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THE CRISIS ON THE BORDER OF TURKEY: AN ANALYSIS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES' EDUCATION, SHELTER AND HEALTHCARE¹

Ahmed Cagri INAN

Abstract

The year 2011 witnessed a series of social movements against ingrained authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, starting in Tunisia. At least 500,000 people, lost their lives in the internal turmoil that started in Syria on 15 March 2011, when the belated local version of the 'Arab Spring' escalated into a violent civil war. In this period, 13.5 million people became in need of dire help in Syria, which has a net population of 20 million. Of 6.3 million people who were displaced, 4.9 million sought refuge in neighboring countries. The first known group to escape Turkey was identified on 29th April 2011, when a group of 250 people crossed the border to seek refuge in the Yayladağı district of Hatay. The Turkish Government described passing people as "guests" in the statement made on the same day and announced that the borders would continue open for these "guests" fleeing persecution and war, vouchsafing that their basic needs would be met in Turkey and that no one would be forcefully sent back. As the number of refugees from Syria increased, camps started to open in different districts of Hatay and then in other provinces along the long Syrian border. Food, healthcare, security, social activities, education, religious activities, and other services are provided by the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), public institutions and organizations and the Turkish Red Crescent in these camps. This study, based on the reports and documents of the official institutions and related literature, seeks to determine sheltering, healthcare and education services, defined as the basic human needs provided by Turkey to the

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Syrian refugees, from the first day to the present situation, and identifies ways to improve them.

Keywords: Education, Hatay, Healthcare, Refugees, Syria, Turkish Red Crescent

1. Introduction

The conflict in Syria has become most bloody and controversial instance of the popular people's revolutions that erupted across the Middle East and North Africa from 2011 onwards, known as the Arab Spring. The Syrian people who called for reforms by making peaceful demonstrations for six months starting from March 2011 expressed their demands in order to live in a fair and impartial environment. While the protests were spreading in April, Bashar Al Assad held two meetings in the Damascus Parliament in which he had declared to the whole world that reforms would take place in various fields such as forming political parties, trade union rights, free elections, social justice and protecting the rights of different communities living in Syria, like Sunni Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds. However, none of these promises were fulfilled, firearms were used to suppress demonstrations, which precipitated the escalation of mass demonstrations into a nationwide rebellion in different cities such as Aleppo, Hama, Humus, Banias and Lattakia. Since July 2011, events have continued to prolong the conflict, with mass desertions from the Syrian Army to join the Free Syrian Army, followed by direct Russian military engagement in support of regime, leading to current impasse and massive humanitarian disaster.²

The ongoing crisis in Syria has costs over 470,000 lives and displaced 13.5 million people, including 6.3 million internally displaced people and 4.9 million seeking refuge abroad. The living victims of the conflict are in need of dire help according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.³ The refugee

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² Murat Kavakdan et al., *İHH Suriye Faaliyet Raporu* (İstanbul: İHH İnsani ve Sosyal Arastırmalar Merkezi, 2014), 2-4.

³ Human Rights Watch, accessed October 18, 2017, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/syria.

flood has transposed the effects of the Syrian Crisis to neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan, and even Egypt and Libya. Western countries have accepted only around 130-150,000 (i.e. 3.5-4%) of the Syrian refugees, exacerbating the burden on regional countries. Europe has totally abandoned any pretence of humanitarian and conscientious responsibility and slammed Turkey's western borders shut in the face of refugees.

Table 1: Syrian Refugee Populations among European Countries

Country	Number of Refugees		
Austria	1,900		
Belgium	475		
Czech Republic	70		
Denmark	390		
Finland	1,900		
France	1,000		
Germany	41,899		
Hungary	30		
Ireland	610		
Italy	1,400		
Luxemburg	60		
Netherlands	500		
Portugal	118		
Poland	900		
Romania	40		
Spain	984		
Sweden	2,700		
United Kingdom	20,000		
Total	74,976		

Source: UNCHR, Resettlement and Other Forms of Legal Admission for Syrian Refugees Report, 2016.

