimated 96 bombing sorties per day over a protracted campaign to defend any sort of no-fly or, more significantly, a territorially-bound safe-zone, as well as to neutralize the government's fighting capacity. The rebel forces ability to hold and defend territory is questionable because they are critically under-resourced and they continue to be driven by inter- and intra-group conflicts. Although tactics such as limiting supply lines or arming the rebels directly may help disable the government's forces, the international community has shown general reluctance to engage in this type of proxy war for fear of escalation. As a result, the U.S. and the international community face a significant dilemma when it comes to the use of force. As a result, Mr. Corbin anticipates that the status quo will prevail for the foreseeable future.

In terms of aid, the speaker raised three issues. First, there has been a discrepancy between what donor countries have pledged in aid and what they have actually delivered. Second, there is a problem with getting the aid to its intended beneficiaries. The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) is the primary legal recipient of international aid dollars in Syria, but it has little internal reach. The U.S. has also attempted to deliver basic goods to the Syrian people, but often resorts to dumping supplies at country borders, which then do not reach the people who need them most due to the development of a black market and war industry of scarce resources that is run by gangs and non-legal forces. Third, the U.S. has also shown some reluctance to have a high profile with regard to the aid effort. For example, although it provided a substantial amount of Turkey's \$1.5 billion costs, the U.S. let Turkey take credit for supplying and delivering aid to the refugees. It has also refrained from using USAID branding on goods and services delivered.

A complicating factor is that internal displacements in Syria are hard to gauge. It is estimated that there are likely over 5 million Syrians who have been displaced internally. In the north, particularly in Aleppo, there has been a retreat of services. However, the Syrian government is still paying salaries to government employees on the rolls in Aleppo. However, if one is a government employee in Aleppo, one has to travel through complicated and quite dangerous circumstances to retrieve physically one's salary. If a government employee does not show up to collect a salary, the Syrian government adds his or her name to a list of "defectors."

This session ended with some Q&A and the discussion related to the complex challenges of trying to reconcile the numbers of refugees, in particular the discrepancies for official and unofficial refugees. There was also discussion about the large discrepancies between the aid amounts pledged and sums actually paid. It was noted that the Turks seem to be doing a better job with policing and security than the Jordanians. Given the levels of predatory criminality and personal violence in some of the refugee camps, it would be prudent to examine policing models that may be replicated from elsewhere.

# Iraqi Refugee Perceptions of Urban Violence

## AT A GLANCE:

1. Dr. Gifford presented her work on spatiotemporal patterns of violence in Baghdad since 2003 and Iraqi refugee perception of and reaction to these patterns.
2. Using IBC (Iraqi Body Count) data, Dr. Gifford discovered that a vast majority of violent events reported by her interviewees are unaccounted for, and public and media reports are misleading and erroneous in their portrayals of violence and death in Iraq during the last decade.
3. At the peak of sectarian violence in 2005-7, Western media reports often pinned Sadr City as the most violent neighborhood in Baghdad, with which Dr. Gifford's respondents overwhelmingly disagreed.

Dr. Lindsay Gifford, Postdoctoral Fellow in Anthropology at UCLA, described her research on spatiotemporal patterns of violence in Baghdad since 2003 and Iraqi refugee perception of and reaction to these patterns. Interviewing Iraqi refugees in Amman and El Cajon, CA, Gifford discovered that a vast majority of violent events reported by her interviewees are unaccounted for in Iraq Body Count, the only unclassified data source on violence in the country. Since IBC only registers lethal occurrences, the system did not record non-lethal events that often influenced decisions to leave Iraq, such as death threats, non-lethal explosions, fires, kidnappings, and beatings. With its bias toward large-scale, high-impact events within Baghdad, IBC underreports not only “ordinary” forms of violence, but also women’s and children’s deaths and Sunni deaths.

Among other unexpected findings, Gifford reported that her respondents overwhelmingly agreed on 2005-2007 as the peak of sectarian violence. Contrary to what outside observers might anticipate, the respondents did not describe Sadr City as the most violent neighborhood. Instead, they tended to believe that all neighborhoods were equally exposed to violence, and they underlined their belief that churches and mosques were sites likely to be targeted for violence.

Gifford is hoping that further research on informal ways of thinking about space and violence and on current concerns of Iraqis in Jordan and California will inform public policy decisions regarding the resettlement and rehabilitation of Iraqi refugees. While acknowledging the importance of empirical-



quantitative data in shaping the development of large-scale refugee assistance programs, this research also highlights the many weaknesses of such datasets collected during times of crisis. Observers of the Syrian conflict should keep in mind the large gaps in datasets such as Iraq Body Count and even those compiled by UNHCR as they attempt to filter such data for Syria and organize a response to the refugee crisis. Violent events that incite massive population movements during civil conflicts such as those in Iraq and Syria are commonly unreported or seriously underreported. Combining qualitative testimonies with quantitative datasets can help to better prepare the international community to deal with large-scale refugee flows and the specific needs of populations exposed to high levels of trauma and violence.

## Iraq Body Count (IBC)

IBC page	Latest incidents added	Date
<a href="#">x048</a>	5-21 in clashes southwest Baghdad	9 Apr 2003
<a href="#">x047</a>	Two men shot dead in an ambulance in Baghdad	9 Apr 2003
<a href="#">x046</a>	13 in crossfire Baghdad	8 Apr 2003
<a href="#">x043</a>	35 corpses received by Al-Kindi Hospital, Baghdad	8 Apr 2003
<a href="#">x042</a>	Two by tank fire at Palestine Hotel, Baghdad	8 Apr 2003
<a href="#">x041</a>	Al-Jazeera journalist by air attack in Baghdad	8 Apr 2003
<a href="#">j027</a>	4 children disturbing cluster bomblets, SW Baghdad	7 Apr 2003- 15 Apr 2003
<a href="#">x051-i</a>	Two children by UXO in Dura, Baghdad	7 Apr 2003- 9 Apr 2003
<a href="#">x079a</a>	11 by tank fire south of Baghdad	7 Apr 2003
<a href="#">j019</a>	Two journalists by missile strike near Baghdad	7 Apr 2003
<a href="#">k003</a>	9-14 by missile strike in Mansour, Baghdad	7 Apr 2003

# From *Ghawgha*'s to Iraqi-Americans: The Two-Decade Metamorphosis of Iraqi Refugees in America

## AT A GLANCE:

1. Dr. Abbas Kadhim talked about his personal journey from Basra, Iraq to the Artawiyya refugee camp in Saudi Arabia and onto to a successful career in the United States, where he is actively involved in the affairs of the Iraqi-American community.
2. Although the basic needs of Artawiyya refugees were met, security measures were exceedingly strict and only primary medical care was immediately available, where Dr. Kadhim volunteered to assist.
3. In an important lesson for Syrian refugees, Iraqi refugees resettled in the U.S. faced many challenges long after the wars ended; resettlement is a protracted experience.

Dr. Abbas Kadhim, Assistant Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School and Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Institute for Iraqi Studies, spoke about his journey from a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia to a successful career in the United States, where he has been actively involved with the affairs of the Iraqi-American community.

After the Gulf War ceasefire on February 28, 1991, a popular uprising began in Basra and the marshlands of southern Iraq. The rebels, labeled *ghawgha*'s (“rabble rousers” or “mob”) by Saddam’s government, took over all provinces south of Baghdad by mid-March 1991. But when the regime recovered from this setback, it struck back with vengeance, prompting the survivors to flee their hometowns where they could no longer be safe. One of these refugees was Abbas Kadhim, who fled to Basra that was then under the control of American forces. As the U.S. forces withdrew and with Saddam remaining in power, the 40,000 refugees in Basra were transferred by the U.S. authorities to Saudi custody. In May 1991, families were housed in the “official” Rafha camp, whereas 13,000 single men were taken to a desert camp near Artawiyya in northern Saudi Arabia.

Although the basic needs of Artawiyya refugees were met, security measures were exceedingly strict and only primary medical care was immediately available. When the UNHCR launched a resettlement project in May-June 1991, Kadhim volunteered to work long hours as interpreter. In July 1992, he left the camp for San Francisco along with three other refu-

gees. That year the U.S. agreed to take in 1,200 refugees for resettlement, but the process continued until 1995 with a yearly rate of 3,000 refugees permitted entry to the U.S.

A number of the resettled refugees faced adjustment issues, legal problems, language barriers, and the disappointment of low-status, unsuitable jobs, although prospects were brighter for married people and English speakers. Kadhim was contacted by the International Rescue Committee to work as a caseworker for newly resettled Iraqi refugees, which gave him a hectic schedule and invaluable experience.

Most Iraqi refugees who came to the U.S. after the Gulf War successfully reunited with their families, received an education, created businesses, and supported their families in Iraq through the time of sanctions. Shedding the demeaning label of ghawgha'is, Abbas Kadhim and others like him became well-integrated American citizens who have been helping in the resettlement of a new wave of Iraqi refugees that began in 2003.

Although Iraqis are among the three largest refugee groups arriving in the US for resettlement, there has been a dramatic drop in resettlement ceilings since 1980 overall. After the U.S. administration lifted the ceiling and allowed 12,000 Iraqis to be resettled in 2007, the numbers have been on the rise, reaching 13,823 in 2008, 18,838 in 2009, and 18,018 in 2011.



# Iraqi Refugees: Experiences of Resettlement in America

## AT A GLANCE:

1. Ms. Woelfel honed in on the experiences of one Iraqi Shi'i family in the Greater Boston area for her presentation.
2. The family she presented found the lack of an Iraqi Shi'i community a tremendous obstacle to their resettlement and simultaneously a signifier of their survival.
3. The example of this family demonstrates that at least some Iraqi refugees have sought a meaningful sense of community that is rooted in religious ritual life, and harkens back to a powerful historical legacy in Iraq.

Heidemarie Woelfel, a PhD Candidate at Boston University and Visiting Lecturer at Framingham State University, has been studying resettled Iraqi families in the Boston area and the transformation of their religious identities. Ms. Woelfel centered her talk on the experiences of a single Iraqi Shi'i family in the Greater Boston area she worked with in the capacity of IRC-affiliated "family mentor." Viewing themselves as "keepers of Shi'ism," this family and their circle of friends have been looking for a sense of religious community in the U.S. The communal experience of coming together with other believers for the commemoration of Muharram in New York City strengthened their sense of Shi'i identity. Claiming space for the particular expression of their faith through ritual ceremonies becomes an important signifier of the survival of their distinctive identity as Shi'i Muslims in North America, precisely because the survival of their faith is part and parcel of the ethos of Shi'i piety. As Shi'i Muslims from Baghdad, their religious identity is intertwined with the preservation of a particular way of life, a life informed by social class and an urban culture of the Iraqi capital city, Baghdad.

