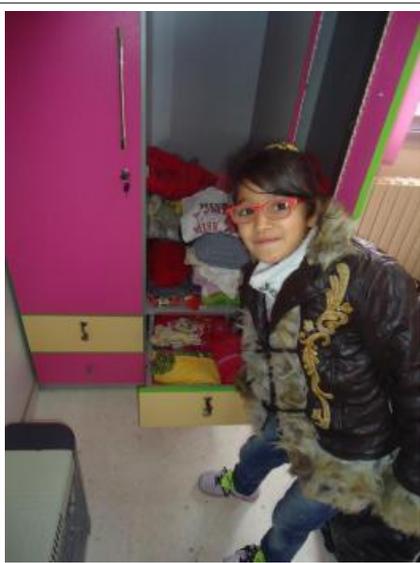


GENERAL INFORMATION ON SYRIA

Since 2011, Syria has been engulfed in conflict. SOS Children's Villages - with over 40 years' experience in the country - is supporting children who have lost parental care and providing emergency relief to vulnerable families.

An estimated 13.5 million Syrians need urgent assistance



A young girl who has finally found safety in an SOS Children's Villages Interim Care Centre (photo: SOS archives).

In 2010, Syria had a population of around 22.5 million, 1.8 million of which lived in the capital Damascus.

In the decades prior to 2011, the government worked towards improving the standard of living, ensuring better access to education and health. However, the number of people living in poverty remained high. The situation was especially acute in rural areas. In addition, Syria was home to around 1.4 million refugees from Iraq, and about half a million Palestinians.

Since 2011, Syria has been the centre of international attention. The conflict has now lasted over six years, the situation is tragic, an estimated 13.5 million Syrians, nearly half of whom are children, are in need of urgent humanitarian help, and a generation of children have not been able to go to school.

Lives disrupted by violence

Life has become increasingly hard for those families who have stayed in Syria despite the war. Many have experienced violence. Those who have lost their homes are now living with relatives or

sheltering in schools or other public buildings. The Syrian health care system has practically collapsed.

Since the violence started in 2011:

- Over 400,000 people have been killed and more than 1.9 million injured.
- An estimated 11.4 million Syrians have had to leave their home. More than 6.6 million are internally displaced and more than 4.8 million have risked their lives to go abroad.
- Around 13.5 million people in need of urgent aid live in the areas most affected by the violence, and are therefore hard to reach.



Lost Childhoods

An estimated 6 million children have been affected by the war. They are trying to survive under life-threatening conditions. Family homes have been destroyed; a growing number are living on the streets and have to find a way of getting food and clean water.

2.7 million children are traumatised: they have witnessed violence and lost relatives and friends. Over two million children cannot go to school. Other activities that children took for granted, such as playing outside, are no longer possible.



An SOS co-worker providing support to a young girl who was forced to leave her family home in Aleppo. (photo: SOS archives).

SOS Children's Villages in Syria

Family strengthening: SOS Children's Village Syria is supporting children and their families with emergency aid such as food, water, baby food, medicine, hygiene articles, children's clothing and winter clothes. We also offer psychological counselling. SOS Children's Villages helps children go to school by paying fees and providing children with school materials. If no schooling is available, we provide lessons.

Protection and care for children without parental care: The SOS Children's Villages Interim Care Centres in Damascus and Tartous care for unaccompanied and separated displaced children and for those who have lost their parents due to the war. We work hard to reunite families. But, if this isn't possible, the children stay in our care.

Child-friendly Spaces: Children can recover from their daily stresses in the Child-friendly Spaces in Aleppo, Damascus and Tartous. We offer psychological help to traumatised children and do everything to ensure that boys and girls have some structure to their days.

Care in SOS-families: Children who have lost parental care live in SOS families in two programmes where SOS Children's Villages works in Damascus. Some children were evacuated from SOS Children's Village Aleppo in 2012 and found a stable home in Damascus. We are carefully monitoring the situation and making every effort to ensure the safety of the children and young people in our care.

Support for young people: We support young people until they are able to live independently.