

FORUM:	Human Rights Council
ISSUE:	Measures to Protect the Rights of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Syria
STUDENT OFFICER:	WonJun Son
POSITION:	Head Chair of Human Rights Council

Introduction

Since 2011, the Syrian Civil War has unleashed one of the gravest humanitarian calamities of the century, forcing millions of civilians to flee their homes, both to neighboring states and within the country itself. More than 6.8 million Syrians are registered as refugees in nearby countries, while an almost equal number—approximately 6.9 million—still seek safety inside Syria’s fractured borders. Along displacement trails—be they in crowded camps, unfinished buildings, or makeshift shelters—families face chronic shortages of adequate accommodation, health services, schooling, and the legal recognition necessary to secure their rights. Young women and children, in particular, confront heightened dangers of sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment, and exploitation in labor and other degrading forms of servitude.



Civilians walking through a neighborhood heavily damaged by airstrikes

Over the past decade, the global response has hinged on humanitarian assistance delivered through cross-border consignments, on-searching-for routes, and on interim resettlement drives; yet the dividends remain shallow. Persistent bureaucratic blockades, protracted armed confrontations, and deep-rooted political fractures not only inhibit timely aid but also transform displacement into a condition of almost permanent distress. Neighboring countries, therefore, remain on the thin front line—keeping borders as porous as feasible, yet at the same time, stretched dry of funds and livelihoods. Guaranteeing the rights of Syrians—whether they have crossed a border or are still waiting at a government or provincial check—remains a moral and strategic necessity, in order to protect their dignity today and to nurse both regional stability and international credibility into a more secure tomorrow.

Background

What began in Syria in 2011 as protests for reform spiraled within months into a full-blown civil war. The government, various opposition factions, and foreign powers soon joined the violence, tearing apart cities, roads, and hospitals, forcing families to leave home, and turning the ordinary act of eating or



Syrian refugees push toward a barbed wire fence at the Turkish border

sleeping into a daily ordeal. Millions crossed deserts and seas to Europe and beyond, while others moved to the relatively calmer north or south of the country. Refugees encounter an unpredictable tomorrow in foreign camps, while internally displaced persons remain without the full rights of a formal refugee, their lives again punctuated by bombings and checkpoints.

Though the 1951 Refugee Convention outlines a set of guarantees for those who flee the country, internally displaced persons find their rights vaguely partially defined in the UN's soft but essential Principles on Internal Displacement, which without enforcement leaves much to chance. The UN Refugee Agency, Oxfam, and the International Red Cross can only deliver food, water, and medical care at the mercy of frontline fighters or impassable roads. Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, the first nations in the refugee surge, stretch hospitals and schools to the breaking point, their own economies flat-lining under the strain. Despite a steady but dwindling trickle of foreign assistance, the war drags on, and the outlook for peace appears as elusive as ever.

Problem Raised

Loss of Access to Basic Needs

Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria face acute shortages of basic necessities as public infrastructure continues to collapse under the strain of prolonged conflict. According to the UNHCR and OCHA, more than 15.3 million people in Syria require humanitarian assistance in 2023, with 12 million lacking reliable access to food and almost 7 million experiencing internal displacement. Access to clean water has dropped to less than 50% of pre-conflict levels, while over 70% of health facilities are either non-functional or only partially operational (WHO, 2022). The absence of safe shelter, potable water, and functioning clinics or schools exacerbates public health risks, with rising cases of cholera, viral infections, and anemia reported among displaced populations. Children are disproportionately affected: UNICEF estimates that over 2.4 million Syrian children remain out of school, placing their development, safety, and long-term survival at severe risk..



TIANMUN

Human Rights Violations

The erosion of protective systems caused by Syria's protracted conflict has left refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)—especially women and children—extremely vulnerable to human rights abuses. According to UNHCR, over 80% of Syrian refugees live below the poverty line, creating conditions that drive families toward negative coping mechanisms such as child labor and early marriage. UNICEF reports that more than 30% of Syrian girls in refugee-hosting countries are married before the age of 18, a rate that has nearly doubled since the start of the conflict. In displacement settings, the lack of secure housing and community oversight also increases exposure to gender-based violence and trafficking networks, with UNFPA documenting tens of thousands of reported cases annually, though many go unreported due to stigma and fear.



