



Global Ministries

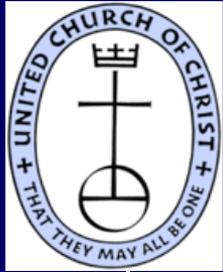


Middle Eastern Refugees: A Century of Wars and Displacement



United Church of Christ Board of Directors

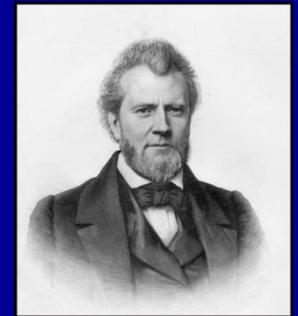
October 16, 2015—Cleveland, OH



The UCC and Disciples, and the Middle East



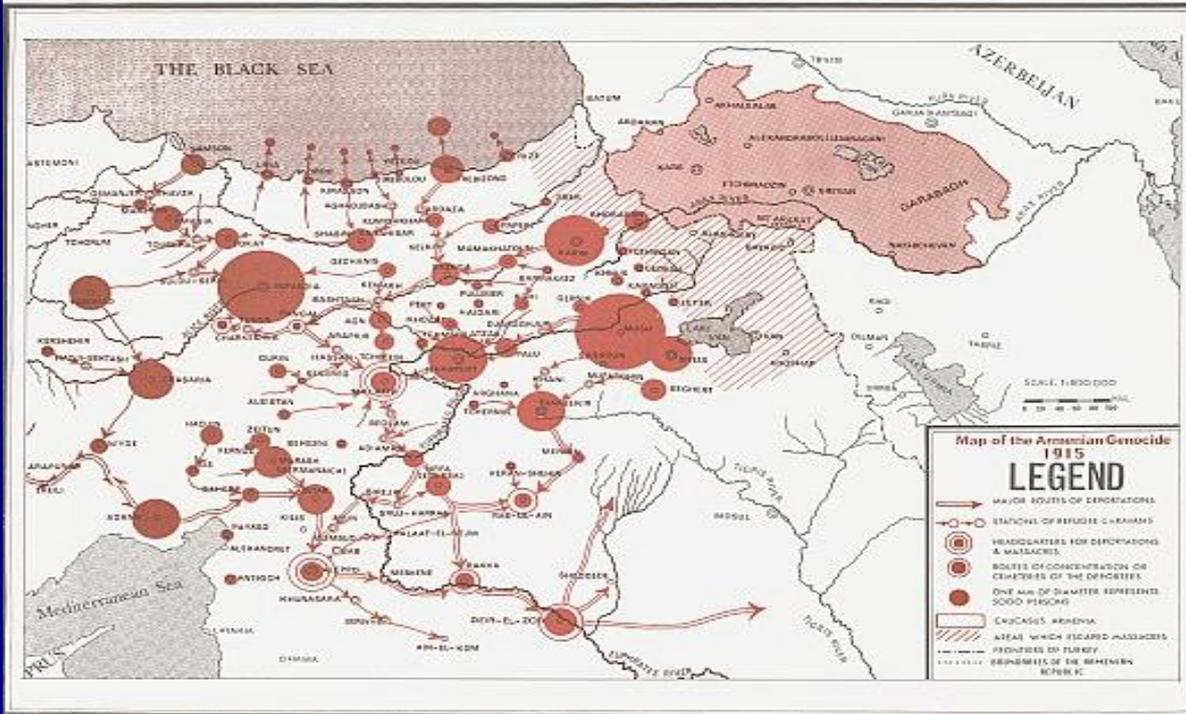
- 2000 years of Biblical/Christian history in the region
- 196 years of UCC mission history (1819: Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk leave New England for Smyrna, Beirut, and Jerusalem)
- 166 years of Disciples mission history (1849: Dr. James and Julia Barclay sent to Jerusalem)
- Current relationships with Christians, churches, and other partners
- Concern for justice and peace, and accompaniment, especially in times of crisis



