



Syrian Refugees in Tent Cities and Urban Centers in Turkey: Their Housing, Livelihood, Culture, Informal Economy and Social-Physical Infrastructure

Cihan ERÇETİN¹

Keywords
Refugee, Syria,
Tent City,
Housing,
Anthropology.

Abstract

The inner war in Syria has resulted in removal of Syrian people from their homeland to surrounding countries. The political conflict between different groups including Syrian government and opponent forces on one single geographical land has made Northern Syria a non-livable place for its own local people. As a result, more than one million people have left their houses, cultures and jobs as refugees having the hope to be hosted in one of the neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and mostly Turkey. The reason why Syrian refugees have mostly preferred Turkey as their temporary homeland is that Turkey is a much more politically stable and owns a positive and welcoming attitude towards refugees.

In terms of urban anthropology, refugees in Turkey will be examined to reveal not just being refugee for Syrians, but also to reveal what kind of a life style they own and how they live apart from their main homeland. In this study, firstly the term -refugee- will be described mentioning how being refugee can be and how they have chosen to be refugee. Later on, the condition in Syria will be noted in terms of the reasons for displacement of Syrian people. Finally, the anthropological analysis will be carried out in some certain titles which are; housing (sheltering needs), livelihood (what kind of jobs they have in order to maintain their lives), and their social-physical infrastructure (education, health, leisure time needs). In the end, some concluding remarks will be presented critically.

1. Introduction

The inner war in Syria has resulted in removal of Syrian people from their homeland to surrounding countries. The political conflict between different groups including Syrian government and opponent forces on one single geographical land has made Northern Syria a non-livable place for its own local people. As a result, more than one million people have left their houses, cultures and jobs as refugees having the hope to be hosted in one of the neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and mostly Turkey. The reason why Syrian refugees have mostly preferred Turkey as their temporary homeland is that Turkey is a much more politically stable and owns a positive and welcoming attitude towards refugees.

In terms of urban anthropology, refugees in Turkey will be examined to reveal not just being refugee for Syrians, but also to reveal what kind of a life style they own and how they live apart

¹ Corresponding Author. Research Assistant, Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, City and Regional Planning Department, cihanercetin@gmail.com

from their main homeland. In this study, firstly the term -refugee- will be described mentioning how being refugee can be and how they have chosen to be refugee. Later on, the condition in Syria will be noted in terms of the reasons for displacement of Syrian people. Finally, the anthropological analysis will be carried out in some certain titles which are; housing (sheltering needs), livelihood (what kind of jobs they have to maintain their lives), and their social-physical infrastructure (education, health, leisure time needs). In the end, some concluding remarks will be presented critically.

2. Refugee Concept and Syrian Refugees

At the beginning of this research, some questions need to be answered to clarify the basis of anthropological analysis. Firstly, definition of refugee will be mentioned touching upon the reasoning behind being refugee. Then, the question of why the refugees in Syria emerged and shifted to Turkey in recent 5 years will be examined.

2.1. Being a Refugee: Why and How?

The pursuit of individuals who left their living places for various reasons for safer living opportunities in any other place different from their homeland can be stated as the objective of a refugee. According to Goodwin-Gill and McAdam (2007), being refugee is a kind of migration dynamic in a way that people move to another country for their security issues in order to escape from unbearable conditions or personal circumstances in their living places.

To describe the concept of refugee, too many phrases have been used by researchers such as Internally Displaced People, asylum seekers, stateless people and environmental refugees (Makanjuola, 2014). According to United Nations Convention on the status of refugees (1951), a formal definition was presented as:

“A refugee is defined as someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”

Therefore, it can be inferred that refugee is a person or group of people who migrate from their own living environment to another country which has a better political and social condition for their firstly sheltering and any other human needs. The reason why these people cross the border is that they have concerns about their future due to mostly lack of security and belongingness.

One of the most prominent questions here is why these people choose to be refugee; what the reason can be behind this abandoning. Administrative instability, social and regional division, lack of monetary sufficiency, environmental diseases, international problematic issues, and political struggles are seen as major reasons of existence of refugee concept. One of the most apparent ones is war which also constitutes the reasoning of Syrian refugees to move into Turkey and many other countries. War and conflict between different groups -states or groups within the same state- having their own armaments influence dwellers profoundly in these urban areas (Hakovirta, 1993). Therefore, refugees have a desire to change their living environment to save their own lives and to live in a more peaceful; yet, they still do not know what sorts of living conditions exist in their new asylum. In other

words, there are a few certain questions for refugees to start a new life in a completely different place: is there an adequate housing opportunity equals to at least the one that they were living before, will they be able to find a new job in their new urban environment, what about their cultural habits and life styles, will they tend to take part in informal economy particularly in urban centers, will they have the opportunity to attain their needs such as education, health, entertainment activities and transport. In Syria case, refugees started to appear because of inner war in the country. The refugees have spread to all surrounding cities in different countries without knowing which place has more hospitality or which place would serve more peaceful living environment and wealth to them. In Syrian case, Turkish government has owned a hospitable attitude towards refugees which has been the reason why they select Turkey as their new homeland. All these concerns and the questions are the main anthropological research issues of this study. Before mentioning the analysis of the refugees in the boundaries of Turkey, how the process was started in Syria, which has resulted in the creation of Syrian refugees in Turkey, will be examined.

