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SYRIAN REFUGEES AND TURKEY'S CHALLENGES:
BEYOND THE LIMITS OF HOSPITALITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first Syrian refugees began to cross into Turkey in April 2011. This was at a time when Turkey's relations with the Syrian government had not yet been ruptured. The Turkish government enjoyed considerable goodwill with the regime in Damascus that had derived from exceptionally close and positive relations between the two countries. The Turkish side was deeply engaged in efforts to persuade Bashar al-Assad to avoid harsh measures against protests that began in March 2011. The Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who had developed a personal relationship with Assad, and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, did their best to convince him to adopt a reform agenda. However, when the Syrian government, instead, chose to use increasing repression and violence against civilians, relations between the two countries deteriorated very quickly. By the end of 2011, the Turkish government had thrown its weight completely behind the Syrian opposition and recognized the then-Syrian National Council as the representative of the Syrian people. Both Erdoğan and Davutoğlu categorically called for a future Syria without Assad. Turkey's expectation, which was in line with a good part of the international community, was that the Assad regime would not last long. It was against such a background that Turkey declared in October 2011 an open door policy towards refugees fleeing Syria and extended to them a legal framework known as "temporary protection." As of May 2014 there are roughly 220,000 Syrian refugees housed in 22 camps along the Syrian border with another 515,000 registered urban refugees. The government together with the UNHCR put the total number of all the refugees in Turkey at around an estimated 900,000. There is general recognition that the government has done a commendable job in providing protection and humanitarian assistance to the refugees in the camps. However, the situation for those refugees outside the camps is more complicated.

The persistence of the conflict and the ever growing number of urban refugees is creating a set of tough challenges for Turkey. Firstly, it is becoming increasingly clear that refugees are not about to return home anytime soon. This brings up a range of very difficult policy issues for the government. They range from whether the government should start to think in terms of offering refugees the possibility to remain and integrate in Turkey to addressing urgent education, employment, health, shelter and other needs of Syrian refugees. Secondly, the refugee population outside camps has grown significantly and is expected to surpass one million by the end of the year. The government is trying to register them but the process is far from complete, particularly as increasing number of refugees are living outside of camps where assistance is always more difficult and complex. Working with refugees who are dispersed in the host community involves different governmental agencies and it is harder to identify who the target population is, harder to figure out how to assist host communities, especially in the absence of a comprehensive systematic need assessment exercise. Thirdly, the presence of growing numbers of Syrians in Turkey is deeply impacting on host communities economically, socially as well as politically. Last but not least, there is also the continued deterioration of the humanitarian and political situation inside Syria. How should Turkey be addressing these challenges?

Firstly, the government and civil society need to switch gears from policies driven by concerns of extending emergency humanitarian assistance and temporary protection to ones focusing on the long term to facilitate the possible eventual incorporation of the refugees into Turkish society. Unfortunately all the conflicts and accompanying displacement crises of the past in the Middle East, from the Afghans to the Palestinians, tell us that expecting a speedy return too peace and prosperity in Syria is painfully slim. Recognizing this cruel reality and adopting the necessary policy adjustments is a must if this crisis is to be transformed into an outcome as positive as is realistically possible for all involved. It is only then that a repetition of too familiar scenes of huge numbers of miserable refugees lingering in camps and on the edges of society across generations is to be avoided. The latter outcome would surely risk dragging Turkey into considerable economic, social and possibly political troubles. The former, if well managed, could become a source of economic growth and development and could even constitute a model for how to handle such crises elsewhere.

Secondly, Turkey will need to develop a well thought out, debated and structured comprehensive policy with a strong legal grounding. As much as Turkey's open door policy has been a commendable one it has had a weak legal basis. A secret regulation adopted in March 2012 should not constitute the basis of a policy that is extending protection close to one million people and has cost $2.5 billion. For very understandable reasons, many aspects of the current policy evolved incrementally and in a rather haphazard manner. This cannot continue. In 1989-1990 the then-Turkish government took bold action in the face of the more than 300,000 Bulgarian Pomak and Turkish refugees. It legislated, with considerable public support, policies that addressed a wide range of issues, from citizenship to health care and housing, to encourage the successful integration of these refugees into Turkish society. This is not to suggest that Syrian refugees should be granted citizenship, but to point out that Turkey in the past, with many fewer resources than today, was able to develop a comprehensive and well-structured policy. Furthermore, when developing such a policy it will also be very important that the government engages domestic stakeholders in policy formulations and embarks on an effort to mobilize and gain public support. The latter exercise will need patience and a lot of goodwill.

Thirdly, Turkey should not have to bear the cost of this policy transformation alone. Protecting and caring for refugees is an international responsibility. The international community will have to contribute to Turkey's efforts in real and effective terms. There should be recognition that the crisis and resulting suffering in Syria and the accompanying displacement are at least partly the responsibility of the international community. In addition to the norms of humanitarian assistance, there are other solid reasons why the international community should assist Turkey's efforts to respond to the refugees. If Turkey can indeed be successful in its management of the refugee crisis this would surely benefit the international community too. After all there would be fewer Syrians trying to make it to EU member countries illegally. Furthermore, the Turkish public will be much more forthcoming if it can see that the international community is involved in burden sharing. However, in turn, Turkey will have to shed some of its real or imagined

distrust of the international community and its institutions. Turkey is a founding member of the United Nations, is deeply engaged in many of its institutions and also aspires to become a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. It just does not seem to add up to entertain such aspirations and, at the same time distrust the international community and especially the humanitarian agencies of the UN and their partners. It will also be important to recognize and accept that those international actors that will extend financial help will rightfully seek transparency and accountability. In any event such accountability and transparency is going to be very important at the domestic level too if broad based public support is going to be maintained.

ACRONYMS

AFAD	Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
ASAM	Association of Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
EDAM	Center for European and Foreign Policy Studies
EU	European Union
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GDMM	General Directorate of Migration Management
HYD-Turkey	Turkish Branch of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PYD	Democratic Union Party
SRRP	Syrian Regional Response Plan
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAK	International Strategic Research Organization
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme

INTRODUCTION

The first Syrian refugees began to cross into Turkey in April 2011. This was at a time when Turkey's relations with the Syrian government had not yet been ruptured. The Turkish government enjoyed considerable goodwill with the regime in Damascus that had been derived from exceptionally close and positive relations between the two countries. The Turkish side was deeply engaged in efforts to persuade Bashar al-Assad to avoid harsh measures against protests that began in March 2011. The Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who had developed an intimate personal relationship with Assad, and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, did their best to convince him to adopt a reform agenda.[1] However, when the Syrian government instead chose to use increasing repression and violence against civilians, relations between the two countries deteriorated very quickly. By the end of 2011, the Turkish government had thrown its weight completely behind the Syrian opposition and recognized the then Syrian National Council as the representative of the Syrian people.[2] Both Erdoğan and Davutoğlu categorically called for a future Syria without Assad. Turkey's expectation, which was in line with a good part of the international community, was that the Assad regime would not last long.[3] It was against such a background that Turkey declared in October 2011 an open door policy towards refugees fleeing Syria and extended to them a legal framework known as "temporary protection."

The persistence of the conflict and the ever growing number of refugees is creating a set of tough challenges for Turkey. Firstly, it is becoming increasingly clear that refugees are not about to return home anytime soon. This brings up a range of very difficult policy issues for the government. They range from whether the government should start to think in terms of offering refugees the possibility to remain and integrate in Turkey to addressing urgent education, employment, health, shelter and other needs of Syrian refugees. Secondly, the refugee population outside camps has grown significantly and is expected to surpass one million by the end of the year. The government is trying to register them but the process is far from complete, particularly as increasing number of refugees are living outside of camps where assistance is always more difficult and complex. Working with refugees who are dispersed in the host community involves different governmental agencies and it is harder to identify who the target population is, harder to figure out how to assist host communities, especially in the absence of a comprehensive systematic need assessment exercise. Thirdly, the presence of growing numbers of Syrians in Turkey is deeply impacting on host communities economically, socially as well as politically. Last but not least, there is also the continued deterioration of the humanitarian and political

[1] Nada Bakri, "Turkish Minster and Other Envoys Press Syrian Leader," *New York Times*, August 10, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/08/10/world/middleeast/10syria.html?_r=0.
[2] Erol Cebeci and Kadir Ustun, "The Syrian Quagmire: What is Holding Back Turkey?" *Insight Turkey*, Spring 2012, http://file.insightturkey.com/Files/Pdf/insight-turkey_vol_14_no_2_2012_cebeci_ustun.pdf.
[3] "Davutoğlu Esad'a ömür biçti [Davutoğlu determines lifespan for Assad]," *NTVMSNBC*, August 24, 2012, http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25376791.

situation inside Syria. How is Turkey addressing these challenges and what possible recommendations can be put forward to better address them?

This report is a follow up to *Syrian Crisis: Massive Displacement, Dire Needs and a Shortage of Solutions* and *Turkey and Syrian Refugees: The Limits of Hospitality*, which were published in September and November 2013 respectively.[4] It is based on the research for these two previous reports and additional interviews held in Ankara and Istanbul with academics, civil society activists, Syrian refugees and officials in January 2014 as well as participation at the workshop "Syrian Refugees in the Long Term" held at the Ankara based International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) on February 1, 2014. The primary focus of the report is to assess the current situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey and discuss the policy implications for Turkey. It is divided into four sections. The first section offers a broad discussion of Turkey's experience with mass influxes of refugees into Turkey in general and how the Syrian one differs from previous ones. This is followed by a discussion of the Syrian refugee situation in Turkey. The third section discusses the challenges that Turkey faces. The report concludes with a set of policy recommendations based on the recognition that Syrian refugees are likely to stay in Turkey for the foreseeable future. This likelihood calls for an urgent need to shift policy focus from the provision of emergency assistance and protection to the refugees to addressing longer term integration-related issues ranging from the provision of education to Syrian children of school age to enabling Syrian refugees to participate in the Turkish labor market. This is going to be a mammoth task and will need to be supported by greater and more generous expression of burden-sharing and solidarity on the part of the international community and an accompanying willingness on the part of the Turkish government to cooperate with competent international stake-holders.

[4] *Syrian Crisis: Massive Displacement, Dire Needs and a Shortage of Solutions*, (Brookings, Washington DC, September 2013), http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/09/18-syria-humanitarian-political-crisis-ferris-shaikh-kirisci and *Turkey and Syrian Refugees: The Limits of Hospitality* (Brookings, Washington DC, November 2013), http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/11/14-syria-turkey-refugees-ferris-kirisci-federici.

MASS INFLUXES OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM IN TURKEY

From the 1920s into the mid-1990s, the Turkish republic received more than one and a half million Muslim refugees ranging from Albanians to Tatars from the Balkans.[5] In 1989 an influx of more than 300,000 Pomaks and Turks fleeing the violent persecution of the then Communist regime in Bulgaria sought refuge in Turkey. The government, in line with a law from 1934 considered them to be of "Turkish descent and culture" and opened its door to them as well as granted them the possibility of acquiring Turkish citizenship.

In 1991 Turkey saw yet another mass influx of refugees as close to half a million people fled Saddam Hussein's violence against Kurds and other minorities in northern Iraq.[6] The harsh mountainous terrain and winter conditions quickly turned the influx into a major humanitarian crisis and coincided with a time when Turkey still denied the separate existence of Kurds. Initially the government saw the events as a national security crisis and tried to deny refugees entry into Turkey. However a mixture of international and domestic reaction led the government to mount a diplomatic effort which culminated in a decision of the United Nations Security Council to create a safe zone in northern Iraq that would ensure the return of the refugees to their homes.[7] This crisis had been preceded in 1988 by the arrival of more than 60,000 Kurds fleeing the Halabja massacres. They were housed in southeastern Turkey and treated as "guests" without any formal legal protection.[8] Most of them returned to northern Iraq together with the refugees from 1991.

The mass influx of refugees in 1991 had a deep and long-lasting impact on Turkish asylum policy. In November 1994 Turkey adopted its first national legislation on asylum in the form of a regulation that clearly reflected an emphasis on national security over human rights considerations. The Regulation defined the need to respond to mass influxes of refugees before the refugees could cross the border into Turkey unless the government was to take a decision to the contrary.[9] In the event that refugees did actually enter Turkey the Regulation called on

[5] Kemal Kirisci, "'Coerced Immigrants': Refugees of Turkish Origins since 1945," *International Migration* Vol. 34, No. 3 (1996).
[6] Muhteşem Kaynak, et al *The Iraqi Asylum Seekers and Türkiye* (Tanmak Publications, Ankara, 1992) and Suna G. Ihlamur-Öner, "Turkey's Refugee Regime Stretched to the Limit? The Case of Iraqi and Syrian Refugee Flow," *Perceptions*, autumn 2013, Vol. XVIII, No. 3.
[7] Kemal Kirisci, "'Provide Comfort' and Turkey: Decision Making for Refugee Assistance," *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, Vol. 2, autumn 1993, No. 2.
[8] For a discussion of the practice to refer to victims of mass influxes of refugees as "guests" see Metin Çorabatır, "Suriye'de iç savaş ve insani güvenlik [Syrian civil war and human security]", *Milliyet*, September 18, 2013, http://cadde.milliyet.com.tr/2012/07/24/YazarDetay/1765043/suriye_de_ic_savas_ve_insani_guvenlik.
[9] *Regulation on the Procedures and Principles related to Possible Population Movements and Aliens Arriving in Turkey either as Individuals or in Groups Wishing to Seek Asylum either from Turkey or Requesting Residence Permission in order to Seek Asylum From Another Country*, No.1994/6169, November 30, 1994, available from http://www.refworld.org/docid/49746cc62.html. Article 8 reads "…population movements be stopped at the border, and that asylum seekers be prevented from crossing over into Turkey." For a detailed analysis of the Regulation see

authorities to keep them in camps as close to the border as possible. The Regulation also defined procedures for receiving and processing individual asylum applications. In line with Turkey's acceptance of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees with a "geographical limitation," the Regulation limited the right to receive refugee status to only asylum seekers fleeing "events in Europe." Refugees from outside Europe would be granted only temporary stay in Turkey pending their resettlement to third countries.

Albanian and Bosnian refugees numbering around 50,000 also came to Turkey in the mid and late 1990s. They were provided informal protection as some arrived with their old Yugoslav passports while others were housed in refugee camps near the Bulgarian border. Once the situation in their respective countries stabilized, most of the refugees returned home although some stayed on in Turkey and integrated into local communities through marriage, employment and naturalization.

