

Turkish government memorandum regarding

[Government](#)



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TO: Osman Gunes, Deputy Minister of the Interior, Government of Turkey

FROM: Tolgahan P? narsayha, Political Advisor to the Government of Turkey

DATE: 10/3/2012 SUBJECT: Addressing the Syrian Refugee Crisis Summary

The Turkish Government has spent over \$300 million providing for refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria [1]. As a neighboring country with important links to Syria through culture and religion alongside being a democratic country that recognizes international laws regarding refugees, Turkey has an obligation to continue to admit civilians from Syria into its southern provinces.

By analyzing Turkey's political ideals, its adherence to international laws and its ties to Syria and the Islamic world, I emphasize the Government's duty towards addressing the refugee crisis above any other related issue (as will be further discussed) in this report. Problems associated with the Government's Allocation of Resources Important issues that may have a bearing on Turkey's provision of adequate resources to refugees include: its support for the Syrian rebels; lack of international action in Syria; and lack of international assistance to Turkey in providing aid and accommodation to refugees [1].

These issues may need to be addressed before the Government can completely fulfill its duty towards the safeguarding of innocent civilians. Turkey's Responsibility as a Regional Power The border between Turkey and Syria stretches 877 km, and is for both countries the longest land border they share with a neighbor [2]. This is significant as the Turkish Government can expect to take in comparatively larger numbers of refugees with relation to Syria's other border states. In the past Our "responsibility" to accept

refugees at arises from the fact that both Turkey and Syria share extensive historical, cultural and religious ties.

Both are members of the OIC and are Muslim countries, and in the eyes of the Islamic world, Turkey has an automatic duty to house fellow Muslims fleeing from the violence. This responsibility is more important for Turkey because it has interests in maintaining strong relations with the predominantly Muslim “ Arab world”; by accepting refugees it is also portraying an image of solidarity with the Syrian people, and this would help strengthen ties with the Arab world which, in light of recent protests for freedom and democracy which have been collectively termed as the “ Arab Spring”, is largely in support of Syrian opposition forces.

International Obligations towards the Protection of Victims of Prosecution
Turkey is a member of the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), three international agencies that determine the laws and relations that Turkish Government is bound by while it addresses the ongoing refugee crisis in the country’s southern provinces.

In adherence with international law and as an upholder of Turkey’s democratic and liberal ideals, the Turkish Government has a basic duty to protect and provide refuge to Syrian refugees fleeing from persecution, as stated in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Options – Re-allocating resources or calling for international assistance From the outset of the war the Turkish Government has undoubtedly been in support of the rebel cause. The Government must seriously consider the impact this may

be having on its allocation of resources to accepting and accommodating refugees.

As previously mentioned, international laws dictate that civilians fleeing persecution have a right to seek refuge in a foreign country. Therefore the Government's main priority as a foreign state should be to funnel resources into building adequate facilities for civilians. In direct relation to this, Turkey should also consider how its participation in the Syrian conflict will benefit the Syrian people and at the same time how it will benefit the economy and security of Turkey. Public support for Turkey's foreign policy towards Syria is low and the public view of the Government's handling of the conflict is largely negative.

While the Government stands for the "freedom" of Syrian people it needs to seriously re-evaluate its position; it is a neighbor country and therefore has no duty to react to the internal political situation in Syria until an international consensus can be reached. Until that point it should focus on strengthening the Turkish border, screening incoming refugees and providing facilities for them. Recommendations The refugee crisis is just one form of the greater humanitarian catastrophe that has resulted from the Syrian uprising.

Although Turkey's interests and obligations lie in protecting persecuted civilians, it must also consider wider issues regarding the conflict, including the impact of its support for Syrian opposition forces, as well as more pertinent humanitarian issues like the displacement of Syrians within Syria itself. The Government should therefore continue to lobby the international community to take action in Syria; more than this, it should seek assistance

from international governments in building refugee camps and providing aid to civilians, in order to supplement dwindling resources.