2.2. Syria in Recent Few Years: Emergence of Syrian Refugees in Turkey

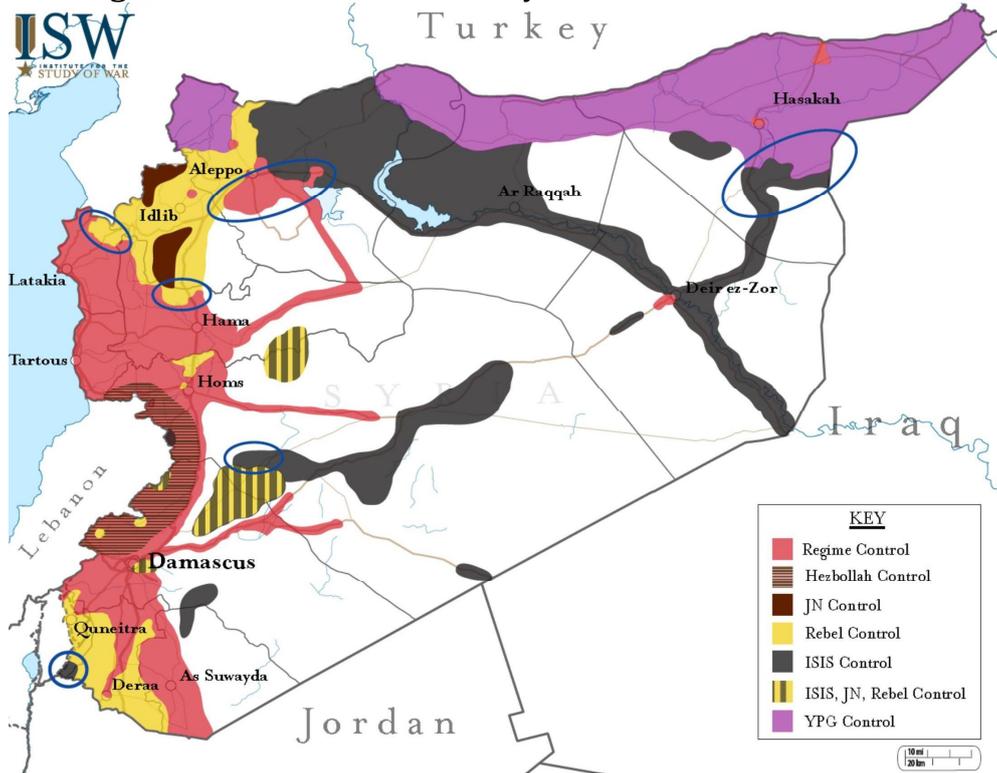
Since the mid of 2011, more than 2.5 million people in Syria have abandoned their country and resided in neighboring countries which are Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. They have been located in refugee camps in different cities in these different countries. In addition, almost 5 million refugee in Syria have been obliged to migrate different cities within the country (BBC, 2013). Before the refugee movements in Syria, the process has started with so called "Arab Spring". In 17th December of 2010, a young Tunisian burned himself in front of the municipality building which has started the uprisings against regimes in Middle Eastern countries. After a while, the effects of young Tunisians spread to other countries such as Egypt, Libya, and other Arabic countries (Güçer, Karaca, & Dinçer, 2013). NATO intervened in the situation in Libya; however the country has still not been resettled today politically. In Yemen and Bahrain, too many people died in violence (Yılmaz, 2013). These movements resulted in regime changes in most of these countries; but in Syria, rebellion has turned into not a regime change but a conflict and after into a civil war. The reflections of "Arab Spring" in Syria has become a humanity crisis in consequence of harsh intervention of Assad's government eventually (Güçer, Karaca, & Dinçer, 2013).

Violence has not stopped in Syria and continued to increase since the beginning of 2011. In addition, rebel forces were created to battle against government forces in order to grab the control of cities. In 2012, the battle in Syria has reached to Damascus, the capital city, and Aleppo. According to the United Nations (UN) and activists, the number of dead people in civil war was 90000 people by June 2013, 191000 people by August 2014, and finally 250000 people by August 2015 (BBC, 2015).

It can be put more simply for the battle between rebel forces and Assad's government army that Syrian rebel people started uprising against administrative policies and repressive regime; however, government forces have responded harshly to these groups. In addition to all these conflicts, the emergence and rise of jihadist groups so called "ISIS, IS or ISIL" (Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham or

Islamic State, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) has contributed the conflict in Syria. ISIS has put in a claim for a new state in Middle East mainly on Syrian boundaries. Thus, Syria has been divided into several sub-political regions controlled by Assad’s government, rebel forces, ISIS, Kurdish forces (YPG), Hezbollah from Lebanon and some other contested areas controlled by different forces (Figure 1). In addition, blue circles in below figure mention the recent superiority changes on certain places.