In fact, Turkey is one of the main sheltering countries for the victims fleeing from Syria. Syrians escape a terrible conflict with safety concerns, leaving their beloved ones, businesses and property to take refuge in Turkey. Doctors, housewives, civil servants,

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⁴ UNCHR, accessed October 20, 2017, http://data.unhcr.org/ syrianrefugees/asylum.php.

farmers, and people from all conceivable walks of life are among those crossing the border into Turkey. As of August 2017, the number of refugees living in Turkey exceeded 3.4 million, making Turkey a hosting country with the world's largest refugee population. Almost 260,000 of these Syrian refugees live in 22 refugee camps managed by AFAD. The amount of expenditure that Turkey has made for incoming refugees is over €11.4 billion. The 2017 Global Humanitarian Aid Report shows that Turkey is the second largest contributor to humanitarian relief and "the most generous country" in the world.⁵

Given the fact that Syrian immigrants are in a long-term guest period and that a large part of them can settle in Turkey, they should be swiftly passed from temporary solutions based on aid to permanent solutions, particularly in terms of education, employment and health issues. If the necessary measures to be taken are to be postponed, delayed or neglected due to the "temporary", status of the refugee crisis (and by extension the Syrian conflict in general), this will cause serious long-term problems for the people involved. For this reason, Turkish domestic as well as foreign policy seeks the best outcomes for Syrians in the short term, while remaining committed to a long-term peaceful solution enabling Syrians to return to their homes. At the current juncture, it is necessary to face the reality that a considerable number of Syrians will remain in Turkey for an extended period (even in the event of a peaceful resolution of conflict tomorrow), and many will remain in Turkey permanently having settled and built lives, thus it is necessary to develop multicultural life strategies.

The first essential step in this regard should be to provide Turkish language education to Syrian children and young people under the age of 18 (53%), which will facilitate increasing their school enrolment rate which is at an extraordinarily low level (15%). The second relevant point is that special efforts must be made not to experience any interruptions caused by the Syrians regarding loss of the rights of local people or utilization of public services. Dynamic process management should be considered as a priority with a

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⁵ Charlotte Lattimer and Sophia Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report* 2017 (Bristol: Development Initiatives, 2017), 44-47.

knowledge-based approach in the development of strategies. Furthermore, the experiences and suggestions of experts, scholars, civil society, international institutions and organizations must be taken into consideration in policy formation.

2017 3 400 000 2016 2,749,140 2015 503.549 Year 2014 2013 224,655 2012 14.237 1 000 000 2,000,000 3,000,000 4,000,000 Number of refugees

Graphic 1: Number of Refugees in Turkey 2012 to 2017

Source: Anadolu Agency.

The Syrian refugee crisis is one of the most serious crises seen by the world and a particularly significant historical challenge for Turkey. It is of the utmost importance to ensure the sustainability of the sacrifice and good will of the Turkish people, who have hosted more than 3.4 million Syrian refugees and have showed a very high level of social acceptance. Some protests and negative events against Syrian refugees in Turkey are warning signals, but they do not change the fact that the level of social acceptance has been remarkable robust, particularly considering the jingoism and vitriolic racism with which refugees are regarded by many mainstream political elements in Western Europe. The efforts of central and provincial authorities of the Ministry of Interior and institutions such as AFAD and the Red Crescent have been beyond any discretion. The criticisms made for the continuation of these efforts must be constructive and the achievement and performance of those who enthusiastically work in the region should be appreciated and encouraged.

2. Migration Policy of Turkey

The issue of migration concerns not only the states that receive immigration, but also for all geographies where globalization is influential. Almost every country in the world has been affected by large collective population migration since 1945. According to the UN data, it is expected that the number of international immigrants worldwide will reach 405 million by 2050 if the rapid increase seen over the last 20 years continues which is likely due to on-going climate and environmental degradation.