The example of this family illustrates that they not only seek to recreate a familiar sense of community, but to recapture the historical legacy of an Iraq that flourished in the context of Iraq's diverse ethnic, sectarian and social ingredients. It is clear that the Shi'i community in the United States (U.S.) is not a monolith. Instead, the Iraqi Shi'i migrants in the U.S. join an array of fellow Shi'i Muslims from diverse national, ethnic, linguistic religious traditions.



# A Personal Account

## AT A GLANCE:

1. Dr. Almaliky spoke about his experience in Rafha refugee camp in Saudi Arabia, where he also assisted with the administration of health services.
2. Despite tent-shattering dust storms and common misunderstandings with Saudi guards, Dr. Almaliky spoke of refugee life that included an active religious and intellectual community and created long-lasting bonds with one another.
3. Dr. Almaliky offered three areas from his experiences in Rafha as potential lessons for Syrian refugees who may be living in similar situations.

Muhamed Almaliky, a physician and Harvard University Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Fellow spoke about his experience in Rafha refugee camp in Saudi Arabia. As a junior medical doctor from a middle-class Shi'i family, Almaliky participated in the Basra rebellion following the humiliation of the war with Kuwait. After the last outpost of rebellion was taken over by Republican Guards and after Baathist neighbors issued clear threats, Almaliky surrendered to American forces at the Saudi border and became a camp assistant. After the U.S. withdrawal, he was transferred to Rafha refugee camp, where he assisted with the administration of health services. Despite tent-shattering dust storms and common misunderstandings with Saudi guards, refugees led an active religious and intellectual life and created long-lasting bonds with one another. Almaliky noted that his experience in Rafha was a shaping event not only for him personally, but for many other refugees who thrived as successful professionals resettled in third countries. A few took senior posts in post-Saddam government(s).

Dr. Almaliky offered some lessons from Rafha to Syrian refugees currently facing a similar circumstance: the camp's life eventually was reduced to three concerns:

1. Survival and thriving within the constraints of the camp's conditions. Iraqis quickly took control over their affairs in the camp - entrusting professionals, tribal and religious leaders to negotiate with the host country and international agencies on their behalves. The camp quickly be-

came awash with sport, educational, art and religious activities. In a way the camp was an Iraqi statelet a few miles from the mother country.

2. Reorganizing for the original cause: refugees remained faithful to the cause that drove them out in the first place. The camp became a recruiting station for various secular and Islamic parties whose leaders frequented the camp from Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Europe.
3. Seeking an exit. Soon the prospect for return to Iraq faded and refugees started to look to third countries and with that the focus shifted from trying to save an injured country to securing future somewhere else.

## Main Themes and Concerns

Sectarianism and its impacts on politics in Syria and Iraq were frequent points of comparison and contrast during the workshop.

At the beginning of the Arab Spring and the ensuing civil war, the Syrian population was approximately 23 million[1], about 75% of whom were Sunni Muslims. Due to close economic and business relationships many of these Sunnis held ties to the political elites, who were largely Alawi, which constitutes a demographic minority at around 12%. Of the remaining Syrians, nearly 10% were Christian and 3% Druze. There were other residents of Syrian not officially recognized by the regime including Kurds and Palestinian Refugees.

Iraq in 2003, by contrast, had a larger population of around 30 million, approximately 60% of whom were Arab Shi'a Muslims excluded from high level government posts since before the inception of the state in 1932 [2]. As the home for the historical battleground for the Shi'a-Sunni split, Iraq is also home to Arab Sunnis (approximately 20% of the population) and Kurdish Sunnis (nearly 17% of the population), as well as around 3% non-Muslims of various Christian and other religious traditions.

Due to these very different sectarian demographics as well as the differences in ancient and modern relationships between them, the sectarian situations in Syria and Iraq are not the same. While acknowledging these differences, the workshop participants expressed a deep uncertainty about the role for sectarian politics in a post-Assad Syria. While Assad has been quick to color the Syrian conflict in terms of sectarianism, Syria is historically a diverse and socio-culturally integrated society, with more points for inter-religious, economic, and political cooperation than Iraq had experienced. The workshop participants indicated that, while neither the civil war nor the refugee experience have been largely defined in terms of sectarianism, the threat of this changing still loomed.

When speculating on the future sectarian-based outcomes of the Syrian war, workshop participants anticipated the most likely point of sectarian contention would emerge between Islamist parties and more secular, inclusive interests. One workshop participant predicted that the resistance would topple Assad, then emerge as a highly exclusivist Islamist regime, which would then be toppled by a more secular and inclusive revolution.

Some of these sectarian uncertainties are revealed in the Syrian case in ways that were not possible in the Iraqi case. The Arab Spring demonstrated that Syrians were highly connected to global affairs: all major Syrian cities provided private access to the internet and most villages had at least one internet café [3]. According to UNHCR High Commissioner Antonio Guterres, "Syrians are the most technologically advanced soci-

ety... to fall victim to a humanitarian crisis” [4]. Iraq, by contrast, suffered under 13 years of international economic sanctions in the 1990’s, rendering their technological capacities for political mobilization and information gathering quite muted.

As a result, we can know more about the internal events during the Syrian war in a quick and timely fashion. For example, we know that the degree to which Assad has intensified warfare and the use of weaponry against his own people was both severe and unanticipated. Workshop participants had not predicted that the war would go on this long. Also, it was not widely expected that Syrians would further entrench the resistance in the face of Assad’s use of Scud missiles, for example, on his own people. It was clarified that, although this may have taken people by surprise, the Syrian regime was built for warfare, as was demonstrated in Hama in 1982. Furthermore, attrition and resistance has strengthened Assad’s army, which has also been culled by the perseverance of the resistance movement.

**Notes:**

[1] All population figures and percentages are estimates.

[2] <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/03/201333115221748710.html>

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.



# Iraqi Refugee Crisis: The Key Facts

## AT A GLANCE:

1. There have been four waves of Iraqi refugees created in the last three decades.
2. There are over 1.4 million Iraqi refugees, with another 1.3 million IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons).
3. The Iraqi case is characterized by mixed migration patterns that are tied to the presence of established Iraqi communities in neighboring countries, typically in urban areas and cities rather than primarily or exclusively in camps.

Over the last three decades, the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf war of 1990-91, the U.S.-U.K. invasion of 2003 invasion and the ensuing intercommunal violence each precipitated massive waves of refugees to leave the country.

- As of January 2012, the UNHCR estimated that 1,428,308 Iraqis are refugees, 23,981 are asylum seekers, and 1,332,382 have been internally displaced [1]. The countries that host the largest number of Iraqis in the region are Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Turkey, and Gulf states. Outside of the Middle East, states with significant numbers of Iraqi refugees include Germany, U.K., Netherlands, Sweden, and the U.S. [2] (See [Figure 1.](#))
- During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980-1988, Fayli Kurds who lost their citizenship on the basis of their alleged Persian origin and Arab Shi'a from central and southern provinces of Iraq fled to Iran [3]. Some of them have since returned from camps and other locations.
- As a result of the first Gulf War (1990-1), a total of 400,000 Iraqi refugees were spread across 90 countries in the Middle East and other regions, more than half of them took refuge in the Islamic Republic of Iran [4]. Between 1991 and 2003, some 70,000 Iraqi refugees were resettled from asylum countries in the region to industrialized states, including 31,550 resettled refugees in the U.S., 12,220 in Canada, and 12,030 in Australia. (See [Figure 2.](#))
- The estimates of Iraqi refugees that left the country following the U.S.-led 2003 invasion and the following civil war are complicated by multiple waves of exodus and the lack of reliable

statistical information on entire groups of refugees. According to UNHCR estimates, 2.4 million Iraqis were displaced internally as of November 21, 2007, including 1,021,962 who were displaced before the 2003 invasion, 190,146 displaced between 2003 and 2005, 1,199,491 displaced after the February 2006 Samarra bombing, and 28,017 displaced during October 2007 [5].

- Unlike scenarios of classic refugee exodus, the Iraqi case is characterized by mixed migration patterns that are related to the presence of established Iraqi communities in neighboring countries, the phenomenon of Iraqis who go to nearby states for temporary visits and employment instead of resettlement, recurrent return trips to Iraq, and close links with the global Iraqi diaspora [6].
- Iraqi refugees, in contrast to other, camp-based refugee groups, are dispersed in cities, often get no aid from host countries or the international community, have an uncertain legal status, face ambivalence and wariness from host governments, and are difficult to reach by governments and aid organizations [7].
- The IRC investigation in 2011 concluded that many displaced Iraqis still live under tenuous conditions and are unable to return to their home country due to security concerns, whereas others are being forcefully deported to Iraq from regional and European countries of asylum without legal protection [8].
- By December 2007, only 4,575 Iraqi refugees had left their countries of first asylum for resettlement in third countries. Just over 3,100 Iraqis were resettled to industrialized countries, and 20,472 more were referred by UNHCR for resettlement consideration. Of those Iraqi refugees, 14,798 cases were referred to the United States and 5,674 to Australia, Canada, Denmark, U.K., New Zealand, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Ireland, Spain, Germany, Chile, Ireland, and Brazil [9].
- Although small numbers of refugees had been resettled in the U.S. previous years, in 2007 the administration lifted the resettlement ceilings to allow for large scale Iraqi refugee-processing [see Figure 3]. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), an organization in charge of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, handles refugee referrals from the UNHCR, U.S. embassies, and certain NGOs [10]. According to Human Rights First, the U.S. resettlement program is still impeded by numerous flaws, including case processing delays, inefficient security clearance process, lack of a transparent procedure for expediting the resettlement of refugees in imminent physical danger, and low application levels [11].