Figure 1. Control of Terrain in Syria as of December 23, 2015



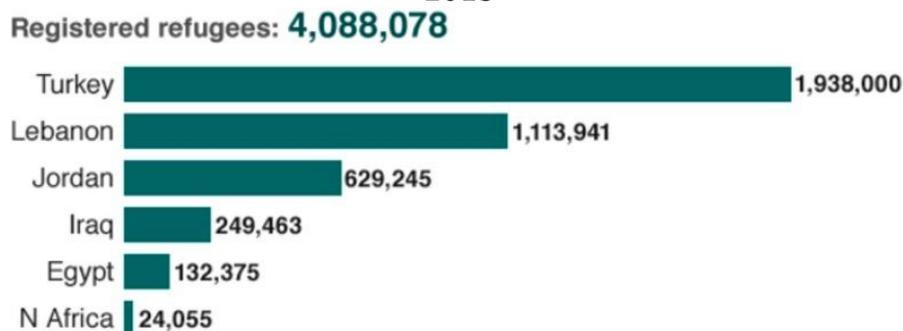
Source: <http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/control-terrain-syria-december-23-2015>

ISIS has been accused by United Nations as they have carried out terror in northern and eastern Syria due to the pursuit of an independent state. These terror actions include severe punishments such as public executions and torture on whom opposes the rules of ISIS. It has been in war with different religious minorities and any other armed forces in Syria. According to Mother-of-nine Mariam Akash, whose husband was executed by a sniper unexpectedly, the feeling of a local people and the dimension of civil war could be expressed as: “We are just living on the edge of life. We are always nervous, we are always afraid” (BBC, 2015).

All these violence and conflicts between various forces in Syria have influenced deeply civil people living in their own homeland. These people have chosen to move to another country as refugees who keep their hope to return to their countries and their own living environments. However, recent escalating conflicts and war in the region keep doubts of refugees still at issue for the peace in Syria.

As of August 2015, registered Syrian refugees have mainly dispersed into five countries and few of them into North Africa. Turkey has hosted almost half of these refugees -1938000 of the total 4088078 refugees- in tent and container cities near boundary, and in urban centers (Figure 2). According to the most recent data from The UN Refugee Agency, as of 17th of December 2015, the total number of registered Syrian Refugees is 4390439, and Turkey has 2291900 Syrian refugees as of 10th of December 2015 that means more than half of the refugees have preferred Turkey (UNCHR, 2015).

Figure 2. Distribution of Syrian Refugees into Different Countries as of the End of 2015



Source: BBC, 2015

According to a research carried out by the UN Refugee Agency (2015), reveals dramatic facts about the conditions of Syrian refugees. In fact, life in asylum for Syrians in Jordan and Lebanon has increasingly been harsh. 86% of the refugees living in outside of camps in Jordan is maintaining their life having daily 3.2 \$ on average which means below poverty line; in addition, 55% of refugees in Lebanon is living in a quite low standard shelters. Moreover, because of the lack of financial supply for the refugee crises from other countries such as EU countries or USA, it is expected that there might be new cuts on food aid, and difficulties in providing lifesaving health services or education needs.

In recent days, current discussions in European Union are held on how to finance refugee crises residing in neighboring countries of Syria or on how to avoid refugees -meaning new population increase by completely strangers (refugees)- to come their countries. However, another issue stands as the most prior than anything in Syria case: what about the current situation of new lives of refugees? As a Syrian citizen living in this world, they have the most basic human rights such as living, housing, health and education, which makes this question one of the prior one. The anthropological analysis on Turkey is going to be based on this question in further part.

3. Anthropological Analysis for Syrian Refugees in Turkey

Turkey has been hosting more than 2 million Syrian refugees as of the end of 2015. In this part of the study, basic needs, values and livelihood of Syrian refugees in Turkey will be discussed. The analysis will be carried out into four parts which are housing, livelihood (informal economy), culture (continuation of traditional life style, and finally social - physical infrastructures (education, health, leisure time, transport).

3.1. Housing

Before the beginning of conflict in Syria, the country had had the population about 20 million; however, today, 12.2 million of these people seek for humanitarian aid. In this process, almost 7.65 million Syrian have been obliged to leave their homes and around 4 million people have chosen to become refugees in neighboring countries. Turkey has applied “Open Gates Policy” to Syrian refugees meaning that Turkey has not refused any Syrians to come into their countries in this civil war process (AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster&Emergency Management Authority), 2015). As of 21st of December 2015, Turkey hosts 265180 Syrian refugees in sheltering centers (tent and container cities), and remaining 4125259 refugees have spread all around surrounding city centers or some metropolitan cities like İstanbul and Ankara. 10 cities and 25 sheltering centers were constructed near the boundaries of Turkey until the end of 2015. Table 1 shows the detailed information about tent and container cities in Turkey.