Hanadi, a Syrian refugee, has two sister who married before they finished their education

The absence of reliable civil documentation—birth certificates, marriage licenses, or residency permits—further compounds the problem. Without these papers, individuals are often barred from schooling, legal protection, or even access to humanitarian aid. Amnesty International highlights how arbitrary detention and the loss of documents at checkpoints leave women and children unable to claim their rights or seek redress when abuses occur. In this way, the war has not only displaced millions from their homes but also dismantled the legal and social frameworks designed to protect them, producing a cycle in which exploitation and abuse thrive unchecked.

Pressure on Host Countries

Turkey and Lebanon have opened doors to millions, yet the sheer volume freezes public sectors that are already bastions of fragility—hospitals double as refugee wards, schools triple into midday and evening shifts, and social threads are worn into snapping extremes, hinting at hardening of public sympathy in the wake of relentless austerity.

Barriers to Durable Solutions

The paths of return are mined, guarded, or systematically erased by still-roiling conflict, while the prospect of durable integration in host lands is severed by legal and political anchors that promise



residency but never belonging. The few that step into resettlement programs applaud success but only a puddle compared to the tide of displaced humanity.

International Actions

United Nations Relief Efforts

The combined orchestration of UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP, a triad of logistical surgery, today still delivers timber shanties, heat-boosting meals, makeshift classrooms, and refugee clinic wards to millions, while their budgets flee the inflation of expectations.

Cross-Border Aid Deliveries

A hard-fought Security Council mandate once opened the fissured door of cross-border convoys into Syria, yet restrictive checkpoints, untenable security conditions, and shifting permissions now shrink the once-hopeful canopy of assistance that the aid caravans once were.

Key Players

Turkey

Turkey is home to more than 3.6 million Syrian refugees, making it the top-hosting country in the world concerning the refugee crisis. This big change, economically, is the burden in the health, education,



Syrian refugees in the Osmaniye Refugee camp in southern Turkey

and housing systems public expenditures and the waves in inflation and unemployment in some areas. The views in the public domain is divided; some citizens appreciate the efforts, whilst some people are angry because the prices are rising and the availability of jobs is low. In the case of the growing refugee population, Turkey has developed policies that grant the population temporary protective status and some public services, though

discussions continue regarding the means of permanent integration and citizenship.

Lebanon



Over one million registered Syrian refugees helps jump the population of Lebanon by more than a quarter million residents. This rapid growth has put Lebanon's delicate infrastructure in even more of a precarious position causing schooling and housing shortages along with hospital crowding. The breakdown of infrastructure is compounded by a dysfunctional polity and overextended state resources. Lebanon's politically motivated sectarian governance fuels tensions around resource distribution and refugee reception. Many of the refugees suffer from limited employment and legal residency options. The public is polarized with humanitarian agencies often labeled "watchdog" while more citizens believe refugees are overburdening the economy and society.

Jordan



Syrian refugees at the Za'atari refugee camp in Mafraq, Jordan

Jordan is home to many Syrian refugees, including a large number in poorly serviced desert camps, such as the Za'atari camp, lacking in adequate sanitation, healthcare, and education. Compounding the challenges is the country's chronic shortage of water and growing economically in debt, further complicated by international aid that only weakly supports the needs of refugees and such communities.

Humanitarian in theory, public opinion is more mixed, with some working to ensure access to social services and public jobs, while others express more negative sentiments. Woefully inadequate are Jordan's policies that only allow the refugees limited access to work permits and schooling. This leaves a substantial number of them not receiving the services to which they are entitled.

Syrian Government and Non-State Groups

Shifting lines of control and deliberate blockades mean humanitarian corridors can be opened—and closed—within hours, leaving internally displaced persons with food, medicine and security dictated more by checkpoints than by need.

European Union and Donor States

Steady financing and modest resettlement quotas keep chosen refugee populations in comfortable dignity, but actual admissions account for only a fraction of those still risking treacherous journeys or accepting a second-rate existence in neighbouring host states.

Possible Solutions

Developing Stronger Legal Protections for IDPs



TIANMUN

As opposed to refugees, IDPs have no binding international legal instrument governing them, making them particularly vulnerable to exploitation, statelessness, and denial of basic services. To fill this gap, the international community might adopt a regional protocol on Syrian IDP protection within the UNHCR's aegis and within the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Such a protocol would provide a minimum level of access to shelter, education, and healthcare and require recognition of civil records even if reissued in situations of displacement. It could be implemented via mobile units registering IDPs issuing replacement identity sheets in camps and informal settlements alongside legal aid centers facilitating IDP resolution of property and family claims. Enforcement will be dependent upon monitoring via OHCHR and ICRC and reporting publicly alongside sanctions against recalcitrant authorities in case of instances of obstruction. Such a solution stands a good chance of succeeding since it presents a low-cost approach to high-impact restoration of rights that has a direct impact upon improving aid and service access while meshing within current UN mechanisms and humanitarian practice..