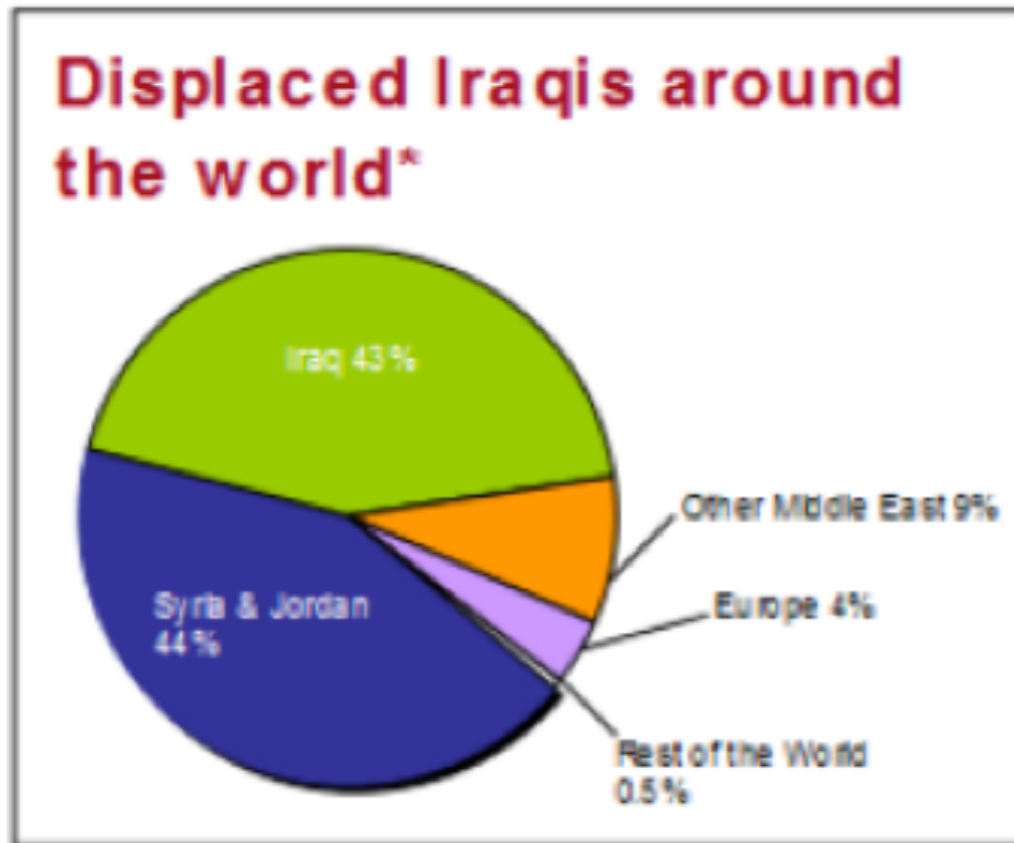
The major issues faced by resettled Iraqi refugees in the U.S. are failure to obtain employment despite the efforts of both the refugees and the IRC staff, risk of homelessness, threats of eviction, high levels of trauma, injury, and chronic illness, and the overall uncertainty about the future [12].

## References:

- [1] UNHCR. “2013 UNHCR country operations profile – Iraq.” <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html>
- [2] UNHCR. “Statistics of Displaced Iraqis around the World – April 2007.” <http://www.unhcr.org/461f7cb92.html>
- [3] UNHCR. “UNHCR Global Report 1999 – Islamic Republic of Iran At a Glance.” <http://www.unhcr.org/3e2d4d5e0.html>
- [4] UNHCR. “Iraqi Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Statistics – March 2003.” <http://www.unhcr.org/3e79b00b9.html>
- [5] UNHCR Briefing Notes. “Iraq: UNHCR cautious about returns - November 23, 2007.” <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/telex/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=4746da102>
- [6] UNHCR. “Surviving in the City: A Review of UNHCR’s Operation for Iraqi Refugees in Urban Areas of Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.” <http://www.unhcr.org/4a69ad639.pdf#zoom=66>
- [7] IRC. “Five Years Later, A Hidden Crisis: Report of the IRC Commission on Iraqi Refugees.” [http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/migrated/resources/2008/iraq\\_report.pdf](http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/migrated/resources/2008/iraq_report.pdf)
- [8] IRC. “Iraqi Displacement: Eight Years Later Durable Solutions Still Out of Reach.” <http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/resource-file/Iraqi%20Displacement%20Eight%20Years%20Later.pdf>
- [9] Migration Policy Institute. “The Iraqi Refugee Crisis: The Need for Action.” [http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/mpi-the\\_Iraqi\\_refugee\\_crisis\\_the\\_need\\_for\\_action\\_011808.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/mpi-the_Iraqi_refugee_crisis_the_need_for_action_011808.pdf)
- [10] USCIS. “Iraqi Refugee Processing Fact Sheet.” <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnnextchannel=68439c7755cb9010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRD&vgnnextoid=df4c47c9de5ba110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD>
- [11] Human Rights First. “Living in Limbo: Iraqi Refugees and U.S. Resettlement.” <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/Living-in-Limbo-final.pdf>
- [12] IRC. “Iraqi Refugees in the United States: In Dire Straits.” [http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/resource-file/irc\\_report\\_iraqcommission.pdf](http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/resource-file/irc_report_iraqcommission.pdf)

## Figures and Graphs

Figure 1: Displaced Iraqis around the world, as of April 2007



Source: UNHCR, Statistics on Displaced Iraqis around the World



**Figure 2: Resettlement of Iraqi refugees, 1991-2001**

**Resettlement of Iraqi refugees 1991-2001**

<i>Resettlement country</i>	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
United States	840	3,440	4,610	4,980	3,480	2,530	2,680	1,410	1,960	3,150	2,470	31,550
Canada	270	1,170	2,230	1,340	1,160	1,140	1,150	780	690	1,160	1,130	12,220
Australia	-	-	1,330	950	2,250	1,520	1,440	1,500	1,390	1,100	550	12,030
Sweden	440	1,580	110	650	540	-	330	270	150	340	250	4,660
Netherlands	-	230	220	460	470	390	120	30	10	10	110	2,050
Denmark	40	160	250	170	330	250	290	200	130	60	70	1,950
New Zealand	200	100	10	220	320	140	270	240	170	50	80	1,800
Norway	-	-	200	20	-	-	620	220	180	90	130	1,460
Finland	-	-	-	-	-	-	340	-	120	150	90	700

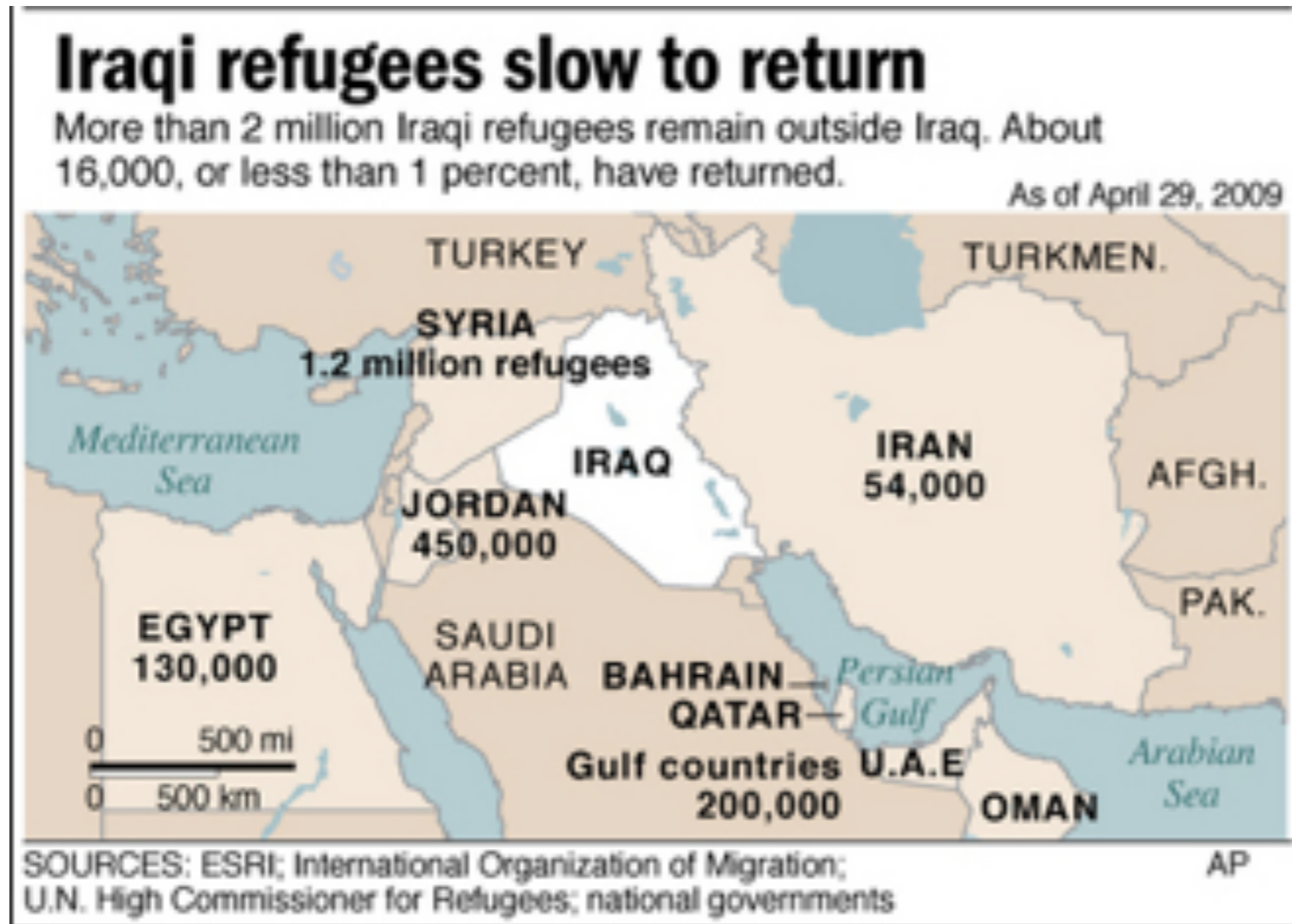
Source: [UNHCR Media Relations and Public Information Service](#)

