

UNDERSTANDING THE REFUGEE CRISIS

What You Can Do to Help

ADVOCATE

- Stay informed by monitoring the websites of UNHCR, Mercy Corps, IRC, and UNICEF for up-to-date coverage of the situation.
- Call or email your members of Congress to tell them that you support resettlement and adequate funding for refugees. Find your representatives at house.gov/representatives/find and senate.gov/senators/contact.
- Promote community discussions and collective action to “welcome the stranger.” www.welcomingamerica.org.
- Help others become better informed by sharing the [“I Hear You” video project](#) - Oxfam’s series of 14 videos featuring celebrities telling the word-for-word stories of positive, relatable aspects of refugees’ lives before fleeing conflict.

ENGAGE

- Partner on your own or with a group with one of the nine resettlement agencies in the U.S. to help resettle refugee families and help to provide them with basic needs upon arrival: www.unhcr.org/us-resettlement-agencies.html.
- Adopt a refugee family through a local resettlement agency. Find a local resettlement agency: www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/state-programs-annual-overview.
- Urge your church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other community partner to provide housing, school supplies, groceries, transportation, clothing, and to address other needs.
- Employ refugees, support businesses run by refugees, and encourage businesses to hire refugees.
- Include Syrian refugee children on your local or school sports teams. This builds their confidence and helps them assimilate faster into their schools and the community.

VOLUNTEER

- Mentor or volunteer to orient refugees to their new communities. Go to aidrefugees.gov to learn more about how to help.
- Use your personal and professional skills to address some of the greatest needs of Syrian refugees: language, legal aid, trauma counseling.
- Encourage refugees to share their stories online by helping them set up a simple webpage or social media site.

DONATE

To organizations in the US and abroad, such as:

- The [Center for Victims of Torture](#) provides psychosocial services, with a focus on counseling, for refugee victims of torture in Jordan.
- [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) is the only organization that guides refugees through every step of the resettlement process, IRAP is often able to identify obstacles of which other institutional players are unaware. Our unique model utilizes lessons learned in individual casework to advocate for systemic changes that benefit broader refugee populations. While we never turn away an urgent case that has merit, we look for cases where legal work can create precedents that will benefit the wider refugee community.
- The [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#) provides legal assistance to the most vulnerable refugees (including women at risk, LGBTI, children, human rights activists) to assist with registration, protection, and resettlement with the UN, US, Canada, and EU.
- [Karam Foundation](#) is on a mission to build a better future for Syria. They are dedicated to providing aid that matters and finding the most effective and impactful ways to help the Syrian people. They call it smart aid.
- [Mercy Corps](#) meets the urgent needs of nearly 4 million people both inside Syria and in neighboring countries. They distribute emergency food and supplies, increase access to clean water and sanitation, improve shelters, and create safe spaces and activities to help children heal from trauma. They also conduct longer term programs to build bridges between refugee and host populations and facilitate access to employment.
- [Middle East Children's Institute](#)'s innovative child-centered community development model is facilitating transformational change in communities across the region through programs in education, women's economic empowerment, and community and economic development.
- In 2014, [Oxfam](#) reached nearly half a million refugees in Jordan and Lebanon with clean drinking water or cash and relief supplies, such as blankets and stoves and vouchers for hygiene supplies. They are helping families get the information they need about their legal and human rights and connecting them to medical, legal, and support services.
- [Project Amal ou Salam](#), meaning Project Hope and Peace, is a grassroots organization dedicated to empowering Syria's children to rebuild their country and work for peace. This is done through day camps with Syrian children, material donations (such as coloring books, games, and sports equipment), holiday events, and monetary support of schools both inside and out of Syria.
- [RefugePoint](#) works to find lasting solutions for the world's most vulnerable refugees, with a focus on expanding access to resettlement and self reliance opportunities. RefugePoint is working with UNHCR to train humanitarian staff in the Middle East to effectively initiate resettlement for Syrian and other refugees in the region, and RefugePoint's child protection staff in Cairo is now responding to the needs of Syrian refugee children in addition to unaccompanied refugee youth from the African continent.
- [Sawa for Development and Aid](#) works to improve the living conditions of families in need and the help individuals in the community change from beneficiaries to independent agents through developing their expertise. In addition, Sawa's vision is to provide them with material, logistical, and psychological support for them in order to live a dignified life with minimum standards, through diverse complementary programs (relief, development and educational, among others).

- [The United Nations Children’s Fund \(UNICEF\)](#) and its partners are committed to keeping Syrian children from becoming a ‘lost generation’. The world must not forget the human realities at stake. The risk of losing a generation grows with every day that the situation deteriorates, while the progress made for Syrian children in previous years is undone. Critical efforts are being made to minimize the impact of the crisis on children – including in the life-saving areas of health, nutrition, immunization, water and sanitation, as well as in the future of children, through education and child protection.
- [The United Nations High Commission for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) holds the UN mandate for refugee response. It works in camps, as well as urban areas in Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, and Lebanon trying to close the funding gaps which have led to food shortages, bolstering the ability of urban refugee families to secure adequate and safe housing, and providing education opportunities for their children. UNHCR is also working across Europe to provide support for the refugees flooding in from all over the world.
- [Watanili](#)’s mission is to contribute the re-building of Syria through grassroots local initiatives, focusing on the needs of the people. They carry out projects that encourage the development of education, art, and culture as well as provide a space for cultural expression.