Table 1. Accommodation Information about Syrians in Turkey in Sheltering Centers

PROVINCE	SHELTERING PLACE	SHELTERING TYPE		TENT AND CONTAINER NUMBER		TOTAL POPULATION
HATAY	Altınözü 1 Tent City	263	living part	1.331	Syrian	15.170
	Altınözü 2 Tent City	622	Tent	2.935	Syrian	
	Yayladağı 1 Tent City	236	Tent	2.714	Syrian	
		310	living part			
	Yayladağı 2 Tent City	510	Tent	3.080	Syrian	
Apaydın Container City	1.181	container	5.110	Syrian		
GAZİANTEP	İslahiye 1 Tent City	1.898	Tent	8.530	Syrian	51.268
	İslahiye 2 Tent City	2.364	living part	10.341	Syrian	
				9.710	Iraqi	
	Karkamış Tent City	1.686	tent	7.265	Syrian	
	Nizip 1 Tent City	1.858	tent	10.518	Syrian	
Nizip 2 Container City	938	container	4.904	Syrian		
ŞANLIURFA	Ceylanpınar Tent City	4.771	tent	20.862	Syrian	107.147
	Akçakale Tent City	5.000	tent	28.952	Syrian	
	Harran Container City	2.000	container	14.034	Syrian	
	Viranşehir Tent City	4.100	tent	17.958	Syrian	
	Suruç Tent City	7.000	tent	25.341	Syrian	
KİLİS	Öncüpınar Container City	2.063	container	10.368	Syrian	33.709
	Elbeyli Beşiriye Container City	3.592	container	23.341	Syrian	
MARDİN	Midyat Tent City	1.300	tent	3.082	Syrian	14.304
				981	Iraqi	
	Nusaybin Tent City	3.270	living part	1.487	Iraqi	
	Derik Tent City	2.100	living part	8.754	Syrian	
KAHRAMANMARAŞ	Merkez Tent City	3.684	tent	18.013	Syrian	18.013
OSMANİYE	Cevdetiye Tent City	2.012	tent	9.272	Syrian	9.272
ADİYAMAN	Merkez Tent City	2.260	tent	9.877	Syrian	9.877
ADANA	Sarıçam Tent City	2.162	tent	10.740	Syrian	10.740
MALATYA	Beydağı Container City	2.083	container	7.858	Syrian	7.858

Source: AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster&Emergency Management Authority), 2015

The site selection of tent or container cities in different Turkish cities was made mainly depending on closeness to electric, water and sewage networks. The containers or tents were positioned on places which provide proximity to social

activities, the feeling of being safe and enabling the maximum benefit of refugees from services as seen in Figure 3 (AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014).

Figure 3. Views from Malatya Beydağı Container City, Şanlıurfa Ceylanpınar Tent City and Nizip-1 Tent City



Source: AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014

In these tent and container cities, basic needs such as food, health, social activity, entertainment, education, worship, translation, cleaning and sanitation have regularly been supplied to refugees by Turkish government. Water is supplied to containers and tents from city networks and wells, and food is given by Kızılay (Turkish Red crescent) three times a day. In addition, main housing needs of security, laundry, television and telephone are served in common guest houses. Heating of tents is procured with electrical heaters in each shelter, tables and chairs are given to each tent or container, and clothing is regularly supplied (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (TBMM) İnsan Haklarını İnceleme Komisyonu (Turkish Grand National Assembly Human Rights Investigation Commission), 2012).

The size of tent or container city settlements were planned providing 45 m² area per person including infrastructure, social facilities and sheltering spaces. At least 2 meters distance between tents or containers, and at least 6 meters distance between tent/container clusters were left to take precaution against fire (Figure 4). Besides, in these sheltering centers, neighborhoods having at most 2500 people were created to take care of the needs of refugees more closely. In addition, a kind of road hierarchy was created between and within these sheltering centers which means 10 meters width roads between neighborhoods, main roads within each neighborhood with 10 meters, and 6 meters width minor roads within each neighborhoods (AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014).

Figure 4. Views from Malatya Beydağı Container City and Adıyaman Tent City



Source: AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014

In tent cities near Syrian boundaries, basic needs of Syrian refugees are regularly provided and they do not have almost any problem in terms of housing conditions. They are living in row of tents or containers having equal conditions and rights, which enables easy access by walking to any amenities provides more secure controllable living environment for refugee residents. Figure 5 demonstrates the layout of Yayladağı Refugee camp in Hatay. According to the research carried out by AFAD (2014), all the people living in sheltering centers in Turkey are provided 3.5-4.5 m² closed, private and healthy living space in these tents or containers which provide protection from harsh climate conditions (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Layout of Yayladağı Refugee Camp in Hatay (a southern province in Turkey)



Source: www.maps.google.com

Figure 6. Views from Adıyaman Tent City Demonstrating Private Living Spaces of Refugees



Source: AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014

Below Figure 7, 8 and 9 shows general views of tent or container cities in Turkey.