Increasing Burden-Sharing Among States

The burden of Syrian refugees has overwhelmingly fallen on bordering states like Türkiye, Jordan, and Lebanon, whose infrastructures and resources are already stressed. A sustainable solution involves a Refugee Responsibility-Sharing Compact (RRSC) that binds richer states to quantifiable resettlement targets or cash contributions. With this arrangement, quotas will be determined by a transparent formula involving GDP, population size, and past refugee intake. States could either accept a



Formal consultations of the UN Refugee Agency

predetermined number of refugees every year through resettlement or humanitarian visas, or pay an equal amount of money—say \$10,000 per non-used slot—into a UNHCR–World Bank trust fund benefiting frontline host states. To ensure compliance, a yearly public scorecard will monitor states' performance annually, while states in compliance will receive positive rewards such as access to concessional financing and development grants. Non-compliance will be penalized with reputational damage and

decreased access to international financing streams. This solution draws on successful prototypes like the Jordan Compact, which was successful in exchanging financial aid and market access for increased work permits and educational opportunities for refugees and is a testament to how predictable financing paired with resettlement commitments can stabilize both host societies and affected populations.

Expanding Humanitarian Access



TIANMUN

Solidarity aid will not reach desperate people without predictable and secure passage across Syria's split frontlines. A Humanitarian Access and Deconfliction Accord (HADA) could establish pre-agreed humanitarian passageways whereby convoys can move across both borders and conflict fronts with increased predictability. Governed by a Joint Access Cell within OCHA, involving ICRC and important NGOs, this system would oblige all parties to conflict to accept designated "white-list" routes and timeframes for aid distributions. Convoys would be GPS-monitored while sealed and checked remotely via satellite verification, with live dashboards reflecting approval and delivery status to provide openness. Enforcement would be via incident escalation rules whereby hindrance or diversion invoke public reporting, donor conditionality, and ultimate reporting to international sanctions committees against repeat offenders. Local monitoring committees would also report in real time on passageway conditions, generating a multi-level system of accountability. This solution has a precedent: comparable deconfliction arrangements in Syria and Yemen have been measurably successful in enhancing aid distributions and indicate that where enforcement and openness occur, humanitarian passageway can be expanded to reach another portion of the 15.3 million Syrians who stand in urgent need.

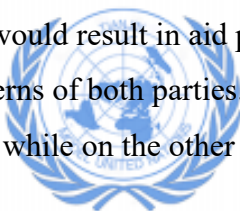
Promoting Education and Employment Opportunities

Provision of education and employment are fundamental for moving populations from aid dependency to self-reliance, however, Syrians particularly struggle with both. UNICEF estimates that there are 2.4 million school-aged Syrian children without access to education, and the UNHCR states that only 20% of Syrian refugees are 'formally' employed, if at all. An ideal option is to broaden the scope of host country compacts, similar to the Jordan Compact, where the host country is subsidized by the international community in return for providing certain access to schooling and employment for refugees. For education, this would mean targeted financial support for double shift schools, accelerated learning, and teacher training around the integration of Syrian children in a way that does not displace local students.



UNHCR supports refugee children in accessing education

For employment, this could take the shape of streamlined work permit processes, employment-based wage subsidies for the hiring of refugees, and local platforms to assist in cross border labor migration from the region to the sectors in demand. Implementation would be based on donor agency support: for enrolment and work permit thresholds, concessional financing would be rewarded, while non-compliance would result in aid package cutbacks. The reason this is likely to work is that it addresses the primary concerns of both parties. On the one hand, the refugees are able to achieve a state of dignity and self-reliance, while on the other hand the host community .



Glossary

Refugee

A person forced to flee their country due to war, violence, or persecution, crossing international borders in search of safety.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

Someone who is forced to leave their home due to conflict or disaster but remains within their country's borders.

Humanitarian Assistance

Aid provided by international organizations or governments to meet urgent needs like food, water, shelter, and healthcare during crises.

Cross-Border Aid

Humanitarian supplies delivered across national borders, often authorized by the UN, to reach people in conflict zones.

Resettlement

The process of relocating refugees to a third country that agrees to provide them with legal status and long-term protection.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Violence directed at individuals based on their gender, including sexual assault, forced marriage, and exploitation, which disproportionately affects women and girls.

