

human appeal

25
years

SYRIA: SIX YEARS OF CRISIS

THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME

2011 - 2017



CONTENT

INTRODUCTION 3

TO BE A SYRIAN 6

INSIDE SYRIA 7

- Access
- Besieged Areas
- IDPs
- Health
- Challenges for Aid Agencies
- Syrian Refugees
- Palestinian Refugees from Syria
- Education

DEAR FRIEND



"It is truly frightening to consider that the Syria conflict has lasted six years and is still ongoing. As this report highlights, not a single Syrian family has been unaffected; an estimated 500,000 have been killed and half of the country has been displaced. Even if you have not been forced to flee your home, Syrians have found themselves living in hellholes of urban destruction and brutality. The statistics are staggering, and yet still do not begin to reflect the full human cost.

The world has failed Syria and Syrians. For six years, we have watched whilst this country and people have been torn apart. It has been one of most documented conflicts in history, with unimaginable horrors occurring daily and appearing regularly on our TV screens, and yet the world has allowed it to continue. We including Britain are now closing our doors to them, even to refugee children. The scale of the tragedy dwarfs the international response.

I can only commend the terrific work of agencies such as Human Appeal whose staff operate in dangerous and terrifying conditions, to deliver vital life-giving aid to some of the most needy and vulnerable on the planet.

My one hope is that we will not need a report for year seven of the Syria crisis."

LORD ALF DUBS

Alf Dubs is a British Labour politician and former Member of Parliament and a life-long advocate for refugees. In 2016, he sponsored an amendment to the Immigration Act to facilitate the entry to the UK of unaccompanied refugee minors, commonly called the Dubs amendment. He himself as a six-year-old fled to Britain from Czechoslovakia on the kindertransport after the Nazi invasion.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



The conflict in Syria has horrified the world. Six years on, we are witnessing a crisis of staggering proportions as this report highlights. In the twenty-six years of Human Appeal's emergency response across the globe, this conflict has been by far the most challenging.

British people have been so deeply moved by this conflict that their continued generous donations have not fatigued at all during this conflict, which is now entering its sixth year. The UK government has also donated an incredible £2.3 billion in humanitarian funding but much more needs to be done.

As a leading Muslim faith-based charity, Human Appeal has been at the forefront, mobilising the British Muslim community at a grassroots level - engaging over 2,000 volunteers from schools, universities, mosques and businesses to raise awareness and funds.

With the added help of partnership funding from various UN organisations, Human Appeal has been on the ground inside Syria and neighbouring countries implementing around a £50 million humanitarian operation.

I have seen for myself the plight and desperation of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Greece. The infrastructure in these countries is at breaking point but inside Syria the conditions are even worse. This cannot be allowed to continue.

Ending the conflict must be the priority. Moreover, humanitarian aid must not be used as a political football. It should be available for all who are in need, wherever, whenever, and certainly, should not be blocked, bombed or stolen. Human Appeal cannot and will not be silent as Syrian civilians are used as weapons of war, starved under siege. Their hospitals, clinics and schools have become military targets, their children have become soldiers, their girls have become child brides and their homes have become rubble.

We must remain determined; continue striving towards greater collaboration and ensure the international community doubles its efforts for the people of Syria.

Othman Moqbel,
CEO, Human Appeal



TO BE A SYRIAN

To be a Syrian over the last six years is to see your once peaceful country be devastated by war, massacres, mass executions, bombing, and siege, systematic rape and sexual violence, chemical weapons use, and the spread of violent extremist international groups that have also terrorised civilians.

Around 500,000 have been killed but almost as many people lost their lives because of indirect consequences of the war, such as a lack of health care.

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians including children have been arrested, kidnapped or sold into slavery.

Around half of all Syrians have been displaced either as refugees or internally displaced. Half of them are children. Refugees frequently face freezing conditions in winter and furnace-like temperatures in summer. The winter of 2016-2017 has been the worst yet.

