

Backgrounder and Info sheet on the Syrian conflict

The Syrian Conflict has resulted in the biggest humanitarian crisis of our time.

It's been five years since the onset of the civil war in Syria and there is no end in sight. Today, there are over four million Syrians who have been forced to leave their country, and this number continues to grow.

Syria crisis: Fast facts from *World Vision*

- 12 million Syrians have fled their homes because of conflict; half are children.
- Of the 4 million Syrians who are refugees - most are in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan.
- Children affected by the Syrian conflict are at risk of becoming ill, malnourished, abused, or exploited. Millions have been forced to quit school.

- See more at: <http://lifelinesyria.ca/>

- More than 75% of Syrian refugees are women and children.
- Nearly four years after the civil war began, more than 250,000 people have died, more than half of whom are believed to be civilians.
- The U.N. estimates that more than half of the country's pre-war population of 23 million is in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, 4 million refugees now live outside Syria and at least 8 million are displaced inside the country.

World Vision at: <http://bit.ly/1TgaBRc>

Why Syrians are fleeing their homes: Three reasons

1. **Violence:** Since the Syrian civil war began, 320,000 people have been killed, including nearly 12,000 children. About 1.5 million people have been wounded or permanently disabled, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The war has become more deadly since foreign powers joined the conflict.
2. **Collapsed infrastructure:** Within Syria, healthcare, education systems, and other infrastructure have been destroyed; the economy is shattered.
3. **Children's safety:** Syrian children — the nation's hope for a better future — have lost loved ones, suffered injuries, missed years of schooling, and witnessed violence and brutality. Warring parties forcibly recruit children to serve as fighters, human shields, and in support roles, according to the U.S. State Department.

- See more at: <http://www.worldvision.org/news-stories-videos/syria-war-refugee-crisis#sthash.uv0BYiD9.7sZRzByZ.dpuf>

The Canadian Government recently announced <http://bit.ly/1I930Ik> #welcomerefugees program.

The Federal Government also has continued the Syrian emergency relief fund that will match funds, up to \$100 million, that are donated to registered Canadian charities. The fund will assist conflict-affected people in Syria and neighbouring countries with basic needs. Canada's emergency fund takes effect immediately and is in place until Dec. 31, 2015, and until that time, donated dollars will be matched.

UPDATE: 25,000 refugees to Canada by March 2016

Red Cross Response To Date

- Seven mobile Red Cross teams provide assistance on a 24/7 basis at northern and southern border crossing points of Macedonia. Teams are also positioned on the border with Greece.
- In Hungary, Red Cross volunteers are providing first aid and medical assistance as well as hygiene kits, psychosocial support and reunifying family services.
- In Serbia, the Red Cross is distributing food parcels and hygiene items at reception centres in the south.



“We feel respected here as human beings. The aid makes a big difference. Our daughters can sleep and rest.”

Ayaat and her family spent 10 days travelling from Syria through Turkey and Greece to cross the border into the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Four risks that Syrian children face

1. Children are susceptible to malnutrition and diseases brought on by poor sanitation, including diarrheal diseases like cholera.
2. Many refugee children have to work to support their families. Often they labor in dangerous or demeaning circumstances for little pay.
3. Children are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation in unfamiliar and overcrowded conditions. Without adequate income to support their families and fearful of their daughters

being molested, parents — especially single mothers — may opt to arrange marriage for girls, some as young as 13.

4. Between 2 million and 3 million Syrian children are not attending school. The U.N. children's agency says the war reversed 10 years of progress in education for Syrian children.

- See more at: <http://www.worldvision.org/news-stories-videos/syria-war-refugee-crisis#sthash.uv0BYiD9.7sZRzByZ.dpuf>

For Canadian Red Cross - Donate here: canadian.redcross.ca/Syrian-Refugee-Crisis

If you want to learn some facts, **and bust some myths about refugees**, go to the website of the Canadian Council for Refugees at ccrweb.ca. This is a national non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in Canada and around the world.

Many Facebook posts and other emails that circulate are inaccurate and misleading. Many hate groups function in social media – spreading lies and fear and divisiveness in Canada—to meet their own racist agendas.

Please, before you hit “share” make sure you check and see what the origin and truth of the information is. Snopes.com is a good one for fake posts, and there is usually always a website associated with a post – follow it to its source—there are many sites you would be appalled to be associated with.

Thank you for your help and welcome of refugees.

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