



PROTECTING SYRIAN CHILDREN EN ROUTE TO EUROPE



Save the Children

A study conducted in Syria, along transit routes & in hosting countries

produced by
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About Altai Consulting

Altai Consulting provides strategy consulting and research services to private companies, governments and public institutions.

Altai teams operate in more than 25 countries in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. Since its inception 12 years ago, Altai Consulting has developed a strong focus on migration and labour market related research and program evaluations.

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Front cover photo: Syrian family in Lesbos, Greece (Save the Children).

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan	LITP	Law on International and Temporary Protection (Croatia)
AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (Turkey)	LRIP	Law on Foreigners and International Protection (Turkey)
CMC	Crisis Management Centre (FYROM)	MoH	Ministry of Health
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management (Turkey)	MPC	Migration Policy Centre
DRC	Danish Refugee Council	MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
EKKA	National Centre for Social Solidarity (Greece)	MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
EU	European Union	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
FRS	First Reception Service (Greece)	OCHA	Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
FSA	Free Syrian Army	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
FYROM	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
HRW	Human Rights Watch	REVI	Refugee Volunteers of Izmir
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission	SAA	Syrian Arab Army
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	SC	Save the Children
IDI	In-depth interview	SYP	Syrian Pound
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UASC	Unaccompanied and separated children
ILO	International Labour Organisation	UAM	Unaccompanied minor
INSS	The Institute for National Security Studies	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IMC	International Medical Corps	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
IRC	International Rescue Committee	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the al-Sham	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
JOD	Jordanian Dinar	WFP	World Food Program
JRPSC	Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis	SAA	Syrian Arabic Army
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service	SOP	Standard operating procedure
KII	Key informant interview	TRY	Turkish Lira
LBP	Lebanese pound	YPG	People's Protection Units

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

As the Syria crisis enters its sixth year, the humanitarian consequences are grave. The Syrian refugee crisis is now the largest since the Second World War, with over 4.8 million Syrian refugees recorded worldwide, many of whom were internally displaced numerous times. Among these refugees are 1.7 million Syrian children. At least 190,000 people have been killed since the beginning of the conflict.¹

While the earlier years of the crisis saw the movement of Syrian refugees across borders to neighbouring countries in the Middle East and North Africa, the unprecedented social and economic impact for many of these countries, a number of which were experiencing their own transition or pre-existing vulnerabilities and instabilities, led to competition for scarce and depleting resources, increasing unemployment, and consequently, changes in policy. This ultimately led to the movement of a greater number of Syrian refugees to Europe in search of more stable conditions.

Until 2014, the main route to Europe was through North Africa and the Central Mediterranean, with Libya acting as the main departure point for boat journeys across the Mediterranean.² The Libyan crisis of 2014 not only led to greater levels of instability in the country but also to changing attitudes towards Syrians, who were suspected of alignment with particular jihadist movements and

scapegoated. As a consequence, by 2015, Syrian refugee populations had rerouted towards the Eastern Mediterranean where they entered the European Union through Greece via Turkey.

As the crisis continues, conditions in host countries diminish and the options for onward movement become more limited, Syrian refugee communities are increasingly relying on negative coping mechanisms. The most vulnerable among them, usually women and children, bear the brunt of this burden.

In December 2015, Altai Consulting was commissioned by the Save the Children Regional Office for the Middle East and Europe to conduct a research study on the protection of children fleeing from the Syria conflict and traveling to Europe. Fieldwork was conducted in January and February 2016 in seven countries along the Turkey-Balkans route. Although this route was officially closed by the time the report was published, the research presents a range of issues that remain relevant across routes and for Syrian families who continue to attempt to leave their home country in search of safe haven. Moreover, while the section of the route from Turkey and across the Balkans is officially closed, irregular movements are still attempted, and the routes into Turkey remain active to the same extent as at the time of fieldwork.



**1.7 MILLION SYRIAN CHILDREN
HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THE LARGEST REFUGEE
CRISIS SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR, WITH OVER
4.8 MILLION SYRIAN REFUGEES RECORDED**

1 3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2015-2016, In Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview

2 Although departures also occurred from Egypt from time to time

Please note: In the sections of this report where a mixed migratory movement is being referred to, the word 'migrant' is used broadly to refer to all people on the move. This includes refugees, asylum seekers, irregular migrants and involuntary migrants, unless a distinction is otherwise made.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2015, Altai Consulting was commissioned by Save the Children's Middle East and Eurasia Regional Office to conduct a research study on the protection of children fleeing from the Syria conflict and traveling to Europe. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the drivers compelling Syrians to undertake secondary movements from neighbouring countries to Europe;
2. To trace the routes of travel that they follow on their journeys;
3. To identify the key protection issues that children face along the way;
4. To map the immediate interventions and measures being put in place to mitigate risks for children.

Fieldwork was conducted over January and February 2016 and culminated in a total of 198 interviews across 19 locations in eight countries: Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia, and Croatia. This included 82 interviews with key informants and 116 in-depth interviews (IDI) or focus group discussions (FGDs) with Syrian refugees. This report presents the findings concerning the first three objectives.

Although the migratory route through Turkey to the Balkans was officially closed by the time the report came to be published, its findings address a range of issues that remain relevant across routes and for Syrian families still attempting to leave their home country in search of safe haven. Moreover, irregular movements through this route are still attempted, and the routes into Turkey discussed here remain as active as they were when the fieldwork was conducted.

Drivers Of Migration From Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey

In the early days of the crisis, Syrians moved to neighbouring countries for what they believed would be a temporary period of time. As security at home became increasingly distant, however, the expectations of the refugees started to shift and the need for long-term stability in host countries became pressing. At

the same time, host countries in the Middle East who had welcomed large numbers of refugees became overstretched and policies towards Syrian communities less welcoming. The combination of these two dynamics pushed Syrian communities out of the Middle East. More specific drivers of onward movement from Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey include the following:

- Work permits are difficult to obtain in all three countries, but finding unskilled work on the informal market is not very difficult in Turkey, most challenging in Lebanon, and somewhere in the middle in Jordan.
- The pattern for legal security is the same in these countries, although eventual naturalisation is impossible in all three thus ultimately pushing Syrians out, especially those with children.
- Economic hardship leads to negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage and children being taken out of school to work, which is considered preferable to sending women to work.
- In Jordan, the requirement for a work permit is enforced and illegal work can lead to deportation.
- Relatively heavier controls on unauthorised labour in Jordan have also had the effect of encouraging more children to work.
- All three countries, while having welcomed large numbers of Syrians refugees since the beginning of the crisis, have now imposed visa requirements for Syrian refugees.

Drivers of Migration from Syria

In addition to the secondary movements from neighbouring countries to Europe, conditions within Syria continue to deteriorate, causing more and more families to make the decision to leave. Specific drivers of migration from Syria, according to location, include:

- Government-controlled areas: Imminent military service and the mobilisation of reserve forces; random recruitment; fear of perceived allegiances; and economic consequences of the war.

- **Opposition-controlled areas:** Indiscriminate aerial bombing; destruction of homes, businesses and commercial assets; and in-fighting between various opposition groups.
- **ISIS-controlled areas:** Indiscriminate aerial bombing; expulsion of the Kurds from Raqqa; targeting of former Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters; and ban on education.
- **Kurdish regions:** Repeated displacement due to ISIS's control of different parts of the country; and recruitment by the People's Protection Units (also a risk for girls).
- **Specific to children:** Family reunification strategies; increased risks of sexual assault for girls; and access to education (a secondary driver).

Routes and Conditions of the Journey

In 2013, Syrians were arriving by air into Algeria, Egypt and Libya, all of which did not require visas for Syrians at the time. By end-2014, visa requirements had been imposed in all three countries (mainly as a result of countries balancing national security concerns and the development of their own countries with the need to provide access to asylum), thereby cutting off access to North Africa for Syrian passport holders. In 2015, some Syrians were flying into Mauritania and then making onward journey by land to Libya. This was curtailed by March 2016 when the Mauritanian government imposed a visa requirement. At this writing, Sudan is the only country in the region that admits Syrians without the need for a visa.

This has resulted in shifting routes to Europe over the Mediterranean. In 2014, a total of 170,664 individuals arrived in Europe through the Central Mediterranean, a more than 300% increase from 2013 figures of 45,298. Of this flow, 25% were Syrian. The new visa impositions in North Africa and increased instability in Libya led to a shift towards the Eastern Mediterranean by 2015. There were 856,723 arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean in 2015, compared to 44,057 in 2014, and 56% of the total number of arrivals were Syrian.

Movements from Syria to Greece along the Eastern Mediterranean also became compromised by changing visa requirements in neighbouring countries. More specifically:

- **Leaving Syria:** Departing the home country has become increasingly difficult. The fragmentation of Syria into areas controlled by various armed groups, all of which have set up checkpoints across their respective areas, means that circulation between areas is limited and requires hiring a smuggler.
- **Routes into Lebanon:** Entering Lebanon has been limited by a series of pre-approved entry categories for Syrian refugees. Exiting the country is also limited by the imposition of a Turkish visa, which means refugees cannot travel by air or sea between Turkey and Lebanon anymore. Thus, those that wish to move on become effectively trapped, as the only way out (without a visa to a more distant country) would be to re-enter Syria and move to its northern border with Turkey.
- **Routes into Jordan:** The border with Jordan was effectively closed in May 2013 and there has been an average of 15 crossings per day since then.
- **Routes into Turkey:** Even prior to the imposition of a visa requirement, most movements over this border occurred clandestinely.
- **Turkey to Greece:** The majority of arrivals came through Greece, with Syrian refugees making up 56% of the total.
- **Balkans:** Before the EU-Turkey deal in 2016, once refugees arrived on the Greek islands they were transferred to reception centres for registration and then would take ferries to the mainland. From there, they continued their journey through the Balkans in a series of steps, using public trains and being registered in each country.

These visa impositions, coupled with the strong push factors in Syria and in neighbouring countries, resulted in riskier decision-making and more dangerous journeys, particularly for children. Effectively, there has been a shrinking of the asylum space and the protective space for Syrians fleeing war. This trend was apparent even before the closing of the Balkans route, and can only be expected to worsen.

Smuggling

Smuggling services were required at different points of the journey studied in this report; at each location, different smuggling rings were encountered. Modes of transport also shifted, depending on location and terrain.

- **Smuggling dynamics in Turkey:** The person that controls the network, referred to as the *muhareb*, is rarely seen by migrants and rarely known. He works with a number of intermediaries (referred to as *samsar*) who are from the same country of origin as the refugees and migrants and who deal directly with them. Respondents reported that on the Western Turkish coast (where the sea journey to Greece is commenced), smuggling networks were controlled by Turkish mafia.
- **Economics of smuggling:** Over 2015, the cost of a boat journey from Turkey to Greece decreased, which led to the journey becoming accessible to a larger segment of the refugee population. It is presumed that the decrease in prices was at least partly due to smugglers adjusting to the purchasing power of their clients.

Protection Issues for Children on the Move

A number of protection issues were identified for children moving along the routes studied. They are identified below. Today, these issues are certainly magnified where the EU-Turkey deal has resulted in the closing of the Balkans routes since this fieldwork was completed. Any movement occurring now from Greece onward would be irregular, making the trip far more risky.

- **Difficult, harrowing passage:** The arduous journey leads to exhaustion and sickness. This includes walking through the mountains to exit Syria, waiting on the Turkish coast for boat journeys to Greece, the boat journey itself and then walking through the Balkans.
- **Inadequate services:** Basic needs and services are lacking, with the absence of sleeping quarters during the Balkans leg of

the journey, showers without privacy for Syrian women and girls, and large collective areas that led to tension between different nationalities.

- **Lack of designated spaces for adolescents:** Child-friendly spaces typically cater to children below age 12; adolescents were rarely engaged and instead shared space with adults in common areas, exposing them to protection risks.
- **Short transit times:** The rapidity with which refugees moved through the Balkan countries made it difficult for NGOs and other service providers to provide them with all of the support that they may need.
- **Psychological impacts:** The risk of death during the boat journey, hiding from authorities, tension and uncertainty at border locations, and stressed parents can all be distressful, particularly for children.
- **Risk of family separation:** Poor crowd management, spouses of different nationalities, exhaustion, issues with registration documents and death at sea can all separate families. In Syria, families are also separated when they experience difficulty moving through checkpoints, when men are forced into military service, when some members of the family remain behind to finish studies, or when there is not enough money for everyone to travel.
- **Risk of violence and abuse:** Women and children are especially vulnerable to abuse in overcrowded facilities. Women who did not have enough money for the boat journey to Greece became vulnerable to sexual exploitation. There were cases of children being left behind to pay off debts to landlords, hotel owners, or smugglers when the rest of the family moved on. This exposed children to the risk of exploitation and trafficking.



- **Identification and registration of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC):** Identification of these children is made difficult due to the short transit time, children overstating their age, authorities seeking to wave children through, inaccurate age assessments, the registration of

individuals claiming to be a relative of the child as the legal guardian without assessing family links, detention of children due to lack of adequate facilities and the absconding of children from facilities.

6. Increase access to labour markets in combination with work permits
7. Increase avenues for income generation for Syrian women
8. Provide better structural support to neighbouring countries for the integration of Syrian refugees already in the country

Recommendations

By the European Union (EU):

1. Ensure safe and legal pathways to international protection in the EU and share the responsibility with neighbouring countries
2. Increase the speed and efficiency of procedures for seeking asylum in the EU
3. Accelerate the implementation of family reunification procedures under the Dublin system
4. Increase and improve reception capacity in all European countries hosting Syrian refugees

In neighbouring countries:

5. Increase access to work permits for Syrian refugees

Child protection guarantees

9. Expand and improve reception conditions across all European countries
10. Work on the legal framework for the reception of UAC at the EU level and develop standard operating procedures (SOPs)
11. Create specific programming for adolescents
12. Assess individually the best interests of each unaccompanied child
13. Ensure education for all Syrian children affected by the crisis



STAKEHOLDERS MUST ENSURE PATHWAYS TO PROTECTION, INCREASE ACCESS TO DIGNIFIED LIVELIHOODS IN THE REGION, AND IMPROVE RECEPTION CONDITIONS AND EDUCATION ACROSS EUROPE

METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

In December 2015, Altai Consulting was commissioned by the Save the Children Regional Office for the Middle East and Europe to conduct a research study on the protection of children fleeing from the Syria conflict.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the drivers compelling Syrians to undertake secondary movements from neighbouring countries to Europe, including a particular focus on the drivers for children;
2. To trace the routes of travel that they follow on their journeys, including conditions of journey, perceptions and expectations;
3. To identify the key protection issues that children face along the way; and
4. To map the immediate interventions and measures being put in place to mitigate risks for children.

This report presents the findings of the first three of these objectives.

APPROACH

This study was conducted through a **qualitative approach that combined a number of research modules, across eight countries**, in order to develop a comprehensive picture of the movement of the Syrian refugee population from the Middle East to Europe.

The various modules were:

1. Secondary research/literature review;
2. Key informant interviews with individuals who have a good sense of migration dynamics in their area;
3. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with Syrian refugees. This included a mix of households and children (including accompanied, unaccompanied and separated children).

These modules are described in greater detail below.

Literature Review

At the outset of the study, a desk review of available literature, as well as Save the Children reports and internal documents, was conducted on the movement of Syrian refugees from the Middle East to Europe, with a particular focus on accompanied, unaccompanied and separated children. The purpose of this exercise was to allow for a comprehensive framing of the study and a deeper understanding of the historical context, as well as to ensure that the study was complementary to existing efforts. A list of the literature consulted during this review appears in Annex 1 of this report.

FIELDWORK

Fieldwork extended over January and February 2016 and culminated in a total of 198 interviews across eight countries. This included 82 interviews with key informants (KIs) and 116 in-depth interviews (IDIs) or focus group discussions (FGDs) with refugees. Fieldwork locations and the number of interviews conducted in each location are presented in Map 1.

Fieldwork Locations

Fieldwork was carried out in eight countries along the route followed by Syrian refugees from the Middle East to Europe. These were: Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia, and Croatia.

While **the intention was originally to interview a larger sample of Syrians who remained inside Syria**, only two interviews had been completed by the end of fieldwork. This is because interviews inside Syria were carried out remotely (by phone or Skype) and during the fieldwork phase, it became apparent that this was far more challenging than originally anticipated. Unreliable electricity and phone lines in the country, coupled with the fact that Syrians were afraid of speaking openly about their views and intentions to depart Syria over the phone given that their phone lines could be monitored, made this nearly impossible.

The team visited a total of 19 locations within the seven countries. These locations and the number of interviews conducted in each are presented in Table 1.

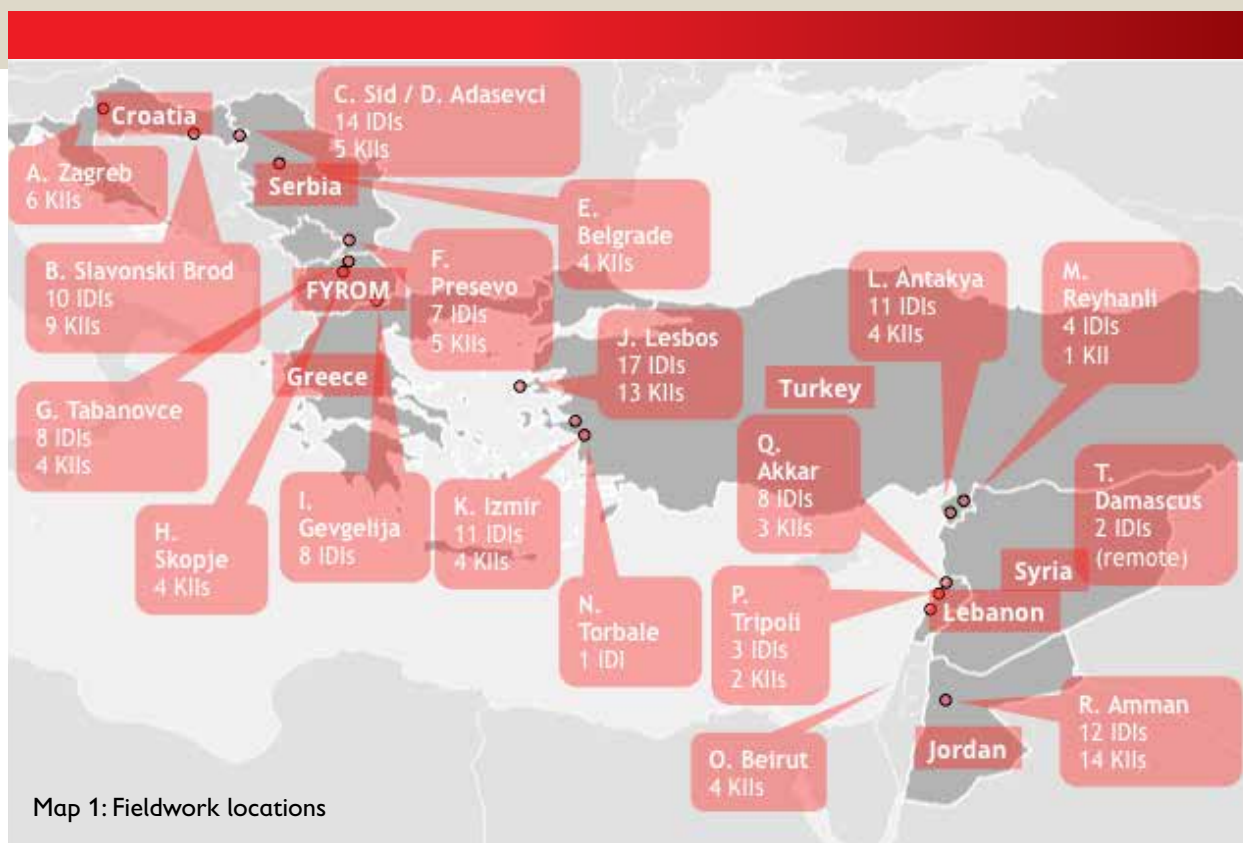


Table 1: Locations of fieldwork and number of interviews conducted in each location

#	ON MAP	LOCATION	IDIS	KIIS	DESCRIPTION OF LOCATION
Croatia					
1.	A	Zagreb	0	6	At the time of fieldwork, Syrian refugees would go directly to Slovenia, without stopping in the Croatian capital.
2.	B	Slavonski Brod	10	9	At the time of fieldwork, this was the only transit camp in Croatia. Syrian refugees would stay in Slavonski Brod for 2 hours on average.
Serbia					
3.	C	Sid	11	5	Sid is a transit camp and train station on the Serbian border. At the time of fieldwork, Syrian refugees would board Croatian trains here headed to Slavonski Brod.
4.	D	Adasevci	3	0	Adasevci is a petrol station on the highway, very close to Sid. At the time of fieldwork, buses of refugees would stop here and refugees would wait here for the train in Sid.
5.	E	Belgrade	0	4	At the time of fieldwork, Syrian refugees did not stop in Belgrade.
6.	F	Presevo	7	5	At the time of fieldwork, Presevo was the entry point to Serbia, a transit camp and train station, that was reached after a 4km walk from Tabanovce in FYROM.
FYROM					
7.	G	Tabanovce	8	4	At the time of fieldwork, Tabanovce was the exit point from FYROM and a transit camp and train station.
8.	H	Skopje	0	4	At the time of fieldwork, Syrian refugees did not stop in Skopje.
9.	I	Gevgelija	8	0	At the time of fieldwork, Gevgelija was the entry point to FYROM, a transit camp and train station.

#	ON MAP	LOCATION	IDIS	KIIS	DESCRIPTION OF LOCATION
Greece					
10.	J	Lesbos	17	13	Interviews with Syrian refugees were conducted at Kara Tepe camp (accommodation and services for Syrian families), Pikpa camp (accommodation and services for vulnerable refugees), Silver Bay Hotel (accommodation and services for vulnerable refugees) and around Mytilene Harbour where Syrian refugees would wait to board the ferry to Athens.
Turkey					
11.	K	Izmir	10	4	At the time of the fieldwork, Izmir was the main departure point in Turkey for journeys to the Greek islands. Syrian refugees would often stay in Izmir for a few days, negotiating with smugglers and waiting for good weather conditions for their crossing. They would typically stay in hotels. There is also a community of Syrians who are permanently settled in Izmir now.
12.	L	Antakya	11	4	At the time of fieldwork, Antakya was one of the main entry points into Turkey for Syrians fleeing from the North West of Syria (including smuggling routes through Jebel Turkmen). From there, refugees would usually take buses towards Istanbul and Izmir to continue their journey. There is also a community of Syrians who are permanently settled in Antakya, because it is partly Arabic-speaking and close to Syria.
13.	M	Reyhanli	4	1	Reyhanli is a Turkish border town close to Antakya, where the Syrian population now exceeds the Turkish population. It is known to be a hub for Syrian activists. While cross-border movements were common, the Turkish authorities have recently stepped up controls along this border.
14.	N	Torbale	1	0	At the time of fieldwork, Torbale was an informal tented settlement of Syrian refugees working in farms.
Lebanon					
15.	O	Beirut	0	4	Beirut is where field teams connected with UN agencies and NGOs.
16.	P	Tripoli	3	2	Tripoli is a city where Syrian refugees can be found living in urban settings.
17.	Q	Akkar	8	3	Akkar is the Lebanese region with the highest proportion of Syrian refugees. There are many informal tented settlements in the rural areas. Many of the Syrians living in this area are working in agricultural areas.
Jordan					
18.	R	Amman	12	14	Amman has the biggest urban concentration of Syrian refugees in Jordan.
Syria					
19.	T	Damascus	2	0	Interviews over the phone

In-depth Interviews with Syrian Refugees

A total of 116 interviews were conducted with Syrians across 19 locations in eight countries, as presented in Map 1 above. These were comprised of:

- A mix of interviews and FGDs (a total of 15 FGDs were conducted across the sample).
- Interviews with Syrian households/parents of children (82 in total) and children themselves (34 in total).



116 INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED WITH SYRIANS ACROSS 19 LOCATIONS IN EIGHT COUNTRIES

Figure 1: Age distribution of children interviewed

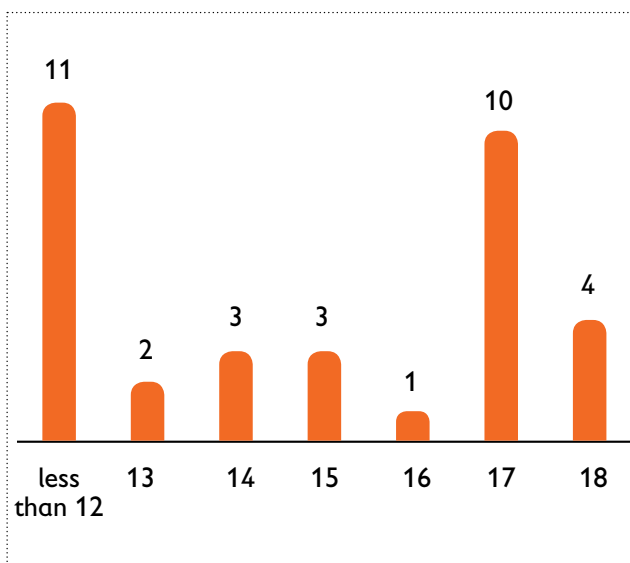
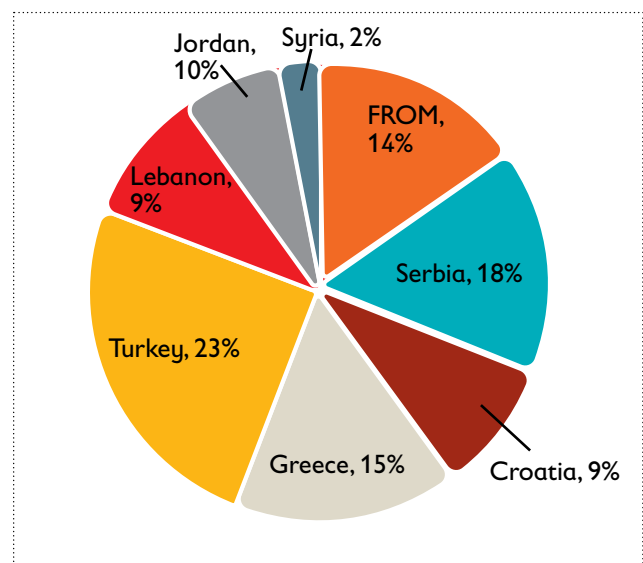


Figure 2: Percentage of the sample of refugees attributed to each country of fieldwork



- Of the 34 interviews with children, nine were with unaccompanied Syrian children and 25 were with accompanied Syrian children.³
- A total of 41% of all respondents were female (47 individuals). Of the 34 children interviewed, 16 were girls (47%).=

Figure 1 charts the age distribution of the children interviewed. Figure 2 demonstrates the percentage of the total sample of migrants that is attributed to each country in the sample.

Key Informant Interviews

A total of 82 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in 18 locations across seven countries,

³ For the purposes of the sample, an accompanied child refers to a child that was traveling with his or her parents or another relative.

as presented in Map 1 above. The purpose of these interviews was to complement information gleaned from refugees and to gain a deeper understanding of migration dynamics among the Syrian refugee population moving from the Middle East to Europe.

Key informants were typically individuals who had a strong sense of migration dynamics in their respective area, or of Syrian communities settled in, or passing through their area. They included civil society figures, i.e. employees of the UN, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), associations, etc., authorities, individuals working in camps, cultural mediators and translators, smugglers, local inhabitants who lived at key points along the transit routes, and others.

A full list of all key informants interviewed at each location appears in Annex 2 of this report.

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

One of the key objectives of this study is to identify the drivers compelling Syrian refugees to undertake secondary movements from neighbouring countries to Europe. That is, **what causes Syrians who have found safe haven in countries neighbouring Syria to leave those countries and attempt a second international migration to European countries?**

In order to answer this question effectively, Syrians who had been living in neighbouring countries (Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) for some time before moving to Europe and Syrians who had recently left Syria were both asked about their motivations and the drivers of their migration.

It should be noted that amongst Syrians who choose to remain in neighbouring countries, there tends to be a feeling that only those who are university educated would be able to find jobs in Europe or manage to build a good life there.

A 46-year-old mother of four from Homs explained, “In Germany, perhaps they give you aid for one year, but then what? If you don’t have a university degree, you can’t work there.” A 17-year-old agricultural worker from the Hama region also explained, “We are not

Focus Box 1: Definition of a refugee, 1951 Convention

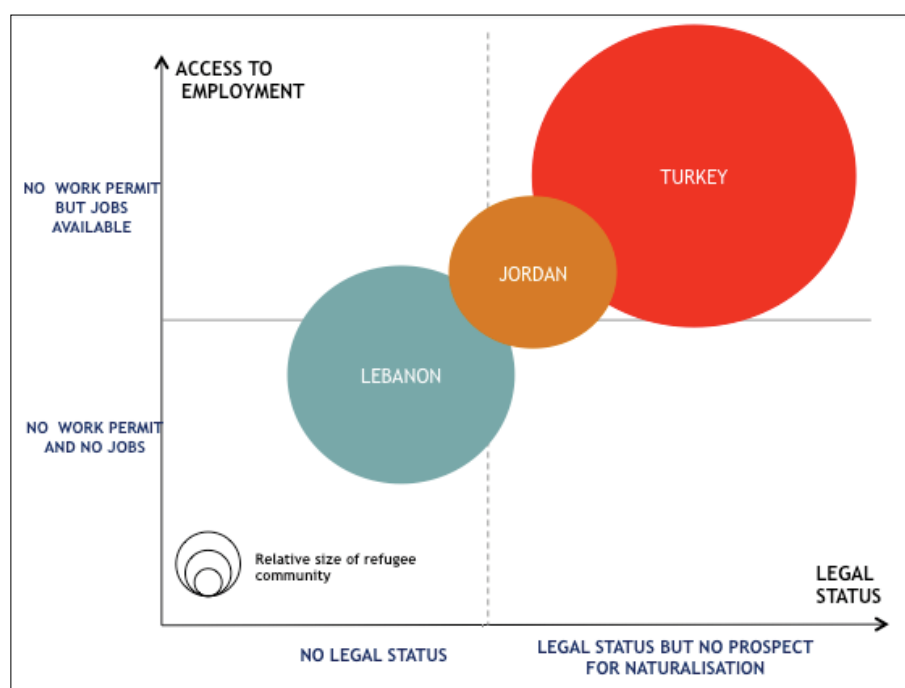
Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as:

“A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it...”

registered for resettlement because we would not integrate in those western countries. The Syrians who went there had studied and had degrees.”