To be Syrian means accepting that you may never return to your country, that your home may have been demolished or taken over.

Perhaps you are one of the hundreds of thousands of Syrians who have braved the journey to Europe risking joining the many who found a watery grave in the Mediterranean.

Life as a Syrian child has been traumatic, losing members of your family, constantly living in danger. Perhaps you are one of the 2.8 million who cannot go to school. Bullying and corporal punishment are rife. Maybe you are a child soldier or engaged in child labour. As a young Syrian girl, you live in fear of being married off early.

Children have had to learn how to spot bombs and booby traps like 11-year-old Omar in Aleppo. Majed said: "It looked like a soda can. I stepped on it and it exploded. I was thrown in the air but never lost consciousness. I was worried about Omar, I didn't know how to help. Two men rushed us to hospital in a taxi."

INSIDE SYRIA

Every part of Syria has witnessed massive killing and destruction. Whole urban areas including beautiful historic centres have been largely destroyed such as Aleppo and Homs. Aside from the intense fighting, a lack of access, food insecurity, inadequate shelter, health concerns, and increasing poverty has affected Syrians across the country. To address this, by the end of 2016, Human Appeal had provided 12,000 tonnes of flour, benefitting nearly 3.36 million people in Idlib, Aleppo and Hama.



FOOD
INSECURITY



INADEQUATE
SHELTER



HEALTH
CONCERNS



INCREASING
POVERTY



13 AREAS UNDER SIEGE



FOOD AND MEDICINE
SEIZED BY SOLDIERS



DEIR EZ ZOUR CAN
ONLY BE REACHED BY
THE USE OF AIR DROPS

BESIEGED AREAS

As of February 2017, the United Nations (UN) estimates that there are some 643,780 people living in 13 areas under siege inside Syria. This means civilians have been deliberately denied aid including food and medicine. Sieges of civilians are as Jan Egeland, the Special Advisor to UN Special Envoy for Syria stated "not compatible with the cessation of hostilities" and "belong in the Middle Ages." It amounts to giving civilians three options – starve, be bombed or surrender. For example, Eastern Ghouta to the east of Damascus has been under siege since April 2013.

Although included in UN Security Council Resolution 2258, the Syrian government has rejected most of the UN requests to deliver aid to besieged areas.

The sieges became a source of income for a network of war profiteers who deliver essential items to the besieged areas through their power and patronage network. Goods are sold for ten times the original price to desperate civilians. Delivering aid to these areas would bring the prices down.

The proper action should be to end these sieges but at minimum, more must be done to ensure that civilians can leave these besieged areas in safety and in compliance with international humanitarian law.

ACCESS

Despite UN Security Council Resolutions 2332 in 2016 and 2165 in 2014, proper access for aid agencies across Syria has yet to be achieved. In January 2017, the UN said that it had only been able to assist half of the people it was asked to reach. According to the UN, in 2016, 67 of the 99 interagency convoys had medical relief taken by force. This means that for example diarrhea kits and milk powder for children have been seized by soldiers.

Deir ez Zour under siege by ISIS in the east has been reached but only by the use of air drops.

SYRIAN REFUGEES 2017

No. of Syrian Refugees (million)
(UNHCR February 2017)