Turkey opens its doors to immigrants to the widest extent due to its geographical location and spiritual foundations, and it has hundreds of years of pedigree in protecting those in need and fleeing persecution. For instance, following the completion of Spanish Reconquista in 1492, thousands of Jews were rescued from Spain by ships and brought to the Ottoman Empire. In 1709, Charles XII of Sweden and remnants of his army (about 2,000 people) fleeing the Russians were allocated a town and a stipend from Ottomans, and Sultan Ahmed III bought some Swedish women and children enslaved by the Russian and emancipated them in the Swedish settlement. In turn, the Russian anti-revolutionary General Vrangel demanded protection from the Ottoman Empire together with about 135,000 people after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, despite Russia having been on the opposing side during WWI. During the Republican period, about 1,185,000 people from Greece, the Balkans and Germany came to Turkey. Between 1988 and 2000, about 900,000 people from Iraq, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Kosovo escaped the war and came to Turkey. Finally, the arrival of about 3.4 million people from Syria from 2011 to present day is among the most striking examples of Turkey's current migration history, Turkey is home to millions of people welcomed from other parts of the world.⁶

The Syrian refugees' influx to Turkey first started on April 2011, at which time Turkey declared that it would implement an "open door policy" for Syrians. On June 14, 2011, when AFAD made its first statement about asylum seekers, it was declared that there

⁶ Directorate General of Migration Management, "2016 Türkiye Göç Raporu", (Ankara: Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2016), accessed October 25, 2017, http://www.goc.gov.tr/Tr_1.

were 8,538 Syrians in the camps established in Hatay Yayladağı and Altınözü. According to AFAD's data, in August 2012, the number of Syrian asylum seekers was 78,409. At the time of these events, Turkey had declared 100,000 people as a critical threshold. However, the migration wave from Syria has been beyond expectation. Turkey has continued to accept the Syrians despite the dramatic increase in number of asylum seekers. Turkey has been housing 233,064 Syrians in 22 camps established in 10 different cities of Turkey. The remaining Syrian guests are trying to maintain their daily lives with the local people in the cities, and life is harder for those living in the camps. The Syrian citizens exceed Turkey's critical threshold and a wide range of refugee issues confront the country. According to Ministry of Health data, 21 million clinical services are provided in the health field. The number of Syrian patients operated on Turkey has exceeded 800,000 and 185,000 Syrian children have been born in Turkey. When we look at the economic dimension of the migration crisis, Turkey spent a total of \$25 billion from the beginning of the crisis to the present. International assistance from the UN and European countries totals about \$932 million.⁷

3. General Situation of Syrians in Turkey

Although Turkey has a distinguished history of hosting refugees and asylum-seekers, the entry of Syrian refugees into the country has caused some problems, including the bureaucratic issue of the status given to Syrians. Syrian citizens cannot be considered refugees because Turkey accepts the 1951 Geneva Convention for the Status of Refugees with geographical restrictions. Although residents of camps and those enrolled in the cities may obtain temporary protection certificates, they are attached to the geographical limitation due to limitation of convention. According to this limitation, Turkey is obliged to give refugee status to asylum seekers who come from European countries only, who are afraid that they will face prosecution due to their religion, race, nationality, social group membership and political considerations. Thus, asylum seekers

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⁷ Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), "AFAD Report 2017", accessed October 23, 2017, https://www.afad.gov.tr/.

from Syria are not considered as refugees in Turkey and the "guest" terminology is used for them.

In October 2011, Temporary Protection Status was granted to Syrian asylum seekers registered in Turkey according to the decision of the Ministry of the Interior, because there was no place in international law for the term "guest". After all these steps, Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection was passed in 2013, which established the Directorate General of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior. The Temporary Protection Status policy provides protection and assistance to Syrians for unlimited stay, protection against forcible return and access to acceptance arrangements in response to urgent needs. Apart from this, people living in the camps are provided opportunities such as housing, food, education, health, and water access. The majority of Syrians who live outside the camps are given free access to health and medicine only if they register.⁸

3.1 Shelter

In the spring of 2011, all transits were allowed starting from the first day when the Syrians began to cross the border into Turkey. Along with those who entered with passports as in normal conditions, people arriving without any documentation were accepted in temporary refugee camps established by Turkey. It was an important milestone for Turkey to adopt the "temporary protection" policy, giving much clearer legal status to refugees in October 2011, by giving up the initial stance that defined refugees as "guests". As a result, Turkey accepted the principle of "non-refoulment" as defined in international law and the provision of basic human services such as health, shelter and education opportunities to the Syrians. Meanwhile, as the numbers of the Syrians fleeing violence increased, more camps were built for the Syrian guests near the border.

