THE SITUATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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PRESENTATION

The popular uprising, which started with civilian and peaceful demonstrations in Syria on 15 March 2011, increasingly turned into a civil war. In this very environment of instability, the Syrian people started to migrate from their homes, villages, towns in search of security. There is both internal and external migration in Syria. As from April 2014, 3 million Syrian refugees; 1.000.000 of whom to Lebanon, 800.000 of whom to Turkey, 600.000 of whom to Jordan, 220.000 of whom to Iraq and 140.000 of whom to Egypt, in total left their homes and took shelter in neighboring countries. There are millions of Syrians who do not live in camps, live in houses in neighboring countries through their own means and the number of whom are not known precisely. On the other hand, the situation is much worse in terms of the internal migration. It is known that 1500-2000 people a day leave the country, or that they migrate to other regions they find more safe within the country. Considering that more than 75 per cent of those who fled the country are women and children, scale of the tragedy in Syria within the framework of the forced migration is understood better.

The amount of aids arriving in Syria from various countries and institutions meets only 54% of the aid required for forced migration. However, the Syria problem is neither only the problem of this country, nor only the problem of the Middle East. The Syria problem is an issue of the international system, and the humanitarian tragedy in this country and forced mass migrations caused by this tragedy pose a threat for peace and security of the whole international system. Within this framework, considering only neighboring countries as the sole addressee of the problem and sort of leaving them alone at this point might further worsen the situation. Therefore, all actors which are a part of the international system need to get more involved in the problem, and they need to provide more support for the neighboring countries which are first-degree addressee to the forced migrations caused by the current crisis in Syria.

Therefore, the international spotlight to the issue of Syrian refugees should be kept warm. In addition, as ORSAM we believe that, it is important for decision-makers, international organizations and civil society organizations to access information which will provide a basis for the further efforts on Syrian refugees. From this point of view, with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation Turkey Office we have conducted a six-month project focusing on Syrian refugees. Untill now many studies were done on Syrian refugees. What distinguishes this work from others is its framework which covers Syrian refugees in four neighboring countries namely, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq together. Thus, this study provides possibility of evaluating great picture and a comparative assessment of situation of the Syrians in these four countries, which host the vast majority of refugees. The other factor makes this study significant is that ORSAM project team visited each four countries in 6 months, observed the situation on the ground and met one on one with relevant officials, representatives of civil society organizations and most importantly with the Syrians. The study is based on information and observations obtained from field researches. We present this study to the public opinion’s attention in order to show the situation of Syrian refugees who live in extremely difficult conditions and to contribute regional stability. We thank to ORSAM project team who contribute efforts for preparation of this report and thanks to Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation Turkey Office who provide support to the realization of this project.

Şaban Kardaş
ORSAM President
THE SITUATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PREAMBLE

The civil conflict in Syria, which has been going on for over three years, has political, economic and social consequences for the Middle East. In addition to these, it is the humanitarian dimension that makes the Syrian crisis important. According to the official data, approximately 150,000 people died in Syria. Almost 3 million people immigrated to neighboring countries Syria and approximately 6 million people abandoned their homes and sought refuge within Syria. Therefore, almost 10 million Syrians are directly affected from the conflict. Considering the fact that Syria’s population before the crisis was 23 million, it is almost a half of the country that is plagued by the crisis as of April 2014. Children and women form more than 75% of the refugees, who live under harsh conditions, outside camps. Syrians seek to fulfill their basic needs such as security, nourishment, sheltering and health, rather than pursuing a decent life.

Syria’s four neighbors Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq house the majority of 3 million refugees. However, the refugee crisis has been such a heavy burden that none of the four countries could handle alone. Turkey and the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government are in a relatively better position than Lebanon and Jordan, who are economically weaker and socially and politically volatile. In Lebanon and Jordan, refugees pose a security problem. International aid from various countries and organizations cover the needs of only 54% of Syrians. The refugee problem is neither the problem of Syria, nor the Middle East. Mass immigration and humanitarian tragedy have reached a point that it threatens the security and stability in the international system. Therefore, one should not think that only the neighboring countries are responsible for the resolution of the refugee problem. The neighboring countries, who are directly affected from the crisis, should receive more aid.

In this framework, it is of vital importance that the international community’s interest towards the Syrian refugee problem should be maintained. In order to support this process, we as ORSAM, promoting the idea that it is of great importance for decision makers, international organizations and NGOs to have access to information that they can use in their works on the Syrian refugees, have carried out a 6-month project about the Syrian refugees with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Up to now, there has been a lot of research on the Syrian refugees. What distinguishes our research is that we sought to handle the issue of the Syrian refugees in all four countries together in one report. Therefore, the research provides an opportunity for considering and comparing the status of the refugees in all four countries. Another important point about the research is that, the
ORSAM project team managed to visit all four countries in six months, observe the refugee phenomenon on the round and speak to officials, academicians, opinion leaders, NGO representatives and Syrians, most important of all. The research is based on information and observations acquired during the field trip. In this report, the situation in the countries was handled under separate headings. Under each country heading, the report elaborates issues such as the basic data about the Syrians, the Syrians’ legal status, the situation of Syrians living in camps and outside camps, immigration trends, and refugees’ effects to receiving countries and local people-refugee relations. A general assessment chapter, which seeks to analyze the situation in four countries comparatively and present suggestions, concludes this report.

I. SITUATION OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

Turkey is the foremost among the countries that the Syrian conflict affects politically, socially and economically. This chapter, however, handles the social and economic effects of the Syrian conflict on Turkey, rather than its effects related to security and politics. The main focus of this chapter is particularly the problems caused and faced by the Syrians in Turkey. Besides, this chapter focuses on the general situation in the refugee camps in Turkey, the problems of the refugees living in camps or outside of camps, and the situation of the displaced Syrians living at the ground zero, just outside the border.

We have visited a large portion of the Turkey-Syria border during our 8-day field trip. We have conducted research in the provinces Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Kilis and in the districts, sub-districts and villages that are within these provinces. We have spoken to high ranking officials, civil society representatives, Syrians and local people in Syrians’ transit locations such as Akçakale in the province of Gaziantep, the urban center of Kilis, Islahiye in the province of Gaziantep, Reyhanlı, Altmözü and Samandağ in the province of Hatay, the settlements, which Syrians affected the most.

1. Basic Data on the Syrians in Turkey

The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) maintains the efforts related to the problems and needs of the Syrians in Turkey. AFAD carries on its work in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local civilian authorities. It is for this reason that AFAD publishes the official information about the Syrian refugees in Turkey. It published the latest update of the information on its website on December 30, 2013. According to the latest data, there are 210,358 Syrians in fifteen tent cities, one transitional reception center and six container cities that are established in Turkey. AFAD states that it aids approximately 600,000 Syrian people that live in several cities in their daily needs and provides health services. According to the official data, there are over 800,000 Syrians in Turkey. Also, AFAD stated that 432,769 Syrian citizens settled in sheltering centers and 222,411 of them returned to Syria.
### Chart – 1 Basic Data about the Sheltering Centers in Turkey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Date of Establishment</th>
<th>Number of Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarıçam Tent City</td>
<td>Adana</td>
<td>10 February 2013</td>
<td>11,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adıyaman Central Tent City</td>
<td>Adıyaman</td>
<td>22 September 2012</td>
<td>9,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islahiye Tent City</td>
<td>Gaziantep</td>
<td>24 March 2012</td>
<td>9,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karkamış Tent City</td>
<td>Gaziantep</td>
<td>8 August 2012</td>
<td>7,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizip - 1 Tent City</td>
<td>Gaziantep</td>
<td>02 October 2012</td>
<td>11,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizip - 2 Container City</td>
<td>Gaziantep</td>
<td>11 February 2013</td>
<td>5,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altınözü 1 Tent City</td>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>09 June 2011</td>
<td>1,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altınözü 2 Tent City</td>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>10 June 2011</td>
<td>2,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yayladağı 1 Tent City</td>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>01 May 2011</td>
<td>2,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yayladağı 2 Tent City</td>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>12 July 2011</td>
<td>2,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apaydın Container City</td>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>09 October 2011</td>
<td>5,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahramanmaraş Tent City</td>
<td>Kahramanmaraş</td>
<td>01 September 2012</td>
<td>15,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Öncüpınar Container City</td>
<td>Kilis</td>
<td>17 March 2012</td>
<td>14,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbeyli Beşiriye Container City</td>
<td>Kilis</td>
<td>03 June 2013</td>
<td>23,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beydağlı Container City</td>
<td>Malatya</td>
<td>12 June 2013</td>
<td>7,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midyat Tent City</td>
<td>Mardin</td>
<td>19 June 2013</td>
<td>3,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cevdediye Tent City</td>
<td>Osmaniye</td>
<td>09 September 2012</td>
<td>9,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceylanpinar Tent City</td>
<td>Şanlıurfa</td>
<td>26 April 2012</td>
<td>20,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akçakale Tent City</td>
<td>Şanlıurfa</td>
<td>06 August 2012</td>
<td>25,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harran Container City</td>
<td>Şanlıurfa</td>
<td>13 January 2013</td>
<td>7,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viranşehir Tent City</td>
<td>Şanlıurfa</td>
<td>07 December 2013</td>
<td>14,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>210,358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chart – 2 Syrian Refugees outside of the Sheltering Centers in Turkey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number of Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaziantep</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Şanlıurfa</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardin</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilis</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmaniye</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahramanmaraş</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adana</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adıyaman</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malatya</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Cities</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chart – 3 Distribution of the Syrian Refugees in Turkey according to their City of Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idlib</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Raqqaah</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latakia</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hama</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Hasakah</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deir ez-Zor</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homs</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Suwayda</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daraa</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quneitra</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tartus</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite the official numbers, the real number of the Syrian citizens in Turkey has actually surpassed 1 million. Many Syrians illegally fled to Turkey in various provinces, especially in the provinces along the border. Even though the Turkish officials deport the Syrians, who illegally enter into Turkey, after applying the necessary legal procedures, it does not hamper hundreds of thousands of Syrian citizens entering Turkey.

2. The Legal Status of the Syrian Citizens in Turkey

There is an ongoing uncertainty about the legal status of the Syrian citizens in Turkey. Initially, Syrians were received because of humanitarian reasons without requiring a legal status, since it was expected that the civil conflict in Syria would not last long. However as the civil conflict dragged on, the legal status of the Syrians in Turkey became ambiguous. Basically, Turkey put an reservation to the Convention about “geographic limitations,” it does not bestow non-Europeans the status of “refugee”, rather it provides them with “temporary shelter.”

As of April 2011, the Syrian refugees in Turkey were officially received as “guests.” Since this definition did not carry any legal meaning, there is the risk of arbitrary treatment towards Syrians. Therefore, the Syrian guests were given the “temporary sheltering status” in October 2011, as per the Article 10 of the 1994 Ordinance by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After that the first legal regulation about the status of the Syrians is the no. 62 “Directive on Receiving and Sheltering the Syrian Arab Republic Citizens and Stateless Persons Living in the Syrian Arab Republic, Who Entered Turkey for the Purpose of Mass Sanctuary”, dated 30 March 2012. This directive defines the status of the Syrians as “temporary shelter” The temporary shelter status is currently ongoing. This regime is compatible with the minimum international standards and contains principles such as open door policy, abstaining from forcing return and
determining individual status, providing shelter and basic services in camps

3. Situation of the Syrian Refugees in Turkey

The Syrians in Turkey, similar to the other countries, should be handled in two categories: those living in camps and those living outside of camps.

a. Syrians living in camps and the general conditions of camps

Most of the Syrians living in camps have better conditions in terms of well-being and social opportunities compared to those living out of camps. We have visited camps in Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa and Hatay, and spoken to officials and Syrian refugees during our field trip. Rather than the UNHCR, which manages refugee camps in other countries, AFAD is responsible for maintaining the Syrian refugee camps in Turkey. Notwithstanding the small amount of international aid, Turkey undertakes the financial burden of the camps, with AFAD’s coordination. As of April 2014, Turkey’s expenses have surpassed 2.5 billion US dollars. Also, Turkish NGOs have provided some aid, amounting to 500 million US dollars. The international aid that Turkey received is only 183 million US dollars. This is a mounting financial burden for Turkey; however it also provides Turkey with the opportunity for establishing total control over camps.

In fact, AFAD does not undertake the management of camps by itself. It provides coordination among the involved official institutions along with its own responsibilities. AFAD establishes the infrastructure of the camps and provides the logistical facilities. However, it receives support from other official institutions in order to maintain a well-functioning system. For example, the Ministry of Education undertakes the educational issues, the Ministry of Health upholds the responsibility of health services, and the Ministry of Interior Affairs provides security services. AFAD works with the private sector for providing food for camps and undertakes coordination with various organization and people in order to meet the needs of camps. Turkey seeks to utilize its accumulated experience and knowledge in various areas in the management of camps. State officials in camps report to the camp directors, which are under the authority of provincial mayors.

Compared to the camps in other countries neighboring Syria, we have made the following observations about the camps in Turkey:

The camps are far superior compared to those in other countries, in terms of order, social facilities, education-health opportunities, and security and hygiene conditions. Despite some differences between container cities and tent cities, camps have generally achieved a certain degree of standard. Refugees enter camps after submitting their fingerprints and may bring any item into camp from outside after scanning them in X-Ray devices. The camps have night illumination and security guards operate inside camps as well. It is for this reason that there is no serious security incident in the camps other than common brawls, etc. Refugees stated during interviews that camps are totally safe. They note that it is possible to walk inside camps during nighttime thanks to illumination.

Order is maintained in camps, especially in container cities. Non-standard and dispersed sheltering (erecting a tent on containers or building an additional shelter beside tents) that is frequently seen in the camps in Jordan and Iraq are not present in Turkey. Concerning hygiene conditions, there are few problems with mud, pollution and odor caused by uncollected garbage and rain, which are common in other countries. The camps in Iraq and Jordan provide basic sheltering, education and health opportunities, though they lack social facilities such as children playgrounds, gathering rooms, training classes, etc. In contrast, the camps in Turkey meet the need for mentioned social fa-
ilities and activities. There are approximately 160 training programs besides social facilities such as mosques and playfields. The training programs facilitate socializing and help Syrians learn new professions. Approximately 35,000 Syrians registered to training classes such as those in English, Turkish, Arabic, computer, hair-dressing, needlecraft and carpet business.

