

# Syrian Refugee Crisis Surrounds the Middle East

Written by Phyllis Richards - September 05, 2015

The news has been filled this first week of September with chaotic scenes. 3-year old Alyan Kurdi, along with his brother Galip, their mother, and nine other Syrian refugees drowned during an attempt to pass the Aegean Sea in hopes of finding safety (over 2500 others have been lost in recent months attempting similar escape). Outside of the Hungarian capital of Budapest, trains packed with Syrian refugees have been halted at the order of the authorities, while the migrants inside refuse to leave because they know that they cannot survive being returned home.



Since the beginning of 2015, over 100,000 displaced persons from Northern and Middle Africa, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq have been registered in Hungary alone, but the authorities are unable to handle all the needs of the migrants as the numbers continue to rapidly increase. All countries surrounding the crisis region are feeling the same strain on their resources, and the situation will only continue to become more dire.

For the past four years, the crisis in Syria has been escalating. Unimaginable violence and unrest across the Middle East and Northern Africa has grown to a level that has created one of the greatest humanitarian crises in current memory. Not since the Second World War have we seen such high numbers of refugees and displaced persons desperately seeking safety and refuge in lands not their own.

This week, we have been confronted with a visible image of exactly what is at stake: the lives - many of which have been lost - of men, women, and children... all of whom are beloved children of God.

At this moment, the church is being called to respond. The United Church of Christ (UCC) through its partnerships has been working to provide support and refuge to those in need. Below are a few examples of work that is already underway, as well as continuing opportunities to respond to the needs of those who are living through the crisis.

## Our Response:

Working with partners inside the country of Syria, and in surrounding countries, the UCC is providing emergency assistance to the million of refugees who are trying to flee the conflict. Through One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), and specially designated gifts to this critical situation, food, water, blankets, hygienic items, essential medicines, medical supplies and equipment have been and will continue to be provided, just as they are in many other disasters. In addition, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and social support is being given, as are clothes, other non-food items, and support aimed at preparing for the winter cold season, just ahead.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Prayers are always needed. Please share this information with others, and ask your church, group or family to pray for all people finding themselves having to flee their homes for safety.
2. Make a Gift. 100% of gifts designated to "Syria Humanitarian Crisis" will directly go to help Syrian refugees and those who are internally displaced in the Middle East and in Europe. Simply make your gift payable to "St. Paul's UCC" marked for "Syria Humanitarian Relief." (For your convenience, you can use the pew envelopes for your gift).

*or*

Make a secure online donation to the International Disaster Relief fund at <http://www.ucc.org/disaster/syria.html>. Please note "Syria Humanitarian Relief" in the Comments Box.



Thank you for your compassion and support.