Despite being a country that is no stranger to asylum seekers and refugees, the influx of Syrians into Turkey is unprecedented for three reasons. First, the sheer number of refugees, fast approaching one million, is unlike any other influx in its history. Second, that Turkey has facilitated an 'open-door' policy for such large number of refugees from outside Europe marks a conspicuous break from past practice. Third, the influx is taking place at a time when Turkey is also setting up the General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM) which will be responsible for implementing a new immigration law that addresses both individual and *en masse* asylum. *En masse* asylum refers to cases where very large numbers of refugees cross borders as a result of massive violations of human rights and widespread violence while the case of individual asylum seekers refers to situations in which persons facing persecution flee their countries of origin and seek refuge in another country. The rights and obligations of individual asylum seekers and refugees are governed by the 1951 Geneva Convention while *en masse* asylum cases are defined by UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Executive Committee decisions and general international humanitarian law.

Turkey has a long history of being a country of asylum and was among the original drafters and signatories of the 1951 Geneva Convention. Recently, with the arrival of Syrians, Turkey has become the sixth largest recipient of refugees in the world.[10] However, beyond the mass influx of Syrian refugees, Turkey has also seen a significant increase in the number of individual asylum applications. According to the UNHCR with almost 45,000 applications in 2013, Turkey became the fifth largest recipient of individual asylum seekers among the forty-four industrialized countries, up from its 15th position in 2010.[11]

Kemal Kirisci, "Is Turkey lifting the "geographical limitation"?: The November 1994 Regulation on Asylum in Turkey," *International Journal of Refugee Law*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (1996).

[10] *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2013*, see Figure 3, pp. 6 and 7, http://unhcr.org/52af08d26.html.

[11] *UNHCR Asylum Trends 2013: Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries*, see Table 2, p. 12 http://www.unhcr.org/5329b15a9.html.

It was only after the adoption of the 1994 Regulation on asylum that the Turkish government began to keep regular statistics on asylum. Since 1995, the majority of individual asylum seekers have come from Iraq and Iran with lesser numbers from countries as diverse as Afghanistan and Zimbabwe. All together more than 118,000 asylum applications had been lodged as of the end of 2013.[12] Their cases are assessed by the government in close cooperation with UNHCR and more than a third have received refugee status, almost all of whom were resettled to third countries. Yet, close to 72,000 cases are still being processed. However, this system is under strain and the status determination process can now takes years.[13] This dynamic is further aggravated by the recent surge in the number of asylum seekers. This increase has led the UNHCR to employ the services of a Turkish non-governmental organization (NGO), Association of Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) since July 2013. ASAM and UNHCR work together to pre-register asylum seekers before they can actually be given a date for an interview. In some cases appointments for such interviews are given to two years after from their initial approach to ASAM.[14]

These developments coincide with a time when the GDMM has just begun to implement the *Foreigners and International Protection Law* that came into force in April 2014.[15] The law aspires to completely overhaul and reform Turkey's asylum system. As the leader of the team drafting the law once had put it, "immigration issues in Turkey could no longer be managed with laws and administrative arrangements dating from the early 1950s. In those times there were just about 35,000 foreign nationals visiting Turkey annually compared to more than 30 million in 2012."[16] The law, *inter alia*, puts into place a fully-fledged status determination system to be administered by GDMM and enshrines for asylum seekers the right to access to asylum as well as judicial appeal procedures. It also defines the rights that asylum seekers and recognized refugees will enjoy with respect to access to public services including employment.

The preparation of the law began soon after the appearance in 2008 of a report from Human Rights Watch which strongly criticized Turkey for the poor treatment of irregular migrants and the serious difficulties that asylum seekers faced in accessing a refugee status determination system.[17] The law itself emerged from an unusually transparent consultation process involving

[12] These statistics were obtained from GDMM. Turkish government and UNHCR data on asylum seekers in Turkey do not always match.
[13] Susanne Güsten, "As Refugees Flood Turkey, Asylum System Nears Breakdown," *The New York Times*, September 26, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/world/middleeast/as-refugees-flood-turkey-asylum-system-nears-breakdown.html?_r=0.
[14] Personal interview with ASAM representatives January 2014.
[15] Law No. 6458, Official Gazette, No. 28615, April 11, 2013, http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/04/20130411-2.htm.
[16] Personal interview with GDMM official, January 2014.
[17] *Stuck in a Revolving Door: Iraqis and other Asylum Seekers and other Migrants at the Greece/Turkey Entrance to the European Union*, (Human Rights Watch, November 2008), http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/11/26/stuck-revolving-door-0. See also *Unwelcome Guests: The Detention of Refugees in Turkey's "Foreigners' Guesthouses"* (Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Refugee Advocacy and Support Program, November 2007), http://www.hyd.org.tr/staticfiles/files/rasp_detention_report.pdf.

input from Turkish civil society as well as various European and UN stake holders. The fact that the law was adopted unanimously by the parliament, a rare occurrence in Turkish legislative practice, is a tribute to the team's commitment to reform and to putting into place a law that could address the challenges of becoming an immigration country.

Now that the law and the new agency are in place, the management of the Syrian refugees will enter a new phase that may facilitate addressing some of the many challenges that Turkey face. However, before addressing these challenges, the next section offers a discussion of the evolution of the Syrian refugee situation in Turkey.

SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

Historically very few Syrians sought refuge in Turkey prior to the war. According to Turkish governmental statistics, between 1995 and 2013 there were only 635 asylum applications from Syrian nationals, as compared to more than 48,000 Iranians, 24,000 Iraqis and almost 29,000 Afghans. This picture changed dramatically after April 2011, when the first Syrian refugees crossed the border into Turkey. Three years later, the country hosts some 900,000 Syrian refugees—220,000 of them living in 22 refugee camps with an additional more than 700,000 living outside of the camps (see charts 1 and 2). These estimates, reported by both the Turkish government and the UNHCR, are considered to be conservative.[18] Indeed, officials working directly with refugees on the ground suggests that the numbers living outside of the camps may already be as high as one million. By the end of 2014 the government expects the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey to approach 1.5 million.[19]

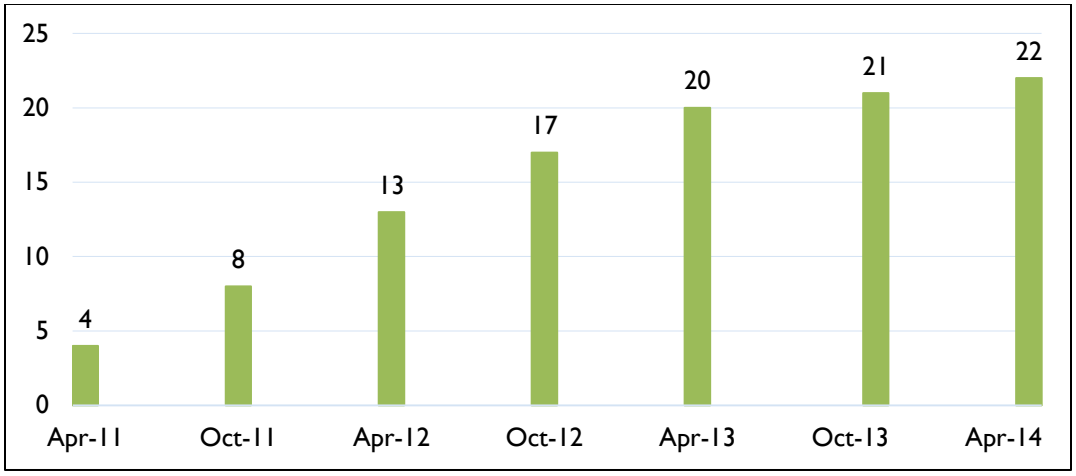
Syrian refugees outside camps are spread out through Turkey. However, the overwhelming majority are concentrated in five provinces adjacent to Syria: Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Mardin. Most of the refugee camps are located in these provinces and they also account for most of the registered half a million refugees living outside camps. Additionally, there are refugees that are not yet accounted for. The number of Syrian refugees in camps and residing in the city of Kilis has, for example, almost surpassed the population of the city itself with all the challenges that come with it. Major cities of Western Turkey such as Ankara, Antalya, Izmir, Istanbul, Konya and Mersin have also attracted large numbers of Syrian refugees. In Istanbul their numbers have exceeded 300,000 according to MazlumDer, a human rights based non-governmental organization.[20]

[18] "UNHCR Turkey Syrian Refugee Daily Sitrep 08 May 2014", http://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/unhcr-turkey-syrian-refugee-daily-sitrep-08-may-2014.

[19] *2014 Syria Regional Response Plan: Turkey*, p. 7, http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/docs/syria-rrp6-turkey-response-plan.pdf#L. The same figure was also cited by the UNHCR Representative in Turkey in "Suriyeli mülteci sayısı 4.1 milyonu bulabilir [Number of Syrian refugees could reach 4.1 million]," *TRTHaber*, December 16, 2013 http://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/suriyeli-multeci-sayisi-41-milyonu-bulabilir-112473.html. In that event the size of the Syrian refugee population would exceed the population of 68 provinces out of a total of 81 provinces in Turkey, "Population of Provinces by Years, 2007-2013," *TUIK Turkish Statistical Institute*, Accessed April 21, 2014, http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=1590.

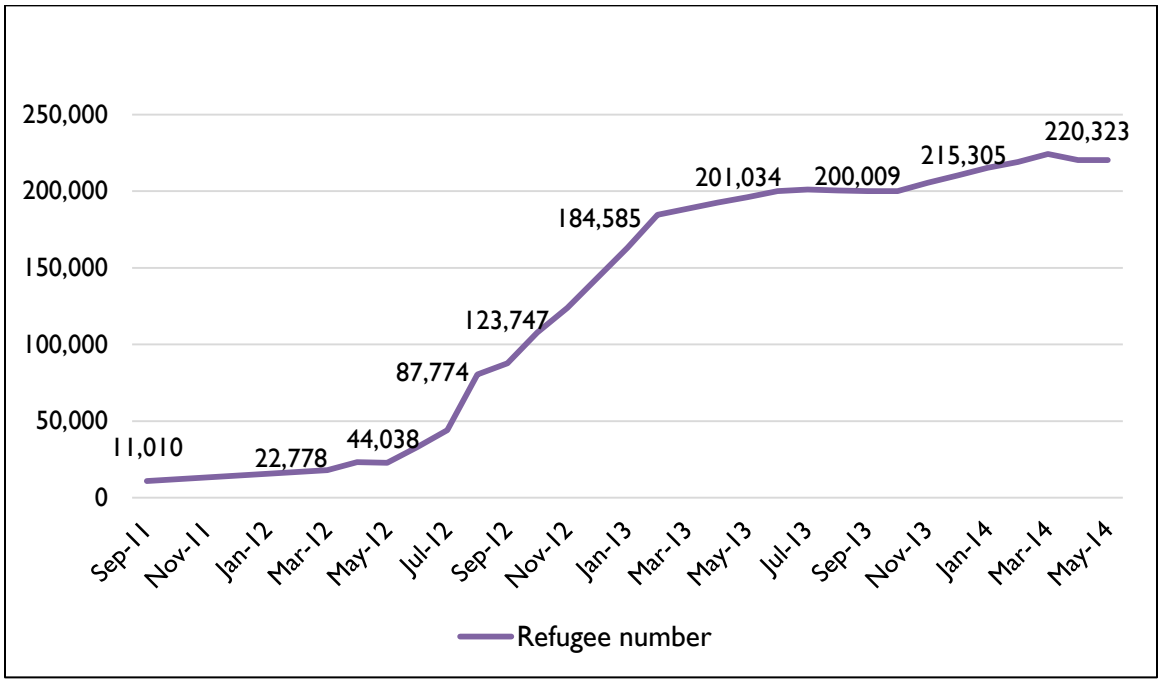
[20] In an earlier report MazlumDer had estimated that the Syrian refugee population in Istanbul was 100,000 Halim Yılmaz, *Türkiye'de Suriyeli Mülteciler: İstanbul Örneği/Tespitler, İhtiyaçlar ve Öneriler* [Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Istanbul Case/Findings, Needs and Recommendations], *Mazlum-Der*, 12 September 2013. However, the figure they are now citing is 300,000 but they consider this to be a conservative figure, personal interview, April 2014.

Chart 1: Number of Refugee Camps in Turkey



Source: UNHCR and AFAD

Chart 2: Number of Syrian Refugees in Camps in Turkey between September 2011 and May 2014



Source: UNHCR and AFAD

Additionally, there are also a string of make-shift camps that emerged on the Syrian side of the border with Turkey housing a constantly shifting number of internally displaced persons (IDPs).[21] It is not always clear whether they are being prevented from crossing the border into Turkey for reasons other than their choice. Lastly, there is a constant movement across the border[22] that includes more than 262,000 voluntary returns from refugee camps.[23] This movement occurs at both official and unofficial border crossings which are especially important whenever the Turkish government closes the crossings for security reasons.[24] Hence keeping track of the number of people crossing the border is a difficult exercise. "Non-refoulement," not returning any refugees to their country of origin or to any place where they risk facing persecution, is an international legal obligation. According to the Turkish branch of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HYD), with the exception of one particular case in 2012, the authorities have been in compliance with this obligation.[25] Currently, the UNHCR is tasked and accepted by the government to monitor voluntary returns however HYD finds the current arrangement to be inadequate and calls for an improved monitoring of the "non-refoulement" principle.

[21] *Limits of Hospitality*, pp. 6-7 and pp. 21-23.
[22] For reporting on this movement see "Syrian Refugees: In their Own Words", *The Guardian*, April 2, 2012, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/02/syrian-refugees-their-own-words.
[23] This is a figure provided by AFAD as of April 28, 2014. There were since April 2011 more than 482,000 refugees that were housed in refugee camps.
[24] According to a survey conducted by AFAD in 2013 roughly 42 and 48 Percent of refugees in and outside camps respectively entered Turkey through "unofficial border crossings", *Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 2013 Field Survey Results*, p. 23, https://www.afad.gov.tr/Dokuman/TR/61-2013123015505-syrian-refugees-in-turkey-2013_print_12.11.2013_eng.pdf.
[25] "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Briefing Note" Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Turkey, Refugee Advocacy and Support Program Report, 16 November 2012, p. 5, http://www.hyd.org.tr/staticfiles/files/20121116_hca_turkey_briefingnotesyrianrefugees.pdf.

MANAGING THE REFUGEE CRISIS

The close relationship that had developed between Syria and Turkey had culminated in the reciprocal liberalization of visa policies in 2009.[26] This encouraged a steady growth in the number of Syrian nationals visiting Turkey. These figures increased from about 400,000 in 2008 to 900,000 in 2010.[27] This is important because as the crisis in Syria began to escalate, Syrian nationals equipped with passports could cross into Turkey without any problems. The government then adopted a similar approach for refugees who arrived without passports, making it very clear that the border would be open to any Syrians fleeing the crisis there. The government in May 2011 designated the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) as the lead organization to coordinate the response to the crisis. AFAD took the initial lead in arranging for shelters for the first group of refugees and by October 2011 eight camps had already been put into place. By then it was becoming increasingly clear that there was a growing need to put into place a more comprehensive policy.