The camps in Turkey have adopted a different method concerning food. Before, a private company determined by a tender process used to provide warm food three times a day. However, refugees’ complaints brought about a change in the system. Currently refugees receive a monthly cash aid, which is loaded into refugees’ cards. People shop for food in markets established inside the camps, which have favorable presentation and range of products. In addition, refugees receive dry food aid. Kitchen sets have been distributed to each container and tent. Each family is able to cook its own food in common kitchen areas within camps.

The camps in Turkey have better bath and toilet facilities in terms of quality and per capita quantity, compared to the camps in other countries. Refugees have access to very good washing opportunities. Each family receives tickets that they can use in common areas that have washing and drying machines. The camps even have a communication infrastructure that provides internet access.

The refugees that we have spoken to state that they have better physical conditions in camps compared to those that they have in their own country. Newly established logistical centers contain food and clothing to distribute to Syrians. The schools in the camps are exactly at the same standard as any school in urban centers. As of April 2014, 65,000 students at elementary, middle and high school levels receive education. In addition, there are high school graduates, who have started universities. 2,800 teachers, both Turkish and Syrian, serve in schools. Turkish doctors and officials serve in health clinics. Ambulances stand ready at each camp and transport refugees to the nearest hospital when needed. The reason for such an extensive camp construction is that AFAD planned these camps as permanent shelters. AFAD intends to use the camps in the case of a natural disaster in Turkey, after Syrians return to Syria. Therefore, they provide refugees with good services, while at the same time prepare for any future case of emergency and disaster.

Nonetheless, Syrians living in the camps experience some problems. Despite the fact that they have good conditions in the camps and their basic needs are met, the majority of the refugees choose to live outside of camps. The biggest problem is the boredom associated with living in camps. They have dissatisfaction with doing the same things every day in a confined area. In addition, for the reason that they need to have permits for leaving and entering, they feel their freedom is being limited. Many refugees regard the camp life as a temporary measure and state that they wish to live elsewhere. Many refugees note that they want to work for earning money. Regulations of the camp life cause disquiet among some people.

Therefore, refugees struggle with emotional and psychological problems rather than any problems related to the services provided in the camps in Turkey. There are many social activities for refugees; however they are dissatisfied due to the boredom associated with the camp life. It is for this reason that they prefer living elsewhere, regardless of all the risks therein.

Another issue related to the refugee problem that Turkey is concerned with is the displaced Syrian people that struggle for a living just across the border on the Syrian side. Approximately 130,000 Syrians are waiting along the border to be received to Turkey, while 100,000 of them stay in the camps along the border. The remaining 30,000 Syrians live in rental houses in border villages. There are twenty five camps along the border on the Syrian side. During the
field research, we have visited the most crowded camps Atme and Bab es-Selam. Atme camp is just across the border from Reyhanlı district of Hatay province, near the town of Atme in Idlib province of Syria. Atme camp houses approximately 30,000 people. This figure is constantly changing. Some Syrians return when their town is liberated by the opposition forces, others increase the camp population when armed clashes reach their towns. While some of the Syrians in this region rent houses in the town of Atme, the housing capacity of this town has surpassed its limits.

Atme camp severely lacks in services, order, opportunities and hygiene conditions compared to the camps in Turkey. It is better to refer to Atme and Bab es-Selam camps as “slum camps.” The camps in the Syrian side of the border probably have the same conditions. The most severe problem in these camps is the housing problem. The Syrians live in tents provided by the US-AID, UNICEF and the Turkish Red Crescent. Tents fall short of meeting the needs in terms of both quality and quantity. There are no security guards in the camp. Medical Relief provides medical service to the camps. There is one bathroom for every 25 tents in the camp. The food shortage is another severe problem in the camp. People cook the dry food that they received as aid in common kitchens.

Turkey and Turkish NGOs, in coordination with the Turkish Red Crescent, provide aid to the displaced Syrians even though they live along the border on the Syrian side. The aids arrive at the reception centers at the border and then they are distributed to those people in need across the border. It is called “aid from the zero point of the border” and it provides shelter, food, health, education, etc. in this framework. The aid activities in the zero point are important since it takes the burden away from Turkey. It is less of a burden for Turkey if the problems of the displaced persons in Syria are resolved inside Syria. That is because, if they cross the border, Turkey’s problems increase in higher rates. Therefore, the best method is the resolu-
tion of the displaced persons’ problems within Syria. For example, Turkish officials in the border stated that the new hospital built on the Syrian side of the border reduced the number of Syrians entering Turkey for medical reasons by eighty percent. The wounded people receive the first treatment in this hospital and they are transported to Turkey if the medical services become insufficient.

The displaced Syrians in Atme want Turkey to provide more aid, raise the camp standards to the level of those camps in Turkey or accept themselves to the camps within Turkey. We have observed that there is resentment against Turkey among the Syrians in Atme camp for this reason. This resentment is caused by the fact that the camps in Turkey have better conditions. The Syrians in Atme camp state that they want to move to Turkey but Turkish officials do not allow them to cross the border.

b. Syrians living outside of camps

The refugees living outside of camps form the majority of the Syrians in Turkey. The official number of the refugees living outside of camps is 600,000; however the real number is estimated to be higher than that. Syrians living outside of camps mostly live in the cities with camps along the border. Besides, there are Syrians all along the line from Mersin and Konya in the west to Batman and Şırnak in the east. Over time, Syrians reached to the whole of Turkey in general, including metropolitan areas such as Istanbul and Ankara.

There are five reasons, which hinder gathering all Syrians in camps:

a. People who illegally enter Turkey do not want to register themselves,
b. People who cannot adapt to camp life want to leave camps,
c. People who are rich enough choose to live outside of camps, for personal reasons,

d. People have to wait outside because camp capacity has been surpassed,

e. People who have relatives in Turkey prefer to live where their relatives recommend them instead of camps.

The Syrians who do not live in camps for these reasons do not have a smooth integration to the Turkish society. Regardless of how it is legally defined, this is an immigration or displacement of a sociologically important number of people in a massive scale. Thus, the Syrian immigration, which was initially considered temporary, becomes a permanent phenomenon day by day. This situation has implications for both the immigrants and the local people with respect to their psychology and reactions.

The Syrians in Turkey who live in camps have better living conditions compared to those in other countries; however, the living conditions outside of camps are relatively difficult. For the reasons mentioned above, those people who want to live outside of camps increase in number. Even though there are more and more people living outside of camps, they continue receiving aid from Turkey in order to make a living. They live under terrible conditions in crowded rental houses. They start working when they run out of money that they brought with themselves; however since they are employed for wages that are far below the market, they hardly maintain basic living standards. Those refugees who live with their relatives face some other problems, because it has been over two years.

AFAD carries on projects for those Syrians, approximately 600,000 people, who live outside of camps as well. The most important practice in this framework is the registering of the Syrians living outside camps in order to determine a requirements list. The project, named “Aid Distribution System,” places all the refugees in Turkey under biometric registry. It forms a requirements list so that any willing national or international NGOs may determine what kind of aid they can provide. In addition, AFAD undertakes action in order to meet basic needs such as health care and education. It provides Syrians with the opportunity to receive free treatment from state hospitals under the condition that they get registered. Besides, there are some projects to take children away from streets. For this purpose, the UNICEF is building fifteen schools only for Syrians.

4. Turkish People’s Attitude towards Syrians

The border provinces of Turkey feel the major impact of the presence of the Syrian refugees. A common complaint across many regions is that the surge of Syrians caused the wages to fall. There are even some Syrians, who cross the border on a daily basis, in order to work in Turkey. Thus, the unemployment problem of local Turkish citizens deteriorates. Turkish people who face difficulties in finding jobs or work in temporary employment complain about their failure in finding jobs. It is stated that there has been a fivefold reduction in the wages since Syrians started entering Turkey. This is a cause of major concern for workers, while an advantage for employers.

Besides, the market prices in the border provinces have risen due to intense immigration. This is a major reason for local people’s reaction. Another complaint is about the rise in rental prices. It is almost impossible to find a rental house in the border districts. That is why there are a lot of construction sites in the Turkish districts along the border with Syria. There is a serious housing and construction spree in especially Akçakale and Ceylanpınar. Land owners are in a rush to construct new houses in order to rent them to Syrians. This leads to defective and unsafe housing. Rising rental prices cause disquiet between landlords and tenants as well. That is because landlords cancel their contracts with current tenants and seek to rent their property to Syrians for higher prices. There are security problems related to the Syrians who crossed
the border and settled in the south of Turkey as well.

It is wrong to suggest that Syrians have had only a negative impact on Turkey’s social and economic life. Syrians brought revitalization to the provinces with advanced economy, such as Gaziantep. Syrians provide cheap and talented labour, which invigorated local economy. In addition, they have an indirect effect on the places that they live. AFAD’s efforts for providing aid to the Syrians create a lot of demand for various products and services, which is supplied through local economy. It is actually a contribution to the local economy by Syrians, rather than a burden. Finally, there are numerous Syrian businessmen who transferred their capital and business to Turkey, thereby contributing to Turkish economy. While there are no clear statistics, some estimates suggest that the number of Syrian companies in Turkey in 2013 has risen threefold compared to the previous years. Syrians have investments amounting almost 4 billion US dollars even only in the province of Mersin. Many Syrian businessmen transfer their factories to Turkey. This is another aspect of the Syrian presence in Turkey.

Another important dimension of the Syrian immigration to Turkey is kinship relations. This is a strong factor for especially the Syrian Kurds. Many families living in the border settlements have invited their relatives on the Syrian side of the border to live together. Railroads form a portion of the Turkey-Syria border, and it divides some settlements that lie along the border. Such divided settlements are referred with the same name by people on both sides of the border. For example, Turkish citizens refer to the village of Şenyurt as Dirbesiye, which is the name of the other half of the village on the Syrian side. Similarly, Ceylanpınar residents refer to their town as “upper Ras al Ain” and to the Syrian town just across the border as “lower Ras al Ain”. Yet before the borders were defined, those settlements were the same and there are kinship relations.

Many families take their Syrian relatives along, provide them shelter and help them find jobs. At the first stage, the kinship relations and severe living conditions evoked sympathy for Syrians among the local Turkish people; however over time the Syrians caused some degree of discontent. At the time when this field research was conducted, some local people stated that they did not know how much longer they could host their Syrian guests, since they see low probability for their return back to Syria and they expect the immigration to continue at an increasing rate. There are concerns about the sustainability of sympathy for Syrian guests, which were initially received with gratitude. Local people stated that they sent their Syrian relatives to the Central Anatolia and the Black Sea regions as seasonal workers for this reason. This results in new ways for Syrians refugees to expand across Turkey.

Local people’s reactions to refugees vary according to several factors, which are stated below:

a. Demographical Characteristics of Local Settlement

Both sides of the Turkey-Syria border are actually demographical continuation of each other; that is why immigrants did not have any difficulty adapting to the places they move to. However, over time as the original place of immigrants change and some other factors step in, new problems emerge. Especially some people who suffer psychologically, economically and politi-
cally from the events in Syria adopt a negative approach towards Syrians. Their negative approach even starts to take root. This situation is best observed in the province of Hatay. The Arab Alawite Turkish citizens in the center of Antakya are uneasy about the arrival of Syrians. Popular demonstrations in the center of Antakya, Harbiye and Samandag started in the last months of 2011 and then took an opposite stance against Syrians. These demonstrations and popular reaction made it difficult for Syrians to settle in those towns.

It is possible to wrap up the general outlook along the border as follows: the Turkish people in the border regions form their approach towards Syrians in accordance with their own ethnic, religious and political identities. For example, there is sympathy towards Kurds and antipathy against Arabs in the places that Kurds form the majority. Kurds think that Arabs support radical groups such as al-Qaeda, which they use against the Kurds in Syria. In contrast, Arabs think that Kurds seek to divide Syria and support PKK-affiliated parties. The majority of Turks sympathize with Turkmens, while most of the Arab Alawites consider the Syrians entering Turkey as traitors to their own country. This is the reason why Syrians tend to move to places in Turkey, where people with similar ethnic, religious or sectarian identities live.

b. The Rate of Syrians to Local People

One of the most influential factors that affect the problems that the Syrians living outside of camps face or the local people’s reactions to Syrians is the proportion of local people and Syrians with respect to each other. As the proportion of the Syrians increase, local people tend to adopt more negative reactions. In some province and districts, the number of Syrians has surpassed the local population. For example, the district of Reyhanli, which has a population of 63,000, houses approximately 100,000 Syrians. The population of central Kilis is 90,000 and it houses approximately 80,000 Syrians. Similarly, the Akçakale district of Gaziantep, which has a population of 29,000, houses a tent city with over 30,000 Syrians, which causes discontent among the local people. In contrast, there is little disquiet about 150,000 Syrians in Gaziantep, which has a population of 1.5 million people. In a nutshell, regardless of the size of towns or cities, the ratio between Syrians and local people has a mutually strong impact on the inter-group relations.

c. Kinship Relations

The increasing number of illegal border crossing is indicative of the importance of kinship relations. Illegal crossing started as some Syrians tried to come to their relatives in Turkey. Families in this region help their relatives as much as they can, because it is considered a shameful act in this region if they do not help their relatives in their time of need. Some families share their houses with them, others help them with rent payments, and some others provide them with employment. However, this situation is in a decline, after its initial rise.

Kinship relations are the most important factor that helped Turkey absorb the intense wave of immigration and its impacts. Thousands of families aided their relatives without seeking assistance from official institutions. It is observed more commonly in the rural areas. Villagers granted vacant houses and lands to their Syrian relatives and even encouraged them to cultivate and produce for subsistence. However, those
people that live in cities do not want to continue subsidizing their relatives, since they have been doing it for a very long time.

d. Economic Factors

Economic factors are at the fore of the causes that affect the reactions towards the Syrians in Turkey. Initially, when the Syrians injected their own money to local economy, local people adapted a favorable stance towards them. Similarly, rental prices in all the border provinces have skyrocketed in the last two years. Thus, landlords acquired increased rental income. In addition, since state officials condoned Syrians who did not have a work permit working for very low wages, employers and businessman enjoyed the advantages of cheap labor. There has been a significant rush in the unqualified labor market. Syrians started to work as seasonal workers or construction workers in the region. At the same time, however, the rising population revitalized the production and retail sectors. The increase in the demand for goods and services caused by the state’s aid projects for the camps invigorated the local economy.