Figure 3 charts the relative levels of access to employment and legal security in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, demonstrating that the three

Figure 3: Employment and legal status across Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey



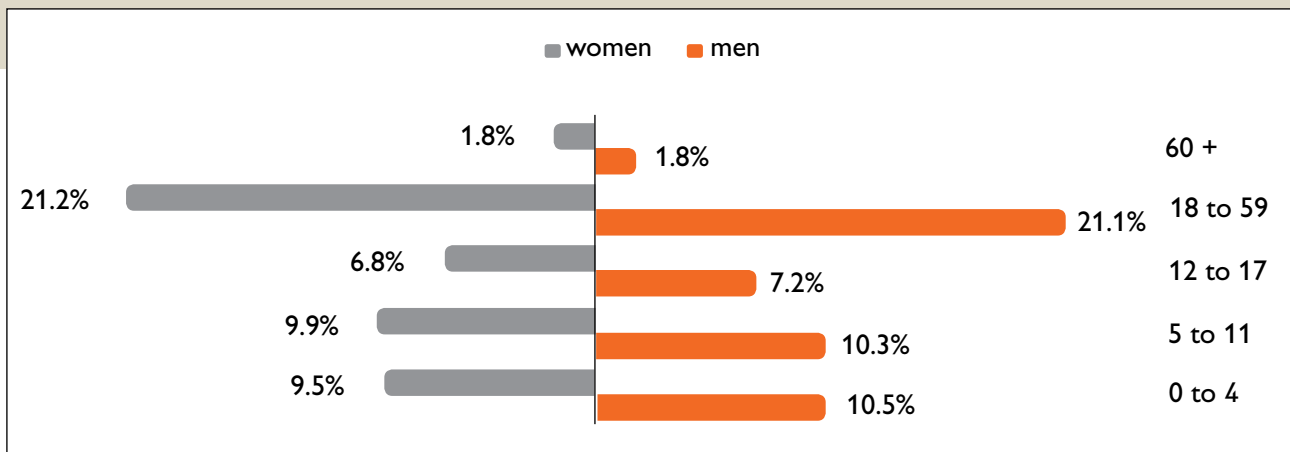


Figure 4: Age and gender distribution of the Syrian population in Turkey
 Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> (figure quoted is current as of March 2016)

countries lie across a spectrum with varying combinations of the two. It demonstrates that work permits are difficult to obtain in all three countries, but finding unskilled labour on the informal market is not very difficult in Turkey, most challenging in Lebanon, and somewhere in the middle of the two in Jordan. The pattern for legal security is the same although eventual naturalisation is impossible in all three countries. These factors are described in greater detail in the following subsections.

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION FROM TURKEY

Since the beginning of the crisis, Turkey has hosted a large number of Syrian refugees. There are currently 2.7 million Syrian refugees registered by the Turkish government in their country.⁴ The age and gender distribution of the Syrian population in Turkey is presented in Figure 4.

While there remains a sizeable community of Syrians residing in Turkey, intending to settle in Turkey and even moving back from Europe to Turkey, there is also movement of Syrians from Turkey to Europe.

Syrian refugees in Turkey receive identity cards that regularise their presence, social relations between refugees and the host community are reportedly not very problematic, and refugees there tend to find jobs. However, most are employed informally because work permits are too difficult to obtain, translating into lower salaries, vulnerability to exploitation, unskilled

jobs and no social security. The salaries that Syrians tend to obtain are often not sufficient to cover their living expenses in Turkey and most families reported only being able to survive economically if there was more than one working man in the family. Naturally, this creates problems for female-headed households, families with only daughters, or families where the man of the house is disabled.

Legal Status

The legal status of Syrian refugees in Turkey is guaranteed by temporary identity cards called *kimlik*, which regularises their administrative status in the country and provides access to health and education. It thereby protects Syrian refugees against practices that have threatened their security in other countries in the Middle East, such as deportation or arrest, and has contributed to the decision of some Syrians to settle in Turkey (see Focus Box 3 for more information on the *kimlik*).

While the *kimlik* allows Syrians to reside in Turkey, it does not automatically give them the right to work; for this, a work permit is required. In order to obtain work permits in Turkey, Syrians must first acquire residency. Residency requires 10,000 TYR (approximately USD \$3,500) in a bank account, a valid passport and an official rental agreement. Thus, it is not within the reach of most Syrians. Some respondents reported that it is also possible to obtain a work permit if your employer secures it on your behalf but most employers forgo the acquisition of work permits for their Syrian staff because of the high costs involved and because it is usually in their favour to employ Syrians informally. In any case, respondents reported that there

⁴ According to UNHCR data: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

Focus Box 2: Turkey's legal framework for refugees and asylum

Turkey is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention but with a geographic limitation that creates obligations only in relation to “persons fleeing events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951.” Turkey is among the few countries that still maintain this limitation (the others being Monaco, Congo and Madagascar).¹ Other countries that observed geographic limitations, such as Hungary, Latvia and Malta, lifted the limitation before or during negotiations for EU membership.

In November 1994, the Turkish government decided through a Decree on Asylum Regulation that it would conduct RSD for non-European citizens on its own. Close to 80,000 asylum applications were examined under this decree between 1995 and 2010, mostly from Iranians and Iraqis.² The manner in which these applications were processed has been the object of some criticism by certain international human rights groups and European governments.³

The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LRIP) was the first related legislation passed, going into effect in April 2014. It maintains the geographical limitation but contains some improvements in terms of procedures for RSD.⁴ Syrians qualify for ‘temporary protection’, which is described in Article 91 of the law as applying to “foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection”⁵.

Focus Box 3: The Turkish ‘Kimlik’

The kimlik regularises the administrative status of Syrians in Turkey and provides access to health and education. It does not, however, provide the right to work; rather a work permit must be obtained. Until recently, the kimlik also allowed for free circulation in the country. At the time of writing, inter-province travel requires prior authorisation, which can be easily obtained say respondents, if there is a valid reason for travel.

While the kimlik safeguards Syrians against deportation, if they leave the country, the kimlik becomes null and void and they are unable to re-register on return. More specifically, it prohibits back-and-forth movement between Turkey and Syria and when Syrians move over the border back into Syria, authorities warn them that they will lose their status in Turkey by doing so. One 28-year-old Syrian man in Turkey explained, “My brother was a fighter for Jebhe al-Nusra; he was killed a few days ago. I came here [to Antakya] with my mother in order to cross the border and attend his funeral. But the Turkish administration did not give us permission. They said that if we go, it is a definitive exit. We would have to come back with smugglers, and then we would not obtain another kimlik.”

The kimlik can be obtained easily at a local police station and under the competence of the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (which comes directly under the authority of the prime minister) and usually within a week or two of entry. Respondents in Istanbul, Bursa, and Izmir, however, reported that sometimes obtaining the kimlik could take a bit longer (up to a few months) in those areas, unlike in the east of the country.

Respondents also reported that when Syrians without a kimlik had been identified by police, they were not arrested or questioned but simply told to go and register themselves at a local police station.

SALARY AMOUNT IN TYR	EQUIVALENT IN USD ⁶	TYPE OF WORK
1,100 per month	\$366	Worker in an aluminium factory in Istanbul
1,000 per month	\$333	Experienced tailor in Urfa
900 per month	\$300	School teacher in Turkey
750 per month	\$250	Adult male working in a coffee shop in Antakya
350 per month	\$115	Working in weaving in Urfa refugee camp
30 per day	\$10	Agricultural worker on the west coast of Turkey

Table 2: Some typical salaries identified for Syrians in Turkey

COST IN TYR	EQUIVALENT IN USD	DETAILS
650 per month	\$215	Two bedroom apartment in Reyhanli
750 per month	\$250	Two bedroom apartment in central Antakya
800 per month	\$266	Two bedroom apartment in Istanbul
1200 per month	\$400	Two bedroom apartment in central Istanbul

Table 3: Some typical costs for accommodation paid by Syrians in Turkey

is almost no risk of being arrested or deported for lack of a work permit (unlike in Jordan).

On January 15, 2016, Turkey passed the “Regulation on Work Permit of Refugees Under Temporary Protection” in order to ease access to work permits for Syrian refugees. Under this regulation, Syrians can obtain work permits under the following conditions⁵:

- An application is filed with the Ministry of Labour at least six months after registering for the *kimlik*;
- An application is filed online by the employer;
- The number of refugees does not exceed 10% of the Turkish workforce at any given workplace (unless the employer proves that there are no qualified Turkish citizens in the province that can fill the position); and
- The terms of the contract adhere to the minimum wage.

However, only 2,000 work permits had actually been issued as of late March 2016, according to the General Directorate for Migration Management. This accounts for 0.07% of the total

Syrian refugee population in Turkey⁶. Mainly because employers prefer to hire refugees informally so that they can pay them less than the minimum wage. At the time of fieldwork (February 2016) none of the refugees interviewed were aware of the new regulation and no one reported possessing a work permit, or knowing someone who did.

It should also be noted that residency is required for eventual naturalisation. That is, nationalisation in Turkey requires five years of formal residency in the country prior to applying for citizenship, which means naturalisation is also not within the reach of most Syrians in the country. For some, this acts as a driver for onward movement: “My wife and I started thinking about Europe. First, because there you are granted residency upon arrival and then there is the opportunity to get citizenship after a few years,” according to a 30-year-old Syrian man in Turkey. For many Syrian parents, the question of eventual naturalisation was particularly relevant in the context of their children’s future, even more so than their own.

In the absence of a work permit, most Syrian refugees join the informal labour market, which translates into exploitation in the form of lower wages (respondents reported that Syrians could

5 Turkish labour law (<http://turkishlaborlaw.com/news/legal-news/362-turkey-grants-work-permit-for-syrian-refugees>)

6 Article in The Guardian (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/11/fewer-than-01-of-syrians-in-turkey-in-line-for-work-permits>)

expect about half the normal rate for a going job) and difficult relations with employers who pay salaries late, partially or not at all. In the face of which, Syrians have no avenues for redress. Working informally, without a work permit, also affects the long-term prospects and stability for Syrian refugees in terms of social security, which was identified as a growing concern. One 40-year-old tiler from Aleppo, who had been living in Istanbul for two years, explained, “The rent was 500 TYR (approximately USD \$165) and the salary never more than 1,000 TYR (approximately USD \$335), so we were counting every *lira*, trying to save. Also, I always had to beg the employers to get my money.” A 17-year-old boy from Damascus who was interviewed in Serbia had a similar story: “I did all kinds of work in Istanbul: weaving, printing, hairdressing, waiting on tables. The maximum salary I got was 800 TYR, but the employers didn’t pay me what I was entitled to. There were always delays and sometimes parts of the salary were not paid.”

Even skilled Syrian workers, those who are educated or qualified in a certain trade or skill, find themselves on the informal labour market, doing menial jobs because their qualifications and diplomas are not recognised and because they do not have work permits. In the best-case scenario, they are able to use their skills informally. For example, a Syrian doctor interviewed in Antakya explained that most Syrian doctors in Turkey work informally but only with Syrian patients.

Economic Factors

As most Syrians in Turkey work without work permits on the informal labour market, they attract lower salaries than Turkish workers, which are insufficient to meet the cost of living in Turkey. A range of salaries were mentioned by the respondents of the study, from 350 TRY (approximately USD \$115) per month to 1,500 TRY (approximately USD \$500) per month, considered the maximum attainable. Table 2 outlines some typical salaries identified for Syrians in Turkey during the study.

These salaries are juxtaposed against the cost of living in Turkey. Rents and the general cost of living in the country are high compared to salaries, but also high compared to the cost of living that refugees were accustomed to in Syria. Most households reported that they had been living on \$200 USD per month in Syria.

Focus Box 4: Current modalities of schooling for Syrian children in Turkey

There are currently three modalities of schooling for Syrian children in Turkey:

- Syrian children attending Turkish government schools with Turkish students;
- Syrian children attending Turkish government schools at times designated only for Syrian children and with Syrian teachers teaching in Arabic (teachers’ salaries paid by UNICEF through the government);
- Private schools set up by Syrians for Syrian children (teachers’ salaries paid by UNICEF through the government and tuition fees also collected from students).

The amount paid for rent by Syrians in Turkey ranged from 650 TYR (approximately USD \$215) to 1,200 TYR (approximately USD \$400), with the spectrum outlined in Table 3. It should be noted that Syrians who were residing in informal settlements on the western coast of Turkey (usually in makeshift tents) did not pay anything for their accommodation, unlike Syrians in Lebanon who paid approximately USD \$70 to live in tents in Lebanon.

In light of these costs, respondents reported that life in Turkey was only possible for those Syrian families who had more than one income stream coming into the family. As it was not customary for women among the sample of Syrians encountered on the route (mainly Sunni Muslims from lower socio-economic backgrounds) to work outside of the home, this translated more specifically into a need for more than one man of working age and ability. Female-headed households, families with disabled men, or families who only had daughters faced major challenges and were often driven to continue onward from Turkey. One young Syrian couple from Damascus stated, “The Turks manage to live because their wives and daughters work.” Another Syrian man from Homs explained, “It is not in our customs to allow woman to work in Baba Amro.” (former FSA fighter, 28, father of four, interviewed in FYROM). Among the Syrians observed and interviewed on the route, only women who were divorced or widowed (i.e., whose position within a patriarchal norm had already shifted) were found to be working outside of the home in Turkey.

Focus Box 5: Factors that encourage settlement in Turkey

When compared to countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, at the time of fieldwork, Turkey emerged as a more attractive destination for Syrians because of the legal security (albeit limited) provided by the *kimlik* and reportedly better relations with the host community. Some other facts that encourage settlement in Turkey are as follows:

Activism: Turkey is a good location for Syrians who remain dedicated to the revolution. It allows them proximity to Syria, which facilitates movement to and from opposition areas. There is also the presence of the coalition in Turkey and the Turkish government's endorsement of the revolution. Some Syrians interviewed in Turkey explained that they had returned to Turkey from Germany because they felt too far from the revolution in Germany and because they felt like somewhat of a traitor by being there.

Religious conservatism: Syrians who adhered to more conservative religious principles spoke of their concerns about secular life in Europe, particularly those who had young children and sought to raise them according to their own principles.

Stable employment: Those in stable employment, or in a favourable financial situation, were also more likely to stay in Turkey, particularly businessmen or those working in the aid sector (with UN or NGOs). There is a group of Syrian businessmen who managed to move some of their capital out of Syria and use it to establish businesses in Turkey. They tended to come from Aleppo and settle in Gazi Antep.

The high cost of living also led to some children discontinuing their education in favour of working to help the family, despite relatively good access to education in Turkey. In some cases, where there was only one male adult in the family, young boys, sometimes as young as 10 or 12, were encouraged to work in order to fill the gap.

Access to Services

The *kimlik* guarantees access to health and education services for Syrians registered in Turkey but access to education is limited by a number of practicalities. These include an insufficient number of schools with curriculum in Arabic, which limits access for Syrian children. If there are no Arabic schools close by, transportation costs limit families' ability to send their children to school. As mentioned previously, in some families, young boys are required to work in order for the family to survive financially and are pulled out of school for this reason. These factors sometimes act as secondary drivers for onward movement, alongside the primary driver, which is usually economic. Focus Box 4 sets out the current modalities of schooling for Syrian children in Turkey.

Access to health services is also guaranteed by the *kimlik* but respondents reported some discriminatory behaviour

in public clinics, which affected their level of service. This was not cited as a driver of migration, however.

Political Factors

Political factors also act as drivers of onward movement for particular segments of the Syrian refugee population. More specifically, **the current conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in the southeast creates instability in one of the main areas of settlement for Syrian refugees.** "Also, in Turkey there is now war between the Turks and the Kurds. This is also a reason why we leave Turkey. We did not leave one war to come to another," said a 46-year-old school teacher from Derbassiyeh who lived for four years in the region of Mardin in Turkey and was interviewed in Serbia. In the same vein, some Kurdish Syrians also expressed the feeling of not being welcome in Turkey or experiencing resistance towards integration into Turkish culture and language.

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION FROM LEBANON

According to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 53% of the Syrian

Syrian children attempt to keep warm along the route (Save the Children)



FAMILIES PUSHING ON TO EUROPE



ONLY 0.07%
OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN
TURKEY HAVE A WORK PERMIT
ALLOWING THEM TO EARN A
DIGNIFIED LIVELIHOOD



CHILD LABOUR
IS ONE OF THE STRATEGIES THAT FAMILIES
USE TO COVER THE HIGH COST OF LIVING
IN TURKEY, DESPITE RELATIVELY GOOD
ACCESS TO EDUCATION

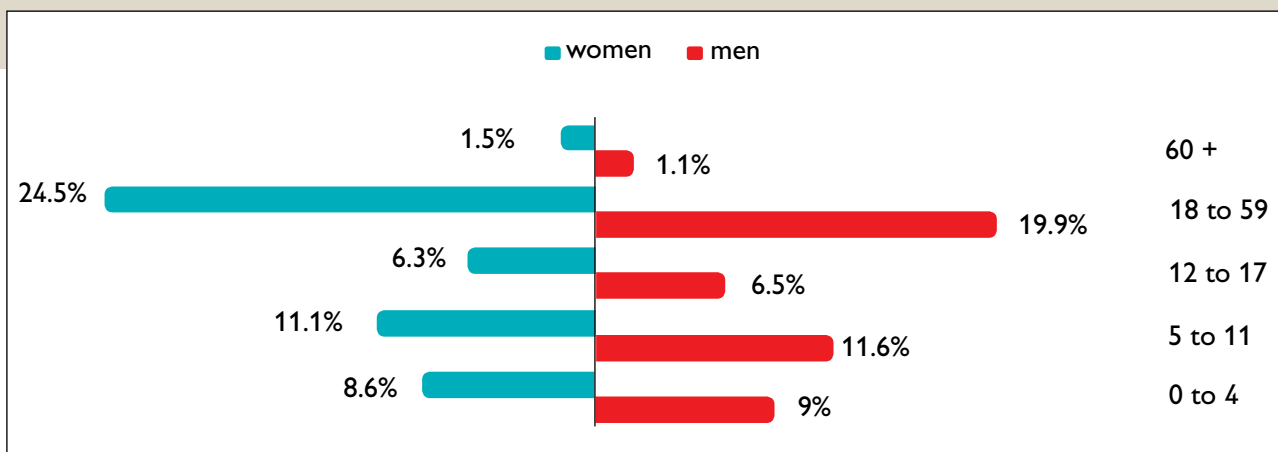


Figure 5: The age and gender distribution of the Syrian population in Lebanon

Source: UNHCR website, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

population in Lebanon are children.⁷ As there are no official Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon, most of the Syrian population lives in the community, in informal settlements, or in existing camps for Palestinians. Syrian refugees in Lebanon have high unemployment rates and are mainly integrated into the informal labour market. Even when refugees have paid employment, they are often unable to meet their basic needs when combining work, humanitarian assistance, and/or the use of coping mechanisms.⁸

There are two types of Syrian migration to Lebanon. The first encompasses those that came prior to the conflict, mainly out of poverty or in search of income-generating activity (some seasonally and some more permanently). These Syrians are typically from the eastern region (Al-Jazira). They tend to work in agriculture in Lebanon and settle in the rural areas of the country. At the onset of the crisis, they started to stabilise in Lebanon, with less cross border movements, and progressively brought over their families and relatives. Today, they tend to find themselves in a relatively more stable situation when compared to the second group, who are Syrians who came solely as a result of the war.

Those that came as a result of the war are typically from central Syria and its border regions, are generally more educated and prefer living in urban areas in Lebanon. They tend to have a harder time finding employment and their expectations are different when compared the first group, as their standards of living were different in Syria.

7 Lebanon overview, OCHA, February 2016

8 "Livelihoods Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Akkar Governorate," UNHCR and REACH, December 2014

While the Syrians in Lebanon are feeling increasingly less secure and more in favour of moving on to another destination, the reality is that most of them are trapped in the country and prevented from being able to do so, both because their movements within the country are limited by their lack of administrative status and also because their options for exiting the country have become limited. That is, Turkey's imposition of a visa requirement for Syrians as of January 8 precludes them from being able to move regularly (by plane or boat) from Lebanon to Turkey. An irregular journey from Lebanon to Turkey would require them to move back into Syria and then cross into Turkey via Syria's northern border. Naturally, returning to Syria is risky and depending on

Focus Box 6: Lebanon's legal framework for refugees and asylum

Lebanon is not party to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol and, according to UNHCR, does not have specific legislation or administrative practices in place to manage a refugee influx of modest, let alone mass proportions.⁷

Prior to the Syria crisis, the refugee population in Lebanon was less than 10,000 and composed mostly of Iraqis (not including the Palestinian refugee population, which was seen as a special case⁸). This increased to 400,000 Syrian refugees in early 2013 and to a million in early 2014. The country now hosts close to 1.2 million Syrian refugees in addition to 280,000 Palestinian refugees, and 46,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria.⁹

Focus Box 7: The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2016 (LCRP) is the Lebanon chapter of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 (3RP) led by UNHCR and UNDP. It is an integrated humanitarian and stabilization strategy which estimates funding needs for 2016 at US\$ 2.48 billion in order to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to highly vulnerable individuals (1.5 million displaced Syrians, 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese and 320,000 Palestine refugees). The LCRP is organized according to three response areas:

- Provide material and legal assistance to the most vulnerable among the displaced from Syria and the poorest segments of Lebanese society;
- Link vulnerable groups and localities to strengthened basic services and protection; and
- Support national institutions to preserve social stability¹⁰

one's allegiances, there may not be a direct path to follow to reach the northern border (as different parts of the country are in the hands of different elements). Finally, the socio-economic situation of large segments of the Syrian population in Lebanon also precludes them from considering an onward journey to Turkey and/or Europe.

Legal Status

The lack of legal administrative status is the main cause of insecurity for Syrians in Lebanon. Before the crisis, Syrians could enter Lebanon with a Syrian National ID Card, which allowed them to remain in the country for six months. This could then be renewed within the country for an additional six months without any fees. After 12 months, Syrians were obliged to leave the country. They would then obtain a new six-month entry for free upon re-entering Lebanon.

After the onset of the crisis, it became increasingly impossible for Syrians to exit and then re-enter Lebanon in order to renew their residency. In an effort on the part of the Lebanese Government to facilitate legal stay for Syrians in such a context, Syrians were permitted to renew their residency in-country after 12 months for LBP 300,000 (USD \$200) per person.

On 5 January 2015, the law was changed again requiring Syrians wishing to renew their residency to submit a payment of USD \$200, a UNHCR registration certificate valid for at least six months, a housing commitment (certified copies of lease agreement or property deeds); certified attestation from the *mukhtar* that the landlord owns the property; an authorised pledge not to work; and proof of financial means to support themselves.⁹ Syrians who are not registered with UNHCR must secure a Lebanese sponsor to renew their temporary residence permit for a period of six months.¹⁰



**REFUGEES CAN'T
MEET NEEDS**
IN SYRIA OR ITS NEIGHBOURS EVEN
COMBINING WORK, HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE, AND/OR THE USE OF
COPING MECHANISMS.

⁹ Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Quarterly snapshot, January to March 2015

¹⁰ "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Government Policy and Protection Concerns," UNHCR March 2015

Focus Box 8: Approved entry categories for Syrians wishing to enter Lebanon as of 5 January 2015

The Government of Lebanon has outlined 10 approved categories for entry into Lebanon:¹¹

1. **Tourism:** Written confirmation of hotel reservation and proof of ability to support oneself financially for the duration of the stay. Entry is given for the duration of the reservation and can be renewed for a maximum of one month.
2. **Work visit:** Only granted to professionals, business or religious persons for a maximum of one month if confirmation by a Lebanese company is provided.
3. **Property owner:** Syrians who own property in Lebanon are entitled to a six-month residency permit renewable for another six months. Under this category, family members are entitled to visit the landowner for a maximum of two weeks.
4. **Tenant:** A lease agreement registered with the municipality and the General Security Office (GSO), accompanied by proof of livelihood (i.e. bank account), entitles one to a six-month residency permit renewable for the duration of the lease. Under this category, family members are entitled to visit the tenant for a maximum of two weeks.
5. **Student:** With proof of acceptance by a Lebanese university, and a valid student card and previous certificates, one is entitled to a seven-day entry permit in order to then acquire a student residency permit on arrival.
6. **Shopping:** Entry permitted for 24 hours.
7. **Transit:** In case of transit through Lebanon, one must present a valid passport, visa to a third country, and a non-refundable airplane/boat ticket. This entitles the individual to a 48-hour (travel by air) or 24-hour (travel by sea) transit permit.
8. **Medical visits:** For entry for medical treatment, medical records from a hospital or doctor in

Lebanon are required, entitling one to a 72-hour entry period, which is renewable for an additional 72 hours. It also carries permission for one family member to accompany the person seeking medical treatment.

9. **Appointment with a foreign embassy:** This is a 48-hour entry permit renewable upon presentation of proof of an appointment.
10. **Displaced:** This is provided under exceptional circumstances, the details for which are to be finalized by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA).

Although not yet finalized, MOSA has indicated that four categories of persons are presently being considered for inclusion in the humanitarian exceptions:¹²

1. Unaccompanied/separated children (under 16 years old) whose parents/legal guardians are confirmed to be displaced in Lebanon;
2. Persons with disabilities dependent on family/relatives confirmed to be displaced in Lebanon;
3. Persons needing lifesaving medical treatment not usually available in Syria, or not available in a timely manner; and,
4. Individuals pursuing resettlement or transitioning through Lebanon to a third country, with proof of onward travel outside Lebanon.

UNHCR has proposed two additional categories that would allow entry to those most immediately at risk. These are:

1. Civilians who are fleeing immediate risk of harm;
2. Civilians with acute vulnerabilities likely to severely deteriorate.

UNHCR also urges that if a humanitarian exception is applied to an individual, it also include his or her accompanying family members so that families are not separated at the border.¹³

It should be noted that the 5 January change in law also limited Syrians' ability to cross over the border into Lebanon. Only Syrians who possess valid identification documents and who can provide proof that they fit into one of the approved entry categories are allowed entry. Focus Box 8 sets out all of the approved entry categories; seeking refuge is not included.

As most of the newly-established requirements for residency are impossible for Syrians in the country to meet, **the result of the new law is that the vast majority of Syrians are unable to renew their residency and are residing in the country with an irregular administrative status.** This creates a number of consequences for Syrians in the country, including limited freedom of movement (out of fear of being apprehended by authorities for being without residency, which can occur at any of the checkpoints set up across the country), the lack of a right to employment, and lack of access to services. One Syrian man in Lebanon explained, "People without residency don't move for fear of checkpoints. If they take you, you are detained between three days to one week. Sometimes they also storm camps and take all males over 14 years of age. Here in the camp, around half of the Syrians have an order of expulsion to Al-Qussayr in Syria. But no expulsions to Syria are enforced, except for maybe a few individual cases on political grounds. So Syrians in informal camps don't move more than a few kilometres. Myself, I cannot go to the pharmacy a few kilometres from here."

Economic Factors

Syrian refugees in Lebanon have high unemployment rates and are mainly integrated onto the informal labour market. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) study in 2014 found that 92% of Syrians who are employed have no work contract. It also found that Syrians are mainly working in the agriculture sector, domestic services, or construction and over half (56%) work on a seasonal, weekly or daily basis. Only 23% earn regular monthly wages.¹¹

Moreover, the new requirements for residency (as of 5 January 2015) explicitly preclude Syrians from the right to work in the country, which keeps them in the informal labour market and

11 "Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile," ILO, 2014

Focus Box 9: Socio-economic characteristics of the pre-war Syrian population

To understand the integration of Syrian refugee communities in host countries like Jordan and Lebanon, it helps to understand the nature of the pre-war Syrian population in comparison to its neighbours. Some facts include:¹⁴

The Syrian population had a similar age structure to the one in Jordan but it was much younger than that in Lebanon.

The education level in Syria was similar to that in Lebanon but much lower than that of Jordan.

Female labour force participation was similar between Syria and Jordan but higher in Lebanon.

Syria had a much higher share of the population employed in agriculture as compared to either Jordan or Lebanon.

vulnerable to exploitation. Much like Turkey, in Lebanon, this takes the form of lower wages (reported to have decreased by 50% since before the crisis) and lax or incomplete payment of salaries, with Syrians having no avenues for redress.

The number of jobs available in Lebanon has also remained stable despite the increase in the number of Syrians competing for them. For example, before the crisis, it was common for Syrians (especially poor, uneducated men from the arid East of Syria) to work in agricultural areas of Lebanon for a few months at a time, particularly during the harvest. In the current climate of an increased number of Syrians in the country that are settled permanently, and living with their families, respondents reported being able to secure work for a maximum of 10 days per month. In a study conducted by UNHCR and Reach in December 2014 in Akkar governorate, only 32% of refugee households reported having at least one member in paid employment.¹²

The lack of legal status has also limited the movements of the Syrian population throughout the country, as explained in the preceding subsection, which thereby limits their access to employment (or their ability to search for jobs in other areas). Respondents reported that authorities

12 "Livelihoods Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Akkar Governorate," UNHCR and REACH, December 2014

at the checkpoints tend to tolerate the movements of women, children and the elderly. Thus, it is mainly men who are limited in their movements as a result of the legal insecurity, which affects a family's income-generating ability.

While in Lebanon Syrian women do not typically join the labour market even to bridge the gap between household expenses and income, a trend does exist of young boys being sent into the workforce in order to supplement household income. This usually prevents them from being able to go to school. A study by ILO in 2014 found that out of all of the Syrian refugee women aged above 15, only six per cent were currently working in Lebanon.¹³

Future Prospects

The lack of legal status in the country affects long-term prospects for Syrians. Even if Syrians in Lebanon manage to meet the requirements for renewed residency (implausible for most in the country), they are explicitly denied the right to work, as one requirement for residency is an authorised pledge not to work. For some, this limits the potential of Lebanon to be more than just a temporary location, especially for middle-class families with young children who do not want their children to grow up without opportunity or the potential to integrate onto the local labour market.

Moreover, the example of the Palestinian community in Lebanon does not create an encouraging outlook for Syrian refugees. While the Palestinian community has been present in the country for 60 years (main waves of migration in 1948 from Palestine and 1971 from Jordan), and is numbered at around 450,000 individuals,¹⁴ it is still considered to be marginalised¹⁵ and without the entitlement to full rights (including limits on employment and land ownership). For many Syrians in our sample, this created a grim outlook in terms of their own integration into Lebanon and encouraged them to seek settlement elsewhere.

13 "Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile," ILO, 2014

14 UNRWA website, "Where We Work," <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>

15 According to Human Rights Watch, Palestinians in Lebanon live in appalling socio-economic conditions (World Report 2013)

Also, it should be noted that the Lebanese government considers that it is experiencing a mass influx and refers to individuals who fled from Syria to Lebanon after March 2011 as "displaced Syrians." According to UNHCR, this term reflects **the Lebanese government's position that permanent settlement in Lebanon is not possible.** This is despite the fact that the UN characterises the migration of the Syrian population as a refugee movement and considers most Syrians seeking international protection to fulfil the requirements of the refugee definition.¹⁶

Social Conditions

The instability in Lebanon that predates the Syrian crisis, as well as societal divisions along the country's sectarian lines, create unfavourable dynamics for the Syrian population and generate further concerns in terms of their future in the country. For example, some Syrians reported that when they entered the country irregularly via Aarsal, Shia militias in the area were engaged in kidnapping. In Akkar, some Syrians reported having been verbally attacked by members of local political parties aligned with the Syrian government.

The Palestinian community in Lebanon is also divided into different factions and fighting sometimes erupts between them within their settlements (especially since the Lebanese army and police are not authorised to intervene). This creates insecurity for Syrian refugees who took refuge in the camps (Palestinian Syrians as well as non-Palestinian Syrians).¹⁷ Within the Palestinian factions, there are also certain divides with groups taking opposing stances on the Syrian conflict. One 63-year-old Palestinian Syrian man explained, "Yes, we stayed three years in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain al Hilwe in Sidon (Lebanon). Life is impossible there; there is no authority, no rule, just fights between Palestinian militias." The fact that the police are not authorised to enter the camps compounds the insecurity experienced by the Syrians inside.

Moreover, in addition to the fact that the sheer number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon has strained already

16 "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Government Policy and Protection Concerns," UNHCR March 2015

17 This is of course only a brief description of a complex situation, provided for the purpose of context



A Syrian refugee displays his passport, a prized possession. (Save the Children)

scarce resources and led to increasing unemployment and other challenges for the local population, there are also **political events that complicate the perception of Syrians in the country**. These political events include the memory of the Syrian role in the Lebanese civil war and the Syrian military occupation of Lebanon, which lasted until 2005. This has been compounded by events that were believed to be a result of the Syrian conflict spilling over into Lebanon (for example, the kidnapping of 30 Lebanese soldiers in Aرسال in 2013 and the bombings against Hezbollah in 2014) as well as frequent border incidents, such as cross-border shelling, surface-to-surface rocket attacks, and air-to-surface missiles.¹⁸ Sometimes this leads to acts of discrimination against the Syrian community. However, this tends to be largely limited to lower socioeconomic classes. Middle-class Syrians do not report such challenges. More generally, it contributes to doubts among the Syrian population that they are able to live a stable long-term life in Lebanon on the long term and driving a desire for onward movement.

