

GROWING RESTRICTIONS, TOUGH CONDITIONS

THE PLIGHT OF THOSE
FLEEING SYRIA TO JORDAN

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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1. INTRODUCTION

Almost one third of Syria's population have fled their homes.¹ More than 2 million are refugees living outside Syria – mostly in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt² – and 4.25 million individuals are displaced internally in Syria.³ They have fled widespread violence and human rights abuses, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The number of people fleeing Syria has soared this year. Over 1 million people fled in the first five months of 2013 alone. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), António Guterres, said in July: "Two-thirds of [the refugees from Syria] have fled Syria since the beginning of this year, an average of over 6,000 people a day. We have not seen a refugee outflow escalate at such a frightening rate since the Rwandan genocide almost 20 years ago."⁴ In the case of Jordan, the main focus of this report, the number of refugees from Syria who have entered its territory has risen from 1,000 in September 2011 to 90,000 in September 2012 to over 500,000 in September 2013.

Jordan has made considerable efforts to accommodate half a million refugees from Syria and this has clearly put significant strains on the country at large. However, Amnesty International is concerned that the Jordanian authorities are imposing undue restrictions on access to the country to people fleeing Syria and violating international law by forcibly returning refugees from Jordan. The organization's research shows that Palestinian refugees from Syria are particularly vulnerable to these practices and many of them are arbitrarily detained at a facility known as Cyber City. They also often receive less assistance than Syrian refugees.

Amnesty International has looked closely at the challenges faced by refugees in Jordan and, in particular, those in Za'atri camp, the largest for refugees from Syria in Jordan. It has investigated how the refugees have to contend not only with harsh desert-like living conditions but also high levels of criminality and other security-related fears that has led, for instance, to many women and girls being afraid to use the camp's toilets at night. It describes how the Jordanian authorities' temporary retention of their identity documents has meant that refugees have been unable to register their marriages and the births of their children. Other concerns include the fact that most refugee children are not going to school and that people have to walk kilometres to access health and other services.

Other neighbouring countries, in particular Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt, have similarly received large numbers of refugees from Syria and face major challenges to adequately protect and support them. Lebanon hosts the most refugees from Syria of any country and has generally demonstrated favourable policies towards them, but since August 2013 it has managed its border more tightly and many people seeking to flee Syria have not been permitted to enter. Since mid-2012, Turkey has blocked thousands of individuals fleeing Syria from entering Turkey, especially those without a passport or an urgent medical need, leaving many displaced on the Syrian side of the border. Iraq has repeatedly closed its

borders to people fleeing Syria. Since July 2013 Egypt has both arrested and deported hundreds of refugees from Syria, many of them for trying to leave the country illegally after a shift in the political climate in Egypt against them. Outside the region, too, refugees from Syria have been subjected to abuse, including collective expulsions from Greece and ill-treatment from officials.

The content of this report relating to Jordan is largely based on a research visit to the country in June 2013. The Amnesty International delegation met with representatives of the Jordanian authorities, UN agencies, international humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and charities, as well as more than 150 refugees from Syria in refugee camps and in host communities. Previous research missions to Jordan were carried out in February 2012 and July 2012. Amnesty International delegates have also carried out field research on issues related to refugees from Syria in other neighbouring countries: Lebanon in April 2011 and February 2013; Turkey in June 2011, February 2013 and April 2013; and Egypt in May 2013 and October 2013. The June 2013 visit to Jordan was followed up by further research and interviews conducted from London. Amnesty International sent memorandums containing its preliminary findings to both the Jordanian authorities and UNHCR in Jordan. UNHCR responded with a letter, aspects of which Amnesty International has reflected in this report, but no response had been received from the Jordanian authorities at the time of publication.

Amnesty International is publishing this report to draw attention to the difficulties faced by people from Syria as they flee their country in search of safety. While the report mainly focuses on the situation in Jordan, it also updates information the organization has previously published on the challenges facing refugees from Syria in other neighbouring countries and further afield.⁵ The organization is therefore calling upon the Jordanian authorities, as well as those of all other neighbouring countries, to keep their borders open to all persons fleeing the conflict in Syria, without discrimination, and ensure full access to their territories and to safety. Jordan and other neighbouring countries must also ensure that no persons fleeing Syria are forcibly removed to Syria, in any manner whatsoever, including through removal, rejection at the border, expulsion or deportation. These countries must also refrain from arbitrarily detaining refugees from Syria and ensure that no refugees are subjected to restrictions which violate their right to freedom of movement.

The organization is similarly calling upon the international community to do all it can to ensure that the affected neighbouring countries are adequately supported. Countries with the means to do so should provide urgent financial and technical support to assist them in providing protection to all those refugees from Syria who need it, and in particular to provide urgent and meaningful financial contribution to the UN Syria Regional Response Plan. Countries should also offer a generous number of emergency resettlement places, over and above annual resettlement quotas, to vulnerable refugees who have fled Syria and are currently in neighbouring countries. They should similarly recognize that anyone fleeing Syria should be considered in need of international protection and continue to suspend, in line with UNHCR recommendations, all returns to Syria and its neighbouring countries until the country's security and human rights situation has sufficiently improved to permit safe, dignified and sustainable return.

2. TURMOIL IN SYRIA

Amnesty International has met with hundreds of refugees, from all of the governorates of Syria, who have fled to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt, as well as to other countries in Europe. Each and every refugee has a unique story of suffering and survival.

Many of the first to leave Syria were fleeing persecution for being actual or suspected opponents of the government of Bashar al-Assad. Many had been detained, tortured and otherwise ill-treated or were the family members of such people. The numbers of people fleeing then soared as the crackdown on dissident voices in Syria developed into an armed conflict which spread across the country from mid-2012.⁶ Many have had direct family members killed, sometimes in front of their eyes. Livelihoods, homes and whole neighbourhoods have been devastated, leaving millions with no option but to flee their homes. In addition to the over 2 million people who have fled the country as refugees, around 4.25 million others have been internally displaced.⁷

When pro-reform protests began in February 2011 and then became widespread and on a mass scale the following month, the Syrian authorities responded with a brutal crackdown. Since then, many thousands of suspected opponents of the government have been arrested and many of them have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Hundreds are reported to have died in custody as a result. Hundreds, possibly thousands, have become victims of enforced disappearance. State-controlled hospitals have become places to detain or even torture patients suspected of supporting the opposition and field hospitals to treat the wounded have been targeted by state forces. Amnesty International considers that the abuses amount to crimes against humanity.

In the context of the armed conflict government forces and pro-government *shabiha* militias have committed war crimes and other abuses. They have used unguided air-delivered bombs, artillery, rockets, ballistic missiles and internationally banned cluster munitions and chemical weapons against civilian residential areas in towns and villages.

While the majority of the abuses have been committed by government forces, recent months have seen an escalation in abuses by armed opposition groups, including some affiliated to al-Qa'ida and some affiliated to the Free Syrian Army. They have increasingly resorted to summary killings of members of the various government armed and security forces, pro-government militias known as *shabiha*, suspected informers or collaborators, members of minority communities perceived by members of armed opposition groups as loyal to President Bashar al-Assad such as Shi'a or Alawite Muslims, as well as abducting and holding hostages.

Amnesty International has been documenting these patterns of violations of international law through research missions to Syria and neighbouring countries throughout the last two and a half years.⁸

3. REFUGEES FROM SYRIA IN JORDAN: AN OVERVIEW

According to UNHCR, on 10 October 2013 there were 540,656 refugees from Syria registered or awaiting registration in Jordan, a country of 6.5 million people. People began fleeing to Jordan in early 2011 when Syria's security forces cracked down on protesters in Dera'a, the southern governorate which neighbours Jordan, where mass protests had begun in March that year and where the first fatalities occurred as a result of excessive use of force, including the use of firearms, by the Syrian security forces. As mentioned above, the numbers of Syrians who had fled to Jordan rose from 1,000 in September 2011 to 90,000 in September 2012 to more than 500,000 by September 2013, as mass protests and the state's harsh response spread nationwide and the situation developed into one of armed conflict.

Around two-thirds of the refugees from Syria live outside refugee camps, many in the northern governorates which border Syria including in the cities of Irbid and Mafraq, as well as in the capital Amman.⁹ Out-of-camp refugees tend to have an even more precarious existence than those in camps in terms of accessing services, information and generally making ends meet (see below for more details).

According to information received during Amnesty International's research visit to Jordan in June 2013, as of mid-2012 it has been the policy of the Jordan government to host in refugee camps and assist those refugees who enter the country from Syria without going through official crossing points. After crossing, refugees and humanitarian agencies and organizations told Amnesty International, these individuals usually gather at assembly points from where they are transported to the Rabaa' al-Sarhan registration centre, after which they are allocated to a refugee camp. Syrian refugees – but not Palestinian refugees from Syria – may be permitted to leave the camps and settle in host communities outside of the camps via a procedure known as "bail out" if they are able to identify a Jordanian "sponsor".

