

The current situation of Syrian refugees in the receiving countries

Currently the UNHCR has registered more than 1.738.208 Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraqi Kurdistan and Egypt. About 201.149 refugees are waiting for their registration at the moment. In total, over 1.932.357 persons are estimated to escape from Syria to these countries currently. Their journey is arduous because they have to pass illegally the heavily guarded Syrian borders at night. Sometimes they need the help of smugglers to cross the border because some parts of the area are covered with landmines.

Although the refugees have access to vital food, medicine, water and medical care the camps are bursting at the seams. The help of the receiving countries is no longer guaranteed because except Egypt none of the receiving countries has signed the UN convention on refugees. Meanwhile basic resources are running short, the level of frustration increases as well as the security risks for the refugees.

By the end of 2013 the number of the refugees will rise over more than 2 million people. According to UNHCR a rate of US\$2.98 billion is needed to deal with the supply of these people.

Syrian refugees in Turkey

At the moment, 425.656 Syrian refugees found shelter in Turkey. 75% of these people are women and children who are especially vulnerable to the hardships of the war. Since January the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey rose by over 270.000 people. The rapid increase in the number of asylum seekers is a financial and bureaucratic challenge for Turkey that demands an intensification of funding and additional relief supplies.

Until now there are camps in the region of Gaziantep, Sanlurfa, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Adana, Adiyaman, Osmaniye and Malatya. The most refugees are in Gaziantep (130.342 people) and Sanlurfa (105.253 people). Generally the Turkish camps have a very high standard providing enough water, sanitation, food, medicine and infrastructure for the refugees. However international organizations are not allowed to enter the camp and the Turkish agencies are denying all kinds of cooperation in this regard. Moreover, Turkey will not be able to maintain the standard of the camps without more international financial support. The agencies might face an increase of arrivals in October that might lead to a collapse of the Turkish financial resources. Therefore, the international community needs to guarantee Turkey more funds to keep its camps running.

Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Until now, 584.608 Syrians are officially registered as refugees in Lebanon. Currently Lebanon shelters the biggest amount of Syrian displaced persons. In total, their number exceeds more than 690.000 people including those who are still waiting to registered officially. Like in Turkey they majority (78 percent) consists of women and children who are urgently in need for shelter, medical and protection from sexual harassment. 196.081 refugees are currently located in the governorate of Northern Lebanon. 199.356 live in Bekaa. 113.010 found shelter around Beirut and 76.161 are registered in southern Lebanon.

Still, the Lebanese government rejects to construct refugee camps because it fears they could turn into heartlands of rebels. Thus, most of the refugees live with host families or relatives. About 20 percent are living in collective, shared or rented accommodations. They receive

support for their daily supply and their children are able to attend school. However, public agencies and schools are overburdened by the rapid increase in new arrivals. They are not able to deal with the huge amount of refugees demanding their help. In June 2013 just 38 percent of the primary-age Syrian children and only 2 percent of the secondary-age Syrian children attended school. Moreover, difficulties occur with the distribution of aid supplies. Because the refugees are not living in camps they are scattered over several regions and places. Moreover, security concerns and rejection by the local population against the refugees are steadily increasing and causing sometimes violent confrontations between refugees and locals. Radical Islamist groups are trying to abuse this instability for their agenda spreading violence through armed attacks and aggressive rhetoric. Additionally, Lebanon is hardly able to finance costly treatments for refugees with heart problems, cancer and diabetes. Currently, just in cases of emergencies refugees are able to receive treatment.

Syrian refugees in Jordan

In August 2013, the UNHCR registered 462.437 refugees in Jordan. 54.553 were waiting to be registered. Since January this year 257.153 people have arrived to Jordan. 79 percent of these displaced persons consist of children and women who are strongly relying on the support of aid organizations. Moreover, 53 percent of the registered refugees are under the age of 18. Last October, 36 percent were single men. Therefore, a camp only for men was established.

There are several camps in Jordan. Some are located in the Irbid governorate like Bashabshe, Cyber city and some others. Since July 2012 the Za'atri camp is open. It has a capacity for more than 120.000 people. Currently, more than 123.000 refugees are registered in this camp. Constantly, the camps are overcrowding. Bashabshe which is designed to host about 500 people host currently 1500 to 2500 people. The distribution of food is an increasing problem in the camps. Also the supply of water, sanitation and medical care becomes steadily difficult because of the uncontrolled and rapid increase of incoming refugees to Jordan. The hospitals are overcrowded and not able anymore to give proper treatment to all incoming patients. They lack staff, place and equipment as well as medicine. The agencies and aid organizations have to take reasonable measures to protect these scare resources and distribute them in the most sustainable manner right now. To avoid epidemic diseases the conditions have to improve immediately. Also there is a growing number of children between 12 to 18 years who are not attending school but work for the livelihood of their families. Violence against women and children increases alarmingly. The state has to train police officers and soldiers to handle these situations. But the Jordanian government is financially not able anymore to provide proper conditions for such a huge amount of people. There are not enough aid organizations to assist the agencies. Basic goods like food, water and fuel are rapidly getting scarce. The international community has to intervene right now to prevent a humanitarian crisis in Jordan.

Syrian refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan

Constantly, the numbers of refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan are increasing. After opening the Peshkhabour (Sêmalka) bridge that is closed to the Sahela crossing point more than 20.000 people arrived to northern Iraq within four days. In total, 150.000 people foremost Kurds came to Iraqi Kurdistan. Most of them (96.872 people) are registered in the city of Dohuk. In Erbil 38.651 people and in Sulaymaniyah 13.735 people found shelter. Currently, the biggest problem is the exploitation of Syrian workers. The refugees earn less than the Iraqi Kurds, sometimes their payment is refused completely. Moreover, there is a lack of transportation facilities which makes it difficult for patients to reach hospitals for medical treatment.

Additionally, there is a lack of medical staff and the camps are equipped with old tents. Furthermore, the voucher system which is enabling refugees to buy food is not working out. Shop owners abuse the system and demand exorbitant prices. Therefore, Iraqi Kurdistan needs more financial support to buy new tents, hire doctors and educate security forces and to deal with the rapid increase of arriving refugees.

Syrian refugees in Egypt

In Egypt, 89,901 refugees are registered. 19,908 people are waiting for their registration. About 66 percent are women and children. The majority lives in Cairo. With the current political situation in Egypt, these people are facing an increasing threat because of the chaotic circumstances the country experiences at the moment. Thus, there is a high possibility that many of these refugees are going to leave to other countries again.

Demands

To prevent a region-wide humanitarian crisis, the receiving countries have to be supported financially. Currently, the political situation is tremendously tensioned, containing the urgent threat of an extension of the Syrian civil war to other countries. To stabilize the region, the refugee problem has to be solved effectively. These displaced persons need proper medical, psychological, and financial support to regain the ability to integrate in a peaceful society. The supply of basic goods like water, food, and fuel has to be guaranteed. Women and children need to be protected. Therefore, special education for soldiers and security forces should be provided. International aid organizations as well as the state agencies have to be supported financially by the international community. The camps need to be funded intensively to guarantee proper living conditions for the refugees. To prevent genocide, the weak parts of the societies, first and foremost members of minorities, need special attention to be protected. Therefore, the international community has to advocate the immediate stop of all warfare in Syria.