Visit us at www.humanappeal.org.uk



TURKEY
2,854,968



LEBANON
1,011,366



IRAQ
223,334



JORDAN
656,007

KEY STATS



Over 500,000 killed



Over 1.5 million injured



6.3 million internally displaced



4.9 million UN registered refugees



643,780 living in besieged 13 areas in Syria



4.72 million in need in hard to reach areas



13.5 million need humanitarian assistance



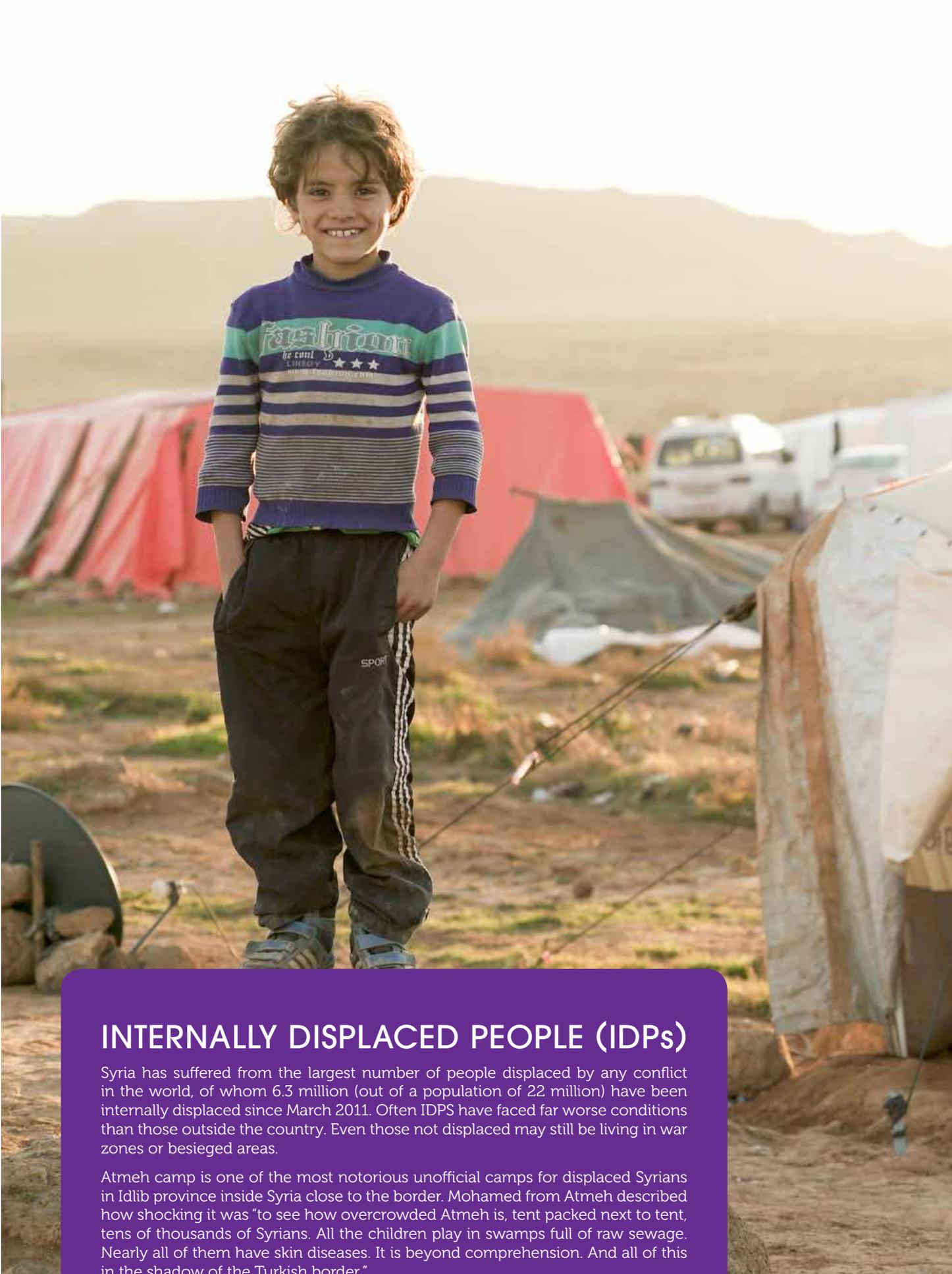
80% in poverty



Estimated cost of conflict over \$200 billion



human appeal



INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs)

Syria has suffered from the largest number of people displaced by any conflict in the world, of whom 6.3 million (out of a population of 22 million) have been internally displaced since March 2011. Often IDPs have faced far worse conditions than those outside the country. Even those not displaced may still be living in war zones or besieged areas.