At the same time, the middle and lower stratum of the society are adversely affected by all these developments. The cheaper labor provided by Syrians caused competition and a dramatic fall in the unqualified labor market. The middle classes suffer from the increase in rents and food prices. Local markets lost their positive outlook as the money inflow from the Syrians came to an end. There are also increasing local reactions because Syrians cannot pay the high rents for their houses.

Lastly, it is observed that smuggling is on the rise and security forces do not fully control important crossing points, despite all efforts. Ille-
gal trafficking is attractive since it ensures high income rates.

e. The Issue of Duration

As the civil conflict in Syria dragged on, local people tend to have more reaction to Syrians. In the cities, where the population has dramatically risen, basic services are hindered and the infrastructure became insufficient, which provokes further local reactions. Besides, the prolongation of the civil conflict in Syria affects the Syrians in Turkey as well. Those people, who have lost their hopes for a resolution to the conflict, look towards a grim future, since they have abandoned their homes without a hope of return. Many of them want to return back to Syria; however they remain in Turkey for reasons of safety and economic hardships.

f. Security and Political Developments

The Reyhanlı bombings in May 2013 serve as a turning point in terms of security. There have been widespread rumors about a new attack, especially in Antakya and its surroundings. There is a great deal of misinformation and rumor mongering on this issue. Allegations of support for radical groups increase discontent among the local people. Political developments are related to certain countries’ and political parties’ political attitudes.

General Assessment

The most important issue about the Syrians in Turkey is that they are going to remain in Turkey for a long time, since the stability in Syria will not be restored in the short term. There are even some estimates about new mass immigration waves towards Turkey, which will raise the Syrian count to 1.5 million in 2014. Therefore, two basic issues will need attention. The first is preparing for meeting the basic needs of Syrians that will arrive in Turkey, such as sheltering, security, food, education and health. In this framework, establishing new camps and launching projects about the Syrians living outside of camps are measures that are worth considering. Another possible measure is the approach that focuses on addressing the problems of the Syrians inside Syria, since their problems increase when they cross to Turkey. The aid projects at zero point might alleviate the conditions of camps on the Syrian side of the border. The second basic issue is preparations for the Syrians’ integration to Turkey, with respect to the possibility of the Syrians remaining in Turkey for longer durations.
II. SITUATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

Jordan is a country that has been hosting refugees for many years. It has been a safe haven for people, who fled from instability and wars in the Middle East. There are already a lot of refugees within Jordan because of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the invasion of Iraq. Currently, Syrians have joined along Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, due to the civil conflict in Syria. The most important problem is that Jordan is transformed into a “refugee country” and the Jordanians became a minority. Over 3 million of approximately 7 million people are Palestinians. 200,000 Iraqis immigrated to Jordan after the invasion of Iraq. The number of Syrians that immigrated after the civil conflict had started is approximately 600,000. The total number of Syrians in Jordan is almost 1 million, if the Syrians that were in Jordan before the conflict are included in the count. Therefore Palestinian, Syrian and Iraqi refugees constitute 4 million of the total population. This is the framework, in which Syrian refugees’ conditions in and their impacts on Jordan should be considered.

For the Jordan stage of the research project, we conducted a field trip in the cities Amman, Mafraq, Zarqa and Irbid of Jordan, on 14-19 March 2014. We have sought to investigate the conditions of the Syrians living in refugee camps and city centers. We have visited two Syrian refugee camps, Zaatari and Emirates Jordanian. We have spoken to Syrian refugees, camp directors, school officials, polyclinic workers, UNHCR representatives and security officials. Syrians living in city centers form the majority of the Syrians in Jordan. They mostly live in the northern regions of Jordan, close to the border with Syria. Therefore, we have visited the cities, Mafraq, Zarqa and Irbid, which houses the majority of Syrian refugees, and spoken to local officials, people, non-governmental organizations and Syrians. One of the main challenges of the research is to understand the refugee policy of Jordan and explain the impact of Syrian refugees on Jordan’s social, economic and political life. Within this scope, we have spoken to official institutions such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office, Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Syrian Refugees Affairs Directorate, and NGOs such as Jordan University Center for Strategic Studies and the South-North Center for Dialogue & Development. In this chapter, the focus is on issues such as the general situation of the refugee camps, the main problems of the Syrians in Jordan, the basic data about the refugees, and the impact of the Syrian refugees in Jordan.

1. Basic Data about the Situation of Syrians in Jordan

According to the UNHCR data there are 588,792 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan, as of April 2014. However, Jordanian officials and UNHCR representatives state during the interviews that the real count is approximately 1.3 million. The difference between the registered Syrian refugee count and the real number is because of the fact that some Syrians, who had come to Jordan for various reasons before the civil conflict, are considered among refugees. There are some estimates that approximately 700,000 Syrians lived in Jordan before the civil conflict in Syria for various reasons such as kinship relations between Syrian and Jordanian people, marriage and employment. The Syrians registered to the UNHCR are those who immigrated to Jordan after the civil conflict broke out.
The Syrian immigration to Jordan started to increase as of the second half of 2012. The Syrian count, which was 120,018 on 2 January 2013, tripled in two months and reached 385,545. It became 468,160 on 3 June 2013. As of 30 March 2014, the registered Syrian refugee count in Jordan is 588,979.

During the interviews, refugees responded differently to the question about their reasons for preferring Jordan. These reasons are generally, geographical proximity, kinship relations, common culture and sectarian identity. Their reasons for immigration are the instability caused by the civil conflict, the lack of medical services and economic factors.

The first immigration wave from Syria to Jordan started from the southern section of the country, especially from Daraa. Over time, refugees from all over Syria, including the northern provinces along the Turkish border, started to move to Jordan. Though, refugees from Daraa, which is close to the Jordanian border, constitute almost a half of the Syrian refugees in Jordan. Refugees from Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo come after the refugees from Daraa, respectively.

The Syrian refugees in Jordan, similar to the other countries, are in two groups: those living in camps and those living in cities. Jordan comes to the fore, as the number of Syrians living outside camps is considerably high. During the interview, the officials in the Syrian Refugees Affairs Directorate stated that 20% of the Syrians in Jordan live in camps, while the remaining 80% live in cities.
camps prefer Irbid, Mafraq, Amman and Zarqa, respectively. Amman is favored for employment opportunities rather than geographical proximity.

There are five camps/temporary centers for Syrian in Jordan. Three of them are permanent camps, while the other two are temporary settlements, in which Jordanian officials and the UNHCR representatives register the refugees. All the camps and registry centers remain in the north of Jordan. Zaatari camp, which is the most populated among all other camps in regional countries, is located in the province of Mafraq. The second camp is the Emirates-Jordanian camp, which is established on a piece of land granted by the Jordanian government. It is financed and administered by the United Arab Emirates. Zaatari camp has surpassed its capacity, and the Jordanian government has built a new camp in Azraq, since it expected new waves of Syrian immigration. The construction of Azraq camp, which has a bigger capacity than Zaatari camp, has been completed. Officials state that it will be a “first class” camp. It is expected that the camp will be opened at the end of April 2014. The temporary sheltering centers and registry centers are Garden Camp/King Abdullah Immigrant Camp with a capacity of 900 persons and Cybercity Camp with a capacity of 450 persons.

2. The Legal Status of the Syrians in Jordan

Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. In Jordan, the Alien Law encompasses all refugees, including Syrians, within its own framework. This law is based on the principle of non-refoulement, which is a general principle of international law. In addition, Jordan is a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Article of the Convention
prohibits the parties from returning refugees to a state “where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture”.

Jordan adopts an open-door policy towards Syrian refugees. It provides security to all Syrian refugees, regardless of them arriving legally or illegally. It does not require Syrians to acquire visas or permit of residence. Only passports are required for entering Jordan. Jordan does not permit people from these four groups: the Palestinians living in Syria, single men of conscription age, the Iraqi immigrants living in Syria, and those people that do not have official documents.

The UNHCR acts in the framework of the 1998 Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of the Interior of Jordan. It is responsible for determining the situation of refugees and managing asylum requests. There are four kinds of refugees in Jordan: the refugees whose status was confirmed by the UNHCR, the refugees who have cards in the scope of the UNHCR’s temporary protection program, the people who were rejected refugee status before 2003 and were included in temporary protection due to the conflict in Syria, the people who fled from violence and torture and did not apply to the UNHCR. The refugees, whose status were confirmed by the UNHCR, do not have any status in the Jordanian Law and does not have permit of work or residence.

According to the 1952 Law, only Jordan citizens have the right to work in Jordan. Those people, who are not Jordanian, may get permit of work from the Ministry of Labor, provided that they have residence of permit and a valid passport. However, the Ministry of Labor is relevant for jobs that are not suitable for Jordanians’ experience and qualifications. Apart from that according to the Jordanian Ministry of Labor, approximately 160,000 Syrians work illegally. Those Syrians, who work illegally, are forced to sign a document that they will not work in Jordan again.

3. The General Trend of the Syrian Immigration to Jordan

The Jordan-Syria border is 370 kilometers long. There are two official border gates between Syria and Jordan. These are Nasib/Jaber and Dera/Ramtha border gates. However, almost all of the Syrian immigrants enter Jordan through unofficial ways. The security situation is worse around the border gates due to the clashes between the regime and the opposition. Therefore, Syrians hire Bedouins to take them to the northeast of Jordan for a price. The northeast of Jordan is vast deserts with no settlements on both the Syrian and Jordanian sides of the border. Syrians enter Jordan on foot via desert and met by the Jordan army, which takes them to camps and temporary sheltering centers. Jordanian officials and the UNHCR register the Syrians and take them to Zaatari camp. United Arab Emirates decide which Syrians will be accepted into Emirates/Jordanian camp, because it undertakes its financing and management.

For the reason that Zaatari out of capacity, as of April Syrians will be settled in Azraq camp. The Syrians in Zaatari are not free to abandon the camp. However, the surpassed capacity of the camp and the Syrians’ preference to live outside camps cause many Syrians abandon the camp. A Jordan citizen has to vouch for a Syrian, who wants to abandon camp. This person may be either an employer or a relative. Because of the increasing number of Syrians that want to live outside camps, there is an increasing demand
for people that would vouch for them. Syrians have to pay some money to make Jordanians vouch for them. When a Syrian refugee earns the right to abandon camp, he/she may live in any city in Jordan.

The UNHCR started registering the refugees, who entered Jordan after January 2012. There are registration offices in Zaatari camp, Amman and Irbid. The refugees, who want to register in Amman and Irbid, has to get an appointment. There are offices in Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa for getting appointments. Registered refugees receive a card, which they can use for receiving state aid, the UNHCR support and the World Food Program (WFP) food aid. The UNHCR officials estimate that 10% of the refugees refrain from registering with their own choice. They fear that they are likely to get in trouble when they return to Syrian if Syrian officials acquire the registered information.

The largest registry office of the UNHCR is in Amman. Refugees are registered at two places after crossing the border. The first place is near Ruwayshid in the east of the border. At Ruwayshid, blankets and food are provided to refugees. Then, Syrians are taken to the province of Mafraq in 24-48 hours. In Rabba Assahan, a settlement close to camps, there is an UNHCR office for registration. Official put refugees to retinal scanning and give them ID cards. Up to now, approximately 300,000 Syrians have had retinal scanning. Officials are planning to include all Syrian refugees in retinal scanning by June 2014.

Eighty percent of the Syrian refugees live in cities with local people. The UNHCR provides Syrians with 400 JD (approximately 570 USD) monthly cash aid. Refugees in cities receive their money in banks after a retina check. There is also a mobile team of the UNHCR consisting of 3400 persons, formed for the Syrians in cities. This unit visits the houses of the Syrians. The visits provide control and up-to-date information about the current status of the Syrians. This way, it is possible to form a requirement list. As of March 2013, the UNHCR team has visited approximately 100,000 houses.

4. The General Conditions of the Syrian Refugee Camps in Jordan

a. Zaatari Camp

Zaatari camp in the province of Mafraq is established on 29 July 2012. The camp, which has 12 sections, has surpassed its capacity. For better management of the camp, each section elected a leader. Leaders transmit their current problems to the UNHCR officials. According to the camp officials, 109,000 Syrian refugees live in the camp as of 18 March 2014. The UNHCR data, dated 30 March 2014, state that the current number of refugees is 106,073. The camp population varies periodically. That is because the refugee flow to Jordan is reduced in some periods and refugees abandon camp in order to live in cities.
The Jordanian Police maintains security in the camp, while the Jordanian Army provides security outside. However, there is a general security problem within the camp. The camp has a population of approximately 110,000, which is almost as big as a small city. Therefore there are incidents of individual or organized crime within the camp, which are common in any settlement. In this respect, the most severe problem is that each neighborhood or section of the camp is controlled by a family or tribe. There are mafia groups in the camp. In the main street of the camp, there are phone shops, restaurants, jewelers, tobacco shops and etc. A person needs to pay tribute to these mafia groups in order to open a shop in this street. Another problem related to security is the superiority of the refugees from Daraa, who came to Jordan with the first refugee wave. The refugees from Daraa, who adopted tribalism and regionalism, constantly harass refugees from different cities. For this reason, the refugees from Daraa form the majority of the refugees in Zaatari, while they form 50% of the total Syrian refugee count in Jordan. There is a small number of refugees from Homs, Hama and Aleppo in Zaatari camp.

In Zaatari Camp, 95% of the Syrians live in containers. Newcomers initially live in tents and move to containers after 6-7 months. However, there is no orderly settlement in the camp. Almost every family has built an extension to its own container or covered it with tent to prevent water. Therefore, the camp does not give the impression of an orderly container city. There are 23,000 containers and 3,000 tents in the camp. Each family receives a tent or a container. Most of the containers come from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and they have water and electricity. Approximately 15 families use the same bathroom and toilet. The camp has poor hygiene conditions. Rain causes mud heaps and sewage water flows in open areas where children can reach, which is a serious risk for health.