Figure 7. Harran Container City



Source: <http://haber.star.com.tr/guncel/turkiyedeki-cadir-kentlerde-kac-suriyeli-kaliyor/haber-1038762>

Figure 8. Kahramanmaraş Merkez Tent City



Source: <http://www.haberler.com/cadir-kent-sanayi-esnafini-magdur-etti-6654699-haberi/>

Figure 9. Şanlıurfa Akçakale Tent City



Source: AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014

To sum up, tent or container cities in Turkey present many opportunities for refugees to maintain their life in terms of having private living spaces, heating, cleaning or worship. In other words, they have as much as things in their tents or containers compared to any standard house. Nevertheless, there is still another dimension. They satisfy almost all basic needs in these camps; however, they eventually deprived their total freedom and private properties as they had before the war in Syria. They are tried to keep in decent life conditions by Turkish government, but they are still refugees in the end in a completely different country, not normal citizen as their own country. Because of this reason, they still keep their hope alive to return to their original homeland -Syria- one day. In fact, the conflicts in Syria seem not to be able be resolved in near future as of the end of 2015.

The story has been experienced more dramatically by another group of people in Turkey who are the refugees living in different urban centers in almost all Turkish cities. These urban refugees -having the population about 1.7 million in Turkey- are the escapers from the war in Syria and started their life with their families in city centers by having an ongoing pursuit of a sheltering and a job to make money. In fact, too many of them are still trying to survive in quite harsh conditions (Figure 10 and 11).

Figure 10. A Syrian Family Living in an Open Space as Urban Refugee



Source: <http://www.memurlar.net/haber/426712/>

Figure 11. Syrian Refugees in İzmir Living near an Open Public Green Area



Source: <http://www.trtturk.com/haber/evsiz-suriyelilerin-yasam-mucadelesi-142119.html>

A considerable number of Syrians -quite more than the ones living in tent or container cities- have been living outside of refugee camps. These urban refugees mostly prefer to live in rental places for their accommodation; however, it is doubtful that how long they can sustain to pay for rent since their savings have depleted in each day outside of their country. Moreover, increasing housing rents in cities near Syrian boundary, because of speculative landlords' profiteer behavior, contribute the concerns of urban refugees to find a place to live. For instance, average housing rents in Kilis (a Syrian border province of Turkey) increased from 100€ to 250-300€; similarly, the increase in rents in İstanbul is much more apparent which is from 250€ to 500€ on average (Dinçer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirişçi, & Çarmıklı, 2013). According to a research carried out by AFAD (2015) on 1143 Syrians in Turkey, these urban refugees are living in six different types of places which are apartments, ruin buildings, public buildings, tents, temporary shelter or plastic preservers, and finally on streets or open spaces (Table 2).

Table 2. Housing Conditions of Syrian Urban Refugees in Turkey

Type of Housing or Place of Living in Turkey for Urban Refugees	Percentage (%)
Apartment or housing unit	74.1
Ruin building	14
Public Building	0.6
Tent	0.8
Temporary Shelter or Plastic Preservers	10.1
On Streets or Open Spaces	0.4

Source: AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster&Emergency Management Authority), 2015

There are also too many refugees in İstanbul in almost each part of the city. Some of these urban refugees in İstanbul did not even enter refugee camps in Turkey since these tent or container cities seemed them as prison. Each family has at least 6-7 children, which forced some of refugee families to rent not one single but two rooms for their housing. A 35-year-old man refugee mentions his opinion as "My monetary condition was fine, and I took all my saving with me which can make my family survive for more two or three months. However, most of Syrians around

here had financial difficulties also in Syria; so they are in worse condition in here". In addition, a 60-year-old woman states that "In Syria, we had properties, house, money, goods and dignity. Now, we have become miserable. Other people call us as beggar, refugee or gipsy" (Yilmaz, 2013). An interesting dilemma exists in urban refugee case for Syrians. They do not want to enter or stay in refugee camps near boundary; they expected a better life opportunity in the center of cities instead. However, they are now mostly trying to survive in small rooms, sheds or on streets. In other words, although refugee camps present a better life condition, they preferred their free will to live in cities to make their own decisions about their lives.

The living condition of urban refugees can be exemplified as (for rental ones) 8-9 m² size and owning the capacity to fit only three beds at the same time. For these shelters, Syrian Refugees in İstanbul pay about 100-200€ in total. In addition, they live in small parts of old business places which transformed to illegal rooms without having any registration of being a hotel or pension as seen in Figure 12. In these places, there are also only one toilet on each floor, which makes these places quite unhealthy (Yilmaz, 2013).