Atmeh camp is one of the most notorious unofficial camps for displaced Syrians in Idlib province inside Syria close to the border. Mohamed from Atmeh described how shocking it was "to see how overcrowded Atmeh is, tent packed next to tent, tens of thousands of Syrians. All the children play in swamps full of raw sewage. Nearly all of them have skin diseases. It is beyond comprehension. And all of this in the shadow of the Turkish border."



HEALTH

Access to healthcare is a major concern and will remain to be so even after the conflict has ended. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that there have been two million casualties due to the conflict (500,000 fatalities).

Life expectancy for Syrians dropped from 70 in 2010 to 55 in 2015. The estimates of the number of Syrians who have died from lack of adequate health services range from 70,000 to over 300,000.

Syria has seen diseases spread that are perfectly treatable and vaccine preventable. One in two children in Syria have not been vaccinated against serious preventable diseases. The skin disease Leishmaniasis has broken out caused by the sand fly that prospers in uncollected rubbish.

Aggravating the health crisis has been the attacks on medical facilities and personnel. 136 health facilities were attacked in 2016. Hospitals and clinics should not be a target in war. The WHO estimates that 65% of Syrian health workers have fled the conflict. Despite UN condemnation in May 2016, attacks on medical staff actually increased exponentially between June and December of 2016 rising from one every 55 hours to one every 29 hours, an 89% increase.

CHALLENGES FOR AID AGENCIES

Humanitarian aid workers, including Human Appeal staff, operate in incredibly tough and dangerous conditions. Even a United Nations convoy has been bombed. It is frequently impossible to get in and out of Syria. Human Appeal staff, for example, cannot cross the border. Even the UN and other NGOs operating from government-controlled areas such as Damascus have had major difficulty in obtaining visas. Huge delays in getting aid across borders and checkpoints are a frequent hazard, with only around 30-40 trucks a day crossing the Turkish-Syrian border.

Adding to the challenge is the myriad array of differing authorities, including in government controlled areas, with local councils, armed groups and militias frequently interfering and blocking access. Aid agencies are committed to neutrality and impartiality but this environment tests this to the limit.

Guaranteed safe access is vital for all humanitarian agencies working inside Syria. To achieve this there must be a genuine commitment by all parties to international humanitarian law. On no account should medical, educational and other parts of the civilian infrastructure be targeted.

The dire economic situation inside Syria combined with high prices of basic commodities and shortages of fuel, water and electricity add to the challenges. Food production in Syria has plummeted during the conflict to an all-time low with wheat production down 55% since 2011.

For aid agencies this means more work is required to build resilience and reduce dependency amongst Syrian communities that have seen their resources depleted and have little to no access to income. Part of this will require the rebuilding of crucial infrastructure and services.

“Poverty, social exclusion, insecurity and language barriers are preventing Syrian children from getting an education, leaving an entire generation disadvantaged, impoverished and at risk of being pushed into early marriage and child labor.”

Tanya Chapuisat,
UNICEF Lebanon Representative

SYRIAN REFUGEES

The conflict has impacted all corners of the world as Syria’s Middle Eastern neighbours, and Europe struggle to find an appropriate solution for the refugee crisis. 11 million people have been displaced out of a pre-conflict population of 22 million, the largest refugee population in the world.

The civil war in Syria has led to the rapid displacement of millions of its citizens, many who have migrated to neighbouring countries including, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. 4.9 million Syrian refugees have registered with the UNHCR since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011. Of these refugees, 2.3 million are children.

Many of the 11 million displaced Syrians have just endured their fourth or fifth winter without permanent shelter.

The situation is particularly acute for many displaced inside Syria, especially in areas that do not receive international aid. Fuel is in short supply, and refugees face threats from severe cold and even flooding.