The UNHCR provides cash aid, food distribution and sheltering in the camp. Any Syrian registered by the UNHCR receives an ID card, which grants him/her access to cash and food aid. Each family receives a weekly cash aid. 80 other institutions work in coordination with the UNHCR in the camp. According to the UNHCR officials, 60% of the Syrains in Zaatari are children. In addition, there have been 3,500 births in the camp up to this date.

In the beginning each family received warm food three times a day. Due to complaints, later the Syrians received dry food and were provided with kitchen facilities in order to cook their own food. The WFP is responsible for distribution of food. Refugees receive food aid per capita with their cards. Thanks to the cash aid, Syrians are able to purchase their own food in markets and bazaars within the camp.

Despite the water shortage in Jordan, there is no problem in the camp about access to water. Water is supplied from nearby wells and transferred to the camp by tankers. Refugees are provided 35 liters of water daily per capita. For the sake of comparison, a person needs at least 25 liters of water daily, in order to survive. However, daily medium per capita water consumption standard is 150 liters, considering water to be used for drinking, cooking and washing needs of a contemporary person for a healthy life.

Six hospitals provide medical services for the camp, 24 hours a day, free of charge. These hospitals are founded and managed by Jordan, Qatar, Morocco, Jordan, Italy and Saudi Arabia.
In addition, there is an infant hospital established by the Doctors without Borders. There are five schools for education. These schools are Bahrain school with a capacity of 4,200, the U.S.A. school with a capacity of 600, the E.U., Qatar and Saudi Arabia schools with a capacity of 5,500. Jordanian and Syrian teachers serve in single-gender schools. Female students study in mornings and male students study in afternoons in classrooms with a capacity of 42 students.

Syrians need a signed document of permit to go out of the camp in daytime. However, sickness, death and special reasons are required conditions for a permit. Syrians need to find a Jordanian to vouch for them in order to abandon the camp and live in cities. Up to now, 60,000 immigrants have abandoned the camp and started living in city centers.

The most important problems in the camp are stress caused by the camp psychology, perceived limits on freedom, difficulty of obtaining permits, access to basic services, heating, cold and rainy weather and high chlorine rate in waters. Besides, the camp is excessively crowded and untidy. Containers are very crowded due to the surpassed capacity. Electricity cables are easily accessible and heating in containers are provided by LPG cylinders, which evoke concerns related to safety. There are no social grounds for adults and children and no activities are being held. The only focus in the camp is on meeting basic needs and requirements.

b. Emirates-Jordanian Camp

The camp, which is located in the province of Zarqa, is directly financed and managed by United Arab Emirates. The UNHCR is only responsible for registry and protection. Unlike Zaatari, refugees do not receive a cash aid in this camp. The location of the camp is picked by the Jordanian government and granted to
United Arab Emirates. It is distant and isolated from settlements. It is right in the middle of the desert. United Arab Emirates officials control everything about the camp.

The camp has been established in the beginning of 2013 and has a capacity of 5,000-6,000. According to the camp officials, 4,100 Syrians dwell here as of March 2014. There are plans to improve the capacity to 10,000. No new refugees have been admitted here since November 2013. The Syrians in Emirates-Jordanian camp have registered to the UNHCR; however they do not have UNHCR ID cards. They have a special ID card. They have a maximum 21 day permit of leave. The UNHCR’s protection unit is called for those who leave the camp on permit and escape. The Jordan police provide security outside the camp; however it may enter the camp on demand.

Refugees register at the office in Rabba Assahan and then picked by the United Arab Emirates officials. The most important condition for acceptance to the camp is having immigrated as a family. Therefore, there are no single men in the camp. The refugees in the camp have come from Daraa, Damascus and Homs. They have abandoned Syria primarily because of safety concerns. Most of the immigrants do not have a passport; therefore they are not able to go to another country.

The camp has very good conditions regarding services, order and hygiene. All kinds of medical services are provided. There is a hospital of United Arab Emirates in the nearby city of Mafraq. When medical services remain insufficient, ambulances transfer patients to this hospital. All refugees receive free medicine. Even though refugees do not have permit of work, there are job opportunities for them within the camp. Refugees are able to work as barbers, tailors and cook and they earn wages. There is an obligation for one person per container to work. Containers have electricity, but no water distribution system. Drinking water is distributed in bottles from kitchens. Bathrooms and toilets are for common use. In addition, there are televisions in containers. Food is cooked in clean and tidy kitchens and then distributed to containers. Education services for the children are free of charge. Primary education for 1st and 8th grade students and high schools are available in the camp. 588 students study in these schools where Jordanian teachers serve. There are also amenity spaces, playfields and training programs for women and children. The UAE officials state that they also provide firewood, food and cash aid to poor people outside the camp.

Even though the Syrians that we have spoken to state that the camp conditions are very good, they have several problems. They complain about the excessive rules and regulations of the camp life. Strict order and timetable about each and every activity including meals disturb the refugees. The second problem is the location of the camp, which is distant and isolated from settlements. Refugees feel detached from social life in the middle of the desert. There is a great deal of distance to the nearest settlement, even if they obtain a permit of leave. Both of these issues make it hard for adult males to find employment outside the camp. They also state that the weather during summer is hot and it is difficult to live in containers.

c. Azraq Camp

Azraq camp will be opened at the end of April 2014. It has been built with a capacity of 130,000
people. The camp is built as a preparation for new refugee waves. It is located between the provinces of Zarqa and Azraq. According to Jordanian officials, the camp will have better conditions regarding comfort, basic services, order and amenities than Zaatari camp. Jordan is in anticipation of new refugee waves, since they started constructing Azraq camp.

5. The Impact of the Syrians on Jordan and the Basic Problems of Refugees

It is possible to handle the impact of the Syrians on Jordan and the basic problems of refugees under four headings.

a. Economic Impact

There are both positive and negative impacts of Syrian refugees on Jordan’s economy.

The negative impact is the burden of hosting the refugee count of almost 10% of the country’s population on the fragile Jordan economy. Jordan has a weak industrial output, lacks natural resources such as water and oil and 80% of its territory is desert. According to the Ministry of Planning and the UNHCR officials, Syrian refugees create a pressure amounting to the 10% of the budget. Negative effects of the civil conflict in Syria and refugees on the Jordanian economy are stated below:

- The economy is impaired by the reduction in cross border trade with Syria. Exports to Syria are down by 22% and imports from Syria are down by 37% in 2012. The transit trade with Turkey, Lebanon and Europe through Syria has ceased. Security concerns raised the costs and transport routes have been changed.
- Officials in the Ministry of Planning stresses that indirect effects have to be considered rather than the direct financial costs. The side effects such as the burden on education and medical services and overall diminishing quality of basic services, reflect the actual tough impact of refugees on the Jordanian economy. Refugees receive education and medical services free of charge. Officials state that free education and medical services cost 1% of the gross domestic product.
- Refugees’ usage of water, while bringing no direct additional cost, consumes the future resources of the country.
- The capacity of schools is insufficient for new students. New buildings were leased for raising the capacity. The schools have adopted single-gender system, which brings about extra costs.
- The rent prices have increased threefold. Since refugees settled in poor neighborhoods, this is a disturbing situation for the locals.
- Forty percent of the refugees are within the ages 18-49. This is excessive supply for the labor market. Since the Syrians provide qualified labor for lower wages than the Jordanians, they dominate the labor market. Job opportunities diminish and the Jordanian people lose their jobs. This is a cause for reaction and concern among the local people.
- According to Jordanian officials, as of March 2014, Syrian refugees’ total cost amounts to 1.5 million USD. Jordan received some amounts of international aid; however there is a gap amounting to 800 million USD between the spending and international aid.

In opposition to the argument that Syrians negatively affected Jordan’s economy, there are those arguments that state Jordan has transformed the crisis into an opportunity. Accordingly, Jordan receives excessive amounts of international aid, since it exaggerates the total number of refugees. According to a Jordanian NGO representative, “Jordan ripped off the in-
ternational community.” The official number of refugees that Jordan declares is 1.5 million, which includes the Syrians, who were in Jordan before the civil conflict. Officials state that these people are no longer able to return to their country and thus, they should be included in the refugee count. In contrast, there are those arguments, which state that those people have been integrated in the Jordanian society, for reasons such as marriage, employment, etc. Therefore, it is wrong to include them in the refugee count. There are numerous people from all Middle Eastern countries, especially Egypt (Egyptians dominate some specific work categories), who work in Jordan. These people are included in the refugee count and thereby increase the aid that Jordan receives.

The second argument about positive impact is the dynamism that Syrians caused in the economic life. There are some views that refugees’ mental state causes them to adopt an entrepreneur attitude, which is on the lookout for new economic opportunities. Therefore, it provides dynamism to economy in general. Qualified labor costs less. Even though this provokes reaction among the local people, it is better for economy in general. In addition, refugees undertake small and middle scale businesses. In this sense, a Jordanian NGO representative mentioned the long term contribution of Turkish immigrants to German economy. The third argument about positive impact on Jordan’s economy is that Syrian businessmen transfer their capital to Jordan. Although Syrian businessmen mostly prefer Turkey for its advanced economy, there are some businessmen, who invest in Jordan as well. The last argument about positive impact is the economic opportunity that international aid brings about in Jordan, which local people and corporations benefit from. The UNHCR and NGOs need labor for camp activities and employ local people. In addition, local amenities provide goods and services that refugees need.

b. Education

Education is one of the most important problems of the Syrians in Jordan. According to the UNHCR officials, at least 35% of the Syrians in Jordan are of school age. Refugees that dwell in cities and camps benefit from education services
free of charge. In the schools, Jordanian teachers teach in the Jordan curriculum. Schools' capacity remains insufficient and they lease new buildings. Education is provided in a dual system of morning and afternoons. Refugees in university age have to pass the university exam that each Jordanian citizen has to pass. There are no additional conveniences for the Syrians, who want to receive university education.

d. Water Problems

Jordan is the third poorest country in the world, considering the amount of water per capita. The drought has been going on for the last ten years, worsening the water shortage and agricultural activities. During interviews, Jordanian people state that “they have to share their limited water resources with Syrians,” when their opinions about the Syrians are asked. Therefore, the water problems are an issue by itself about the Syrians in Jordan.

The water problems in Jordan became more salient with the arrival of Syrian refugees. For many years, groundwater meets Jordan's water requirement, because surface water is insufficient. With the influx of refugees, the population increased and the draft rate of ground water tripled the replenishment rate. That is why some wells dried up. Sixty five percent of the water transferred to the province of Mafraq is lost because of the pipeline hardware problems and the local people's intrusion to the pipelines. There are problems related to the quality of the water as well. The need for filtration brings about extra costs. There is no filtration in camps. As an overall solution, the water in tankers is chlorinated as per the World Health Organization's permit. The bad taste caused by the chlorine is another issue of complaint. The extended preservation of water in old tankers brings about problems related to hygiene.

The water problems in camps are about the access to and the amount of water. According to the official data, there is no water in some regions of the province of Mafraq. The high temperature of summer and potential new waves of refugees worsen the problems related to water. The camps provide refugees with 35 liters of water per capita. The daily water consumption of the Syrians in cities are estimated 20-50 liters, including drinking water.

e. Other Social Problems

Jordanians share many common values with Syrians such as language, religion and history.
Despite these common values, local people are disquiet about refugees who take shelter in Jordan. Similar arguments state they Jordan is not a rich country, natural resources are limited and Syrian refugees are a heavy burden for Jordan. Local people’s reactions get worse since Syrians settle in poorer regions of Jordan. Jordanians, who have the same living conditions as the Syrians, do not receive any state or international aid, unlike the Syrians. This is a further cause for resentment against Syrians. For example, Syrian children receive free school bags, while Jordanian children do not. For this reason, local poor people are taken into consideration, while distributing aids to Syrians. Other causes for local people’s resentment are unemployment, sharing water resources, perceived privilege of Syrians in education and medical services and negative experience with other refugees. Since Palestinian and Iraqi refugees had not returned to their own countries, Jordanians worry that Syrians will not return as well. Rising rental prices, landlords’ preference for Syrian tenants over Jordanians, Syrians’ qualified and cheap labor supply, the state’s perceived discrimination in favor of refugees are further causes of local peoples’ resentment. Currently, there is a growing anger among the local people. Up to now, there has been no serious incident or outright clash between Jordanians and Syrians.

The Syrians’ impact on Jordan’s social life is similar to the other countries. Syrians have their underage daughters marry, in order to guarantee their future. Underage Syrian girls are getting married to Jordanians. Syrian families receive a certain payments for marriage. Therefore, some Jordanian families became polygamous. There is also the problem of prostitution, which involves young Syrian girls, similar to the other countries.

General Assessment

Refugees from several countries form the majority in Jordan, which is at the same time a seri-
ous burden for the country. However, Jordan is the most successful country, considering that it managed to transform the Syrian crisis into an opportunity, utilizing its past experience with refugees. This observation does not mean that the refugees’ contribution is greater than their negative effects. Jordan’s financial hardship is the lowest among the other neighboring countries, since it receives a substantial international aid. Jordan’s weak economy and non-existent natural resources help it transform the crisis into an opportunity. Therefore, it is able to carry the burden of refugees despite its weakness and the high numbers of refugees within its borders. Jordan is a haven of stability in the Middle East. This is a major cause of mass refugee waves towards Jordan in times of crisis. Besides, international community and regional states seek to protect Jordan’s stability during crises. Even Israel provides aid to the Syrian refugees in Jordan. It provides water, which is Jordan’s most severe problem.

Nevertheless, Jordanian officials state that there is a gap between the international aid and total spending for the Syrians and they need more aid. They also point out that the burden of the refugees is not only in terms of financial spending. Since the population has risen by 10%, it has a spillover effect in many issues. Refugee count determines the amount of aid received. Jordanian official include the Syrians, who were in Jordan for various reasons, in the total count. In addition, Jordanian officials still include people, who escaped Zatari camp, in the refugee count and aid provision, as if they are still in Jordan. Many refugees sell their UNHCR ID cards, which enable them receive aid. The UNHCR launched a retinal scanning program in order to avoid this problem.