Syrians who present themselves to UNHCR in Jordan are automatically recognized as prima facie refugees by UNHCR given that there is a strong likelihood that, having fled the internal conflict, they are indeed refugees. This means that they are not required to undergo a refugee status determination process and are thus afforded both protection and consequently access to subsidized primary health care and other essential services.

There are now six camps in Jordan: Za'atri camp near the small town of Za'atri, near Mafraq, accommodating some 120,000 refugees; the Emirates Jordan Camp, also called Mrajeb al-Fhood Camp, near Zarqa, where there are several thousand refugees; King Abdullah Park, near Irbid, with around a thousand refugees; Cyber City, also outside Irbid, where there are around 500 Syrians and Palestinian refugees from Syria; and a new camp being established near Azraq. There is also a camp for defectors from the Syrian armed forces in Mafraq, which according to the Jordanian Ministry of Interior, houses 2,130

defectors.¹⁰ In this document, Amnesty International focuses on the situation in Za'atri camp and Cyber City (see below).

The Jordanian authorities are seeking to increase the capacity of the refugee camps given strains on the country's infrastructure and the expectation that there is not likely to be an end to the crisis in the near future. Jordanian officials also cite the fact that the country has for decades been a refuge for people fleeing conflict and oppression, notably hosting many hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees and Iraqi refugees, and is in essence, in the words of an official from the Ministry of Interior during a meeting with Amnesty International in June 2013, "overloaded".

It is clear that Jordan is straining to meet the demands of providing for these large number of refugees. The infrastructure of Jordan – which has to import much of its energy, water and grain – is overstretched with much increased demand for water, electricity, housing, schools, health care, food and so on. As the UNHCR has said, "The surge in population has exerted tremendous pressure on the ability of local authorities to maintain service delivery, has resulted in over-crowded labour markets and has generated considerable additional public expenditure."¹¹

Some residential areas are struggling to accommodate particularly large refugee populations and frustrations among many sectors of the population have grown, as rents increase and there is increased competition for jobs. The small northern city of Mafraq, for example, which hosts tens of thousands of refugees from Syria, has witnessed protests over the increasing numbers and particularly the impact this has had on the availability and cost of residential accommodation. With a significant increase in unskilled labour, wages decline and unemployment rises. As a consequence, the general public has become less keen on hosting so many refugees. According to a April 2013 survey, 71 per cent of Jordanians want the border with Syria to be closed to more arrivals.¹²

4. ACCESS TO JORDANIAN TERRITORY

4.1 CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE DENIED ACCESS

Amnesty International is concerned that the Jordanian authorities are not keeping their borders open to all individuals fleeing human rights abuses, persecution and the conflict in Syria without discrimination. While statements made by the Jordanian authorities indicate that the border with Syria is open,¹³ there seem to be nonetheless four categories of individuals who, as a general rule, are not allowed into Jordan: Palestinian refugees from Syria; unaccompanied men who cannot prove that they have family ties in Jordan; people without identity documentation; and Iraqi refugees living in Syria. This is at least partially recognized by the Jordanian authorities.¹⁴

Based on information received from international and national human rights and humanitarian organizations, including the names of individuals affected, as well as interviews with refugees in Jordan and individuals in Syria, hundreds, if not thousands, of Palestinians living in Syria have been denied access to Jordan since 2012, when the Jordanian authorities made it harder for Palestinian refugees from Syria to enter the country, before announcing the policy officially in January 2013. One Palestinian man from Syria whom Amnesty International met in June 2013 in Cyber City (see below), for example, said that his two sons were now missing, possibly dead, after being refused access to Jordan on account of their Palestinian identity.

When asked why Palestinians from Syria were not being granted access to Jordan, representatives of the Jordanian authorities told Amnesty International in June 2013 that they do not wish to harm Palestinians' "right of return". Rather, the Jordanian officials stated that Israel should bear responsibility for the plight of Palestinian refugees. Amnesty International also holds that Israel has specific responsibilities to enable Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes or lands in what is now Israel, the West Bank or Gaza, along with those of their descendants who have maintained genuine links with the area, to exercise their right to return.¹⁵ However, that in no way reduces or diminishes Jordan's own obligations to ensure protection, without discrimination, to Palestinians fleeing human rights abuses and the conflict in Syria; nor does the provision of such protection in any way diminish or reduce the right to return of those Palestinians.

As for Iraqi refugees living in Syria, Amnesty International was informed at a meeting with officials at the Ministry of Interior in June 2013 that the refugees with whom Jordan was already "overloaded" included Iraqis who could now return to Iraq, indicating therefore that this should be the case for Iraqi refugees fleeing from Syria also. However, based on its research on the situation in Iraq, Amnesty International considers that security risks, along with widespread patterns of human rights violations and abuses, remain serious concerns in many parts of Iraq and that therefore Iraqi refugees' needs for international

protection must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

With regard to refugees from Syria generally, in light of the widespread violations of international law and the internal armed conflict in Syria, including gross human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity, all individuals fleeing Syria should be presumed to be in need of international protection and not denied entry at the border, or forced to return.

4.2 “CLOSURES” OF THE BORDER

Access to Jordan has been denied not only to the specific categories of people noted above, but at various times since May 2013 more generally to people fleeing Syria. From around 20 May 2013 there are indications that an unannounced border closure policy was introduced, exacerbating problems of access to Jordan caused by ongoing clashes in the border areas, leading to periods of significantly reduced numbers of people accessing Jordan from Syria, as commented on by displaced Syrians, media sources and human rights organizations.¹⁶

UNHCR’s regional co-ordinator for refugees from Syria said on 21 May 2013 that “it is extraordinary that all of a sudden from receiving two thousand refugees a day, the number has dropped to close to zero”. Since then, only scores or a few hundred people at most have arrived each day, and as the year has progressed the majority of these have been arriving after huge walks through eastern desert areas.¹⁷

Media and other reports have indicated that, as a result of Jordan’s management of its border, combined with fighting in border areas, thousands of displaced people seeking to enter Jordan have been stuck on the Syrian side of the border with Jordan. On 12 July 2013, for example, Al-Jazeera reported that about 1,300 individuals were stuck north of the Nasib-Jaber crossing point and nearly 2,500 others were trapped in the Tel Shihab area in Dera’a governorate, with only a small number of injured and sick individuals being allowed to cross into Jordan. In mid-August 2013, Syrians from Dera’a governorate told Amnesty International that family members had fled from their town, Dera’a al-Hara, which was being attacked by the Syrian armed forces, and were waiting by the Nasib-Jaber crossing point but that the Jordanian authorities were not allowing people to enter. They said they were told by Jordanian border officials that people without identity documents would not be let in at all, but that if people had identity documents and also paid a bribe then they would be able to enter Jordan.

Speaking on the phone from the Syrian side of the Jordanian border, a Syrian woman from Dera’a told Amnesty International that she and her six children were being denied entry despite carrying passports. She said that Jordanian border officials had in fact granted them entrance visas but that the family were told they could not enter Jordan for one month. She said their passports were stamped with the words “Return in one month”.¹⁸ Four other Syrian women, three of them accompanied by children, told Amnesty International on 23 August 2013 that they too were stuck on the Syrian side of the same Jordanian border crossing point, having been refused entry to the country. After

waiting for more than a month, during which one woman told Amnesty International that she and her children were forced to sleep on the road with about one hundred other families, and struggled to survive by eating whatever fruit they could find on nearby trees, the family members were forced to give up on 19 September 2013, when the month-long period was over, the same woman told Amnesty International that the Jordanian border officials still would not let her in and when she asked for the reason, she was told that Syrians were not being permitted entry into Jordan. She and her children were staying in Jassem, a town neighbouring their own which she said they could not return to due to ongoing clashes there.

4.3 FORCED RETURNS

While the Jordanian authorities have said to Amnesty International that they will not return anyone to Syria,¹⁹ information obtained by Amnesty International from humanitarian agencies and organizations as well as from interviews with refugees indicates that hundreds of refugees from Syria have been forcibly returned across the border from Jordan.

Some 200 refugees were deported from Jordan after protests on 28 August 2012 in Za'atri camp that involved violent acts. On 31 August 2012, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nasser Judeh, said that "[w]ith regard to [Syrian refugees] who rioted and they were about 200 or a little more, these have been returned to the border area. They were not only involved in riots, but also incited others to hurl stones at the security men who were there to protect them and meet their needs."²⁰ Among those returned across the border there may have been some who voluntarily chose to leave Jordan, albeit at least partly due to conditions within the camp. However, according to information received by Amnesty International, some refugees were detained arbitrarily when security officials arrived to control the protests in the camp and made arrests without ascertaining whether those individuals were involved in the violence. Those arrested were given the option of returning to Syria via Tel Shihab, an unofficial border crossing, or remaining in detention in Jordan. On 18 September 2012 Amnesty International wrote to the Minister of Interior, Ghaleb Zu'bi, requesting information regarding the reported forced returns and detentions, but received no response.