All of Syria’s neighbouring states have been massively challenged by the flood of refugees. The open-door policy of these countries has after six years become a largely closed-door policy. Overwhelmed by the sheer numbers and impact on society, economy and the infrastructure, they have struggled to cope. International appeals are still underfunded meaning that resources are continually squeezed.

In Jordan, where Syrian refugees make up around a tenth of Jordan’s population, only 21.5% of Syrian refugees live in one of the established refugee camps (Za’atari, Azraq, and EJ camp). The majority of these (around 80,000) live in Za’atari camp while the other 80% are based in alternative accommodation in the north of the country. A majority of Syrian refugees in Jordan are living in urban areas, where an estimated 93% of those are living under the poverty line.

Lebanon has been tested more than any of the neighbouring countries. The conflict in Syria has exacerbated political and sectarian divisions in Lebanon and resulted in the arrival of 1.1 million refugees in Lebanon which has put more pressure on the economy and public services. According to the UN, 70% live below the poverty line. Around 35% of UN registered refugees are in the Beka’a Valley. One in five people in Lebanon is a refugee, the most per capita in the world. This would be the equivalent to the UK hosting 13 million Syrian refugees, whereas the government has agreed to take only 20,000 over five years.

The challenge for Syrian refugees is exacerbated by the fact that Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Syrian refugees live in over 1,700 communities with many settling around Tripoli, Akkar and the Beka’a Valley largely in tented encampments



or abandoned buildings. A feature of the influx in Lebanon has been the absence of official camps and the absorption of many refugees into Lebanese communities. Many of these communities initially welcomed the refugees with hospitality and solidarity.

However, as thousands of refugees continued to pour in tensions between host communities and refugees rose, leading to tighter Lebanese controls on the Syrian border.

Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not permitted to work. Desperate, many have found themselves taking on jobs for little pay and are exploited in near slavery-style conditions. They are "highly vulnerable to exploitation by their employers, who may threaten to report them to the authorities at any time for not having legal status."

Children are increasingly caught up in this dire situation. Some have estimated that 60-70% of Syrian refugee children are working. Women

have been forced into prostitution and even young girls into 'survival sex.'

Lebanese host communities also suffer from the additional burdens of this huge refugee community not least as the refugees have often been pushed towards the poorest areas of Lebanon. Human Appeal works to offset this by assisting those most affected as well as the refugees.

Turkey has become the world's biggest refugee hosting country with nearly three million refugees mostly in the south of the country. Around 250,000 live in camps while the rest stay in host communities. Human Appeal for example supports Al-Huda school for Syrian Refugees children by equipping it with teaching materials and other supplies.

Syrian refugees may enrol in Turkish schools for free. Many Syrian children struggle to learn Turkish and suffer during tuition. Over 40% of Syrian refugee children in Turkey are missing out on education. Greater investment

is vital if Syrian children are to receive an education. Employment opportunities remain low, and a large proportion of Syrian refugees live in acute poverty.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, smaller but sizeable numbers of Syrian refugees have also fled to Egypt and Iraq. Iraq has set up some camps to house the influx of Syrian refugees but is struggling to meet their needs, particularly with around one million Iraqis being internally displaced. Syrian refugees in Egypt also tend to live in dire conditions; the UN estimates that 90% of Syrian refugees in Egypt are living on or below the poverty line set by UNHCR.

Many refugees just want to return safely to Syria.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES FROM SYRIA

Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have been forced to become refugees for a second time, fleeing Syria where they had built a vibrant society, to neighbouring countries, particularly Lebanon. Living in the crowded and impoverished Palestinian camps in Lebanon, PRS enjoy very few legal protections and employment possibilities. There has been much less international attention focused on this vulnerable sub-population than on the general Syrian refugee population. According to UNRWA, around 31,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have at one time or another been seeking safety and shelter during the conflict. However, even Lebanon is becoming an increasingly desperate option. One of their challenges is that it is UNRWA not UNHCR that is responsible for them. However, UNRWA is severely hampered by a major funding crisis: "Unemployment among Palestinian refugees from Syria is even higher than among non-Palestinian Syrians."