**Figure 3: USCIS Iraqi refugee processing, as of March 31, 2012**

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	*FY 2012	*TOTAL
Referrals to USRAP	12,098	28,769	49,276	46,472	39,878	9,604	186,097
USCIS Interviews	4,437	23,862	29,096	27,277	26,831	7,730	199,233
Approved by USCIS	2,909	18,674	25,238	24,021	22,323	5,688	98,853
Admitted to U.S.	1,608	13,823	18,838	18,016	9,388	2,501	64,174

Source: [USCIS Iraqi Refugee Processing Fact Sheet](#)

Figure 4: Iraqi refugees slow to return



Source: [Iraqis Staying Put Despite Relative Calm](#)

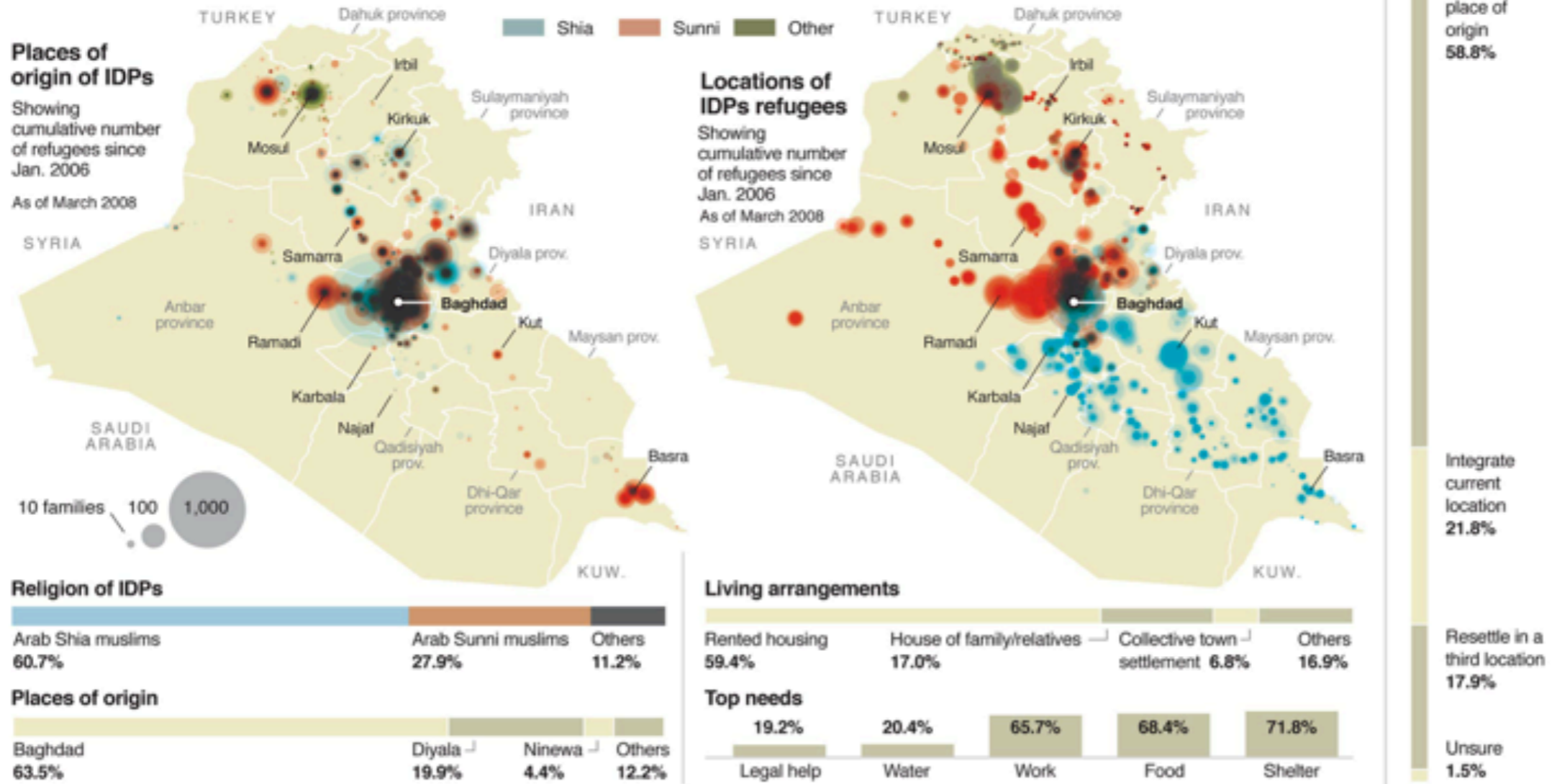
**Figure 5: Displaced Iraqis followed different paths to refuge**

## Displaced Iraqis followed different paths to refuge

An estimated 1.3 million people have been displaced in Iraq since the beginning of 2006, which results in a total of 2.4 million to date.

Internal displacement has slowed, and a fraction of the population has returned, however the humanitarian condition of the migrants is

worsening. Many are unable to return to their original home because it is destroyed, occupied, or exists in an unstable neighborhood.



SOURCE: International Organization for Migration

John Parsons, AP News Research Center; N. Rapp /AP

Source: [Displaced Iraqis followed different paths to refuge](#)

# Syrian Refugee Crisis: The Key Facts

## AT A GLANCE:

1. One in six Syrians has been displaced from their homes.
2. Over 50% of the displaced persons are under 18, and are women and children.
3. There is a significant “Giving Gap” between the amounts given in assistance and the amounts pledged, often reported between 10%-30%.
4. Refugees are displaced within Syria and to the surrounding countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq.

After three years of conflict, one in six Syrians has been displaced from their homes (the same ratio as Iraqis displaced at the height of the Iraq war). Within Syria, the U.N. estimates that 3.6 million have been internally displaced, although it is more likely closer to four million people [1]. In total, there are some 5.5 million people in Syria (approximately a quarter of the population) in need, and an additional estimated 1.7 million who have fled the country either as registered refugees or awaiting registration [2]. Approximately 51 percent of the displaced are under 18, and the majority are women and children. Due to concerns about the conflict spreading, men of fighting age are often discouraged or disallowed from entering the refugee camps. As the conflict is approaching a phase of “exponential growth,” the number of displaced persons is also expected to increase.

In December 2012, a Regional Response Plan 4 was launched by the U.N. with the supportive cooperation of a number of NGOs and humanitarian organizations, who requested more than \$1.5 billion from the U.N. to support operations in and outside of Syria, which was the largest humanitarian appeal in the U.N.’s history. Although the humanitarian community pledged more than \$1.5 billion at the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria on January 30, 2013, in Kuwait, less than a third had been paid as of late March 2013 [3] (See Table 3.) By the end of April, 2013, the gap between pledged and paid contributions has been reduced to 55% [4].

Meanwhile, the surrounding countries that have absorbed Syria’s refugees (Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq) are suf-



fering from the pressure. In Jordan, the country does not have the financial capacity to safely and sufficiently accommodate the refugees. The Syrian refugees now make up 5 percent of Jordan's total population, and there has been protest and unrest at the camps. In Lebanon, 62 percent of the refugees are not in camps, making it very difficult for UNHCR to serve them. Additionally, Lebanon already has a large refugee population from Palestine, and is suffering from internal political instability [5]. Turkey is relatively better equipped to absorb the refugees, but with 17 out of the total 23 Syrian refugee camps, Turkey's willingness to further fund prospective refugees is waning. There are camps in Iraq, but international agencies have no access to them because of Iraq's internal security problems. Across all the host countries, concerns exist about the refugees carrying conflict over the border, and about the probability of the refugees becoming semi-permanent. For the Syrian refugees, without adequate tracking, camp funding, and legitimate legal status, they face extreme vulnerability to violence, abuse, and lack of basic services.

**Notes:**

1. Regional Analysis for Syria, March 2013, found here: <http://www.acaps.org/en/news/snap/2>
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>
5. <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/08/17/lebanon-and-the-syria-crisis/>

# The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Graphs and Statistics

Useful graphics about the progression of UNHCR refugees can be found here:

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

**Figure 6: Syrian refugee population projections for June 2013**

Breakdown of Syrian refugee population planning figure up to June 2013<sup>1</sup>

	Syrian refugee population as of 12 December 2012	Projected Syrian refugee population by end of June 2013
Jordan	144,997*	300,000
Lebanon	156,612*	300,000
Turkey	137,756**	380,000
Iraq	65,527*	90,000
Egypt	10,169*	30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>515,061</b>	<b>1,100,000</b>

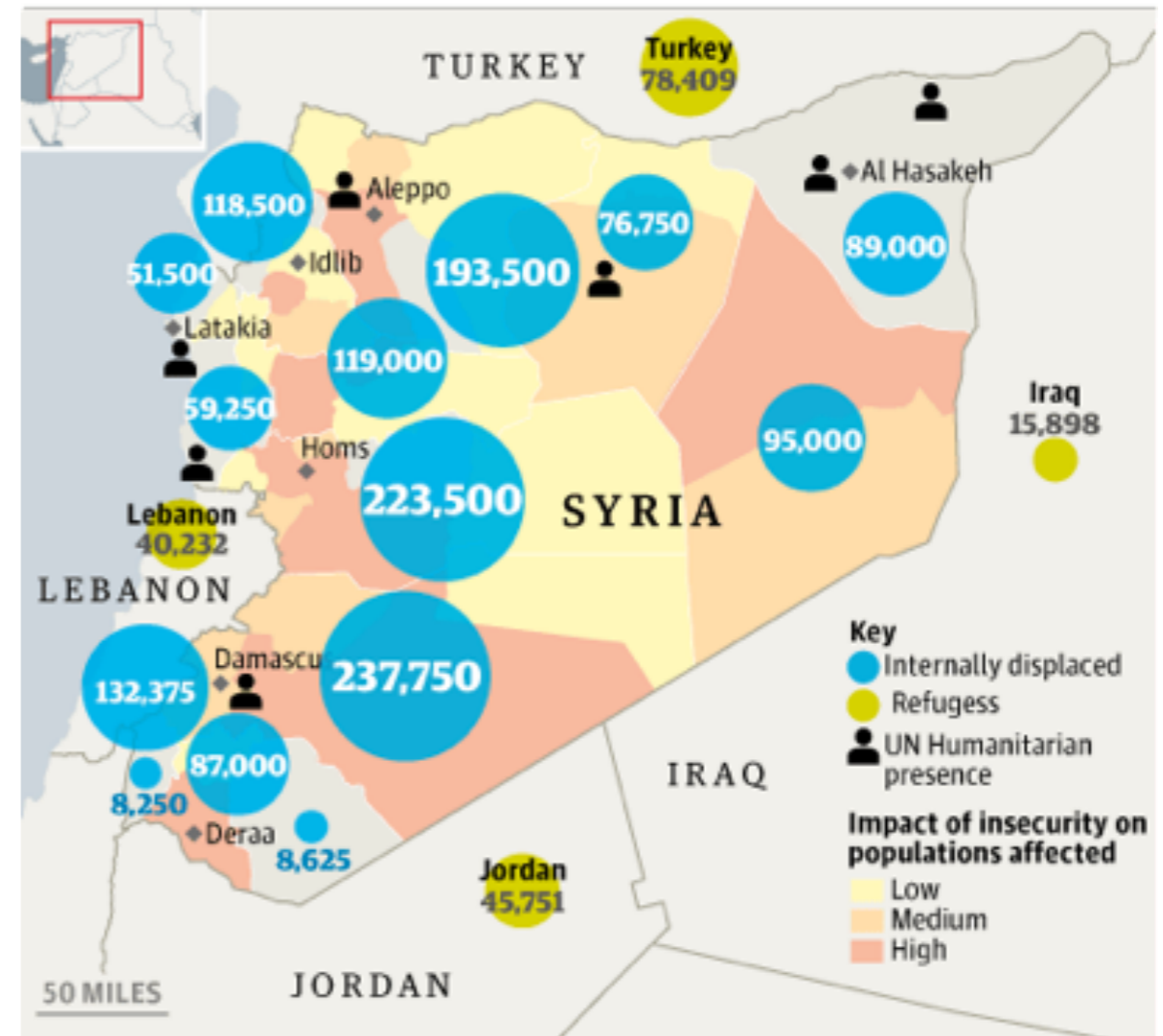
\* Registered with UNHCR or awaiting registration.