There were a number of important aspects of this policy. First, in a major break from the initial practice of referring to the refugees as "guests," the government in October 2011 extended "temporary protection" that entailed a much clearer legal status for the refugees.[28] This was clearly a decision that went well beyond what was provided for in the Regulation from 1994.[29] This way the government committed itself to the principle of "non-refoulement" as prescribed by international law, and to provide Syrian refugees with basic humanitarian services such as health and shelter. There was no limit set to the duration of "temporary protection." However, this policy so far remains based on a Ministry of Interior regulation issued in March 2012 that remains secret and not accessible to the public.[30] Numerous human rights activists have complained about this secrecy and some have also expressed puzzlement as the regulation appears to be, by and large, incompliance with international refugee law and human rights

[26] Juliette Tolay, "Coming and Going: Migration and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy", in Roland H. Linden et al. (eds.), *Turkey and Its Neighbors: Foreign Relations in Transition*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2012), p. 134.

[27] Kemal Kirişci, "Turkey's 'demonstrative effect' and the transformation of the Middle East" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2011, Table II, p. 45. The figure for 2002 was only about 126,000.

[28] For a more detailed description of the decision see "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Briefing Note" as well as interview with Pırıl Erçoban from MÜLTECİ-DER, a Turkish NGO specializing on asylum and refugees in Turkey, in Emre Can Dağlıoğlu, "Türkiye'ye sığınan Suriyeliler misafir değil, mülteci [Syrian who sought protection in Turkey are not guests but refugees]," *Agos*, January 11, 2014 https://www.agos.com.tr/haber.php?seo=turkiyeye-siginan-suriyeliler-misafir-degil-multeci&haberid=6419.

[29] "Ülkemize Sığınan Suriye Vatandaşlarının Barındıkları Çadırkentler Hakkında İnceleme Raporu [Report on the camps housing Syrian Nationals who have sought refuge in our country]," TBMM İnsan Hakları İnceleme Komisyonu, February 15, 2012, p. 12, http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/docs/2012/raporlar/28_02_2012_1.pdf.

[30] "Türkiye'ye Toplu Sığınma Amacıyla Gelen Suriye ve Arap Cumhuriyetinde İkamet Eden Vatansız Kişilerin Kabulüne ve Barındırılmasına Dair Yönerge [Regulation on Reception and Accommodation of Syrian Arab Republic Nationals and Stateless Persons who reside in Syrian Arab Republic, who arrive to Turkish Borders in Mass Influx to Seek Asylum]" was issued as Regulation No. 62 on March 30, 2012. "Suriyeli mülteciler," *Zaman*, May 14, 2012, http://www.zaman.com.tr/yorum_suriyeli-multeciler_2089308.html.

standards.[31] Secondly, the government committed itself to keeping the border open to Syrian refugees. The policy came to be known as the "open door" policy even if there has been occasions when official border crossings have had to be closed when the security on the Syrian side deteriorated.[32] Refugees have then resorted to using unofficial crossings.[33] Thirdly, the government instituted a coordination committee led by Beşir Atalay, a deputy prime minister, bringing together representatives of a number of ministries as well as government agencies. The committee holds meetings, on a roughly biweekly basis. Lastly, the government appointed a "coordinator governor" to enhance coordination between the governors of the provinces along the Syrian border.

The government has been relatively successful in setting up and managing refugee camps. These camps have received considerable recognition for the quality of the shelter and services provided for the refugees. All the camps are equipped with medical centers, schools, recreational facilities and vocational training programs. The provision of services ranges from psychological assistance to television rooms and the quality of accommodation has led the International Crisis Group to refer to these refugee camps as the "best refugee camps ever seen."[34] *The New York Times* has featured an article entitled "How to Build Perfect Refugee Camps?"[35] However, the article also points out how as no end is seen to the conflict in Syria the mood for the camp inhabitants is fast becoming very gloomy. This is starkly reflected in the remarks of one camp resident that "This is a five-star hotel," but "we're not happy here." The camps were indeed set up at a time when the expectation was that the regime in Syria would not last very long and that refugees would be able to return to their respective homes within a reasonable period of time.

The situation is even more difficult for refugees outside camps. The majority of Syrian refugees– an estimated 76 percent[36] – are in fact outside these well-maintained camps and lack formal access to assistance for shelter, health and food. In testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee in January 2013, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration Anne Richard brought attention to the challenges of those outside camps, noting that "urban refugees are often invisible and dispersed among local people in poor communities."[37]

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[31] Remarks by Taner Kılıç director of Mültecı-Der in Pınar Öğünç "Mülteci politiasini neden tartışamıyoruz?" *Radikal*, May 5, 2013, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/pinar_ogunc/multeci_politikasini_neden_tartisamiyoruz-1133796.

[32] In April 2014 four official crossings were closed because of the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham reported in Cansu Çamlıbel, "Dış istihbarat şüphesi yok [No fears of external intelligence]," *Hürriyet*, April 4, 2014, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/26215661.asp.

[33] *Limits of Hospitality*, pp. 5-6.

[34] *Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey*, International Crisis Group (ICG), no. 225, April 30, 2013, p.8, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/turkey-cyprus/turkey/225-blurring-the-borders-syrian-spillover-risks-for-turkey.pdf.

[35] Mac McClelland, "How to Build a Perfect Refugee Camp", *New York Times*, February 13, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/magazine/how-to-build-a-perfect-refugee-camp.html.

[36] This percentage figure has been calculated on the basis that there are overall an estimated 900,000 Syrian refugees of which 220,000 where in refugee camps as of April 15, 2014. If their number are more like 1 million than the percentage would go up to close to 80 percent.

[37] "State's Richard at Senate Hearing on Syrian Refugee Crisis", January 7, 2014

The lack of comprehensive data on the humanitarian needs of this population makes a coordinated response that much more difficult.[38]

The government had clearly made no allowance for an eventuality in which large numbers of refugees would live outside the camps. Initially, only Syrians with passports were permitted to stay outside camps and receive residence permits. It is roughly from the second half of 2012 that the numbers outside camps began to register a major increase. That also marked a turning point when Turkey launched an appeal for international assistance. Previously, the government was confident that it could manage the refugee situation on its own. By early 2013 Syrian refugees in urban centers started to become visible especially as many of them ran out of their savings and found themselves trying to survive under very difficult conditions.[39] The appearance of make shift shelters in public parks and beggars in the streets attracted growing media coverage of their plight. The government was somewhat slow in responding to the needs of Syrians living outside of camps. The initial response came in the form of a commitment to provide health services to all Syrians outside camps in border provinces.[40] However, recognition that the refugees had spread well beyond these provinces culminated in an extension of this service to any Syrian national anywhere in Turkey.[41]

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http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2014/01/20140107290103.html#axzz2vksdSTIu. For photographs capturing some of the difficult and poor shelter conditions that Syrian refugees find themselves in see "Suriyeli aileler: İstanbul da artık savaşın bir parçası [Syrian families: Istanbul too is part of the war]" *Evrensel*, January 18, 2014, http://www.evrensel.net/haber/76612/suriyeli-aileler-istanbul-da-artik-savasin-bir-parcasi.html#.U10d_1WJcbA and "İstanbul'da yol kenarında bir mülteci kenti [Roadside refugee town in Istanbul]," *Radikal*, April 28, 2014, http://www.radikal.com.tr/fotogaleri/turkiye/istanbulda_yol_kenarinda_bir_multeci_kenti-1188995#kategori.

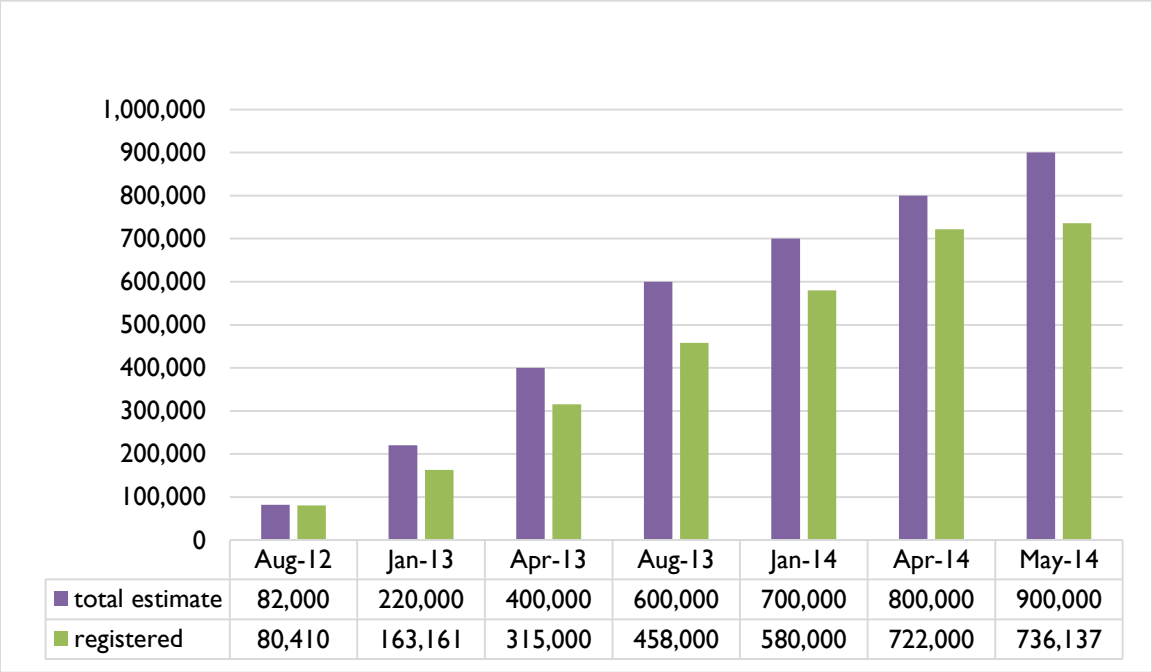
[38] Kemal Kirişci and Raj Salooja, "Northern Exodus: How Turkey Can Integrate Syrian Refugees" *Foreign Affairs*, April 16, 2014, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141186/kemal-kirisci-and-raj-salooja/northern-exodus

[39] Sema Karaca, "Kayıt Dışı Mülteciler, Kayda Değer Sorunlar [Unregistered refugees, problems needing to be registered]," *Analist*, September 2013, http://www.usakanalist.com/detail.php?id=694. For an early field survey studying the conditions of the refugees outside camps see, Mehmet Güçer, Sema Karaca and Osman Bahadır Dinçer, *The Struggle for Life between Borders: Syrian Refugees Fieldwork*, USAK Publications, Ankara, Report No13-04, May 2013, pp. 23-24 http://usak.org.tr/usak_det.php?id=1&cat=817&h=3#.UnzdQflT7fI.

[40] AFAD Communique, January 18, 2013, 2013/1 No. 374.

[41] AFAD Communique, September 9, 2013, 2013/8 No. 12816.

Chart 3: Number of Registered and Estimated Syrian Refugees in Turkey between August 2012 and May 2014



	Aug-12	Jan-13	Apr-13	Aug-13	Jan-14	Apr-14	May-14
total estimate	82,000	220,000	400,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000
registered	80,410	163,161	315,000	458,000	580,000	722,000	736,137

Source: UNHCR and AFAD

It took a considerable time for the government to put into place a registration process with the assistance of the UNHCR. The registration process has now come a long way and as of early-May 2014 the government had succeeded in registering close to half a million refugees outside camps (See Chart 3).[42] The process is continuing and will be critical to the management of the long list of challenges that Turkey faces with the ever growing Syrian refugee population.

[42] "UNHCR Turkey Syrian Refugee Daily Sitrep 08 May 2014," http://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/unhcr-turkey-syrian-refugee-daily-sitrep-08-may-2014.

CHALLENGES OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

The list of challenges Turkey and the international community face in addressing the Syrian refugee crisis is clearly a long one. The listing of challenges discussed in this section is neither in an order of importance nor an exhaustive one. However, one of the leading and toughest challenges that Turkey faces is what will happen to these refugees in the long run. In many ways the policy responses to the other challenges will be shaped by the answer to this question.

Many in Turkey recognize that when the crisis first started, the general expectation was that the Syrian refugees would be in Turkey temporarily and that they would be able to return home within a few months. Receiving them generously and with open arms was seen foremost as an ethical response to those fleeing the brutal conflict. It was expected that this policy in return bring goodwill and benefits to Turkey once the new Syria was established. Today, many acknowledge that refugees are likely to stay in Turkey for a long time to come and that they present Turkey with costly challenges. As a representative of a Turkish NGO put it in October 2013 "Initially, all the refugees wanted to return to Syria. But with the growing chaos and the increasing involvement of radical groups, there is a feeling that this is not the Syria they want to go back to."[43] A number of members of parliament from both the governing and opposition parties interviewed in January 2014 openly stated that they could see the conflict in Syria persisting for the next 10-15 years and hence these refugees would most likely remain in Turkey for that duration.

These observations are not surprising considering the state of the civil war in Syria. The country has seen an untold level of physical destruction accompanied by the collapse of the economy and basic public services in most of the country. The prospects of a settlement rekindled by the negotiations between the Syrian government and the opposition in Geneva in January 2014 have not produced any significant results on the ground. The situation has also been aggravated by a three-way conflict involving radical Islamic groups. The attacks that these groups have mounted on both opposition forces and Assad strongholds have created additional refugee flows into Turkey. The complexity of the conflict in Syria and the absence of an imminent solution make it quite clear that Turkey will continue to receive Syrian refugees and that these refugees are likely to stay in Turkey for the foreseeable future.

[43] Quoted in *Limits of Hospitality*, p. 9.

Bracing for the long-run

The UNHCR is mandated to oversee the protection of refugees around the world and identifies voluntary return of refugees to their country of origin as the preferred solution for refugees. However, in the case of the Syrian crisis it is very difficult to see how refugees would be able to return without an end to the fighting or some kind of settlement. The Geneva Process has achieved very little and the possibility of an agreement looks grim. The political circumstances and the level of destruction in Syria may not make it possible for the refugees to return home for a long while to come even if the violence was to stop.[44] Furthermore, a settlement that keeps the regime in place may deter most of the refugees from returning.

Following voluntary return, the second and third solutions advocated by the UNHCR involve either resettlement into third countries or integration in the host country or a combination of the two. In February 2014, the UNHCR launched an appeal to member countries to volunteer to take at least 30,000 Syrian refugees by the end of the year to ease some of the burden on countries neighboring Syria.[45] European countries have promised more than 18,000 resettlement slots.[46] The U.S. for its part has promised to take "several thousand Syrian refugees."[47] Subsequently, UNHCR called for an additional 100,000 slots for 2015 and 2016.[48] However, it is unlikely that there would be the kind of large resettlement programs similar to the ones involving Bosnians and Kosovars. It is also unlikely that there will be any major resettlement from Turkey beyond some symbolic numbers involving particularly vulnerable refugees and may be those refugees with close relatives in resettlement countries.