¹⁸ "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Government Policy and Protection Concerns," UNHCR March 2015

Focus Box 10: Renewing Syrian passports

Passports continue to be issued by the Syrian government within Syria. Thus, for Syrians that are in government-controlled areas, or who can make their way to government-controlled areas and who are not wanted by the government, it is possible to obtain a valid passport.

For Syrians outside of Syria, a decision was made by the Syrian government in April 2015 to allow passports to be issued by embassies abroad without the need to wait for a security clearance from the Department of Emigration and Passports in Damascus. Passports were issued for a fee of USD \$400 and even Syrians who left the country irregularly were eligible. By September 2015, there were as many as 10,000 passports¹⁵ being issued per month by the Syrian embassy in Amman.

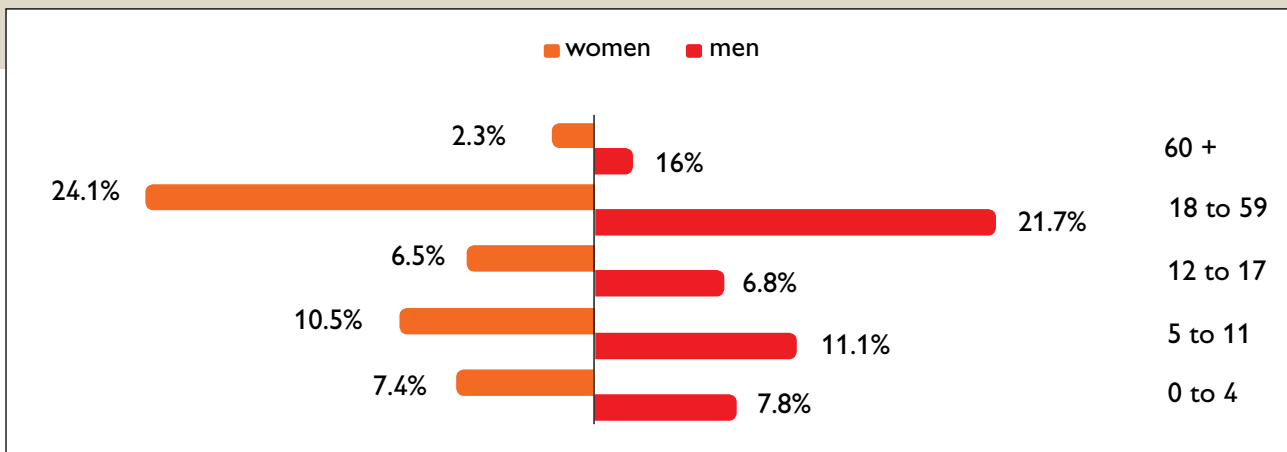


Figure 6: Age and gender distribution of Syrian refugee population in Jordan

Source: UNHCR website, “Regional page” <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION FROM JORDAN

Jordan is currently hosting over 600,000 Syrian refugees.¹⁹ According to UNHCR, 90% of this population lives outside of the camps²⁰ and in poverty, 75% are highly or severely vulnerable, 80% are using crisis or emergency coping mechanisms, and 115,000 school-aged children are not attending school.²¹ Moreover, 50% of the Syrian refugee population in Jordan is below the age of 18 (see Figure 6).

According to the World Bank and UNHCR, the poverty of Syrian refugees is more extensive in Jordan than in Lebanon and poverty among refugees in Jordan is increasing.²² However, respondents reported better relations with authorities in Jordan, when compared with Lebanon, and less tension with the host community.

Legal Status

A residency permit can be obtained in Jordan from a local police station by producing the following documents: a valid Syrian passport or other ID document, a formal rental agreement, UNHCR registration, and a medical test. The medical test could cost up to USD \$50 but is now typically covered by UNHCR.

19 As of 16 March 2016, the precise figure was 636,040: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>

20 At the time of writing, there were four refugee camps hosting refugees from Syria in Jordan: Zaatari, Azraq, King Abdallah and Cyber city.

21 UNHCR Operational Update for Jordan, March 2016.

22 The Welfare of Syrian Refugees: Evidence from Jordan and Lebanon, World Bank and UNHCR, 2016.

In terms of work permits, according to the Ministry of Labour’s Annual Report, a total of 324,410 workers obtained work permits in Jordan in 2014. Of that, only 5,700 were Syrian (1.7%).²³ The ILO estimates that **99% of Syrian refugees work outside of Jordan’s labour regulations and on the informal**

Focus Box 11: Jordan’s legal framework for refugees and asylum

Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention but article 21 of the Jordanian Constitution of 1952 states “Political refugees shall not be extradited on account of their political beliefs or for their defence of liberty”. The General Law of 1973 on Residence and Foreigners’ Affairs¹⁶ also recognizes the existence of refugees and gives the Ministry of Internal Affairs authority to rule on that matter.

A 1998 Memorandum of Understanding between Jordan and the UNHCR includes the definition of a refugee and honours the principle of non-refoulement, specifying that asylum seekers can stay in Jordan until their status is determined and for another six months after they have been given status¹⁷. The memorandum does not accept local integration however, favouring instead resettlement to third countries¹⁸. This memorandum was amended in March 2014, extending the period of examination of applications by the UNHCR to 90 days (previously a maximum of 30 days) and extending the period of validity of the refugee identification card from six months to one year¹⁹.

23 “Work Permits for Syrian Refugees in Jordan,” ILO, 2015.

Focus Box 12: The Jordan Compact

At the Syria Donors Conference in February 2016, The Government of Jordan announced a series of initiatives (termed the 'Jordan Compact') that aim to unlock the economic potential of Syrian refugees in the country while also strengthening the resilience of host communities.

While the compact is subject to international funding, it targets initiatives that would:

- Provide Syrians with the right to work;
- Formalise existing Syrian businesses and establish new tax-generating businesses for Syrians;
- Remove restrictions on small economic activities within camps hosting Syrians;
- Create specially designated development zones providing jobs for Syrians, as well as Jordanians,
- Formalise access for Syrians to work in sectors where there is low Jordanian participation and a high proportion of foreign workers.

economy²⁴. By September 2016, after the government eased fees for obtaining a work permit as part of an agreement with the international community (see Focus Box 12), 26,000 Syrians had obtained work permits and more were coming forward, although numbers remain far short of the target of 200,000 work permits issued²⁵.

In order to obtain a work permit in Jordan, Syrian refugees must be able to produce the following: a work contract, a valid vocational license for the employer, a valid passport, proof of subscription to a Social Security Corporation, and an identity card from the Ministry of Interior. While the requirement for a valid passport is already limiting for many Syrian refugees, access is further limited by the fact that Syrians who entered Jordan irregularly, or who are residing in refugee camps, are not entitled to work permits.

Usually, fees for a work permit range between 170-370 JOD (approximately USD \$240-\$522).

These fees can also be altered at the discretion of the Ministry of Labour and can sometimes be set as

24 Ibid.

25 "Syrian Worker Programme Faces Hurdles in Jordan", Al-Jazeera, available online at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/syrian-worker-programme-faces-hurdles-jordan-160919073944811.html>, last accessed 10 January 2017.

"They warned me twice not to work, then they expelled me. I was detained for 11 days and beaten occasionally, and then they [the authorities] took me to the border and pushed me back into Syria into a rebel area."

—25-year-old Syrian man interviewed in Jordan

high as 700 JOD (USD \$986).²⁶ Under Jordanian law, the employer is required to pay for the work permit. However, in many of the agricultural or unskilled jobs that Syrian refugees are commonly employed in, employers are unable to pay these kinds of costs, which acts as a disincentive to apply for the work permit on behalf of the employee. The recent fee waiver programme reduced the fees to just 40 JOD.²⁷

Unlike Turkey, the requirement for a work permit is enforced. Respondents reported that if found to be working without a permit, they would be sent back to the refugee camp that they are registered in and if caught a second time, they would be deported back to Syria. Researchers interviewed refugees that had been expelled for working without a permit. A 25-year-old Syrian woman explained, "We think about Europe because there you can obtain a work permit. Twice they arrested my husband for working without a permit. If they arrest him once more, they will deport him to Syria. This is what they said" (refugee from Khalediye, Homs neighbourhood).

While **the commitments made by the Jordanian government in 2016 through the Jordan Compact** (see Focus Box 12 for more details) are targeted at alleviating these challenges for Syrian refugees through greater access to the labour market, it remains to be seen how the commitments will be implemented.

26 "Work Permits for Syrian Refugees in Jordan," ILO, 2015.

27 "Syrian Worker Programme Faces Hurdles in Jordan", Al-Jazeera, available online at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/syrian-worker-programme-faces-hurdles-jordan-160919073944811.html>, last accessed 10 January 2017.

It should be noted, however, that the difficulties in obtaining work permits tend to have the greatest impact on the middle class Syrians who are living in Jordan's urban centres, rather than rural, uneducated Syrians who settle in the northern provinces and work in agriculture. This is because the agricultural sector in Jordan tends to be largely informal in any case.

Economic Factors

The consequences of not being able to obtain a work permit in Jordan are much like those explained in the previous sections on Turkey and Lebanon: **most refugees end up working on the informal labour market, which leads to exploitation** in the form of lower wages and diminished bargaining power (or the lack of enforceable rights) when dealing with employers. Some typical salaries identified during fieldwork in Jordan appear in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Some typical salaries identified among Syrians in Jordan

SALARY AMOUNT IN JOD	IN USD ²⁰	TYPE OF WORK
320 per month (80/week)	\$450	A carpenter in Amman (but full time schedule hard to secure)
300 per month (75/week)	\$420	A shoemaker in Amman
200 per month	\$280	A blacksmith in Amman
3 per day	\$4	A child working in a sandwich shop in Amman

Another consequence of working without permits includes limited access to qualified jobs (or lack of access altogether), which also leads to lower salaries. The more educated or qualified Syrians typically found jobs in the aid or humanitarian sector or with organisations linked to the revolution (for example, media outlets and other associations). However, most of them still worked informally, as volunteers, provided with a daily stipend rather than a salary.

These salaries compared to the cost of living make it difficult for families to survive on one income alone. Similar to those in Lebanon, Syrian

families tend to survive by relying on a number of strategies, including supplementing income with aid and food vouchers and relying on more members of the family working, including children.

The relatively heavier controls on unauthorised labour in Jordan also have the effect of encouraging more children to work. That is, families understood that children were less controlled and less at risk of being penalised for working without a permit, so they would pull their children out of school and encourage them into working instead, or in the least, encourage them to find jobs on top of their studies.

Some of the actors in Jordan also mentioned that the **limited access to the job market and to high paying or qualified jobs leads to economic pressures that can encourage practices such as the early marriage of young girls.** This is often seen by families as a coping mechanism, whereby the girl can join a household where she will have greater resources and opportunities at her disposal, and where the dowry paid for her will also help the rest of the family to survive. Save the Children identified a growing trend in their 2014 study on the issue, reporting that in 25% of marriages in the Syrian refugee community in Jordan the bride was under the age of 18 in 2013, compared with 18% in 2012 and 12% in 2011²⁸.

Future prospects

Most Syrians interviewed in Jordan (or further up the route) spoke of being treated favourably by the authorities and the local population in Jordan, which contrasts with the mixed treatment reported in Lebanon. One 40-year-old Syrian man explained, "The authorities are very good. When we came the police were so good to us. They give us food and clothes; we could wash, make ablutions and pray."

Nonetheless, the absence of long-term integration and future prospects is also a driver of onward journey from Jordan (similar to Lebanon and Turkey). This concern is fuelled by economics but mainly by the inability to naturalise on the long term. One 47-year-old man from Homs said, "I stayed for three years in Jordan. The conditions were not too bad. My children could go to school for free, in a normal Jordanian school. It is more or less the same program

28 "Too young to wed, the growing problem of child marriage among Syrian girls in Jordan" Save the Children, 2014

Focus Box 13: Concerns about integrating into the West amongst Syrians in Jordan

The Syrian community encountered during the fieldwork in Jordan appeared to be more conservative than communities encountered in other countries studied. Reflecting this, they expressed greater hesitations about moving to Europe and integrating into a western way of life.

One 31-year-old mother of five from Damascus explained, “People kiss in the buses in Europe, which is not in our culture. My cousin is in Germany and at the beginning he was happy, but now he feels his children are changing and he regrets going there. He is afraid that he cannot educate his children correctly. My husband and I decided that it is better to stay in an Islamic Arabic-speaking country.”

Another 36-year-old mother of four from Baba Amro neighbourhood in Homs explained, “I know some friends in Germany, in the U.S., in Sweden and they told me that the swimming pools are mixed there and that there is too much freedom. This contradicts our traditions. But they said that they will stay at least stay to get residency there. They say there is comfort, security, respect at work, social benefits, a health system, but the big challenge is the education and upbringing of the children.”

For some, this issue was not considered to be so problematic: “We have some relatives in France, Australia, and Canada. My husband and I would like to go to the West, too. We have been thinking about it for some time because our relatives say that life is good in these countries. I don’t know about the veil. Maybe I will have to take off the niqab [full face veil] when I get there, but that’s not such a big deal,” according to a 25-year-old mother of three from the Khalediye neighbourhood in Homs.

**INFORMAL LABOUR
BY REFUGEES LEADS TO THEIR
EXPLOITATION IN THE FORM OF
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BARGAINING POWER**



as in Syria. They also worked sometimes (in shops or restaurants), on top of school, because my salary was not enough. But there is no future for Syrians in Jordan. We will never have citizenship. So we look to Europe.”

Even Syrians who are studying in Jordanian universities on scholarships are concerned about their ability to create a stable life on the long term. “There are a lot of Syrian students here who are on scholarships. But even when you graduate from a Jordanian university, you cannot work in your speciality. There is no future; you are a refugee and that’s all,” according to a 30-year-old Syrian man interviewed in Amman.

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION FROM SYRIA

There is no disputing the fact that Syrians are pushed out of their country by the war and conflict that has been raging there for the past five years. While acknowledging this fact as indisputable, this section seeks to identify some of the factors that compound the instability already faced and that serve to worsen the conditions of Syrians who had chosen to remain in the country. Rather than seeking to justify decisions to leave Syria, it seeks to broaden the understanding of the conditions that Syrians face in the country today and to provide context to the ever-growing number of Syrians that continue to leave their country in search of safe haven elsewhere.

The analysis is structured according to geopolitics: regions in control of the government, regions in control of the opposition, regions in control of ISIS, and Kurdish regions.

Government-controlled Regions

Fleeing from imminent military service is one of the reasons for leaving the government-controlled regions of Syria today, particularly for young men of 16 to 18 years of age. Young men in the sample who had recently left Syria spoke of hiding in apartments or in houses in the countryside for years before they could manage to exit the country. One Syrian man in Turkey explained: “There are a lot of teenagers living alone here in Hatay province [of Turkey] because they had to escape military service in

“In Germany nobody will arrest me and ask for my ID and then torture or harass me on the basis of my birthplace.”

—31-year-old orthodontist from the Homs region, interviewed in Croatia

Syria. Usually they leave the country before they are 18 in order to escape military service. Even my sister in Damascus who has only one son had to send him to Germany because he was 17 years old and would be recruited.”

The government’s mobilisation of reserve forces also leads men as old as 45 to consider the prospect of being called to join the military forces even if they have already served their time in the military.

Random recruitment is also reported as an increasing practice, where able-bodied men are rounded up in the streets, or even taken from homes, despite having valid reason for exemption (for example, students, men who are the sole breadwinner for their families, the only son of a widow, etc.). Some respondents spoke of a running joke that recruiters of the Syrian army would cite when recruiting young men who have no brothers (or who are the sole son of a widow). They are quoted as saying, “No problem, you can join us. We will be your brothers.” One 40-year-old woman from Damascus explained, “We fled because now they take young people at the checkpoints for the army. They just round them up and take them away, without any procedures.”

In these regions, there is also a general fear of being arrested simply because your place of birth (as stated on your national ID) falls in pro-revolutionary areas. The Sunni population in government-controlled areas also suffers from a general fear of being harassed by authorities, particularly those that originate from areas that are now pro-revolutionary. “I left Syria for Turkey because every time I went out there were checkpoints where we were beaten up and accused of standing with the revolution. I was from Deraa and that is written on my ID, so they were asking, ‘What are you doing here? You want

freedom, don't you?" (17-year-old boy who had been living in Damascus, interviewed in Serbia).

The government-controlled areas are also plagued with economic issues that compound the instability already faced by the population.

Inflation has caused prices to increase dramatically, affecting food, rent, transportation costs and other daily expenses. A 37-year-old Syrian man living in Damascus explained, "The inflation has been so crazy that you often cannot know how much to expect to pay for fruit and vegetables from one day to the next."

A basic working class salary in Syria is about 10,000 SYP, which amounted to approximately USD \$200 before the crisis and is now valued at approximately \$25.

On the higher end of the scale, a civil servant attracts about 40,000 SYP per month. Neither of these salaries is sufficient for one to be able to pay rent and daily expenses in the current context.

Simultaneous with the increase in prices has been a decrease in work or income-generating activity. **There is a general feeling that staying in Syria is only an option for those who are profiting from the war** (at the exception of those who do not have the means or motivation to be able to leave). For example, army officers or officers of the intelligence services who are bribed to let people through checkpoints or to make false registrations in the army are reported to be able to make as much as 1 million SYP per day (USD \$25,000). Some commanders of opposition brigades are reported to be receiving funds from the Gulf, which supplements the money they amass when plundering towns. There are also reports of kidnappings in central Damascus for the purpose of obtaining ransom payments.

Opposition-controlled Regions

Indiscriminate aerial bombing has been continuous in all regions held by the opposition since the beginning of the conflict and has been one of the primary factors causing people to flee. Since 2015, Russian bombs have caused outflows in greater numbers, as explained by one 26-year-old Syrian man. "Everybody kept leaving Syria but I wanted to stay. Finally, the last bombing convinced us. Russian planes were bombing everything with no precise target."

Not only has the bombing created fear, instability and risks to personal safety but it has also led

"I live here in Izmir with my mother and a sister. My father is still in Aleppo. He has heart problems and diabetes and is too old and sick to make the journey out of Syria. So we had to come alone and now I look after my family."

—12-year-old street boy from Aleppo, interviewed in Turkey.

to the destruction of homes, businesses and commercial assets. A 21-year-old man said, "We had a good financial situation before the crisis. We were working in the glass business. We had two shops, a house, a car, and a farm. But now the shops in Aleppo have been destroyed in the bombing and we have no way to earn a livelihood." The destruction of assets also diminishes the hope in being able to return to Syria one day. "We will be resettled to Ireland," reported a 45-year-old former customs officer interviewed in Tripoli. "If one day peace comes back to Syria, maybe we can come back for visits, but we would probably stay as residents in Ireland because our houses in our village in the Homs region are destroyed. We would have to start from scratch in Syria."

In addition to the bombing, there has also been infighting between various opposition factions, which further destabilises these regions. Some of the opposition groups have also been described as abusive, with cases of arbitrary detention and torture related by some respondents. Also, a young couple, both of whom are teachers and who were interviewed in Turkey, mentioned (what they perceived to be) the extreme Islamic curriculum that had been imposed by Jebhat al-Nusra²⁹ onto the education system in Idlib as one of the reasons for their emigration, for their own sake and for that of their future children.

29 A Sunni Islamist militia group fighting against Syrian Government forces

ISIS-controlled Regions

While indiscriminate aerial bombing is also common in ISIS-controlled areas, there have been a number of other events that have compounded the prevailing instability. This includes the **expulsion of the Kurds from Raqqa, which is reported to have been brutal, and the targeting of former FSA fighters.**

Respondents that came from these regions also spoke of the general pressure and intimidation affected by the group and their efforts to impose their values on the populace: “I left the town of Al Eshara about five months ago because of ISIS pressure. Either you pledge allegiance to them or you go away. For example, I was arrested three times because I was wearing blue clothes,” said a 17-year-old boy interviewed in Turkey. A 30-year-old Syrian woman interviewed in FYROM also explained, “ISIS is imposing their values on the people. They force the women to wear *niqab*. If they catch somebody smoking, they cut off his fingers and if you don’t attend prayers, they put you in prison.”

Respondents also spoke of ISIS instituting a complete ban on education in the areas in their control. “There was some teaching [carried out] in some mosques, but then ISIS forbade it. They closed all teaching institutes,” said a 45-year-old man from Aleppo who lived nearly two years in an ISIS controlled area east of Aleppo. “Some people started schools in houses but ISIS arrested these teachers.”

However, there are two main factors that limit people’s ability to emigrate from the ISIS controlled areas. One is restricted movement and the other is the fact that ISIS has cut off phone and internet communications in these areas. “In our area there is no mobile network nor internet. ISIS has adopted a monopoly on all communications. If you want to make a call, you have to go to ISIS centres. It is forbidden to speak with anyone outside of ISIS-controlled areas,” said a 17-year-old Syrian boy.

Kurdish Regions

Syrians in the Kurdish regions of the country are harassed by ISIS, whose occupation of various areas of the country has led to some Syrian Kurdish communities being displaced repeatedly. In addition to ISIS pressure, recruitment by

“I travelled in a group of around 40 people. I was traveling with my cousin, who is 33. I will go to Germany. From Germany, I plan to apply for reunification for my mother and my brother [who remain in Syria].”

—14-year-old Palestinian/Syrian boy from Damascus, interviewed in Greece

the People’s Protection Units (YPG), which is perceived to be indiscriminate and also a risk for girls, pushes some Kurds out of these regions and out of the country altogether.

DRIVERS PARTICULAR TO CHILDREN

The concerns related to integration in the long term, naturalisation, and acceptance by the host community emerged as factors that encourage a decision to move on from all three countries. However, these prospects were particularly relevant for families with young children, as parents felt that the future prospects of their children were more pertinent than their own. Economic factors in all three countries also led to instances of children having to work to supplement the family income, sometimes necessitating them from discontinuing their schooling. This was also a factor that led some families to move on. This section deals with additional factors that emerged as relevant particularly to children and their families as they chose to make the difficult journey to Europe.

Family Reunification

One of the main reasons that children travel alone from Syria, or from neighbouring countries to Europe, is in the hopes of paving the way to apply for family reunification. That is, a decision is

made for one child to make the arduous journey alone, while the rest of the family remains where they are. The hope is that once the child arrives at the destination and is registered, the rest of the family members will be able to follow through regular means, in a family reunification scheme.

Sometimes this is a family decision and sometimes the child makes the decision him/herself. In the case of the latter, it is usually teenage boys who adopt this course of action and they often do not consider themselves children (although there are other cases as well).

There are also examples of very young children being sent to Europe with extended family members or close friends or neighbours. In the case of one Syrian family interviewed, they had sent their six-year-old girl some years earlier on an irregular journey via Turkey and Greece, in the company of close neighbours, hoping that she would reach Europe and create a 'passageway' for them to follow regularly.

In any case, it is extremely rare that Syrian children travel completely unaccompanied. Although they may technically qualify as an unaccompanied minor, they are usually accompanied by a cousin or an uncle or some other extended family member. In some cases, they may not be with family, but rather very close friends of the family. On the route travelled, other nationalities (for example, Afghans) are much more likely to present examples of completely unaccompanied children.

The decision to send a child ahead to pave the way for the rest of the family is usually based on two factors: lack of financial resources to pay for all family members to follow smuggling routes, and, in some cases, parents being infirm and unable to sustain the arduous journey.

However, during the time of fieldwork a number of families were interviewed who had followed this strategy but still ended up making the irregular journey themselves. That is, they had sent a child ahead some years prior but the family reunification process was taking too long, or was met with too many obstacles (for example, not being able to produce all of the documents required of them), so they decided to complete the same journey themselves some years later. Factors that compelled families to move on

“Since the beginning of the crisis, we do not let our daughters go out because there are so many checkpoints with men who may assault them. When it is the official army it is still ok, but with other paramilitary groups you never know. We had to get them out.”

—45-year-old couple from Damascus.

without waiting for the family reunification process to be completed included the increased dangers associated with remaining in Syria and the general decline in price for journeys along smuggling routes to Europe in recent years.

Insecurity for Girls

As in other situations of conflict, the general climate of war in Syria has increased the risks of sexual assault, especially for young women and girls. Rape in detention facilities in Syria is widespread and the risks of sexual assault at checkpoints are high. Sunni families are especially affected because they are implicitly considered to be supporting the revolution, and assaults on their female members are used as a strategy to 'stain their honour', i.e., commit psychological injury, besides the actual injury to the victim. Syrian girls are not seen travelling alone, but their safety is one of the drivers for the migration of their parents and families.

A 40-year-old couple from Damascus, who had two daughters aged 15 and 16, described their experience. “We wanted to protect our daughters. They were depressed in Syria. It was impossible to go out. We were living in Jdeide Artuz [a suburb of Damascus], and we would absolutely avoid being in the streets in the evening because we heard stories of girls being kidnapped and raped by the paramilitaries.”

Focus Box 14: The Dublin Regulation and Dublin III

The Dublin regime was originally established by the Dublin Convention, which was signed in Dublin, Ireland on 15 June 1990. It came into force on 1 September 1997 for the first 12 signatories (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom), on 1 October 1997 for Austria and Sweden, and on 1 January 1998 for Finland. It was replaced by the Dublin II Regulation in 2003 and finally by the Dublin III Regulation, which was approved in June 2013 and applies to all member states except Denmark.

The aim of the Dublin Regulation is to ensure that only one EU member state is responsible for examining an asylum application, to determine the responsible member state as quickly as possible, and to deter multiple asylum claims. The normal rule is that an asylum claim should be heard by the first country where a person claimed asylum, was legally present (e.g. on a visa), or had their fingerprint recorded (on Eurodac).

The recast Dublin Regulation (Dublin III) entered into force in July 2013 and applies to applications for international protection in the EU lodged from 1 January 2014 onwards. It is aimed at increasing the system's efficiency and ensuring higher standards of protection for asylum seekers falling under the Dublin procedure. The main changes are:

Information: Applicants must be informed about the Dublin process before it starts, including through a formal interview (with an interpreter if needed) that comes before, and completely separate from, any interview about the actual claim for asylum.

Right to appeal: Must be granted on all Dublin decisions.

Detention: Member states are prohibited from detaining someone solely because he or she is subject to the regulation; detention is only permissible if the person poses a significant risk of absconding in order to carry out a transfer (which must be determined on the basis of an individual assessment) and detention is permissible only after less coercive alternatives are first exhausted.

Timeframe: Member states have three months from the time that an asylum-seeker comes to their attention in which they can make a Dublin transfer request to another member state. Under Dublin III, if the reason for the transfer is a fingerprint match under Eurodac, this is reduced to two months.

Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs): There is a wider definition of family, which means that unaccompanied minors should be reunited with uncles, aunts, grandparents, or brothers and sisters, as well as parents – as long as this is in their best interests.

Access to Education

Access to education is generally not one of the main drivers of migration, neither from Syria nor from neighbouring countries. It is, however, sometimes combined with primary drivers such as economic factors, military service and instability, to propel a decision to leave. Sometimes it is also seen as an indicator of a family's inability to be able to integrate for the long term into neighbouring countries.

Within Syria, many children have been out of school for some years now and for some families, this is one factor that contributes to their decision to leave. Schooling is either affected by security (schools having been bombed and closed or parents are concerned

about sending their kids to school every day when bombs continue to fall), or changes in curriculum. For example, in areas controlled by ISIS and also in areas controlled by the opposition group, Jebhe al-Nusra, there are reports of curricula being altered to reflect more radical ideologies, which causes some families to pull their children out.

Access to education across the three countries studied is varied but the general landscape is the same. The high numbers of Syrian children in all three countries strains the ability of the local school system to accommodate them. Sometimes, extra shifts are established outside of the normal teaching hours to cater to Syrian students; sometimes private schools are

Focus Box 15: Convention on the Rights of the Child and other instruments

The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the main legal instrument on the protection of children. It embodies four general principles, while also detailing rights that fall under those principles:

- The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions affecting children (Article 3).
- There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (Article 2).
- State parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life and shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child (Article 6).
- Children shall be assured the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with the child's age and level of maturity (Article 12).

Other child-specific international and regional instruments other than the CRC include:

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000.
- Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1980.
- Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption 1993, and its 1994 Recommendation concerning the application to refugee children and other internationally displaced children.
- Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect to Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, 1996.
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990.
- ILO Conventions No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour), 1999, and No. 138 (Minimum Age), 1973.²¹

set up for them. Lack of access is generally attributed more to the family's distance from a school and the resulting insurmountable transportation costs, or to a decision to that the child must leave school in order to work and supplement the family income. There are also some cases of Syrian students being bullied by local students or not feeling very welcome in the school environment, but this does not generally affect their level of access. This factor only contributes to a decision to make the onward journey when it is combined with other factors that demonstrate an inability to integrate.

Access to tertiary studies can influence a decision to leave for families with older children or for adolescents/young adults. There are possibilities of university study in Turkey (for free, with a one-year intensive language course) and in Jordan (with scholarships), but less so in Lebanon, where most of the

universities are private and expensive. However, for most Syrians considering tertiary studies in neighbouring countries, the most limiting factor is the lack of work prospects in their area of expertise at the completion of their studies (because the difficulty of obtaining work permits means most graduates remain on the informal labour market).

COMMON DRIVERS

Some drivers emerged that were common to all Syrians across the locations. These included:

- After five years of war, **many Syrians have given up on the idea that the war will end soon** and that they will return home. This means that they no longer feel that they need to

stay close to Syria and instead, are looking for countries to reside where they can build a future.

- For some Syrians, their homes, and in some cases entire neighbourhoods (for example, Yarmook Palestinian camp in Damascus, Khalediye in Homs), have been destroyed in the war. These refugees feel that even if the war ends soon, they would have **nothing to go back to in Syria**.
- For refugees coming from locations within Syria that are identified as particularly pro-revolutionary (for example, Ghuta in Damascus, Khalediye in Homs, Telbisa to the north of Homs), or ethnically cleansed, the feeling is that without a complete victory of the revolution and the overthrow of the government, **they will never be safe in Syria**.
- There is a 'network effect', i.e. **almost all Syrians have relatives or friends in Europe**, particularly Germany.

- An 'opportunity effect' describes the sense that this may be **the best or last chance to make the journey**. Some interviewed had decided that now was a good time to make the journey to Europe because prices decreased. Others felt that now was the time to make the journey before the borders closed.
- The **future of the children in a family is often the main driving force** in decision-making. Europe is seen as a place of opportunity for studies and for finding skilled work once studies are completed. The Middle East is viewed as providing no opportunities for these families' children.



25% CHILD MARRIAGES
WERE RECORDED
BY SAVE THE CHILDREN
IN THE SYRIAN REFUGEE
COMMUNITY IN JORDAN
IN 2013, COMPARED WITH
18% IN 2012 AND
12% IN 2011

ROUTES & CONDITIONS OF JOURNEY

This section describes the various segments comprising the journey to Europe for Syrian refugees traveling along the Balkans route. The following maps were developed by Altai Consulting during the period of fieldwork, which ran over January and February 2016, and as a result of interviews with Syrian refugees and key informants in a number of countries. By the time this report came to publication, the European portion of this route had been officially closed as a result of the deal between the EU and Turkey (although some clandestine movements still occur). The first half of the route remains open. This section, however, focuses on the state of the route at the time of the fieldwork. Map 2 (p. 40) provides an overview of the entire journey, while subsequent maps narrow in on specific segments.