\*\* This figure only includes Syrian refugees currently registered and assisted in camps by the Government of Turkey. To date Turkey has assisted over 190,000 Syrian refugees, some of whom have since returned to their country. According to the authorities, there are also 60,000 to 70,000 Syrian refugees living in urban locations across Turkey.

Source: [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/2013\\_Syria\\_RRP.pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/2013_Syria_RRP.pdf), from p. 9

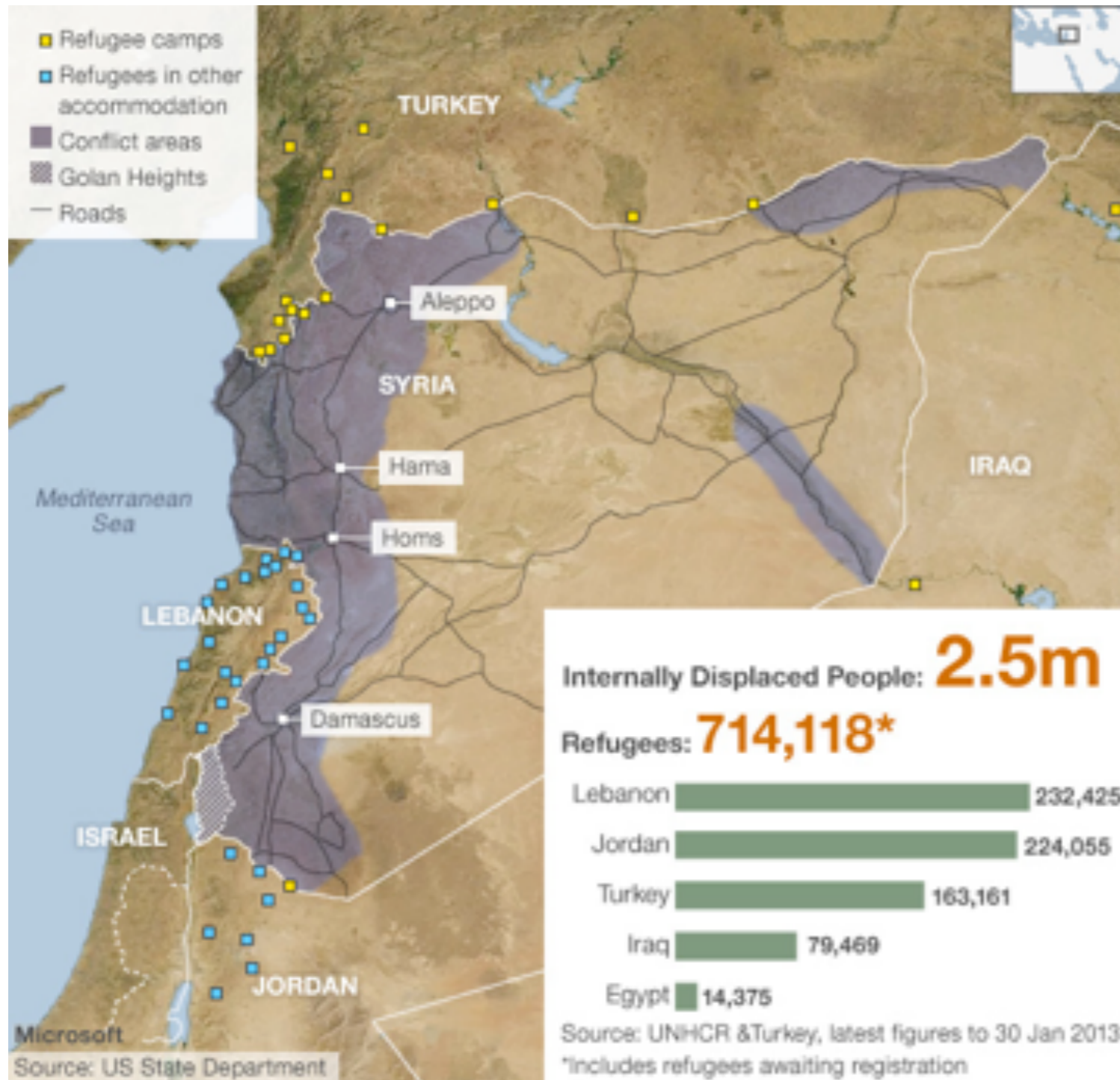
**Figure 7: Syria numbers of refugees and internally displaced people**

**Syria Numbers of refugees and internally displaced people**



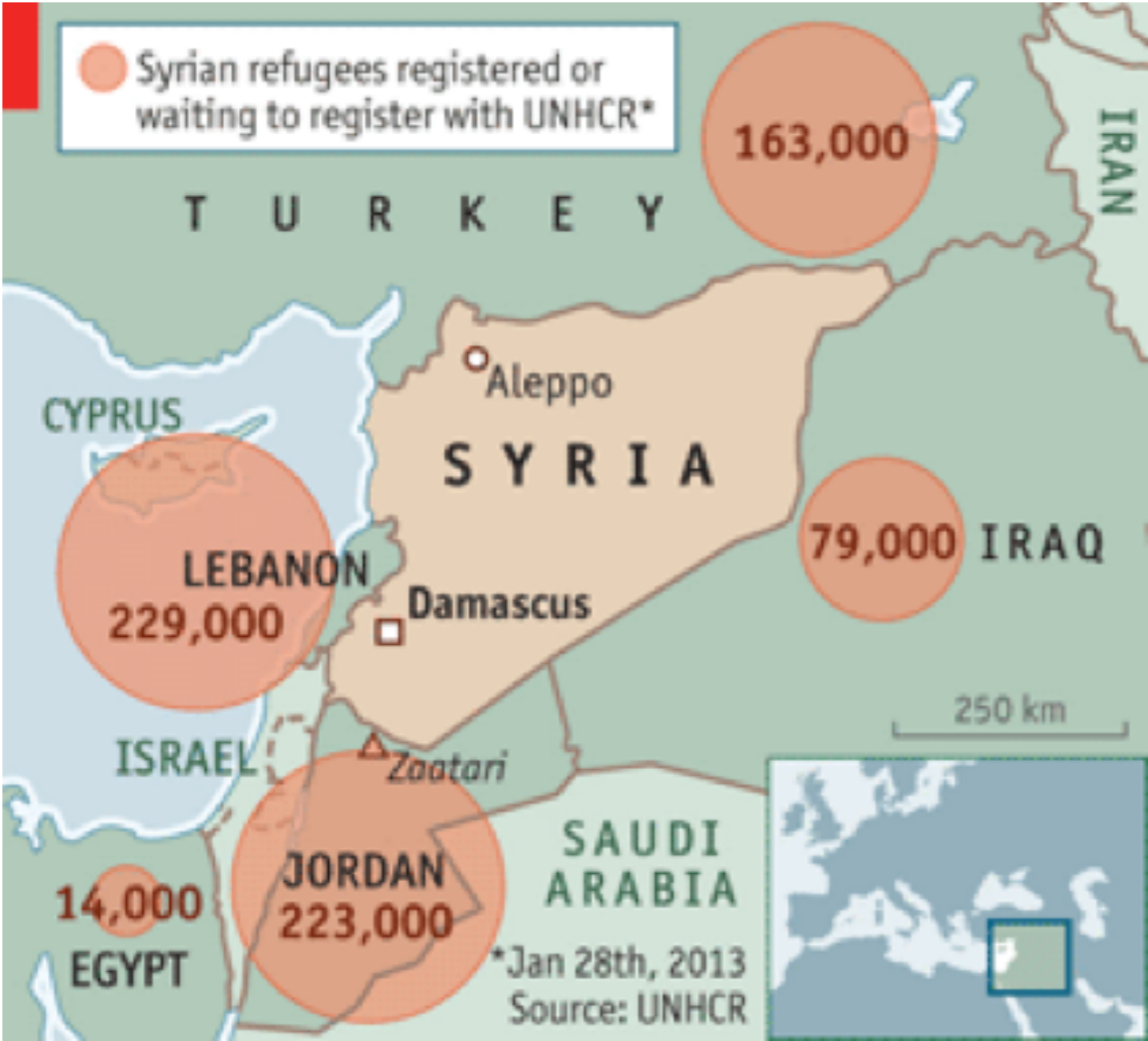
Source: <http://politicalviolenceatagance.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/syrian-refugees-001.png>

