
EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS MUST CONTINUE TO PROTECT SYRIANS

JRS Europe is concerned about the statements from various European governments announcing potential revisions of their protection policies towards Syrian refugees and asylum seekers following the fall of Bashar al-Assad’s regime. Given the current context of widespread uncertainty and instability, we urge European States to continue to provide protection to Syrian refugees already in Europe and not to close their doors to newly arriving Syrian asylum seekers.

“We call on European governments to adopt an approach of openness and solidarity towards our Syrian brothers and sisters” – says Alberto Ares, JRS Europe’s director – “They have already suffered the effects of devastating policies in the past and have been displaced for over a decade. At this stage, forcing them to leave their homes again—the European countries where they have worked so much to rebuild a life—would be irresponsible and simply cruel.”

JRS Europe opposes any hasty decision by European governments to withdraw the protection status from Syrian refugees and their families in Europe. We can understand the need to suspend the examination of pending asylum applications in order to reassess the situation in the country. However, given the delicate nature of the current circumstances, we urge European governments to exercise maximum flexibility in granting protection, ensure access to the asylum procedure and refrain from any form of blockade against new asylum seekers at the borders. We also call on governments not to use detention.

At present, Syria is not a safe place to live or raise children, nor does it have the economic and structural conditions to effectively and systematically reintegrate thousands of its citizens. JRS hopes for the rapid stabilization of the country through a democratic and peaceful transition that restores hope to the Syrian people. However, today, the governments of EU Member States and the international community cannot afford to consider Syria safe enough to implement accelerated returns.

JRS therefore urges the European establishment to act with responsibility and solidarity, adopting a cautious and conscientious approach that respects international and European law. JRS remains committed to supporting and assisting Syrian refugees, as it has always done for forcibly displaced people around the world.