As of August 8, 2017, there were more than 230,000 Syrians in 22 camps in southern Turkey, mainly near cities along the Syrian border. Şanlıurfa has four tents camps and one container camp, while Gaziantep and Hatay have four camps each. Kilis and Osmaniye have

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⁸ Murat Erdoğan, Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration Research (Ankara: HUGO, 2014), 14-16.

two camps, and Mardin Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman, Adana and Malatya each have one camp. Obviously Turkey has expended significant economic and logistical resources in planning, constructing and operating these camps, which are highly praised for the quality of their services and accommodation facilities for guests. All the camps have facilities such as health centres, schools, social facilities and vocational training courses. The services provided range from psychological assistance to television viewing rooms, and the quality of the services led these camps to be introduced as "the best refugee camps ever seen" by the International Crisis Group.

In the camps, intelligent human delegations and women's committees were established among the Syrian guests with the organization of neighbourhood headmen, imams, teachers and military personnel to solve problems in the camps and to mediate between delegations, particularly during the early periods when the camps were established, and some unforeseen incidents arose. Currently camp management is smooth and routine, with cases of burglary, murder, or theft etc. Furthermore, there are CCTV systems in the camps and their adjacent environments, with strict controls by security officers and gendarme for camp security. Judicial cases are transmitted to judicial authorities through gendarmes, and in cases when the judicial cases are not required to transfer to judicial authorities, camp guests are subjected to change their camp. In the winter months, vaccinations are carried out to cope with severe winter conditions in the camps and medical examinations are continuously carried out by doctors in the camp health clinics free of charge. In addition, there are translators, psychologists and social services specialists in the camps. Guests follow many artistic activities and Syrian television channels. 10

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⁹ Osman Bahadır Dinçer et al., *Suriyeli Mülteciler Krizi ve Türkiye Sonu Gelmeyen Misafirlik* (Ankara: USAK, 2013), 19-21.

¹⁰ Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), "AFAD Report 2013", accessed October 23, 2017, https://www.afad.gov.tr/.

Table 2: Refugee Camps According to Number of Refugees and Cities in Turkey

CITY	NAME OF CAMP	NUMBER OF REFUGEE	CITY TOTAL	
НАТАУ	Altınozu Camp	8,053		
	Yayladagi Camp	3,796	17,766	
	Apaydin Camp	5,054		
	Guvecci Camp	863		
	Islahiye 1 Camp	6,336		
GAZIANTEP	Karkamıs Camp	5,963	25,755	
GAZIANTEF	Nizip 1 Camp	9,285	23,733	
	Nizip 2 Camp	4,171		
	Ceylanpinar Camp	18,679		
	Akcakale Camp	25,451		
SANLIURFA	Harran Camp	12,330	82,051	
	Viransehir Camp	1,750		
	Suruc Camp	23,841		
KILIS	Oncupinar Camp	12,910	30,468	
KILIS	Elbeyli Besiriye Camp	17,558	30,400	
OSMANIYE	Cevdetiye Camp	14,590	15.345	
OSMANITE	Duzici Camp	755	13,343	
ADIYAMAN	Central Camp	9,479	9,479	
ADANA	Saricam Camp	21,100	21,100	
MALATYA	Beydagi Camp	9,900	9,900	
MARDIN	Midyat Camp	2,843	2,843	
KAHRAMANMARAS	Central Camp	18,267	18,267	
		TOTAL	233,064	

Source: AFAD Report 2017

Turkey's achievements are indeed commendable, but the egregious abandonment of this large and essentially permanent refugee population by international organizations and countries has left Turkey to shoulder this burden alone. Aid provided by the World Food Organization has gradually decreased as media interest has waned, and some tents given by the UN are not suitable for use.