**Figure 8: Internally displaced people and refugees**



Source: US State Department

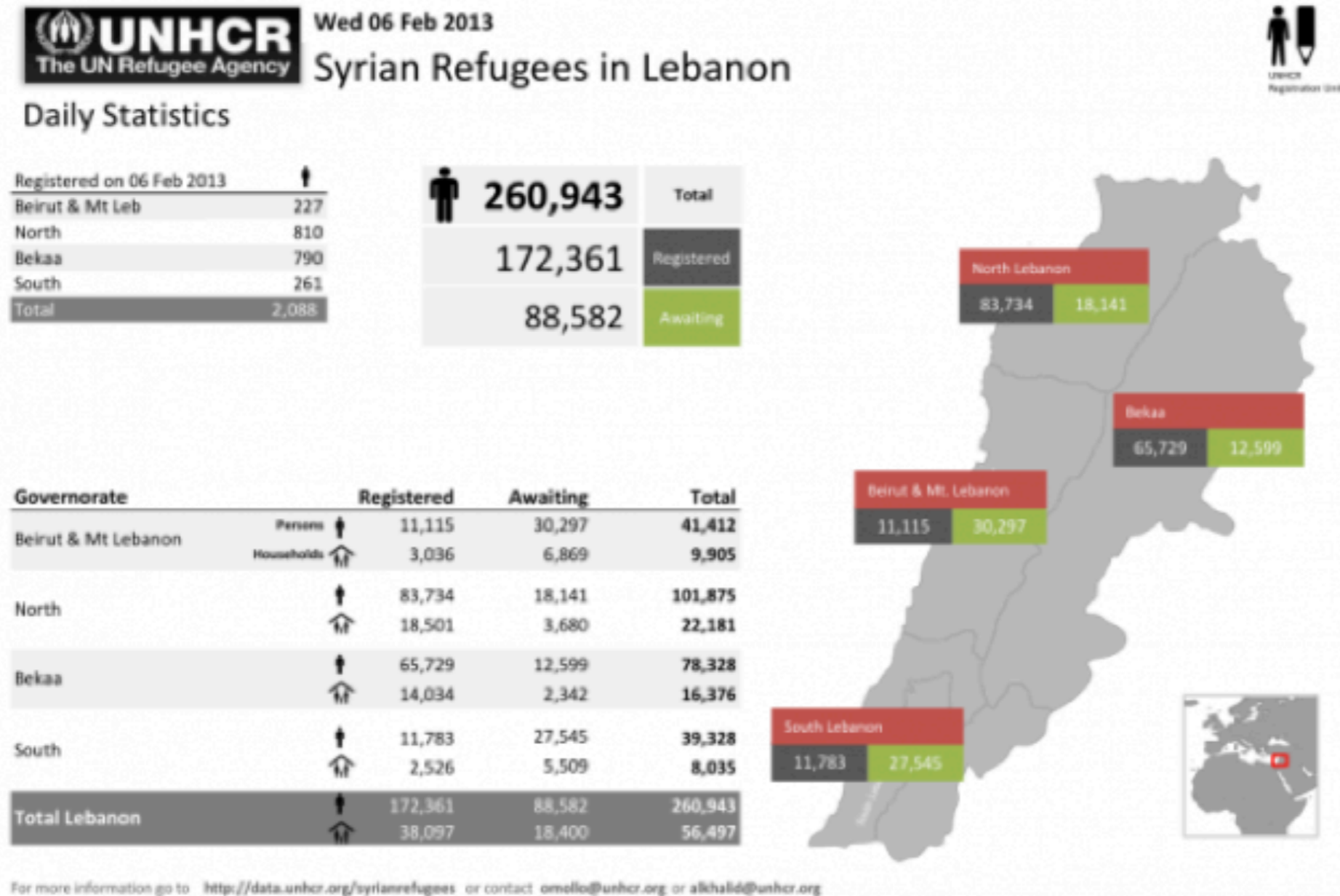
Figure 9: Syrian refugees registered or waiting to register with UNHCR, as of Jan 28, 2013



Source: UNHCR



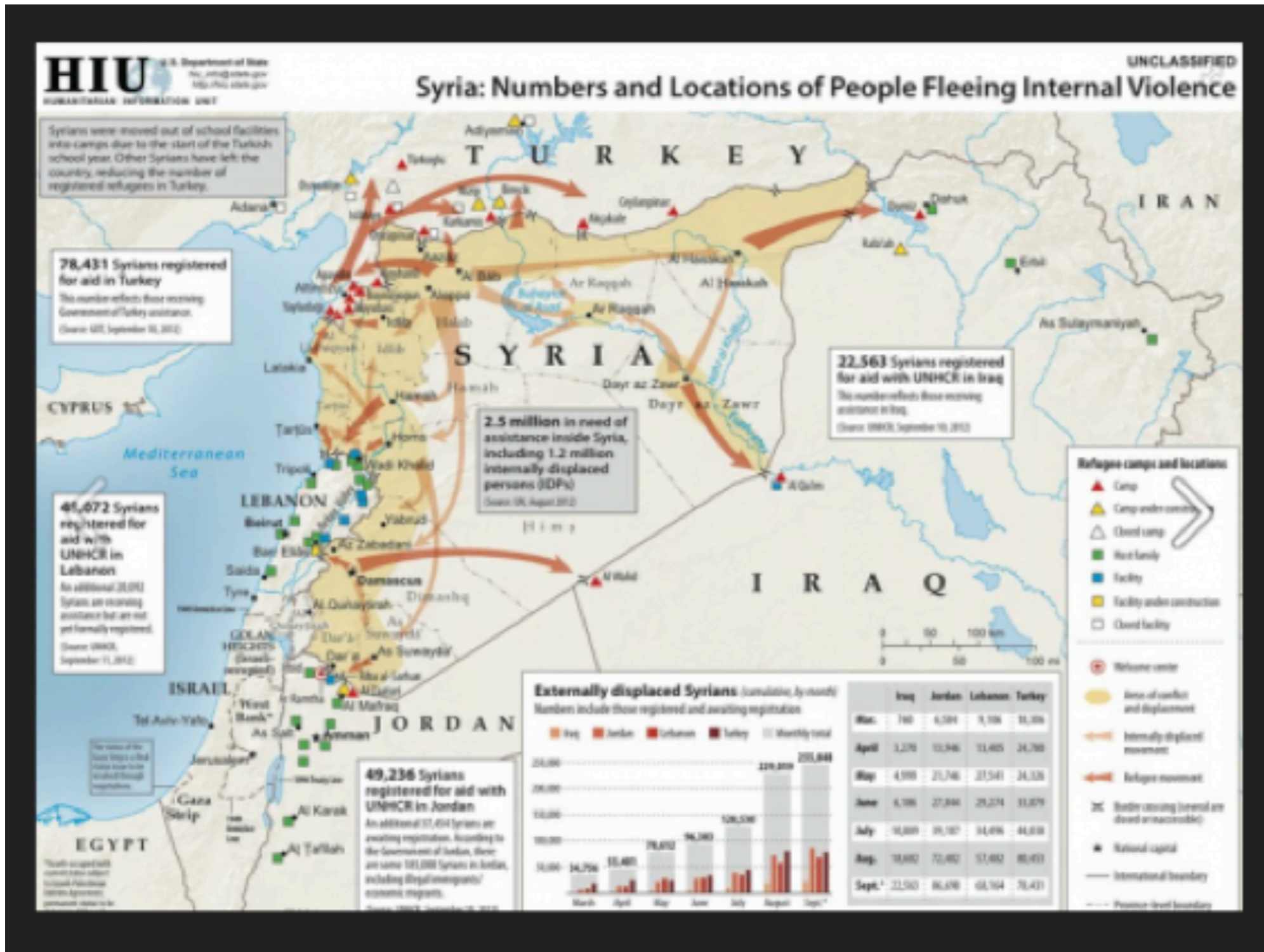
Figure 10: Syrian refugees in Lebanon



Source: <http://img.static.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/styles/attachment-large/public/resources-pdf-previews/139156-Syrian%20Refugees%20in%20Lebanon%20Daily%20Statistics%20as%20of%2006%20Feb%202013.png>

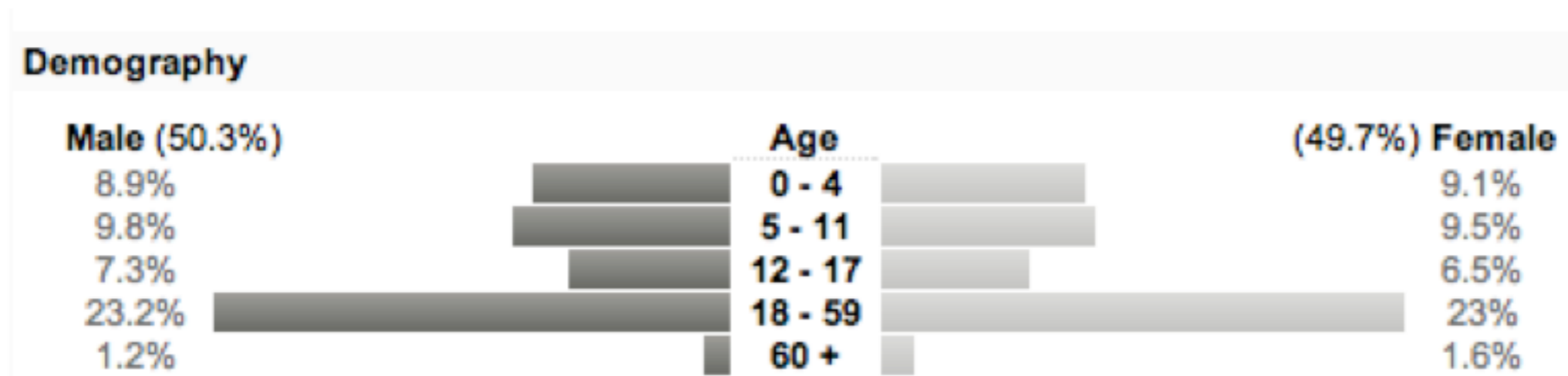


Figure 11: Syria: numbers and locations of people fleeing internal violence



Source: [http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-ioYsCrijoyY/UN2GpCbc\\_4I/AAAAAAAAAHE/Z3\\_4LIvgTcI/s1600/AAAAA.png](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-ioYsCrijoyY/UN2GpCbc_4I/AAAAAAAAAHE/Z3_4LIvgTcI/s1600/AAAAA.png)