Despite all these problems, the international aid to Jordan needs to continue and improve. Zatari camp is the most populous camp in all four countries. The conditions in Zatari are worst among all other camps as well. The camp is exposed to potential risks of instability, radicalization and misconduct, which enable radical groups to recruit members among the refugees. A social explosion caused by this many people will affect first Jordan and then the regional stability negatively. Therefore, Jordan needs to stand strong.
III. THE SITUATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

The events in Syria have affected its neighboring countries in particular and the whole region in general. However, one of the most affected of all has been Lebanon mainly due to its fragile political structure. Lebanon has been immediately affected from the events in Syria, not only because it has been subjected to a refugee influx, but also because various groups in the country are directly engaged in the developments in Syria.

The field research in the country was conducted in Beirut, Tripoli, Zahle and Bekaa on 05-10 February 2014. During the field research, interviews were done with official institutions like the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, as well as academic and civil society organizations such as Beirut American University Issam Fares Center for Public Diplomacy and International Relations, Beirut American University Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, Syrian Aid and Rescue Organization (SAAR), Dar Al-Zahra, Save the Children International, Islamic Medical Association, Bayt Al-Zakat, Lebanese Turkish Association, Beirut American University Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, Syrian Aid and Rescue Organization (SAAR), Dar Al-Zahra, Save the Children International, Islamic Medical Association, Bayt Al-Zakat, Lebanese Turkish Association, Forum of Likat al Hayr, Al-Abrar Islamic Charitable Organization. In addition, numerous Syrians were interviewed in the districts and tent camps.

This report first provides statistics about the Syrians in Lebanon, second elaborates the legal status of the Syrians in Lebanon and third portrays the problems that the Syrians confront in Lebanon which came to the fore during the field research. Furthermore, it also evaluates the attitudes of the Lebanese people towards the Syrians.

1. Data on the Syrians in Lebanon

According to the UNHCR, as of 18 March 2014, there are in total 974,434 Syrians in Lebanon, 926,353 of whom are registered by UNHCR and 48,081 of whom are waiting for registration. In addition, some of the authorities in Lebanon and NGOs claim that the Syrians in Lebanon are more than what is stated by UNHCR. During the interviews with the officials in the Ministry of Social Affairs, it was asserted that there are almost 1,200,000 Syrians who entered Lebanon via legal means and about 500,000 Syrians who came to Lebanon illegally, which amounts to the total of 1,700,000 Syrians in Lebanon.

In fact, the UNHCR officials do also admit that the number of the Syrians waiting for being registered is more than the number of Syrians that are already registered. According to the UNHCR officials, some of the Syrians prefer to stay in Lebanon without being registered because of personal considerations, the present ongoing situation of violence and the hesitation that their information could be shared with the (Syrian or Lebanese) authorities. However, the UNHCR does not make any estimation about the number of people in this category.

Despite the personal considerations outlined above, why the number of Syrians in Lebanon cannot be established accurately derives from two reasons: First, the unique relationship between Lebanon and Syria and second, the sui generis political structure of Lebanon. When the unique relationship between Syria and Lebanon is considered, having a 375 km long land border with Syria, Lebanon has officially controlled border crossings to Syria through four border gates after the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon in 2005.

At these border crossings, there was no visa requirement between two countries. What is more, a Syrian citizen did not even require a passport to go to Lebanon. Any Syrian can go to Lebanon with a valid identity document and stay there for 6 months. In this context, it is mentioned that before the crisis in Syria, the number of Syrians staying in Lebanon for work (mainly in the agriculture sector) or tourism purposes was ranging from 300,000 to 500,000.
The second reason why the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon cannot be known exactly is related to the refugee experience in the country's history. When this is added to the fragile political structure of Lebanon, the outcome is an unstable refugee or immigrant policy and thus the exact number of these people remains unknown.

2. The Legal Status of the Syrians in Lebanon

Lebanon has not ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Therefore, it has the right not to give refugee status or permanent residence permit to the foreigners coming to the country due to security reasons. Syrians in Lebanon are not officially recognized as refugees or asylum seeker. It is important to note that not all Syrians have entered Lebanon legally. In this respect, the situation of Syrians in Lebanon may be evaluated under five headings.

The first group is composed of dual citizens who have both Lebanese and Syrian passports. The second group contains Syrians who came to Lebanon via legal means and extended their residence permits at the end of their duration of stay in Lebanon. The third group is consisted of Syrians who came to Lebanon via legal means, but could not extend their residence permit because of the cost of extension and thus compelled to stay illegally in Lebanon. Syrians who entered Lebanon illegally, but have official identity documents that can be displayed as and when required forms the fourth group. The fifth group is made up of Syrians who entered Lebanon illegally and have no valid identity document.

3. The General Trend in Migration to Lebanon

The most systematic data regarding the general trend of migration to Lebanon from Syria belongs to UNHCR. These data are converted into statistics and regularly updated. Additionally, it is critical to recall that not all Syrians in Lebanon are registered by the UNHCR because of the reasons listed above.

Graph – 3 The Demographic Structure of the Syrians in Lebanon According to the UNHCR Records

demography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male (48.8%)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female (51.6%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>18-59</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122#
Syrians going to Lebanon has displayed an upward trend proportional to the increasing violence in the clashes in Syria.

There is substantial increase in migration to Lebanon from Syria by the year 2013. As a matter of fact, by 1 January 2013, 130,799 Syrians in Lebanon were registered to the UNHCR. This number increased to 205,419 by 1 March 2013 and reached 423,495 by the end of May 2013. The number of Syrians registered to UNHCR in Lebanon was 610,916 by 31 August 2013 and rose up to 805,835 by the end of the year. According to UNHCR, Syrians registered and waiting to be registered by 18 March 2014 totaled the sum of 974,434. The areas that the Syrians in Lebanon came from are related to the places where the clashes in Syria are concentrated.

During the interviews with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the UNHCR and the local and foreign NGOs in Lebanon, it was mentioned that the Syrians coming to Lebanon are mostly Sunni Arabs. It was also noted that there were few numbers of Syrians of Palestinian, Arab Alawite, Christian and Druze origin coming to Lebanon. It is not possible to figure out the percentage of these groups since neither the UNHCR nor any other NGO has made a religious or sectarian classification.

Regardless of any data, it can be said that Syrians migrating to Lebanon are coming from the regions close to the Lebanese-Syrian border. On the other hand, according to the UNHCR records, contrary to the general presumption, Syrians migrating to Lebanon are not coming from the region close to the Lebanese-Syrian border, but from different places.

It is important to note that there have been massive Syrian emigrations from Aleppo, Idleb, Al-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh and Lattakia, which are closer to Turkish border than the Lebanese one. Speaking the same language with the Lebanese people and being accustomed to cross the Lebanese border have been the most influential factors for that. In addition, during the interviews, it was revealed that the cost of border crossing to Lebanon and Turkey was also a factor in emigration from Syria. Under normal conditions, Turkey does not charge fees for the Syrians who are willing to come to Turkey. However, it was claimed that at the border gates which went out of the control of the Syrian regime and fell into the hands of the opposition, Syrians, who were going to Turkey, were charged with a fee of 30 USD per person. In this context, when it was asked to the Syrians who migrated to Beirut from Aleppo why they chose Lebanon instead of Turkey, they replied that it was cheaper to go to Lebanon than to Turkey.

The Palestinians in Syria chose to migrate to Lebanon due to the internal unrest, because they had relatives there and thus they preferred to settle down in the Palestinian refugee camps.

Graph – 4 The Number of Immigrants to Lebanon from Syria According to the UNHCR Records

in Lebanon. Apart from that, Syrians are mostly settled in Zahle in Lebanon.

Additionally, some Syrians, fewer in number though, are settled in the south of Lebanon like Sour, Sidon and Bint Jbeil where Hezbollah is more influential. In this context, it was stated that there were not any problems for Syrians, the majority of whom are Sunni Arabs, to settle in the regions where Hezbollah is more powerful. It was mainly because Hezbollah did not intervene in the humanitarian aid and assistance to the Syrians and there was relatively less migration to the south of Lebanon. UNHCR reports that among the registered Syrians in Lebanon, less that %15 went to the south of Lebanon.

4. Major Problems of the Syrians in Lebanon

The problems faced by the Syrians in Lebanon can be listed as accommodation, education, health and other social problems.

a. Accommodation

Accommodation is the most important problem that the Syrians in Lebanon confront. The Lebanese government has adopted the policy of not establishing official camps and this has direct negative effects on Syrians. Syrians, who come to Lebanon legally or illegally, settle in places with which they are familiar (if they have ever been to Lebanon before) or they move to places where they have relatives or friends. Syrians who have not been to Lebanon before or do not have relatives or friends, follow the families they come together with to Lebanon and settle in the places these families choose to stay.

Syrians come to Lebanon in families and according to the UNHCR records, there are 204.698 Syrian families in Lebanon by 20 February 2014. Although there are families who chose to stay in rural areas, half of these families have settled in city centers. UNHCR records display that 1,661 villages in Lebanon host Syrians.

There are five types of living places in Lebanon where Syrians stay.
1. Houses where there is only one family living.
2. Houses where more than one family is living through room sharing.
3. Places which used to be depots or shops and now are used as living spaces by more than one Syrian family,
4. Buildings under construction, where Syrian families live,
5. Tents where families live.

Although there are no official camps for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Syrian families who can not afford to pay rent have no other choice than staying in tents. In this context, despite being few, there are tent camps in Lebanon. These tent camps, where it is much harder to live compared to other living places, have two characteristics.

First of all, even though these camps are not officially recognized by the Lebanese government, they are not interfered. On the contrary, the camps are implicitly organized by the local governments. Hence, the NGOs which are providing assistance to Syrians in the camps are working in cooperation with the local authorities.

Secondly, the Lebanese government is trying to keep the number of the tents in the camps limited in order not to allow tent camps to become widespread. Therefore, these camps are incomparably smaller than the Palestinian refugee camps or the camps in Turkey and Jordan which are established because of the crisis in Syria.

For instance, there are 600 Syrians and 100 tents in the camp located in the rural areas of the Taalabaya town near Chtaura. There are approximately 250 Syrians and 40 tents in the camp in Al-Marj near Bar Elias. In this respect, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, Syrians living in tents consists of %16 of the Syrians in Lebanon.

b. Education

Another problem of Syrians in Lebanon is education. According to the UNHCR records, %52.4 of the Syrians coming to Lebanon are under the age of 18 and at least % 33.5 of them are of primary or secondary school age. It should be noted that there are differences between the data provided by UNHCR and the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs. There are 300.000 children at school age according to the UNHCR records whereas Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs states that the number is 400.000.

Lebanese government has enabled Syrian children to be enrolled in the Lebanese state schools in order to meet the educational needs of Syrians in Lebanon. However, the capacity of the schools in Lebanon is far from meeting the educational needs of Syrians in Lebanon.

To overcome these problems, some of the NGOs are implementing the curriculum in Syria in the city centers where there is a large population of Syrians. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only a small number of Syrian children are able to benefit from this opportunity.

It is fair to say that the Syrians in Lebanon have fewer problems in terms of higher education since the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education has opened the doors of the state universities to the Syrian university students as is the case for the primary and secondary schools.

Syrian university students are easily adapted to the higher education system in Lebanon, and they are especially good at studying in the departments in which the education language is
Arabic. Besides, when there is no university in the places where Syrian university students stay, there appears logistical and economic problems.

c. Health

Health problems that Syrians confront in Lebanon can be elaborated under four groups:
1. Problems in general health services,
2. Problems in pregnancy and childbirth,
3. Problems experienced by the patients with chronic disease,
4. Problems in medical emergency services and situations in which operations are required.

These problems mainly stem from the fact that the demand by the Syrians in Lebanon exceeds the capacity of the Lebanese healthcare system and also the Lebanese healthcare system, itself.

Owing to the arrangements by the Lebanese government, Syrians in Lebanon have the same rights with the Lebanese citizens in access to the health services. However, the health care system in Lebanon is mostly in the hands of the private sector and the healthcare organizations are functioning like private sector.

Therefore, like the Lebanese citizens, Syrians have to pay money for primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services. In this respect, the UNHCR as well as some local and international NGOs are providing the Syrians with financial aid, especially for primary healthcare services. Nonetheless, on average the aid does not cover all healthcare services.

Syrians in Lebanon mostly require primary healthcare services due to the non-sterile conditions of their living spaces. Infants, children and the elderly are directly affected by the bad living and poor nutrition conditions.

Since Syrians in Lebanon are scattered throughout the country, they have problems in access to healthcare services in terms of logistics. This especially applies to the Syrians in rural areas. It was reported that Syrians have established their own hospitals with the help of some NGOs in Bekaa and the Syrian side of the borderline because of the problems in access to the healthcare services.

In addition, another point to be mentioned about the problems Syrians face in terms of health is corruption. During the interviews, it was alleged that the medicine and medical supplies provided by the international organizations and local NGOs were displayed as consumed, but sold in the market.

Another point expressed during the interviews is the unnecessary operations done in the complicated medical cases instead of direct treatment. It was alleged that the doctors have conducted such operations in order to develop their operational skills and earn more money.

d. Other Social Problems

Syrians in Lebanon have other inevitable social problems in addition to accommodation, education and healthcare problems. These problems can be counted as polygamy, early marriage and prostitution. Polygamy and early marriage are seen as a salvation from the bad living conditions for Syrians in Lebanon.

There is no supportive data from official institutions or NGOs regarding the extent of influence
of these social problems on the lives of Syrians in Lebanon, but they were expressed in various interviews in the field research.

5. Lebanese Attitudes towards Syrian Refugees

During the interviews in the field research, it was mentioned that Lebanese were more inclusive and hospitable towards the Syrians at the beginning. For instance, a radio station broadcasting in Tripoli, which is mostly populated by the Sunni Arabs, made calls for help and succeeded in collecting 150,000 USD with the donation of the local people. With this money, Syrians living in rural places were provided with food, heater, and medical supplies.