Armenian Genocide



MAP OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

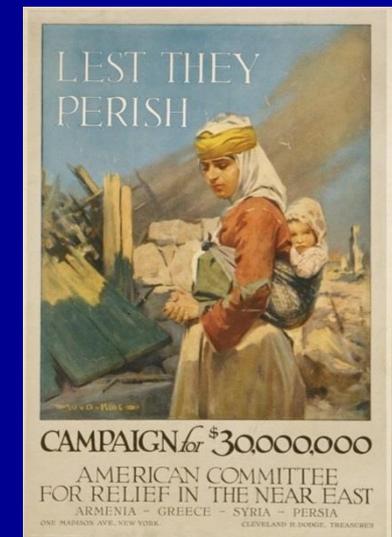


REMEMBER AND DEMAND

APRIL 24

April 24, 1915-1923

- 1.5 million Armenians were killed
- 1 million Armenians were forced to flee central Anatolia (Turkey)





Where did Armenian Genocide survivors resettle?

Russian Empire (400,000)—Eastern Armenia, Caucasus, Black Sea Coast
Middle East (275,000)

Syria	100,000	Aleppo, Deir az-Zor
Lebanon	50,000	Beirut
Iran	50,000	Tehran
Egypt	40,000	Cairo, Alexandria
Iraq	25,000	Baghdad, Mosul, etc.
Mandatory Palestine & Jordan	10,000	Irbid, Jerusalem, Amman, Haifa, etc.

Europe (99,500)

Greece	45,000	Athens
France	30,000	Marseilles
Bulgaria	20,000	Varna, Plovdiv, Burgas
Cyprus	2,500	Nicosia, Larnaca
Other European countries	2,000	Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Italy, United Kingdom

North America and other countries (36,380)

US and Canada	35,380	Boston, Fresno, Philadelphia, Montebello, etc.
Others countries	1,000	Japan, China, India, Latin America

Palestinian Refugees



1947-48 (*an-Nakba*—"the catastrophe")

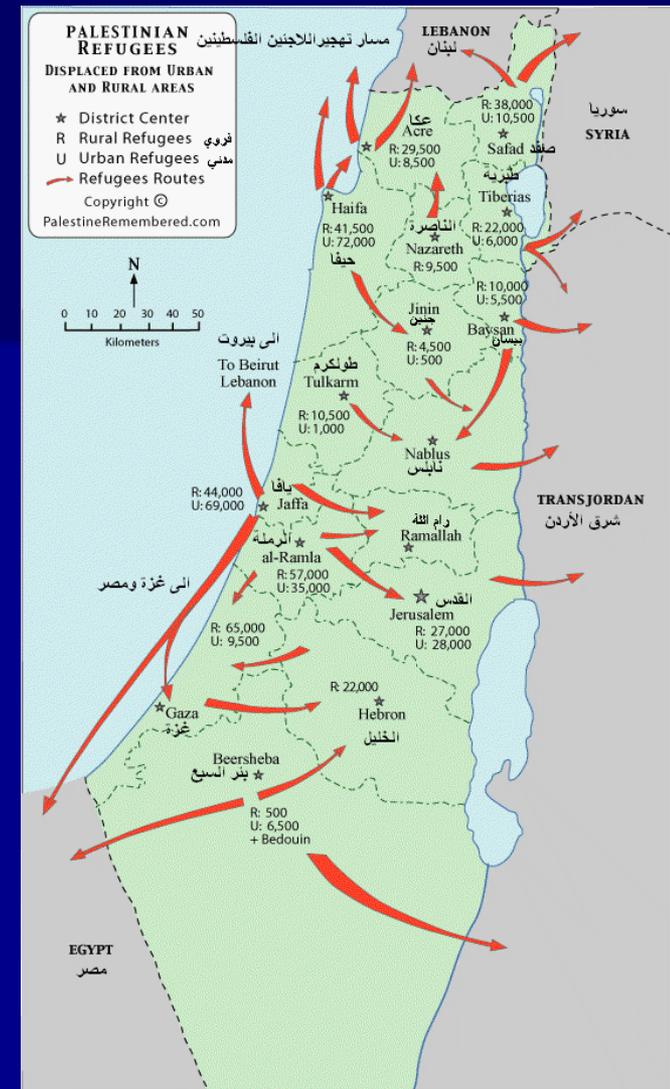
750,000 Palestinians became refugees

- In Ramallah, Bethlehem, and the West Bank
- In Gaza
- In Jordan and Egypt
- In Lebanon and Syria