**Figure 12: Demography of Syrian refugees**



Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

# International Involvement in the Syrian Refugee Crisis

## AT A GLANCE:

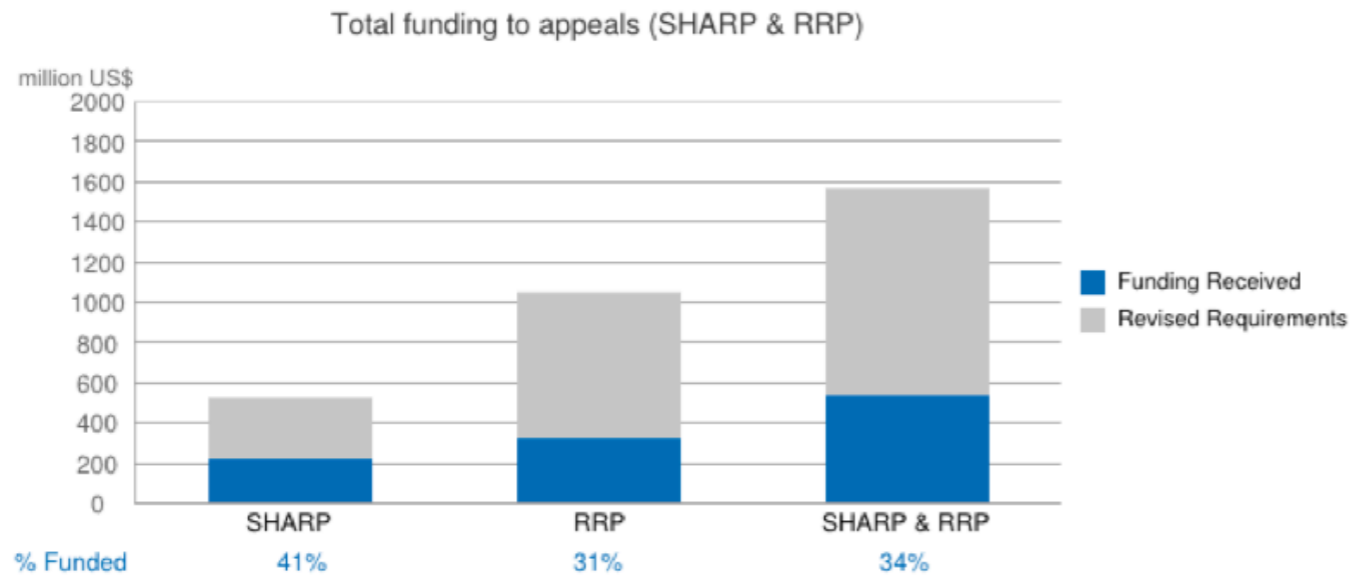
1. A primary need is to fulfill pledged assistance and provide cash flows to service providers.
2. There are immediate needs for assistance locating and registering refugees.
3. There are critical needs for providing security and policing in the refugee camps.
4. There are pressing needs for assistance with securing food, water, and healthcare, particularly reproductive healthcare.

More than 6 million people are affected by the crisis and in need of humanitarian assistance [1]. The role for international involvement has never been greater. Over 55 governments and international organizations from over 43 countries have pledged financial support.

## Fulfilling Pledged Assistance

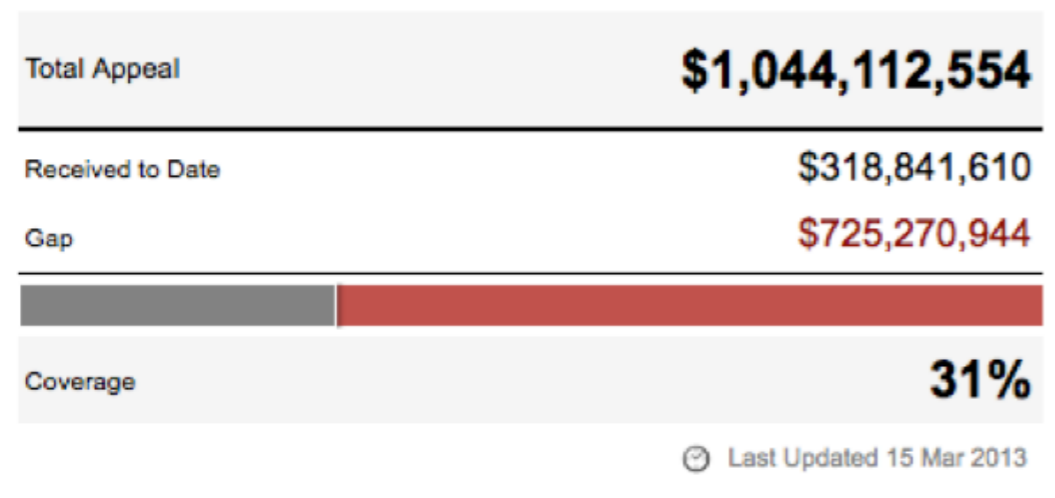
One of the major difficulties in addressing the Syrian Refugee Crisis is reconciling the amount of financial assistance pledged and the amounts required to sufficiently address the problem with the amounts allocated and given. At the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria on January 30, 2013, representatives from member states, UN agencies and NGOs gathered to further pledge their assistance. Of the amounts pledged, nearly \$1 billion is earmarked for the Refugee Response Plan (RRP), which will support the refugees in neighboring countries of Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt. The Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) requires more than \$519 million to help over 4 million people inside Syria, including an estimated 2 million people who have been forced from their homes by the violence. Yet, as of late March, 2013, well less than half of the pledged contributions had been paid [2].

**Table 1: Total funding to appeals (SHARP & RRP)**



Source: <http://www.unocha.org/syria-humanitarian-pledging-conference>

**Table 2: Gap between pledged and received funding, as of 15 March, 2013**



Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

This difference between the amounts pledged and funding received is significant. Approximately 20-30% of the funds pledged [3] have been realized as cash assistance, and the shortfall in funding has directly affected the well-being of many suffering Syrians. In



mid-April, 2013, the U.N. World Food Programme, for example, indicated that it would need cut food aid within the month if funding is not immediately provided [4].

One of the most important and immediate efforts that international organizations can do is to fulfill their pledges, and to turn their voices of support into financial support. Though the funding gap between pledged and allocated amounts continues to close, the RRP and SHARP programs are only operating with 61% and 55% of pledged funds, respectively (see Table 3), from the 1.5 billion pledged at the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria on January 30, 2013.

**Table 3: Funding to the Syria crisis**

**Syrian Arab Republic Civil Unrest, 2013 Humanitarian Funding : Actual**

<b>Total Funding to the Syrian Crisis 2013 (appeals &amp; other reported funding) * US\$</b>
<b>\$1,283,043,291</b>
(Pledges: \$805,017,695)

Appeal Funding below dotted line

Total funding to appeals (SHARP & RRP)				
Original requirements	Revised requirements	Funding received	Unmet requirements	% funded
\$1,563,739,601	\$1,607,575,169	\$915,640,505	\$691,934,664	57%

Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP): January - June 2013 **				
Original requirements	Revised requirements	Funding received	Unmet requirements	% funded
\$519,627,047	\$563,462,615	\$342,965,023	\$220,497,592	61%

Syria Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP): January - June 2013 ***				
Original requirements	Revised requirements	Funding received	Unmet requirements	% funded
\$1,044,112,554	\$1,044,112,554	\$572,675,482	\$471,437,072	55%

**Notes:**  
 \* This funding includes donor commitments and contributions towards the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) and the Syria Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), as well as contributions outside these frameworks (to UN agencies, NGOs or the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement) in Syria and neighbouring countries, as reported to FTS and UNHCR.  
 \*\* Source: OCHA Financial Tracking Service as of today [http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/OCHA\\_R32sum\\_A1007.PDF](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/OCHA_R32sum_A1007.PDF)  
 \*\*\* Source: UNHCR as of 15 March 2013 <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>  
 To view the funding for 2012, follow this link: [Syria 2012 Humanitarian Funding](#)

Source: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?key=0AusGu5uwbtt-dEpoEHRzcWdVd2hBQmpBVWwxUHRjcUE&single=true&gid=0&output=html>

Of the countries that pledged 1 million dollars or more at the at the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria on January 30, 2013, their fulfillment of pledges breaks down in the following ways:

**Table 4: Country pledges and commitments**

Country	Total Assistance Pledged January - June 2013	SHARP Committed (as of 4 May, 2013)	RRP Committed (as of 4 April, 2013)	Total Committed	Fulfilled as %
Netherlands	6,631,300	None Reported	7,033,231	7,033,231	106%
Kuwait	300,000,000	78,210,100	221,789,900	300,000,000	100%
United Kingdom	80,775,444	75,435,880	4,552,352	79,988,232	99%
Australia	10,362,694	5,233,505	4,081,633	9,315,138	90%
China	1,200,000	None Reported	1,000,000	1,000,000	83%
USA	155,000,000	68,698,300	56,960,000	125,658,300	81%
Spain	4,000,000	2,747,102	None Reported	2,747,102	69%
Canada	25,000,000	16,773,649	None Reported	16,773,649	67%
Ireland	6,200,000	2,690,759	1,356,852	4,047,611	65%
European Union	132,625,995	35,396,494	45,390,669	80,787,163	61%
Finland	4,641,910	1,356,852	1,356,852	2,713,704	58%
Japan	65,000,000	5,000,000	26,000,000	31,000,000	48%
Germany	13,262,599	2,587,322	2,633,991	5,221,313	39%
Luxembourg	3,978,780	1,504,530	None Reported	1,504,530	38%
Belgium	8,620,690	1,308,901	1,356,852	2,665,753	31%
Switzerland	10,976,948	1,615,226	1,619,870	3,235,096	29%
Norway	37,756,203	688,942	5,475,452	6,164,394	16%
Republic of Korea	3,000,000	None Reported	300,000	300,000	10%
Saudi Arabia	78,000,000	2,160,000	None Reported	2,160,000	3%
Sweden	23,000,000	425,401	None Reported	425,401	2%
Bahrain	20,000,000	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
Denmark	10,140,544	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
France	9,946,950	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
India	2,500,000	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
Iraq	10,000,000	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
Italy	29,177,719	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
Mauritania	1,000,000	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
Morocco	4,000,000	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
United Arab Emirates	300,000,000	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported

Information for Table 4 was consolidated from: [https://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/HumPledgingConf\\_Summary.pdf](https://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/HumPledgingConf_Summary.pdf), <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/97877/Promised-aid-funding-for-Syria-reaches-half-way-point>, [http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=search-reporting\\_display&CQ=cq201212112840wfBcr9m7qv&orderby=USD\\_comm itdisbu&showDetails=](http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=search-reporting_display&CQ=cq201212112840wfBcr9m7qv&orderby=USD_comm itdisbu&showDetails=) , <http://www.irinnews.org/report/97395/Breakdown-of-Syria-aid-pledges-in-Kuwait>, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=1753> , <http://www.irinnews.org/report/97395/Breakdown-of-Syria-aid-pledges-in-Kuwait>

Although the Netherlands has provided more than the amount pledged, Kuwait has come through as the major donor of 2013, single-handedly sustaining relief efforts [5]. With the exception of the Netherlands, the European showing has been disappointing: reporting up to 69% of pledged funds allocated (Spain), but more frequently reporting less than 40% (e.g. Germany, Luxembourg, and Belgium). The United States has fulfilled 81% of its pledges, and the United Kingdom is nearly complete with 99% of pledges allocated.