Figure 12. A View from Rental Rooms of Syrian Refugees in İstanbul



Source: <http://www.mazlumder.org/tr/main/aktuel/suriye/3>

The most serious and dramatic issue for refugees is living in nowhere without electricity, sanitation, toilet, proper food and clothes (Figure 13). In addition to lack of basic necessities of housing, they also feel the pressure from local people as they seem to them unsecure and dangerous strangers. They are always in a pursuit of a way of better life opportunity in different cities; however, they face a new struggle in each day socially and financially unless they find a job and a basic house to live in.

Figure 13. Syrian Refugees Living in a Park in front of the Municipality Building in İstanbul



Source: <http://www.mazlumder.org/tr/main/aktuel/suriye/3>

3.2. Livelihood

Housing conditions in refugee camps and in city centers are differentiated from each other. It seems to be better to stay in a container near the boundary for a refugee maintaining the hope to return to Syria; however, in this case, their freedom is restricted and they have limited rights to go around freely. According to a research carried out by AFAD (2013), refugees in tent or container cities in Turkey considers entry-exit issues in refugee camps and visitor restrictions as the most significant problems. This situation also supports their limitation about freedom in camps.

On the other hand, in urban centers, they completely have their freedom; however, harsh living conditions and survival without having any shelter make them miserable urban refugee dwellers. In order to make refugee life better, job opportunities and financial well-being is one of the most fundamental prerequisite. In this part, livelihood, meaning how they manage their lives through job opportunities and working conditions, will be examined considering mostly the refugees living in urban centers. In tent or container cities, refugees do not work, because basic living necessities are provided by Turkish government. In fact, there are not places for them to work within camps due to having refugee status. On the other hand, it is an obligation for urban refugees to work in order to survive in cities with their families.

There are at least six or seven children in each family, and some of them panhandle on the streets seeking money from other people. It is seen for urban refugees that lack of knowledge about language (Turkish) has always been difficulty in finding job and communicate with the society. In addition, getting a working permit has seemed to be troublesome to refugees, which necessitates long time, effort and money. Therefore, some adult males and children sell water to try to make money (Yılmaz, 2013).

As a result of influx of refugees to urban centers, they have also been seemed as cheap labor force. According to the research carried out by “Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies” (2015), Syrian refugees in Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay and Kilis cities (cities on Syrian border) have caused job losses for local people living in these places in particularly informal sector. Moreover, many local people

also think that arrival of Syrians have made the wages decreased since refugees are desperate in terms of their livelihood together with their families and they are able to work for lowest wages. Therefore, it can be concluded that urban refugees in Turkey mostly work in informal sectors or just panhandle on streets.

Panhandling on streets or near traffic lights is one of the mostly preferred methods of earning livelihood for Syrians in cities. In other words, refugees seek money from any other people mentioning their desperate condition in Turkey -mostly with their children-. Figure 14 shows panhandling mother and her two daughters in city of Mardin seeking money from drivers.

Figure 14. Panhandling Syrian Refugees near Traffic Lights in Mardin



Source: <http://haberciniz.biz/suriyeli-dilenciler-trafik-isiklarini-mesken-tuttu-2840230h.htm>

Another mostly preferred livelihood method for Syrian urban refugees is seeking money from other people on streets and squares by approaching and telling their stories that they are Syrians and they lack of most of their life maintenance needs. In capital city of Turkey -Ankara- and a global metropolitan city -İstanbul-, it is possible to see Syrian refugees in any crowded and vibrant places, particularly in city centers. In Figure 15, Syrian refugees in Ankara can be seen as panhandling on central streets of Ulus and Kızılay districts. In Figure 16 from İstanbul, a Syrian father and his three children are seen as panhandling on street, and also one little Syrian kid is seen in front of a mosque in İstanbul mentioning a speech on a piece of paper: "I am Syrian. For the sake of Allah (god), could you help me? I do not know Turkish".

Figure 15. Syrian Refugees in Ankara Seeking Money in Different Crowded Streets in City Center



Source: <http://www.gungazetesi.com/suriyeliler-ankarayi-istila-etti-h966.htm>

Figure 16. Panhandling Syrian Refugees in İstanbul



Source: <http://www.mercek.tv/Haber/300984/istanbulda-suriyeli-dilenci-istilasi/1/>

The main question for Syrian refugees in urban centers in Turkey is that panhandling or working in informal sectors has been a preference or obligation to satisfy their livelihood. In the end, urban refugees preferred to earn money through these illegal methods; however, one of the reasons is the bias of Turkish people for Syrians resulting in not employing them in any other formal sectors. According to Turkish people, living together with Syrian in the same cities, Syrian refugee issue is seen as trouble in terms of security reasons, identity differentiations, disturbing the order and life style of Turkish society. In other words, some people do not even want to see any Syrians in their countries; moreover, they do not want Syrian refugees to benefit from financial supports coming from Turkish government. All these reasons have made most of Syrian urban refugees as persona non grata in Turkey. Therefore, they have difficulties in finding a proper job for their livelihood and in being an ordinary citizen on any land as they are in their homeland Syria before the war.