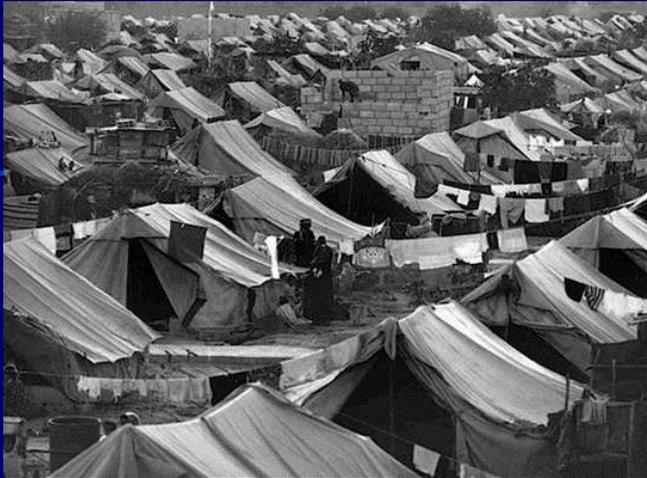
1967 (*an-Naksa*—"the setback")

350,000 Palestinians became refugees,
some for the second time

- From Gaza to Egypt
- From the West Bank to Jordan
- From the Golan Heights to Syria



Palestinian Refugees



Refugees registered with UNRWA: 4.9 million

- living in refugee camps: 1.53 million
- not living in refugee camps: 3.37 million

Place	Refugees
Gaza Strip	1,203,125
West Bank	741,409
Jordan	2,034,641
Syria	560,000
Lebanon	441,543