MOVEMENTS WITHIN SYRIA

Leaving Syria has become increasingly difficult. The fragmentation of the country into areas controlled by various armed groups, all of which have set up checkpoints across their respective areas, means that **moving between areas is fraught.** Moreover, one is at risk of harassment on the basis of factors as simple as religious or ethnic origins or even place of birth, even if one is not officially aligned with any particular side.

For those with pledged allegiances, the situation is naturally far more complex. Individuals wanted by government security services (for having taken part in the revolution, being suspected of having done so, because they are wanted for military service, etc.) must hire smugglers, or use other strategies, to move even within the government-controlled areas. It usually necessitates paying an intermediary who bribes officers of the army or of the intelligence service in order to secure passage through the various checkpoints.

For **Syrians in besieged opposition areas**, there is no direct way to exit the country without passing

through government-controlled areas first. **In ISIS areas**, there is now a general ban on travel out of the area. There is also more erratic behaviour at checkpoints in ISIS-controlled areas, particularly by their foreign fighters, as reported by respondents. Kurdish Syrians are particularly at risk in ISIS areas, when compared to other non-aligned citizens.

Map 3 (p. 41) presents a basic overview of how Syria was segmented at the time of writing. While the map does not do justice to the complexity of the conflict in the country, it is provided to aid readers in their understanding of the difficulties of moving within Syria.

EXITING SYRIA

Routes into Lebanon

Main routes: The two main entry points into Lebanon are in the East on the Damascus-Beirut road (Masnaa) and in the North on the Tripoli-Tartus road (Arida). Up until January 2015, passage over these borders was quite straightforward and conducted through regular journeys. Since 5 January, however, Lebanon has a new policy where only Syrians who fit into one of a series of approved entry categories (see Focus Box 8 for full list) can pass.

The second factor affecting these regular movements is the imposition of an entrance visa [for Syrian passport holders by Turkey on 8 January 2016. Between January 2015 and January 2016, Syrians that wished to move to Turkey could enter Lebanon for the purpose of transiting through (one of the approved entry categories). They would enter Lebanon from Damascus by bus or plane, or from Homs by bus, and continued their journey to Turkey either by boat from Tripoli or by plane from Beirut. Once entry to Turkey was limited by the visa, however, the flow through Lebanon also decreased.

Main risks: There are periodic clashes on the road to Damascus airport or on the road between Damascus and the Lebanese border, and

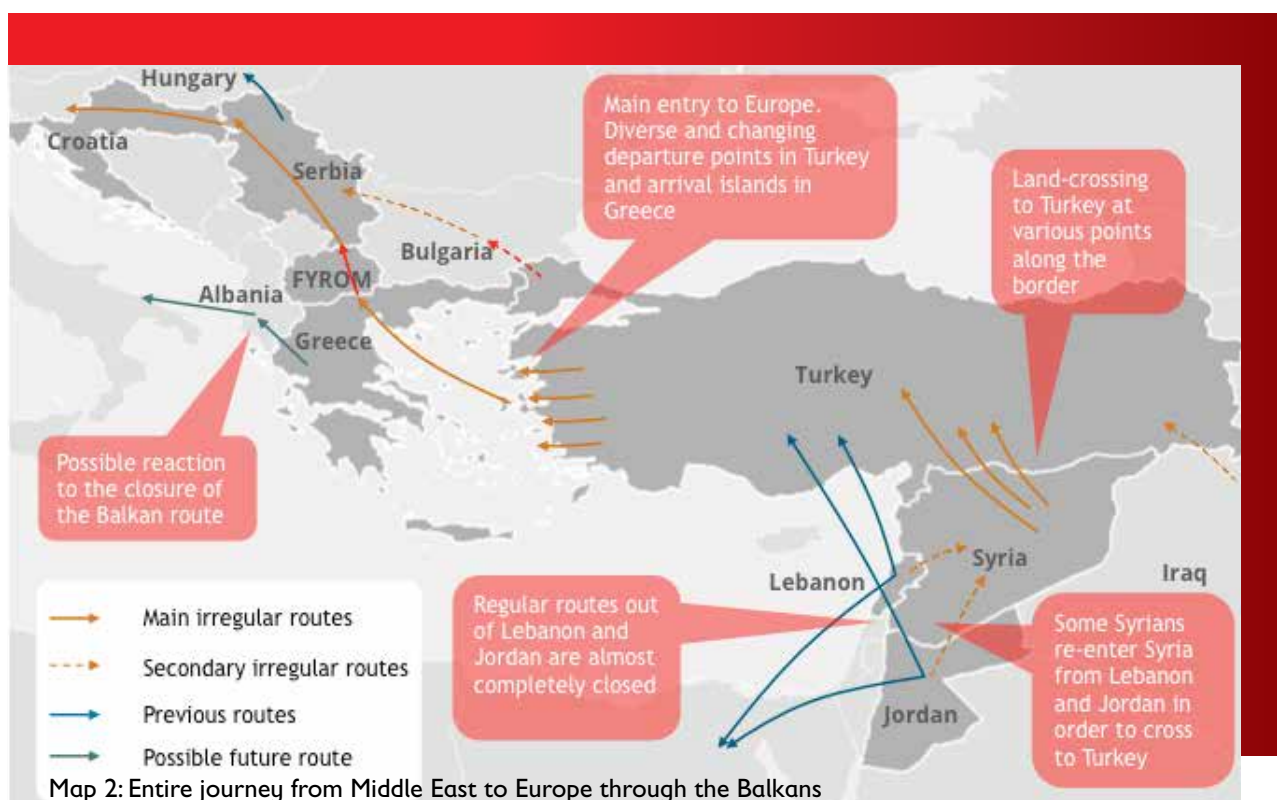


LEAVING SYRIA

HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT,
AS DIFFERENT PARTIES CONTROL THE EXIT
ROUTES AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES
IMPOSE VISA REQUIREMENTS

“It is forbidden to go out of Munbej. So I gathered money and paid 125 USD per person to a smuggler to get my family and I out by hiding us in a fuel tanker. We were transported with five other families. We were frightened because sometimes the bombs target fuel tanks, but we made it. Now the smugglers have increased the price to 300 USD because ISIS took some smugglers and beheaded them.”

—35-year-old Syrian man interviewed in Serbia



the possibility of arrest at the border for people who may be wanted by the security services or the army.

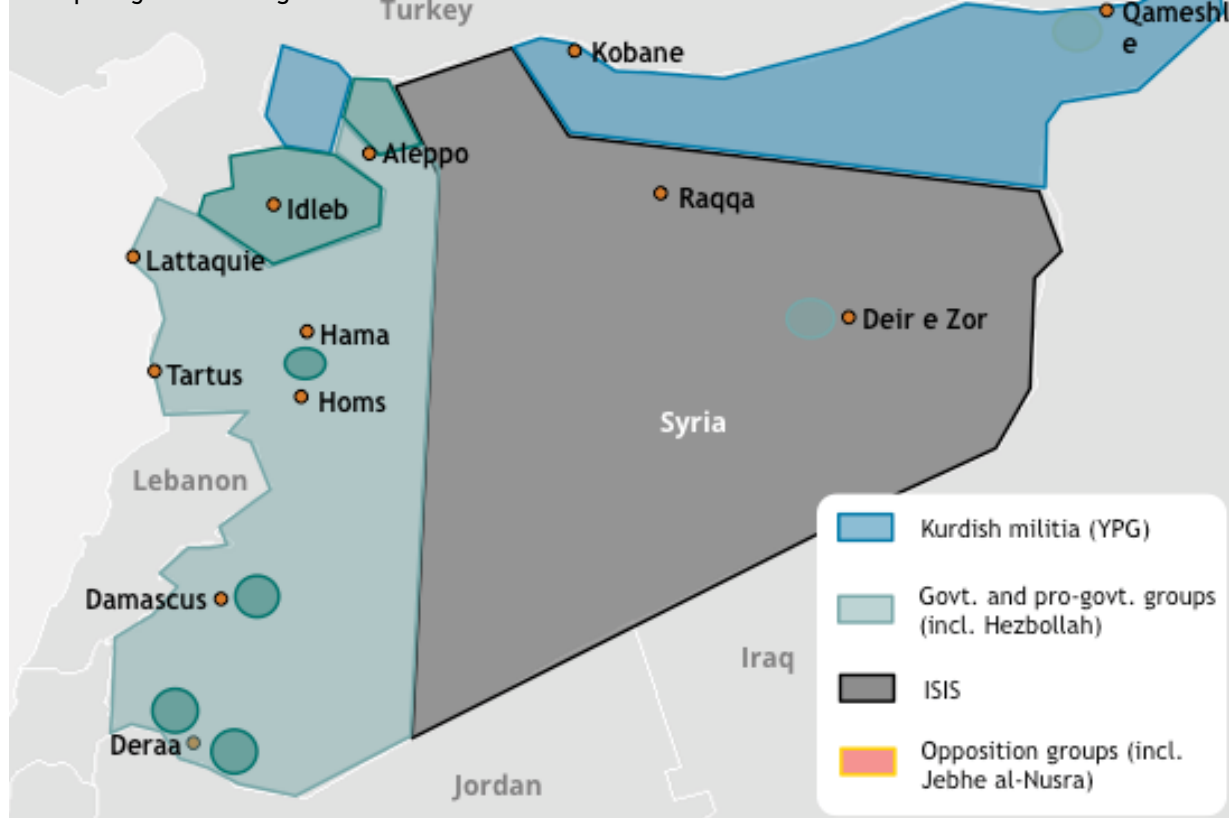
Price: The cost is low, around 30 USD for a bus ticket from Damascus to Beirut. The cost of a combined plane ticket from Damascus to Beirut and then Istanbul was reported to be around USD \$400. Some refugees travelled directly to Tripoli (instead of Beirut), and then travelled by ferry to Mersin in Turkey. The cost of the combined ticket (van from Homs or Beirut to Tripoli and then ferry to Mersin) was around USD \$200.

Irregular routes: There are two potential routes for irregular passage over the border from Syria into Lebanon: through Arsal in the east of Lebanon and

through Wadi Khaled in northeast Lebanon (see Map 4). It has become increasingly more difficult to make such irregular journeys, given the controls along the border and the security issues on either side. At the time of fieldwork, both routes were reported as being quite dangerous and there was very little traffic along them.

The irregular route through Arsal, in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, presents a number of risks on the Syrian side of the border. This is because it includes areas controlled by the government (which presents risks for people wanted by the government or considered pro-opposition), some ISIS presence (therefore not advisable for people considered pro-government, such as those belonging to non-Sunni minorities) and an area

Map 3: Syria according to the conflict



controlled by opposition group Jebhe al-Nusra (see Map 3). The Lebanese side of the border also presents risks, according to refugees who reported being fearful of kidnapping and deportation to Syria by Hezbollah or Amal.

A 17-year-old agricultural worker from Hama province explained, “I have a friend who came this way three months ago. He paid 100 USD. You walk in the mountain for five hours. But sometimes Shia guys there want money; if you don’t pay, they give you to Hezbollah. If Hezbollah takes you, either they kill you or deport you to Syria. This is the only entry point. On the Syrian side, you have to pay at each government checkpoint, on top of the 100 USD. Now there is not much movement on this route because it is not a safe route. If it was safe, we would have brought my brother this way.”

The irregular route through Wadi Khaled presents fewer risks on the Lebanese side but similar risks on the Syrian side. “There is this irregular route through Wadi Khaled, but you need to cross several government checkpoints on the Syrian side, which means it is effectively closed to us,” said a 22-year-old woman from the Hama region.

Routes into Jordan

At the onset of the Syrian crisis, Jordan maintained an open border policy whereby Syrian refugees escaping the conflict could enter the territory with a valid passport (and without the need for a visa). This continued until May 2013, after which time the border was effectively closed. Figure 7 demonstrates that the arrival of Syrian refugees in Jordan peaked in 2013 and then systematically decreased until reaching the 2016 figure, which is the lowest ever. It should be noted that even during Jordan’s open border policy, Jordanian authorities were denying entry to four particular groups: Palestinians living in Syria; single men of military age; Iraqi refugees living in Syria; and anyone without documents.³⁰

Main routes: The regular entry points were at the Deraa and Nasib border crossings (both in the vicinity of Deraa in Syria) but a number of irregular entry points existed in the same region and the irregular crossing of

30 “Blocking Syrian Refugees Isn’t the Way,” Human Rights Watch Editorial published in the New York Times, 23 April 2013, available online at http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/24/opinion/global/blocking-syrian-refugees-isnt-the-way.html?_r=1&, last accessed 11 January 2017.

Syrian refugees was tolerated by the Jordanian authorities.

Main risks: The same general difficulty in accessing the borders from within Syria presents as the main risk along this border. There were no particular dangers reported on the Jordanian side of the border. On the contrary, the Jordanian authorities were reported to be welcoming and helpful.

Current status: Regular crossings over this border have almost ceased since May 2013, with an average of 50 crossings per day, as compared to tens of thousands the year before. Irregular crossings are also close to impossible, given the high levels of control by the Jordanian security

services who use technical equipment that allows them to detect arrivals from some distance.

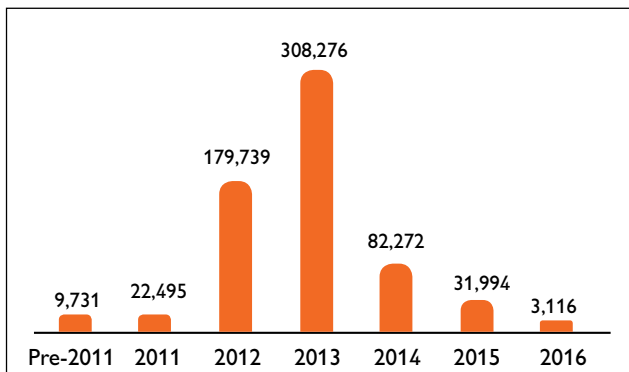
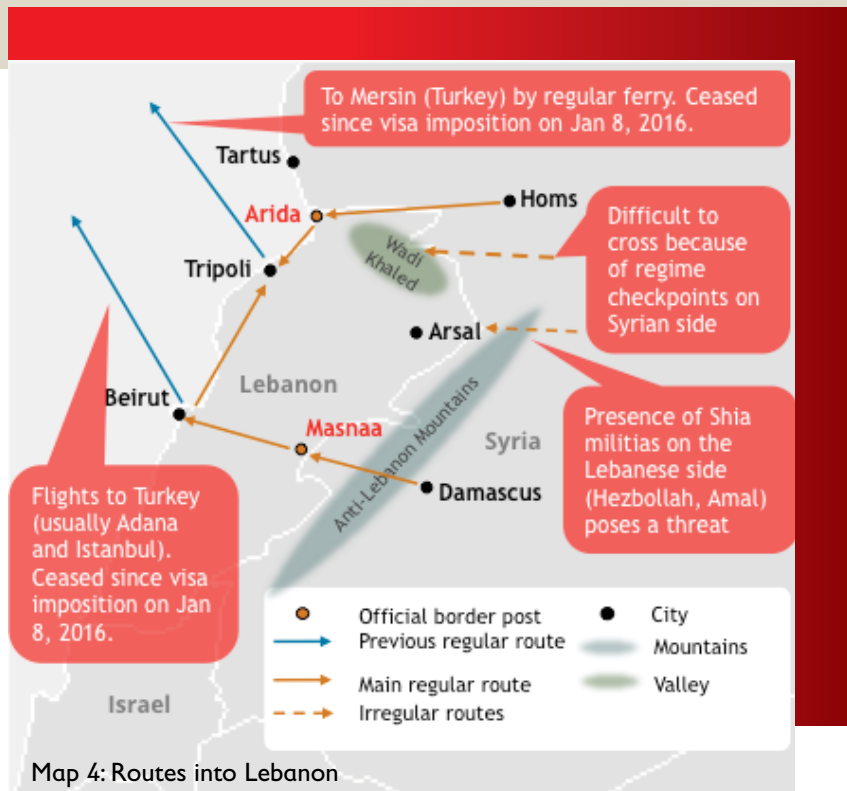


Figure 7: Arrivals of Syrian refugees in Jordan 2011-2016³¹

As a result, an estimated 18,000-19,000 Syrians have become stranded in the no man's land region between the Jordanian and Syrian border.³² Illness has broken out due to poor sanitary conditions and some refugees have also perished as a result. Others died in operations by the Jordanian army, acting to curb, they say, the possible

31 External statistical report on UNHCR registered Syrians as of 15 February 2016, UNHCR Jordan

32 "In no man's land: Syrian refugees trapped and dying on Jordan border," David Hearst for Middle East Eye, available online at <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syrian-refugees-trapped-and-dying-jordan-border-2071487217>, last accessed 11 January 2017.



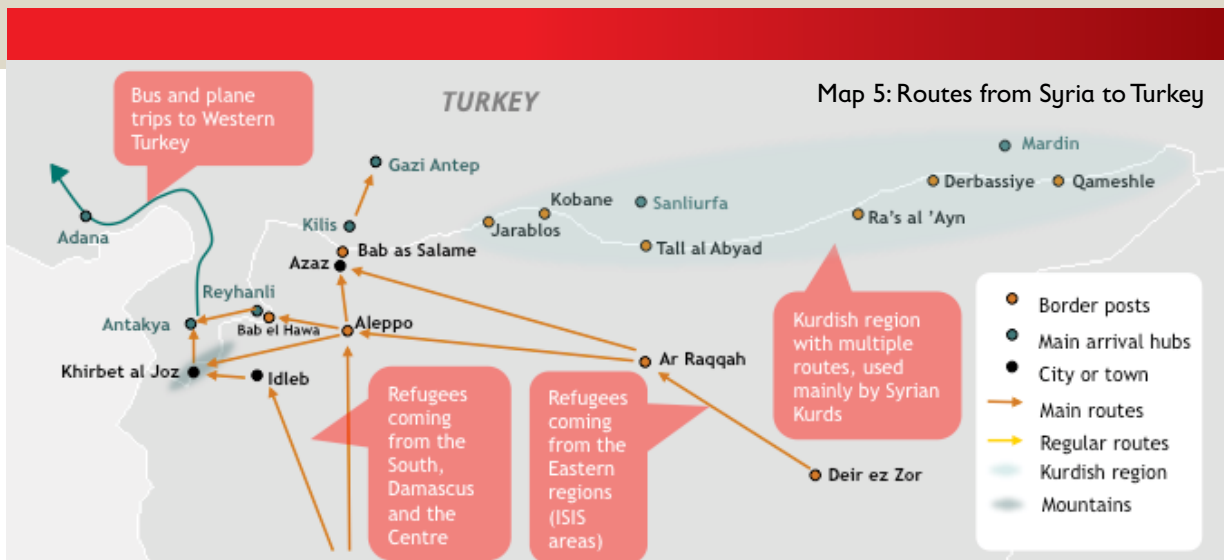
infiltration of ISIS.³³ Only a limited number of vulnerable special cases are authorised to cross the border each day.

A nine-year-old Syrian girl described the experience: "We had to wait two months on the Jordanian border, sleeping on the stones in the desert. We were close to the border of Iraq so we were afraid of attacks from Iraq, from armed people from there. But a plane came to frighten them and they went back. I didn't really see these attackers, because I was hiding under the blanket. [The authorities] were opening the border for sick people only. The rest of us had to wait. Some people waited as long as three months. Some people even died there."

Routes into Turkey

Contrary to the case in Lebanon and Jordan, there were significant numbers of Syrians crossing the land border from Syria into Turkey at the time of this fieldwork. The border between Syria and Turkey is long, stretching for about 800 kilometres, with no major natural obstacles, apart from the mountains in the extreme west.

33 Jordanian border guards reportedly acted under rules of engagement to shoot and kill anyone seeking to infiltrate across the border with Syria. See "Jordan kills 12 infiltrators attempting to cross borders from Syria," Reuters, 23 January 2016, available online at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-jordan-border-idUSKCN0V10WZ>, last accessed 11 January 2017.



The routes into Turkey have not changed significantly since the beginning of the crisis. The land border is divided essentially into three parts:

- A mountainous area in Idlib region, which is inhabited by Turkmen communities on both sides of the border;
- A vast Kurdish area in the East (between Kurdish areas of Syria and Kurdish areas of Turkey) stretching from Iraq until the Euphrates, in flat terrain; and
- An area in the Aleppo region of Syria that extends from the Euphrates to Bab al Hawa. It is a mainly Arab region, with a Kurdish pocket around Afrin, North West of Aleppo, It encompasses mainly flat terrain.

Since the beginning of the crisis, and within the framework of their Temporary Protection Regime, the Turkish government has maintained an open border policy. However, security concerns (YPG Kurdish militias in the East, infiltration by ISIS) have led to progressively tighter controls at official border crossings. This has led to some actions by the Turkish government that have become the object of controversy and legitimate concern (including the use of live ammunition).³⁴ Harassment by authorities, particularly along the eastern part of the border (controlled by Syrian Kurdish militia), was also mentioned by respondents.

Turkey also imposed a visa requirement for Syrian nationals as of 8 January 2016. It should be noted, however, that even prior to the January 8 visa

imposition, most movements over this border occurred irregularly. This is because regular movements were facilitated by opposition groups who would register Syrians that wished to cross and then pass their names on to Turkish officials. Such procedures entailed a wait time that seemed unnecessary for most Syrians wishing to pass, given that the border is long and porous and easy to move through irregularly.

Idlib Region

Main routes: At the time of research, the Idlib region was the main crossing from Syria into Turkey, not only for Syrians from the region, but also for Syrians coming from the East (ISIS regions), Aleppo, Central Syria and Damascus.

Syrians typically travel to Idlib City or Jisr al Shughur by road, spend some time there resting and planning their onward journey, and then move to the border village

“We heard in the media and from people around us that Turkey would close its borders soon and ask for visas from Syrians, so we hurried up and organised our journey out of Syria.”

- A Syrian family from Damascus

interviewed in Serbia

³⁴ “Struggling to Survive: Refugees from Syria in Turkey” Amnesty International, 2014

of Khirbet al Joz. From Khirbet al Joz, they walk over the border into Turkey, through the Turkmen Mountains. Usually they connect with smugglers in the village who guide them in their walk over the border. If they manage to avoid the Turkish gendarmerie, they are picked up by cars on the Turkish side of the border (also organised by the smugglers) and taken to Antakya.

The region is mostly controlled by Jebhe al-Nusra on the Syrian side (which makes it easier for pro-revolutionary Syrians), with mountains and forests that facilitate irregular crossings. The region is inhabited by many Turkmen who have family links inside Turkey, know the terrain well, and can facilitate the journey of Syrians wishing to pass over the border.

Price: The journey was usually priced at somewhere between USD \$30 to \$75 per person with a walking time of usually a few hours. However, greater controls by the Turkish authorities are leading to an increase in price (as high as USD \$100-\$300) and an increase in walking time (up to nine hours in some cases) in order to avoid authorities.

In addition to the price paid to smugglers, refugees usually have to pay bribes at various checkpoints that need to be crossed to reach Idlib City (especially government checkpoints, but also Jebhe an Nusra checkpoints).

Main risks: The mountains reach as high as 500-1000 metres (Khirbet al Joz itself is at 600 metres elevation), which means the main risks are related to extreme cold and the potential for accidents, particularly for women, children and the disabled.

Aleppo Region

Main routes: The second major place for crossing from Syria to Turkey, at the time of research, was the region of Aleppo. One of the major hubs for smuggling in this region is the town of Azaz, because it is controlled by the opposition and is situated very close to the border post of Bab es Salama. It, therefore allows both regular crossing (very limited now with the visa imposition and the tighter controls) and irregular crossing in the vicinity of the border. Refugees would typically arrive at Azaz, connect with smugglers and prepare for their onward journey across the border.

Refugees reported that crossing the border in this region was relatively easy. The role of the smuggler was

simply to direct refugees in the right direction and to indicate the best times to cross in order to avoid the Turkish authorities.

While this route was mainly used by Syrians from Aleppo, people from other regions of Syria (Centre, Damascus, East) also converge here to exit the country, particularly because other exit points along Jordan and Lebanon have become heavily restricted.

It should be noted that at the time of the fieldwork, it was possible to cross here regularly, through the official border posts of Bab el Hawa or Bab es Salaam with the payment of a bribe of USD \$700.

Price: Until summer 2015, crossing this border could cost as little as USD \$10, or just as much as the price of transportation. However, increased controls by Turkish authorities led to increased prices (around USD \$70).

With the combination of Russian bombing, the offensive on Aleppo, and tighter Turkish control on the border, the general prices to escape the Aleppo region went up dramatically. At the time of the fieldwork, respondents who were in touch with relatives or friends in Aleppo reported that new prices could reach as high as 400 USD to reach Azaz.

Main risks: The main risks along this route are arrest, detainment, deportation or harassment by the Turkish gendarmerie. The opposition groups present on the Syrian side of the border tend to allow passage and the need for bribes is rare. The region is flat and planted with olive trees, so the walk is much easier than Idlib.

The Kurdish Regions

Main routes: In the Kurdish areas (eastern part of the border), the border is long and so the main crossing points are multiple: from west to east Jarablos, Kobane, Tell Abyad, Ras al Ayn, Derbassiyeh, Amuda and Qameshle. The process is much like the other regions: that is, people approach the border by car, generally in groups of 15 to 20 people, and then walk over the border as instructed by smugglers. The routes in this region are utilised mainly by Kurdish Syrians.

In Kurdish regions, the local authorities (PYD and its military wing the YPG) sometimes try to limit emigration, especially of men of military age. As a result, the aid of a smuggler is sometimes needed not only to cross the Turkish border, but to also facilitate passage on the Syrian side.

Protecting Syrian Children En Route to Europe



SMUGGLING SERVICES ARE REQUIRED AT DIFFERENT POINTS OF THE JOURNEY

Price: The cost for moving over the border in this region amounts to approximately USD \$80 per person. Much like the other areas of the border, prices in this area are also increasing as a result of the increased controls by the Turkish authorities, sometimes up to USD \$150 per person.

Main risks: The risks of arrest, detention, harassment and deportation by the Turkish gendarmerie (the latter reportedly only a risk for single men, not families) that exist on the whole border, are particularly high along the Kurdish part.

Re-entering Syria

As described previously, before the imposition of a visa requirement in Turkey, Syrians were flying from Lebanon and Jordan to Turkey and in some cases, traveling by boat from Lebanon to Turkey (Tripoli to Mersin). As this is no longer possible, **most Syrians in Lebanon or Jordan who wish to move to Turkey, or to Europe via Turkey, need to cross back into Syria and then into Turkey via the northern Syrian border.**

This presents a number of risks, not the least of which is the fact that moving from the Lebanese or Jordanian border to the Turkish border within Syria necessitates moving through a number of regions controlled by different groups (see Map 3). Among those interviewed, some respondents had re-entered Syria from Jordan in order to cross over into Turkey but none had made the attempt from Lebanon. This is presumably because from Jordan there is the possibility of crossing into opposition areas, whereas from Lebanon one must transit through

government-controlled areas. **In general, it is considered an extremely risky path, effectively trapping Syrians that are in Lebanon and Jordan and stopping them from onward migration.**

TURKEY TO EUROPE

Figure 8 charts the total number of arrivals through the Mediterranean in 2015. It demonstrates that the large majority of arrivals came through Greece. Syrian refugees made up 56% of the flow coming through Greece in 2015 and this was their main entry point to Europe. Moreover, almost 40% of those arriving in Greece in 2015 (across nationalities) were children.³⁵ Some were seen taking an alternative route through Bulgaria. Both of these routes are described below.

Within Turkey

The main entry points into Turkey are presented in blue on Map 5. The main entry points in the East are between Reyhanli and Antakya (from Idlib region of Syria), Killis to Gazi Antep (from Aleppo region of Syria), Sanliurfa or Mardin (from the Kurdish regions of Syria). From there, refugees take buses or planes (or more rarely taxis) mostly to Istanbul, Izmir, Bodrum and Antalya, which is where they can connect with smugglers in order to organise the boat journey to Greece.

There are no particular risks on the way. However, the new regulations on freedom of circulation in

³⁵ Save the Children Greece Response, 'Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Greece: Current Issues, Statistics and Protection Recommendations', March 2016

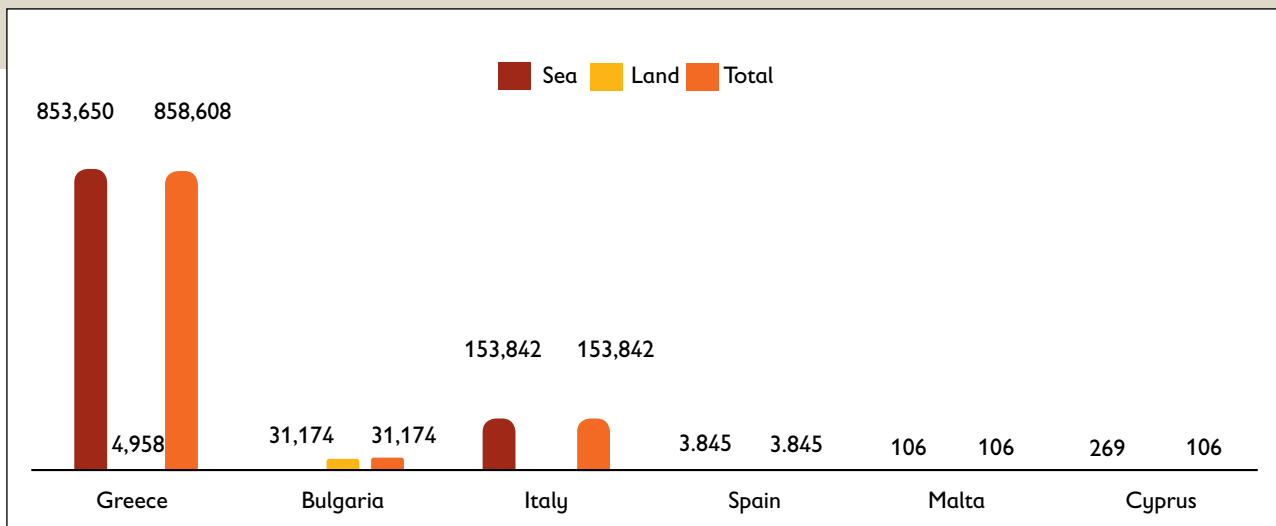


Figure 8: Mediterranean arrivals in 2015

Source: Mediterranean Update, Migration Flows Europe: Arrivals and Fatalities, IOM

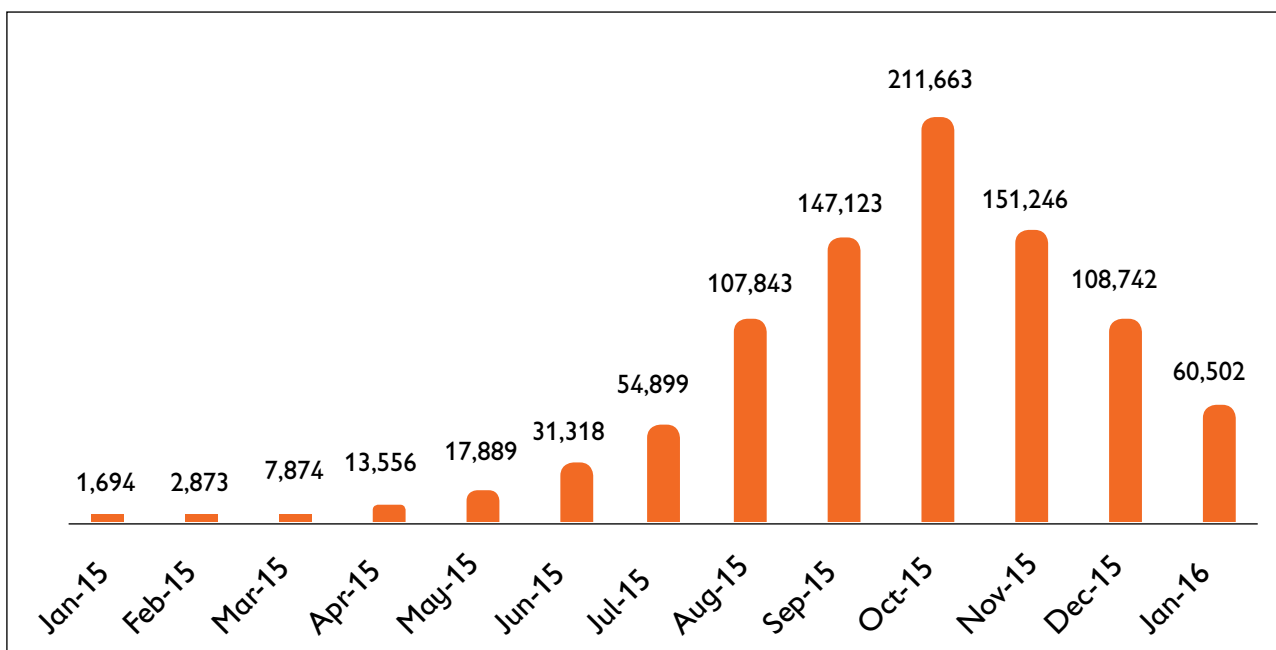


Figure 9: Arrivals per month to Greece January 2015- January 2016

Source: Data Source: Europe Refugees and Migrants Emergency Response - Daily Estimated Arrivals per Country - Flows through Western Balkans Route

Turkey require Syrians to gain authorisation in advance in order to travel internally from one province to another. This regulation was imposed during fieldwork and it is expected that it will affect the movements of Syrians in the country.