Among those returned have been single men who did not meet more restrictive requirements introduced by the authorities in 2012 as to which people fleeing Syria would be admitted into and allowed to stay in the country. Some appear to have been forcibly returned from assembly points near the border, others from police stations where refugees were previously screened, and others still from camps to which they had been transferred. Dozens of these were Palestinians from Syria. One Palestinian from Syria told Amnesty International in Cyber City in June 2013 that his father and brothers were detained in Amman and escorted to the border and forced to leave Jordan in December 2012, by force and at gunpoint. Another Palestinian from Syria, Mahmud Merjan, was reportedly killed in Syria in late 2012, three weeks after being forced by Jordanian security officials to sign a "voluntary" paper that he would go back to Syria despite allegedly being wanted by the Syrian authorities. In addition, the UN announced that the UNHCR had three forcible return cases reported to it in the first quarter of 2013.²¹

Other individuals forcibly returned include people accused of security offences, such as carrying weapons, or of behaving “indecently”. At least two individuals forcibly returned, in mid-2012, were Syrian women who had been living in Cyber City and were alleged to have had “inappropriate” sexual relations.

Some Syrians in the city of Irbid told Amnesty International in June 2013 that hundreds of Syrians had been rounded up in the city in early 2013, possibly as a result of working without work permits, and taken away in vehicles. It was unclear whether they were taken to a detention centre, Za’atri camp or the border. A senior representative of an aid agency also told Amnesty International that it is not uncommon for security forces to pull out Syrians from workplaces, and detain them or even deport them.

Forcing anyone to return to a country they have fled due to a risk of persecution or serious human rights abuses is a violation of the principle of *non-refoulement*, a rule of customary international law binding on all states.

5. RETENTION OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

As confirmed by officials in the Syrian Refugee Camp Department during two meetings with Amnesty International in June 2013, it is the current policy of the Jordanian authorities to retain, at the Rabaa' al-Sarhan registration centre, the identity documentation of refugees who have entered the country through unofficial border crossings. Refugees explained to Amnesty International that their documents were taken at Rabaa' al-Sarhan in exchange for a pink receipt slip.

The policy of retaining identity documents prevents refugees registering marriages or births or applying for a work permit. It leaves some refugees potentially at risk of exploitation, for example labour exploitation, as it prevents them from being able to work legally. It also increases their risk of human rights abuses, particularly if they return to Syria without their documents.

People wanting to register a marriage officially have been unable to do so as they have not had the required identity documentation. Amnesty International is concerned about the lack of registration of marriages as it can negatively affect the rights of the spouses in cases of divorce or death, as well as the rights of children of parents whose marriage was not registered.

By not permitting refugees from Syria without identity documentation to officially register their children born in Jordan, the Jordanian authorities have been in violation of their obligations as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which, in Articles 24(2) and 7(1) respectively, state that every child must be registered immediately after birth. However, Amnesty International is pleased to learn from UNHCR that when the verification exercise is completed in Za'atri and documents are returned, all new-borns will be registered by the authorities.

Lack of registration of marriages can affect the couple's access to some services. Women told the delegates that newly married couples with unregistered marriages were unable to update their registration information pertaining to their new family arrangement with UNHCR, and so could not receive from UNHCR a tent they would be entitled to as a married couple if their marriage was registered.

The government is establishing a religious court in Za'atri to register marriages. This should facilitate the registration of marriages for those who do not have documentation or possess sufficient financial means. Amnesty International hopes that it will alleviate any practical and legal problems the couple may otherwise face if their marriages are not registered.

Another concern arising from the retention of identity documents is that, as many

refugees have told Amnesty International, in order to have their documents returned, the refugees have to pay a bribe of around 100 to 400 Jordanian dinars. In many cases people have been unable to afford such a sum. Others told delegates that they had requested their identity documents on numerous occasions but had not been given them.

It appears that, due to harsh living conditions in refugee camps in Jordan, on the one hand, and refugees' desire to check on the well-being of relatives or the situation of their homes or land inside Syria, on the other, many individuals are voluntarily returning to Syria; often with the intention of only going to Syria for a short period and returning to Jordan. Some of those who wish to do so told Amnesty International that they were frustrated by difficulties in obtaining the return of their identity documents. Refugees told the delegates that some refugees had little choice but to return to Syria without their documents, which meant they could face serious problems in Syria, in particular if stopped at checkpoints or otherwise asked by members of the security forces to show their documentation. Amnesty International was told of several individuals who, it was alleged, had returned to Syria without their documentation and were killed by members of Syria's security forces because they did not have their documentation. In addition, serious obstacles in re-entering Jordan would be encountered for anyone wishing to return given the Jordan authorities' policy of not allowing individuals without identity documents to enter the country.

Amnesty International has been told by the Jordanian authorities that the policy of retaining documents is being stopped and that there are plans in place to return all identity documents to refugees over the coming months during a re-registration exercise, and is pleased to learn this. Amnesty International has learnt from UNHCR that, as of 4 September 2013, the electronic classification of all existing confiscated documents has been completed and that documents are to be returned to refugees in Za'atri camp and then to those elsewhere in Jordan. Amnesty International calls on the Jordanian authorities to ensure that the exercise of returning documents is completed as soon as possible.

6. CONDITIONS IN ZA'ATRI REFUGEE CAMP

Za'atri camp is by far the largest refugee camp in Jordan. It is approximately 12 kilometres from the border with Syria and is now a temporary home to some 120,000 Syrian refugees.²² It is the second largest refugee camp in the world, after Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. Environmental conditions are harsh, located in a very arid area with little protection from the elements- sun and dust in the summer, heavy rain and flooding in the winter. Since the camp opened in July 2012, it has grown exponentially; now accommodating well over the 60,000 refugees it was originally built for, and is no longer accepting new arrivals.

The camp is under the joint administration of UNHCR and the Jordanian government and refugees in the camp rely to a large extent on assistance and services provided by humanitarian organizations. In addition, hundreds of shops have been established by those living in the camp, providing refugees, if they have money, the opportunity to buy additional goods to supplement the assistance that they receive from organizations in the camp.

Over half the camp population is made up of children under 18.²³ Many of those Amnesty International spoke to in the camp had experienced trauma and suffering in Syria, and now found it extremely hard to cope with life as a refugee in Za'atri camp.

Access to basic services in refugee camps is essential in order to enable refugees to exercise their human rights, in particular the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing and housing, water and sanitation and the highest attainable standard of health, and, particularly for children, to education, as well as protection and assistance to the family, as set out in the International Covenant on Economic Rights, and for the rights of the child as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Jordan is a party to both of these treaties.

With the majority of services clustered together where the original infrastructure of the camp was built, refugees living further away in newer parts of the camp have greater difficulty in accessing services, particularly as, except in emergency situations when ambulances may be available, they will have to walk up to several kilometres to reach them. This has caused problems in particular for more groups such as the elderly or people with disabilities as they may be less mobile or less able to leave their immediate area. Women who head households also told Amnesty International that they are less able to access services due to fear of travelling alone and difficulties in finding someone to look after their children while they go.

6.1 REGISTRATION

Level 1 registration, also known as emergency or household registration, is undertaken by

UNHCR when refugees arrive at Za'atri refugee camp. This procedure, which is usually undertaken in the earliest stages of an emergency and aims to collect some elementary information about the refugee population, collects basic data from the head of household. While registration is not mandatory, refugees need to register in order to obtain a tent, basic supplies and a ration card.

Registering refugees is an important part of protecting them. It can help protect against forcible return, ensure access to basic rights, including adequate food, clothing and housing, facilitate family reunification and importantly can help to identify those within the refugee population who may have particular needs or more vulnerable to human rights abuse in a refugee setting. These may include, for example, separated or unaccompanied children, unaccompanied women, people with medical needs, torture survivors, the elderly and people with disabilities. Registration also helps to identify appropriate durable solutions for refugees, for example those individuals for whom resettlement may be necessary.

Level 1 registration should be completed within the first three months of the start of an emergency, after which, Level 2 and 3 registration is undertaken to collect more detailed data, in order to be able to meet more fully the protection and other needs of refugees.

Despite having received arrivals since July 2012, Level 1 registration has been undertaken throughout. While this is partly due to the large numbers of new refugees arriving, there is a clear need to collect much more detailed, accurate and individualised data in order to understand, protect and meet the needs of the refugee population. Additional resources should be provided for UNHCR to have sufficient capacity on the ground to undertake more detailed registration.