This means that the third option, integration into the host country, will inevitably have to be considered. Turkey was abuzz with rumors that the government was going to extend citizenship and allow refugees to vote during the local elections at the end of March 2014.[49] A number of officials as well as Members of Parliament interviewed in January 2014 categorically denied that the government had any such intentions of granting citizenship and noted that there were no

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[44] *The Rising Costs of Turkey's Syrian Quagmire*, International Crisis Group (ICG), no. 220, April 30, 2014, p.2, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/turkey-cyprus/turkey/230-the-rising-costs-of-turkey-s-syrian-quagmire.

[45] "Resettlement, Humanitarian Admission, and Other Forms of Admission for Syrian Refugees *2013/2014 Pledges,"* February 11, 2014 http://www.unhcr.org/52d565699.pdf.

[46] Mona Chalabi, "Where are the Syrian refugees going?," *The Guardian*, January 29, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jan/29/where-are-the-syrian-refugees-going. For the UNHCR appeal and breakdown of responses by countries see http://www.unhcr.org/52d565699.pdf.

[47] "State's Richard at Senate Hearing on Syrian Refugee Crisis."

[48] "UNHCR new call for resettlement or other forms of admission for 100,000 Syrians", February 21, 2014, http://www.unhcr.org/530736ded39.html.

[49] "Kaç Suriyeli'yi oy kullansın diye TC vatandaşı yaptınız [How many Syrian did you naturalize to enable them to vote]," *Hürriyet*, November 25, 2013, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/25199610.asp; "Sandıkta Suriyeli oyları [Syrian votes in ballot-boxes," *Vatan*, April 25, 2013, http://haber.gazetevatan.com/sandikta-suriyeli-oylari/532896/9/siyaset.

steps that had been taken in this direction.[50] A written question raised by a member of the opposition party with the Minister of the Interior about the issue of citizenship was answered in the negative as far as refugees in camps go and the statement that between 2003 and 2012 about 5,000 Syrians had acquired Turkish citizenship many through marriages.[51] The current Turkish Law on Settlement allows only for refugees who are of "Turkish descent and culture" to settle in Turkey.[52] The government would have to adopt special legislation to be able to extend mass naturalization for the Syrian refugees in Turkey. This would be a very controversial and divisive issue and a politically treacherous decision especially at a time when Turkey finds itself in difficult politically polarized election cycle. Opposition politicians have feared that if indeed Syrian refugees were able to vote it, they would most likely be voting overwhelmingly for the political party in power and the current prime minister because of the "open door" policy but also the stand taken against the regime in Syria.

Another factor complicating the politics surrounding the citizenship path is that the public in Turkey is growing weary of the Syrian refugees and increasingly sees them as a burden. There is an unhappiness that is growing as prices rise - especially rental prices in towns along the Syrian border - and wages fall as more and more refugees enter the informal labor market.[53] This development is also aggravated by the fact that provinces along the border region are also parts of Turkey where per capita income is usually lower than the national average of USD 10,500.[54] These attitudes are reflected in the results of a poll taken by the Center for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM) published in January 2014.[55] According to this poll, 86 percent of the respondents want the intake to be stopped while close to 30 percent of these respondents advocated that the refugees should simply be sent back. An additional complicating factor is that the Turkish public in general is not particularly receptive to immigration in general. According to a survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund, 54 percent of Turkish respondents saw legal

[50] "YSK Başkanı Güven: Suriyeli sığınmacılar oy kullanamaz [Head of YSK: Syrian refugees cannot vote]," *Zaman*, December 17, 2013, http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_ysk-baskani-guven-suriyeli-siginmacilar-oy-kullanamaz_2184777.html. For a statement by the Minister of the Interior in this regard see "Soru: Suriyeli sığınmacılar oy kullanacak mı? [Question: Will Syrian refugees vote?]," *Radikal*, August 19, 2013, http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/soru_suriyeli_siginmacilar_oy_kullanacak_mi-1146783. See also statement by MülteciDer, a Turkish NGO specializing on refugee issues that Syrian refugees do not have the right to vote and only 71 Syrians had acquired Turkish citizenship between 2008 and 2013, "MÜLTECİ DER'den Suriyeli Mültecilerin Oy Kullanma İddiasına Yanıt [Response from MÜLTECİ DER to claims that will vote]," March 28, 2014, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/154523-multeci-der-den-suriyeli-multecilerin-oy-kullanma-iddiasina-yanit.

[51] The written questions raised by the opposition member of parliament on March 1, 2014 can be reached from: http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/7/7-19264s.pdf. The answer by the Minister to these questions was provided in a document dated May 24, 2014 can be accessed from: http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/7/7-19264sgc.pdf.

[52] Iskan Kanunu [Settlement Law], No. 5543, *Official Gazette*, Tarih: 26/9/2006 Sayı: 26301, Article 4, http://www.nvi.gov.tr/Files/File/Mevzuat/Nufus_Mevzuati/Kanun/pdf/IskanKanunu.pdf.

[53] *Limits of Hospitality*, p. 27.

[54] "Türkiye'nin en zengin ve fakir illeri [Richest and Poorest Cities in Turkey]", *Sabah* December 25, 2012 www.sabah.com.tr/fotohaber/ekonomi/turkiyenin-en-zengin-ve-en-fakir-illeri/45769.

[55] "Türk Kamu Oyunun Sığınmacılara Yönelik Bakış Açısı [Turkish Public Opinion Towards Refugees]", January 2014, http://edam.org.tr/Media/IcerikFiles/12/EdamAnket2014.1.pdf.

immigration as a problem compared to 32 percent in Germany. 70 percent believed "immigrants take jobs away from native born" and 70 percent were "unhappy with their governments' management of immigration policy," compared to 20 and 46 percent in Germany.[56]

As much as the path of formal integration in the form of the granting of citizenship may at the moment be a difficult and thorny one, there is the sheer reality that more than 900,000 Syrian refugees are present in the country and their number are likely to keep increasing. There is already an informal process of integration occurring as Syrians try to adjust to their new surroundings and seek more permanent accommodation, employment and schooling for their children. The government as well as many municipalities and civil society groups are extending and expanding a range of services including language courses in Turkish. Refugees themselves realize that they are likely to be in Turkey for the long haul and demand these courses in Turkish language. A survey conducted by AFAD in 2013 found that 86 percent of refugees outside of camps want to learn Turkish.[57] However, short of formal integration, the government is going to have to give priority to two policy areas critical to formal or informal integration: employment and education of refugee children.

Employment

There are growing reports in the Turkish media about the number of Syrians that seek employment in the informal sector and risk serious exploitation. Furthermore, any casual observer of neighborhoods populated by Syrian refugees whether in Istanbul, Gaziantep or elsewhere will observe the bustling economic activity resulting from bakeries, businesses, travel agencies and restaurants run by Syrians. The AFAD survey mentioned above found that three quarters of respondents non-camp Syrians looked for a job.[58] Current Turkish labor laws make it very difficult for Syrian refugees to obtain work permits and seek employment in the formal economy. They would need to have a valid passport as well as a residence permit and the employer would need to show that a Turkish national could not be found for the position. The inability to work legally has created an underground labor force for adult and children workers in industries such as construction, textile manufacturing and heavy industry as well as in the agricultural sector. There are reports of Syrian refugees travelling all the way from provinces along the Syrian border to the Black Sea region to work as seasonal agricultural workers.[59] This is pushing wages downwards. Daily rates in Kilis have been reported to have declined from an

[56] *2013 Transatlantic Trends*, pp. 37-41, http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2013/09/TTrends-2013-Key-Findings-Report.pdf.
[57] *Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 2013 Field Survey Results*, p. 10.
[58] Ibid.
[59] *The Situation of Syrian Refugees in Neighboring Countries: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations*, ORSAM Report No: 189, April 2014, p. 16.

estimated 60 lira to 20 Turkish liras per day.[60] Often Syrians find themselves having to work for much lower wages than their Turkish counterparts. Those Syrians willing to take lower wages and work longer hours face a higher risk of exploitation with little recourse while provoking resentment among locals.[61] Yet, at the same time there are also reports that Syrian labor was a welcome relief for the labor market, at least in Gaziantep.[62] In 2013 Gaziantep together with Kilis where two of the only three provinces in Turkey that reported a drop in their unemployment rates.[63] As Syrian labor is informal they would not appear in these statistics however this seems to suggest that there will continue to be a demand in Gaziantep for Syrian labor whether it is informal or not.

There have been efforts to address the challenge of incorporating Syrian refugee labor into the formal economy both from civil society as well as the government. The Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce, for example, recently recommended that Syrians be given formal and legal short-term working permits, vocational training and social security benefits.[64] Their proposal includes a quota for local businesses to employ Syrian refugees, an assessment on the skill profile of Syrian workers as well as the introduction of industrial zones to be set up near the border for public-private partnerships that would employ Syrian refugees and produce goods that could then be sold to Syria. The proposal, however, is only in its earliest stages. Many details would still need to be worked out. In the meantime, the Ministry of Labor in April 2014 introduced an expedited procedure for Syrians to obtain work permits.[65] Under normal conditions obtaining a work permit is very slow and complicated. The employer has to show that there are no Turkish nationals available for the position. The new arrangement would relieve the employer from having to do this. However, it is too early to say whether this practice will indeed improve the situation of Syrians and draw them into the formal labor market.

[60] "Turkey tries to cope with Syrian refugee influx amid challenges," *Today's Zaman*, December 22, 2013, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-334486-turkey-tries-to-cope-with-syrian-refugee-influx-amid-challenges.html.
[61] For a survey of wages and working conditions see Dr. Mehmet Zencir and Dr. Aslı Davas *Suriyeli Sığınmacılar ve Sağlık Hizmetleri Raporu* [Report on Syrian Refugees and Health Services] (Türk Tabipleri Birliği, Ankara, January 2014), pp. 44-46 and for resentment by locals see p. 71 http://www.ttb.org.tr/index.php/Haberler/hizmet-4315.html. For reports of poor working conditions see also *Yok Sayılanlar; Kamp Dışında Yaşayan Suriye'den Gelen Sığınmacılar* [The Inexistent: Syrian refugees outside camps], Suriye'den İstanbul'a Gelen Sığınmacıları İzleme Platformu, http://www.multeci.net/images/stories/1/Yok-Saylanlar-Raporu.pdf.
[62] Vahap Munyar, "Gaziantep'deki 140 bin Suriyeli, fabrikalar için 'ilaç' gibi geldi [140,000 Syrians in Gaziantep, like 'medicine' for factories]," *Hürriyet*, February 2, 2014, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/25716877.asp.
[63] Slide 26 and 28 in PPT presentation by Murat Erdoğan, Director of Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO), at the conference entitled "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration" held on March 27, 2014 at Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sıhhiye Campus, (New) Senate Hall, Ankara. This presentation was based on a forthcoming report on the topic.
[64] "Northern Exodus: How Turkey Can Integrate Syrian Refugees."
[65] For the announcement see: http://www.csgb.gov.tr/csgbPortal/yabancilar.portal?page=duyurular.

Education

A second policy challenge closely linked to a better integration of the Syrians is the education of the refugee children. Over half of the Syrian refugees are estimated to be children.[66] Although there are no reliable statistics, UNICEF estimates that 74 percent of children outside of camps in Turkey had no access to schooling.[67] This is in contrast to 60 percent attendance rates in camps reported by UNHCR.[68] Addressing the education needs of nearly half a million refugee children at school age in Turkey is no easy feat. A concerted effort needs to be made by the Turkish government, civil society, and major donor countries to meet this challenge. After all, Turkey and virtually all of the international community are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which promises all children access to education irrespective of their nationality. Furthermore, ensuring refugee children receive an education is crucial to preventing what UNICEF calls the danger of a "lost generation" of Syrians.[69] Such a generation would be unlikely to contribute positively and productively to society and instead risk becoming involved in crime and constitute a threat to societal peace and stability. Instead, as the former prime minister of Britain Gordon Brown notes, education would provide hope and prospects for a better future.[70] There is also an urgent need to achieve a better understanding of the complexities associated with meeting the educational needs of Syrian children, including a better understanding of the pull and push factors influencing parents' decision to send or not to send their children to school.[71]

One tough and strategically difficult question that the Turkish government faces in providing education to Syrian refugee children is: should policy be based on the assumption that refugees will eventually return to Syria, or not? The answer to this question will ultimately determine the language and curriculum of education. Currently, a majority of refugee children with access to schooling receive their education on the assumption that they will eventually return home to

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[66] *Syria Regional Response Plan 2014 Turkey*, p. 26, http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/.
[67] *UNICEF: Syria Crisis Monthly humanitarian situation report, 18 March-17 April 2014*, p. 19 https://syria.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/unicef_syria_monthly_humanitarian_situation_report_140417.pdf. There are actually no reliable figures on the number of school children out of school. In general, children in refugee camps have guaranteed access to schools. AFAD in their report *Syrian Refugees in Turkey* report 83 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 11 attend these schools though no information is available for ages above eleven, p. 50.
[68] *Syria Regional Response Plan 2014 Turkey*, p. 25. UNHCR reports a lower rate of attendance of 14 percent for children outside camps, p. 25. AFAD reports the same figure too.
[69] *No Lost Generation: Protecting the futures of children affected by the crisis in Syria, Strategic Overview*, UNICEF, 2014, http://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/No_Lost_Generation_Strategic_Overview__January_2014.pdf.
[70] Gordon Brown, "Education can offer Syrian children a hopeful future," *Washington Post*, January 10, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/in-lebanon-a-glimmer-of-hope-for-syrians/2014/01/08/67b0837e-7888-11e3-af7f-13bf0e9965f6_story.html.
[71] This need and the issues deserving further research were discussed at "The Syrian Refugee Crisis – A roundtable discussion on research priorities related to the education response," hosted by the Center for Universal Education at Brookings February 25, 2014. For a summary of the event see Xanthe Ackerman, Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Maysa Jalbout, "A Fourth Year of War in Syria: What We Still Need to Know About Educating Refugees, Brookings Institution, March 14, 2014, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/education-plus-development/posts/2014/03/14-syria-educating-refugees-ackerman-jalbout-peterson.