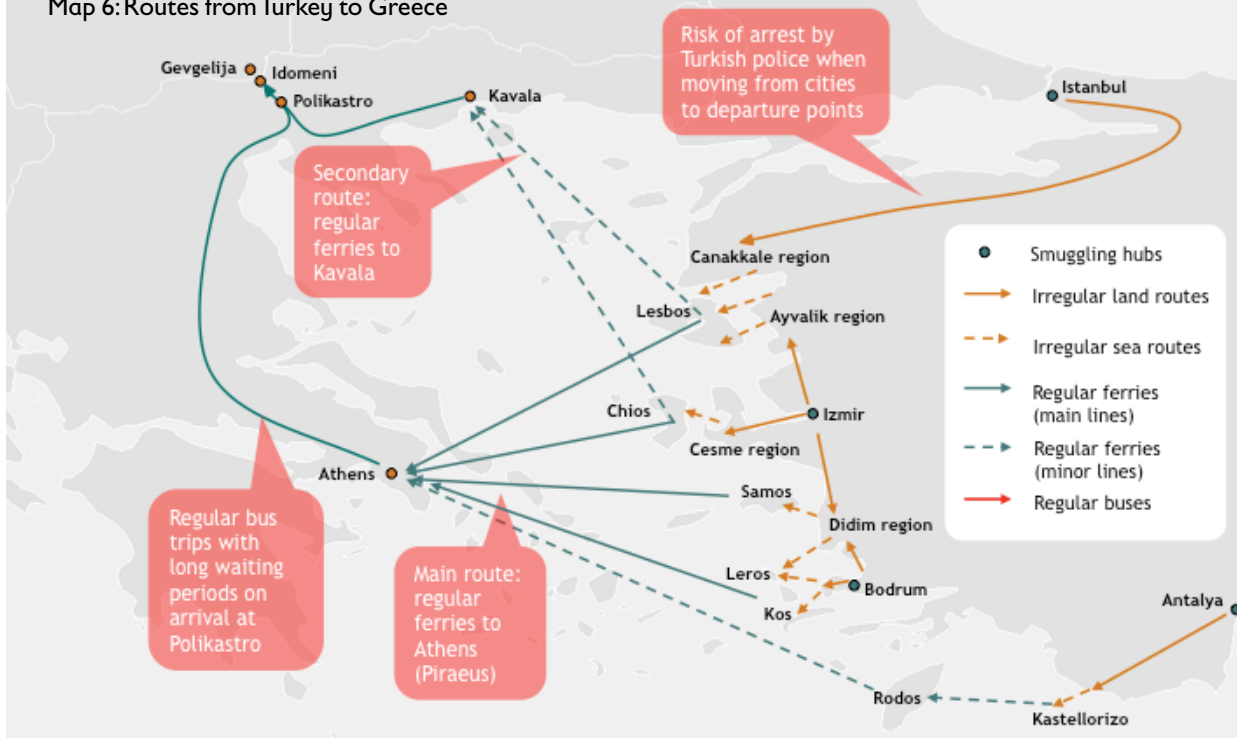
Turkey to Greece

The boat journey from Turkey to Greece is typically between 10 and 20 kilometres and departures occur along various points of the Turkish coast. Boats to Lesbos usually depart from the coast close to Ayvalik or from the Canakkale region,

boats to Chios tend to depart from the coast close to Cesme, and boats to Samos tend to depart from the coast close to Kusadasi.

There are some limited arrivals to the military island of Farmakonisi (opposite Didim in Turkey) and to Kastellorizo, which is farther towards the East (near Antalya). Although the journey is short, interviewees reported spending up to seven hours at sea because the boats are generally overloaded, experience mechanical problems at sea, or get lost at sea. Figure 9 charts the total number of arrivals on the Greek coast between January 2015 and January 2016.

Map 6: Routes from Turkey to Greece



Alternative routes from Turkey to Europe

There is an alternative route from Turkey to Bulgaria that is followed by a small proportion of refugees. The route moves from Istanbul to Edirne by bus and then refugees cross over the border into Bulgaria by foot. They are transported through Bulgaria by various vans and taxis organised by smugglers, and then walk over the western mountains to end up in Dimitrovgrad (Serbia). This route is much more expensive than the sea route, estimated to cost around USD \$3,000. Respondents also reported a high risk of police brutality along this route. Although the numbers of Syrians along this route is low compared to the numbers crossing by sea in 2015, Syrians do make up a large proportion of the overall travellers, as portrayed in Figure 10 below.

WITHIN EUROPE

Greece

Before the EU-Turkey deal, once refugees arrived on the Greek islands they were transferred to reception centres for registration (see Focus Box 20 for an outline of the reception and registration process in Lesbos). Registration included the recording of personal data, fingerprints, photos, sometimes nationality and/or age assessments, and the issuing of the Greek administrative note that is informally referred to as the *khartia* by refugees. This process was typically completed on the same day as arrival (within a few hours), depending on the number of arrivals on any given day.

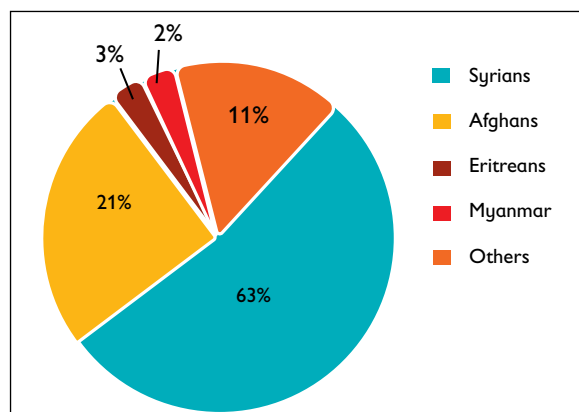


Figure 10: Apprehensions at western land borders by Turkish authorities, Nov 2015, Source: November 2015 External Update, UNHCR

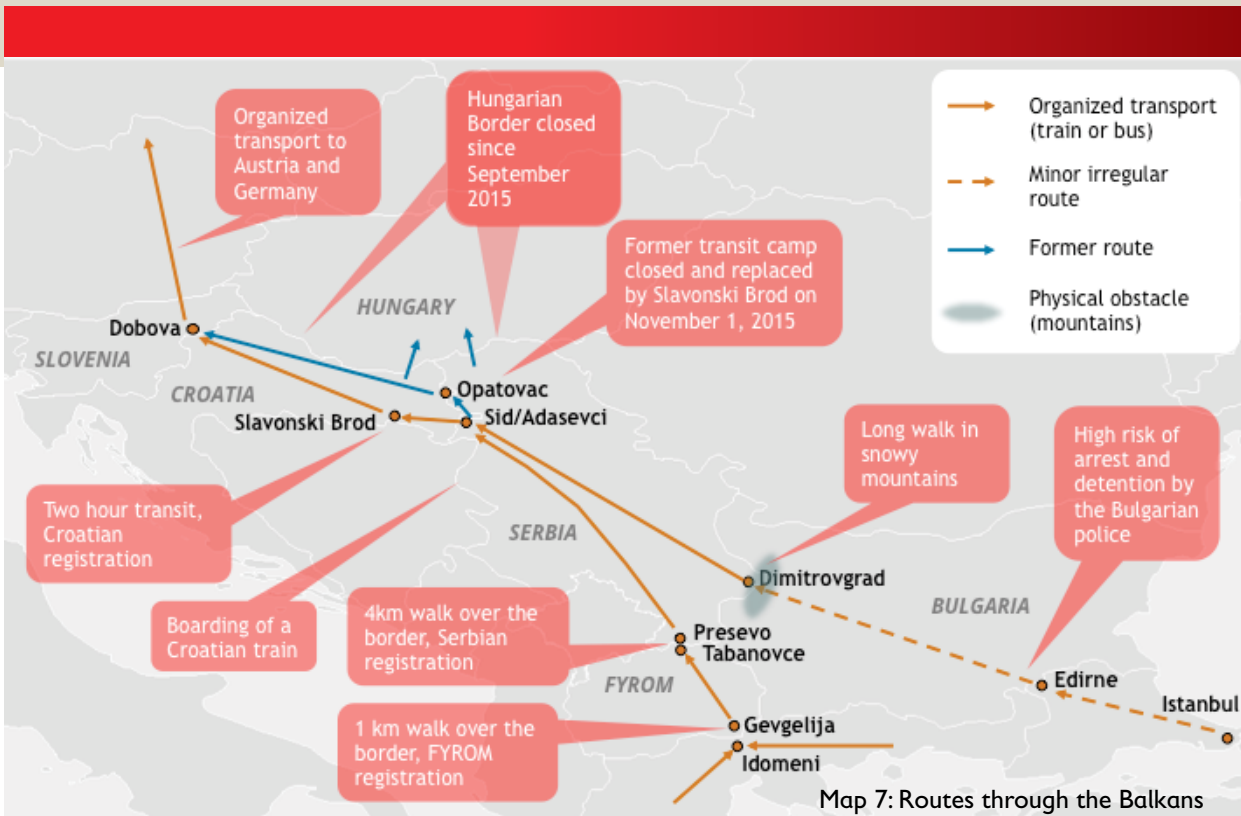
Once registration was complete, refugees would then wait for the next ferry to the mainland. Sometimes they waited in the transit camps but they were also seen waiting around the port, in restaurants close to the port, or in private hotels.

Those who arrived at the smaller islands of Kastellorizo (from Antalya region) or Farmakonisi (military island close to Bodrum) were transported to Rhodes and Chios, respectively.

Balkans

The journey from Greece through the Balkans was quite structured and usually followed a series of steps as follows:

- From the Greek islands, refugees would take public ferries to the mainland. The main destination was Athens (Piraeus Port) but there was also a smaller flow of people moving to Kavala. This segment of the journey typically lasted eight hours and no particular risks were reported.
- Refugees would take public buses from Piraeus or Kavala to Idomeni, on the border with FYROM. The bus typically cost 30 Euro and the journey lasted around eight hours. When refugees approached Idomeni, they were told by authorities to wait at the Polykastro gas station, situated 20 kilometres away from the border, until the time of their crossing. This waiting period usually lasted a few hours.
- Refugees reported that the conditions of the journey started to deteriorate once they left Greece, with lack of sanitation, absence of sleeping quarters, and more difficulty acquiring food and water being the main issues.
- From Idomeni, refugees crossed over into FYROM by walking for less than a kilometre on flat terrain. In FYROM, they registered at the Gevgelija temporary reception centre with the use of their Greek documents and received a 72-hour transit document.
- There was generally a wait time of less than a day before refugees would board the train to Tabanovce Temporary Reception Centre in Northern FYROM (25 EUR, around six hours).
- On arrival at Tabanovce, refugees either walked immediately to Miratovac (a small village on the Serbian border, about four kilometres from Tabanovce) or waited for daylight (big collective winterized tents were set up to accommodate migrants). There was also limited transportation available for vulnerable cases (sick, elderly, disabled, pregnant women and mothers with young children). This walk was exhausting, particularly for those that had a lot to carry and particularly in the cold.
- From Miratovac, refugees were transported by bus to Presevo, the temporary reception centre in southern Serbia, which was situated just a few kilometres away. Registration was conducted on the basis of the Greek and Macedonian documents and led to the issuance of a 72-hour transit pass.
- From Presevo, refugees would choose between buses (frequent departures, 35 EUR, around seven hours) or trains (once a day at the time of research, 17 EUR, 11 hours) to make their onward journey to northern Serbia. Waiting time of maximum one day with no proper sleeping quarters.
- From Presevo, refugees traveling by train arrived at the Sid temporary reception centre and those traveling by bus arrived at the Adasevci motel on the highway. Then there was a wait for the Croatian train that transported refugees to Croatia. Waiting could take up to a day. There were no sleeping quarters in Adasevci but there were collective winterized tents in Sid.
- The train from Sid would travel to Slavonski Brod Temporary Reception Centre in eastern Croatia. It was free and took about four hours.
- The transit time in Slavonski Brod was around two hours and registration was conducted on the basis of the Greek, Macedonian and Serbian registration documents. There was no proper place for resting, but some NGOs were distributing clothes and food.
- The train from Slavonski Brod to Slovenia was around six hours and free of charge.



Map 7: Routes through the Balkans

Alternative Routes Within Europe

An alternative route from Serbia to Hungary, and then on to Austria, had existed previously but it was completely closed at the time of the fieldwork. Hungary sealed its border with Serbia on 17 September 2015, and the flow was re-routed to Croatia.

Smuggling routes from Belgrade to Hungary were in operation at the time of research but this route was rather complex and expensive and was generally only utilised by other migrants on the route who knew that they would be stopped at official crossing points (for example, Iranians). It involved taking a Serbian taxi to the border, walking for a few

kilometres over the border, and being picked up by another car once the border with Hungary had been crossed. It was priced at 3,000 EUR for the journey all the way to Vienna.

SMUGGLING

For the purposes of this report, the term ‘smuggler’ refers to someone who assists refugees and migrants to move from one place to another for a fee, when refugees and migrants do not have the possibility of doing so regularly. This includes, but is not limited to, passage over international borders. As Syria is fragmented into



Image 3: Travel agents in Lesbos advertise onward journey to Athens for refugees in Arabic (Altai)

various areas controlled by different groups, resulting in front lines within the country, passage within Syria is also facilitated by smugglers in some instances. Smugglers are not only involved in the movement of migrants over borders; they also offer a range of connected services.

Transport Used

The main forms of transportation used along the smuggling routes to Europe include:

- **Motorbikes:** Used in rural areas in Syria when refugees need to avoid the main roads and towns. For example, when they need to move out of

Focus Box 16: Timeline of policy changes along the Balkans route

15 September 2015: Hungary closes its border with Serbia, redirecting the flow to Croatia.

16 October 2015: Hungary closes its border with Croatia, redirecting the flow to Slovenia.

1 November 2015: Opening of Slavonski Brod temporary reception centre (replaces Opatovac)

4 November 2015: First relocations from Greece (part of the EU plan to relocate 160,000 refugees)

18 November 2015: FYROM, Serbia and Croatia impose the SIA decision (only refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan and allowed to enter their territories irregularly)

29 November 2015: EU-Turkey joint action plan pledges three billion EUR in aid to improve the conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey, in exchange for measures to prevent onward movement.

11 February 2016: NATO operation is launched in the sea between Greece and Turkey.

18 February 2016: Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and FYROM introduce new identification and registration measures for migrants, effectively restricting passage for many nationalities.

19 February 2016: Austria imposes a quota at its border; a maximum of 3,200 refugees can enter per day.

20 February 2016: Serbia and Bulgaria decide that refugees can only enter Serbia through Preševo (via FYROM) and that Serbia and Bulgaria will take joint measures to prevent the movement of people from Bulgaria to Serbia. The entry point via Dimitrovgrad is closed.

21 February 2016: FYROM and Serbia deny entry to Afghans.

24 February 2016: Vienna summit on refugees, where Balkan states decide to close the border with Greece.

26 February 2016: Slovenia and Croatia impose a quota at their borders; a maximum of 580 refugees can enter per day.

7 March 2016: EU-Turkey summit to decide on measures to end the flow of irregular migrants along the Eastern Mediterranean route.

8 March 2016: FYROM and all other countries on the route close their border with Greece to all refugees.

18 March 2016: EU-Turkey deal is made, allowing Greece to return 'new irregular migrants' to Turkey, including a return-one-to-resettle-one policy for Syrian refugees.

20 March 2016: EU-Turkey deal comes into effect and reception centres on the islands are turned into detention facilities.

22 March 2016: MSF, UNHCR, Save the Children and others revise their involvement in the newly-assigned detention facilities on the Greek islands, refusing complicity in the EU-Turkey agreement.

TYPE OF BOAT	DESCRIPTION	PRICE (PER PERSON)
Balam	This is the type of boat that most Syrian refugees travel on. It is a basic inflatable rubber dinghy. It is usually filled with more people than it has capacity for (usually about 60 people) and is thus easily filled with water. It is also the slowest form of boat transportation.	Approx. USD \$700
Shakhtura	Wooden boat, similar to what smugglers and refugees call a 'yacht', but smaller. Usually carries around 20 people.	Approx. 1200 USD
Yacht	Wooden boat, faster than the <i>balam</i> but slower than the jetboat. Considered safer than the <i>balam</i> , although it can also hit rocks underneath the surface since it is deeper in the water. Usually holds around 50 people.	Approx. 1400 USD
Jetboat	Fast metal boat. Can sometimes travel faster than the boats of the coast guards. The only boat that is re-used by smugglers. It usually holds about 12 people. The risks of shipwreck are minimal but an experienced driver is required.	Approx. 1500 USD

Table 5: Types of boats used by smugglers between Turkey and Greece

besieged areas or when they need to cross from government areas into opposition areas.

- Taxis and minibuses: When travelling on main roads within an area controlled by a single group in Syria.
- Pick-up trucks: For travel through desert or semi-desert areas in Syria. This is mainly in the eastern region, which was under the control of ISIS at the time of writing.
- Vans without windows: For travel from Turkish cities to the Turkish coast, where refugees would board boats for Greece. They were usually filled with up to 30 refugees and migrants of various nationalities.
- Fuel tankers: Used especially to hide refugees when moving through checkpoints in Syria.
- Walking with guides: mainly inside Syria to move between areas controlled by different groups, across the border between Syria and Turkey, sometimes across the border between Syria and Lebanon, and previously to cross the border between Syria and Jordan. Smugglers also make refugees walk across the Bulgarian border (when coming from Turkey) but this is conducted without a guide; refugees are just pointed in a general direction.
- Boat: for the crossing from Turkey to Greece. Usually smugglers are not on board and the boats are directed by one of the refugees after a few minutes of training. Table 5 sets out the different types of boats used by smugglers.

Dynamics of Smuggling

Key Actors

Smuggling services are required at different points of the journey. For example, travelling within Syria often requires a smuggler or a facilitator because of the fragmentation of the country into the hands of different groups. Exiting Syria also requires a facilitator now, particularly after the effective closure of the borders between Syrian and Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, and Syria and Turkey.³⁶ The sea journey between Turkey and Greece also requires a smuggler and is the segment of the journey where smuggling networks are most sophisticated. After the EU-Turkey deal that led to the closure of the Balkans route, there have been reports of smugglers operating through the Balkans also.³⁷

Respondents reported that, on the western Turkish coast (where the sea journey to Greece is commenced), smuggling networks were controlled by Turkish mafia. This is because the Turkish mafia has the money to buy boats, the networks to organise ground transportation to the departure points, and presumably the connections to bypass authorities where required. The mafia then works with Syrian intermediaries, many of whom are former FSA fighters. A Syrian *samsar* interviewed in Izmir explained that smuggling was the privilege of the Turkish mafia and any Syrian intermediary who tries to enter the business himself would be threatened and strongly discouraged.

³⁶ See section on routes of travel for more information on visa impositions.

³⁷ As the EU-Turkey deal came into operation after fieldwork for this study was completed, these smuggling routes have not been explored in this study.



Refugees arrive at Lesbos (Save the Children)



On the western part of the Turkish/Syrian border, around Khirbet al Joz and the Turkmen Mountains, local Turkmen villagers were known to facilitate the journey over the border. Their knowledge of the region and terrain, coupled with their familial connections on either side of the border, allowed them to be able to assist Syrians in making their way across.³⁸ **On the Eastern part of the Turkish/Syrian border, some members of local Kurdish communities were reported to play a similar role.**

Dynamics of Smuggling in Turkey

The smuggling networks observed in Turkey tend to be quite hierarchical in nature. **The person that sits at the top of the network, referred to as the *muhareb*, is rarely seen by migrants and rarely known.** While he (it is always a man) tends to control the network, he works with a number of intermediaries (referred to as '*samsars*') who deal directly with the refugees.

The *samsar* is usually from the same country of origin as the migrants he deals with. On the routes studied, Syrian refugees dealt with Syrian *samsar*. The *samsar* essentially acts as a middleman between the refugees and the *muhareb*. In Turkey, he would typically circulate in the coffee shops and hotels in Istanbul, Izmir and Bodrum and find refugees that were interested in boat journeys to Greece. Then he would contact the *muhareb* and fix a time and date for the journey and relay the information back to the refugees. The *samsar* in Turkey typically received USD \$50 from the *muhareb* for each person he referred. Many of the Syrians interviewed perceived the *samsar* as an agent that protects them from the abuse of the Turkish smugglers. The validity of such an impression could not be verified. Then there is a third layer, the man that physically moves the refugees.

Connecting with smugglers is quite straightforward. While the *samsar* tends to find the refugees by going to areas he knows they frequent, and while most refugees know that it is not hard to find smugglers and their intermediaries in Izmir and Bodrum, some refugees arrive in Turkey already in possession of contact details for *samsar* that friends or family have recommended. Some also find their details on Facebook

³⁸ By no means does this report imply that all Turkmen villagers were involved in the facilitation of Syrian refugees over the border. It was, however, reported in some cases.

pages that advertise smuggling journeys (see Focus box 17). Some Syrians arrive in Turkey with a smuggler, date of departure and price already organised in advance.

Syrian refugees were observed to be working with guarantors when dealing with smugglers in Turkey. This essentially means that payment is not handed over to a smuggler until a refugee arrives safely at destination. This practice was organised and formalised through the establishment of 'insurance offices', which were usually just single individuals that would hold the payment and hand it over to the smuggler once the refugee called safely from destination. Sometimes the *samsar* himself would play this role.

Economics of Smuggling

Over 2015, the cost of boat journeys from Turkey to Greece decreased. In the summer, they had been in the general vicinity of USD \$4,000. At the time of the fieldwork, however, prices from Turkey to Greece had dropped as low as USD \$650.

It was believed that the decrease in prices came with the development of the smuggling industry and the entry of new players into the market to meet the increased demand from Syrian refugees (i.e. more refugees on the route). It was also believed to be a business tactic by smugglers as the decrease in price led to some refugees who had been thinking about undertaking the journey, but who did not have enough money to do so. Also, by the end of 2015, the Syrian refugees en route to Europe generally had fewer financial resources than did their predecessors (as those who were wealthier left early in the crisis), so smugglers presumably started to adapt to the purchasing power of their clientele. This was particularly the case at the time of the fieldwork, with people pushed out of northern regions by Russian bombing. Of course, the decrease in price was also affected by the season and it was presumed by respondents that prices would slightly increase in the summer, although not to the same levels of summer of 2015.

When refugees required money be transferred to them by relatives elsewhere, some reported using Western Union, although most worked with a more informal *hawala* network.³⁹ This is mainly

³⁹ '*Hawala*' (meaning transfer in Arabic), is an informal system of money transfer that functions on a network of money brokers across the globe that affect the transfer between them without actually moving the money.

Focus Box 17: Smuggling services on social media



This post, from the Facebook page of a smuggling ring, advertises the journey of a ‘fishing boat’ from Mersin (Turkey) to Italy. The advertised price is USD \$5,000 per person and the duration of the journey is advertised as 2-3 days. Only serious people are advised to enquire further.



This post, from another Facebook page, advertises trips that are available almost every day on a tourist yacht from Izmir to the island of Chios. The smuggler states that he will cover hotel and food until the moment of departure and the total cost of the entire journey will be 2,200 EUR. He only accepts calls or messages on Viber.

because it is cheaper and leaves no trace. Moreover, Western Union requires identification and it was not always possible for refugees to produce the identity documents required. This was particularly the case for Syrian children who had been too young before the crisis to obtain documents, and then were unable to do so during the crisis. Palestinian Syrians also often faced problems producing the needed identity documents.

Unaccompanied Children and Smuggling

In the case of UAC, families were observed playing a significant role in preparing the trips and assisting children from afar. For example, UAC were often in very frequent contact with families, who

would then be advising them on next steps. One 17-year-old boy explained that he would call his family every single day and update them on his whereabouts and that they would then contact the smugglers for him. A father from Damascus explained, “We sent our oldest boy to Germany four months ago. We decided to send him alone because we did not have enough money. He flew from Amman to Turkey and then crossed to Greece and continued his way up to Germany. I wrote him the information for the stages of the travel. We prepared the contacts of smugglers in advance. I even contacted a smuggler to get him a fake Syrian ID.”

PROTECTION ISSUES FOR CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

THE ARDUOUS JOURNEY

One of the main issues for children traveling along the routes studied is the exhaustion and sickness that arises from the journey. There are particular segments of the journey that were identified as particularly problematic in this regard and these are outlined below.

The exit from Syria into Turkey necessitates walking some distance, sometimes through the mountains, which lent itself to injuries, particularly among children. Sometimes the cold in these areas would also lead to children falling sick. “I understood the suffering of children when I walked the journey myself. My daughter told me on the way she wished to come back to Aleppo even with the barrel bombs there. By the time we reached Adana [Turkey], my children were really sick and some had to go to hospital. My oldest son spent one week in the hospital in Adana. The Turkish doctors treated him very well; they were excellent,” reported a 41-year-old Syrian man from Aleppo interviewed in Greece.

“My children were sick from the cold because we walked in the snow between Syria and Turkey and then they had to sit on a bus in Turkey in their wet clothes. I know a child five months old who died of cold in the mountains between Syria and Turkey. He was buried there.”

—30-year-old mother of five,

interviewed in FYROM

Boat journeys from the Turkish coast to the Greek islands often entail some waiting on the Turkish coast. This might be because it takes some time to find a smuggler or because smugglers make refugees wait in holding locations until authorities are no longer in sight or until enough individuals are gathered to fill a boat. Conditions are often precarious and can lead to fear, anxiety, or sickness among children. One 32-year-old man from Kobane (interviewed in Croatia) explained, “We were on the coast alone for five hours, bitten by mosquitoes. In the end, we walked to the road because we did not know what else to do. But the buses would not take us: we were wet, full of mud, and frightened the drivers.”

The boat journey itself is naturally quite arduous. In the worst case, it can lead to death as a result of shipwreck or hypothermia. Even when the journey ends successfully (in terms of reaching the destination), sickness in the form of vomiting or hypothermia is common. Psychological distress is also common.

The most challenging segment of the journey through the Balkans is the four-kilometre walk between Tabanovce (FYROM) and Miratovac (Serbia). At the time of the fieldwork, temperatures reached 16 degrees below zero and some families had to undertake the journey at night, which is the coldest time of day. Buses or vans were used to transport the vulnerable through this segment, but there was usually an insufficient number to cater to those who needed it. One 15-year-old girl from Damascus recalled, “On the border between FYROM and Serbia, we got off the bus before the border. We had to walk in the snow for 30 minutes in the dark. Then there was a kind of camp where we had to register with police. After that we had to continue walking in the snow. It was really cold and I just wanted to get to Serbia.”

While it was uncommon for Syrians to take **the alternative route through Bulgaria** at the time of the fieldwork, those that did suffered more than the rest. There were far fewer organisations and volunteers along this route to assist them or to distribute clothes and food. One 35-year-old man from Homs described



Family boards train to Croatia from Serbia in the snow (Save the Children)

his trip. "From there in Western Bulgaria, we went with a van and they told us at some point to walk in a particular direction. They said it would be 30 minutes but it was four hours, in the snow, in the mountains. There was an eight-month-old child who became very sick on the way. In Serbia, they took him to hospital but I think he died. He was all blue and breathing with difficulty. In the mountains between Bulgaria and Serbia, we were a group of Syrians and Yazidis from Iraq."

INADEQUATE SERVICES ALONG THE WAY

Sleeping and General Hygiene The journey between Greece and Croatia usually took five to 10 days. Most respondents reported that of their greatest challenges during this journey was the lack of adequate sleeping quarters and issues related to hygiene and sanitation.

On the Greek islands, sleeping quarters were arranged for refugees in transit, usually in the form of tents for families (for example, at the

"We were taking my daughter to the doctor at every stage of the journey. She was crying a lot at sea. All the children were vomiting."

—29-year-old Syrian woman

interviewed in FYROM

time of fieldwork, Kara Tepe transit camp in Lesbos accommodated families in containers that were set up with heating and other basic services) or collective tents for those not traveling in families (although these were sometimes overcrowded). During field research in Lesbos (mid-February 2015), it was observed that Syrian families and children (as well as those traveling individually) would also sleep on the street, close to Mytilene port, in order to ensure that they would not miss the ferry to Athens.

The main gap in terms of sleeping arrangements was observed to be during the travel through the Balkans, as explained by one 15-year-old girl interviewed in Serbia who said, “We have not been able to spend one night sleeping in a bed since Mytilene” (Lesbos, Greece). Sleeping arrangements during the travel through the Balkans are described below:

- Individuals would sleep in buses on the way to Idomeni (Greece/FYROM border) with progressively longer wait times as the numbers of refugees accepted at the border were reduced, and before the border ultimately closed.
- In the transit camps of Idomeni (Greece/FYROM border), Gevgelija (entry point into FYROM) and Tabanovce (exit point from FYROM), there were only large collective winterized tents where people would sleep on wooden benches or directly on the floor, with blankets distributed by NGOs and volunteers. There were sometimes showers (in Gevgelija, for example), but given the cultural demand for privacy by the Syrian refugees on the route, very few of them, and almost no woman, were using them.
- In Presevo (entry point into Serbia), there was no proper sleeping place, apart from the limited capacity of small winterized tents provided by MSF for special cases.
- In Adasevci (Serbia), where refugees were waiting for the train to take them to Croatia (waiting between a few hours to one day), refugees slept in the buses.
- In Sid (train station on the Serbian border with Croatia), sleeping quarters had been prepared by MSF, which set up two big winterized tents with double beds and a few rooms. Most refugees were able to rest here, although tensions between refugees of different nationalities were common and fear was expressed for the safety of women. Again, refugees, especially women, often did not use the showers because of the lack of privacy.
- In Croatia, refugees were only transiting in Slavonski Brod for an average of two hours. Only vulnerable cases were taken to ‘sectors’ with sleeping quarters for longer periods.
- While the other countries along the route to Germany (Slovenia, Austria, Germany) were not included in the field research for this study, testimonies found that refugees there were only sleeping in trains and buses.