Amnesty International understands that UNHCR is capturing more comprehensive data on the camp population and introducing iris scanning through a verification exercise, which will be conducted with the Jordanian authorities in the last quarter of 2013. Amnesty International welcomes this step as one which is urgently needed to ensure more targeted effective protection interventions for refugees in Za'atri camp.²⁴

6.2 HEALTH

Primary health care is provided in the camp and there are three field hospitals, as well as a paediatric hospital, with treatment free of charge. Cases that cannot be dealt with in the camp are referred to hospitals outside where possible. While refugees whom Amnesty International met said that they were in general able to access the health facilities, those with limited mobility found it harder. Some refugees said that their medical examinations were cursory and that they were often sent away with only painkillers, rather than being thoroughly examined and treated. In emergencies or where the sick are unable to reach the hospitals, refugees said that they had to wait hours for one of the three ambulances in the camp to reach them. With around 10 babies born a day in Za'atri camp, doctors in the camp told Amnesty International that there is a lack of adequate neo-natal equipment and services for newborns.

Dry food packages are distributed fortnightly. Water is available at various water points across the camp, although many refugees and several doctors whom Amnesty International spoke with believe the water to not be of good quality and to be causing diarrhoea. Some women told Amnesty International that they believed poor conditions including poor sanitation and drinking water in the camp are resulting in their children having diarrhoea frequently. One UN agency representative said that the water was of the same quality as the tap water in the rest of Jordan, although that water is not generally drunk by the Jordanian population. Other humanitarian agency workers said that while the water brought into the camp should be of high enough quality when put into the tankers, there were cases of it becoming contaminated because of dirt in the tankers.

6.3 EDUCATION

Formal education is provided in the camp and according to UN statistics over 10,000 children are registered to attend.²⁵ However, this represents only around half the children eligible for school and some 76 per cent of girls and 80 per cent of boys do not attend classes.²⁶ Parents and children told Amnesty International that this is because the children are disinterested, bored or traumatized, that they are scared and do not want to go far from their homes or that the curriculum is not adequate. Some would rather wait until they can go home to Syria or cannot attend because they have to undertake tasks such as collecting water. Amnesty International met children as young as 12 who were working to support their families in Za'atri camp. UNHCR has told Amnesty International that UNICEF and other organizations have mounted an extensive back-to-school campaign in Za'atri and that the International Labour Organization is conducting a survey "on child labour" in Za'atri and also urban areas that will assist in combating and responding to the worst forms of child labour.

6.4 SECURITY AND LAW AND ORDER

Insecurity in the camp is of great concern. Many people in the camp said there were high levels of criminality in the camp and spoke about general impunity for criminals.

According to the UN, serious security incidents in Za'atri rose alarmingly during the first quarter of 2013 and one of the greatest gaps at present is the safety and security conditions for both humanitarian workers and refugees. In Za'atri camp, as stated in a report by UNHCR that outlines some of the challenges as well as planned means to confront them, "powerful individuals and organised gangs have imposed their will on sections of the camp, diverting assistance and engaging in criminal activities". There is "an insecure living environment, in which vulnerable groups may face serious protection risks, including rent-seeking behaviour and sexual exploitation and abuse, without recourse to the Jordanian justice system. A culture of impunity reigns."²⁷

During food and other aid distributions, tensions run high with disputes and violence often breaking out, sometimes dispersed by the Jordanian Gendarmerie, which has a permanent presence at the entrance to the camp. Humanitarian workers have been attacked during distributions. Refugees whom Amnesty International spoke with said they have come to dread these distributions as they feel unsafe themselves or anxious for family members attending distributions.

UNHCR, with the support of other humanitarian agencies and the Jordanian government, is seeking to address the problem through processes outlined in the Governance Plan. Through this there is planned to be a restructuring of the camp, enhancement of security capacity and outreach, and engagement with the community

6.5 WOMEN AND GIRLS

For women and girls, life in Za'atri can pose particular difficulties. Many told Amnesty International that the communal toilets are unlit and they feel unsafe going to use them, including due to fears of sexual violence and harassment. In addition, in some camp areas announcements were made (by men) for women not to go to the toilets after 10pm. As a result, many women avoid the toilets, especially at night. Many women in Za'atri camp told Amnesty International that having to frequently restrain themselves from urinating is leading them to develop urinary tract infections, an observation supported by three doctors in Za'atri whom the organization talked with.

Where families can, they sometimes build their own toilet, which is causing other problems including unsanitary conditions in and around the tents. Women fear sexual harassment when moving around the camp and there are some reports – as well as numerous rumours – of incidents of sexual violence.²⁸ A Jordanian organization providing psychosocial services in Za'atri camp told Amnesty International that on average they receive three to five women and girls per month reporting some form of sexual or gender-based violence.

Several female refugees told Amnesty International that Jordanian men often visited the camp looking for “brides”. The organization is concerned that in some cases, when prospective brides are young and there may be a perception that as refugees they have an inferior status, ensuing marriages, some of which may be temporary, can place the women at risk of exploitation.²⁹

Early marriages in the camp are quite common. While early marriages were practised in Syria prior to the outbreak of conflict, and are legal in some circumstances in Syria for girls as young as 13, the lack of security and privacy may be driving families to consider such marriages more often. All marriages, Amnesty International holds, should be entered into with the full and genuine consent of both parties.

Women also face additional obstacles to accessing services in the camp. For women who are the heads of their household, and/or the sole or primary carers of children or ill or injured family members, it is more difficult to both access information as well as to travel to the relevant service providers. According to UNHCR, refugee committees, on which female representation is mandatory, are being created and a safety audit is being conducted by the Gender-Based Violence Field Working Group in Za'atri. It is hoped that these will facilitate awareness of challenges facing women and girls and that an ensuing action plan will help address the issue of early marriage.

6.6 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND OLDER PERSONS

People with disabilities and older persons are among those for whom life in Za'atri camp poses particular difficulties. According to UNHCR, Handicap International is the primary service provider in the camp and supports individuals with mobility equipment, hearing aids and special education services for children with learning disabilities. However, humanitarian organizations working in the camp told Amnesty International that there is a need for additional specialized agencies and resources to meet the needs of people with disabilities. In particular, in their view, greater efforts needed to be made to capture detailed data on the level and types of disability that exist within the refugee camp population.

7. PALESTINIANS IN CYBER CITY

According to information provided to Amnesty International by humanitarian and human rights organizations in Jordan, some 9,000 Palestinian refugees who were living in Syria are estimated to have fled to Jordan since the start of the crisis in Syria 2011.³⁰ Most of these arrived prior to early 2012, when the Jordanian authorities began blocking their entry into the country before declaring such a policy in January 2013.

Palestinian refugees who have fled Syria and fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), cannot obtain recognition as refugees from UNHCR in UNRWA's areas of operation, which include Jordan. UNRWA does have a field office in Jordan where Palestinian refugees from Syria should be able to access equivalent services to those provided by UNHCR to Syrian refugees, although Amnesty International has heard concerns that, in practice, they are not equivalent.

Some 150 to 200 Palestinians from Syria, along with some 300 Syrian refugees, live in Cyber City, a largely empty complex of buildings amongst dry land and some trees outside Irbid that has been housing refugees since May 2012.

7.1 ARBITRARY DETENTION

Amnesty International has particular concerns related to the conditions of the Palestinians from Syria who are housed in Cyber City. All residents of Cyber City appear to be confined to the one six-storey building in which they live and its immediate vicinity. However, unlike the Syrian refugees there, Palestinians from Syria staying in Cyber City are not permitted to obtain "bail out" to live in host communities. These conditions amount to detention.

Individuals should not be held in administrative detention due to their status as refugees. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considers that situations where "asylum seekers, immigrants or refugees are subjected to prolonged administrative custody without the possibility of administrative or judicial review or remedy" involve an arbitrary deprivation of liberty.³¹ Amnesty International is concerned that Palestinians from Syria are detained in Cyber City indefinitely, solely for administrative purposes, without any opportunity for judicial or administrative review and that this amounts to unlawful arbitrary detention, in violation of Jordan's obligations under international law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

7.2 SEPARATION OF FAMILIES

Amnesty International met with more than a dozen individuals in Jordan, both Syrians and Palestinians from Syria, who had Palestinian family members who had been forbidden from entering the country from Syria. As a result the families are divided across the border. Many residents of Cyber City, both Palestinian and Syria, told Amnesty

International that they had family members stuck inside Syria who were unable to enter Jordan to be with them and that the reasons for these obstacles was their Palestinian identity. Amnesty International also met several Palestinians from Syria in Cyber City who had non-Palestinian family members living as refugees elsewhere in Jordan, but who were not allowed to leave Cyber City to go and live with them. Families are therefore divided as a consequence of this policy, including families with children who may be separated for a long period from one of their parents.

8. CONDITIONS FOR REFUGEES IN HOST COMMUNITIES

The majority of Syrian refugees in Jordan live in host communities outside camps. Less information is available on the refugee population in host communities than on those in camps, particularly because, according to humanitarian agencies Amnesty International has spoken to, it is harder to access refugees in host communities and to identify their protection needs. Humanitarian agencies have also told Amnesty International that refugees in host communities have a harder time meeting their daily needs and accessing services, as well as obtaining information on their rights.