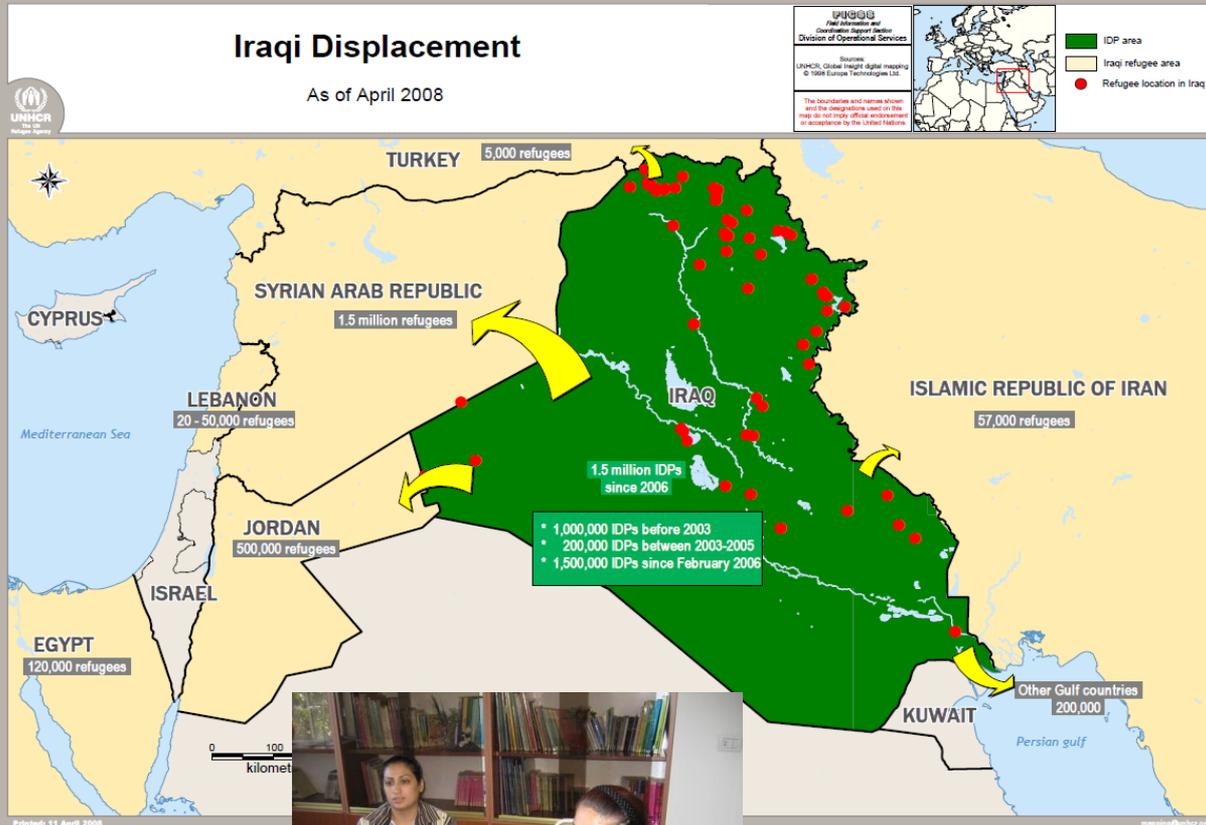


Sources: UNRWA &
The Two-State Delusion,
by Pdraig O'Malley

Iraqi Refugees and 2003 "Operation Iraqi Freedom"

Iraqi Displacement

As of April 2008



Receiving country	Number of refugees
Iraq-IDPs	Nearly 3 million
Syria	1.5 million
Jordan	500,000
Egypt	120,000
Gulf countries	200,000
Iran	57,000
Lebanon	40,000



The Syrian Uprising

Protests began just after Egyptian protests began in January 2011;
Syrian uprising began on March 18, 2011.

Main issues:

- Call for political reforms, including regime change
- Call for economic justice to address un- and under-employment
- Call for respect for human rights and journalistic freedom



Characterized by:

- intense violence, more than 250,000 deaths, and high injury rates
- high numbers of refugees (more than 4.18 M) and internally displaced (more than 7.6 M)
- High level of international involvement and attention (UN, US/NATO, Turkey, Russia, Iran, and other nations, as well as various non-state actors)
- Parties to the conflict have included: the Regime, the Syrian Opposition Coalition, the Syrian National Council, the Syrian Free Army, the "Islamic State," the Islamic Front, an-Nusra, and other armed groups

Impact on refugee communities in Syria:

- Armenians speak of a "second genocide" due to fighting in Aleppo area. Roughly 20,000 of 100,000 have fled to Armenia and Lebanon.
- Many Palestinians have fled to Lebanon (80,000 of 560,000); 280,000 of remaining 480,000 are internally displaced; 95% of those still in Syria need humanitarian assistance
- Most Iraqis have chosen to return to Iraq, despite its instability. More than 250,000 Syrians have sought refuge in Iraq.



Humanitarian Bulletin

Syria

As of Sept. 2015

Refugees and IDPs



Population	21.4 million
People in need of humanitarian assistance	12.2 million
Number of internally displaced persons (IDPs)	7.6 million
Number of Syrian refugees who have fled the country	4.18 million

“This is the biggest refugee population from a single conflict in a generation. It is a population that deserves the support of the world but is instead living in dire conditions and sinking deeper into abject poverty.”

