



Resolution 1902 (2012)¹

The European response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, more than 2.5 million people have found themselves in a perilous situation, suffering from lack of food, hygiene and essential goods. Over 1.2 million people have been displaced within the country, and more than 294 005 have taken refuge abroad in order to avoid the shootings and bombardments and to save themselves from attacks and acts of violence.
2. The situation is thus becoming more and more critical, since each day brings further bloodbaths and acts of violence against civilians, medical workers and the staff of humanitarian organisations.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1878 \(2012\)](#) on the situation in Syria. It regrets the dramatic deterioration of the conflict, which has escalated into a fully fledged civil war, and its continuing grievous threat to security and stability in the entire region, and in particular the neighbouring countries.
4. In this context, the Assembly resolutely condemns all acts of violence and the military operations whose victims have been the civilian populations, many thousands of whom have lost their lives. It particularly condemns the continuing, widespread, systematic and gross human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity committed in Syria, such as summary executions, torture and sexual violence, including of and against children. The Assembly reiterates that all allegations of violations and crimes must be properly investigated and their perpetrators, whoever they may be, must be brought to justice, including, as appropriate, before the International Criminal Court.
5. The situation in the refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq is also becoming dramatic owing to shortages of food and hygiene products and a lack of housing. This is also the case in certain areas of Syria itself. The approach of winter is further aggravating the situation.
6. Indeed, for the last six months an upsurge in the number of refugees, 75% of whom are women and children, has been noted in the border regions as well as in certain member States (France, Germany, Sweden, etc.).
7. The Assembly thanks the Turkish authorities, together with Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq, which are receiving these refugees, despite the organisational and security problems associated with this task.
8. Unfortunately the reception capability of these countries has very quickly been overwhelmed following the mass influx of refugees, and the Assembly appeals to the solidarity of the international community to make a generous and most urgent response to the calls for funds to assist the refugees from Syria and the neighbouring countries receiving them, as requested in the last revised plan of the United Nations.
9. The Assembly considers that the international community's relative silence and inaction with regard to the influx of refugees to neighbouring countries has lasted too long and that it is time to react and take the measures necessary to ensure that the refugees are provided with suitable reception facilities and that they are given the opportunity to move back once the conflict has ended.

1. Assembly debate on 4 October 2012 (34th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13045](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Santini; and [Doc. 13048](#), opinion by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Marcenaro). Text adopted by the Assembly on 4 October 2012 (34th Sitting).

10. The Assembly is convinced that the problems posed by the dramatic situation of refugees and displaced persons in Syria and in neighbouring countries can only be solved if there are prospects of peace. This will only be possible through a political solution to the conflict. For this purpose, it is essential that:
 - 10.1. a common initiative of the international community emerge;
 - 10.2. more voices among the ranks of the supporters of the regime seriously consider the prospect of a political transition;
 - 10.3. extremist and fundamentalist forces among the ranks of the opposition are marginalised, and that the opposition realise that a military solution is a mere delusion;
 - 10.4. more efforts are made to convince the Syrian democratic opposition to unify around a common political platform and leadership in order to be ready for the political transition.
11. Accordingly, the Assembly asks the parties to the conflict to:
 - 11.1. as rapidly as possible reach a ceasefire, a necessary precondition for any political solution, and to that end avail themselves of the good offices of the international mediator, Mr Lakhdar Brahimi;
 - 11.2. allow the humanitarian organisations and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help displaced persons in Syria and accordingly to abide by humanitarian law for the access of all humanitarian workers;
 - 11.3. ensure that those who have fled from their homes can benefit from housing and adequate medical care;
 - 11.4. permit the establishment of humanitarian corridors or buffer zones to let convoys deliver whatever humanitarian aid is necessary for the survival of the displaced population.
12. The Assembly recommends that the member States of the United Nations Security Council:
 - 12.1. take measures to establish an air exclusion zone in order to prevent bombing of the civilian population;
 - 12.2. agree on a common initiative which will set the conditions for a political solution to the conflict and generate the prospects of peace.
13. The Assembly recommends that the Council of Europe member States and the countries bordering Syria:
 - 13.1. do not send asylum seekers back to Syria, in compliance with the fundamental principle of *non-refoulement*, and ensure that they are not turned back on arrival at their borders;
 - 13.2. provide proper facilities for the reception of refugees and provide them with all necessary assistance;
 - 13.3. enable all asylum seekers to obtain international protection, in the form of temporary, subsidiary or full refugee status under the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;
 - 13.4. take the requisite measures to ease and shorten the procedures for obtaining asylum;
 - 13.5. ensure that appropriate assistance is provided to refugees previously living in Syria seeking protection a second time, or third country nationals having fled Syria looking to return to their home countries;
 - 13.6. lay down an action plan providing in particular for a programme of resettlement operating from the host countries, possibly enlisting the aid of the Council of Europe Development Bank;
 - 13.7. ask the Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank to consider a donation from the Selective Trust Account aimed at reinforcing the action of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the benefit of refugees from Syria;
 - 13.8. recognise the urgent need to provide vital supplies, including food, clothing, medical aid and temporary shelter, both to displaced persons in Syria and to Syrian refugees in its bordering countries before the onset of winter.
14. The Assembly also recommends that the member States of the Council of Europe and Syria's bordering countries, including Israel, open all border crossings to refugees from Syria.

15. The Assembly reiterates that the possibility of eliminating violence and embracing the change for which so many lives have been sacrificed can be opened up to Syria only through a political solution.