Syria. In Turkey, the Syrian Education Commission provides a curriculum taught in Arabic and based on the Syrian curriculum with adaptations, including the removal of any glorification of Bashar al-Assad and his regime.[72]

There are also a series of schools with a curriculum similar to those taught in refugee camps run by Syrian and Turkish non-governmental organizations, sometimes with grants for buildings or land from private donors or municipalities. There are for example two schools set up with the support of the city of Gaziantep catering for children between the grades one to twelve. The City is looking into constructing another school to be able to meet the demand from a long waiting list. The city of Kayseri is another place where in April a school was inaugurated to cater for 690 Syrian refugee children.[73] One Turkish NGO, Kimse Yok Mu, runs and supports a number of schools in the region and supports more than 2,500 children.[74] Syrian refugees with residence permits are able to send their children to regular Turkish schools, however, these children receive their education in Turkish based on the Turkish curriculum. Their numbers are reported to be around 6,000 compared to approximately 40,000 enrolled in schools run on the basis of the curriculum provided by the Syrian Education Commission.[75] The Higher Education Board of Turkey has also made it possible for Syrian university students to continue their education at Turkish universities as "guest" students.[76]

Should Turkish and the Turkish school curriculum be taught? There are reports that in response to growing demand, language courses in Turkish are increasingly being offered to children as well as adults in and outside refugee camps. This is interpreted partly as a sign of a growing need to integrate into Turkish society but also a realization among refugees that return to Syria is not likely to take place soon. In this event, it seems that a school curriculum in Turkish, or at least a program with a strong element of Turkish, will be critical to the functioning of these children in Turkish society as adults. The decision to teach Turkish, or to teach *in* Turkish for that matter, is a difficult one that comes with many cultural, legal, political, and societal consequences. Failure to provide education in Turkish, however, could create a youth with a serious handicap integrating into the Turkish society. Yet, at the same time experts also highlight the importance of emphasizing education in mother-tongue or native language.[77] Striking a balance between the

[72] Personal interview with education expert April 2014.
[73] For the announcement by the Ministry of Education see: http://mebk12.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/38/14/749482/icerikler/suriyeli-ogrenciler-icin-okul_1178665.html?CHK=cdb1a7d99bcdc414e2bd160fd01d3ef1.
[74] Xanthe Ackerman, "Education for Syrian Refugees in Turkey – Beyond Camps" January 17, 2014, Brookings Institution, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/education-plus-development/posts/2014/01/17-turkey-syria-refugees-education-ackerman.
[75] *UNICEF: Syria Crisis Monthly humanitarian situation report, 18 March- 17 April 2014*, p. 19
[76] "Suriyeli Mültecilere Üniversite Yolu [Syrian Refugees Granted Access to University Education]," *NTVMSNBC*, September 22, 2012, www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25384153/.
[77] *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery*, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2010, http://www.ineesite.org/eietrainingmodule/cases/learningistheirfuture/pdf/Minimum_Standards_English_2010.pdf.

two will clearly not be an easy exercise that indeed will require considerable cooperation between the Turkish government and all stake-holders.

A greater challenge concerns the actual content and substance of the curriculum. Syria and Turkey are vastly different countries with significant cultural, societal, and historical differences which are inevitably reflected in their educational systems and curricula. For example, while older boys and girls study in sex-segregated government schools in Syria, boys and girls study together in Turkey. Thus, children who receive an education based on Syrian curriculum are less likely to easily adapt and function in a Turkish environment. Education outside refugee camps will need to be closely supervised, as content and delivery is vulnerable to politicization due to the resentment, prejudice, and sectarianism triggered by the war in Syria. Turkey is a very diverse society and any teachings that promote societal discord along ethnic or sectarian lines would in the long run have serious security related consequences.

In the event that a Syrian curriculum and Arabic medium of instruction were to be chosen, the government inevitably would face an additional challenge arising from the long-standing demands of Kurds in Turkey to have education in Kurdish. Turkey has come a very long way from the days when Kurdish identity in Turkey was denied and Kurds were instead referred to as "mountain Turks." The effort to meet the European Union's (EU) criteria to start the membership accession process saw the adoption of important cultural reforms for minorities in Turkey. This made it possible for radio and TV to be broadcasts and publications in the Kurdish language to appear, something that would have not been imaginable even twenty years ago.[78] Additionally, in southeastern parts of Turkey where the majority of the Kurds live, Kurdish is being increasingly used at the local level for the provision of public services. The government has also opened the way to the teaching of the Kurdish language in private schools. However, broader education in Kurdish, that is the adoption of a curriculum in Kurdish and the teaching of the Kurdish language in public schools, is still a very controversial and contested issue. Hence, allowing a parallel education system in Turkey that would teach Syrian refugee children in Arabic risks making it easier to level accusations of double-standards at the government. So far the Turkish Ministry of Education is not officially providing Syrians with education in Arabic, although they are tacitly permitting the widespread education of Syrians in Arabic outside camps.

Beyond these complicated political questions, there are also practical problems that call for attention. One such problem has to do with certification of the education that Syrian children receive. Following the Syrian curriculum is not a realistic option because students would have to go to Syria to take national exams to be able to receive recognized certification. The Syrian curriculum is not recognized in Turkey. In order to offer Syrians an accredited degree upon passing 9th grade exams and baccalaureate exams at the end of 12th grade, the Syrian Education

[78] Kemal Kirişci, "The Kurdish Issue in Turkey: The Limits of European Reform" *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 2011).

Commission and the Turkish Ministry of Education determined that Syrian students from 9th – 12th grade should follow the Libyan curriculum. There are practical problems resulting from access to textbooks and incompatibilities between the regular Syrian curriculum and the Libyan one especially with respect to graduation exams.[79] Nevertheless, approximately 5,000 students successfully completed these exams and their equivalencies where granted by the Turkish Ministry of Education.[80]

There is also the problem of infrastructure. Finding buildings and premises suitable for housing schools is a major handicap. So far a number of Turkish NGOs, a number of municipalities, and the Syrian Education Commission have been able to find such buildings, but the number of children they are able to serve is very limited. In other cases, Syrians have themselves gathered resources and rented buildings to start schools. There would have to be a significant increase in the availability of such buildings and their construction would take time and require significant resources to meet the educational needs of Syrian children. This would call for a large concerted effort on the part of Turkish government and donor countries as well as international organizations given the size of the Syrian children population outside camps. Furthermore, finding and paying qualified teachers is another additional challenge that would require considerable organizational effort. However, some progress has already been achieved as a result of cooperation between AFAD, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF. The completion of 50 prefabricated schools by the end of 2014 is planned as well as the expansion of a current project providing economic support for volunteer Syrian teachers.[81]

In the event that Syrian children were to be admitted to Turkish schools, there would be different set of challenges. One major challenge would be ensuring good quality education. The provinces where most of the urban refugees are living are also provinces where schools' performance is below the national average.[82] Expanding the size of the classes in an effort to absorb Syrian children would most probably aggravate these existing performance problems. An additional accompanying challenge would be the need to address the effects of the displacement trauma and the fact that these children have been away from school for more than two years. Addressing these challenges in themselves would require considerable resources and would create major budgetary pressures as well as tax Turkey's human resources. Overall it is likely that integrating Syrian refugee children into the school system of the region will complicate pre-existing problems and aggravate inequalities within the Turkish education system.

[79] Personal interview with education expert April 2014.
[80] "MEB'den Suriyeli öğrenciler için elektronik kayıt sistemi [Electronic registration for Syrian students from MEB]," March 11, 2014, http://www.egitimtercihi.com/gundem/13460-meb-den-suriyeli-ogrenciler-icin-elektronik-kayit-sistemi.html.
[81] Ibid.
[82] For a comparison of these provinces with the rest of Turkey on the basis of basic educational parameters see *81 İlde Temel Eğitim Göstergeleri* [Basic Education Parameters in 81 Provinces] prepared by the Education Reform Initiative, Sabanci University, http://erg.sabanciuniv.edu/ilegitimgostergeleri.

Language of instruction and actual content of the curriculum to be followed are extremely difficult issues to solve politically and will be compounded by the more practical difficulties to do with certification and infrastructural shortfalls. The resolution of these challenges is also closely tied to what happens to Syrian refugees in the long run. Striking a balance between providing immediate access to education to ensure that there is no "lost generation" of Syrians and the long term needs of refugee children will require considerable political effort and cooperation between wide ranging stakeholders. There is already an expanding cooperation emerging between AFAD, the Turkish Ministry of Education, UNICEF and UNHCR, which is a welcome development. It is important this cooperation is expanded to include representation from Syrian parents, as parents are often the best judges when it comes to their children's education. Moreover, gathering input from the experience of teachers associations as well as Turkish and international non-governmental organization specializing in educational issues, such as Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee, is critical to developing a strategy that will best serve the interests of the Syrian refugee children and Turkey. Ultimately, "the overarching challenge will be is to ensure continuity in refugees' education in the long run and for that there are various factors Turkey and partners need to address: language (to ensure literacy in at least Arabic and Turkish), curriculum, teachers (certification, pay, etc.) and certification of students' learning. This will require a systematic approach to education".[83]

Health and Shelter

Two key challenges that have been in place since the first arrival of Syrians are health and shelter. Both of these challenges have been largely met as far as refugees in camps are concerned. However, one challenge is that after having established 22 camps in three years, the government is pressed to find the resources and the land for additional camps. Primary health services and vaccination campaigns for the children are provided for in the camps and paid for by the government. However, an extensive report prepared by the Turkish Doctors Union highlights a series of problems resulting from the absence of specialized medical services, overworked personnel and language barriers.[84]

There is also a well-functioning food program the government runs in cooperation with the World Food Program. Each camp resident is entitled to a fixed amount monthly payment that is registered on to electronic cards.[85] This allows the camp residents to meet their food and other needs by purchasing goods from supermarkets inside the camps.

[83] Observation made by the Director of the Education Reform Initiative at Sabanci University, personal interview, April 2014.
[84] *Suriyeli Sığınmacılar ve Sağlık Hizmetleri Raporu* [Report on Syrian Refugees and Health Services], p. 82.
[85] Erol Cebeci and Sally Judson, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey", *Perspective*, April 2014, p. 2, http://www.setadc.org/syrian-refugees-in-turkey/dc-perspectives/2277.

The situation outside camps is very different. Urban refugees face great difficulties in meeting their health and shelter needs. The increased demand for rental property has already had the effect of pushing up rents in cities and neighborhoods where refugees have settled. Furthermore, many refugees find themselves in very poor quality housing and those who do not have enough resources end up having to find shelter in abandoned buildings, or worse, in make-shift shelters. Local governments and some NGOs have tried to address these needs but the scale of the demand is well beyond available resources. This problem is compounded by the fact that not all the urban refugees have been registered and information about their needs have not been compiled in any systematic manner.[86]

The health situation for urban refugees is an even greater challenge. The government has made all of its hospitals accessible to refugees and provided funding for it. However, major difficulties remain, as addressed by the Turkish Doctors Union in some detail. First, in spite of the measures put into place by the government, there are reports of urban refugees encountering difficulties in gaining access to hospitals and health services partly because of the number of refugees and partly because health workers lack of awareness of the circulars published by AFAD requiring the extension of health coverage to all Syrian refugees.[87] Access is not always as straightforward and simple as the government makes it out to be. Secondly, there are problems resulting from overcrowding especially in provinces along the border with Syria. These are parts of Turkey where the health system is limited and serving refugees as well as injured people ferried from Syria is straining the system. This leads to complaints from personnel as well as local patients who feel they are failing to get the services they deserve. A case in point is the state hospital in Kilis situated a few miles from the border. The hospital is simply overwhelmed; the personnel, refugees as well as local patients all appear dissatisfied.[88] Thirdly, refugees with chronic diseases and diseases requiring follow-up or continuous treatment encounter major difficulties and shortages.[89] Fourthly, the language barrier is reported as a major problem complicating the provision of services to Syrian refugees and in creating awareness about the rights refugees are entitled to.

Finally, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) that have extensive experience in the provision of specialized health services to victims of civil wars and refugee movements have encountered difficulties in registering themselves to operate legally in Turkey. This complicates the possibility of developing a supplementary health support system that both Syrian refugees and locals could benefit from in areas most affected by the crisis. Nevertheless, some of these INGOs have been able to pair up with local NGOs to provide these services as is the case with

[86] The report prepared by the Turkish Doctors Union seems to be the most detailed report in documenting shelter related problems together with health *Suriyeli Sığınmacılar ve Sağlık Hizmetleri Raporu* [Report on Syrian Refugees and Health Services].
[87] Ibid p. 18
[88] Personal interview with an NGO representative October 2013. See also *Limits of Hospitality* p. 18.
[89] This problem is especially highlighted by *Yok Sayılanlar; Kamp Dışında Yaşayan Suriye'den Gelen Sığınmacılar* [The Inexistent: Syrian refugees outside camps], p. 27.

the health clinic in Kilis operating under the name of the Turkish Helsinki Citizens Assembly with the support of Médecins Sans Frontières. ASAM has also put into service a major health center in Istanbul in cooperation with International Medical Corps since January 2014 and plans to open a similar one in Gaziantep.[90]

There is also the challenge of communicable diseases. As soon as the WHO announced that polio cases had been recorded among Syrian children, the Turkish government mounted a campaign of vaccinations in camps as well as in the provinces along the Syrian border. Nevertheless, AFAD notes that there are important percentages of children inside as well as outsides camps that are not vaccinated for measles and polio. As AFAD notes, "Relatively high percentages of Syrian refugee children not vaccinated against polio and measles puts Turkey at risk as these viruses may spread to Turkey."[91]

Social issues

The presence of large numbers of Syrian refugees is having important social consequences particularly in the border provinces. As some of the local population has close family and social ties with the regions in northern Syria where most of the refugees come from, there are also major differences. One such difference is that Turkish civil law does not allow for multiple wives and child marriages. Syrian women and under aged girls have been entering local households as second sometimes even third wives.[92] This is causing social tension and there have been reports of divorce rates as well as an increase in depression cases among local women in Hatay and Kilis.[93] These developments have been accompanied by the birth of babies that are technically considered to have been born out-of-wed-lock.

Such babies and their mothers inevitably suffer from social stigma, but more importantly, Turkish law does not allow the possibility to register these babies. The problem of registration is also faced by babies born to Syrian couples outside camps. Furthermore, it is not also clear whether the day will come when Syrian authorities, especially if the current regime persists, will recognize the registration of births by Turkish authorities in camps. Effectively, these children will be without citizenship. As of January 2014, according to Davutoğlu, there were just under 8,500 babies born in refugee camps.[94] Furthermore, the inability of obtaining official

[90] Personal interview April 2014.
[91] *Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 2013*, p. 42.
[92] *Suriyeli Sığınmacılar ve Sağlık Hizmetleri Raporu* [Report on Syrian Refugees and Health Services], p. 62.
[93] "Kilis'teki Suriye: Sorunların Tespiti ve Çözümlerine İlişkin Rapor" [The Syria Within Kilis: Determining the Problems and Finding Solutions], *Kilis Ortak Akıl Topluluğu [Kilis Common Mind Association]*, September 2013. See also Slide 29 in PPT presentation for conference on "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration".
[94] Remarks by Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey at the Geneva II Conference, Montreux, January 22, 2014, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/remarks-by-mr_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-geneva-ii-conference_-montreux_-22-january-2014.en.mfa.

documentation from Syria pertaining to personal status makes it impossible to register civil marriages with Turkish authorities.