Jordan has since the early days of the crisis often denied access to PRS culminating in a non-admittance policy beginning January 2013. In total there are around 16,000 PRS in Jordan.

EDUCATION

UNICEF estimates that 2.8 million Syrian children are out of school due to the conflict. Teachers have little experience in how to handle traumatised children, and may be themselves traumatised. Syrian refugees who are teachers may not be permitted to work in host countries.

Syrian families are making large sacrifices in order for their children to gain an education, with many Syrian families "sliding into debt in order to pay for documents, school materials and transportation."

In Jordan, around half of the Syrian refugee families have a child as a breadwinner according to UNICEF.

Syrian schools have also been on the receiving end of attacks during the civil war. In 2015, UNICEF documented 60 attacks on schools in Syria, killing a total of 591 children. By November 2016, there had been a further 39 attacks on schools in Syria since January.

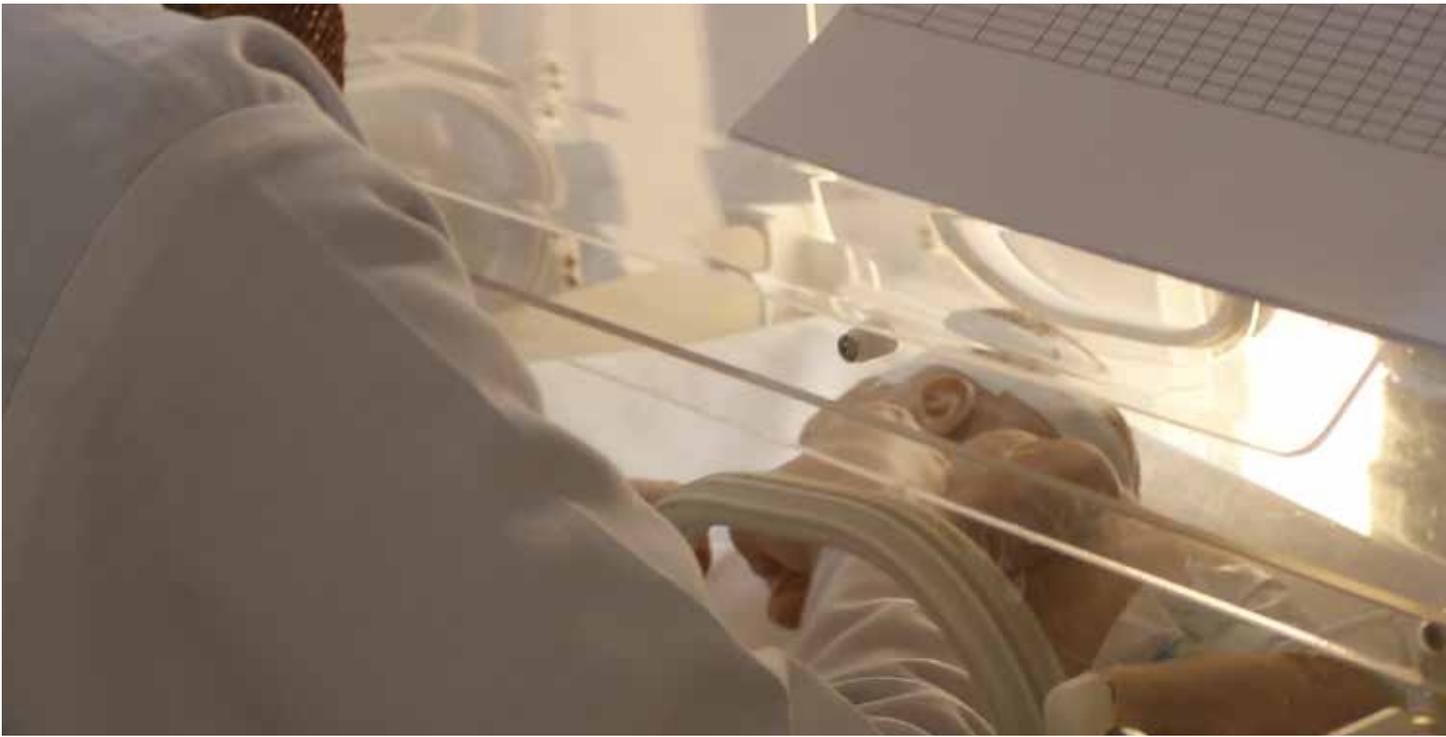
Even schools outside Syria are not always safe spaces. Human Rights Watch has reported on widespread bullying of Syrian children at schools in Lebanon and Jordan as well as teachers using corporal punishment. One 2016 survey by a Lebanese university found that 33% of Syrian respondents experienced "problems at school." Ziad, 17, told Human Rights Watch that he decided not to enroll in school after a friend told him Syrian children had to clean floors and were regularly hit.





