

Syria refugee crisis FAQs

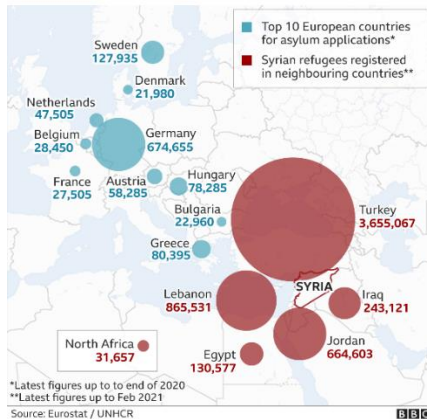
Where is Syria?

- Syria is a country in Western Asia, bordered by 5 countries and the Mediterranean Sea.
- Home to 6 UNESCO World Heritage sites, Syria has a rich cultural heritage. Its capital city Damascus, and another city called Aleppo, are two of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities.
- The majority of people in Syria practise Islam. As of 2020, its estimated population was 17.5 million people. The population given in the 2010 census, before the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, was 21 million people.

What is happening in the Syrian civil war?

- There has been a civil war in Syria for the last 10 years. It started in March 2011, as part of a wider set of protests known as the Arab Spring, which took place across much of the Arab world. The unrest in Syria started because people were unhappy with the Syrian government.
- The war is currently being fought by several different groups trying to seize control of the country, including: the Syrian Armed Forces who support the government; fighters known as rebels who are against the government; and the group that calls itself Islamic State (IS).
- The situation is very complicated because other countries have got involved in the conflict. The Syrian government's key supporters are Russia and Iran, while the USA, Turkey and Saudi Arabia backed the rebels.

Where have all the Syrian refugees gone?



What about the people of Syria?

- About 6.8 million Syrians are refugees and asylum-seekers, and another 6.7 million people are displaced within Syria.
- This means 13.5 million Syrians in total have had to flee their homes – that's more than half of the country's population.
- The majority of Syrian refugees are in Turkey, followed by Lebanon, Jordan, and Germany.
- As for those who remain in Syria, over 11 million people need humanitarian assistance. About half of the people affected by the Syrian refugee crisis are children.

What can the UK do about it?

- The UK has been a leading provider of humanitarian aid to Syria, providing over \$5 billion in food rations, vaccines, cash grants and relief packages since the beginning of the conflict.
- The UK has welcomed 20,000 Syrian refugees since 2015 through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. However, in March 2021, the UK announced the end of the scheme.
- At the same time, it announced steep cuts in the amount of aid it would provide to Syria. This means there will be less money to support programmes that help make sure Syrian children can access food, education and healthcare.

What can we do to change this?

- We can tell Liz Truss, the Foreign Secretary, that we care about the people of Syria and we want the UK to reverse the aid cuts and provide Syrian children and families with the support they need.
- Polls and surveys show that in the UK, public awareness of the ongoing conflict is declining over time – so it's important to keep raising awareness of the Syrian civil war so people don't forget the people of Syria.
- We can also create a welcoming environment for refugees from Syria and elsewhere in our communities.