Another social problem receiving growing attention in the media is the manner in which the dire situation of the refugees is making women and girls vulnerable to sexual exploitation.[95] There are media reports of commercialization of extra-legal marriages.[96] Children as young as five-six years old find themselves having to earn money peddling goods or begging in the streets. These developments in turn fuel growing resentment towards refugees among local populations.

Political challenges

Currently, Syrian refugees are a little more than 1 percent of Turkey's overall population. However, the overwhelming majority of the refugees are concentrated in five provinces along the Syrian border: Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa and Mardin. The figure for registered refugees in and outside camps is a little over 615,000. This amounts to just about 10 percent of the total population of these five provinces. The proportion increases significantly when allowance is made for the fact that most of the refugees outside camps actually live in the main cities of these provinces and that refugee camps are usually within walking or short bus ride of these cities. When this is taken into consideration, the percentage of Syrian refugees in relation to the main cities of these provinces increases to around 22 percent.[97] In the specific case of Kilis, the number of refugees is roughly 73,000 while the population of the city is 85,000. These figures do not include the refugees that have not been registered but they are clearly large enough to suggest a major impact on these cities and provinces.

One major political challenge results from the fact that the overwhelming majority of the refugees are Arab Sunni Muslims and they have arrived into a region of Turkey that is ethnically and religiously quite diverse. In the province of Hatay there is an important minority of Alawites, (separate from Alevis in the rest of the country) who are closely related to their co-religionists in Syria.[98] As the conflict in Syria evolved and radical Islamist groups became increasingly active, Alawites have identified themselves much more openly with the regime in Damascus. They have also resented the presence of Syrian Sunni refugees in their midst and have imagined a conspiracy on the part of the government to change the demographic balance in the region.[99]

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[95] Brenda Stoter, "Syrian women refugees humiliated, exploited in Turkey" *Al-Monitor*, March 12, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/syria-refugees-women-exploitation-harassment.html.
[96] Mehves Evin, "Suriyelilerle evlilik ticarete dönüştü [Marriages with Syrians have become a trade]" *Milliyet*, January 27, 2014, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/suriyelilerle-evlilik-ticarete/gundem/detay/1827612/default.htm.
[97] The total population of these cities is just under 2.8 million. The figures were obtained from http://www.tbb.gov.tr/storage/catalogs/2012-belediye-nufuslari.pdf.
[98] Soner Cagaptay, "Are Syrian Alawites and Turkish Alevis the same?" *CNN Global Public Square*, 17 April 2012, http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2012/04/17/are-syrian-alawites-and-turkish-alevis-the-same/.
[99] Tuğba Tekerek, "Burada Suriyeli Oturamaz [No Syrians here]", *Taraf*, October 7, 2012, http://www.taraf.com.tr/yazilar/tugba-tekerek/burada-suriyeli-oturamaz/23432/.

Actually, in the early stages of the refugee crisis the government decided to relocate most of the Sunni refugees who had initially been settled in camps in parts of Hatay heavily inhabited by Alawites.[100]

Turkey does not collect demographic data on the basis of ethnicity and hence it is difficult to tell the size of the Alawite population in Hatay, but some estimates put their numbers at around 500,000.[101] The tensions come at a time when the Turkish government is being criticized for emphasizing the Sunni aspect of Turkish identity.[102] The situation was also aggravated when the prime minister in June referred to the people who were killed by a bombing in Reyhanlı as "my 53 Sunni citizens" [103] and then went on to accuse Alawites in Turkey of supporting or sympathizing with the Assad regime in Syria.[104] Many Alawites considered this evidence of the prime minister's sectarian attitudes.[105] These developments raise concerns that the crisis in Syria and the way the Turkish government handles it could complicate minority-majority relations within a region otherwise historically recognized as one where different ethnic and religious groups lived in harmony.[106] Hatay also has some small Christian communities including Armenians.

Similar observations can be made about Sanlıurfa and Mardin. While the population of Gaziantep and Kilis is predominantly Turkish and Sunni, in these two provinces there is a delicate balance between Arab and Kurdish populations. In the case of Mardin there is also an Assyrian minority, belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church, which had fled the region in the 1990s because of the violence between the Turkish security forces and Kurds and which had recently began to return to the province. The influx of large numbers of Sunni Arabs always risks disrupting these local balances and raises the specter that the conflicts within Syria could duplicate themselves on the Turkish side of the border. One manifestation of possible tensions occurred after the local elections in the border town of Ceylanpınar as well as in the neighboring towns of Birecik and Viranşehir. These are overwhelmingly Kurdish populated towns. When the Kurdish political party, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), lost to the governing AKP during the

[100] Soner Cagaptay, *Impact of Syria's Refugees on Southern Turkey* (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2013) pp. 13-19. For an extensive discussion of tension in Hatay province caused by the presence of Syrian refugees see "Turkey's Refugee Regime Stretched to the Limit? The Case of Iraqi and Syrian Refugee Flow."
[101] Bayram Balci, "Le rêve arabe de la Turquie brisé par la crise syrienne [Turkey's Arab dream destroyed by the Syrian crisis]," *Etudes du CERI*, No. 188/2012, p. 19, http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/fr/content/le-reve-arabe-de-la-turquie-brise-par-la-crise-syrienne.
[102] Fehim Taştekin, "Turkey's Sunni Identity Test," *Al Monitor*, June 21, 2013 and US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, "International Religious Freedom Report 2012, Turkey", http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper.
[103] Kadri Gürsel, "Erdoğan'ın Sorunu Nedir [What is Erdoğan's Problem]?" *Al-Monitor*, June 17, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2013/06/erdogan-turkey-protests-strategy.html.
[104] Stephen Schwartz, "Erdogan, Iran, Syrian Alawites, and Turkish Alevis," *The Weekly Standard*, March 29, 2012, http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/erdogan-iran-syrian-alawites-and-turkish-alevis_634834.html.
[105] Constanze Letsch, "Syrian conflict brings sectarian tensions to Turkey's tolerant Hatay province," The Guardian, September 3, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/03/syria-crisis-threatens-turkish-tolerance.
[106] Robert Koptaş, "Alevi-Sünni gerginliği korkutuyor [Alawite-Sunni tension scares]," *Agos*, Mayıs 16, 2013, http://www.agos.com.tr/haber.php?seo=rober-koptas-yazdi-alevisunni-gerginligi-korkutuyor&haberid=5082.

local elections in March 2014, with very tight margins, violence broke out in protest of alleged irregularities.[107]

One important consequence of these tensions is that Alawite refugees from Syria have shied away from going into refugee camps that are overwhelming populated by Sunni Arab refugees. Instead they have chosen to go to cities where the opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), runs municipalities or moved to Istanbul and sought the assistance of Alevi foundations.[108] Syrian Christians and Turkmen refugees too have preferred to stay out of the camps dominated by Sunnis. The government set up a camp for Turkmen refugees in Hatay[109] and one for Christian refugees in Mardin.[110] Christian refugees by and large belong to the Syrian Orthodox Church and many have found refuge with foundations and monasteries belonging to Assyrian communities in Turkey, mostly in Midyat in the province of Mardin. This seems to have occurred in spite of the fact that the Turkish government as well as AFAD has repeatedly expressed their openness to receiving refugees irrespective of their ethnic or sectarian background. Nevertheless, there are reports highlighting discrimination as well as a sense of insecurity by members of these minority refugee communities.[111]

Another town that has seen increased tension resulting much more directly from the developments in Syria and refugee flows is the town of Nusaybin in the province of Mardin. At the origins of the tensions lie efforts by the security forces to build a physical barrier along parts of the border across from Kurdish-populated areas of Syria. These efforts provoked protests and even led the mayor of the town to go on a hunger strike.[112] The project was subsequently discontinued but the tension persisted. The tension results also from an uneasy relationship between the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the group that dominates the Kurdish populated

[107] "Ceylanpınar'da seçim OHAL'i! [Election related emergence rule in Ceylanpınar", *Radikal*, April 2, 2014, http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/ceylanpinarda_secim_ohali-1184464 and "Ceylanpınar'da OHAL [Emergency in Ceylanpınar]," *Taraf*, April 3, 2014 http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber-ceylanpinarda-ohal-152024/.

[108] Personal interview with a member of parliament from CHP, January 2014. See also "Suriyeli sığınmacılara rahat yok [No peace for Syrian refugees]," *Taraf*, September 6, 2013, http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber-suriyeli-siginmacilara-rahat-yok-133731/.

[109] Sema Karaca, "Suriyeli Mülteciler Meselesinde Problemli Alanlar [Syrian refugees and Problematic Themes]," *Analist*, June 2013, http://www.usakanalist.com/detail.php?id=627.

[110] Sussane Güsten, "Christians Squeezed Out by Violent Struggle in North Syria" *New York Times*, February 13, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/14/world/middleeast/christians-squeezed-out-by-violent-struggle-in-north-syria.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&.

[111] *Yok Sayılanlar; Kamp Dışında Yaşayan Suriye'den Gelen Sığınmacılar* [The Inexistent: Syrian refugees outside camps] as well as see also Slide 25 in PPT presentation for conference on "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration."

[112] "Turkish mayor stops hunger strike over Syria border wall," *Hürriyet Daily News*, November 7, 2013, www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-mayor-stops-hunger-strike-over-syria-border-wall--.aspx?pageID=238&nID=57544&NewsCatID=338 and "Kurds protest against wall along Turkey's border with Syria" *Reuters*, November 7, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/07/us-syria-crisis-turkey-kurds-idUSBRE9A610720131107.

northern parts of Syria, and Turkish authorities.[113] For a long time, Turkey resented PYD's reluctance to join the broader Syrian opposition, seeing it as undermining Turkey's grander strategy of encouraging unity within the Syrian opposition. An additional complication also arose from Turkey's concerns that PYD's domination of the northeastern parts of Syria could undermine Turkey's increasingly warm relations with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq.[114] Much more important is the concern among Turkish officials about how developments in PYD-held parts of Syria may undermine Turkish governmental efforts to reach a political deal with the PKK. The PYD is considered as an extension of the PKK in Syria. This is occurring at a time when elements within the PKK are becoming increasingly restless that a political deal with the government is not emerging.[115]

Initially, Turkey kept the border with Kurdish areas closed except for refugees and limited transfers of humanitarian aid.[116] Most Syrian Kurdish refugees went to Iraqi Kurdistan when fighting broke out between PYD and radical Islamic groups in August 2013.[117] In the course of the second half of 2013 the relationship between Turkey and the PYD somewhat improved. The leader of PYD, Salih Muslim, was invited to Turkey and held meetings with Turkish officials on a number of occasions. Since then there has been an uneasy state of affairs with sporadic extension of humanitarian assistance from Turkey to Kurdish-populated areas in Syria.[118] In March 2014 UN aid convoys were able to cross into these areas from Turkey and arrangements were been made for additional convoys.[119] However, there is deep mistrust on both sides and the situation is also aggravated by frequent clashes between PYD forces and Islamic radical

[113] For an article capturing the uneasiness of the Turkish state towards PYD see Cengiz Çandar, "Rojava-PYD ve devletin "Kronik Kürt Alerjisi [Cronic Kurdish Allergy]," *Radikal*, July 21, 2013, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/cengiz_candar/rojava_pyd_ve_devletin_kronik_kurt_alerjisi-1142690.
[114] Henri Barkey, "Spinoff: The Syrian Crisis and the Future of Iraq," *The American Interest*, December 26, 2013, http://www.the-american-interest.com/articles/2012/12/26/spinoff-the-syrian-crisis-and-the-future-of-iraq/.
[115] Soner Cagaptay and Coskun Unal, "Leadership reshuffle - PKK makes changes in its ranks," *IHJ Jane's 360*, February 26, 2014, http://www.janes.com/article/34646/leadership-reshuffle-pkk-makes-changes-in-its-ranks.
[116] *Türkiye-Rojava Sınır Geçişleriyle İlgili Araştırma ve Tespit Raporu (5-6-7 Ekim 2013)* [Research Report on Passages on the Turkish-Rojova Border Crossings (5-6-7 October 2013)], Human Rights Association, http://www.ihd.org.tr/index.php/raporlar-mainmenu-86/el-raporlar-mainmenu-90/2719-turkiye-rojava-sinir-gecisleriyle-ilgili-arastirma-ve-tespit-raporu-5-6-7-ekim-2013.html and "İşte Rojava heyeti araştırma raporu [Here is the research report by the Rojava delegation]," *Ilke Habe*r, September 24, 2013, http://www.ilkehaber.com/haber/iste-rojava-heyeti-arastirma-raporu-tam-metin-27503.htm.
[117] Mutlu Çiviroğlu, "Rojava'daki kitlesel göç ve nedenleri [Mass migration from Rojava and its causes]," *Radikal*, August 28, 2013, http://blog.radikal.com.tr/Sayfa/rojavadaki-kitlesel-goc-ve-nedenleri-31098.
[118] *Suriyeli Sığınmacılar ve Sağlık Hizmetleri Raporu* [Report on Syrian Refugees and Health Services].
[119] "Implementation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014)," Report of the Secretary-General, S/2014/295 April 23, 2014, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2014_295.pdf.

groups.[120] PYD representatives have claimed that Turkey assist these groups while the Turkish side claims that PYD is allied with the Assad regime.[121]

Turkey's so-called relationship with Islamic radical or al-Qaeda affiliated groups are a very contested and controversial one.[122] The government denies any relationship and any support extended to these groups.[123] However, there are frequent media reports to the contrary which particularly highlight the government's relations with Jabhat al-Nusra.[124] It is not the objective of this report to dwell on these reports and government denials but to highlight the way in which these Islamic radical groups impact on the region's and Turkey's own security. The overwhelming majority of refugees in Turkey have had to flee Syria as a result of attacks and destruction caused by Assad's regime forces. A case in point is the wave of refugees that flooded into Turkey in February when government forces brutally bombarded and attacked some neighborhoods of Aleppo.[125]

However, there is also displacement that occurs as a result of fighting between these radical groups and mainstream opposition groups affiliated with the Free Syrian Army (FSA).[126] The Syrian town of Azaz near the Turkish border is a good example that has also seen frequent clashes over the control of the border crossing into Turkey known as Bab al-Salame provoking considerable insecurity especially among the IDPs in makeshift camps.[127] A similar situation also developed at Bab al-Hawa not far from the Turkish town of Reyhanlı as Free Syrian Army elements were challenged by al-Nusra and Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) provoking considerable insecurity in the area as part of an effort to control the Syrian side of the border.[128] This prevailing insecurity and the repressive methods employed especially by ISIS and its

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[120] Hasan Cemal, "Ankara, eski hatasını Rojava Kürtlerine karşı da sürdürüyor! [Ankara continues with previous mistakes toward Kurds from Rojava!]," *T24*, April 22, 2014, http://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/hasan-cemal/ankara-eski-hatasini-rojava-kurtlerine-karsi-da-surduruyor,9083.