Furthermore, some of the Lebanese people started increasing their income with the arrival of Syrians. For example, people who owned a house or a depot began to rent their property over the market price to Syrians. Normally, these properties might have remained empty or rented with a much lower price. In a similar vein, a Lebanese employer who had to pay more salary to a Lebanese worker was able to employ two or even three Syrians for the same amount of money.

On the other side of the coin, there is a segment of the Lebanese society which thinks that they suffer from the arrival of the Syrians. This segment is composed of more people compared to the people who gained advantage, because, with the arrival of Syrians, house rents have increased and Lebanese become unemployed as Syrians started being employed.

In some villages and towns, the number of Syrians is close to the Lebanese population. For instance, the town Al-Marj near Bar Elias had a population of 16,000. As of now, 13,000 Syrians have settled in the town and more Syrians are coming. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Syrian population has outweighed the
Lebanese population in %30 of the rural areas. The increase in the number of Syrians in Lebanon is inevitably escalating the potential social tensions.

In this respect, a Lebanese expert asserts that the reaction of Lebanese people to Syrians derives from economic and social reasons rather than political. In fact, almost all the people interviewed underlined that unemployment in Lebanon has increased with the arrival of Syrians.

During the interviews, people with low income in Lebanon criticized the social assistance to Syrians. The reaction of the Lebanese people may sometimes be low, but may sometimes reach to a dangerous extent.

To illustrate, some of the Lebanese people claimed that they could have received much more assistance via acquiring Syrian nationality. Some NGO authorities think that the reactions of Lebanese people originate from the fact that the social assistance that needy Lebanese people used to receive has almost stalled with the Syrian crisis. Hence, in order to reduce social tensions, the %20 of the aid and assistance that came from international organizations for Syrians have been delivered to needy Lebanese people.

On the other hand, rumors are spread via social media about the possible attacks to the offices and shops where Syrians are employed. There are also calls for demonstrations as a reaction to social problems deriving from Syrians.

It is fair to say that Lebanese reaction to Syrians is not political and is not proportional to Lebanese internal political structure at least at this stage. During the interviews with the authorities of the UNHCR, Ministry of Social Affairs and NGOs, it was stated that there were not any problems regarding the Syrian settlement in Beirut or the areas in the south of Lebanon under the influence of Hezbollah.

In general, authorities expressed that Hezbollah or Amal movement have not prevented any activity of NGOs in their areas of influence, but during one interview, it was asserted that these groups were causing troubles to the aid convoys and seized the lorries at the checkpoints they established.

Syrians in Lebanon are not frequently involved in judicial cases. This is one of the important factors preventing the escalation of social tensions. Ministry of Social Affairs notes that there are more judicial cases among Syrians in comparison to the ones between Syrians and Lebanese. At this point, when it is kept in mind that Syrians go to Lebanon for security reasons, it is highly comprehensible that Syrians refrain from getting involved in a judicial case.

A Lebanese academic links the inexistence of problems between Syrians settled in the south of Lebanon and Lebanese to the auto-control mechanism of the Syrians. Accordingly, Syrians beware of getting at odds with the Lebanese people in the south of Lebanon under the influence of Hezbollah. In case of an unfavorable situation, not only the Syrians as the subject of the situation and their families, but also all other Syrians are likely to be negatively affected. Within this framework, although there is not a legal regulation, Syrians do not go outside at dark.
Another interesting point to underline regarding the attitudes of the Lebanese towards the Syrians is that the Sunni Arab majority in the north of Lebanon is reactive to the Syrians, the majority of which is Sunni Arab, too. This reaction is due to the fact that the living conditions in the north of Lebanon are worse than other parts of Lebanon and this region has received more Syrian migration. In short, this indicates that the attitudes towards the Syrians are not political.

**General Assessment**

The crisis in Syria has affected Syrians and neighboring countries in particular and the whole Middle East in general. Turkey, Jordan and Iraq have been affected from the crisis in terms of humanitarian issues. However, Lebanon has comparatively been affected more from the crisis in Syria because of the relative number of the Syrian refugees and the fragile political structure of the country. The lack of confidence in the government actions in Lebanon has painted an unfavorable picture with the migration from Syria. When the social discontent owing to unstable governance is combined with the lack of resources, infrastructure and the immigration from Syria, the concerns about future is increasing.

According to the estimations of the UNHCR, it is expected that the registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon will have increased to 1,500,000 by the end of the year 2014. When the unregistered Syrian refugees are considered, the number is supposed to be 2,000,000. Therefore, the problems counted in this study are likely to increase incrementally in number and variety. On the other hand, beyond the expectations of the UNHCR, there may be a massive influx of Syrian refugees due to the increasing violence in the clashes in Syria and its concentration on Damascus and its surroundings. In case of the realization of such a scenario, the problems are likely to turn into an impasse.

In terms of the Syrians in Lebanon, it can be said that the problems of accommodation, education and healthcare will increasingly continue. Of these problems, the impact of the accommodation and healthcare problems are likely to be felt in the short run. Hundred thousand Syrians are feeling the impact of these problems everyday. The increasing continuation of these problems may lead in the short run to an increase in the judicial cases between the Syrians and Lebanon and also an increase in the social problems that the Syrians experience. Besides, the tensions between the Lebanese and the Syrians are also increasing, because the Syrians start working in Lebanon in order to survive and make their living. These tensions has the potential to turn into local clashes or mass response and attacks against the Syrians.

The middle and long-term impact of the educational problems that the Syrians in Lebanon have will be worse than its impact in the short-term, because a socially lost generation is likely to emerge when the youngsters, which consists more than %50 of the Syrian population in Lebanon, do not receive education. This uneducated generation will be a significant problem for Lebanon as long as they stay in Lebanon and for Syria as well if they happen to return to Syria. Another aspect of this problem that needs to be mentioned is that it is irreversible.

The most important reason why Syrians migrate to Lebanon is the concern of security. In addition, the problems faced by some of the Syrians in Lebanon have taken precedence over security concerns. Economic difficulties, bad living conditions and healthcare problems compel some of the Syrians to return home. It was expressed that some of the Syrians, who themselves or their families have not actively participated in the armed resistance against the Syrian regime or have not openly sided with the Syrian opposition, went back to their homes. This decision of the Syrian families mainly derived from their expectation to have better living conditions in Syria in comparison to the living conditions in Lebanon and also there are Syrians who dare to live in Syria although the bad conditions of living do persist in their home country.
IV. SITUATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN IRAQ

For the Iraq stage of the research project, we conducted a field trip in the cities, Arbil, Sulaymaniyyah and Duhok, cities under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government, in September 2013. We have visited four Syrian refugee camps in three different cities, and spoken to Syrian refugees and officials from Iraq and the UNHCR. Below is the list of the camps we have visited and the officials we have spoken to: Kawergosk Refugee Camp - Arbil, Basirma Refugee Camp – Arbil, Arbat Refugee Camp – Sulaimany, Dumiz Refugee Camp, Duhok, William Tall – UNHCR Iraqi Kurdistan Representative, Directors of Kurdistan Research and Development Institute, the Higher Council of Camp Officials that Syrians elected among themselves, doctors and teachers that work in the camps, the representatives of NGOs in the camps and local people.

This chapter of the report contains information acquired through the field research and evaluations on this basis. First, this chapter elaborates the general trend of the Syrian immigration towards Iraq and covers the basic data on and the legal status of the refugees in Iraq. Then, the focus will be on the general situation and the main problems of the refugee camps, which house almost half of the Syrian refugees in Iraq. With respect to the data acquired through meetings with Syrians and Iraqi people, observations about the refugees’ reasons for immigration, their thoughts about returning back to their country, their political stance and the relations between the local communities refugees will be elaborated. A general evaluation concludes this section.

1. The General Trend of Syrian Immigration towards Iraq

People tend to move towards places where they might feel themselves safe, when they are forced to migrate. As the ethnic and sectarian dimension of the Syrian conflict came to the fore, Syrian refugees migrated to the regions, where their own ethnic and sectarian group constituted the majority. Immigration from Syria to Iraq is an explicit case for this situation. The Kurds form a large portion of immigrants from Syria to Iraq, where they are settled in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Syrian Kurds have adopted an alternative stance, which they call “the third way”, since March 2011, when the uprising has begun. In accordance with the policy that they developed under the PYD leadership (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat, Democratic Union Party), the Kurds have decided to forge their own way rather than siding with either the regime or the opposition. This stance, in turn, enabled them to cooperate with both sides when required. The Syrian Kurds have succeeded in keeping some sections of the Northern Syria, in which they live in majority, out of armed confrontation until mid-2012. Within this period, they have focused on developing their civil, administrative and military infrastructure and establishing de facto autonomous administration. The turning point for the Syrian Kurds is July 19, 2012, when the YPG (Yekineyen Parastina Gel, The People’s Protection Units), the armed militia of the PYD, captured the Kurdish settlements without a major confrontation, after the withdrawal of the loyal regime forces. Initially, the YPG controlled six Kurdish settlements; however it quickly expanded its area through capturing other Kurdish settlements. Despite representing a major achievement for the Kurds, it has been no longer possible for them to maintain their “non-combat status” that they have carried on since the onset of the civil war. Ever since, the sections of Northern Syria where Kurds exercise control have been exposed to assaults from especially radical opposition groups and the Kurds became part of the civil war.

With respect to the geography of the Syrian Kurds, they live in three distinct regions along the Turkish-Syrian border. The city of Afrin in the province of Aleppo is the westernmost re-
The region where Kurds form the majority. Turkmen and Arab regions lie eastward from Afrin. The middle region centered on Kobani lies further east. The easternmost region is the al-Jazira district, which lies north of the al-Hasaka province. These three regions, which are disconnected from each other, have strategic importance in several respects. The Syrian opposition’s most important source of income for funding the civil war is the control of border commerce, the distribution of the international aid and the oil in these regions. The regions controlled by the Kurds carry vital importance with respect to the presence of the richest oil reserves and their proximity to the Turkish border. This is the reason that the YPG and the Free Syrian Army engaged in an armed confrontation for the control of the Kurdish settlements after the Syrian regime had withdrawn in mid-2012. Over time, several other groups in Syria emerged, such as al-Qaeda affiliated groups al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), against which the Kurds have begun fighting. The Kurds, which were spared from the armed confrontation until then, became more and more exposed to security threats. The most important outcome of this period is the onset of dense immigration waves from the Kurdish regions to Iraq and Turkey.

Two major Syrian Kurdish immigration waves reached Iraqi Kurdistan. The Syrian immigration to Iraq started gradually in the first months of 2012. The refugee count, which had reached 6,000 by the beginning of July 2012, has rapidly increased since then. The major reasons for the first immigration wave included the instability generated by the changes between the regime and the opposition, economic reasons and the Kurdish youth’s unwillingness for military service.

Iraqi Kurdistan occasionally shut down the Pishabour border gate during the first immigra-
tion wave in order to put pressure on the PYD, against which it has engaged in competition for regional leadership. As the Kurdish regions were dragged into armed confrontation, the number of Syrian Kurds fleeing to Iraq increased. Therefore, the refugee count surpassed 67,000 at the end of 2012. In the first months of 2013, the monthly average refugee count reached 12,000.

The second immigration wave was triggered as a result of the al-Qaeda affiliated groups’ increasing activity and assaults against the YPG in the north of Syria. In August 2013, a large number of refugees flocked to the Pishabour border gate, which was shut down. Iraqi Kurdistan was forced to open the border gate on August 15, 2013, due to increasing domestic public pressure, and 40,000 Syrian refugees crossing the border in a very short time. This was the largest refugee wave since the beginning of the Syrian civil conflict. The KRG settled the first wave of Syrian refugees in the Dumiz camp in Duhok province; however as the numbers multiplied, the capacity of Duhok province was surpassed and the refugees were relocated to other camps in Arbil and Suleimany within Iraqi Kurdistan.

A large portion of the Syrian Kurds moved to Iraqi Kurdistan through the Pishabour border gate. When the border gate is shut down, the refugee flow continues through a nearby bridge on the river or by traversing the river by boats. Syrian refugees travel mostly on foot while moving to Iraq. The Pashmarga forces meet the refugees crossing the Pishabour and lead them to a gathering area constructed by Iraqi Kurdistan and international organizations, in which the refugees are able to meet their basic demands. Then, the official vehicles of Iraqi Kurdistan pick up the refugees and transport them to the camps in Duhok, Arbil and Suleimany.

2. Basic Data about the Syrian Refugees and The Refugees’ Legal Status

As of March 25, 2014 the aggregate number of Syrian refugees in Iraq is 226,934. A very large portion of the Syrian refugees head towards Iraqi Kurdistan and almost all of the immigrants are Kurds. Iraq’s al-Anbar province receives the immigrants that move to areas outside of Iraqi Kurdistan. The al-Ubaidi camp along the border and other camps (including Anbar, and also Mossul and Kirkuk in a small scale) house 4,915 refugees. This is the 2.2% of the total refugee count in Iraq. Therefore, the immigration from Syria to Iraq is in fact the immigration of Syrian Kurds to Iraqi Kurdistan.

The immigration wave causes a demographical shift in the Kurdish regions of Syria. Considering the fact that 2 million Kurds live in Syria, almost ten percent of the Kurdish population has left their homes and fled to Iraq. Syrian Kurds immigrate to Turkey as well as Iraq. Therefore, twenty percent of the Syrian Kurds was forced to abandon their country. Most of the Kurds living in the al-Jazira district, to the north and northeast of al-Hasaka province, have left the district. Unlike towns and urban centers, which were not abandoned, the rural settlements are almost evacuated. The distribution of Syrian Kurds according to their settlement of origin is as follows: Almost 60% of the Syrian refugees in Iraq are from the al-Jazira district, mostly due to the geographical factors. Within al Jazira, Qamishli rural areas, especially Derik and Ras al-Ain come to the fore. Aleppo is the second with seventeen percent. The Kurds of Aleppo are mostly from Afrin and Ain al Arab (Kobani). Some refugees come from the center of Aleppo as well. The Damascus Kurds are the third with...
10%. Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor (the Arabs of Anbar) are further down the list with two percent. There are small number of refugees from rural Damascus, Homs and Daraa as well.

