

Syrian Refugees Flee as Their Tents Are Torched in Lebanon

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On December 26, hundreds of Syrian refugees fled their refugee camp in the Miniyeh region near the coastal city of Tripoli in north Lebanon after [their tents were burned](#) when fighting broke out between local youths and camp residents. At least three were injured in the incident said Khaled Kabarra, a UN refugee agency (UNHCR) spokesman, while nearly four hundred residents who fled found temporary shelter in various locations.

Damascus urged Lebanon's judicial authorities and its security forces to ensure its nationals were protected.

The Lebanese army said it had arrested eight people after the incident, including two Lebanese nationals and six Syrians over a personal dispute. The Lebanese men shot in the air and torched the tents of Syrian refugees.

"I came back to check on belongings inside our small tent only to discover that we no longer own anything," said [Amira Issa](#), a 45-year-old mother of five who fled Syria eight years ago. "We lost everything in one moment," she said, sobbing.

November incident

On November 23, around [270 Syrian refugee families evacuated](#) the northern Lebanese town of Bsharre after a Syrian man was accused of killing a Lebanese man, sparking widespread tension and hostility.

The eviction of all Syrians was demanded after the murder, and residents rioted and demanded that the authorities act.

The Syrian, identified by the initials of MK, surrendered to security forces after allegedly killing Joseph Tawk in a personal argument.

Lebanese locals of the Christian mountain resort town of Bcharre torched Syrian homes and attacked Syrians in the streets following the killing. They surrounded the town's main government building and demanded the authorities to hand the suspect over, while the Lebanese Army deployed troops in the area.

The Mayor of Bcharre, Freddy Keyrouz, echoed local sentiments and demanded that all Syrian citizens should be evicted from the town. "[All Syrians who are staying in the town illegally must leave immediately.](#)" he insisted. The mayor also called on security forces to raid Syrian homes in the town and search for weapons after it was reported that MK had allegedly used a gun to shoot Tawk.

Hearing of forced eviction, many Syrians fled the town, and others were forcibly evicted by residents.

Pro-US politicians in Lebanon will not allow the Syrian refugees to return to Syria, even in the face of suffering inside the refugee camps, and elsewhere. The supporters of the pro-US Lebanese parties hate the refugees and continue to torment them, even though their party leaders benefit from the refugees, as well as from supporting the US position which maintains Syria must have 'regime change' before a return to normalcy. What the US-NATO war machine failed to achieve in 10 years of war on the Syrian people, they demand to be fulfilled, using the refugees as pawns in the game.

Refugees as political pawns

The UN reports that 90% of Syrian families in Lebanon are living in extreme poverty. Lebanese and Syrian authorities have both called on refugees to return to Syria; however, some international groups claim Syria is not yet safe. Instead of allowing refugees to go home, the US, EU, and UN all demand that a political settlement is in place before repatriation. However, the country is safe and calm in most areas, except Idlib, which is occupied by HTS, the Al Qaeda affiliate in Syria. Many refugees would be safer back in Syria rather than in dangerous camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. Some experts claim the refugees are being used as political pawns.

Lebanese prejudice

Lebanon has over one million Syrian refugees. During the Lebanese civil war, the Syrian Arab Army was requested to enter by the Lebanese government, to stop the war. This was achieved, but the Syrians remained longer than some Lebanese people would accept, which led to hard feelings, ending in the 2005 withdrawal of troops.

Some writers have incorrectly attributed tensions to racism, but this is an incorrect usage of the term, as Lebanese and Syrian belong to the same race. However, you can say some Lebanese have a prejudice against Syrians for various reasons. The Lebanese economy has collapsed in early 2020, and some blame refugees for taking their jobs, such as labor for the construction and agriculture sectors.

Syria calls refugees back home

On December 38, Syrian officials in a joint Syrian-Russian press conference in Damascus reported that the overall situation in Syria is promising for the return of refugees while blaming Western sanctions for hindering their return.

The Syrian government is looking forward to the full return of all Syrians to rebuild the country, which has been destroyed by international and domestic terrorism. Western sanctions hinder the return of refugees to Syria and negatively affect the social and economic situation as well as the health sector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The deputy head of the [Russian Center for Reconciliation](#), Major General Vyacheslav Sitnik, told reporters that currently there are 50 refugee centers in Syria which are home to more than 100,000 people, and more than 2 million Syrians have returned to their homes.

More than half of Syria's 23 million people have fled their homes, including 5.5 million who

went abroad as they were forced to leave their country by an unjust war waged against them.

UN calls for peace and stability in Syria

On December 16, the United Nations special envoy for Syria, [Geir Pedersen](#), warned that the country could be a powder keg for a major international incident, as five foreign armies are operating there.

The UN calls for an end to hostilities in Syria to protect civilians, keep peace and security, support a political process, and concentrate forces to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. There are hostilities in northeast Syria between the invading Turkish Army, along with Radical Islamic mercenaries they employ, and the Syrian Kurds. The battles in Idlib are between the Al Qaeda terrorist group, HTS, who hold 3 million persons as human shields, and the Russian military and Syrian Arab Army in a war against terrorism.

The UN is working with the Syrian government, opposition, and civil society groups to work towards a political solution under UN resolution 2254.

The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, reported that the number of Covid-19 cases in Syria continues to increase. Sanctions have prevented Syrian civilians from rebuilding their homes, and businesses because imported supplies and equipment are strictly prohibited by the US and EU sanctions, which have even prevented medical companies from delivering orders of necessary supplies, out of fear of penalties by the US Treasury.

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