[121] Semih Idiz, "Pressure Mounts on Turkey Over Radical Groups in Syria," *Al-Monitor*, October 15, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/10/turkey-must-control-jihadists-entering-syria.html.

[122] One recent report examining Turkey's involvement in the Syrian crisis refers to this relationship as "support for most noxious elements of the Syrian opposition," *Back to Zero Problems? Recent Developments in Turkey's Foreign Policy*, Bipartisan Policy Center, April 2014, p. 6, http://bipartisanpolicy.org/sites/default/files/BPC%20Turkey%20Foreign%20Policy.pdf.

[123] On support and denial of such support see Richard Galpin, "Syria crisis: Turkey training rebels, says FSA fighter", BBC News, August 4, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19124810 and "Davutoğlu: 'El Nusra ile bir ilişkimiz yok'[Davutoğlu: We have not relations with al-Nusra]" *CNNTurk*, September 10, 2013, http://www.cnnturk.com/2013/turkiye/09/10/davutoglu.el.nusra.ile.bir.iliskimiz.yok/722862.0/.

[124] Justin Vela, "The Syrian Supply Chain" *Foreign Policy*, June 22, 2013, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/06/22/the_syrian_supply_chain_turkey_arms_rebels and Soner Cagaptay and Aaron Zelin, "Turkey's Jihadi Dilemma," *Global Public Square CNN*, August 5, 2013, http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2013/08/05/turkeys-jihadi-dilemma/.

[125] Ben Hubbard, "Bombings in Syria Force Wave of Civilians to Flee," Feb 17, 2014, *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/18/world/middleeast/bombings-in-syria-force-wave-of-civilians-to-flee.html.

[126] Mona Chalabi, "Syria's hidden emergencies," *The Guardian*, July 2013, retrieved from: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/jul/25/syria-emergencies.

[127] "Syria's civil war: Rebels vs. rebels" *The Economist*, November 23, 2013.

[128] "Growing strength of Syria's Islamist groups undermines hopes of ousting Assad," *The Guardian*, December 14, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/14/syria-islamist-militants-growing-strength.

insistence to implement Sharia Law in a harsh manner in areas under its control have also provoked some civilians to flee to Turkey.[129] There is also displacement resulting from attacks on government controlled towns too. A case in point is the arrival of some Armenian refugees from the town of Kassap near the Turkish border when the town was overrun by al-Nusra fighters late in March 2014.[130] In this case there were media reports claiming that fighters had actually entered Syria from Turkey.[131] These allegations and reports, however, have been categorically rejected by the Turkish government.[132]

One other consequence of the "open door" policy is that the Syrian-Turkish border is not secure.[133] Beside civilians and refugees, there are also fighters and weapons that move in and out of Turkey as well as refugee camps. These camps reportedly are used for rest as well as recruitment.[134] The down side of all this movement of people is that there were a number of occasions when Turkish security was directly affected with heavy death toll. There was a car bomb at a border crossing into Turkey on February 11, 2013[135] followed by another one in the Turkish town of Reyhanlı on May 11, 2013 that killed more than 50 people.[136] In March 2014, a group of ISIS fighters opened fire, killing and wounding a number of security people at a check

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[129] Ammar Cheikhomar and Henry Austin "Al Qaeda-linked extremists cause new Syria refugee crisis," *NBC News*, October 20, 2013, http://www.nbcnews.com/#/news/other/al-qaeda-linked-extremists-cause-new-syria-refugee-crisis-f8C11427880.

[130] "Turkey hosts Armenians from Syria" *Hürriyet Daily News*, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-hosts-armenians-from-syria.aspx?pageID=238&nID=64590&NewsCatID=510.

[131] Loveday Morris, "Syrian Armenians, who had been insulated from war, forced to flee after rebel offensive," *Washington Post*, April 2, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/until-last-month-this-ancestral-home-of-syrian-armenians-had-been-insulated-from-war/2014/04/02/84a97180-5224-40fc-bcdf-6920aae3a7ab_story.html and Fehmi Tastekin, "Kesep Sürgünü 3.0 [Kassap Exile 3.0]," *Radikal*, March 28, 2014 http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/fehim_tastekin/keseb_surgunu_30-1183619.

[132] Irem Karakaya, "Turkish government distances itself from radical groups in Syria" *Today's Zaman*, October 6, 2013, http://www.zaman.com.tr/todays-zaman_turkish-government-distances-itself-from-radical-groups-in-syria_2147851.html and "Davutoğlu says Turkey never supported al-Qaeda-linked groups in Syria," November 8, 2013, *Sunday's Zaman*, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-330992-davutoglu-says-turkey-never-supported-al-qaeda-linked-groups-in-syria.html. For a denial of any involvement in the Kassap attacks see "No: 96, 26 March 2014, Press Release Regarding Recent Developments in Latakia / Kesap and Unfounded Allegations in the Press on this Matter" http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-96_-26-march-2014_-press-release-regarding-recent-developments-in-latakia_kesap-and-unfounded-allegations-in-the-press-on.en.mfa.

[133] "El Muhaberat ve PKK da geliyor [Al-Muhabarat and the PKK are coming]," September 12, 2013, http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/el-muhaberat-ve-pkk-da-geliyor-/gundem/detay/1759594/default.htm. Cumali Önal "Serious flaws along Syrian border increase security risks," *Today's Zaman*, September 8, 2013, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-325791-serious-flaws-along-syrian-border-increase-security-risks.htm. "Turkey's Syria border crossings uncontrolled, says governor's office," *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 6, 2013, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-syria-border-crossings-uncontrolled-says-governors-office.aspx?pageID=238&nID=53982&NewsCatID=341.

[134] Ashish Kumar Sen, "Read more: Syrian war refugees find crowds, crime, contagion at camps," Washington Times, November 5, 2013, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/nov/5/syrian-war-refugees-find-crowds-crime-contagion-at/#ixzz2zoUx1xKv Of those interviewed in the survey for *The Struggle for Life between Borders: Syrian Refugees Fieldwork* 41 percent said they had participated in clashes in their country, p. 48.

[135] "Sınır kapısında patlama: 13 Ölü" [Explosion at the border crossing: 13 Dead], *NTVMSNBC*, February 11, 2013, www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25421222/

[136] "Reyhanlı cehenneme döndü" [Reyhanlı turned to hell], *Hürriyet*, May 11, 2013, www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23257089.asp.

point on a highway near the city of Niğde in central Anatolia.[137] They were allegedly on their way to mount terrorist attacks in Ankara or Istanbul and a commentator expressed his concern about security noting that there was a risk that as "Syria became more and more like Afghanistan there was a risk that Turkey could become like Pakistan."[138] As much as this comment may be somewhat exaggerated, it nevertheless points at the mounting seriousness of security challenges that Turkey faces.

Administrative challenges

The newly-established GDMM will be taking over the overall management of the Syrian refugee situation from AFAD. The organization is the first new major bureaucratic agency to be set up in Turkey since the establishment of the General Secretariat of EU Affairs in 2001. The organization has its headquarters in Ankara with offices across the country as well as abroad. Its portfolio will cover a wide range of tasks relating to immigration in the broadest sense of the word. However, the Syrian refugee crisis will clearly be a major item on its agenda. GDMM's role will be more along the lines of policy making and overseeing of policy implementation while AFAD will continue to be responsible for running camps and catering for the needs of refugees in general.

One of the first tasks that GDMM has been engaged in is the drawing up of regulations to govern, inter alia, asylum related tasks such as "refugee status determination," "reception," and most importantly in the case of Syrian refugee crisis "temporary protection." The latter is especially important as once adopted it would replace the "secret" regulation from March 2012 but also constitute the basis for developing a more structured and comprehensive policy towards the refugees. It should help to bring much greater clarity to the scope of temporary protection and will most probably clarify the issue of extension of protection duration as well as access to public services and the labor market.[139] Currently, many of these issues, as discussed earlier in this report, are handled by circulars issued by AFAD and various other agencies such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and the Higher Education Board in a rather incremental piecemeal manner. Another important task that GDMM will take over is registration.

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[137] Semih Idiz, "ISIS emerges as threat to Turkey," *Al-Monitor*, March 25, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/isis-threat-turkey-syria-jihadists.html.

[138] Bülent Günal, "Niğde'deki saldırıyı nasıl okumak gerekiyor [How to interpret the attack in Niğde]?", *Haber Türk*, March 22, 2014, http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/931900-nigdedeki-saldiriyi-nasil-okumak-gerekiyor. The Turkish president noted the danger of Syria becoming "Afghanistan on the shores of the Mediterranean," Simon Tisdall, "Radicalisation in Syria poses growing threat to Europe, says Turkish leader," *The Guardian*, November 3, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/03/radicalisation-syria-turkish-president-abdullah-gul.

[139] For a detailed set of proposals concerning a regulation on "temporary protection" see Oktay Durukan, *YUKK Çerçevesinde Hazırlıkları Devam Eden "Geçici Koruma Yönetmeliği'ne" Dair Öneriler* [Proposals for the ongoing preparation of "Temporary Protection Regulation" in the context of YUKK] **(**Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Turkey, Refugee Advocacy and Support Program, Istanbul, forthcoming).

Registration also evolved in a somewhat haphazard manner until with close cooperation with the UNHCR a more systematic procedure based on biometric data was finally put into place and implemented by the Turkish National Police. Registration inevitably is going to be a critical procedure to ensure the implementation of temporary protection. Lastly, an important issue that has received little attention is the need to better monitor voluntary returns and compliance with the principle of "non-refoulement."

The Law on *Foreigners and International Protection* authorizes the GDMM to cooperate specifically with the UNHCR and IOM as well as other international organizations and non-governmental organizations. This should enable a better coordination to emerge between the government side on the one side and international governmental as well as non-governmental organizations. The Law also provides for a policy-making body in the form of a Migration Policy Board composed of representatives from various government agencies as well as a Migration Advisory Board composed of academic, civil society representatives and experts. The terms of reference of both Boards are open to the idea of cooperation with the international community. The new Law and GDMM may well provide an effective framework to better address the challenges of Syrian refugees in Turkey and increase prospects of international cooperation and coordination.

International Cooperation and Burden Sharing

Providing protection and caring for refugees are an international responsibility. The level of cooperation achieved between Turkey and the international community could clearly be improved. At the outset of the crisis, Turkey chose not to be included in the first Syrian Regional Response Plan (SRRP) of the UN and chose not to cooperate with the UNHCR beyond ensuring supplies of tents for camps and overseeing voluntary return.[140] The government believed it could manage the crisis with its own resources and by itself. However, by the summer of 2012, as the number of refugees began to reach significant levels and it became increasingly clear that refugees would not be returning soon, Turkey's policy began to change. Cooperation with major UN agencies began to improve and intensify. With the WFP a project was developed to provide refugees in camps with electronic payment cards which had a major positive impact on the management of the camps.[141] This cooperation between WFP, the Turkish Red Crescent and AFAD has been critical to ensuring food security for inhabitants of refugee camps. This was followed by efforts to develop a project with the support of the UNHCR for the registration of refugees outside camps that has been going on now for more than one year. This cooperation is expected to expand as GDMM takes over registration and plans to collect data to better determine sensitive groups and vulnerabilities. IOM is helping with the transportation of Syrian children to school in Şanlıurfa province and together with a Turkish NGO, Support to Life, IOM is also distributing food vouchers to Syrian refugees outside camps in Hatay.[142] In sharp contrast to 2012 the 2014 SRRP for Turkey is very extensive and provides a growing list of areas of cooperation and projects focusing on refugees in as well as outside camps involving FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF etc.[143] This is clearly a very positive development considering that compared to 2012 now the majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey are outside camps and increasingly in need of assistance.

Another area that is seeing an expansion in cooperation is civil society involvement. There are already an important number of Turkish NGOs that are providing services ranging from humanitarian assistance to education and medical assistance.[144] INGOs are also showing growing interest although some complain about difficulties they encounter in opening offices and getting the necessary authorizations from the government. The process is somewhat cumbersome and complaints also include lack of information as well as absence of transparent procedures. As of

[140] *Syria Regional Response Plan March 2012*, pp. 64-73**,** http://www.unhcr.org/4f6c80a49.html. The decision not to seek international support is also mentioned in "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Briefing Note."
[141] "Syrian Refugees in Turkey."
[142] *IOM Regional Response to the Syrian Humanitarian Crisis*, April 15-28, 2014.
[143] The fact that *Syria Regional Response Plan 2014 Turkey* is 74 pages is telling in itself compared to the few pages in the report from 2012.
[144] *Case Study of NGO Activities in Safeguarding the Rights of the Syrian Refugees and Increasing Their Quality of Life in Three Border Provinces of Turkey*, İGAM (Association for Research Centre on Asylum and Migration), March 2014, http://www.igamder.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/İgam-Rapor.pdf.

April 2014 there were twenty-four NGOs mostly from the U.S. who have received their authorizations with another twenty applications pending and ten rejections.[145] The level of violence and instability in Syria is aggravating fears in Turkey of the violence spilling over into Turkey.

This creates a paradoxical situation. There is recognition by many Turkish officials of the need for greater cooperation with INGOs to cater more effectively for the humanitarian needs of the displaced Syrians.[146] At the same time the deteriorating security situation makes putting into place an effective cooperation more complicated as there are also officials that simply do not trust INGOs and prefer keeping INGOs away from a volatile region. Hence, finding a balance between security considerations and addressing the needs of the refugees will clearly be a major challenge for Turkish officials and INGOs. Nevertheless, as a civil society activist in humanitarian assistance puts it "the steady increase of Syrian refugees is resulting in flexibility on the part of the government in acknowledging and recognizing other actors as legitimate players in the humanitarian sphere in Turkey."[147] If well approached by all involved, this development should open up space for greater cooperation.

