

SAFERWORLD

UPDATE



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Challenges and opportunities: the long-term integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey



Saferworld has been engaging with Syrian and Turkish actors and NGOs to discuss ways of ensuring the effective integration of the massive influx of Syrian refugees into Turkish society.

The Syrian conflict and humanitarian crisis, entering its fifth year, has driven a large number of refugees into Turkey. As of January 2016, the official number had reached 2.6 million. Turkey has faced migration flows from across the Middle East region in the past—Iraqi Kurds, Bosnian Muslims, and Afghans, for example—but never before in these numbers, or for this extended period of time.

Around 90 per cent of Syrian refugees in Turkey live outside camp settings in urban areas. While Syrians fleeing the war have been hosted in Turkey under temporary 'guest' status,

Enhancing the role of youth in democratic engagement in Satkhira, Bangladesh



Despite difficult circumstances, Saferworld recorded lasting achievements through bringing together youth from a range of cultures to debate the future of Bangladesh in a peaceful manner and engage constructively with security services.

The programme commenced during testing times. The time available to carry out the planned activities had been severely cut by a combination of strike action, the holy month of Ramadan, and the killing of foreigners in September and October. Activities took place in rural and urban locations in order to acknowledge the tensions between them. In each, 20 youths were included in a newly formed Youth, Democracy and Justice Forum. The Forum has a dual role:

the need for broader adaptation to the growing refugee crisis has become apparent as the conflict continues.

Saferworld organised workshops in December 2015 in Gaziantep and Ankara, together with partners PODEM, Baytna Syria and ORSAM. This brought together members of Turkish and Syrian civil society organisations, researchers and practitioners, local and national authorities, and international actors to discuss the challenges posed by Syrian refugees' presence in Turkey and ways to address long term integration.

Bringing together Turkish and Syrian NGOs in this way is unprecedented and has been useful in bringing Syrian voices and perspectives to the evolving global discussion on migration. This workshop highlighted challenges faced by refugees, including a lack of clarity from authorities on their legal status and a lack of efficiency in the bureaucratic process within which their asylum applications are processed. Other issues, including unemployment, poor living conditions and risks of social tension, were identified as obstacles to effective integration. However, we also found that Turkey's public policies are increasingly reflecting the fact that Syrians have become 'permanent-temporary' parts of society. Providing space for Syrian and Turkish people to inform the design of these policies is critical for their effectiveness. The exchanges also contributed to a **Refugees Briefing** report produced by Saferworld and Conciliation Resources on understanding the tensions the Syrian crisis is bringing to neighbouring states.

EU ruling on arms sales to Saudi Arabia

On 25 February, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the humanitarian situation in Yemen which includes a call for an EU arms embargo to be imposed against Saudi Arabia. Whilst non-binding, this resolution serves as a reminder to EU member states of their legal responsibilities and calls them to order over their arms export practices.

Since the Saudi-led intervention began, both sides have carried out indiscriminate attacks which are reported to have killed over 3,200 civilians. Saferworld commissioned a legal opinion on the legality of UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia in late 2015.

1. To act as a cross-regional platform for youth to share experiences, lessons learnt, forge networks and create links that cut across often isolated local communities.
2. To act as an open, unrestricted space for the development and deployment of advocacy messages to government at the local and national levels.

Most participants were unemployed, with some considered radicalised at the outset. The Forum acted in partnership with local authorities, including the police, to work together to reduce youth susceptibility to violence, and increase the community's resilience to extremism.

The outcomes of this work were overwhelmingly positive. Attendees said they felt inspired, having gained more understanding and appreciation of human rights and the rule of law, with one girl refusing to pay a bribe based on this knowledge. Furthermore, connecting officials with youth has created an environment of cooperation not present before, which culminated in officers making public pledges to support advocacy on democratic consolidation and justice reform.

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