Human Trafficking

The illegal trade of people for purposes such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, or other forms of abuse.

Burden-Sharing

The principle that multiple countries should share responsibility for hosting refugees and supporting displaced populations.

Humanitarian Corridor

A negotiated safe passage that allows civilians or aid supplies to move through conflict areas without interference.

Reconstruction

The rebuilding of infrastructure, services, and institutions after a conflict, aimed at enabling displaced persons to return home safely.



TIANMUN

Sources

admin. “Forced Displacements from Syria or How to Institutionalize Regimes of Suffering – European Society of International Law | Société Européenne de Droit International.” *Esil-Sedi.eu*, 2015, esil-sedi.eu/fr/forced-displacements-from-syria-or-how-to-institutionalize-regimes-of-suffering/. Accessed 3 Sept. 2025.

Diab, Jasmin. *RESEARCHING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT on Refuge and Displacement: Challenges to the Provision of Rights and Protection for Syrians inside and Outside Syrian Borders*. 2021, researchinginternaldisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/RID-WP_Jasmin-Diab_Refugees-IDPs_091221.pdf.

“Ensuring a Safe, Secure, and Dignified Future for Displaced Syrians - Syrian Arab Republic.” *ReliefWeb*, 16 Dec. 2024, reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/ensuring-safe-secure-and-dignified-future-displaced-syrians.

Fahim, Kareem. “Sharp Rise in Syrian Refugees to Jordan and Turkey.” *The New York Times*, 28 Aug. 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/08/29/world/middleeast/Syria.html.

Fahim, Kareem. “Sharp Rise in Syrian Refugees to Jordan and Turkey.” *The New York Times*, 28 Aug. 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/08/29/world/middleeast/Syria.html.

“Glance Back: 180,000 Syrian Refugees Flee into Turkey.” *Nationalgeographic.org*, 2025, outofedenwalk.nationalgeographic.org/2015-02-glance-back-180000-syrian-refugees-flee-into-turkey/.

REFUGEES and INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS in the EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION: A HEALTH PERSPECTIVE. 2015, www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/publications/refugees-and-migrants-eastern-mediterranean-region-a-perspective.pdf.

“Syrian Arab Republic | UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2024, www.unhcr.org/where-we-work/countries/syrian-arab-republic.



TIANMUN

“Syrian Children Forced to Quit School, Marry Early to Survive.” *Unicef.org*, 2017,

[www.unicef.org/stories/syrian-children-forced-quit-school-marry-early-](http://www.unicef.org/stories/syrian-children-forced-quit-school-marry-early-survive?__cf_chl_tk=JhZCPbEha5lAeJ7HuAEnacVjWKVIUTXaPOwi_Yz83SE-1756870331-1.0.1.1-_fsS63DwPQg2.bEZaZcfc1u97smzs2Y5jLnxcQuvQ9I)

[survive?__cf_chl_tk=JhZCPbEha5lAeJ7HuAEnacVjWKVIUTXaPOwi_Yz83SE-1756870331-](http://www.unicef.org/stories/syrian-children-forced-quit-school-marry-early-survive?__cf_chl_tk=JhZCPbEha5lAeJ7HuAEnacVjWKVIUTXaPOwi_Yz83SE-1756870331-1.0.1.1-_fsS63DwPQg2.bEZaZcfc1u97smzs2Y5jLnxcQuvQ9I)

[1.0.1.1-_fsS63DwPQg2.bEZaZcfc1u97smzs2Y5jLnxcQuvQ9I](http://www.unicef.org/stories/syrian-children-forced-quit-school-marry-early-survive?__cf_chl_tk=JhZCPbEha5lAeJ7HuAEnacVjWKVIUTXaPOwi_Yz83SE-1756870331-1.0.1.1-_fsS63DwPQg2.bEZaZcfc1u97smzs2Y5jLnxcQuvQ9I). Accessed 3 Sept. 2025.

The Syrian Crisis : Effects on the Regional and International Relations. Springer Singapore, Imprint Springer, 2021.

UNHCR. “Education.” *UNHCR*, 2024, www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education.

UNHCR. “Internally Displaced People - UNHCR Syria.” *UNHCR*, UNHCR, 2017,

www.unhcr.org/sy/internally-displaced-people.

“UNHCR Operational Framework: Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs 2025 - Syrian Arab Republic.” *ReliefWeb*, 6 Feb. 2025, reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/unhcr-operational-framework-voluntary-return-syrian-refugees-and-idps-2025.



TIANMUN