Refugees registered with UNHCR receive the Asylum Seeker Certificate, which is valid for six months, after which it must be renewed. Registration is required in order to receive World Food Programme food vouchers and to access free public services, such as primary health care and education. It is also required to be considered for UNHCR cash assistance, although this is only available to a minority due to funding constraints. In addition, accessing primary health care facilities and schools can be difficult as they are overstretched and, as it can be harder for a Syrian child to register at a local school, he or she may have further to travel to attend classes.

Many of the refugees Amnesty International spoke to in host communities are struggling to pay their rent and to survive on the food vouchers they receive through the World Food Programme. Paying rent is usually cited by refugees in Jordan as their main challenge. A large number of out-of-camp refugees are in debt. Refugees also said paying for transport to collect the vouchers and then to go to the designated shopping mall where vouchers must be used is an additional financial burden for them. Refugees rely on charities and community-based organizations for help with additional items, but this support appears to be provided on an ad hoc basis. Some have resorted to working without a work permit, but fear being caught and punished by the authorities. While it is possible for Syrians to apply for a work permit, in reality it is complicated, expensive and requires refugees to have identity documents, which many do not possess. As a result refugees have little option but to work without authorization, which may be placing them at a heightened risk of labour exploitation and abuse in the workplace. It is common also for children in host communities to work, with almost 15 per cent of all households surveyed by UN Women citing child labour as their primary source of income.³²

9. OTHER NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

As is the case in Jordan, Syrians who present themselves to UNHCR in Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq are automatically recognized as prima facie refugees by UNHCR given that there is a strong likelihood that, having fled the internal conflict, they are indeed refugees. This means that they are not required to undergo a refugee status determination process and are thus afforded both protection and consequently access to subsidized primary health care and other essential services. However, Palestinian refugees who have fled Syria and fall under UNRWA's mandate, cannot obtain recognition as refugees from UNHCR in UNRWA's areas of operation, which include Lebanon.

9.1 LEBANON

According to UNHCR, on 10 October 2013 there were 789,954 refugees from Syria registered or awaiting registration in Lebanon, a country with a population of 4.3 million. This figure represents the highest number for any nation hosting refugees from Syria and also the highest proportion compared with its population. They are hosted among the local communities in over 1,200 municipalities across Lebanon.³³

Accommodating so many refugees has put considerable strains on the country's infrastructure, "especially at the local level, where poorly resourced municipalities have struggled to maintain services for water, sanitation and solid waste management", according to UNHCR.³⁴ The impact of the Syrian conflict on the country's economy is predicted to measure an estimated US\$7.5 billion and to have pushed 170,000 Lebanese into poverty by the end of 2014, as well as contributing to the worsening unemployment situation.³⁵

Lebanon's political and security environment is also impacted. The country has very close historical ties with Syria and for decades its politics have been strongly influenced by its large neighbour, Syria. Politically the country is acutely divided, with its leading political blocs being March 8, which supports the rule of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and March 14, which is close to Saudi Arabia and supports the Syrian opposition.

Accompanying this political division and tension, there has been political violence. There have been lethal clashes in Tripoli between supporters and opponents of President Bashar al-Assad, dozens killed in other clashes in Sidon between the Lebanese armed forces and followers of a pro-al-Assad Sunni Muslim cleric in June 2013, and more than 20 individuals killed in a August 2013 bomb in a southern Beirut stronghold of Hizbullah, which, having been supported for many years by the government of Bashar al-Assad and his father, Hafez, before him, is fighting against armed opposition groups in Syria.³⁶

It should be noted positively that despite these considerable impacts, Lebanon's borders have remained generally open throughout the crisis period and some 3,000 to 4,000

refugees from Syria continue to enter Lebanon and/or to be registered with UNHCR daily.³⁷ As UNHCR has said, "To date, the generosity, solidarity and welcoming of refugees by the Government and people of Lebanon has been exemplary."³⁸

From early August 2013, however, the Lebanese authorities have operated a policy of more strictly enforcing entrance requirements on individuals fleeing Syria, most notably on Palestinian refugees living in Syria. Entry requirements for Palestinian refugees living in Syria now includes the obtention of an exit permit from the Syrian authorities, which would likely entail a difficult journey into central Damascus as well as an interview with security officials that could potentially lead to detention or worse, as well as valid travel documents. Very few Palestinian refugees living in Syria have been able to enter Lebanon since then and stricter controls on others entering has caused delays.³⁹ Before the crisis and armed conflict began in Syria in 2011, Lebanon already hosted up to 300,000 Palestinian refugees, most of whom are people and their descendants who were expelled from or otherwise fled their homes and lands during the events surrounding the creation of the state of Israel and the Arab-Israeli war of 1948.⁴⁰

Another concern is the financial obstacle facing refugees from Syria wishing to regularize their stay in Lebanon. For those who wish to extend their residency permit beyond one year, a fee of US\$200 is required for individuals over 15 years old. For refugee families with very limited financial resources and likely to be spending most of any money they have on shelter and food, the cost is excessive and may lead to a refugees who do not or cannot pay having irregular status in Lebanon. At the same time, according to information Amnesty International has received from humanitarian agencies and organizations, the Lebanese authorities have pledged not to arrest or return to Syria anyone from Syria due to the expiry of their visas.

9.2 TURKEY

According to UNHCR, on 10 October 2013 there were 504,415 refugees from Syria registered or awaiting registration in Turkey, with a population of 73.6 million. Around 60 per cent are living among host communities while 40 per cent are in 21 refugee camps established across 10 provinces. By October 2011 the Turkish authorities declared that a temporary protection regime would take effect for all Syrians and Palestinians from Syria, meaning that refugees fleeing Syria do not need to undergo a refugee status determination process operated by UNHCR under its mandate. Turkey has borne nearly all of the costs of responding to the refugee crisis, amounting to some US\$2 billion by September 2013.⁴¹

In January 2013 the Turkish Prime Minister's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency issued a circular authorizing Syrians to have access to health care facilities on an equal basis with Turkish nationals. However, access to health care for Syrian refugees has in practice differed depending on location and has frequently been denied to refugees living outside refugee camps. Nonetheless, provision of health care to refugees from Syria has posed a significant strain on the health infrastructure of south-east Turkey.⁴²

Since mid-2012, Turkey has blocked thousands of individuals fleeing Syria from entering Turkey, especially those without a passport or an urgent medical need, leaving many displaced on the Syrian side of the border, apparently, according to unofficial statements from Turkish officials, due to concerns that the camps it runs for the refugees are full. In March 2013 up to 600 individuals were reportedly returned to Syria from the Akçakale refugee camp following protests there.⁴³ Amnesty has received reports that further small-scale forced returns of Syrian refugees have taken place since this time. Reports from Palestinian refugees from Syria indicate that it is more difficult for them to enter Turkey than Syrian nationals. Border areas have witnessed a series of security incidents, including an explosion in Reyhanlı, in which there is a camp for refugees from Syria, in May 2013, in which scores of civilians, believed to be mostly Turkish nationals, were killed.⁴⁴

9.3 IRAQ

According to UNHCR, on 9 October 2013 there were 196,286 refugees from Syria registered or awaiting registration in Iraq, with its population of 32.7 million. Around 40 per cent live in camps, the rest in Iraqi host communities often in unfinished houses and flats.⁴⁵ The vast majority of the refugees are living in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and are Syrian Kurds.

Initially the refugees were given residency permits, which also provide them with the right to work, ensure freedom of movement, facilitate access to basic services and promote self-reliance for refugees. However, with ever increasing numbers of refugees arriving, the local authorities in Erbil and Sulaimaniya, two of the three governorates in which most out-of-camp refugees live, suspended issuance of residency cards, encouraging the refugees to move into camps.⁴⁶

The main, if unofficial, Peshkhabour border crossing with Syria was closed temporarily in May 2013 until mid-August 2013, after which some 60,000 refugees from Syria crossed the border into the Kurdistan region of Iraq, and was subsequently closed again, along with the Sehela crossing point.⁴⁷ The al-Qaim border crossing between eastern Syria and Anbar province in central Iraq has been closed by the Iraqi authorities, with few exceptions, since October 2012.⁴⁸ Palestinian refugees who were living in Syria have told Amnesty International that in rare cases individuals can apply for and obtain work or student visas for Iraq but in most cases they do not even try to enter Iraq as they know they will not be allowed to enter the country.

9.4 EGYPT

According to UNHCR, on 10 October 2013 there were 125,840 refugees from Syria registered or awaiting registration in Egypt, a country of 84 million people. The government of Egypt estimates the actual figure may be 300,000.⁴⁹ All live among host communities.