Almost all Syrians living in the camps receive adequate support and help, but this is not the case for refugees living outside the camp. The majority of Syrian refugees continue to live outside of these camps, and they are experiencing difficulties in access to housing, health care and food assistance. One of the most important reasons for this case is that refugees should not be registered when entering the Turkey. Most of the refugees outside the camp, especially in the border regions, have the opportunity to live in houses donated by their relatives living in Turkey, who generously embrace them. Beyond this, Syrians generally prefer rented houses in different cities in Turkey. However, the difficulty of finding tenement and increased rents in areas near the border is also causing

concern. For example, the average rental prices in Kilis before the war and migration were 200-300 Turkish Lira, but now they have risen to 700-1,000 Turkish Lira, which obliges refugees to stay in physical or socially and psychologically adverse conditions in empty / deficient buildings or outside. 11

3.2 Education

As mentioned previously, Syrian refugees in Turkey are not likely to return to their country for the foreseeable future, and even after cessation of hostilities the humanitarian and infrastructural clean-up in Syria will be formidable and long-term process. Short-term measures have been taken to identify and supply primary and crucial needs and problems such as food, shelter, and dressing etc. for Syrian refugees, but considering the presence of substantive Syrian population in Turkey for over six years, it is essential to take measures and develop policies for long-term problems to ensure social harmony and the adaptation of the Syrian minority to life in Turkey. After addressing fundamental biological needs, one of the most immediate problems faced by Syrians is the lack of education. particularly given that over half of the population are of school age.

Turkey developed various short-term policies for the education of Syrian children based on the assumption that the Syrians would return to their homes in the near future, and these policies were based on education in the camps. Within the framework of this provisional education policy in 2012, instead of teaching Turkish to Syrian children, they continued their education with an Arabic curriculum, with the intention that when the Syrians returned to their country, they would have minimal disruption in their normal education. By 2013, the escalation of the civil war was further exacerbating the refugee crisis and it became clear that medium and long-term developmental and social problems could arise due to the lack of substantive education for Syrian children. In this context, the Ministry of National Education tried to produce solutions with a circular letter and various activities to address the education problem of the Syrians. 12

¹¹ Bilal Göde et al., Suriyeli Sığınmacılar Raporu, (İstanbul: İFE, 2016), 10-14.

¹² Ali Rıza Seydi, "Türkiye'nin Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Eğitim Sorununun

Prior to the conflict, 99% of Syrian children attended primary school and 82% attended secondary school, with approximately equal schooling rates among girls and boys. According to UNICEF, about 3 million Syrian children left school in and out of the country, and the population of Syrian refugee children aged 5-17 in Turkey is about 1,388,799. In 2011, when the Syrians first migrated, 34,000 Syrian children were able to benefit from education services both inside and outside the camps, which increased to 612,000 in 2017. ¹³

Table 3: Number of Students with Schooling in Years

		2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Pre-school	TEC	3,000	5,000	8,000	8,145	11,351
	Out of TEC	500	1,000	2,000	4,911	3,888
Primary School	TEC	13,000	23,000	33,000	43,720	129,403
	Out of TEC	4,500	11,500	40,000	79,255	46,035
Secondary School	TEC	7,000	13,000	20,000	22,595	56,738
	Out of TEC	2,000	8,000	22,000	28,084	12,711
High School	TEC	3,000	4,000	8,000	10,045	26,036
	Out of TEC	1,000	2,000	6,000	13,144	4,241
Total	TEC	26,000	45,000	69,000	84,505	223,528
	Out of TEC	8,000	22,500	70,000	125,394	66,875
	Final Total	34,000	67,500	139,000	209,899	290,403

Source: Müberra Nur Emin, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Çocukların Temel Eğitimi, (İstanbul: SETA, 2016).

