

World Renew Syria FAQs U.S.

September 23, 2015

1. What is happening in Syria that is causing a mass exodus of refugees?

- The current civil war in Syria began in 2011 following pro-democracy protests during the Arab Spring to challenge the government of President Bashar al-Assad. With brutal military crackdowns on the protesters by the Syrian army, the conflict between government and rebel forces expanded. Extremist groups Al-Qaeda and ISIL became involved, efforts recently revealed to be backed by military equipment supplied by Russia.
- More than a quarter-million people have been killed in the violence in Syria since 2011, and it's estimated that half of the country's residents are displaced from their homes within Syria or have fled to countries in the region that were already experiencing economic strain.
- This summer, thousands of Syrians began streaming into Europe as well, causing a humanitarian crisis that the United Nations says "has not been seen since World War II."
- In all, more than 11 million people – nearly half of Syria's 23 million citizens – are in need of humanitarian assistance: 6.5 million are internally displaced within Syria; more than four million are refugees with half of these children.
- Food, water, shelter, medical care, and appropriate clothing are in short supply. In addition, 2,500 Syrian refugees died trying to reach Europe by sea over the summer, and those who did arrive alive received a varied, sometimes deadly, reception, and news reports that chronicled this humanitarian disaster have brought worldwide attention to the crisis.
- World Renew has worked in the Middle East for decades, responding to chronic unrest, hunger, and displacement as needed. In the current conflict, there has been an immense loss of human life and great suffering within the Syrian refugee population.

2. How is World Renew responding to Syrians caught in the conflict?

- World Renew has been providing food and other emergency assistance to displaced families in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan for the past three years.
- **To date, we've provided more than \$7.5 million in assistance.**
- Visit worldrenew.net/syriacconflict for more information.
- In Canada, World Renew is helping to resettle Syrian and other refugees through a sponsoring partnership with the Canadian government and Canadian CRCs, both of which indicate that they are eager to increase their services to Syrian-related refugees soon.
- The scale and duration of our continued response will depend on the level of financial support we receive. Your donation to World Renew's Syria Response will directly help Syrian refugees and internally displaced people.

3. Who are World Renew's partners in Syria?

- World Renew is working with the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD), the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC), and Arab Women Today / Arab Center for Consulting and Training Services (AWT / ACCTS).
 - World Renew is coordinating its efforts with the Integral Alliance and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. These are Christian relief and development organizations with which we partner on an ongoing basis. We can use your additional support to assist these alliance partners in their response to the situation in Europe.

- World Renew Canada received a matching grant through the Canadian government in September 2015. This grant matches gifts from Canadian citizens only through December 31, 2015, and includes Canadian citizens living in the U.S.

4. What specific assistance is World Renew providing in the region?

- **In Syria**, World Renew is working with the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) and the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC). Between April 2012 and June 2015, World Renew provided:
 - Food assistance for 16,025 families, totaling 83,000 monthly food packages or vouchers
 - Rent and fuel subsidies for 575 families
 - 6,450 blankets for 4,300 families
 - Medical assistance to 133 people
 - 4,884 hygiene kits to 3,314 families
 - 2,000 kitchen kits
 - 2,000 emergency heaters, plus fuel for heating and cooking
- **In Iraq**, World Renew provided the following in response between August 2014 and June 2015:
 - Food packages to 450 families
 - Medical assistance to 2,100 families
 - Blankets, furniture and other non-food items to 175 families
 - Rent and fuel subsidies to 105 families
 - Spiritual conferences and support to 500 women
- **In Jordan**, World Renew is working with a local partner, Arab Woman Today / Arab Centre for Consulting and Training Services (AWT/ACCTS). Of the 1,000 families, 850 are Syrian refugees and 150 are vulnerable and poor Jordanian families.
- **In Lebanon**, World Renew is working closely with its local partner the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) to provide food assistance to 1,825 households. These food vouchers are provided monthly at 18 different locations, mostly churches, throughout Lebanon.
- **In Canada**, from January 2014 to June 2015, World Renew helped to sponsor 49 Iraqi refugees and 23 Syrian refugees as they began a new life in Canada. The CRC partners with PARA, which is now part of Bethany Christian Services, in the U.S. to assist with refugee resettlement.

5. How can you and your church help families affected by the civil war in Syria?

The Syrian conflict response is currently the largest humanitarian action in World Renew, and your support is needed.

- **You are invited to donate to World Renew's humanitarian assistance in Syria.** World Renew's feeding program in Syria is drawing to a close because the funding is virtually gone. Without an influx of funds, this assistance will end in November 2015. **Please consider giving financially to SYRIA CONFLICT 2012 (fund code: 515144).** The funds will be put to use in areas in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan where it is needed most. World Renew has people in place "on the ground" who can implement this response immediately. You can donate online, by phone, or send your gifts marked "Syria Conflict 2012" to World Renew, 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508, call 1-800-552-7972, or given online at worldrenew.net/donate.

- **Host “A Day of Prayer for Syria”** at your church using the information at worldrenew.net/about-us/news-events/day-prayer-syria and the prayer for refugees at worldrenew.net/pray-refugees.
- **World Renew’s Refugee Office in Canada** is currently addressing a backlog of refugee applications to be in a position to respond as the Syrian need accelerates and reaches Canada. More churches are needed to sponsor refugees from Syria and those other countries in conflict. Churches in the US and in Canada can partner with sponsoring churches and lend more financial support to lessen the financial weight on the sponsoring church.
- In the U.S., the CRC Office of Social Justice works with the **Refugee and Immigrant Foster Care** program, part of Bethany Christian Services, to support refugee resettlement. To learn more about this program and current opportunities, contact Debra Hoekwater, Church and Community Engagement Coordinator, Refugee Resettlement Program, Bethany Christian Services of Michigan, at: dhoekwater@bethany.org or call 616-965-8082.
- **Find more information, resources and refugee stories** from World Renew’s work at <http://worldrenew.net/refugees>. Read and share our 3-Year Update on Syria Response PDF from <http://worldrenew.net/syriacconflict>. You can order print copies by emailing info@worldrenew.net.
- Learn more about **advocating** for refugee resettlement in the U.S. through the CRC’s Office of Social Justice at www2.crcna.org/pages/osj_actioncenter.