On **the route through Turkey**, many refugees sleep in small, overcrowded hotels or in accommodations provided by smugglers. Some were also observed to be sleeping in the streets in the Basmane area of Izmir, which is the main meeting and waiting area for Syrian refugees and smugglers and their intermediaries. They



Informal camp in Hungary, along the Serbian border (Save the Children)

Focus Box 18: Child-friendly spaces observed along the route

In Slavonski Brod transit camp in Croatia, a mother-and-baby area was maintained by Save the Children, Magna and UNICEF within a tent provided by Care International.

in Sid and Adasevci transit camps in northwest Serbia, child-friendly spaces were maintained by UNICEF and World Vision.

In Presevo (southern Serbia), a child-friendly space managed by Save the Children was provided a few hundred meters from the transit camp, which also contained some beds to accommodate families overnight. There were also child-friendly spaces managed by UNICEF and DRC in Miratovac (next village, on the border with FYROM) and Presevo.

In Belgrade, Save the Children managed a child-friendly space.

In Tabanovce (northern FYROM), a child-friendly space was managed by Open Gate and Terre des Hommes Foundation (Lausanne), with some space for families to sleep if required (but no beds). There was also a child-friendly space managed by UNICEF and SOS Children's Village.

In Gevgelija (southern FYROM), a child-friendly space was managed by Open Gate with some space for families to sleep if required (but no beds).

In Idomene (northern Greece), a child-friendly space and a mother and baby area was managed by Save the Children.

In Lesbos, a playground was established for children at the Moria camp.

In the Middle East, since refugees are spread out over numerous locations, no particular child-friendly spaces were observed, but many INGOs and local NGOs run proximity centres focused on education, activities, sports, etc.

were also observed to be sleeping at the bus station in Antakya, which is where Syrians arrive after crossing the border from Syria and wait for buses to take them to other parts of Turkey (generally towards Istanbul or directly to Antalya, Bodrum or Izmir).

For those that need to be **smuggled within Syria** in order to reach one of the borders, they can be on the move for long periods of time, sometimes up to two weeks, with no proper accommodation or sleeping quarters. They typically sleep in abandoned warehouses, chicken farms, or inside cars.

Lack of Designated Spaces for Adolescents

Areas referred to as “child-friendly spaces” were set up at numerous points along the route and in a number of reception and transit centres. Focus Box 18 sets out the various child friendly-spaces that were observed along the route.

These spaces proved to be greatly beneficial in providing mothers and pregnant women the space to rest, change diapers, breastfeed and tend

to their children who are often quite fatigued and sometimes distressed. They often contained areas for children to play and draw and engage in other activities, which was seen to be quite important in terms of allowing children to come back to themselves in the midst of such an arduous journey. The activities for children also allowed parents some time to rest and de-stress, which was also quite needed. Respondents,

“There is no accommodation. We are sleeping in buses, on trains, and on benches at bus stops. It is very tiring for the children.”

—32-year-old Kurdish Syrian, father of four, interviewed in Croatia



Child-friendly space in Idomeni
(Save the Children)

Focus Box 19: Definition of unaccompanied and separated children

An unaccompanied child is a person who is under age 18, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier, and who is “separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so”.²²

Separated children are those that are separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives.²³

particularly mothers, as well as children themselves, spoke quite highly of these spaces, which they described as providing much needed respite during the arduous journey.

The other important function of these spaces is that they allow for improved detection of vulnerable cases. For example, NGO La Strada provided almost 700 women and 1,500 children with psychosocial support in UNICEF Child Friendly Spaces at the Vinojug reception centre in a typical week in October 2015.⁴⁰

However, these spaces were typically positioned to cater to the needs of babies or children below the age of 12. For older children, in their teenage years, there was little engagement in these spaces. This led to older children (ages 13-17) typically sharing space with adults in common areas,

⁴⁰ “Europe’s Refugee Emergency Response, Update #6” UNHCR, October 2015

which opened them up to several vulnerabilities. This was compounded by the fact that transit locations were shared by migrants and refugees from different nationalities who possessed different cultural values, sometimes creating tension.

Moreover, adolescents who were not traveling with their immediate family tended to avoid such safe spaces out of a fear of being identified as unaccompanied and consequently held back.

This created a series of vulnerabilities, including lack of access to official information (leading to children being easily misinformed or fooled), lack of access to support services, and the formation of bonds of trust and reliance with individuals who may not have their best interests at heart.

SHORT TRANSIT TIMES

In most of the transit locations in Europe, both because the refugees desire to move on quickly and reach their destination and because authorities prefer to facilitate their quick transit in order to be able to manage the large flows, transit times are extremely short. This makes it difficult for NGOs and other service providers to provide refugees with all of the support that they may need.

Most of the NGOs who are focused on assisting children and families with children (particularly NGO translators, cultural mediators and field workers) reported that the majority of the **vulnerable cases remain undetected because there is not enough time for proper assessment.**



The beaches of Lesbos are filled with life jackets; most of them fake (Save the Children)

Provision of needed medical services is particularly challenging. Some refugees refuse treatment, even in serious cases, because they fear that the borders may close soon and thus wish to move on as soon as possible. This is particularly problematic for children who may not be able to sustain illness as long as an adult.

Along the entire route, nutrition of children is an issue because of lack of money, perceived lack of time, and the rush to reach the destination country. Both adults and children reported eating mostly canned food and biscuits distributed by NGOs. For young children, there was baby milk available at the various transit facilities, but short transit time sometimes prevented its adequate distribution to all children.

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT

Even before commencing the journey, many children already suffer from distress associated with living through the Syrian war and its impacts. The psychosocial impacts of the journey itself are also great, however,

with particular points posing particular protection and mental health risks. For example:

- **The risk of death during the boat journey:** Children reported being afraid that they would die and that it felt as though the journey would never end. Some even reported that it made them wish that they had never left their homes. Parents reported that it took some time for their children to feel safe again, even when they were back on solid land. This manifested in decreased autonomy and independence amongst the children and a greater attachment to parents.
- **Hiding from authorities:** The need to hide from authorities, beginning in Syria and continuing throughout the journey, left children in a constant state of anxiety and fear. It also created an ominous picture of authority figures for children, which was exacerbated by the harsh treatment their parents sometimes experienced at the hands of officials. This image of authority figures sometimes affected the ability of children to trust aid workers and social service providers in countries along the way because they did not discern a difference between the individuals that wanted to assist them and the authorities that



Image 9: Mother and daughter wait to be reunited with separated family, Croatia (Save the Children)

they had to continually escape from. This naturally affected their access to services and assistance.

- **Tension and uncertainty at border locations:** The constant changes at borders and the general fear of border closures created a lot of distress for children, but also for parents who then unintentionally (but naturally) passed it on to their

children. Children developed a sense of constant instability that often led to them acting out.

- **Stressed parents:** In addition to their own distress, children were also exposed to the fear, anxiety and depression of their parents, which was quite unsettling for them.



Top: Train pulling out of Croatia (Save the Children),
Bottom: Large crowds that form when boarding trains
along the Balkans route (Save the Children)

Among the children interviewed, those who displayed the greatest signs of distress were those that were affected not only by the stressful travel, but also by difficult family situations. For example, in some cases children were traveling only with their mother because they had lost their father along the way (through separation, death, or detention).

A sudden departure from Syria due to imminent danger also exacerbated the stress and distress of the journey, particularly for those children who witnessed acts of violence and destruction during the departure. It created added stress because often the sudden departure meant that families did not have enough money with them for the entire journey resulting in the adoption of negative coping mechanisms. Conversely, families with greater financial means, who were more educated, and came from urban areas, usually had more information about the journey and experienced it in a slightly less traumatic way.

THE RISK OF FAMILY SEPARATION

In Greece and the Balkans

As the route through the Balkans became progressively more organised, the incidences of family separation decreased and their resolution became more efficient.

Before the opening of the Slavonski Brod temporary reception centre in November 2015 (Croatia), cases of family separation were common at the Opatovac Centre (which was the former entry point into Croatia). UNHCR reports that by mid-October 2015, they were detecting an average of seven cases of family separation per day.⁴¹ In one case in Opatovac, a baby of 20 days whose mother had died in bombing in Syria was found in Opatovac with her aunt and the aunt's family. She had become separated from her father at the border crossing between Serbia and Croatia because of mass movement and ad-hoc boarding on buses. The father was found four days later at the Austrian-Slovenian border.

However, when the flow was diverted to Slavonski Brod, this trend decreased quite significantly due to greater organisation and also greater efforts to reunite separated family. Family tracing units were set up in most camps in the Balkans and the staff of the different units in different countries coordinated themselves to trace lost family members, arranging for one family member to wait in a camp until another family member was sent by train to meet him or her. Family tracing units were established in Slavonski Brod, Croatia (Managed by the Croatian Red Cross); Presevo, Serbia (managed by the Serbian Red Cross); and in Tbanovce and Gevgelija in FYROM (managed by the Macedonian Red Cross).

The main factors that contributed to instances of family separation, include:

- **Poor crowd management:** Very high numbers of people on the route, compounded by a sense of urgency to arrive at destination (given that migrants were often hearing rumours about the borders being closed), often led to a lot

of pushing and shoving that easily separated family members. For example, when entering a registration area or boarding a bus or train, some would manage to enter, while others would be stuck further back.

- **Spouses of different nationality:** There were instances of one spouse being held back at a border due to his or her nationality, while the other was allowed to pass.
- **Exhaustion:** The general exhaustion of the journey also led to some disorientation and separation. Particularly in the case of mothers traveling alone with many children. "On this route, in the camps, sometimes I see mothers with four or five children. They are so tired that sometimes they forget one," commiserated a 22-year-old mother from Afrin, interviewed in FYROM.
- **Issues with registration documentation:** Sometimes it became necessary to return to a country already crossed in order to rectify a mistake on one's registration documentation. The loss or theft of registration documentation could also necessitate returning to where one had first been registered. For example, in Tabanovce (FYROM), an adolescent who was traveling with his older brother had Spain written as his destination on his registration documentation. He was advised by NGO staff in Tabanovce to go back to Greece and have it changed to Germany so that his entry into Slovenia was not jeopardised. He went back to Greece while his brother waited in Tabanovce.
- **Family separation due to death at sea:** In some situations, for example, a mother or father perished in a shipwreck and the child/ children survive (or vice versa). There were also cases where family believed that they had lost a member at sea, only to discover them later on the route.

The locations where separation was common include:

- At border crossings, when women and children were given prioritised crossing, which often led to family members losing one another;
- When boarding trains, given the large numbers of people doing the same; and

⁴¹ "Europe's Refugee Emergency Response, Update #6" UNHCR, October 2015

- At registration within countries because registration was not typically conducted at once for all family members.

In Syria and the First Host Countries

In Syria, cases of intentional separation were more common. This was particularly related to divergent decisions about emigration. Some examples are outlined below:

- **Military service:** Male adolescents are often sent out of Syria in order to escape military service while the rest of the family remains in Syria.
- **Finishing studies:** Some children remain in Syria in order to finish their studies before joining the rest of the family in a new country. For some, this results from the impression that having a university degree will increase chances of integration in a new country (particularly Europe). For others, it is because they do not want the few years of study that they have already completed to have been in vain.
- **Dangers for men:** In some cases, women and children travel alone while the father of the family remains in Syria. Such a decision is made when it is believed that the man is likely to be harassed at checkpoints within Syria and even arrested, whereas women and children are likely to pass through.

In the first host countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey), cases of intentional separation (and sometimes forced) were usually related to:

- **Difficulties crossing Syria:** Currently, the only way for Syrians in Lebanon and Jordan to reach Turkey is to re-enter Syria, move to the northern border, and cross over to Turkey by land. For some Syrian men, the risks of re-entering Syria and then traveling across the country are too high. Thus, there are cases where only women and children move on and the men remain in Lebanon and Jordan.
- **Expulsion from first host country:** There have been some cases observed where young men are expelled from Jordan for working without a work permit. The family remains while the young man returns to Syria.

- **Sea crossing:** Family members sometimes make divergent decisions about continuing on from Turkey to Greece/Europe because of fears related to the risky sea journey. One or some members may stay back in Turkey while others move on.

It should be noted that when families make a decision to intentionally separate, it is usually in the hope that the family member that has stayed behind will join them later, through regular means and as part of a family reunification scheme.

Economic factors also created cases of intentional separation. When families may not have enough means to pay for the journey of every family member, some family members are sent ahead to pave the way for the rest. This is particularly common for journeys out of Syria or the first host countries. In the Balkans, it was not common because smugglers were generally not required and transportation was cheap and even free after Serbia. There were also a number of aid organisations who were able to assist families financially if they required it. One 35-year-old father from Homs said, “Yes, some families get separated. In Edirne, there was a family with eight children who did not have enough money for everyone. They ended up leaving their 13-year-old son in the hotel. The owner of the hotel told them that the boy would work for him until he had enough money to continue his journey.”

In general, children were found to cope quite well when the situation of all the separated family members was known. For example, children seemed able to absorb the separation in cases where the father and some siblings were already in Europe or where a mother stayed behind with her own family. Cases of separation were, naturally, distressing for children when they arose out of a situation where a family member had been detained, prevented from moving on, or lost.

Cases of male adolescents or young men traveling alone were also easier for a family to accept than cases of mothers traveling alone with children. This is because young Syrian boys, even when they are minors, are rather accustomed to taking on responsibility for the entire family. On the contrary, for the Syrian women, particularly those from rural areas, it was quite uncommon to undertake long journeys without their husbands. This not only resulted in stress on the part of the mother, but also for their children who were not accustomed to such a scenario and understood it as a sign that something was wrong.

THE RISK OF VIOLENCE & ABUSE

As described in the previous sections, the lack of privacy along the route and the need for refugees to share sleeping quarters and bathrooms or showers with other migrants and refugees from a variety of other countries was a source of concern for families interviewed. Families with young girls and female-headed households were particularly concerned. The fact that border crossings and transit centres were usually overcrowded also created some risks for children who could potentially become lost in the crowd.

Although respondents did not report any direct cases of assault, Syrian families expressed concerns about the safety of their teenage daughters in crowded accommodation facilities, particularly on the Greek islands. However, these risks were mitigated by the fact that most Syrians travelled in families and then formed even larger groups by traveling with other Syrians they met along the way, which was partly in response to the perceived risks for children and women from men of other nationalities.

There were also scenarios where women who were traveling alone with their children would become vulnerable to sexual exploitation. This was particularly the case on the Turkish coast where the largest payment was required for the crossing to Greece. Sometimes if women did not have enough money for the journey, smugglers would encourage them into prostitution rings in order to generate the required funds. There were also suggestions of linkages between the local smuggling rings and local mafia groups otherwise involved in prostitution. Respondents also reported that sometimes other individuals in positions of power (e.g., landlords, hotel owners, etc.) encouraged women into prostitution for the same reason.

While incidences of trafficking were difficult to detect and apparently not very common, the potential for trafficking, as well as vulnerability to being trafficked was apparent, particular for women and children. For example, while some vulnerable and desperate women did fall into prostitution as a means of generating the requisite funds for the onward journey, it was not always in a

context of trafficking. Nonetheless, if a woman falls into prostitution in such a context, it can increase her vulnerability to being trafficked.

In a small handful of cases, it was found that if a family did not have enough money to pay a smuggler for the onward journey from Turkey, they would sometimes leave behind the eldest son to work for a hotel owner, smuggler, or landlord, to pay off the family's debt. In exchange, the person for whom the child was working promised to send him to Europe to join the family once the debt had been repaid. Parents always reported that they trusted the said individual and felt completely confident that their child would be taken care of. Nonetheless, the risk of exploitation and trafficking is clear.

IDENTIFICATION & REGISTRATION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

As explained previously, children are sometimes sent ahead of the rest of the family in the hope that they will be able to facilitate the family's arrival at a later time, through regular means, as part of a family reunification scheme.

On the route studied, Syrian children were rarely unaccompanied (UAC). Generally, they are more commonly categorised as 'separated' children. That is, they are usually traveling in the company of extended family members (for example, uncles or cousins). Even in the rare cases where Syrian children were traveling without any family members, they were still in the company of people that they were well-acquainted with (for example, close family friends, neighbours they grew up with in Syria, etc.). This was different from children from other nationalities along the route studied.

Most of the countries along the way have very similar laws and procedures for dealing with identified UAC. The general principle is that if a UAC is identified and cannot be matched with parents or legal guardians in the country, then that child should come into the care of the state. The state becomes the

Focus Box 20: Registration and reception procedures in Lesbos (Greece), including procedures for UAC

At the time of the fieldwork, all individuals who arrived by boat were registered at Moria as irregular arrivals. An individual identified as an irregular arrival was to be given an administrative note (informally referred to as 'khartia' by the refugees) at registration that states one of the following: voluntary departure or deportation from the Greek territory within 30 days; suspension of deportation from 30 days to six months; certificate of non-removal due to humanitarian reasons.

Suspension of deportation from 30 days to six months was to be applied to: pregnant women (cannot be deported for six months after birth of child); asylum seekers (until a final decision is made on their application); recognised asylum seekers; parent of a Greek minor (if the parent is the legal guardian); and the elderly (over 80 years). Nationals of the following countries were to receive a certificate of non-removal for humanitarian reasons: Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Iraq. Palestinian refugees (typically without state documents) were also among this group.

Greek police were responsible for conducting the registration at Moria with the assistance of Frontex. This involved recording all of the personal details of the individual being registered, including nationality and age. All registered individuals were to be photographed and those above age 14 were to be fingerprinted (EURODAC). If the person was able to present identity documents, then the details were recorded accordingly. If the individual did not have identity documents, their age and nationality were to be determined. Frontex was supporting the Greek police on the issue of nationality determination.

During registration, all vulnerable cases were supposed to be flagged, including: UAC; individuals with serious health problems; pregnant women and mothers with babies; mothers or fathers traveling with children but without their spouse; victims of trafficking (VOTs); survivors of rape, torture or other serious harm; and the elderly.

If an irregular arrival did not have identity documents and stated an age that seemed unlikely (for example, in the case of UAC overstating their age), a medical doctor was to be summoned to conduct an age assessment.

If the individual was found to be a minor and police suspected that the minor was unaccompanied, they were obliged to alert the First Reception Service (FRS), which is a government body. The FRS would then refer the child to the public prosecutor to determine whether the child is in fact unaccompanied. If the assessment was found to be positive, then the public prosecutor would become the legal guardian of the UAC. Although a UAC is technically a child that is not accompanied by his or her parents or a legal guardian, in practice, in some cases, the public prosecutor would determine a child as being accompanied if they were traveling with an extended family member. After this process, the case would be handed back to FRS who would find accommodation for the child in a shelter through the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA).

The UAC would be prevented from continuing the journey alone and be provided with a number of options to choose from instead, among them remaining in the shelter until they come of age or applying for asylum, family reunification or relocation to another EU member state:

Asylum: The UAC must be 14 years of age in order to be able to make an application for asylum.

Family reunification: Dublin III broadened the definition of family and allows UACs to be reunited with uncles, aunts, grandparents, or brothers and sisters (as well as parents) in another EU member state. Reunification with family outside of the EU (for example, with family still in Syria) is technically possible, although there have been no cases in Greece, and in Germany it takes some years for the process to be completed.

Relocation: UACs are included in the EU relocation scheme and are one of the groups that are not excluded from relocation to a different member state even if they have already applied for asylum in one member state. Relocation comes under Article 17 of the Dublin regulation (the humanitarian clause) and also allows adult 'children' to be reunited with family in another country (that is, if a person arriving in Greece is over the age of 18 but their father is in Germany, they could apply to be relocated to Germany to join their father). In the case of UACs, the child will be sent to the country where they have the most immediate relatives, through a relocation scheme, not a family reunification scheme (as these are two separate tracks).

legal guardian of the child and makes decisions for the child's accommodation and upbringing (as deemed in the child's best interests) until the child becomes of age. This usually means that the child will spend some years in a state institution or in foster care. The full process for identifying and protecting UAC in Greece is outlined in Focus Box 20 as a case study.

In general, the identification of UACs was observed to be extremely challenging along the route studied. This was particularly so in the Balkans because of the very short transit time in these countries by the Syrian refugees. With transit time a few hours at most, and as officials in the countries involved are pressed for time in registering everyone that is moving through, it is quite common for UACs to pass unnoticed.

This is compounded by the fact that most children who are under the age of 18 are likely to overstate their age to authorities. This is mainly because they have understood that children under the age of 18 will be held back and they wish to continue on to their destination. In practice, it is usually only those UACs who are quite obviously under the age of 18 who will be stopped and their age verified through an age assessment.

Even where age assessments are utilised to determine the age of a child, they do not always produce reliable results. In most countries along the route, age assessments were conducted through bone assessments (by -ray) and dental examinations, both of which carry a margin of error of plus or minus two years. The result of this is a substantial number of children who self-declare as adults being registered as such.

In cases where a Syrian UAC was identified and perceived to be traveling with an uncle or cousin (or some other relative), some countries along the route were likely to appoint the relative as the legal guardian of the child. While on some level, it may seem more favourable to allow the child to continue traveling with a relative than keeping him or her in a state facility for a few years, this policy raises

some serious concerns. More specifically, it is impossible to determine whether the individual appointed as guardian is in fact a family member (particularly when most do not have identity documents) or even capable of acting as an appropriate guardian for the child in question. Conversely, there are cases of separated children traveling with adults entrusted by the child's parents who are subsequently separated from those adults when the law is applied strictly and the child is registered as unaccompanied.

In addition to the above, there are also a range of more practical issues that arise in relation to the identification and protection of UAC on the route. For example, there is inadequate training and/or experience in working with children amongst authorities and social workers, as well as language barriers, that lead to questionable standards of child protection.

Sometimes concerning practices such as the detention of children also arise out of practical difficulties. For example, when UAC arrive at a given country or arrival point at night and outside of office hours, authorities are not be able to notify the official state guardian until the next morning. Since no decision on the child's status can be made without the guardian, the child often will wait in police custody for the evening. Sometimes they will be held with other adults and without access to essential minimum services, such as adequate food, legal information, medical aid, psychosocial support, translation and cultural mediation services. This naturally leads to a range of concerning outcomes, including a high level of distress for the child and vulnerability to ill treatment and abuse. It is also in contravention of international and European law.

Moreover, many of the UAC who were identified, registered and accommodated in specialised reception centres in Greece eventually absconded from these centres in order to continue their journey. This desire to move on creates another layer of challenges related to unsafe migration and the related risk of exploitation and trafficking, especially for children, who are particularly vulnerable.



GAPS EXIST
IN THE IDENTIFICATION
AND PROTECTION OF
UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

CROSS ANALYSIS

SYRIAN REFUGEES & MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES

A total of 362,775 Syrian nationals made applications for asylum for the first time in the EU in 2015. Moreover, the number of Syrians seeking protection in the EU increased from approximately 20,000 in 2012 to just under 120,000 in 2014 (see Figure 9).

Map 8 presents the routes adopted by Syrian refugees wishing to reach Europe. It charts smuggling routes by land and sea, as well as air routes (both previous and current). It also outlines the countries in the Mediterranean region that are currently visa-free for Syrians (thereby, facilitating travel by air) and those that previously granted this status. The map points to a trapped refugee community: Syrians cannot leave their country and find safe haven in a neighbouring country by land without the use of a smuggler because all neighbouring countries have effectively closed their borders.

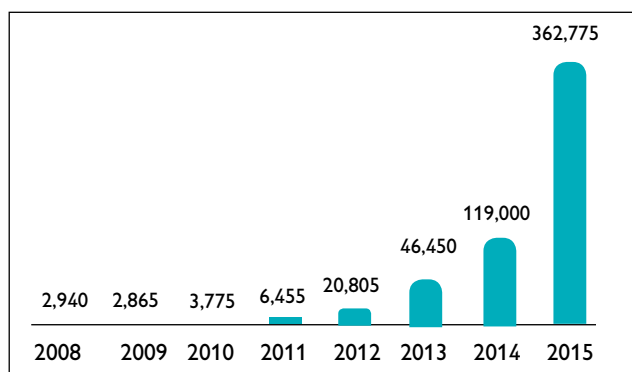


Figure 11: Syrian asylum seekers (first time applicants) in the EU, Norway and Switzerland⁴²

Through North Africa

In 2013, Syrians arrived by air into Algeria, Egypt and Libya, all of which did not require visas for Syrians at the time. Libya was the main departure point for Europe so Syrians arriving in Algeria would move by bus to Libya, via Tunisia, in order to board boats

⁴² Eurostat, asylum and first time applicant by citizenship, age and sex annual aggregated data (rounded), 02/03/2016

to Europe. Air arrivals into Egypt either moved to Libya or made direct sea crossings from the Egyptian coast close to Alexandria. Both Egypt (since July 2013) and Algeria (since December 2014) now require visas from Syrian passport holders and air routes have ceased. Syrian travel by air into Libya also decreased following the 2014 crisis, particularly with the closure of the main airport in the capital. The general increased instability and changing attitudes towards Syrians (who began to be scapegoated during the 2014 political crisis in Libya) also curtailed movements towards Libya.⁴³

In 2015, some Syrians were flying into Mauritania and then making the onward journey by land to Libya (through Mali and then Algeria or through Mali and then Niger) in order to then make sea crossings to Europe. Although the flow was limited, by March 2016, the Mauritanian government had also imposed a visa for Syrian passport holders, thereby curbing this air path.

Sudan still admits Syrians without the need for a visa, deeming it the only country in North Africa that maintains an open border policy for Syrians. From Khartoum, Syrians typically moved into Libya and up to the northern coast in 2014. Towards the end of 2014, there was also a flow of Syrians moving from Khartoum to Egypt through Aswan. The flows from Sudan to Libya and Egypt were quite low at the time of writing, however.

Through the Middle East

Prior to the imposition of a visa for Syrian passport holders in Turkey in January 2016, Syrians in Lebanon and Jordan would fly to Turkey. Syrians in Lebanon also travelled on public ferries between Lebanon and Turkey. The visa imposition curtailed these flows and effectively rendered Syrians who wished to move on from Lebanon and Jordan trapped in those countries. As was explained in the section on routes of travel, some Syrians that are desperate to leave Lebanon and Jordan are now re entering Syria and crossing the country to reach its northern border in order to make a land crossing of the Syrian/Turkish border (despite the grave risks associated with such a journey).

⁴³ "Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots" Altai Consulting for IOM, 2015

In addition to the Turkish visa imposition in 2016, Lebanon (in 2015) and Jordan (in 2013) also effectively closed their borders to Syrian refugees.

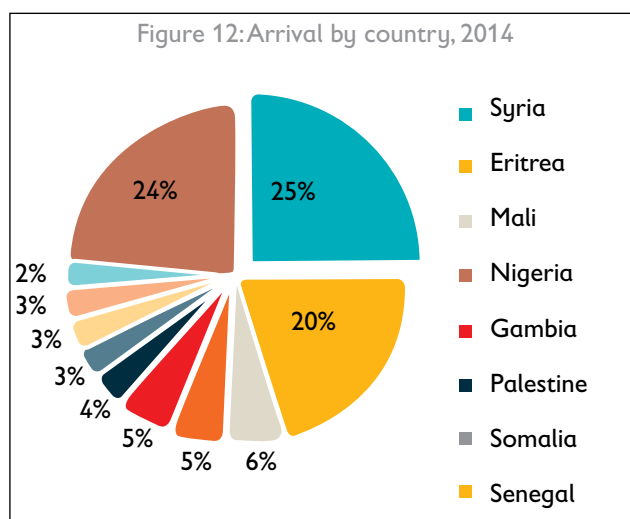
Shifting Between the Routes

In 2014, a total of 170,664 individuals arrived in Europe through the Central Mediterranean, which was more than a 300% increase when compared to the 2013 figures of 45,298. The huge increase was attributed to a number of very strong push factors in Europe's immediate neighbourhood,⁴⁴ one of which was the increase in Syrians being pushed out of their home country or country of first asylum (Syrians accounted for 25% of the flow).

Increased instability in Libya and more restrictive policies towards Syrians in most North African countries led to a shift in the flows through the Mediterranean by 2015. The number of arrivals through the Central Mediterranean decreased slightly to 153,842 and the number of arrivals through the Eastern Mediterranean (Turkey to Greece) increased dramatically to 856,723 in 2015 (compared to 44,057 in 2014). That same year, 56% of the total number of arrivals in Greece were Syrian. Conversely, the number of Syrians arriving in Italy decreased dramatically. Figure 12 and Figure 13 chart the arrivals in Italy over 2014 and 2015 according to nationality. Syrians represented 25% of the flow in 2014 and only 5% in 2015.

Map 9 charts the number of arrivals through the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes from 2012-2015.

44 "Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots" Altai Consulting for IOM, 2015



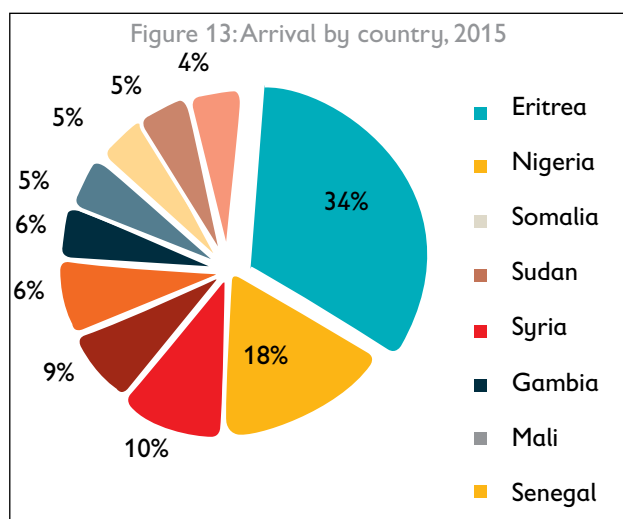
KEY TAKE-AWAYS & PERSPECTIVES

This study has revealed a number of factors that combine to create a situation of instability for the Syrian refugee population. While the dynamics keep shifting and changing in response to a number of factors, but particularly to changes in policy, the risks and vulnerabilities remain fairly constant, across routes and across countries. For this reason, this study, while conducted along the Balkans route, which was officially closed by the time the report came to be published, provides an evidence base for a set of issues that are likely to continue being relevant and demanding attention.

