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18.05.2020

## SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY OUTLINE CONDITIONS FOR SAFE AND VOLUNTARY RETURN TO SYRIA

A new report published by [The Day After](#) reveals a strong desire among Syrian refugees in Turkey to return to Syria and outlines the conditions for that return. In one of the most prominent findings, 71% of respondents who wish to return refuse to return to areas other than their original areas of residence, meaning that the establishment of a safe zone in a small part of the country is not a motive to return. 70% of respondents stipulated political change in Syria, specifically “overthrowing the regime,” as a condition for return.

The report, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Perceptions on Return to Syria,” presents the results of a survey conducted in December 2019 with over 2,000 Syrians living in 20 cities in 12 provinces of Turkey. **The full report can be read [here](#).**

The report presents several factors influencing Syrians’ desire to return, such as their legal status in Turkey. 77% of respondents covered by the temporary protection system want to return if the appropriate conditions are met, compared to 69% of those who hold tourist residency permits and 62% of those who hold Turkish citizenship.

Economic factors were not found to strongly influence Syrians’ desire to return. On the contrary, among respondents who receive government assistance in Turkey, 80% wished to return to Syria, compared to 71% of those who receive no assistance. In addition, age and language skills emerged as influencing factors, with a significantly lower proportion of young people (aged 18-25) and those who speak fluent Turkish expressing a desire to return to Syria. These findings suggest that social integration into Turkish society plays a large role in the desire to return, a factor which will likely become increasingly important as time passes and more young Syrians identify Turkey as home.

Mutasem Al-Syoufi, Executive Director of The Day After, said: “The findings of the report reinforce the conviction of many Syrians and followers of the Syrian cause that the return of Syrians to their country depends on the transition towards a new political order that respects human rights, the rule of law and principles of transitional justice, and leads a fair reconstruction effort for the destruction that occurred as a result of years of war and unjust laws and decrees issued by the Assad regime that threaten the property rights of displaced Syrians. Any political or economic measures that take place under the current regime will not have any credibility or confidence among the refugees and will not constitute for them the conditions for safe and voluntary return.”

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