3.3. Cultural Life and Social - Physical Infrastructure

Syrian refugees in tent or container cities in Turkey have had mostly their opportunities for education, health and entertainment activity places as their social and physical infrastructures; however, it is not so easy to mention this issue for urban refugees.

The percentage of the use of health services for Syrian refugees in tent or container cities is quite high which is 90% for males and 94% for females. In these refugee camps in Turkey, there are sufficient number of doctors and nurses. On the other hand, the refugees living outside of tent or container cities have not been able to use hospital facilities that they needed. The reason why urban refugees have seldom used health facilities can be related with lack of necessary registration (AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster & Emergency Management Authority), 2013). In refugee camps, as of 2nd of May 2014, there are 21 health centers, 399 health staff, 102 ambulances, 11579 births and 44163 surgeries were carried out. As seen in There are also 21 mobile hospitals having flexible route opportunity for the benefit of refugees (AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014) (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Field Hospital in Refugee Camps for Syrians in Turkey



Source: <http://www.haberler.com/suriyelilere-cadir-hastanede-saglik-hizmeti-7956697-haberi/>

In tent or container cities in Turkey, there many other social facilities such as education for different levels, religious amenities, entertainment activity places for kids, social amenities for people, and common laundry rooms. There are also special classes for different personal development activities such as Quran learning courses, Turkish language literacy classes, tailoring and embroidery courses, hairdressing courses, handiwork studies, and computer learning (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Social and Physical Infrastructures for the Needs of Refugees in Camps



Source: AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı), 2014

In summary, Turkish government tries to provide almost all social and cultural necessities of Syrian refugees in refugee camps located near border cities of Turkey. In fact, some of these Syrians have more socializing opportunity than they

had in their country. They are provided various education opportunities, social activity places, physical infrastructures to fulfill daily necessities and health centers. However, there is a serious fact that almost six times more refugees than in camps have been trying to survive in urban centers without having special social and physical infrastructure to maintain their life. As a result, refugee issue cannot be restrained as if the fact that Turkey hosts Syrian refugees in only tent or container cities. In fact, the real problem lies behind the existence of urban refugees in Turkey.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Refugee migration from Syria to Turkey has started to become one of the most prior agendas of Turkey, because, Turkish government has applied open gate policy to refugees seeking help from the beginning of civil war and ISIS crisis in Syria. This policy, implying the message which invites suffering Syrians to Turkey, has created two living conditions for refugees. One of them is staying in refugee camps and benefitting the aids of Turkish government without paying money - except for paying for self-market shopping in refugee camps-. In this option, the main advantages are having opportunities for education, health services, socializing activities, self-improvement courses, free accommodation, heating, cleaning and security. On the other hand, what makes being in camps disadvantageous is entry-exit and visitor restrictions. In other words, they lack of enough freedom as they have in their homeland. Another living condition for Syrian refugees is migrating urban centers as a preference of self-maintaining life mostly as a family. The advantage of being an urban refugee is having the absolute freedom in terms of moving in cities from one place to another. However, this choice has two main disadvantages which are difficulties in self life-maintaining activities without having any financial or moral support, and pressure on urban refugees by local dwellers about the feeling of being unwelcome. These two factors state the main reason why Syrian refugees decided to stay in tent or container cities or to be urban refugees under challengeable conditions of cities.

Syrian refugees in Turkey have faced being strangers and undesirable guests in the eyes of Turkish people eventually. No matter where Syrian refugees live in refugee camps or urban centers, Turkish people mostly consider them as resource consuming unwelcomed guests having different cultural and social identities. As of the beginning of 2016, Turkish government has spent almost 1 billion \$ for Syrian refugees in tent or container cities. This idea has made Turkish people question about the source of that amount of money, and many of them think that Turkish citizens deserve to benefit from that amount or resource as society. This issue contributes another dimension to the discussion of Syrian refugees in Turkey that Syrians seeking help from Turkish government have faced unfavorable perception by Turkish citizens. Thus, they cannot fulfill their daily needs as comfortable as they would desire to be. In other words, in addition to their monetary deficiencies, they have also faced psychological challenges which affect their anthropological structure as finding a proper housing, fulfilling their livelihood to maintain their lives in Turkey and new social and cultural way of living.

The dilemma for refugees, namely staying in Syria or migrating to Turkey or any other country, can also be considered from the eyes of Syrian refugees. What if

they would have stayed in Syria despite the civil war and ISIS threat? They would certainly feel the fear of die or any kind of security concerns, and also they might feel the limitations on their freedom again for the security reasons in Syria. However, despite all these concerns, they could be saying that “this is my homeland” if their homeland is still the place that they desire to live in under terror and state of war. In reality, migrating from their homeland could have not been a choice, but a necessity namely an obligation. After all these dilemmas and a bundle of choices to prevent themselves from the war, the real losers of this process are not politicians or policy makers. It can be claimed that the absolute losers of this civil war and migration process are the refugees since they have not been able to sustain their life as it should be as a human being.