On 8 July 2013, five days after the military deposed President Mohamed Morsi much stricter entry requirements were suddenly imposed on Syrians entering Egypt, now requiring them to obtain exit permits from Syria and entrance visas for Egypt before travel, which previously were not necessary; some 259 individuals were sent back that day from Cairo airport to Syria, Lebanon and other countries after these new entry requirements were imposed.⁵⁰ These new

requirements are significant obstacles since the Egyptian embassy in Syria was closed during the leadership of Mohamed Morsi and it is difficult to travel to the diplomatic missions of Egypt in other countries to seek a visa for Egypt and there are reports that, in any case, such applications are unsuccessful.⁵¹

The Egyptian authorities had previously mostly turned a blind eye to refugees from Syria staying without up-to-date residency permits, but since the removal of Mohamed Morsi the generally welcoming environment has shifted to one of some hostility.⁵² According to detailed information obtained by humanitarian agencies and organizations, hundreds of refugees from Syria, including more than 400 Palestinian refugees, have been arrested for not having up-to-date permits and/or for attempting to leave Egypt illegally. On 26 July 2013 UNHCR expressed concern about the situation facing Syrian refugees in Egypt, warning of arbitrary arrests amid a “growing anti-Syrian sentiment”.⁵³ In one instance, at least 150 Syrians and Palestinian refugees from Syria were arrested when the boat in which they were trying to sail to Italy was stopped by the Egyptian navy on 17 September 2013 and brought back to Alexandria. At least two individuals on the boat were reported to have been killed by the navy. In addition to those returned back from Cairo airport on 8 July 2013, a further 300 or more Syrians and Palestinian refugees from Syria, including at least 120 women and children, have been deported to Turkey, Lebanon and other countries. Among these, some 66 individuals, including many Palestinian refugees from Syria, were deported to Syria and information given to Amnesty International indicates that two of them were arrested on return and that their whereabouts are currently unknown.

The around 5,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria in Egypt are less well-protected and have access to less services than Syrian refugees in Egypt.⁵⁴ In UNRWA’s areas of operations (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank), Palestinians who receive assistance and/or protection from UNRWA are excluded from international protection stipulated under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or UNHCR’s Statute. In Egypt, which is not an UNRWA area of operation, Palestinians could enjoy international protection under the 1951 Convention or the UNHCR Statute, but in practice, the Egyptian authorities have, for a long time, pressured UNHCR not to consider Palestinian asylum claims, including those fleeing the conflict in Syria.⁵⁵

9.5 ISRAEL

According to reports in Israeli media, scores of Syrian nationals have received medical treatment inside the Israeli-occupied Golan or at hospitals inside Israel.⁵⁶ Reports indicate that after medical treatment members of the Israel Defense Forces have then escorted the individuals across the border to Syria.

It is unclear whether such individuals have had the opportunity to apply for asylum while in Israel, but given the declared state of war between Syria and Israel, this is highly unlikely.

On 19 July 2012 statements attributed to the then Israeli Minister of Defence, Ehud Barak, appeared in the media about preventing the entry into Israel via the Israeli-occupied Golan of people fleeing Syria. Amnesty International wrote to the then Minister of Defence urging him

to ensure that anyone fleeing Syria be allowed to benefit from effective and systematic protection procedures and safeguards to prevent their forcible return to Syria.⁵⁷ No response was received to the letter.

10. THE RESPONSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

10.1 FUNDING AND SUPPORT

In June 2013 the UN launched the largest humanitarian appeal in its history, the Syria Regional Response Plan, to meet the needs in the region of refugees from Syria. Through the plan the UN is requesting some US\$3 billion in assistance through international agencies and NGOs and an additional US\$830 million for the governments of Lebanon and Jordan.⁵⁸

To date, the USA, Kuwait and the European Commission have provided the largest financial support to the Syria Regional Response Plan. However, despite their donations and those of others, the plan is currently only 47 per cent funded.⁵⁹

Given the strains that the main hosting countries are under, there is a risk that without sufficient support from the international community they will no longer be willing or able to continue to give adequate protection and assistance to the large numbers of refugees on their territories, as has been seen with the increasing trend to restrict or deny access at the borders.

Amnesty International believes that countries with the means to do so – in Europe, North America, the Gulf and elsewhere – should provide significant funding to deal with the refugee crisis, as well as sustained, long-term support to neighbouring countries. The international community needs to ensure that those who have managed to flee to neighbouring countries are adequately protected and have access to shelter, health care, water and sanitation and education, among other rights.

10.2 PROTECTION IN EUROPE

As the Syrian crisis continues and as humanitarian needs deepen and as neighbouring countries make it more difficult for refugees from Syria both to access their territory and stay there, increasing numbers are seeking refuge in Europe. Amnesty International has received information on refugees from Syria applying for asylum in 16 countries of the EU.

However, the numbers remain low. For example the 28 countries of the European Union, with a combined population of more than 500 million, provided protection status in 2012 to a combined total of 18,700 refugees from Syria. More than 70 per cent of these were recorded in Germany and Sweden.⁶⁰ Sweden took a positive step at the start of September 2013 when it announced that individuals coming from Syria could apply for permanent residency status.⁶¹

Many hundreds of refugees from Syria have attempted to reach Greece, from where many hope to travel on to other European countries. Amnesty International has documented the ways in which migrants and refugees, of whom a large number are Syrians, try to enter Greece and how on many occasions they face ill-treatment and abuse by Greek officials.⁶² Migrants and refugees have told the organization of dozens of collective expulsions of groups of people, including families with children, without considering the individual circumstances of each person separately – despite this practice being prohibited under domestic and international law, including EU law. Among those who were subjected to collective expulsions this year were Syria refugees.⁶³ Since August 2012, more than 100 individuals, mostly Syrians and Afghans, have lost their lives trying to cross the borders from Turkey to Greece. Since the end of 2012, Greece has frozen all forced removals to Syria due to the risk those fleeing Syria would face if returned.

Growing number of Syrians have been arriving in Italy. UNHCR estimates that around 4,600 Syrians have arrived in Italy by sea since the beginning of 2013, with about two thirds of these arrivals in August.⁶⁴ Increasingly, asylum-seekers in Italy, including Syrians, are trying to move on to reach other European countries in order to apply for asylum there, due to poor reception conditions and integration prospects in Italy.⁶⁵

Increasing numbers of Syrians are also entering the EU via Bulgaria. To date, Bulgaria has received more than 2,000 asylum applications from Syrians who often end up in overcrowded and “dire” reception centres.⁶⁶ Media reports suggest 4,000 refugees may have arrived in Bulgaria from Syria.⁶⁷

Anyone fleeing Syria should be considered in need of international protection and the vast majority of those who do flee are likely to be refugees as defined in international law. Given that they are presumed to be in need of international protection, people fleeing Syria should not be subject to immigration detention.

10.3 RESETTLEMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ADMISSION

Refugees from Syria who have fled widespread violence and human rights abuses, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, in search of protection in neighbouring countries are now facing often precarious living conditions in those countries. Such conditions and the accompanying social tensions can exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalized groups who may be without the social support networks or means they may have previously used to survive.

Consequently, donor governments, in addition to providing economic and technical assistance to the host countries in the region, need to show willingness to undertake and/or expand resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes, in co-operation with UNHCR, in order to enable the most vulnerable refugees to leave the region and settle safely in other countries. As well as providing a very real lifeline for the most vulnerable, this will help to share some of the weight of the responsibility currently being carried by Syria’s neighbours.

Resettlement, the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third state that has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent

residence status, is one of three durable solutions⁶⁸ for refugees promoted by the UN and plays a key role in the international community's response to the needs of refugees. It gives them immediate protection and a long-lasting solution when local integration or safe return home is not possible. The identification and selection of refugees for resettlement to a safe country should be based on the protection needs of refugees. In the case of refugees from Syria, priority for resettlement should be given but not limited to: women and girls at risk, persons with medical needs, disabilities and people with family reunification possibilities, persons with physical protection needs including as a result of their political or ethnic profile or their involvement in peaceful humanitarian or other activities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersexual (LGTBI) individuals. Palestinian refugees from Syria should not be excluded from resettlement opportunities. It is crucial that states that do resettle refugees from Syria, do so by offering resettlement places over and above their annual resettlement quotas, so as not to deplete an already limited pool of places available globally. In addition, under a new pilot scheme, called the Humanitarian Admission Programme, temporary protection in a safe third country outside the region will be given to up to 10,000 refugees, with Germany currently taking 5,000 persons and Austria 500 persons.⁶⁹

Seventeen countries have pledged to participate in resettlement or humanitarian admission, to take around 10,000 refugees, mostly in 2014. While this is a positive development, the number of places offered is negligible compared with the scale of the Syrian refugee crisis. Resettlement and humanitarian admission places need to be significantly increased to meet the needs of refugees most in need.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

As the conflict in Syria continues unabated, international solidarity will become all the more crucial, with resettlement and humanitarian admission becoming an increasingly important part of the response. In the light of this, Amnesty International is asking the international community, in particular members states in Europe, North America and the Gulf that have the means to do so, to:

- Provide urgent financial and technical support to countries neighbouring Syria to assist them in providing protection to refugees from Syria and ensure that they have the means to provide protection to all those who need it, and, in particular, to provide urgent and meaningful financial contribution to the UN Syria Regional Response Plan and commit to sharing a greater responsibility for the provision of services to Syrian refugees living outside of the camps;
- Invest in increasing the capacity of national services, including health care facilities, to accommodate the needs of refugees from Syria, including for Palestinian refugees from Syria whether through UNRWA or otherwise;
- Offer a generous number of emergency resettlement places, over and above annual resettlement quotas, to vulnerable refugees who have fled Syria and are currently in neighbouring countries; priority for resettlement should be given but not limited to: women and girls at risk, persons with medical needs, disabilities and people with family reunification possibilities, persons with physical protection needs including as a result of their political or ethnic profile or their involvement in peaceful humanitarian or other activities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersexual (LGTBI) individuals. Palestinian refugees from Syria should not be excluded from resettlement opportunities.
- Prepare for a prolonged humanitarian programme so as to provide continuous support and help to neighbouring countries.