“Our children can go to school but we cannot afford the bus so choose which of our four children gets an education.”

Syrian refugee parent,
Beka'a Valley



HUMAN APPEAL ON THE GROUND

Days after the conflict started, Human Appeal arrived in Syria to provide aid. We did not expect to still be there six years on. Our operation in Syria has become the largest of all our 25 countries operation. Our use of local networks and contacts within Syria means that we are able to get aid to areas where others cannot. It is also why agencies like the World Food Programme, UNOCHA, Orphans In Need, Qatar Charity, UN – Humanitarian Fund, UNICEF and UNFPA partner with us or engage us to deliver their aid.

Working on multiple areas, Human Appeal has saved thousands of lives in Syria. Here are just some of the ways we have helped:

HEALTH CARE

In 2012 Human Appeal equipped and ran a hospital for refugees in Tripoli, Lebanon, and provided medical aid to two hospitals in Homs. We delivered seven ambulances to conflict affected areas inside Syria and we provided medical aid and winter supplies to people in Douma.

In 2013, Human Appeal equipped a specialist care hospital in Bab al-Hawwa with twelve emergency ambulances and advanced diagnostic and intensive care equipment, including a CT scanner, helping 600 patients every month. We also distributed 7,000 hygiene kits to women and provided logistical and material support for a Polio vaccination drive inside Syria. In 2016, working with Americares, we provided the Al-Imaan hospital with \$736,587 worth of medication.

WATER

Since April 2011, Human Appeal has worked with local partners to distribute clean water. In 2014, we provided 5,000 vulnerable people of the Deir ez Zour city and its suburbs with clean, safe drinking water. This, in turn, saw a sharp decline in the spread of waterborne diseases. In 2015 in western rural Aleppo, where communities faced water shortages, Human Appeal and UNOCHA worked with local residents and displaced people to construct water wells and water tanks to provide clean water to 15,000 people, including patients in Al-Imaan hospital. In 2016, Human Appeal ensured over 1,300 families had access to safe clean water via the installation of a 5,000 litre water tank.

HUMAN APPEAL FLOUR PROJECT

Human Appeal's distribution of flour to the bakeries of Syria is vital. Food production in Syria has also hit a record low and the wheat harvest is approximately 1.5 million tonnes, 55% lower than the pre-conflict average.

Bread is a major part of the Syrian diet. However, the price of bread has increased by 87% at public bakeries. Families spend more than half of their income on food.

Human Appeal provides the bread for about 208,000 beneficiaries every month. The majority of the bread that Human Appeal provide the flour for is given away to IDPs, a small proportion is sold at a very low cost to help bring down the market price of bread throughout Syria. For an average of 17 bakeries each month, we provide the flour to keep them in operation, giving their staff a regular income and liberating them from being dependant on humanitarian aid.