In conclusion, in the last few years, Syrian refugees have been suffering from the fight among countries or groups, namely among the policy makers or directors ruling their groups or states for the sake of owning the power... the power for what? This struggle results in most significantly death, homelessness, hunger, social exclusion of human beings. The action that must be carried out is ending the war literally. However, there has seemed no reason for power holders to consider the war from the perspective of refugees, since they have not still allocated the power and land in between each other. Consequently, there are two choices to act on refugee issue in Turkey which are enhancing the life condition of refugees or keeping away from Turkey. In both cases, the loser side is being refugee staying or surviving far away from their homeland.

References

- AFAD (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı). (2014). Suriyeli Misafirlerimiz Kardeş Topraklarında. Ankara: AFAD.
- AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster & Emergency Management Authority). (2013). Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Sığınmacılar: 2013 Saha Araştırması Sonuçları. Ankara: AFAD Publishing.
- AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster&Emergency Management Authority). (2015, December 21). Disaster Report. December 28, 2015 tarihinde <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/IcerikDetay1.aspx?IcerikID=848&ID=16> adresinden alındı
- BBC. (2013, July 25). BBC Türkçe. Suriyeli mültecilerin sayısı '2 milyona çıktı' (The number of Syrian Refugees has reached to '2 million': http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/07/130725_suriyeli_multeciler_guardian.shtml adresinden alınmıştır
- BBC. (2015, October 9). BBC News. December 27, 2015 tarihinde Syria: The Story of the Conflict: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868> adresinden alındı
- Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies. (2015). Suriyeli Mültecilerin Türkiye'ye Ekonomik Etkileri: Sentetik Bir Modelleme. Ankara: ORSAM Publishing.

- Dinçer, O. B., Federici, V., Ferris, E., Karaca, S., Kirişçi, K., & Çarmıklı, E. Ö. (2013). Suriyeli Mülteciler Krizi ve Türkiye: SONu Gelmeyen Misafirlik. Ankara: International Strategic Research Institutions & Brookings Institute.
- Godwin-Gill, G., & McAdam, J. (2007). The Refugee in International Law. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Güçer, M., Karaca, S., & Dinçer, O. (2013). Sınırlar Arasında Yaşam Savaşı: SURIYE'li Mülteciler Alan Araştırması. Ankara: International Strategic Research Institution Publication.
- Hakovirta, H. (1993). The Global Refugee Problem: A Model and Its Application. International Political Science Review, 14(1).
- Makanjuola, R. O. (2014). Refugee Protection and the International Refugee Regime: Challenges and Future Possibilities. İzmir: Dokuz Eylül University.
- Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (TBMM) İnsan Haklarını İnceleme Komisyonu (Turkish Grand National Assembly Human Rights Investigation Commission). (2012). Ülkemize Sığınan Suriye Vatandaşlarının Barındıkları Çadırkentler Hakkında İnceleme Raporu (Research Report on Tent Cities in which Syrian Refugees are Living). Ankara: TBMM.
- UNCHR. (2015, December 17). Syria Regional Refugee Response. Inter-agency information sharing portal: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> adresinden alınmıştır
- UNHCR. (2015, July 9). The UN Refugee Agency. Total number of Syrian refugees exceeds four million for first time: <http://www.unhcr.org.tr/?lang=en&content=648> adresinden alınmıştır
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (1951). Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. UNHCR (The United Nations Refugee Agency).
- Yılmaz, H. (2013). Türkiye'de Suriyeli Mülteciler: İstanbul Örneği - (Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Case of Istanbul). İstanbul: MAZLUMDER Publishing.
- <http://www.understandingwar.org/background/control-terrain-syria-december-23-2015>
- www.maps.google.com
- <http://haber.star.com.tr/guncel/turkiyedeki-cadir-kentlerde-kac-suriyeli-kaliyor/haber-1038762>
- <http://www.haberler.com/cadir-kent-sanayi-esnafini-magdur-etti-6654699-haberi/>
- <http://www.memurlar.net/haber/426712/>
- <http://www.trtturk.com/haber/evsiz-suriyelilerin-yasam-mucadelesi-142119.html>
- <http://www.mazlumder.org/tr/main/aktuel/suriye/3>
- <http://www.mazlumder.org/tr/main/aktuel/suriye/3>

<http://haberciniz.biz/suriyeli-dilenciler-trafik-isiklarini-mesken-tuttu-2840230h.htm>

<http://www.gungazetesi.com/suriyeliler-ankarayi-istila-etti-h966.htm>

<http://www.mercek.tv/Haber/300984/istanbulda-suriyeli-dilenci-istilasi/1/>

<http://www.haberler.com/suriyelilere-cadir-hastanede-saglik-hizmeti-7956697-haberi/>

SRA
Strategic Research Academy

Strategic Research Academy ©

© Copyright of Journal of Current Researches on Social Science is the property of Strategic Research Academy and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.