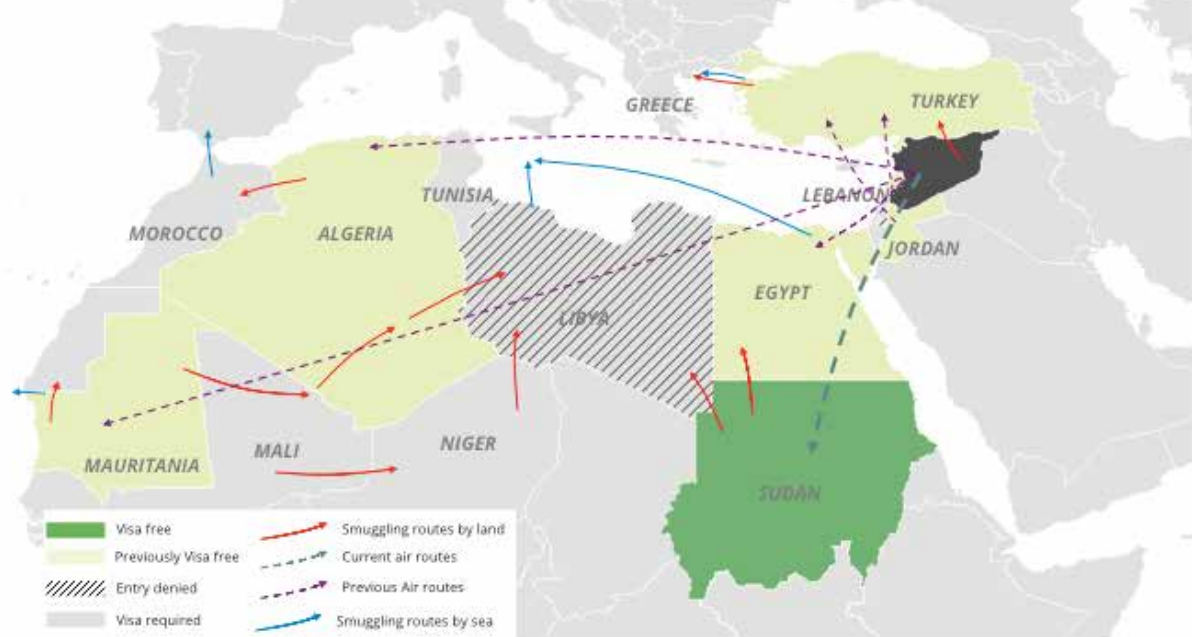
Shifting Expectations among Refugees

In the early days of the Syrian Civil War, many Syrians left their country and moved to neighbouring countries in the region for what they believed would be a temporary period of time. Gauging from the experience of the other countries of the Arab Spring, they believed the conflict would subside within six months to a year at maximum, at which time they would return home. That is to say, they did not envisage settling in their host countries for the long term, and for many, this meant that they did not plan accordingly.

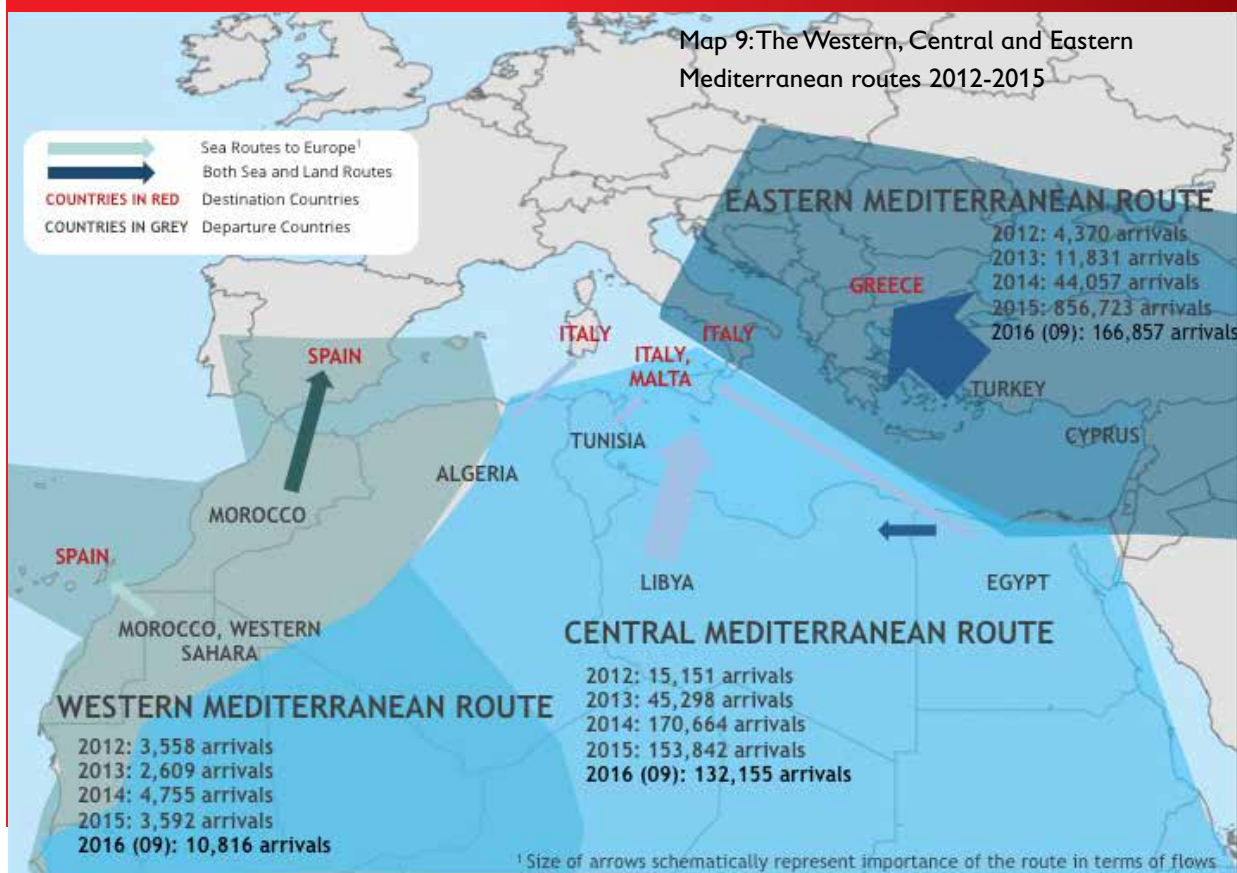
However, as the years passed and a resolution to the conflict seemed less and less imminent, the expectations of the refugees started to shift and the need for long-term stability in host countries became pressing. So



Map 8: Syrian refugees and Mediterranean routes



Map 9: The Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes 2012-2015



much so, that it also became a driver for onward movement.

Host Countries in the Middle East are Overstretched, Pushing Many Refugees Out

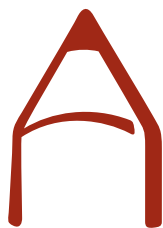
In parallel to the shifting expectations of the refugee community, **the host countries of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, all of whom had maintained an open border policy in the early years of the conflict, started to feel overwhelmed by the very large numbers of Syrian refugees in their countries.** The unprecedented social and economic impacts on many of these countries, which were experiencing their own transitions or pre-existing vulnerabilities and instabilities, led to competition for scarce and depleting resources and increasing unemployment. This resulted in policy changes that affected the ability of the Syrian refugee community to integrate into these countries over the long term. In some locations, it also led to tensions with host communities (particularly Lebanon).

For example, while the legal status of Syrians is generally safeguarded through temporary protection systems that provide registration with the state (although quite challenging now in Lebanon), work permits are extremely difficult to access in all three countries. This means the majority of the community works in the informal market, which leads to exploitation in the form of lower wages, unqualified jobs, no social security, diminished bargaining power when dealing with employers, and a lack of avenues for redress.

The biggest push factor in these Middle Eastern countries, however, tends to be the lack of potential for naturalisation in the long term. This is particularly concerning for parents who often decide to move on to Europe for the sake of their children's future.

Women and Children Face Unique Pressures

The lack of access to work permits means that salaries for Syrians in neighbouring countries are rarely high enough to meet expenses. This leads



MORE THAN HALF OF SYRIAN CHILDREN ARE OUT OF SCHOOL, THEIR LIVES MARKED BY YEARS OF UPHEAVAL AND DISPLACEMENT

to negative coping mechanisms, such as child marriage for young girls and young boys being pulled out of school in order to work and supplement the family income (as this is preferred over sending women into the workforce). Families

generally only survive if there is more than one income stream coming into the family, which means female-headed households, families with disabled men, or families who only have daughters usually don't have enough income coming into the family and are particularly vulnerable.

The increased incidence of sexual abuse of girls in Syria was also identified as one of the main drivers of migration from Syria for families with young girls. There have also been cases of women being trafficked for sexual exploitation in neighbouring countries, stemming from their vulnerability and poverty.

Factors Specific to Children

In addition to the above, there are a number of other issues of concern relating specifically to children. For example, **the journey to exit Syria is replete with dangers and risks, as well as physical hardship in many cases.** This is particularly because all neighbouring countries have now imposed entry visa requirements for Syrian nationals, so Syrians can only leave their country with the aid of a smuggler making a clandestine journey. The exit from Syria and other hazardous segments of the journey to Europe sometimes lead to the separation of family, causing further distress for children.

A large proportion of Syrian children have now lived over five years of their lives in a precarious situation replete with instability and uncertainty. This is partly due to the fact that Syrians did not expect the war to continue for so long and did not plan accordingly (expectations were that they would return home after a few months), but also because of conditions in the countries of reception. Some refugees lived in a state of flux in neighbouring countries for the past five years before again uprooting and experiencing the long and hazardous journey to arrive at another new location in Europe.

Many have been living outside of the cultural norms they know and understand for some time now, creating much confusion and instability. For example, researchers documented cases where fathers remain in Syria and children live alone with their mother in a neighbouring country, where mothers are forced to work thus altering cultural norms and family dynamics, or where children are pulled out of school to work, exposing them to exploitation and the loss of years of their education. For some families, the marriage of girl children is seen as a coping mechanism for the entire family.

Among the children interviewed, those who displayed the greatest signs of psychological distress were those that were affected by not only the stressful travel, but also by difficult family situations (e.g. a father detained in Syria or elsewhere).

A sudden departure from Syria because of imminent danger also exacerbated the stress and distress of the journey, particularly for those children who witnessed acts of violence and destruction during the departure.

Adolescents present a special case where they often do not consider themselves children but are also not adults. It was observed on the route that adolescents would rarely access child-friendly spaces in countries of transit and instead remained in adult areas. This often made them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse but also meant that humanitarian workers were not able to identify vulnerable cases, cases of children in need, or cases of children traveling alone.

UAC are also hard to identify because of the short transit time in many of the transit countries (in Balkan countries in particular). This is compounded by the fact that most children who are under the age of 18 are likely to overstate their age to authorities so that they will be allowed to continue on the journey. Even where age assessments are utilised to determine the age of a child, they do not always produce reliable results. In cases where a Syrian UAC was identified and perceived to be traveling with an uncle or cousin (or some other relative), some countries along the route were likely to appoint the relative as the legal guardian of the child with no assessment of family links. The

lack of adequate training or experience in working with children amongst authorities and social workers, as well as language barriers, also lead to questionable standards of child protection. Researchers also observed resource insufficiencies (such as insufficient capacity in the guardianship system, and insufficient reception and accommodation facilities).

More than half of the Syrian child refugee population is currently out of school. Overcrowded schools, the cost of education, economic pressures leading to child labour, administrative barriers, lack of familiarity with the curriculum or language of instruction, lack of basic numeracy and literacy skills, discrimination and violence in and around schools, are some of the main barriers keeping children from education.

The Preference is Often for the Middle East

Despite the very strong push factors behind the decision to leave the first host country in the Middle East and to move on to Europe, it should be noted that a good proportion of the Syrian refugee community moving to Europe expresses a preference to remain in the Middle East. It was not uncommon for Syrian refugees, particularly parents of young children, to express their anxiety in relation to integration into the West. Adjusting to a new language, culture, religion and lifestyle was seen as a potential challenge and behind the preference to remain in a country where the language or religion is the same. Parents expressed concern over their ability to raise their children with their own values in a European country. This suggests that for a good part of the flow, **the decision to move to Europe is motivated by strong push factors and has very little to do with pull factors, i.e. characteristics of life in Europe.**



MEDICAL SERVICES ARE REFUSED BY REFUGEES, EVEN IN SERIOUS CASES AND FOR CHILDREN, BECAUSE THEY FEAR THAT BORDERS MAY CLOSE SOON AND THEY WISH TO KEEP MOVING

Avenues to Europe are Decreasing

In addition to the social and economic impacts of the large flows of Syrian refugees in (often already vulnerable) countries in the MENA region, concerns for national security have also begun to affect policy. More specifically,

concerns that the Syrian conflict could spill over into neighbouring countries (already occurring to some extent in Lebanon and Iraq) have led to more restrictive border policies. A visa requirement was imposed for Syrian passport holders in Egypt in 2013, Algeria in 2014, Lebanon and Jordan in 2015 and Turkey and Mauritania in 2016. Cases of Syrians being deported back to Syria on national security grounds have also been reported from a number of countries in the region. This effectively led to a shrinking of the asylum space for the Syrian community and lack of access to safe territory. It also decreased the number of avenues to Europe for Syrian refugees by making the North African coast almost entirely inaccessible.

As North Africa became increasingly less accessible to refugees, the Eastern Mediterranean route through Turkey and Greece increased in prominence, with arrivals in Greece increasing from 44,057 individuals in 2014 to 856,723 individuals in 2015 (see Map 9). Now that the Eastern Mediterranean route has become inaccessible, there are already signs of smugglers rerouting to Italy, via Turkey (see Focus box 17). The natural consequence of this is riskier journeys and an increase in demand for smuggling services. The drop in prices of smuggling journeys also led to more Syrians deciding to make the journey.

Fewer Avenues is Leading to Riskier Journeys

The limited passage to countries of safe haven in Europe is leading to greater risk-taking. For example, families are more likely to send one person on the journey to Europe when there is little guarantee that the journey will prove successful. In many cases, it is leading to children, particularly teenage boys, being sent alone. The hope is that the boy will arrive in Europe, claim asylum, and be able to bring the rest of the family over through regular means under a family reunification scheme. However, the time required for family reunifications processes to come to fruition, coupled with the fact that many families discover that they are unable to produce the documents required of them, leads the rest of the family eventually attempting the irregular journey anyway.

Finally, this fieldwork was conducted at a time when half of the route was open and movements were occurring regularly (from the portion beginning in Greece). Since the time of fieldwork, this route has been closed and this closure is likely to only worsen the impact of the factors identified. The asylum space has shrunk further, journeys to access asylum are becoming more dangerous, and more families are becoming trapped in poverty and vulnerability.



**FOR CHILDREN
ESPECIALLY, THE JOURNEY TO EXIT
SYRIA IS REPLETE WITH DANGERS
AND RISKS, AS WELL AS PHYSICAL
HARDSHIP**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this report and the key takeaways presented in the previous section, a number of recommendations have been outlined below.

While most of these recommendations are developed around improving the efficiency of asylum procedures and protection mechanisms for Syrian refugees, the international community is also urged to renew and reinforce its commitment to **pursuing a political solution to the Syria conflict**, which has now been underway for over five years, as the greatest way to alleviate the suffering of millions of civilians.

AT THE EU LEVEL

1. **Ensure safe and legal pathways to international protection in the EU and share the responsibility with countries neighbouring Syria:** Refugees are currently obliged to use smugglers to exit Syria and to find safe haven elsewhere, as neighbouring countries have effectively closed their borders (after receiving large numbers of Syrian refugees for many years) and borders across North Africa and Europe are also effectively closed. In order for Syrian refugees to have access to asylum in a safe and dignified manner and with respect for their human rights, all countries need to ensure access to territory. Europe's greatest contribution to such a situation would be to increase the legal pathways to Europe and to execute them in a speedy and efficient manner. European governments are urged to commit themselves to the call made at the March 2015 responsibility sharing conference in Geneva to take "at least 10 per cent of the most vulnerable refugees who fled Syria and currently live in the main host countries, through resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes".
2. **Increase the speed and efficiency of procedures for seeking asylum in the EU:** In order to eliminate risky journeys, any legal pathways introduced must also be affected in a speedy manner; otherwise refugees are likely to continue to resort to irregular means of travel (which carry with them a high risk of exploitation and violence, especially for children) because they will allow refuge more quickly. Syrian families were encountered on the route who had initiated a family reunification process to join a family member in Europe some years prior, but after waiting for many years for a response that never came, resorted to an irregular journey with a smuggler.
3. **Accelerate the implementation of family reunification procedures under the Dublin system,** particularly for UAC who can currently spend years in state facilities while waiting for family reunification applications to be processed. Priority should also be given to families with children.
4. **Increase and improve reception capacity in all European countries hosting Syrian refugees.** Priority should be given to shelter conditions for children and UAC who currently spend a long time in state facilities, and sometimes in detention, while waiting for their asylum claims to be processed.

IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

1. **All countries in the Middle East are urged to increase access to work permits for Syrian refugees.** Access to livelihoods with dignity facilitates the rights of Syrian workers and lessens their vulnerability to exploitation. Work permits ensure that refugees have access to the formal labour market and are paid according to the minimum wage, which increases their ability to cover their daily expenses and thereby eliminate the need to turn to negative coping mechanisms (child marriage, pulling children out of school to work, etc.). This should be achieved in a manner that ensures that refugees working in informal sectors are not penalized as a result of work permit processes. It should also be noted that, while some countries in the region officially offer work permits to Syrian refugees, the requirements for the permit are often impossible to meet.

- 2. All countries in the Middle East are urged to increase access to labour markets, in combination with work permits.** Work permits alone do not guarantee access to livelihoods, they need to also be accompanied by greater access to labour markets through skills development and skills matching programs so that work permits actually translate into employment.
- 3. Countries in the Middle East are also urged to increase avenues for income generation for Syrian women that ease their access to the labour market, either as second wage earners or the heads of household.** Women refugees reported that working away from the home and with men that are not close relatives was anathema to their experience and challenged community norms. Access to home-based initiatives or women-only workplaces would allow women workers and females who head their households to meet the needs of their families without increasing tensions. Greater access to livelihoods would allow female-headed households to chart their way out of poverty, decrease women's vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation, and prevent children from being taken out of school in order to work.
- 4. The international community is urged to provide better structural support in assisting neighbouring countries to meet the above-mentioned recommendations around integrating Syrian refugees already in-country.** Many Syrians reported that they would prefer to stay in the Middle East but moved on when they were not able to build a future there. There are also communities of Syrian refugees stranded in the Middle East (wanting to move on but blocked by new visa requirements).

CHILD PROTECTION GUARANTEES

- 1. Expand and improve reception conditions across all European countries.** Capacity should be increased for the reception of children in appropriate, open and safe facilities in compliance with international and European human rights standards. This includes abolishing the detention of UAC in all instances (as this runs counter to the rights of the child), reinforcing the guardianship system in all countries on the route, and increasing facilities to accommodate UAC.
- 2. Work on the legal framework for the reception of UAC at the EU level and develop standard operating procedures (SOPs)** to be implemented across facilities and countries in Europe in order to harmonise and improve identification, referral, reception and care conditions for UAC.
- 3. NGOs and other organisations assisting refugees along the route or in host and transit countries are urged to create specific programming for adolescents** (children between 12 and 18) and protection components that cater to their special needs. Much of the assistance currently offered focuses on children under 12, which results in adolescents joining adults in refugee centres, reception centres and other settings where they are waiting for registration or seeking assistance. This opens them up to significant vulnerability and prevents many of their specific needs and vulnerabilities from being identified and addressed.
- 4. European countries are urged to assess individually the best interest of each UAC.** While the state has the duty to protect children not in the custody of their parents, it is important to assess if separation from protective adults will expose children to further risks, particularly when most of these children eventually abscond from the reception centres they are placed in so that they can continue the journey (this is raised in light of cases where children are registered as unaccompanied when they are traveling with adults who are not their parents but whose care their parents entrusted them to).
- 5. Ensure education for all Syrian children affected by the crisis.** Neighbouring countries are urged to ensure that all Syrian children in their territory are in school for the 2016-17 school year, as committed by all relevant stakeholders during the London Conference in February 2016. This includes strengthening public education systems while also increasing informal education programmes, with the support of civil society technical partners, for the most vulnerable children.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of Literature Reviewed for the Report

TITLE	AUTHOR(S)	DATE	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
Policies, Practices and Data on Unaccompanied Minors in the EU Member States and Norway: Synthesis Report	DG Home Affairs	May 2015	Explores the motivations for unaccompanied minors (UAMs) entering the EU and describes the various procedures, laws and policies in regards to their registration, reception and accommodation.
Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Greece: Current Issues, Statistics and Protection Recommendations	SC	March 2016	An update on the situation of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Greece, particularly in light of the EU/Turkey deal, and Save the Children's response to the situation, including details of all activities implemented in Greece.
UNHCR Operational Update for Jordan	UNHCR	March 2016	An update on the situation of Syrian refugees in Jordan including an analysis of achievements and impact in relation to education, health, food security and nutrition, shelter and non-food items, camp coordination and camp management, access to energy
Middle East and North Africa Regional Report 2016. Going to Europe: A Syrian Perspective	DRC	2016	Attitudes and perspectives on destination for Syrian refugees in Turkey and the Middle East and popular European destinations, expectations for life in Europe, decision-making factors, barriers to onward movement, motivations and drivers of onward journey, routes and risks, awareness of risks.
The Welfare of Syrian Refugees. Evidence from Jordan and Lebanon	World Bank, UNHCR	2016	Macroeconomic and socioeconomic data and analysis on Syrians, Lebanese and Jordanians before the crisis.
Daily Estimates – Arrivals per Location, Greece	UNHCR	Dec. 2015	Breakdown of arrivals in the main Greek entry points.
FYR Macedonia, Interagency Operational Update	UNHCR	Dec. 2015	Data on border crossings, breakdown by nationality, aid operations.
Serbia, Interagency Operational Update	UNHCR	Dec. 2015	Data on border crossings, breakdown by nationality, aid operations.
Greece, Data Snapshot	UNHCR	Dec. 2015	Monthly arrivals throughout 2015, with breakdown by nationality, gender and age.
Irregular Migration Between West Africa, North Africa and the Mediterranean	Altai Consulting	Dec. 2015	Profiles of migrants, drivers of migration, routes, and conditions of journey for migrants moving from West Africa to North Africa and Europe. Also analyses programs and policies in countries across the three regions.
Summary of Regional Migration Trends: Middle East	DRC	Nov-Dec 2015	Summary of inter and intra-regional displacement and displacement-induced mobility in the Middle East region (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq). It covers events, trends and data.
Rapid Assessment on Unaccompanied Minors and Separated Children	Save the Children	Nov. 2015	Research on UAMs on the move in Serbia (Afghans, Iraqis and Syrians) including legal framework, protection issues, routes, perceptions of the UAMs, and recommendations.
Syria Crisis Response	Save the Children	Nov. 2015	Updated data on Syrian refugees with a focus on children, as well as programmes implemented by Save the Children (breakdown by country and sector, with financial data and numbers of beneficiaries).
Migration of Children to Europe	UNICEF and IOM	Nov. 2015	Quantitative data on child refugees, breakdown by country of origin, categories of children particularly at risk.
Greece, Refugee Emergency Response	UNHCR	Nov. 2015	Data on arrivals, updates on border procedures, breakdown by nationality.
Syria Crisis. Monthly Humanitarian Highlights & Results	UNICEF	Nov. 2015	Quantitative data on the situation of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, as well as Syrians displaced inside Syria. Also provides an overview of the activities of UNICEF and funding levels.
Right to a Future. Empowering Refugees from Syria and Host Governments to Face a Long-term Crisis	Inter-agency briefing paper	Nov. 2015	Needs of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, current social and legal situation, effects on host communities, international community response.
Migration of Children to Europe	IOM and UNICEF	Nov. 2015	Data on child asylum seekers with breakdown by nationality and information on destination countries and protection issues.
Syria Crisis	ECHO	Nov. 2015	General data on the Syrian crisis and European Union action.

The Balkans. Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Refugees in Transit	ACAPS	Nov. 2015	Map of transit locations through the Western Balkans route, information on the situation in the various transit countries, breakdown by nationality, protection issues.
Europe / Mediterranean Migration response Situation report	IOM	Nov. 2015	Situation overview (Turkey, Croatia, Greece, Serbia, Niger), highlights and UN Migrant Agency (IOM) response.
2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview	OCHA	Oct. 2015	Updated data on the number of people in need and IDPs, and an overview of the various protection issues (shelter, education, nutrition, etc.) with breakdown by district inside Syria.
Syria Crisis. Monthly Humanitarian Highlights & Results	UNICEF	Oct. 2015	Quantitative data on the situation of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, as well as Syrians displaced inside Syria. Also provides an overview of the activities of UNICEF and funding levels.
Syria Crisis Dashboard	UNICEF	Oct. 2015	Data on Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries (school enrolment, health, water access, etc.).
The Educational and Mental Health Needs of Syrian Refugee Children	Migration Policy Institute	Oct. 2015	The educational needs of Syrian refugee children, the psychological consequences of war and emigration, the psychological support available in neighbouring countries, and recommendations for psychological support to refugee children in Europe.
Syria Crisis. Monthly Humanitarian Highlights & Results	UNICEF	Sept. 2015	Quantitative data on the situation of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, as well as Syrians displaced inside Syria. Also provides an overview of the activities of UNICEF and funding levels.
Syrian Refugee Arrivals in Greece. Preliminary Questionnaire Findings	UNHCR	Sept. 2015	Results of a survey conducted upon arrival in Greece, covering, among others, issues of family separation, family status, intentions of travel, level of education, needs for assistance and former professions.
Migration Trends & Patterns of Syrian Asylum seekers travelling to the European Union	REACH	Sept. 2015	Profile of the Syrian refugees reaching Europe and motivations.
Syrian Refugee Arrivals in Greece	UNHCR	Sept. 2015	Preliminary results of a survey upon arrival: levels of education, needs, intentions, time spent in first country of asylum, age, gender, profession.
Is this Humanitarian Migration Crisis Different?	OECD	Sept. 2015	General data on arrivals to Europe, comparison with historical precedents, migration routes, countries of origin and destination.
A Study on Smuggling of Migrants	European Commission	Sept. 2015	Patterns of migrant smuggling, legal framework and counter-smuggling initiatives.
European Migration Crisis. IOM Emergency Response Plan for Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	IOM	Sept. 2015	Situation overview, IOM interventions, funding requirements.
IOM Response Plan For the Mediterranean and Beyond	IOM	Sept. 2015	Flows, routes, policy responses and IOM interventions for each region.
Identification of Proven Models of Support for Children on the Move. With Recommendations for Adaptation and Implementation in Serbia	Olga Byrne	Aug. 2015	Definition of “children on the move” by organisations such as Save the Children and Terre des Hommes, existing programs and needs in Serbia, child protection schemes in Serbia and other countries, state of the law concerning refugee children.
Small Hands, Heavy Burden. How the Syria Conflict is Driving More Children into the Workforce	Save the Children, UNICEF	Jul. 2015	Estimates of the percentage of refugee children working, typical salaries, nature of work, individual stories, health consequences.
Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise. Syrian Refugees in Jordan.	WFP	Jul. 2015	Coping strategies, livelihoods, food security, comparison between refugees in camps and in host communities, household vulnerabilities.
The Sea Route to Europe: the Mediterranean Passage in the Age of Refugees	UNHCR	Jul. 2015	General data on passage by sea, the rise of the Eastern Mediterranean route, the top nationalities among arrivals, the issue of unaccompanied minors arriving to Italy and Greece.
Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots	Altai Consulting	June 2015	Comparative study of the western and central Mediterranean routes (profiles of migrants, push and pull factors, routes, dynamics of migrant smuggling and trafficking, main actors and programs, recommendations).
3RP Regional Progress Report	3RP	June 2015	Consolidated data on aid provided, objectives and results achieved on various themes (education, health, protection, food, etc.).

10% of Refugees from Syria: Europe's Resettlement and other Admission Responses in a Global Perspective	Europe ICMC	June 2015	Humanitarian needs in neighbouring countries, asylum rates in Europe, resettlement programs (breakdown by country, details on national acceptance schemes).
Special Mediterranean Initiative. Plan for an Enhanced Operational Response June – December 2015	UNHCR	June 2015	Current situation, enhanced response and partnerships for three regions (Europe, MENA and Africa).
Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Government Policy and Protection Concerns	UNHCR	March 2015	An overview of the protection concerns, according to UNHCR, for refugees in Lebanon. The report also outlines government policy in relation to the refugee community in the country.
Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, Quarterly Snapshot: January-March 2015	UNHCR	March 2015	Update on the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including updates on programs and interventions.
EU Legal Framework on Asylum and Irregular Immigration 'On Arrival' State of play	European Parliament	March 2015	An overview of European policies and legislation in relation to asylum, border surveillance and rescue at sea and an overview of Dublin II and III
Asylum in the EU: Facts and Figures	European Parliament	March 2015	Asylum rates over a number of years, including breakdown by age, gender and country of origin.
Curriculum, Accreditation and Certification for Syrian Children in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt	UNICEF	March 2015	Detailed study on access to formal and non-formal education for Syrian children in neighbouring countries, and curricula and certification.
The Cost of War. Calculating the Impact of the Collapse of Syria's Education System on the Country's Future.	Save the Children	March 2015	Data on schools destroyed, proportion of children lacking schooling and enrolment rates inside Syria, as well as enrolment rates among Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. Makes comparison with the pre-war situation in Syria.
Understanding the Syria Refugee Crisis	World Affairs Council	Feb. 2015	Situation of refugees in the various neighbouring countries, social issues (early marriage, schooling, child labour, etc.).
The Big Dilemma of Small Soldiers: Recruiting Children to the War in Syria	Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre	Feb. 2015	Recruitment of child soldiers, Individual cases, groups involved, attitude of the Jordanian authorities.
Hardship, Hope and Resettlement	Amnesty International	Feb. 2015	Individual stories of Syrian refugees.
The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Regional and Human Security Implications	Benedetta Berti for INSS	Jan. 2015	Impact of the refugees on host communities in the fields of economy and stability.
Europe's Borderlands. Violations against Refugees and Migrants in Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary.	Amnesty International	2015	Individual cases and testimonies about human rights violations at the borders and inside countries.
Irregular Migration Routes to Europe and Factors Influencing Migrants' Destination Choices	Maastricht University	2015	Modelling of irregular migration, decision-making processes, push and pull factors, routes.
The Mediterranean Migration crisis	HRW	2015	Profiles of migrants and drivers of migration, situations in various countries of origin, children at risk, European Union response.
When I Picture my Future, I See Nothing. Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Turkey	HRW	2015	Educational structures for Syrian refugees in Turkey, barriers to education.
Education of Syrian Refugee Children	Rand corporation	2015	Barriers to formal education, alternatives, social consequences.
Protecting Syrian refugees: Laws, Policies and Global Responsibility Sharing	Boston University	2014	Comparison of the legal situation for Syrian refugees in the various neighbouring countries (journey, asylum, residency, protection gaps).
Syrian Adolescents: Their Tomorrow Begins Today	Mercy Corps	Sept. 2014	Facts and recommendations on the psychological and educational situation of Syrian teenager refugees.
The Syria Crisis, Displacement and Protection	Forced Migration Review	Sept. 2014	Collection of articles looking at various topics including protection challenges and mental health of Syrian refugee children.
Syrian Refugees in Europe	UNHCR	July 2014	Protection issues at irregular border crossings, including the detention of refugees, and the types of protection available for Syrian refugees in the EU.
Syrian Refugees in Europe	UNHCR	Jul. 2014	Policies carried out by the various European states, state of the law concerning asylum, concerns about detention practises and reception capacities.