AL-IMAAN HOSPITAL

In 2014 Human Appeal established Al-Imaan Specialist Hospital for Women and Children in Syria. The hospital is free of charge and provide services to patients that are the most vulnerable and conflict-affected, every day 24/7. Now more than 20,000 people a month access our health care and medical services directly and over 100,000 indirectly.

Human Appeal's Al-Imaan hospital fills an important gap needed by Syrians by providing outpatients services, comprehensive reproductive health services, emergency gynaecological surgery, basic emergency obstetric and new-born services. On the nutritional side, we provide the screening of malnutrition, management of moderate and acute malnutrition, Child Health Workers and Infant and Young Child Feeding programs.

Al-Imaan Hospital, and the primary health care service it provides and the ability to deliver comprehensive health services that are equitable, accessible and sustainable, is essential to hundreds of thousands in Northern Syria.

EDUCATION

From 2013, Human Appeal tried to establish some normality to children's lives ravaged by conflict.

- In 2013 we supported a school inside a refugee camp in Idlib, Northern Syria, facilitating the teaching and psychological support of 800 children aged between 6-15 years. We also launched several arts and drama workshops and distributed 800 books in both English and French, stationary kits, winter hats, jackets, sweaters, pyjamas and hygiene kits.

In 2014, we provided over 450 children with quality education and psychological care for post-traumatic stress and anxiety brought on by living through the conflict. The project saw an increase in school enrolment, a decrease in child labour and better attendance amongst girls in the targeted areas.

- Human Appeal also helped support 800 children in the Qah camp for Internally Displaced People (IDP) through the Jeel Ah Huriyya school, equipping them with educational resources, exams and ensuring their primary and secondary education is continued through the turmoil of displacement.
- In 2016 we provided material and support for the Batbu School in Aleppo and the Al-Huda School for Syrian refugees in Turkey which provides a formal education to more than 1,060 children.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

In 2015, we set up a sewing factory for refugees in Lebanon giving 110 Syrians living in a camp a means to generate their own income and the dignity of regular work.

In 2016, working with UNOCHA, Human Appeal helped 1,550 whose livelihoods as farmers had been destroyed by providing them with the means to cultivate potatoes and beans.

EMERGENCY AID

Every year, we have provided emergency aid to the areas which need it most. We are particularly proud of the following achievements:

- In 2011, Human Appeal provided thousands of families in South Syria, Southern Lebanon and Saida with Eid-al-Adha meat packages, in Northern Lebanon we gave refugee families pillows, mattresses, blankets and clothing. For those displaced on the Syrian-Lebanese border we provided food packages.
- Throughout 2012 Human Appeal were distributing food parcels in Damascus, Idlib, Homs, Aleppo, Douma and for thousands of Syrian refugees in Jordan.
- In 2013, for IDPs without a home, Human Appeal constructed 100 solid shelters for up to 700 internally displaced men, woman and children in Aleppo and we constructed 40 solid shelters for Syrian refugee families in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. We also distributed 5,000 mattresses, blankets and clothes as part of our winter campaign.
- In 2014 we provided 57,000 people with fresh meat.
- 750 Syrian Families were given shelter by Human Appeal in 2015, in partnership with UNOCHA. Human Appeal delivered winter kits to 20,000 vulnerable people in Idlib and rural areas of Aleppo, Latakia and Hama.
- In 2016 we worked with the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) to provide 16,500 food parcels in 130 refugee camps in Karama, Qatmah and Salqin.



ABOUT HUMAN APPEAL

Human Appeal is the UK's leading Muslim humanitarian charity operating in 25 countries, spanning Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East. We help in times of crisis and deliver sustainable development programmes in some of the world's poorest nations.

CREDITS

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HEAD OFFICE

Human Appeal
1 Cheadle Point, Carrs Road
Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 2BL
United Kingdom

0161 225 0225

www.humanappeal.org.uk

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