Similar to the other countries housing Syrian refugees, the refugees in Iraq are in two groups: those living in camps and those living in cities. Iraq is different from the other three neighboring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan) due to the higher rate of refugees living in camps. There are almost 95,000 refugees in the camps, whereas approximately 129,000 refugees live in cities, especially in Duhok. The refugees in the

Graph – 5 Registration Trend of Syrians in Iraq

Source: https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=4734

Graph – 6 Refugees’ Place of Origin in Iraq

Source: https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=4734

Graph – 7 Camp and non-camp population comparison in Iraq

Source: https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=4734
camps constitute 42%, while those living out of the camps are 58%. As of March 2014, Duhok houses 109,979 refugees that are registered by the UNHCR. Approximately 60,000 of this number live in camps, while the rest live in the city center. Nearly 75% of the Syrians in Duhok came from the al-Jazira district. Within al Jazira, Derik takes the lead with 25%, followed by Qamishli, al-Hasaka and Damascus.

During the interviews with the refugees in Duhok, they stated that they do not think of going to a third country; they would consider that option only on certain occasions. Approximately eighty percent of the refugees in Duhok work in various sectors, especially in construction. Their biggest problems are accommodation (rent aid), food and jobs. Arbil houses a registered refugee count of 84,881. Approximately thirty thousand of that count lives in the camps, while the rest live in the city on their own. Forty percent of those living in the city share the same house with another Syrian family, while 30% live as single family. 80% percent of those refugees living in Arbil have a regular income.

The foremost problems of the refugees in Arbil are accommodation (rent aid), jobs, medical aid and food. Suleimany houses 25,134 registered refugees. Approximately 3,000 of those live in the camps, while the remaining 22,000 refugees live in the city center on their own. Thirty percent of the Syrian refugees in Suleimany is from al-Jazira, while approximately 25% is from Ain al-Arab and 10% is from Afrin. In Suleimany, more than 50% of the refugees live in houses, while 30% of the refugees live in tents and similar temporary places. Among the refugees in Suleimany, the biggest problems are accommodation, food and clothing.
**Chart – 4 The Basic Data about the Syrian Refugee Camps in Iraq**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Founding Date</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>Refugees’ Place of Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dumiz</td>
<td>Duhok</td>
<td>1 April 2012</td>
<td>58,500</td>
<td>Al-Jazira, Afrin, Raqqa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akre</td>
<td>Duhok</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>Al-Jazira District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gawilans</td>
<td>Duhok</td>
<td>29 September 2013</td>
<td>2,810</td>
<td>Al-Jazira District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawergosk</td>
<td>Arbil</td>
<td>15 August 2013</td>
<td>13,412</td>
<td>Al-Jazira District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basirma</td>
<td>Arbil</td>
<td>26 August 2013</td>
<td>3,004</td>
<td>Al-Jazira District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darashakran</td>
<td>Arbil</td>
<td>29 September 2013</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>Aleppo and al-Jazira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuştepe</td>
<td>Arbil</td>
<td>19 August 2013</td>
<td>4,373</td>
<td>Al-Jazira District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrka</td>
<td>Arbil</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>Founded as a precaution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbat</td>
<td>Suleimany</td>
<td>25 August 2013</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Al-Jazira District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ubaidi</td>
<td>Anbar</td>
<td>27 June 2013</td>
<td>1,781</td>
<td>Deir en-Zor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Refugee Count in the Camps</strong></td>
<td><strong>Duhok, Arbil, Suleimany, Anbar</strong></td>
<td><strong>95,770</strong></td>
<td><strong>Syrian Kurdish Regions and Deir ez-Zor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart – 5 Statistics on the Refugees in Iraq that Live out of the Camps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duhok</td>
<td>48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbil</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suleimany</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anbar, Kirkuk and Mossul</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Count Registered by the UNHCR</strong></td>
<td><strong>129,100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart – 6 The Ratio of the Refugees Living out of the Camps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total Refugee Count</th>
<th>Refugees Living out of the Camps (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duhok</td>
<td>109,389</td>
<td>48,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbil</td>
<td>84,043</td>
<td>37,26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suleimany</td>
<td>25,293</td>
<td>11,21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anbar, Mossul ve Kirkuk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Refugee Count Registered by the UNHCR</strong></td>
<td><strong>226,934</strong></td>
<td><strong>Places of Origin: Syrian Kurdish Regions and Deir ez-Zor</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The main reason behind the Syrian immigration to Iraq is the instability caused by the ongoing fight between the ISIL, al-Nusa Front and the YPG forces of the PYD. Other than that, economic hardships, lack of job opportunities, electricity and water shortage are among the main causes of the refugee flows. Approximately 70% of the Syrian refugees in Iraq are from rural areas. A great portion of those living in the camps are people with low income (approximately 90%), while the remaining families have middle income level. Several Syrian families with middle and high incomes live in houses in the city centers. While people from all educational backgrounds are present among the refugees, the majority has a lower level of education. The ratio of the university graduates are 15%.

Iraq is not a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Nevertheless, there are two legislations with respect to the situation of refugees in the national legal system. These are the 1977 Political Refugees Law and the 2009 Immigration and Displacement Ministry Law no. 21. The 2009 law is more extensive than the other one; however both laws are insufficient in guaranteeing the rights of Syrian immigrants. In general, therefore, it is safe to assume that the Iraqi legal system lacks a legal framework regarding refugees. Nor does the Iraqi government have a policy or strategy towards refugees. Nonetheless, the KRG is able to uphold and apply its own legal system and policies towards Syrian refugees in an independent manner. As a matter of fact, almost 95% of the Syrian refugees in Iraq live in areas controlled by the KRG.

Irish Central Government and the KRG pursue different policies with respect to refugees. The KRG generally keeps its borders open and maintains a flexible policy towards refugees. The main reason for that is the common ethnic origin that both Syrian refugees and the people in the Iraqi Kurdistan shares. There are also political reasons, besides the social and cultural affinity. The KRG allows Syrians to stay in camps or in cities with their own means of survival. It
provides the Syrians living in cities residence permits, so that they can benefit from the services that its own citizens enjoy. Refugees, even though they stay in camps, have the right to abandon camps and live freely in all the three provinces with the KRG. The only limitation is that single males are forbidden from renting houses in city centers. Refugees, living both in camps and in cities, have work permits. Those refugees, who have residence permits, have the right to benefit from health and education services that the KRG provides, similar to the Iraqi citizens.

The Iraqi central government has a different approach towards refugees. The central government has decided to move refugees from the Rabia and al Kaim border gates to a newly established camp in July 2012. Refugees in the camp are provided with basic services. As of August 2012, the central government shut the border gates with the exception of emergency humanitarian situations. Refugees, who live in al Anbar province, within the jurisdiction of the Iraqi central government, do not have the right to free movement within Iraq. They do not have permission to work outside camps. Nonetheless they can benefit from all the basic services; for instance, they can go to public hospitals or schools free of charge.

3. General Situation in the Camps and Main Problems

While Iraqi Kurdistan receives aid from the UN and various NGOs, it maintains the camps with its own resources. The Government of Iraq does not offer any aid since it does not recognize the Syrians as refugees. Therefore, the financial burden of Iraqi Kurdistan increases day by day. “Barzani Charity Foundation” is the foremost among the civil society organizations that bring aid to the camps. Other than that, Japanese, South Korean and Western NGOs such as “Save the Children” provide the camps with aid. The Government of Iraq do not offer any aid since it does not recognize the Syrians as refugees.

Syrian refugees formed a council among themselves (the Higher Council of Camps) for the administration of the camps. The responsibilities of this council are: maintaining contact with Iraqi Kurdistan officials, defining the needs and problems of the camps and relaying them to the officials and keeping the statistics about the refugees (total count, education level, place of origin, etc). The aid, even if provided by the NGOs, is brought to the camp by Iraqi Kurdistan and UNHCR, and distributed by the Council.

The refugee count in Dumiz, the biggest refugee camp in Iraq, is almost 60,000. Certainly there are problems about meeting the needs of that many people and making them live in an orderly fashion, in contrast to the smaller camps in Arbil and Suleimany. Efforts by Iraqi Kurdistan and international organizations have resulted in a system in Dumiz camp, which enables the refugees to meet their needs. The officials have established water and sanitation systems, registration offices and regular bus schedules for traveling to Duhok. Several shops have been opened in the main street of the Dumiz camp. Phone dealers, barbers, jewelers, restaurants and all kinds of shops that one can find in a city are available in the camp. Dumiz resembles a large town, even almost a city. Iraqi Kurdistan’s flexible policy enables refugee families to utilize the camp for only accommodation. Senior family members and young people are allowed to leave the camp and work in Duhok and other cities.
Observations made in four refugee camps point out towards several common observations. No major event has taken place in the camps, except for some burglary and brawls that are common in any settlement. The refugees state that the camp is generally safe. Some of them express security concerns about the flexibility in the camp entrance controls. More than half of the refugees that were interviewed did not see a problem about meeting their needs. In contrast, the remaining half reports that they cannot fulfill their medical, educational and food-related needs. There is a school in each camp. Teachers are either assigned by Iraqi Kurdistan or chosen among the refugees themselves. A major portion of the children in school age cannot receive education. One reason for that is the quality of education, while the other reason is that families want their children to go to work rather than school. Syrian Kurds used to receive education in Arabic in Syria, however in Iraqi Kurdistan, education is in Kurdish. Hence, there are problems related to teaching in Arabic and finding teachers that can teach Iraqi Kurdistan curriculum in Arabic.

There is a medical facility in each camp. Iraqi Kurdish doctors and nurses serve in each medical facility, where an ambulance stands ready. The most serious health problem is illnesses caused by the lack of hygiene; especially children mostly suffer from such illnesses. During summer, the illnesses cause more problems. Electricity and water are provided by Iraqi Kurdistan. Water storage, cooling and distribution issues are UNICEF’s responsibility. While there are no problems related to electricity, the refugees report the insufficiency of water supply. The number of bathrooms is quite low. New bathrooms are being built in order to meet the demand. People try to wash themselves in some makeshift places around their tents. There is a severe problem about bathrooms and toilets, especially in Dumiz camp. Bathrooms and toilets that are assigned to twenty families each are
insufficient in both number and hygiene standards. The Syrians meet their food needs with the dry food that Iraqi Kurdistan, UNHCR and NGOs provide. They state that the food aid is insufficient and they need to buy additional food from the marketplace. The camps have a limited capacity for social activities. There are no children playgrounds, TV halls or places of worship. There are demands for such places. The Syrians in the camps underline the terrible conditions of the container or tents that they live in as the most severe problem.

4. The Refugees’ Reasons for Immigration, Possibility of Return and Political Views

The Syrian Kurds prefer Iraqi Kurdistan for the reasons of language affinity, Iraqi Kurdistan’s flexible policy towards refugees, geographical proximity, stability and job opportunities. The majority of the refugees state that they want to return to Syria when the stability is restored and the civil war comes to an end. In contrast, they do not believe in a possible resolution for the civil war. It is seen that the refugees have long term plans about staying in Iraq. A great portion of the Syrian refugees in Iraq state that they do not want to go to a third country and want to stay in Iraqi Kurdistan; they make preparations for a lengthy stay there. The total count of the refugees is expected to rise since there are predictions pointing to the continuation of instability in Syria. Therefore, there are efforts towards increasing the capacity of the current camps and building extra camps.

The Syrian Kurds reply positively when they are asked if they have brought their families with them. Therefore, it is possible to predict that there will be no major Kurdish immigration wave in the following period, unless a major instability emerges in Kurdish cities. Those refugees, who have left their families in Syria, express their desire to bring their families to Iraq.

The refugees state their reasons for immigration as follows: fleeing the war, ISIL’s attacks, ISIL’s statements declaring “Kurdish women and property” as “halal”, fear of forced conscription, lack of job opportunities and disruption of medical and educational services. Some refugees, however small in number, claim that they escaped because of the PYD’s oppression. When they were asked why they preferred Iraqi Kurdistan, they replied, “We are in our own country here; we are being treated as brothers, not as guests”.

The refugees state that they would prefer Turkey if they were provided easier conditions. The Syrians told that they are comfortable in Iraqi Kurdistan, since they don’t have to stay in the camps, and they can go out of the camp any time they want. They know that the camp conditions in Turkey are better, but they prefer to stay in Iraq, where they are free to go out of the camp. The Syrian Kurds regard Iraqi Kurdistan as a part of the “Greater Kurdistan”. Common ethnic origin, language affinity and favorable public opinion strengthen this idea.

Along with these answers, economic opportunities, stability and geographical proximity of Iraqi Kurdistan are important reasons affecting their decision. Nonetheless, those factors are rarely mentioned. Yet, some refugees told that if Turkey allowed border crossing, they would prefer it. The fact that most of the refugees are from the neighboring al-Jazira region shows that geographical proximity is an important factor. During the field research conducted in Tur-
It is observed that there is a considerable number of Kurds among the Syrian refugees in Turkey. With respect to the research in Iraq and Syria, it is seen that the Syrian Kurds migrate for the same reasons and prefer Iraq or Turkey due to geographical proximity and kinship relations. For instance, Kurds in Afrin and Kobani preferred Turkey. However, a common perception among the Kurds about “Turkey’s alleged support for groups that are attacking the Kurds” sometimes cause people to prefer Iraq instead of Turkey. It is important to note that this perception was valid during the time that the research was conducted, and it might have changed since then, depending on the changing events in Syria.

The refugees were asked questions about the current situation in the majority Kurdish areas of Syria, and their expectations for the future. The Syrian Kurds adopt a favorable view towards the opposition in the current regime-opposition struggle. However, they make a clear distinction among the opposition. Thus, they do not regard al-Qaeda affiliated groups and Islamist groups as the opposition. In fact, they consider these groups as a bigger threat than even the Assad regime. However, generally they tend to support moderate groups and they want them to overthrow Assad. Almost all refugees that were interviewed stated that they want to have an independent Kurdish state; nevertheless they also recognize that it is a far-fetched dream. With a realistic approach, they stated that they want to have a Kurdish autonomous region in a democratic, federal state structure within Syria as a whole. As a federal region, they conceive of an integral region from al-Jazira to Afrin, encompassing the north of Syria. There is also a strong, common demand that, after the civil war, the state should be renamed as “The Republic of Syria”, instead of “Syrian Arab Re-
public”. They consider a civil war between the Arabs and the Kurds as a lower probability. They think conflicts may emerge with the Arab tribes, which were resettled into Kurdish territories.