Refugee Protection and International Migration in the Western Balkans	Kristina Zitnanova for UNHCR	March 2014	History of migrations in the Western Balkans, current trends, child refugees on the move, protection challenges, regional cooperation.
Unaccompanied and Separated Asylum-seeking and Refugee Children Turning Eighteen: What to Celebrate?	UNHCR – Council of Europe	March 2014	Social aspects of minor asylum seekers in various European countries.
Human Smuggling and Trafficking into Europe	Migration Policy Institute	Feb. 2014	Smuggling and trafficking models and routes, profile of smugglers.
<i>The Syrian Displacement Crisis and a Regional Development and Protection Programme: Mapping and Meta-analysis of Existing Studies of Costs, Impacts and Protection</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark	Feb. 2014	Impact of refugees on host communities, protection issues, risks and abuses.
Too Young to Wed. The Growing Problem of Child Marriage among Syrian Girls in Jordan	Save the Children	2014	Data on child marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan, analysis of its causes and consequences.
Mixed migration: Libya at the Crossroads	Altai Consulting	Nov. 2013	Main routes to, through, and from Libya; conditions of the various journeys; smuggling and trafficking dynamics, profiles of migrants; push and pull factors; human rights issues; outflows from Libya to Europe; changes since the revolution, in terms of migration to, through, and from Libya.
The Future of Syria: Refugee Children in Crisis	UNHCR	Nov. 2013	Situation of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, the lack of education, the issue of child labour, the problems of separated families, the tensions between refugees and host populations, the need for support by the international community.
Shifting Sands: Changing Gender Roles Among Refugees in Lebanon	Oxfam	Sept. 2013	Gender-based violence, early marriage, gendered access to aid and resources.
Gender-based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian Refugees in Jordan, with a Focus on Early Marriage	UN Women	July 2013	Gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, child protection.
A Social and Economic Assessment of Urban Refugees in Three Libyan Cities	Altai Consulting	May 2013	Nature of the refugee communities in Libya, reasons for coming to Libya, locations of settlement, risks and vulnerabilities, socio-economic conditions.
Syrian refugees in Turkey	MPC	May 2013	General data, employment conditions, influence on the Turkish economy, administrative status.
The Syrian Crisis and its Repercussions: Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees	MPC	March 2013	Political aspects of emigration, needs of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.
Syria's Children: a Lost Generation?	UNICEF	March 2013	UNICEF interventions with a breakdown of beneficiaries in the various neighbouring countries.
Children on the Move: Status and Programmes of Support and Protection of Children on the Move in the Republic of Serbia	Save the Children	2013	Legislative framework for the protection of children on the move (international and Serbia), challenges to the exercise of rights, data on the phenomenon of children on the move in Serbia, existing humanitarian programmes.
Field Handbook for the Implementation of UNHCR BID Guidelines	UNHCR & IRC	2011	Practical applications of the concept of the best interests of the child.
Migrating Alone; Unaccompanied and Children's Migration to Europe	UNESCO	2010	Collection of articles including case studies with a particular focus on protection issues.
UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child	UNHCR	2008	Guidelines on how to operationalize and apply the concept of the best interests of the child, which appear in most pieces of legislation relating to the protection of children.
Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated children	ICRC	2004	Guidance on preventing the separation of families and the state of play in relation to family reunification.

Annex 2: List of Key Informants Interviewed

#	LOCATION	ORGANISATION	POSITION	NAME
Croatia				
	Zagreb	UNHCR	Protection Association	Mirjana Vergas
	Zagreb	Croatian Red Cross	Head of Department for Psycho Social Support and the Prevention of Trafficking	Nives Vudric
	Zagreb	Croatian Red Cross	Head of Department for Integration	Maria Juzbasic
	Zagreb	Centre for Peace studies (Croatian NGO)	Coordinator of the Program Against Racism and Xenophobia	Tea Vudovic
	Zagreb	Save the Children, Croatia	Croatia Team Leader (outgoing)	Benoit Delsartre
	Zagreb	Save the Children, Croatia	Croatia Team Leader (incoming)	Ljiljana Sinickovic
	Slavonski Brod	IOM	Field Migration Response Assistant	Krunoslav Durkovic
	Slavonski Brod	IOM	MTM Mobility Tracking Matrix Assistant	Kristina Wzelac
	Slavonski Brod	UNICEF	Emergency Coordinator	Shannon Hayes
	Slavonski Brod	UNHCR	Emergency Team Leader	Marco Buono
	Slavonski Brod	Croatian Red Cross	Assistant Camp Manager	Vlatka Ipsa
	Slavonski Brod	Croatian Red Cross	Camp Manager	Teni Cucek
	Slavonski Brod	Magna (Slovakian medical NGO)	Field Project Coordinator	Katerina Struhova
	Slavonski Brod	Magna (Slovakian medical NGO)	Cultural Mediator	Joudallah Munawar
	Slavonski Brod	Inter-European Human Aid (German NGO)	Team Coordinator	Klemens Gnaedinger
Serbia				
	Sid	Atina (Serbian legal counselling NGO)	Team Coordinator	Senka Skero
	Sid	MSF	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	Francisca Da Silva
	Sid	SC	Supervisor of Outreach Team	Ivana Pataric
	Sid	SC	Cultural Mediator	Osman Mustafa
	Sid	UNHCR	Protection Officer	Raquel Trabazo
	Belgrade	Centre for Youth Integration (Serbian NGO)	Coordinator of the Outreach Program with Refugees	Marko Sijan
	Belgrade	Ministry of Social Affairs	Coordinator of the Centre for the Protection of Victims of trafficking	Lidija Milanovic
	Belgrade	Group 484 (Serbian NGO)	Supervisor of Mobile Team	Gordana Balaban
	Belgrade	Save the Children, Serbia	Serbia Team Leader	Nevena Milutinovic
	Presevo	Ministry of Social Affairs, Presevo Social services	Supervisor of social services in Presevo	Gordana Nikolic
	Presevo	Serbian Red Cross	Responsible for Family Tracing	Linorita Neziri
	Presevo	Philanthropy (Serbian orthodox charity)	Field Worker	Milica Stanisavljevic
	Presevo	IOM	Field Coordinator	Milan Colic
	Presevo	UNHCR	Protection Officer	Sabrina Amirat
#	Location	Organisation	Position	

FYROM

Tabanovce	La Strada-Terre des Hommes	Team Leader	Stanka Jovanovska
Tabanovce	La Strada-Terre des Hommes	Translator	Viktor Ilie
Tabanovce	Macedonian Red Cross	Doctor	Doctor Abdulsalam Sabbouh
Tabanovce	SOS Children's villages	Cultural Mediator	Malek Allawi
Skopje	UNICEF	Child Protection Emergency Specialist	Helen Villaneuve,
Skopje	UNICEF	Emergency Field Coordinator in Gevgelija	Jasper Frobin Jensen
Skopje	Centre for Social Work of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Social Worker	Natacha Stanojevic
Skopje	Macedonian Red Cross	Logistics Manager	Marina Mateska

Greece

Lesbos	UNHCR	Senior Protection Assistant	Alkisti Mavraki
Lesbos	UNHCR	Legal Coordinator	Erasmia Roumana
Lesbos	Action Aid	Cultural Mediator	Aiman Alarafi
Lesbos	METAdrasi Action for Migration and Development	Child Protection Officer and Guardian	Christina Dimakou
Lesbos	Asylum Service	Associate Asylum Expert	Eleftherios Lonstantonopoulos
Lesbos	IOM	Local Coordinator	Elina Emmanouil
Lesbos	Independent	Journalist	Rachel Maher
Lesbos	Save the Children	Senior Child Protection Manager	Marleen Atles
Lesbos	Save the Children	Programme Development and Quality/M&E Director	Isabelle Risso-Gill
Lesbos	Praksis	Local Coordinator	Nadina Leivaditi
Lesbos	Praksis	Interpreter (Arabic)	Rami Hannas
Lesbos	Caritas	Coordinator of Silver Bay Hotel (accommodation for vulnerable refugees)	Tonia Patrikiadou
Lesbos	Kara Tepe	Camp Manager	Stavros Mirogiannis

Turkey

Izmir	Amnesty International	Local animator	Dilan Tasdemir
Izmir	REVI	Coordinator	Hassan Haj Hasan
Izmir	REVI	Coordinator	Sophie Bruneau
Izmir	Mercy Corps	Program manager	Tracy Lucas
Antakya	DRC	Protection and Migration Advisor	Luke Gracie
Antakya	Save the Children	Advocacy, Communications, and Media Coordinator	Sera Marshal
Antakya	Save the Children	Coordinator	Ahmad Baroudi
Antakya	'Hezb at Tadamon' Syrian opposition party	Founder of party and community leader	Dr. Imad eddin al Khatib
Reyhanli	The Syrian Journalist Association	Media and humanitarian activist	Mazen Abu Tamam
#	Location	Organisation	Position

Lebanon

Beirut	The Syrian League for Citizenship	Project Coordinator	Hala Khudr
Beirut	Jesuit Refugee Service	Grant manager for the Middle East	Wael Hulou
Beirut	The Syrian League for citizen ship	Project coordinator	Hala Khudr
Akkar	Relief and Reconciliation for Syria	Founder and director	Friedrich Bokern
Beirut	Jesuit Refugee Service	Grant Manager in regional office Middle East, office in Beirut	Wael Hulu
Tripoli	Save the Children	Program development and quality director	Iwona Safi
Tripoli	Save the Children	Program manager for child protection	Maya El Ghol
Akkar	Al Ihsan	Community leader, director of Al Ihsan informal school and tented settlement	Sheikh Abdo Hisyan
Akkar	UNHCR	Local coordinator	Mahmood Ibrahim Hussein

Jordan

Amman	Save the Children MEE Regional Office	Regional Advocacy, Media and Communications Director	Misty Buswell
Amman	Save the Children MEE Regional Office	Regional Program Development and Quality Director	Priya Jacob
Amman	Save the Children MEE Regional Office	Regional Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Advisor, Syria Response	Snjezana Hansen
Amman	Save the Children MEE Regional Office	Senior Education/Education in Emergencies Adviser	Bente Sandal-aasen
Amman	Save the Children MEE Regional Office	Strategic Analyst	Caelum Moffatt
Amman	Various INGOs	Activist and humanitarian work	Ibrahim Majed Mansoor
Amman	IOM	Research consultant	Caroline Ronsin
Amman	IRC	Interim woman protection and empowerment coordinator	Joanne Creighton
Amman	IFPO-CNRS	Academic researcher focusing on refugee issues (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan)	Kamel Dorai
Amman	Naba' al Iman (Fountain of Faith, local NGO)	Founder and director	Muna Mustafa
Amman	WFP	Food Security Sector Coordinator	Nicole Carn
Amman	NRC	Country director	Petr Kostohryz
Amman	Save the Children	Director, Programme Operations & Advocacy	Mohammad al Asmar
Amman	Various Syrian media and associations	Media Activist	Thaer al Tahli

Annex 3: Programs and Actors

Croatia

The Croatian government organizes the transit of refugees through its territory through the provision of transportation and by ensuring security and registration procedures.

After Hungary closed its border with Serbia in mid-September 2015 and migrants starting moving through Croatia instead, Croatia made a decision to allow them to cross into its territory

at the Berkasovo-Babska border point. On September 24th, 2015 a temporary reception centre was set up in Opatovac with the intention of systematising the movement and providing support to the refugees. However, the situation remained chaotic.

Shortly after, in November 2015, the Slavonski Brod Transit Reception Centre was opened in Croatia and Croatian trains transported refugees from Sid (in Serbian territory) to Croatia, with Croatian border officials conducting a preliminary security check in Sid. Serbia and Croatia also increased controls along

their border so that this train was the only way one could pass the land border between the two countries.

Slavonski Brod, the only temporary reception centre in the country, is managed by the Croatian Ministry of Interior. At the time of field research (January 2016), the Minister of Interior himself was often present on site. A mixture of local police and special units were monitoring the camp, conducting the registration procedures (checking of IDs; checking registration papers from Greece, FYROM and Serbia; taking fingerprints and photographs) and facilitating the departure of the refugees to Slovenia.

The Croatian government is supported by the Regional Initiative on Refugee Protection and International Migration in the Western Balkans program, which was established by the UN Migration Agency (IOM) and UNHCR in order to strengthen the capacity of States to create protection-sensitive asylum and migration systems consistent with international standards. This involves mechanisms to differentiate among various groups of people on the move; the identification of those in need of protection; and their referral to the appropriate authorities. It also aims to foster national and regional dialogue, and practical cooperation.

The Croatian Red Cross took the lead in coordination of humanitarian aspects. This was implemented mostly through a daily morning briefing where all NGOs and UN agencies present in the camp would exchange needs, resources, follow-up of special cases and camp organization.

The main organizations and groups involved in protection of children on the move were:

- Magna, a Slovakian medical NGO responsible for a mother and baby area in a tent provided by Care and managed in partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children, was responsible for providing medical support for children and adults in need of medical assistance. They were also providing complementary food for babies and children up to 2 years. At the time of fieldwork, this tent was always full with many mothers with very young children. Most of the cases treated were cases of illness related to the conditions of the journey (mainly cold and flu).

- A working group on Infant and Young Children Food (IYCF) made up of Save the Children, UNICEF and Roda, Red Cross, Magna and the Ministry of Health (MoH) coordinates IYCF activities in the camp, including the distribution of read to use baby formula, and provides a forum for actors to discuss challenges and strategies.
- The Croatian Red Cross run a small family tracing unit. However, its efforts were hampered by the fewness of translators and the short transit time of the refugees moving through Croatia (usually two hours on average).
- Several NGOs (Intereuropean Human Aid, The Samaritan's Purse, Remar, CARE, the Centre for Peace Studies and others) were distributing clothes and shoes with a particular focus on the needs of children's, within a distribution tent that refugees would cross after registration and before boarding the next train.

The protection of children forms part of the Croatian government's social welfare services.

That is, when UAMs are detected, they are referred to Osijek Social Centre, under the authority of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth.

The Croatian Law on International and Temporary Protection (LITP) of July 2015 provides the definition of a UAC.

It is defined as a third-country national or a stateless person younger than 18 years of age who enters the Republic of Croatia unaccompanied by an adult person responsible for him or her in the sense of parental care. The LITP has introduced an age assessment procedure, with medical examination in case of insufficient information.

The Protocol on the Treatment of Separated Children-foreign Nationals with the Aim to Provide a Unified Procedure

determines which authority/institution is in charge of identifying, assisting and protecting UAC. This involves ensuring their safe return, family reunification, or integration into Croatian society. The Protocol was drafted by representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. Input was also provided by the UNHCR.

Where a UAM is identified, the Croatian Centre for Social Welfare appoints a guardian to the child. They are typically lawyers, social workers or social pedagogues who are trained to work with children and who are employed by the Centre for Social Welfare. The role of the guardian is to prepare the child for their interview for their asylum claim and to provide him or her on the significance and consequence of the interview.

Serbia

The Serbian government organizes the transit of refugees through its territory by ensuring security and registration procedures. However, the provision of transportation is not provided by the state as in other countries along the route. The typical transit time through Serbia is around two days, including waiting periods in Presevo and Sid-Adasevci.

The Serbian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior are the ministries responsible for the management of the mixed migratory flows moving through the country.

A Crisis Response Plan was adopted by the Serbian Government at the beginning of September 2015, which outlines how the Serbian government will respond to the needs of the migrant flow moving through the country.

There are three temporary reception centres in the country, which are maintained by The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, under the authority of the Ministry of Interior. They are:

- The centre in Presevo (southern Serbia): greets migrants on their arrival from FYROM and conducts registration and facilitates onward journey to the north. Migrants either move by bus or by train. The train travels directly to Sid and the bus travels to Adasevci.
- The centre in Adasevci: is near the border with Croatia and is where the buses wait until the train to Croatia arrives.
- Sid: This is where migrants who came by train from Presevo wait for the train to Croatia. Those that travelled by bus to Adasevci will be transported by bus directly to the train station and avoid the camp in Sid.

The state did not take full responsibility for the provision of transportation for migrants in

Serbia, as was the case in FYROM at the time of research. From Presevo, refugees could choose between buses and trains. Contrary to FYROM, they were also allowed to use private taxis, although only a few did so because of the higher associated cost. At Presevo, Sid or Adasevci transit camps, refugees were found walking freely in and out of the facilities, which was not the case in FYROM and Croatia.

Within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan and with the support of UNHCR and IOM as lead international organizations, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, OHCHR, UNOPS, WHO, WFP, as well as 11 international and seven local NGOs, assist the refugees and migrants moving through Serbia in terms of protection, education, food, health and nutrition, logistics, shelter, non-food items, WASH and local community support.

The main organizations involved in protection of children on the move were:

- Save the Children: a safe space facility that functions 24 hours in Presevo (but not directly inside the camp) for families and UAMs;
- MSF: medical consultations for children and mothers in Presevo and Sid;
- UNICEF: child friendly spaces in Sid and Adasevci;
- Serbian Red Cross: family tracing unit that coordinates with units in FYROM and Croatia when reuniting separated family members;
- Philanthropy (the charity organization of the Orthodox church): distributes cash to refugees. One of their target groups is families with children.

According to the Law on Migration Management of 2012, when the Serbian police detect an unaccompanied child refugee, they inform the local centre for social care, which assigns a temporary guardian to the child. The child is accompanied by the temporary guardian to one of the two relevant social centres (one in Belgrade, “The Belgrade Children’s Shelter” with a capacity of 12, and one in Nis, South Serbia, with a capacity of 10). However, these centres are for boys only. Upon arrival, children are informed of their rights and obligations and are given the opportunity to apply for asylum. If they do,

the guardian guides them through this process. In actual reality, few of them do so.

In Presevo, six social workers of the local Centre for Social Care were active at the transit camp through a partnership with UNICEF. However, very few cases of UAC were detected and none were taken to specialized centres. In most of the cases, social workers simply made sure that adolescents travel with a group of people from the same country. In Sid, a few children were stopped and placed in social service centres or in foster families but none of them were from Syria. They were mainly Pakistanis and Afghans.

In Belgrade, the Centre for the Protection of Trafficking Victims, which comes under the Ministry for Labour, Employment, Social Affairs, and Veterans, protect victims of trafficking identified on its territory. No Syrian child had been identified at the time of field research as a victim of trafficking.

FYROM

In August of 2015, in response to the large flows of migrants and refugees moving through its territory, the Government of FYROM declared a “crisis situation.” As a result, **the government’s response is managed through the Crisis Management Centre (CMC).** The CMC has established two transit camps and a system for the transportation of the migrants.

The Macedonian police were in charge of the two transit camps (Gevgelija in the South on the border with Greece, and Tabanovce in the North, on the border with Serbia), controlling access and conducting the registration of migrants.

At the time of field research, the Macedonian government was organizing the collective transportation of refugees through the country by train. At the beginning of the crisis, migrants were free to choose between trains, buses and taxis but in September 2015, a decision was made to organise the transportation into one single stream.

The main organizations dealing with children on the move in the transit camps were:

- Save the Children: child friendly spaces in Gevgelija and Tabanovce (in partnership with Open Gate);
- UNICEF: water and sanitation equipment in both camps, with special corners for mothers and babies.
- MYLA (Macedonian Young Lawyers Association): assisted in creating procedures for the registration of births for children born on the way and in obtaining an international birth certificates;
- Macedonian Red Cross: Family tracing units active in both transit camps.
- There were also networks of volunteers distributing food and clothes with a particular focus on children.

According to the Macedonian law on Asylum and Temporary protection of 16 July 2003, a guardian shall be assigned to unaccompanied minors who are detected on the territory. Best interest assessments are conducted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), who is assisted by the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) and UNHCR. The MLSP has taken the lead in adapting the national standard operational procedures to the current context, in order to produce a simplified version that will be easy to implement by all concerned humanitarian partners. Unaccompanied children are transferred to Gazi Baba Reception Centre for Foreigners in Skopje until a guardian is appointed.

Greece

The Greek response comes under the Ministry of Migration policy. In addition to the registration of irregular arrivals, which was conducted by the Greek police at the time of research, Greece is also active in the monitoring of its territorial waters through its coast guard. At the time of the fieldwork, most refugees arriving by boat in Greece had been picked up by the coast guard.

With operation Triton, Frontex deployed personnel to assist Greece in the patrolling of its waters (at the time of research around Lesbos, Chios and Samos), in the registration process on the arrival islands and upon exit at the border with FYROM (especially fingerprinting). The **European Union** was also supporting Greece in increasing capacities in terms of reception, relocation and forced return.

In February 2016, five NATO vessels were dispatched to patrol the sea between Greece and Turkey with the aim of reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance activities against smuggling activities.

Local authorities are also active, particularly through the Karatepe, which is managed by the municipality of Mytilene and welcomes Arabic speaking families for their transit time, after registration and before they board ferries towards the mainland.

Greece is also characterised by a strong presence of **local and international volunteers and activists**, who have set up important facilities for refugees and play a significant role in humanitarian assistance. The main networks observed in Lesbos were:

- “Better Days for Moria”: next to the official Moria camp, international volunteers had set up tents for food and clothes distribution, rest, recreational activities and medical consultations. There is a playground and an “Art and Play” space for children, as well as clean and dry clothes for children. It is referred to as “Afghan hill”, but some Syrians also spend time there (especially those that are not traveling in a family).
- Next to Mytilene port, the “No Borders Kitchen” hands out food, blankets and provides accommodation to non Syrian, Iraqi or Afghan nationals stranded in Lesbos;
- Pikpa camp (south of Mytilene) was established by Greek volunteers for the reception and accommodation of vulnerable cases, including unaccompanied and separated children. It describes itself as an open, self-organised refugee camp.

There are also a large number of NGOs and agencies dedicated to the flow of migrants moving through Greek territory who provide additional capacities in terms of reception, medical services and guidance for refugees. It is impossible to list in this report all NGOs active in Greece, but in Lesbos they included, for example:

- INGOs: Mercy Corps, Action Aid, Caritas, Oxfam, MSF, SC
- Local NGOs: Praxis, METAction, Starfish Foundation, Social Kitchen

- The relevant UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM.

The **main local NGOs** dealing with children refugees that were observed in Lesbos are:

- Praxis: provides basic identification, documentation, psychosocial support, information provision and legal counselling for children on the move, with Child Friendly Spaces in Moria and Kara Tepe, and a transit accommodation facility in Mytilene for unaccompanied children.
- METAction: provides services for the escort of unaccompanied children from detention centres to appropriate hosting spaces, guardianship of unaccompanied children, support for unaccompanied children & temporary accommodation in facilities.
- Caritas Greece: runs a safe place for vulnerable cases (elderly, pregnant women, new mothers, women travelling alone, families with many children, the disabled) at Silver Bay Hotel in Lesbos.

Since September 2015, Save the Children has been working according to an Emergency Child Protection Programme in Greece, which is comprised of different components. They are:

- Maintaining child friendly spaces that are run with the assistance of national partners;
- Maintaining mother and baby areas and breastfeeding corners to support safe feeding of infants and young children;
- Identifying and supporting children at heightened risk and vulnerable families through multidisciplinary child protection outreach teams that are run and organised through partners;
- Supporting shelters for unaccompanied children (run by partners in several locations).

When a UAC is detected by the police during the registration procedure, a close relative (uncle or aunt) is appointed as guardian by the district attorney. If there is no close relative, the district attorney becomes the legal guardian. Because of the overwhelming number of UAC requiring guardianship, the role is now delegated to networks of guardians (specially-trained NGO workers, lawyers, social workers or psychologists), who are

Focus Box 21: Hotspots

Hotspots have been defined in the European Agenda on Migration presented (May 2015) as places of registration, identification, fingerprinting and orientation towards relocation, or deportation if the person is not considered in need of international protection. These operations are carried out in cooperation between the Member State authorities and the relevant European agencies: the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Frontex, Europol and Eurojust.

Through the establishment of hotspots, the European Union intends to support the member states most exposed to migration pressure (Italy and Greece) and to help them fulfil their obligations of control and registration of the external European border. In Greece, hotspots are planned to open in Lesbos, Chios, Kos, Samos and Leros.²⁴

responsible for legal representation, social integration, psychological support of the child (see Focus Box 20 for more information).

Turkey

Turkey is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention but with a geographic limitation that creates obligations for it only in relation to “persons fleeing events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951.”

In October 2011, Turkey announced that it would receive Syrian refugees according to a temporary protection regime that guarantees open borders, non-refoulement and humanitarian aid. The Turkish government retained full responsibility in erecting and maintaining refugee camps - 22 through the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Cross, under the authority of province governors - and in registering Syrian refugees. The UNHCR only registers a limited number of Syrian refugees for resettlement purposes.

A Law on Foreigners and International Protection came into force in April 2014, making the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) the sole institution responsible for asylum matters. This is the first domestic law on asylum, as previously refugee matters were covered in Turkey under secondary legislation such as administrative circulars. The law provides that those in need of international protection will not be sent back to places where they will be tortured, suffer inhumane treatment or punishment that is humiliating, or be threatened due to race, religion, or group membership.

Turkey’s response to the Syrian refugee flow moving through its country falls within the 3RP (Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan). The Government of Turkey is the main coordinator of the response to this emergency, with decisions

being taken by the central government and implemented at the local level by the provincial governors. The 3RP partners in Turkey include FAO, ILO IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, WFP and WHO. The Task Force includes six sector working groups led by different agencies encompassing Protection (UNHCR), Basic Needs and Essential Services (IOM, UNHCR), Education (UNICEF, UNHCR), Health (UNHCR, WHO), Food (WFP) and Livelihoods (UNDP, UNHCR).

NGOs are also active within the framework of 3RP. At the end of 2015 there were 139 international NGOs accredited in Turkey, the majority of which were supporting the refugee population in the country. International and local NGOs are particularly important in assisting refugees who live in urban settings (outside of the camps). Most of the NGOs active in refugee issues are concentrated in the southeast of Turkey, including for example IMC, Solidarites International, Handicap International, IMC, Watan Syria, Spark NRC, DRC, Relief International, Care, Save the Children, GOAL, People in Need, IRC and Medecins du Monde.

There are fewer active NGOs in the west of the country, where refugees on the move concentrate before crossing to Europe. In Izmir, at the time of fieldwork, only Mercy Corps was present (since November 2015). Moreover, NGOs that are active in the area tend to focus on settled families, rather than families on the move. In general, there was a gap in terms of service provision for Syrian families on the move on the Western Turkish coast, particularly in cities such as Istanbul, Izmir and Bodrum. Some NGOs reported difficulties in gaining authorization from the government to work in this region.

The absence of NGOs is only partially compensated by networks of volunteers. In Izmir, three networks were identified during field research: REVI-Refugee Volunteers of Izmir, Multeci Dayanismasi

and Halkların Korusu. They were active in assisting refugees by distributing food and clothes, by supporting them in administrative procedures and by providing medical assistance. Local efforts by the Turkish civil society to assist refugees are hampered by the language barrier. Moreover, these networks focus on families settled in Izmir rather than refugees waiting to make the sea crossing.

According to LFIP, from the moment an **unaccompanied minor** international protection applicant is identified, the best interests of the child principle must be observed and the relevant provisions of Turkey's Child Protection Law (2005) must be applied. That is, the child applicant must be referred to an appropriate accommodation facility under the authority of the Ministry for Family and Social Services and, according to the relevant articles of the Turkish Civil Code, a legal guardian should be appointed. The appointment of guardians is conducted by the Peace Courts of Civil Jurisdiction (Sulh Hukuk Mahkemesi) and guardianship matters are thereafter overseen by Civil Courts of General Jurisdiction (Asliye Hukuk Mahkemesi). Guardians can be qualified NGO staff, UNHCR staff or Ministry of Family and Social Services staff and once appointed they are responsible for assisting the child through asylum proceedings.

Jordan

As Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the rights of Syrian refugees in the country are regulated by the general Law of 1973 on "Residence and Foreigners' Affairs".

Led by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis (JRPSC) is the main instrument for the organisation of assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordan. The JRPSC comes under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) launched in December 2014 in Berlin, which also includes provisions for Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt.

The JRPSC is conducted through the development of strategic plans. The current plan is for the period of 2016 to 2018 and sets out interventions in the following sectors: education, energy, environment, health, justice, livelihoods and food security, local governance and municipal services, shelter, social protection, transport and WASH. It includes specific

measures on sexual and gender based violence, child protection, access to primary education (including remedial and reintegration courses), child labour, treating children with disabilities, maternal and child health, dealing with children without documentation, children deprived of parental care.

Under the JRPSC, numerous INGOs are active in assisting Syrian refugees in Jordan including NRC, DRC, Handicap International, World Vision, Oxfam, Relief International, MSF, Mercy Corps, Search for Common Ground, Medecins du Monde, Action Contre la Faim, Save the Children, Premiere Urgence and Action Aid. Jordanian civil society is particularly active in supporting Syrian refugee children in the poor neighbourhoods of Amman.

A significant number of Syrian children have arrived in Jordan without parents or adult relatives. According to UNICEF, there were a total of 1,170 cases of unaccompanied Syrian children in Jordan in 2013. AN IRC study in 2014 identified the arrival of 200 new Syrian UAMs per month between January and June of 2014.⁴⁵

A working group on child protection consisting of UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, IMC, IRC, Nour Hussein Foundation (NHF) and Jordan River Foundation establishes the respective roles of UN agencies, international agencies and government agencies in dealing with UASC and coordinates their work. The government agencies involved are the Family Protection Department, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Social Development and their role is mostly to formalize care arrangements through courts.

In November 2014, the working group developed SOPs for the care and protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) as part of the refugee response in Jordan. The SOPs include prevention of separation; identification of UASC; family tracing and reunification where possible, and where not possible, placement of the UASC in a foster family (subject to approval by the Ministry of Justice).

⁴⁵ "Unaccompanied and Separated Children Trend Analysis: January to June 2014," IRC 2014

Lebanon

While Lebanon is not a state party to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and does not have specific legislation or administrative practices in place to manage such a refugee influx, it did establish an inter-ministerial committee in 2012, and an inter-ministerial crisis cell in 2014, to address the refugee flows in the country. It has also respected the principle of non-refoulement.

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016 (which comes under the 3PR, which includes also Turkey, Jordan and Egypt) is a joint plan between UNOCHA and the Government of Lebanon that establishes objectives for the delivery of aid to Syrian refugees, as well as vulnerable Lebanese families and individuals. It coordinates the work of 77 government ministries, UN agencies and national and international NGOs.

An extensive refugee coordination system is in place, steered by the government, UNHCR and UNDP, and working through nine sectors both in Beirut and in the field. Specialized agencies and relevant line ministries lead the sectors in their areas of expertise and NGOs participate in sector coordination, particularly in field locations. The sectors are organised as such:

- Protection: Ministry of Social Affairs, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA;
- Shelter: Ministry of Social Affairs, UNHCR;
- Basic Assistance: Ministry of Social Affairs, UNHCR;
- Social Stability: Ministry of Social Affairs, UNDP, UNHCR;
- Livelihoods: Ministry of Social Affairs, UNDP;
- Food Security: Ministry of Social Affairs, MoA, WFP, FAO;
- Health: MoPH, WHO, UNHCR;
- Education: MEHE, UNICEF, UNHCR;
- Water & Sanitation: MoEW, UNICEF, UNHCR.

In Lebanon, UNHCR has worked with the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Social Development to facilitate family-based care for refugee children who are separated from their parents or in need of alternative care arrangements

due to abuse or neglect. By the end of September 2013, UNHCR had registered 2,440 unaccompanied or separated children in Lebanon. UN agencies and partners try to reunite these children with their families or, when it proves impossible, to find a foster family.

There are a number of NGOs working to address the needs of Syrian children in Lebanon. They include:

- Amel: child protection, education, recreational activities, distribution of NFI for winter, health care;
- Kafa: programs on the protection of children and adolescents from family violence, abuse, early marriage, and various gender-based forms of violence;
- Le Mouvement Social Libanais: programs on education, integration, vocational training;
- Relief and Reconciliation for Syria: programs on education, peace building and arts
- International Orthodox Christian Charities: hygiene and infant supplies, care for pregnant women throughout pregnancy and the neonatal period, treatment of malnourished refugee children.

UN agencies and NGOs are also reaching out to religious leaders to raise awareness of the health risks and other harms associated with early marriage, with several religious leaders incorporating prevention messages in their regular sermons as a result. Humanitarian actors are also working with the Government of Lebanon on the issue of child labour. UNHCR has been advocating for better procedures for the civil registration of refugee births in an effort to avoid risk of statelessness among Syrian children born in Lebanon.

Footnotes

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