At the same time, all countries need to consider anyone fleeing Syria to be in need of international protection as the vast majority of people fleeing Syria are likely to be refugees as defined in international law. Accordingly, Amnesty International urges all states to do the following:

- Refugees from Syria, including Palestinian refugees who resided in Syria, should be able to access refugee protection and the benefits that come with it, a right they have under international law. Key to this is that Syria refugees should not be disadvantaged by being given a lower humanitarian status according them only short residency periods and excluding them from family reunification. Countries receiving people fleeing Syria should fully respect their rights as refugees.
- In line with UNHCR recommendations, all returns to Syria and its neighbouring

countries must continue to be suspended until the country's security and human rights situation has sufficiently improved to permit a safe, dignified and sustainable return.

- Syrians who are already present, whatever their immigration status, including failed asylum-seekers, should be allowed to apply or reapply for asylum, given the drastically deteriorating human rights situation in Syria since the onset of the conflict/
- People fleeing Syria should not be subject to immigration detention, given they are presumed to be in need of international protection.
- Any obstacles to Syrians accessing protection, such as visa requirements and unnecessarily burdensome family reunification criteria and restrictions, should be waived.
- Ways should be explored to bring together family members affected by the crisis by facilitating access for displaced family members of Syrians lawfully present, including by broadening out the definition of family beyond the nuclear family.

11.2 JORDAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES NEIGHBOURING SYRIA

Amnesty International is asking the national authorities of Jordan and other countries neighbouring Syria to:

- Keep their borders open to all persons fleeing the conflict in Syria, without discrimination, and ensure full access to their territories and to safety;
- Ensure that no persons fleeing Syria are forcibly removed to Syria, in any manner whatsoever, including through removal, rejection at the border, expulsion or deportation;
- Refrain from arbitrarily detaining refugees from Syria and ensure that no refugees are subjected to restrictions which violate their right to freedom of movement; this should apply to all refugees from Syria without distinction;
- Ensure that refugees from Syria have access to adequate services and sanitary and other facilities essential for exercising their rights, in particular the rights to adequate shelter, food, health care, water and sanitation and education;
- Ensure respect for family unity and where needed, special protection for children and take measures to reduce discrimination against women;

In addition, in light of the particular concerns in Jordan focused on in this report, Amnesty International urges the Jordanian authorities to ensure compliance with their obligations under international law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and customary international law, in a number of ways. In particular, they should:

- Ensure that Palestinian refugees from Syria in Jordan are able to live with their family

members, and are not subjected to restrictions which violate their right to freedom of movement or which amount to arbitrary detention;

- Provide all refugees arriving in Jordan from Syria with documents clarifying their legal status and enabling them to access services;
- Bring an immediate end to the policy of retaining the identity documents of refugees arriving from Syria and ensure that the exercise to return documentation takes place, and is completed, as soon as possible;
- Ensure that procedures are put in place to register children born in Jordan to refugees from Syria and marriages of refugees from Syria who do not possess the appropriate identity documents and may have very limited financial resources;
- Ensure that the role of the sheikh or similar functionary or body being established to register marriages and other family matters in Za'atri camp follows procedures that accommodate the special needs of the refugees, in particular to facilitate the registration of marriages and births of refugees who do not possess their official documentation and may have very limited financial resources, and ensure that all marriages are entered into with the full and genuine consent of both parties;
- In co-ordination with UNHCR, ensure the safety and security of Za'atri camp and its residents, including through provision of an adequate number of law enforcement officers who have received appropriate training in policing refugee camps in a manner that fully respects the human rights of refugees and ensures everyone's, particularly women's and girls', safe access at all times to sanitary and other facilities.

12. ENDNOTES

¹ Based on a population for Syria of 21.1 million in UNFPA, *State of the World's Population 2012*; (http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/swp/2012/EN_SWOP2012_Report.pdf). Subsequent population sizes are based on this also.

² 2,172,110 individuals as of 11 October 2013, according to UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>).

³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (<http://syria.unocha.org/>).

⁴ UNHCR, "UNHCR chief urges states to maintain open access for fleeing Syrians", 16 July 2013 (<http://www.unhcr.org/51e55cf96.html>).

⁵ See, for example, Amnesty International, *Turkey: National authorities and the international community must act in partnership to meet the needs of Syrian refugees* (Index: EUR 44/009/2013), 25 April 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR44/009/2013/en>).

⁶ In July 2012 the ICRC issued a statement that "The ICRC concludes that there is currently a non-international (internal) armed conflict occurring in Syria opposing Government Forces and a number of organised armed opposition groups operating in several parts of the country (including, but not limited to, Homs, Idlib and Hama)" in Syria: ICRC and Syrian Arab Red Crescent maintain aid effort amid increased fighting, 17 July 2012 (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/2012/syria-update-2012-07-17.htm>).

⁷ UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>); United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (<http://syria.unocha.org/>).

⁸ See the Syria page on the Amnesty International website (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/syria>).

⁹ According to UNHCR, on 1 August 2013 some 314,000 refugees were living outside of the camps (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>).

¹⁰ *Jordan Times*, "Jordan hosts 2,130 army defectors – Majali", 15 September 2013.

¹¹ UNHCR, *Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing*, September 2013, p. 10.

¹² See *Jordan Times*, "Majority of Jordanians call for end to Syrian refugee influx", 15 April 2013 (<http://jordantimes.com/majority-of-jordanians-call-for-end-to-syrian-refugee-influx>); For a case study see also Mercy Corps, *Analysis of host community-refugee tensions in Mafraq*, Jordan, October 2012

(http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Mercy%20Corps_JordanSyriaRefugee_ConflictReport_0213.pdf).

¹³ For example, for a statement from the Commander of the Border Guard, *Al-Dustur*, “No Jordanian border closures in front of Syrian refugees”, 17 September 2013 (via BBC monitoring); for a statement of a government spokesperson, *Jordan Times*, “Gov’t dismisses Amnesty’s claims that Syrians denied entry”, 22 August 2013 (<http://jordantimes.com/open-border-policy-for-syrian-refugees-unchanged>); for a reported statement of the Foreign Minister, *Jordan Times*, “Jordan committed to open border policy with Syria – Judeh”, 23 May 2013 (<http://jordantimes.com/jordan-committed-to-open-border-policy-with-syria---judeh>).

¹⁴ In a meeting with Amnesty International in June 2013, Ministry of Interior officials said that Palestinian and Iraqi refugees were generally not allowed access and there were restrictions on single men and those without identity documents.

¹⁵ See Amnesty International, *Israel and the Occupied Territories/Palestinian Authority: The right to return: The case of the Palestinians* (Index: MDE 15/013/2001), March 2001 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/013/2001/en>).

¹⁶ For example, “Jordanian... officials told Human Rights Watch on May 27 that border authorities had neither closed the border nor limited the number of refugees permitted to enter... However, refugees who spoke to Human Rights Watch after they entered Jordan only with great difficulty in the second half of May said that Jordanian border officials were also responsible for the decrease in the number of refugees entering Jordan. Some said that officials told them that the border was temporarily closed, while others claimed that officials said they were limiting the number of refugees allowed to enter Jordan to 150 each day.” Human Rights Watch, *Iraq/Jordan/Turkey: Syrians blocked from fleeing war*, 1 July 2013 (<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/01/iraqjordanturkey-syrians-blocked-fleeing-war>); and *al-Sabeel* “‘Syrian opposition member’: Jordan blocking 30,000 displaced from entering land” (in Arabic), 5 September 2013 (<http://www.assabeel.net>).

¹⁷ In a statement carried by the *Jordan Times*, UNHCR figures were that “more than 800 Syrians crossed into Jordan” over that week, “Gov’t dismisses Amnesty’s claims that Syrians denied entry”, 20 August 2013 (<http://jordantimes.com/open-border-policy-for-syrian-refugees-unchanged>). Andrew Harper, UNHCR’s representative to Jordan, tweeted on 11 September that 224 Syrians had entered Jordan in the previous 24 hours, 218 of them via the eastern border (https://twitter.com/And_Harper).