Temporary Training Centres (GEM) are educational centres for elementary school and secondary education in Arabic medium for Syrian children and young people of school age, which are operated by AFAD both inside and outside the camps, although the latter are not available in every city. Indeed, centres were targeted to 19 cities with concentrated Syrian populations. Together with the Syrian teachers who serve voluntarily in these centres, education is provided from the preschool to high school level. The applications of the students who want to study in these centres and placement tests are carried out by the commissions established by the Ministry of National Education. However, the Ministry of National Education

Çözümüne Yönelik İzlediği Politikalar," SDU Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Social Sciences no. 31 (2014): 267-269.

MEB, accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.meb.gov.tr/demirci-bruksel182017de-siginmaci-mal-imkni-yonlendirme-komitesi-toplantisi8217na-katil di/haber/14909/tr.

¹⁴ Müberra Nur Emin, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Çocukların Temel Eğitimi (Istanbul:

has decided that as of 2017 the students in the temporary training centres will gradually be enrolled in public schools over the following two years. Thus, the integration of the Syrian students to Turkish schools as well as Turkish curriculum education will be provided. The statement made by the Minister of National Education shows that education of Syrian children policy is maintained at the highest level in the Ministry of National Education. This development can be interpreted as a return to the education policy developed in 2012. At that time, it was planned that the Syrians should be educated according to the Turkish curriculum. However, the unexpected increase in the number of refugees led to the abandonment of this policy. Recent statements are important in that they show that education policy on Syrian children is reverting to the mainstream policy of inclusion. The students are important in the shown that education policy on Syrian children is reverting to the mainstream policy of inclusion.

Living either in or out of the camps is an important factor in the educational activities of Syrian students in Turkey. Factors such as the regular registration system, the identification of children in the age of education, and easy access to such children in the camps provide advantages in terms of educational points. Syrian children living out of the camps, especially those of high school age, cannot continue their education due to the employment of boys to help their family economy and the marriage of girls at early ages. Public schools are another and important alternative the point of access to education of Syrian children living outside the camp. Thus, Syrian students who want to study in public school can benefit from all kinds of education services offered to children in Turkey and can be educated with their Turkish peers. ¹⁷ The number of Syrian students in these schools, which provide conventional Turkish education, increased from 67,000 in 2016 to 181,000 in 2017. This student increase in public schools also reveals the effectiveness of the

SETA, 2016), 17-19.

¹⁵ Özkan Beyer Anadolu Agency, accessed November 2, 2017, http://aa.com.tr/tr/egitim/suriyeli-cocuklar-daha-saglikli-egitim-mekanlarina-kavusac ak/800316.

¹⁶ Ömür Kızıl and Cengiz Dönmez, "Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Sığınmacılara Sağlanan Eğitim Hizmetleri ve Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi Bağlamında Bazı Sorunların Değerlendirilmesi," *IJETSAR* no.4 (2017): 212-213.

¹⁷ Nur, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Cocukların Temel Eğitimi, 19-20.

Ministry of National Education policies. However, Syrian children who do not have obstacles to go to public schools have preferred temporary education centres instead of public schools, mainly because the latter use their native language, Arabic, and the Syrian curriculum.¹⁸

The Higher Education Council's Declaration dated 03.09.2012 related to the solution of the Syrians' university education problems stated that "Those who are studying associate degree, undergraduate and postgraduate education in Syria can enrol in some universities in Turkey such as Gaziantep, Kilis 7 Aralık, Harran, Mustafa Kemal, Osmaniye Korkutata, Çukurova and Mersin". In addition to the academic education of Syrian children, some vocational training courses are provided in the camps, such as Turkish and foreign languages, sewing, embroidery, fine arts, and reciting the Holy Qur'an. Approximately 223,000 Syrians participate in these activities.

3.3 Health

The right to health is a universal right recognized in the UN Convention on the Rights of Man under the "right to life". Health services for asylum seekers and refugees vary from country to country and are not at the desired level, including even developed countries. The main means of access to health and social services for refugees is related to the achievement of citizenship or a residence permit. Refugees are experiencing serious problems around the world in accessing basic health care, preventive services, diagnosis, treatment options and access to medicine. According to international law, refugees must have the right to the same physical and mental health standards that all other individuals have.²²

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Yeşim Yeşir Özer, Ayşegül Komşuoğlu and Zeynep Özde Ateşok, "Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Çocukların Eğitimi: Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri," ASOS no. 37 (2016): 89-90.