### **Locating and Registering Refugees**

As of April 5, 2013, there were 4,250,000 internally displaced persons in Syria, and an additional 1,251,322 refugees registered and awaiting registration [6]. As of March 23, 2013, there were 1,175,915 Syrian refugees, which highlights a high growth rate of over 75,000 people in two weeks.

The challenges of locating and registering refugees are complicated by a variety of factors [7]:

- Lack of information on unregistered refugees for the international community: Unregistered refugees are not fully covered by the UNHCR's data portal, resulting in an important information gap.
- Lack of reporting on those that return to Syria: Some refugees have returned to Syria in order to participate in the fighting, take care of possessions, or because of discontent with conditions in the refugee camps.
- Differences in registration methodologies: Registration depends on capacity in-country to register refugees. As a result, a sudden increase of registered refugees may reflect an actual increase of daily arrivals. It might also indicate that a new registration office is opened or that the capacity of current registration offices has been augmented.
- Differences in assessment methodologies and measurements: Across the region, a multitude of assessments have been undertaken on a village or district level, using different methodologies. It is difficult to gain a comparative situational overview per country.



- Speed of situational change: Many assessments were conducted around mid-2012, when the refugee influx suddenly increased significantly. Even between January 2013 and the publication of this report, rates of refugees are changing quickly. With the highly dynamic nature of the crisis, information becomes quickly outdated.
- Unwillingness to register: Some refugees may be unwilling to become registered, for example if they fear reprisals from the regime, they do not have the resources to go to the registration area, or they do not know they need to register.

International and local organizations should work to utilize local networks and knowledge systems to best convey information about registration to the unregistered refugees in their areas, and utilize their international affiliations to coordinate a shared response plan and methodology to register and assess refugees. Though local knowledge is vital, a shared set of methodologies will make comparative work easier, thereby providing the international community with a more clear idea of the problems at hand.

For a list of cooperating international agencies, please see: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/partnerlist.php>

### **Food, Water, and Health Assistance**

Humanitarian needs for food, water, and health care grow daily. With the conflict already in the third year, it is estimated that the refugee population has grown dramatically. For instance, from December 2012 to February 2013 the number of Syrian seeking refuge in neighboring countries increased at a rate of 250% [8]. Reaching this need requires a coordinated system of international funding and assistance, regional distribution, and local implementation. Even the most basic of needs, including food, water, and basic health care require this complex, systematic response.

Some of the most immediate concerns and recommendations also include:

- Stem the rise of infectious diseases: The spread of infectious diseases (e.g., cholera, scabies, leishmaniasis) has achieved an epidemic scope in numerous localities that host Syrian refugees. Preventative services and primary health care should be mobilized to contain the outbreaks.
- Address season-specific needs: As a cold winter turns into spring and summer, organizations need to be prepared for the potential outbreaks of water-borne diseases, new requirements for food storage and preparation, and associated health care requirements.
- Implement wider voucher systems for local food distribution: Though Turkey is equipped to provide an electronic voucher system, not all countries are. A more extensive food voucher system will enable refugees a wider selection of offerings, and will also stimulate local economies.



- Utilize expertise amongst the refugees: Identifying and utilizing the offerings of doctors, nurses, teachers, and experienced cooks and chemists will help ensure that the refugees receive maximum quality care at limited costs.

International and local humanitarian organizations are considered the “front lines” for these efforts, and coordination and efficiency are paramount.

### **Reproductive and Mental Health Care**

- An overwhelming majority of Syrian refugees are women and children, 51% of which are under the age of 18. Health care services, especially in the areas of mental well-being and reproductive health, should reflect this demographic distribution. Every effort should be made to involve highly trained clinicians with extensive experience in dealing with the consequences of trauma and displacement in women and youth.
- Considering the problem of rape and unwanted pregnancies among Syrian refugee women, host countries should take all necessary measures to prevent and persecute sexual violence in refugee camps, including the following measures: make available all means of contraception, introduce family planning clinics and provide necessary medications, make mobile clinics available to both men and women, and provide health care services and counseling to the victims of rape. As Rafif Jouejati reported during the workshop, the prevention of unwanted pregnancies needs to be a top priority; at least 60 women had been raped and are now carrying children conceived by the rape. Many recent newspaper articles have highlighted the seriousness of these issues [9].

### **Security and Maintenance, Policing and Rule of Law**

Security and policing of Syrian refugee camps vary tremendously from camp to camp. Thus far into the third year of the Syrian conflict, the Turks are doing a better job at limiting crime and implementing rule of law than others, particularly those refugee camps in Jordan, where the conditions are reported to be quite dire in several cases. There is an urgent need for all camps to utilize security measures, camp maintenance, and policing to fight sexual perdatation, violence, and looting or other theft.

- Enable the U.N. Security Council to visit the camps: Currently blocked by China and Russia [10], the U.N. Security Council could provide a consolidated form of oversight and set of recommendations to enable refugee camps to operate in ways that are efficacious and that forward the resolution to security concerns by camp residents.
- Develop a “Security First” approach to maintaining and operating refugee camps: As biological needs for food, shelter, and health care are being met in varying degrees, addressing security needs as the next priority is vital. This would include taking measures to disarm camp residents; implement urban planning techniques when building new camps, so as to limit areas of low visibility and physical distance,

particularly for women and children as they move about the camp; provide a protected women's-only area in which women and children can safely enter and move freely, without threat of harm from men from within and outside the camp; monitor vulnerable areas around the camps such as bathing and bathroom facilities to provide protection for women and children in those spaces; help organize and facilitate connections between refugees from shared areas of Syria, which will help expand possibilities for building social capital and reduce crime.

- Security concerns related to instances of theft and smuggling: There are times that these concerns threaten the living conditions of the refugees. Turkey has been relatively successful in addressing such concerns, and other host countries may benefit from experience-sharing consultations with Turkish personnel.
- Train camp constabulary forces to maintain basic security and minimize criminality: This would include training lightly armed constables who would be empowered to police camps and deter criminals. They would have the authority to turn over perpetrators to local authorities for full prosecution.
- Develop small-scale economic opportunities for women and children, including craft's development and sales: Small-scale opportunities such as these may provide women with enough financial security that they can provide for their daughters against threats such as early marriage and temporary marriage.

## **Information Gathering**

- Considering the reported success of Local Coordination Committees (LCCs) in Syria and Turkey in documenting the number and conditions of detainees, LCCs and similar organizations may be effective in estimating the current number, distribution, and living conditions of refugees. Host countries should enable the work of LCCs as a way of obtaining up-to-date and valid data on the refugee situation.

## **Post-Conflict Planning**

- Given the reported success of "The Day After Project" [11] in proposing post-conflict transition measures, the U.S. government and other interested sides should consider funding an on-going effort that would monitor the development of the events on the ground and propose new post-conflict solutions that would reflect the changing dynamics of the Syrian refugee crisis.

## Notes:

1. [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf)
2. <http://www.unocha.org/syria-humanitarian-pledging-conference>
3. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/deve/dv/syria\\_april13\\_/syria\\_april13\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/deve/dv/syria_april13_/syria_april13_en.pdf)
4. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/09/us-syria-crisis-refugees-idUSBRE9380O920130409>
5. <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/97877/Promised-aid-funding-for-Syria-reaches-half-way-point>
6. [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf)
7. <http://geo.acaps.org/docs/471>
8. “UNHCR recently reported that the average number of Syrians arriving in neighboring countries reached approximately 8,200 people per day in February 2013, an average increase of 252 percent compared to December 2012” (pp. 1); from: [http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/syria\\_ce\\_fs12\\_03-28-2013.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/syria_ce_fs12_03-28-2013.pdf)
9. Cf. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/04/syria-has-a-massive-rape-crisis/274583/>, and [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/helen-ouyang/no-aid-for-syrian-refugee\\_b\\_3205740.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/helen-ouyang/no-aid-for-syrian-refugee_b_3205740.html)
10. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/05/201353164716956408.html>
11. <http://www.usip.org/the-day-after-project>

# ACU

Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) is the primary legal recipient of international aid dollars in Syria.

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## Related Glossary Terms

LCC

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**Index**

Find Term



# IBC

Iraq Body Count, which is the only unclassified data source on violence in the Iraq wars.

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## Related Glossary Terms

UNHCR

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**Index**

Find Term

# IDP

Internally-Displaced Persons

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## Related Glossary Terms

UNHCR

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**Index**

Find Term

# LCC

Local Coordination Committee

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## Related Glossary Terms

ACU

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**Index**

Find Term

# PRM

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), is the organization in charge of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

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## Related Glossary Terms

USCIS

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**Index**

Find Term



# RRP

The Refugee Response Plan is a strategic framework document prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to address the needs for protection and assistance of refugees fleeing from the Syrian Arab Republic into Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq.

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## Related Glossary Terms

SHARP

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**Index**

Find Term

# SHARP

The Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP)

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## Related Glossary Terms

RRP

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Find Term

# UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or The United Nations Refugee Agency. The daily-updated information about the Syrian Refugee Crisis is available here: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>.

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## Related Glossary Terms

IBC, IDP

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Find Term

# USCIS

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service

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## Related Glossary Terms

PRM

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**Index**

Find Term