¹⁸ Amnesty International, *Jordan: Children among Syrian refugees denied entry*, issued 19 August 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/jordan-children-among-syrian-refugees-denied-entry-2013-08-19>).

¹⁹ Meeting with Syrian Refugee Camps Department, Ministry of Interior, 16 June 2013.

²⁰ Interview with Al-Arabiya Satellite Channel Television, 31 August 2012.

²¹ UN, *Syria Regional Response Plan January to December 2013*, p. 145, (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>).

²² 120,695 individuals as of 7 October 2013. UNHCR, Syria Refugee Regional Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/settlement.php?id=176&country=107®ion=77>).

²³ UNICEF, *Shattered Lives: Challenges and priorities for Syrian children and women in Jordan*, July 2013, p. 3 (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Shattered_Lives_June10.pdf).

²⁴ Since July 2013, UNHCR in Amman has also captured more detailed information from refugees in host community settings who approach them.

²⁵ UN, *Syria Regional Response Plan*, p. 158 (<http://www.unhcr.org/50d192fd9.html>).

²⁶ UNICEF, *Shattered Lives: Challenges and priorities for Syrian children and women in Jordan*, July 2013 (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Shattered_Lives_June10.pdf).

²⁷ UNHCR, *Zaatari Governance Plan*, June 2013, p. 4 (<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ZaatariGovernancePlan%20June2013.pdf>).

²⁸ Al-Arabiya, "Syrians gang-rape teenage girl in Jordan refugee camp", 24 September 2013 (<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/09/24/Syrians-gang-rape-teenage-girl-in-Jordan-refugee-camp-.html>). In the article, Brigadier Waddah Hmud, head of the Syrian refugee department, says, "This brings the total number of sexual assaults at the camp to 10 since the beginning of this year".

²⁹ Amnesty International, *Early marriage and harassment of Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan*, 5 September 2013 (<http://livewire.amnesty.org/2013/09/05/early-marriage-and-harassment-of-syrian-refugee-women-and-girls-in-jordan>).

³⁰ According to UNRWA, around 50 per cent of some 530,000 Palestinian refugees are displaced inside Syria or have fled the country, describing the community as one "unravelling and in acute distress". See UNRWA, Syria regional crisis response July – December 2013, 7 July 2013 (<http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/201306071557.pdf>)

³¹ Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Human Rights Council, Sixteenth session. UN Doc. A/HRC/16/47, annex, para. 8 (d).

³² UN Women, *Gender-based violence and child protection among Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on early marriage*, July 2013 (<http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/7/Report-web%20pdf.pdf>).

³³ UNHCR, *Syria Regional Response Plan January to December 2013*, p. 27.

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- ³⁴ UNHCR, *Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing*, September 2013, p. 8.
- ³⁵ UNHCR, *Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing*, September 2013, p. 7.
- ³⁶ Amnesty International, *Lebanon: No excuse for targeting civilians*, 16 August 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/lebanon-no-excuse-targeting-civilians-2013-08-16>).
- ³⁷ UNHCR, Lebanon registration daily stats (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>).
- ³⁸ UNHCR, *Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing*, September 2013, p. 8.
- ³⁹ See Palestinian Human Rights Organization (PHRO), *Border controls at the Bekaa border crossing point hinders Palestinian Syrian refugees fleeing to Lebanon*, 19 August 2013; and UNHCR, *Lebanon Inter-Agency Response: Syrian Refugees*, 23 August 2013 (<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/InteragencyWeeklyUpdate-August23-Final.pdf>).
- ⁴⁰ For further information see Amnesty International, *Lebanon: Exiled and suffering: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon* (Index: MDE 18/010/2007), issued 17 October 2007 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE18/010/2007>).
- ⁴¹ UNHCR, *Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing*, September 2013, p. 13.
- ⁴² UNHCR, *Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing*, September 2013, p. 15.
- ⁴³ Amnesty International, *Turkey forces hundreds of Syrian refugees back across border*, 28 March 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/turkey-forces-hundreds-syrian-refugees-back-across-border-2013-03-28>).
- ⁴⁴ Amnesty International, *Turkey: Twin car bombings in Syrian border district condemned* (<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR44/011/2013/en>).
- ⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Syria Regional Response January to December 2013*, p. 250 (<http://unhcr.org/51b0a56d6.html>).
- ⁴⁶ Norwegian Refugee Council, *Failing Syrian Refugees in Iraq's Kurdish Region: International Actors can do more*, 26 June 2013 (<http://www.nrc.no/arch/ img/9678509.pdf>); and UNHCR, *Syria Regional Response January to December 2013*, p. 256 (<http://unhcr.org/51b0a56d6.html>).
- ⁴⁷ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), "News update Iraq Syria border", 30 September 2013; UN, *Syria Situation in Iraq Inter-agency Weekly Update no. 49*, 17-23 September 2013.
- ⁴⁸ UNHCR, *Syria Regional Response Plan*, p. 255.
- ⁴⁹ UNHCR, *Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing*, September 2013, p. 20.
- ⁵⁰ Amnesty International, *Egypt turns away Syrians*, 10 July 2013

(<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/egypt-turns-away-syrian-asylum-seekers-2013-07-10>).

⁵¹ *As-Safir*, “Egypt shuts the door in the face of Syrian refugees”, 3 September 2013 (<http://www.assafir.com/Article.aspx?EditionID=2555&ChannelID=61702&ArticleID=143#.Uk2BDMjaKE9>).

⁵² See for example UNHCR, “Egypt: UNHCR concerned over detention of Syrian refugees amid anti-Syrian sentiment” (<http://www.unhcr.org/51f242c59.html>).

⁵³ UNHCR, “Egypt: UNHCR concerned over detention of Syrian refugees amid anti-Syrian sentiment” (<http://www.unhcr.org/51f242c59.html>).

⁵⁴ UNRWA, *Syria regional crisis response July – December 2013*, p. 26 (<http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/201306071557.pdf>).

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⁵⁷ Amnesty International, *Israel: Government urged to allow all from Syria seeking refuge to enter Golan Heights*, 20 July 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/043/2012/en/e3b40ee4-b90f-47d7-acc2-c142ffbe8af4/mde150432012en.html>).

⁵⁸ See UNHCR, *Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP) Jan-Dec 2013* (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>). Note also a further US\$1.4 billion is needed for the OCHA-led humanitarian efforts inside Syria, which is currently 54 per cent funded, via the Revised Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (SHARP) Jan – Dec 2013 (<https://syria.humanitarianresponse.info/document/revised-syria-humanitarian-assistance-response-plan-sharp-jan-dec-2013>).

⁵⁹ See UNHCR, *Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP) Jan-Dec 2013*. A table showing total funding per donor to the RRP is available on the website of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_R5_A1010_1310071615.pdf). *The Guardian* newspaper produced an infographic to demonstrate each country’s donations in proportion to its GDP as well as the extent to which it has paid its donations (<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/interactive/2013/sep/06/syria-aid-who-gives-how-much>).

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⁶² Amnesty International, *Frontier Europe: Human Rights Abuses on Greece's Border with Turkey* (Index: EUR 25/008/2013), issued July 2013. (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR25/008/2013/en/d93b63ac-6c5d-4d0d-bd9f-ce2774c84ce7/eur250082013en.pdf>).

⁶³ Amnesty International, *Frontier Europe: Human Rights Abuses on Greece's Border with Turkey* (Index: EUR 25/008/2013), issued July 2013, pp. 6, 9, 12.

⁶⁴ UNHCR, "Growing numbers of Syrians arriving in southern Italy", 13 September 2013 (<http://www.unhcr.org/5232e41e9.html>).

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⁶⁶ UNHCR, "Bulgaria's asylum centres bursting at the seams as Syrian refugees enter Europe", 17 September 2013 (<http://www.unhcr.org/52384d359.html>).

⁶⁷ Sofia News Agency, "Bulgaria to open 2 new refugee shelters" (<http://www.novinite.com/articles/153949/Bulgaria+to+Open+2+New+Refugee+Shelters>).

⁶⁸ In addition to voluntary repatriation and local integration.

⁶⁹ Humanitarian Admission is a new scheme initiated by states in response to the Syria refugee crisis. It is the process by which safe countries, for example in the EU, take vulnerable refugees out of Syria's neighbouring countries where they first sought safety and provide them with temporary protection on humanitarian grounds. Beneficiaries of Humanitarian Admission are granted short-term residence in receiving countries, with the expectation of reviewing the ongoing need for protection in the future. Humanitarian Admission may be used for a refugee population in an extremely insecure or vulnerable situation and in need of urgent protection. It is an expedited process that can enable large numbers of refugees to depart from the region quickly. See European Resettlement Network at (<http://www.resettlement.eu/page/resettlement-relocation-or-humanitarian-admission-we-explain-terminology>). Humanitarian Admission, then, differs from resettlement in so far as it offers expedited processing and temporary protection while resettlement generally offers permanent protection and the full spectrum of refugee rights, including family reunification rights.



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