5. Local People – Syrian Refugee Relations

Shortly after the Syrians started immigrating to Iraq, Dumiz camp in Duhok was established to house the refugees. Increasing refugee count surpassed the capacity of Dumiz. Therefore, the refugees were taken to the camps in Arbil and Suleimany. As it is common in other countries housing Syrian refugees, a large portion of the refugees wanted to live out of the camps. As of March 2014, 58% of the refugees live in the cities on their own. There are several reasons for that. They claim that the camps are sometimes unsafe and the camp life is boring, whereas the city life in attractive and the cities have job opportunities. Some people prefer to live in houses that they lease or purchase, because they can afford it.

As of the time period when this research was completed, Iraqi people have received the Syrian refugees in a pleasant manner. Iraqi Kurds’ own experience as refugees and viewing the refugees as their kin are important causes of this approach. The Syrian refugees speak in Kirmanchi, a dialect of Kurdish, while the people in Duhok speak in Bahtinani dialect, which is close to the Kirmanchi dialect. Kurds in Arbil and Suleimany speak in the Sorani dialect, which is different; nevertheless this problem is solved in a short time. Therefore, the refugees do not have any difficulty communicating with the local people or finding jobs.

Overall public reaction towards the refugees is still positive, though there are some problems. Similar to the cases in other countries with respect to the integration of refugees, the refugees in their quest for survival constitute a cheap labor force in construction and services sector, and deprive the local people of their job opportunities. The refugees’ extra burden on education and health care systems and increasing crime rates among the refugees worsen this situation. Except some small scale incidents and rising local reaction, no major incident has taken place between the locals and the refugees. It is just that the people are not as favorable as they were, towards the new immigration wave. The rent aid that the Syrians receive and the Syrians’ domination in the unqualified labor market make the poor local people to expect aid. Another factor that causes local reaction is that the increasing demand for housing brings about higher rental prices. It has two outcomes. First, the locals, who lease houses, are negatively affected. The refugees are forced to lease houses, which are not completed and not entirely safe for living inside. Secondly, the children and youth in school age have to work in order to meet high rents. A third of the refugees in Iraq are schoolchildren of elementary or secondary school age. Generally, the local people adopt a feeling of anger, which is on a steady rise, instead of an immediate harsh reaction.

General Assessment

With respect to the observation that Syria will not be able to achieve stability any time soon and the refugees in Iraq are unwilling to move to another country, it is safe to predict that the Syrians will be living in Iraqi Kurdistan for a lengthy period. This situation signifies a possible major shift in the Kurdish regions of both
Iraq and Syria. Approximately 20% of the Syrian Kurds have had to abandon their country. Most of the Kurdish rural settlements have been evacuated. Possible outcomes of this situation are as follows:

- It is disadvantageous for the Kurds’ aim of establishing an integral Kurdish federal region, encompassing the north of Syria.

- In the long run, the camps may have the risk of affecting Turkey-Iraqi Kurdistan relations negatively, like the case of Mahmur camp.

- The harsh living conditions in the camps provide a fertile ground for misconduct and exploitation. The refugee camps and the refugees that live in the cities have the potential to cause instability in Iraq and its neighbors.

- The PYD is the most active political movement among the Syrian Kurds. The Syrian Kurdish immigration towards Iraqi Kurdistan may cause the PKK/PYD to emerge as a stronger actor in the Iraqi Kurdish politics. The PKK may strengthen its power base in Iraqi Kurdistan, where it is the weakest among all four countries.

- The increasing local reaction towards the refugees has to be nullified through some programs promoting the well-being of the local people.
GENERAL EVALUATION

These are the conclusions after the comparative assessment of the situation of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries:

a. The Situation of Camps

Turkey is in a foremost position regarding the camp conditions among the four countries housing Syrian refugees. There are no official camps in Lebanon as a result of the government policy. The UNHCR and donor countries maintain the camps in Jordan. In Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the UNHCR and NGOs support the camp. Notwithstanding a small amount of international aid, Turkey undertakes the financial burden and administration of all the camps in its territory. Syrian refugees are provided basic services, social amenities and activities, order, hygiene, etc., in high quality, under AFAD’s coordination. In contrast, Zatari and Dumiz camps in Jordan and Iraq, which house majority of refugees in their respective countries, offer low quality services and amenities to refugees. However, there is no direct correlation between the quality of services and refugees’ satisfaction. Even though services and camp conditions are important, issues such as perception of freedom, flexible camp regulations, permit of work outside camps are determinant for refugees’ satisfaction. In this respect, the camps in Iraqi Kurdistan come to the fore. The KRG’s flexible policy results in a greater level of satisfaction among refugees, even though the camp conditions in Iraq are incomparably lower than those in Turkey. The only problem in the camps in Turkey is about rigid regulations on leaving camps and life in camps. In Zatari camp in Jordan, the conditions are worse and refugees are not allowed to work outside. Therefore, Jordan has the lowest rank in terms of Syrian refugees’ satisfaction. Lebanon remains out of this assessment, since it has no official camps, and there are only very small camps maintained by NGOs.

b. New Refugee Waves

The basic reason for the Syrians’ immigration is instability. The most important reason for determining the destination is geography. Turkey and Iraq receives immigration from the north and east parts of Syria; and immigration towards Lebanon and Jordan originates from the western and southern regions. Therefore, it is the security situation in mentioned areas, which will determine new refugee waves.

Lebanon and Jordan is under the high risk of being exposed to new refugee waves. Turkey comes after these two countries in terms of the risk associated with refugee flows. Iraq feels the lowest probability of new refugee waves. The worst case scenario for Lebanon and Jordan is the intensification of battles for Damascus, the city with the highest population, which will cause evacuation in the city on a major scale, similar to Aleppo. Under these circumstances, the people of Damascus will head towards Lebanon and Jordan due to geographical proximity. During the interviews in Lebanon, people frequently stated that “if Damascus is evacuated, Lebanon will be no more.” It is understandable, since the population of Damascus is more than a half of the population of Lebanon and the Syrians in Lebanon already form almost one-third of the population of Lebanon. The situation in the north of Syria will determine refugee flows towards Turkey. The north of Syria is under control of opposition groups. The settlements there are not evacuated since it is a relatively safe region. However, over 4,000 Turkmen refugees entered Turkey on a daily basis due to the fighting between the opposition and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. If the fighting spreads to Idlib, Latakia and Raqqa, Turkey may receive mass refugee flows. Besides, the risk is lessened for Turkey, since most of the settlements in the north of Syria are already evacuated. Since the Iraqi Central Government do not accept refugees, new refugee waves may head towards the territories controlled by the KRG. However this is closely related to the security situation in the
regions of Syria. Where Kurds form the majority. As of April 2014, these regions are relatively safe. However, there are sporadic clashes between Kurd and al-Qaeda affiliated groups. If these groups capture the settlements where Kurds form the majority, there may be a mass refugee wave towards Iraqi Kurdistan. However, since the number of refugees and the probability of instability is low, Iraq is under a small risk. There is also the fact that most of the Syrians brought their families with themselves, which reduces risk for all countries involved. Every Syrian refugee, who left some of its family in Syria, wants to bring the rest of the family in a short time. However these people are low in number.

c. Local-Refugee Relations

There is anger towards refugees in all four countries; however none of them has the risk of an all-out social conflict. Syrians’ major concern is safety. They feel safer near their relatives and near people with similar ethnic and sectarian origins. The Syrians living in the south of the country migrated to the north of Jordan, where they have kinship relations with the people living there. Most of the Syrians that migrated to Lebanon are Sunnis and they settled in the north of Lebanon, where the Sunni population lives. The immigration towards Iraq is almost wholly the immigration of the Syrian Kurds to the territories controlled by the KRG. Sunnis Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens and Christians migrated to Turkey. For Turkmens and Kurds, the both sides of the border are connected with kinship relations. Mardin is the old settlement of the Syrian Christians. Therefore, notwithstanding the exceptions, the immigration patterns have a close correlation with ethnic-sectarian identity. Nevertheless, economic factors rather than identity values determined the relations between local people and Syrian refugees. In all four countries, local people initially felt sympathy for refugees; however they started to feel resentment towards refugees over time. In Lebanon, the Sunni people are disquiet for the reason that they are exposed to the social and economic impact of refugee flows. Similarly, the Kurdish people in Iraq started to complain about refugees, which they initially felt sympathy and affinity. This is similar in Turkey and Jordan as well. The popular reaction in Jordan is mostly in the northern provinces. The popular resentment is limited to a few border provinces in Turkey, since Turkey is geographically larger and its economy is not directly affected.

d. The Situation of the Syrians Living Outside Camps

The refugees living outside camps try to survive in tough conditions. These Syrians cause problems about social integration in all four countries. Refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq speak the same language as the local people. Shared language and culture facilitates integration in these countries. In contrast, the Syrians in Turkey suffer from a language barrier. However Turkey’s advantages are geographical size, population and economic capacity. These advantages facilitate integration of refugees in Turkey. For example, the province of Gaziantep in Turkey is foremost among the provinces housing Syrian refugees. There are 100,000 refugees in Gaziantep, however since its population is 2 million, the refugees is hardly seen as a problem. Besides, Gaziantep’s advanced economy is capable of absorbing excess labor force. This problem is worse in the other countries and makes it difficult for social integration.

e. Ethnic-Sectarian Polarization

Lebanon is a troubled country in terms of ethnic-sectarian polarization. The most important reason for that is the social and political structure of Lebanon, which is based on the population ratio among the sectarian groups. Sunni Arabs form the majority of refugees, which deteriorates the already-existing Shiite-Sunni polarization in Lebanon. The Lebanese Shiites worries that the Syrian refugees will stay in Leb-
anon and alter the demographic structure. Jordan and the KRG do not have a similar problem, since they have a homogeneous demographic structure and close affinity between peoples on both sides of the border. In Turkey, the sectarian polarization is confined in the province of Hatay. The most important cause of this situation is the heterogeneous demographic structure of the city and its cultural ties with Syria.

**f. The Desire to Migrate to Third Countries**

Turkey and Lebanon are the countries, from which the refugees are more likely to migrate to third countries. Even though there are good camp conditions and many economic opportunities, many Syrians try to live under harsh conditions outside the camps. Many Syrians in Turkey might as well be trying to go to Western countries, since Turkey is geographically closer to Europe. Initially, Syrians had been staying in the border provinces; however they spread elsewhere in Turkey over time. Currently, there are lots of Syrians in Istanbul. It is probable that most of these Syrians will migrate to Europe. According to the UNHCR officials in Lebanon, there are numerous demands about immigration to third countries. The Syrians in Iraqi Kurdistan are the less likely to migrate to a third country.

**g. Radicalization Trends among the Syrians**

This is a risk factor that is valid for all four countries. However, Zatari Camp in Jordan is the most suitable place for misconduct and therefore radicalization, because of the size of the camp, worse conditions and insufficient security measures. The Syrians in Lebanon live under harsh conditions as well. Besides, the Syrian civil conflict has spread to Lebanon. The Lebanese people support either the regime or the opposition. For this reason, the refugees in Lebanon are highly politicized. Considering the harsh conditions of living, the Syrians in Lebanon are more likely to radicalize. Suicide attacks after long years and increasing al Nusra activity in Lebanon are indicative of this process.

Lastly, these points are to be taken into consideration in order to lessen the problems of the refugees living in neighboring countries:

- There are both similar and different cases about the Syrian refugees’ conditions and impacts in all four countries. Rising rental prices in settlements that refugees live, decreasing labor costs, polygamous marriages, increase in prostitution and resentment among the local people about the aids that Syrians receive are common observations about the social and economic impacts of Syrians in all neighboring countries. In contrast, there are different outcomes in all four countries with respect to camp conditions, political tensions, ethnic-sectarian polarization, general economic situation and security.

- People with low income feel resentment against the Syrians in all four countries and the basic reason behind it is economy. Therefore, it is imperative for governments, international organizations and NGOs to consider the local people when planning aid projects for the Syrians.

- Syrians in all four countries respond positively to the question about whether they want to return to Syria or not. They want to return when the stability and economic conditions in Syria are restored. They are hopeless, when they are asked when they expect the civil conflict would end. Therefore, Syrians need to prepare for even longer durations of refuge. Besides, it is probable that the security situation in Syria will worsen and there will be a new wave of mass refugees. Every country should have measures against it.

- Provided the conditions are good, the camps should offer more amenities in terms of control and basic services. It is difficult to provide services to the Syrians, who live outside camps. And it is quite impossible to contain the effects that it will cause within
the country. Therefore, all four countries need to build new camps and enhance the camp conditions, except for Turkey. The camps in the countries other than Turkey focus only on meeting the basic needs of Syrian. The problems in the camps in Turkey are the lack of a control mechanism and perceived freedom limitations. Turkey should uphold flexible camp rules for promoting camp life. For Lebanon, it is currently imperative to build a camp, according to officials. Lebanon no longer pursues a camp policy, because of past experience with refugees and its political scene. However, it is no longer sustainable. In Jordan, Azrak camp proves to be a good preparation for the future, considering its enhanced capacity and conditions.

- Even though, camp life is promoted, most of the refugees will prefer living in city centers. Syrian will stay in those neighboring countries for a long time. Considering these two points, it is imperative that these countries should begin thinking about measures for integration of Syrians in local society.

- Lastly, the refugee problem is not a phenomenon, which affects the receiving country negatively. Syrians’ contributions to receiving countries should be taken into consideration. These contributions are close affinity between neighboring peoples and Syrians provided that social integration is successful, long term political and economic cooperation opportunities enabled by strong social links, Syrians’ positive impact on receiving countries’ economies (dynamism, entrepreneurship, Syrian businessmen’s investments and capital transfers, etc.).