¹⁹ Teoman Akpınar, "Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Mülteci Çocukların ve Kadınların Sosyal Politika Bağlamında Yaşadıkları Sorunlar," *Balkan ve Yakın Doğu Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* no. 3 (2017): 21.

²⁰ AFAD Report 2017.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ahmet Önal and Belma Keklik, "Mülteci ve Sığınmacıların Sağlık Hizmetlerine

Refugee movements, the result of war or internal disturbances, cause many people to continue their lives in severe living conditions. These people usually live in temporary housing units that consist of tents or containers, vulnerable to disease due to the lack of adequate shelter from the elements and sanitation, inadequate water and sewerage infrastructures in these areas can be particularly dangerous. The most frequent health problems faced by refugees are infectious diseases such as anaemia, diarrhoea, measles, malaria, respiratory tract infections, physical violence and related injuries, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, risky pregnancy, abortions, birth complications, chronic diseases, depression, anxiety disorders, sleep disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder and dental health problems.²³

Adverse living conditions cause both new diseases for refugees and have negative effects on the healing process of existing diseases. During refugee movements there is an increase in the number of heart and respiratory diseases, blood pressure-related illnesses, diabetes and preterm birth. The increase in heart disease is due to the stresses and intense physical activity associated with negative events. The increase in respiratory diseases and diabetes mellitus is related to the inadequate follow-up of the patients during the refugee movement and the inability to reach the necessary medicines. Furthermore, refugees are particularly vulnerable to psychological problems. When the refugee movements first appear, the emergency and factors such as the difficulty of adapting to the different conditions in a new country and the feeling of embarrassment from refugee status trigger psychological problems. The most common psychological problem in these cases is post-traumatic stress disorder, associated with intense fear, horror and helplessness.

The main problem facing the point of providing health services to refugees is that they have difficulty in reaching health care due to legal obstacles. Nevertheless, problems such as inadequate health

Erişiminde Yaşadığı Sorunlar: Isparta İlinde Bir Uygulama," *Suleyman Demirel University The Journal of Visionary* 7, no.15 (2016): 135.

²³ Ömer Yavuz, "Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Mültecilere Yapılan Yardımların Yasal ve Etik Temelleri," *Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute* 12, no.30 (2015): 268-269.

personnel, language and cultural differences, inability to adapt to the foreign health system, and the cost of health care services make it difficult for refugees to access appropriate care. In addition, another problem in practice is the unconsciousness of refugees' legal rights and special needs by the health personnel in the country where the refugees live. The health problems faced by refugees in Turkey after the internal turmoil in Syria coincide with the problems mentioned above.²⁴

Table 4: The Numbers of Free of Charge Healthcare Service for Syrian Refugees²⁵

General Health Services Data of Turkey					
Polyclinic	Hospital Referred Patients	In-patients	Delivery	Surgery	
25,919,750	918,694	1,143,393	224,750	953,466	

Source: AFAD Report 2017.

Approximately 3.4 million Syrian refugees live in Turkey, including about 234,000 in temporary shelter camps constructed from containers and tents. Refugees living in the camps receive both the possibility of healthy accommodation and the systematic use of water, food and nutrition aids for a healthy life. Refugees living outside the camp cannot easily access these health benefits. One of the important factors in terms of preventive health services is vaccination. Children whose routine immunizations are not fully completed are at risk, potentially threatening other refugees and the local population with health problems and infectious diseases. Syrian refugee children are vaccinated against measles and polio. One quarter of the children living in the camps and almost half of the children living outside them are not vaccinated against polio.

The second stage of the right to health is defined as the right to access medical resources. In this context, the availability of emergency medical services for emergencies, the establishment of

²⁴ Mehmet Balcılar, *Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Mültecilerin Sağlık Durumu Araştırması* (Ankara: STEPS, 2016), accessed October 25, 2017, https://sbu.saglik.gov.tr/ Ekutuphane/kitaplar/suriyeli multeci.pdf.

