



# REFUGEE PROTECTION INTERNATIONAL

## Shelter Program

**The Need:** In war-torn Syria, nearly 4.7 million persons require urgent shelter support, according to the United Nations. This need is most acute in north-western Syria, where 3 million civilians, including 1 million children live amid ongoing hostilities.

With over half a million civilians newly displaced this year alone, many are sheltering in the open air. They urgently need insulated shelter ahead of the winter. Dismal conditions were made worse when heavy rains flooded the tented settlements of 23,000 families last year. Children were left to sleep without ground cover.



Other families have sought refuge in war-damaged urban housing. The rising cost of repairs and heating fuel is a tremendous challenge. The UN estimates that the need for shelter non-food items has grown by 600,000 civilians in Idlib province alone. Nationally, 64% of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are renting. The risk of eviction is widespread as families who have lost everything now face surging rent costs. The gravity of this situation is compounded by the free-fall into cross-border violence between Turkey and north-eastern Syria.

Neighboring host countries are overwhelmed. Turkey hosts a staggering 63% of displaced Syrians registered globally, while Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. Access to affordable and adequate housing in both countries is a continuous struggle for Syrian refugees. Despite the historic generosity of landlords, destitute single mothers and their children increasingly fear exploitation and eviction. In Lebanon, up to 3,600 Syrian refugee families in the Aarsal border region risk homelessness due to the prohibition and demolition of semi-permanent structures in make-shift shelters, according to Human Rights Watch. Shelter needs across the region are enormous, impacting on both protection and health.

**Programming Focus:** We support our refugee-led nonprofit partners with project design, grants, monitoring, and technical and logistic support, as needed, to carry out the following activities:

- Secure rent-free or subsidized urban housing for the most vulnerable displaced families
- Repair war-damaged housing to render it fit for habitation in exchange for rent-free hosting of IDPs
- Distribute shelter materials and fuel for heating and cooking to families affected by eviction and floods

**Impact:** RPI and its partners have met 19,690 shelter-related needs among refugees and internally displaced persons in Syria, Turkey, and Lebanon. Supported services have included: monitoring and securing subsidized housing arrangements for the most vulnerable IDPs at risk of eviction and newly arrived refugees; repairing war-damaged housing; replacing demolished shelters; and providing evacuees, flooded tents, and informal settlements with shelter insulation, floor matting, heaters, blankets, mattresses, and alternative fuel for heating and cooking in the form of dried olive pulp. Featured local charity partners registered in Turkey and Lebanon include: Basmeh and Zeitooneh, Kids Paradise, and the Union of Relief and Development Associations.

*Refugee Protection International, Inc is a 501(c)(3) public charity with EIN # 47-5417614 based in Greater Boston*

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<https://refugeeprotection.org/portfolio/flood-relief/>*

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**Our Approach:** We strive for locally-driven and efficient aid, by supporting and raising the visibility of remarkable refugee-led nonprofits on the frontlines. Our joint project designs integrate gender and vulnerability analysis, a rights-based approach, and urban focus.

When possible, we go beyond providing shelter materials. Critically, our projects also facilitate tenure security, monitor evictions, and link with self-reliance initiatives. We encourage our partners to identify displaced families arriving in urban areas with little recourse to external support. Vulnerable women and children are prioritized, given the particular risks they face in poor shelter conditions.



**Personal Impact Stories:** Alarmed by the imminent eviction of displaced persons from closing collective shelters in 2018, RPI asked its Turkey-based partner Basmeh and Zeitoneh to identify and repair urban housing to accommodate the IDPs in Idlib, **Syria**. In exchange, landlords gifted 1 year of free rent to the IDPs.

Ali Jumaa A. had displaced 6 times within Eastern Ghouta to avoid heavy shelling before fleeing to Idlib with 15 family members, primarily women and children. His family needed assistance after moving from a tented settlement to a partially constructed one-room apartment exposed to the oncoming winter. With our support, Ali Jumaa secured rent-free adequate housing and could finally focus on sending his children back to school.

Earlier in the war, RPI supported another partner in Gaziantep, **Turkey**, to negotiate access to urban housing, and subsidize rent and heat for highly vulnerable Syrian refugees. One such family of the late widow Amina P. comprised of 6 orphans living with their extended relatives. A 14-year old son was the only breadwinner.

In 2019, RPI supported its partner URDA to replace demolished refugee shelters in line with **Lebanese** housing codes. RPI also supported its Turkey-based nonprofit partner Kids Paradise to distribute waterproof area floor matting to flooded tents across Idlib and Aleppo provinces of **Syria**, benefiting 6,765 IDPs.

Pregnant Khadija sat with her two children, including an infant, and shared her story. Khadija fled Nubel town after air raids damaged her home and severely injured her husband. Living in squalid conditions, she feared for the health of her children and thanked our partner for providing ground cover. Elsewhere in Idlib, shelter beneficiary Suhaila A. despaired over the health of her 5 daughters, one of which struggled with cancer. The emotional resilience of such families inspires RPI and its grassroots partners to work harder in every way.



*Kids Paradise NGO distributing shelter materials in Syria with RPI's support*



*Basmeh and Zeitoneh NGO repairing housing for IDPs in Syria with RPI's support*