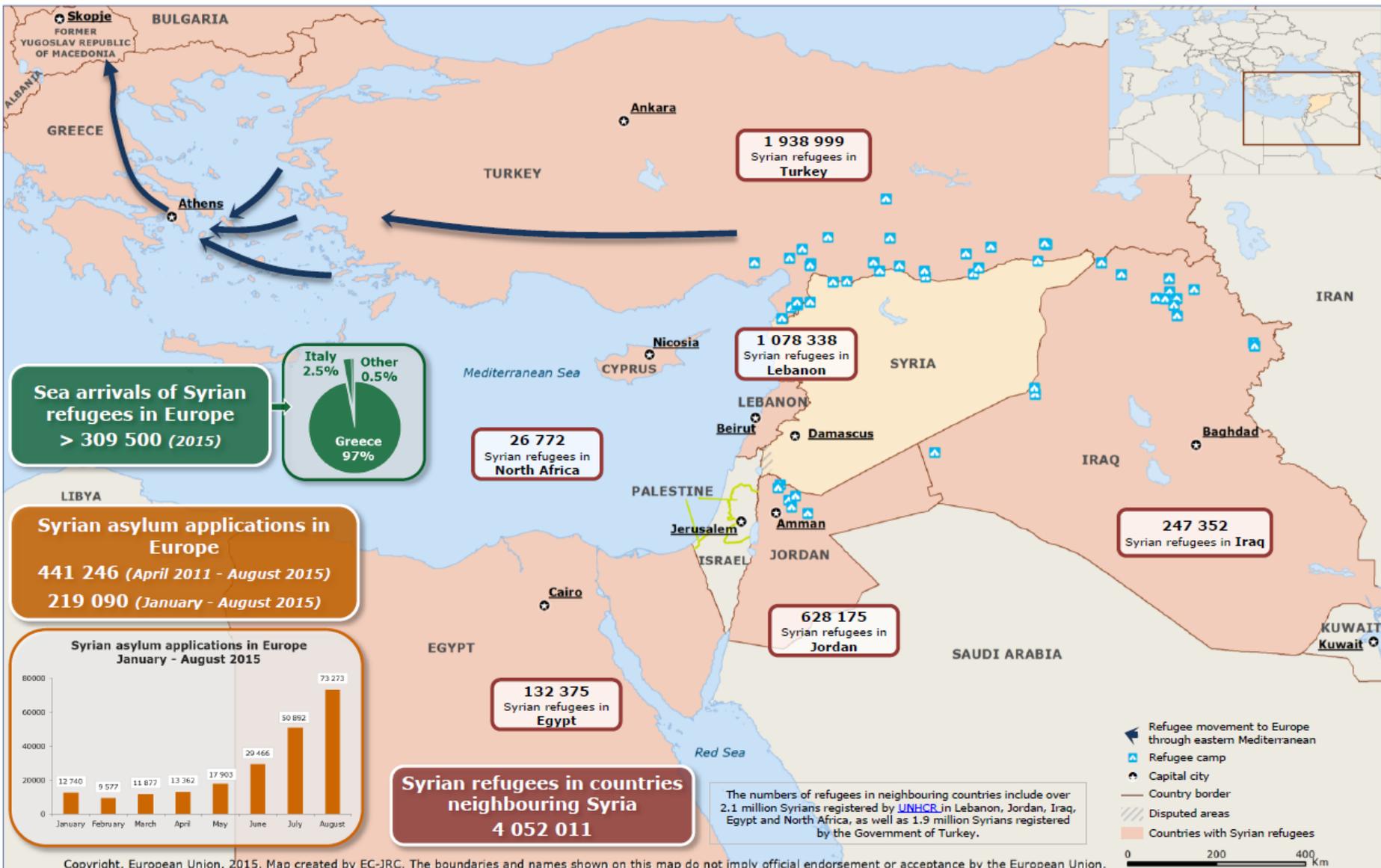
--UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, July 9, 2015.