Some INGOs partner with local Turkish NGOs such as Hayata Destek (Support to Life), the Turkish branch of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and the International Blue Crescent in order to reach populations in need. Yet, some Turkish as well as informal NGOs formed by Syrians have also complained about poor coordination and communication with INGOs as well as difficulties they encounter in accessing EU as well as U.S. funds.[148] Achieving an improved relationship between Turkish NGOs and their international stakeholders as well as donor governments is going to be critical but also challenging. A first step in the right direction appears to have come as a result of periodic "coordination and cluster meetings" held in Gaziantep under the auspices of the UNHCR.[149] These meetings help interagency coordination but also allow NGOs to participate in "cluster" meetings that relate to their respective areas of expertise. There is also an effort to extend this kind of coordination to the regional level through the "Ministerial Meetings if Syria Bordering Countries" with the close cooperation of the UNHCR. The second and most recent ones were held in January and May 2014 in Şanlıurfa in Turkey and in Zaatari in Jordan.[150] The Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu together with the UNHCR chief Antonio Guterrès in January appealed to the international community to increase quotas for resettlement and humanitarian admission. In May Davutoğlu advocated the idea that the UN Security Council

[145] The information was obtained from the Ministry of the Interior.
[146] Personal interviews with Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and AFAD officials, January 2014.
[147] Sema Genel, "Turkey and humanitarian assistance" Heinrich Boll Stiftung-Turkei, http://www.tr.boell.org/web/51-1934.html.
[148] Personal interviews in October 2013 and January 2014 with representatives of NGOs.
[149] "Turkey and humanitarian assistance."
[150] "Davutoğlu: UN Security Council most responsible for Syrian tragedy", *Today's* Zaman, January 17, 2014, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=8EA9F8F0BBC77F62639AF0CF287E7562?newsId=336937.

should authorize the setting up refugee camps within Syria.[151] Advancing the level of coordination among Turkish and international stakeholders is going to be critical to addressing the needs of Syrians refugees that are likely to be around in Turkey for a while to come.

Resettlement is an important part of this burden-sharing even if it may remain at a symbolic level. In the past the United States, Canada, Australia and some Nordic countries resettled approximately 48,000 refugees from Turkey between 1995 and 2013.[152] Adopting a similar approach to Syrian refugees especially towards vulnerable refugees would be an important expression of solidarity with Turkey. UNHCR's intention to submit 10,000 persons for resettlement from Turkey is an important first step.[153] The United States accepted over 73,000 Iraqi refugees for resettlement between 2006 and 2012[154] and admitted more than 100,000 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1994 to 1999.[155] The EU too is going to have to be more forthcoming then in the past. As mentioned earlier, the European Commission has declared a resettlement program and most member countries have stepped up to the appeal made by the UNHCR's Syria Resettlement/Humanitarian Admission Program. It will be important to carry out these promises, especially, given the context where some member countries have pushed back Syrian refugees and the EU has built a reputation as "Fortress Europe" with its broader policy to block out migrants and asylum seekers from reaching Europe. Bulgaria has been one EU member country that has attracted criticism for preventing Syrian refugees from seeking asylum and pushing them back into Turkey. Such policies clearly fall well short of the kind of solidarity that is expected from an EU member country. As a human rights activist has pointed out "Turkey, which already hosts well over half a million Syrians, should not be expected to serve as Bulgaria's refugee dumping ground."[156]

New resettlement countries such as Brazil, India and Malaysia should also be encouraged to emerge as hosts for resettlement programs. UNHCR in September 2013 welcomed Brazil's decision to extend humanitarian visas to Syrian refugees in neighboring countries.[157] Yet, there also has to be recognition that resettlement in itself is not going to make a major contribution to the resolution of the Syrian refugee situation. In 2012, only 88,600 of the world's 15.4 million

[151] "Foreign Minister Davutoğlu 'We witness the most destructive humanitarian catastrophe of the decade in Syria'", http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-_we-witness-the-most-destructive-humanitarian-catastrophe-of-the-decade-in-syria.en.mfa.
[152] Data obtained from the GDMM.
[153] *Syria Regional Response Plan 2014 Turkey*, p. 17.
[154] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, "Iraqi Refugee Resettlement Fact Sheet," May 31, 2013, Accessed April 18, 2014, http://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/factsheets/2013/210132.htm.
[155] U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002), p. 94. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2000/Yearbook2000.pdf.
[156] Bill Frelick, "Bulgaria's False Good News for Refugees," April 16, 2014, Human Rights Watch, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/16/bulgarias-false-good-news-refugees. For a detailed discussion of the problem of "push backs" see *"Containment Plan": Bulgaria's Pushbacks and Detention of Syrian and Other Asylum Seekers and Migrants*, Human Rights Watch, April 28, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2014/04/28/containment-plan.
[157] "UN refugee agency welcomes Brazil announcement of humanitarian visas for Syrians," September 27, 2013, http://www.unhcr.org/524555689.html.

refugees were resettled, a rate of less than 0.6 percent.[158] Nevertheless, if well implemented with a focus on the most vulnerable and difficult cases receiving priority, a resettlement program can still help relieve some of the burden and pressure on the hosting countries including Turkey.

Lastly, there is also the financial dimension of burden-sharing. Turkish leaders increasingly have been complaining about insufficient international financial support it receives. As of April 2014, the Turkish government had spent more than $2.5 billion hosting Syrian refugees with Turkish civil society spending an additional estimated half a billion while receiving less than $200 million USD in international support.[159] The United States has provided $1.7 billion in humanitarian assistance to all Syrian refugees;[160] the European Union, including the EU Commission and individual member states, has given around $3.6 billion.[161]

As much as these figures may look impressive, the scale of the refugee crisis is going to call for a more generous contribution and burden sharing effort from the international community. The financial requirements for activities to support refugees in and outside camps in Turkey for 2014 have been put at around half a billion US dollars by the sixth SRRP.[162] It will be important that the international community does not fall too short of this sum. In the case of the previous two SRRP appeals for Turkey the level of funding was only at 32 and 37 percent compared to 53 and 69 percent funding rates for overall appeals.[163] The international community, beyond just burden sharing, will need to be more forthcoming as in the long run Turkey's ability to cater for the basic needs of an ever growing refugee population will be taxed.[164]

There is a lot Turkey can do too. Turkey has become a major humanitarian assistance donor itself and was listed as the fourth largest donor immediately after the U.S., the EU and United Kingdom ahead of Germany and Sweden.[165] The United Nations has recognized this development by announcing that 2016 World Humanitarian Summit will be held in Turkey.[166] This is a very significant development as it will enable the international community to take good note of the humanitarian and development work that Turkey is doing especially through its

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[158] Megan Bradley, "Is Resettlement a Solution for Syria's Refugee Crisis?" November 13, 2013, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/11/13-syria-refugee-crisis-bradley.
[159] *The Situation of Syrian Refugees in Neighboring Countries:* p. 11.
[160] "Syria" USAID, April 14, 2014 (last updated) http://www.usaid.gov/crisis/syria.
[161] *Syrian Crisis: ECHO Fact Sheet*, April 28, 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf.
[162] *Syria Regional Response Plan 2014 Turkey*, p. 70.
[163] Limits of Hospitality, p. 30 and "Suriyeli mülteci sayısı 4.1 milyonu bulabilir [Number of Syrian refugees could reach 4.1 million].
[164] "Syrian Refugees in Turkey," p. 4.
[165] "Turkey fourth biggest donor country", *BBC News*, July 17, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23341189 and for the full list see *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013* Table 2.1 p. 26, http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/GHA-Report-2013.pdf. See also Cemalettin Hasimi, "Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy and Development Cooperation" *Insight Turkey*. Vol. 16, No. 1, Winter 2014, http://file.insightturkey.com/Files/Pdf/insight_turkey_16_1_2014_hasimi.pdf.
[166] "UN General Assembly: Turkey announced as host of 2016 World Humanitarian Summit," September 9, 2013 http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/un-general-assembly-turkey-announced-host-2016-world-humanitarian-summit.

International Cooperation and Development Agency as well as its NGOs. At the same time this could become an opportunity for Turkish actors to become more familiar with principles governing humanitarian assistance especially transparency and accountability. Turkey so far has preferred to distribute its humanitarian and developmental assistance bilaterally often in contrast to the practice adopted by the leading donor countries.[167] The latter group prefers to work through multilateral institutions and the United Nations system.

This may partly explain why major donor countries have not been able to respond to the Turkish governments call for greater direct financial support. Turkey was among the founders of the United Nations and in recent times has been keen to serve in the UN Security Council and other bodies of the UN. Closer cooperation with the UN system would surely help Turkey to address the major donors concerns about issues of accountability and transparency that their respective tax-payers demand from them. Turkey now has a rich civil society that is also increasingly active internationally including in the area of humanitarian assistance. Turkey's closer engagement of the UN system would also help these Turkish NGOs to achieve a broader reach and develop the practice of working with international agencies and INGOs. In turn this would help the development of greater trust and confidence in INGOs. In other words Turkey has to help the international community to help Turkey.[168] However, in turn the international humanitarian community has to question itself too and reconsider some of the practices, such as excluding local NGOs from coordination efforts, and possibly prejudices that get in the way of closer cooperation with their Turkish governmental and non-governmental counterparts. It is only such cooperation that at the end of the day is going to help Turkey but also the international community meets the challenge of addressing the ever expanding humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees and displaced people.

[167] "Turkey and humanitarian assistance."
[168] *Limits of Hospitality*, p. 30.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Turkish government:

- Recognize that most of the Syrian refugees are in Turkey for the long haul and by default many have already started to integrate into Turkish society.
- Explore ways to encourage their successful integration process short of granting blanket across the board citizenship.
- Prepare the public for the reality that Syrian refugees are likely to be in Turkey for a while to come.
- Now that a new agency, the General Directorate of Migration Management, is in place, revisit the registration of refugees living outside of camps and speedily complete their registration with a view to identifying vulnerabilities.
- Encourage this agency to adopt the secondary legislation to define and provide a transparent basis for "temporary protection" and accompanying elements including measures to monitor voluntary return and non-refoulement.
- Launch an information campaign to better inform Syrian refugees about their rights, services, available assistance.
- Urgently embark on a comprehensive needs assessment with special focus on the education of Syrian refugee children and recognize the importance of education as an important step to assist the integration of refugees into Turkish society.
- Engage in a broad based debate to formulate an education policy that takes note of principles advocated by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and respects the right of the children to learn their native language.
- Take leadership to address immediate shelter and food needs of the refugees outside camps, mobilize relevant government institutions including the Turkish Red Crescent for the task.
- Revisit and strengthen circulars concerning the provision of health services for Syrian refugees and seek avenues for burden-sharing with the international community.
- Expand efforts to draw Syrian refugee labor into the formal economy and encourage vocational training.
- Address certification-registration issues ranging from school and teacher's diplomas to marriages and births and seek means to receive international recognition for these certifications.
- Ensure respect for children and women rights and their protection from exploitation.
- Respect minority rights and avoid any administrative measures or practices that risks engendering insecurity.

To the international community:

- Recognize the sacrifice that the Turkish public is making in support of Syrian refugees and respond more generously to the SRRP-2014 appeal, as responses to previous appeals for Turkey have not been very encouraging in terms of making the Turkish public feel a strong sense of international solidarity.
- Respond generously to UNHCR's Syria Resettlement/Humanitarian Admission Program and consider working more closely with the new immigration agency GDMM.
- Encourage greater regional cooperation and coordination among governments and NGOs of countries hosting Syrian refugees.
- Enable Turkish NGOs and government agencies to participate in international grants especially EU grants.
- Discourage practices of pushbacks and rejections of Syrian refugees who seek to cross borders into EU member countries.
- Encourage greater coordination between Turkish NGOs and INGOs.
- Recognize Turkish security concerns and abide by its laws and administrative procedures.

CONCLUSION

A fact virtually unknown to the outside world is that Turkey has long been a country of asylum and immigration. Yet, the arrival and presence of Syrian refugees is approaching one million. This is an unprecedented figure for Turkey and is beginning to tax the generous hospitality extended to the refugees by the government and a good part of the Turkish society. As the conflict and violence in Syria continues unabated it is becoming clear that Syrian refugees will be in Turkey for a long time to come. No immediate return home appears to be likely for most of the refugees. This is creating a string of challenges for Turkey that will require a fundamental revisiting of a set of policy assumptions and a significant recalibration of policy.

Firstly, the government and civil society need to switch gears from policies driven by concerns of extending emergency humanitarian assistance and temporary protection to ones focusing on the long term to facilitate the possible eventual incorporation of the refugees into Turkish society. Unfortunately all the conflicts and accompanying displacement crises of the past in the Middle East, from the Afghans to the Palestinians, tell us that expecting a speedy return too peace and prosperity in Syria is painfully slim. Recognizing this cruel reality and adopting the necessary policy adjustments is a must if this crisis is to be transformed into an outcome as positive as is realistically possible for all involved. It is only then that a repetition of too familiar scenes of huge numbers of miserable refugees lingering in camps and on the edges of society across generations is to be avoided. The latter outcome would surely risk dragging Turkey into considerable economic, social and possibly political troubles. The former, if well managed, could become a source of economic growth and development and could even constitute a model for how to handle such crises elsewhere.

Secondly, Turkey will need to develop a well thought out, debated and structured comprehensive policy with a strong legal grounding. As much as Turkey's open door policy has been a commendable one it has had a weak legal basis. A secret regulation should not constitute the basis of a policy that is extending protection to one million people and has cost $2.5 billion. For very understandable reasons many aspects of the current policy evolved incrementally and in a rather haphazard manner. This cannot continue. In 1989-1990 the then-Turkish government took bold action in the face of the more than 300,000 Bulgarian Pomak and Turkish refugees. It legislated with considerable public support policies that addressed a wide range of issues, from citizenship to health care and housing, to encourage the successful integration of these refugees into Turkish society. This is not to suggest that Syrian refugees should be granted citizenship but to point out that Turkey in the past, with many fewer resources than today, was able to develop a comprehensive and well-structured policy. Furthermore, when developing such a policy it will also be very important that the government engages domestic stakeholders in policy formulations and embarks on an effort to mobilize and gain public support. The latter exercise will need patience and a lot of goodwill.

Thirdly, Turkey should not have to bear the cost of this policy transformation alone. Protecting and caring for refugees is an international responsibility. The international community will have to contribute to Turkey's efforts in real and effective terms. There should be recognition that the crisis and resulting suffering in Syria and the accompanying displacement is at least partly the responsibility of the international community. In addition to the norms of humanitarian assistance, there are other reasons why the international community should assist Turkey's efforts to respond to the refugees. There should also be recognition that if Turkey can indeed be successful this would surely benefit the international community too. After all there would be fewer Syrians trying to make it to EU member countries illegally. Furthermore, the Turkish public will be much more forthcoming if it can see that the international community is involved in burden sharing. However, in turn Turkey will have to shed some of its real or imagined distrust of the international community and its institutions. Turkey is a founding member of the United Nations, is deeply engaged in many of its institutions and also aspires to become a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. It just does not seem to add up to entertain such aspirations and at the same time distrust the international community and especially the humanitarian agencies of the UN and their partners. It will also be important to recognize and accept that those international actors that will extend financial help will rightfully seek transparency and accountability. In any event such accountability and transparency is going to be very important at the domestic level too if broad based public support is going to be maintained.