²⁵ Source: AFAD Report, 2017.

health facilities to meet the needs of all citizens, and the provision of access to health services and medical supplies are health benefits that must be made in the second stage. These services are provided by the Ministry of Health through established hospitals and health centres for refugees living in the camps. While medical care can be accessed free of charge by Syrian refugees in the camps, refugees living outside the camp have difficulties in reaching health care. With the circular issued on January 18, 2013, AFAD enabled Syrians living outside the camp to benefit from the hospitals and health centres free of charge. According to this circular, the costs of preventive and curative health services will be covered by AFAD if refugees living outside the camps apply to health institutions in 10 cities where temporary settlement centers are located. However, since the refugees who live outside the camp do not live only in these 10 cities but also in many different cities of Turkey, the regulation is insufficient.

For this reason, a new circular issued by AFAD on September 9, 2013 extended the scope of the previous application to 81 cities. Thus, Syrian refugees will be able to receive services from any health centers and the fee for these services will be billed to the governors of the cities where the centers are located. Within the scope of the health service given to all registered Syrians in Turkey, 953,466 operations were performed, 224,750 deliveries were carried out and about 26 million policlinic services were provided.²⁶

4. Conclusion

When Turkey welcomed Syrian refugees in April 2011 and extended generous assistance and temporary shelter in October of the same year, the expectation was that the Syrian Crisis would be resolved very quickly, and the refugees would return home safely. However, the temporary issue became a permanent and intractable civil conflict with escalating destruction and displacement. Due to the "open door" policy that Turkey adopted a total of about 3.4 million Syrian citizens took refuge in Turkey over six years. The fact that the war and violence in Syria is still continuing makes it impossible that Syrian

²⁶ AFAD Report 2017.

refugees will return to their countries in the foreseeable future. Turkey's religion, traditions, customs and cultural habits such as hospitality and neighbourliness relations caused easy adaptation of the refugees to Turkey without encountering too many problems, particularly if compared to the hostile and xenophobic political discourse of Western Europe as the crisis wore on, but despite Turkey's successful crisis management and support of Turkish and Syrian citizens, naturally there are many problems for refugees in the country.

The Syrians in Turkey have become a matter of security and adaptation, which has a social, political and economic dimension. It is therefore assumed that a policy based on meeting the basic needs of refugees is unsustainable, and recent studies of the relevant institutions are shaped in this direction. In the coordination of AFAD, the camps have been planned very well and implemented policies for refugees have become as an example in the world. Out of camp living conditions, on the other hand, cannot catch living in-camp standards in most cases, which brings with it very different problems.

First of all, it is necessary to make realistic assessments about the prospects and rates of the Syrians staying in Turkey in this period during which Turkey has assumed the obligation to develop long-term policies on these problems. These projections will determine which steps are taken towards the Syrian refugees. The investigations show that the Syrians will stay in Turkey for a long time and that a significant part of them will continue to live in Turkey even if the war in Syria ends immediately. If Syrian guests are now a fact of Turkey, measures to reduce the adverse effects and accentuate the more positive effects are necessary. If the assumption is made that the Syrian refugees are permanent, the implementation a comprehensive Syrian refugee policy, including harmonization with the local people, is essential. If the integration process is successfully managed, it will contribute to social wealth and multicultural development in the long run. In addition, the social bond among the neighbouring countries will be strengthened and the ground for more political and economic business alliances will be prepared in the long term.²⁷

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²⁷ Oytun Orhan and Sabiha S. Gündoğar, Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Türkiye'ye Etkileri

In addition to these measures to be taken, it should not be forgotten that the "humanitarian efforts will not be able to take place in the political attempts to solve the Syrian crisis in a wider sense". As a key actor in the region, Turkey has a critical role in embracing policies that will ultimately put an end to this human tragedy, with diplomacy based on humanitarian concern and a solution whereby Syrians will return to their countries with confidence.



(Ankara: ORSAM, 2015), 34.

AL-SHAJARAH

Special Issue

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