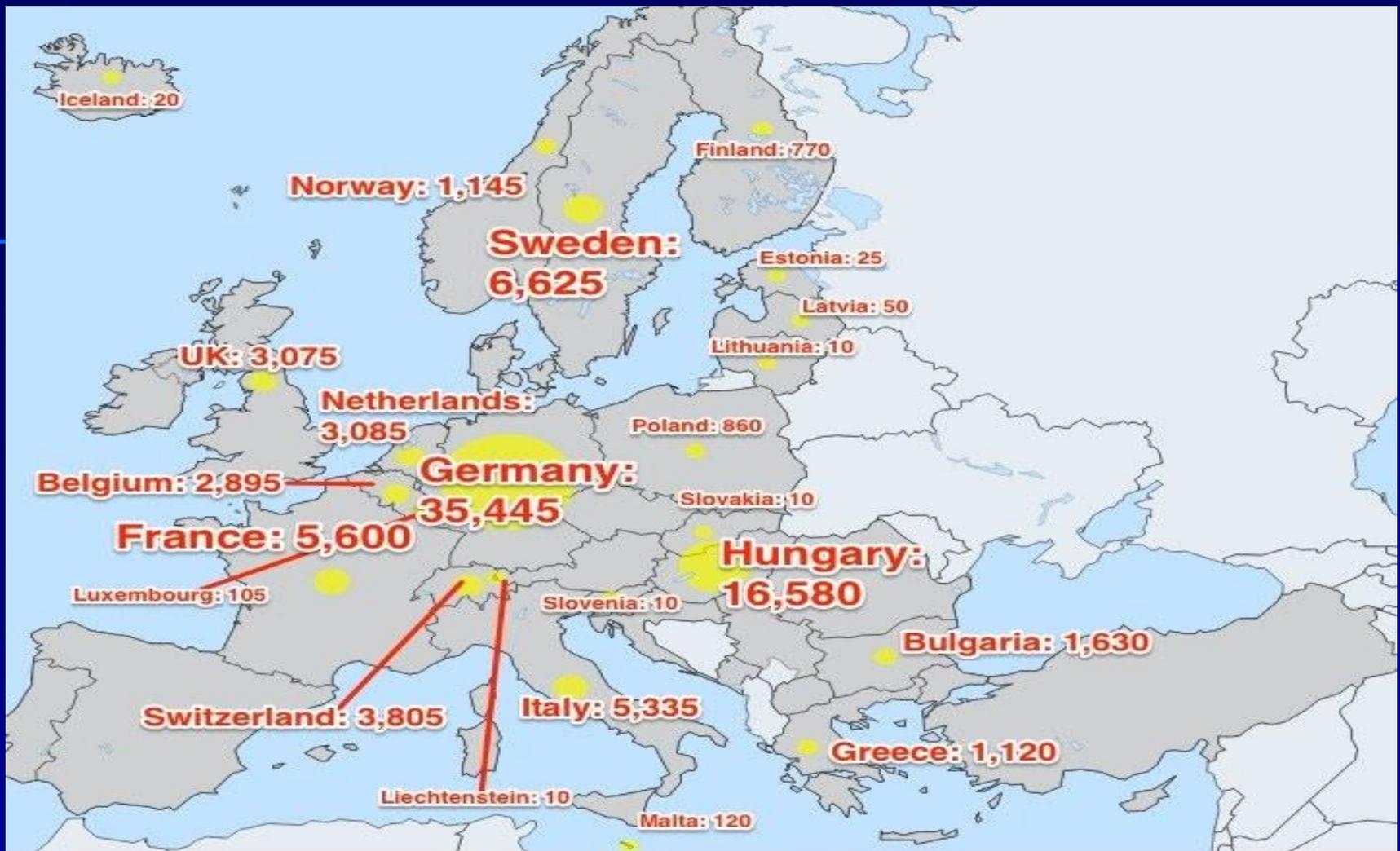
SYRIAN REFUGEE POPULATION PLANNING FIGURES

2015 Planning Figures

As of:	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Turkey	Total
Dec 2012	13,000	74,000	168,000	180,000	148,000	583,000
Dec 2013	145,000	216,000	575,000	905,000	562,000	2,403,000
Nov 2014	137,504	228,484	619,777	1,146,405	1,165,279	3,297,449
Dec 2015	120,000	250,000	700,000	1,500,000	1,700,000*	4,270,000

Syria - Refugees





2015 Refugee Crisis:

Pending asylum applications of EU countries as of June 2015

Syria



Church response to Crisis

The UCC and Disciples have contributed to work of several partners, including:

- The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East—Syria
- Middle East Council of Churches and Orthodox Initiative—Jordan
- The Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches—Syria
- The International Orthodox Christian Charities—Lebanon
- The Forum for Development, Culture, and Dialogue—Syria and Lebanon
- Syriac Orthodox Archbishopric of Mardin—Turkey
- Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East—Lebanon
- Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue—regional
- Hungarian Interchurch Aid
- Hungarian Reformed Church Aid



Almost 5 years of crisis in Syria—partners' responses



Our partners are working in the following areas:

- ✓ Assistance for refugees and IDPs (Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan)—humanitarian relief supplies, including food and basic nutritional supplements
- ✓ Medical assistance and basic medication for women, children, and elderly
- ✓ Temporary resettlement
- ✓ Assistance for Muslims and Christians in Homs and Aleppo, and nearby towns and villages
- ✓ Support for churches in their continuing work with families
- ✓ Educational support for students, teachers, and school
- ✓ Peacemaking through interreligious dialogue



**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

**Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)**
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA



Global Ministries

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ



A Pastoral Letter on the Crisis in Syria—October 2013

“See, Damascus will cease to be a city, and will become a heap of ruins.
Her towns will be deserted forever.” —*Isaiah 17:1-2a*

- ❖ Offers historical summary and laments the extent of the tragedy of the past 2 years
- ❖ Offers background of Syria’s demography and highlights Christian presence
- ❖ Establishes UCC and Disciples’ relationships in Syria—over 100 years
- ❖ Contextualizes current chemical weapons crisis in larger conflict, and humanitarian tragedy
- ❖ Points to efforts of UCC and Disciples to support partners’ response to humanitarian crisis
- ❖ Suggests the need, and our churches’ efforts to promote, a diplomatic resolution to the greater conflict
- ❖ While Isaiah’s prophecy bodes ill, “Damascus is a place of transformation—where Paul regained his sight and was changed for life. We recognize that God can inspire change in the hearts of God’s children. We pray that warring factions will see the futility of their actions, and that they recognize that only death and destruction results.”
- ❖ Urges UCC and Disciples to respond to crisis through:
 - Prayer
 - Learning about partners in Syria and the Middle East, and their witness
 - Working to support a peaceful resolution to the conflict
 - Supporting humanitarian response with contributions



In a Sept. 29 letter to President Obama, Global Ministries joined US partner churches and ecumenical agencies stating the following:

- **The root of the refugee crisis is the devastating civil war in Syria, which has been raging now for more than four years.** Rather than responding with deeper military involvement, the armed involvement of *all* outside actors, including the United States, must cease.
- **The U.S. government must make finding a negotiated solution to the Syria crisis a top diplomatic priority, engaging all involved nations** (such as Russia and Iran)
- **Humanitarian assistance for people suffering from the brutal impacts of the war is vastly underfunded.** The US should increase the \$4.5 billion commitment it has made, and encourage other countries to increase their contributions.
- **The U.S. should open its doors to receive many more refugees.** We encourage the U.S. to accept more Syrian refugees and to expedite the processing of these applications.



Refugee Resettlement

Camps keep refugees alive but they keep them from living.”

—Elizabeth Dunn, “The Failure of Refugee Camps,” in *The Boston Review*, Sept. 28, 2015

Resettlement countries have offered 88,000 places for refugees since 2013. Just under 2000 refugees departed the region for third countries in 2014.

The United States

- UNHCR submitted 16,286 resettlement referrals to the United States as of August 2015.
- The U. S. resettled 1,682 Syrian refugees in 2015 (roughly 1900 total in last 4 years)
- President Obama called on the Department of State to ensure the resettlement of 10,000 Syrian refugees between October 2015 and September 2016.
- Church World Service and Global Ministries have called for the resettlement of 100,000 Syrian refugees in addition to 100,000 refugees from other parts of the world. The U. S. has committed to resettling a total of 85,000 refugees in FY16.

Source: Church World Service (citing AP and UNHCR)





Patriarch Hazim (Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East—Damascus): “We need each other as incarnate brothers and sisters—not as abstractions. Americans must know there are human beings in the Middle East whose lives are at stake.”





Middle East Initiative



Jesus was born in the Middle East. The Church began there. Who are Middle Eastern Christians today? How do we partner with churches and people of faith in the region? What difference can we make together?

Join Global Ministries in a special exploration—
the **Middle East Initiative**
Now through the end of 2016.

Online at: www.globalministries.org/MEInitiative

*Enduring Legacy;
Sustaining Hope;
Envisioning a Just Peace*



**Pray.
Learn.
Engage.**