

Tzu Chi Holds Distribution for 900 Syrian Refugee Families in Turkey

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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The Syrian civil war has been going on for four years, leading to 230,000 deaths and more than four million people forced to take refuge in neighboring countries. Of these, 1.8 million have taken refuge in Turkey. From 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers in Turkey have been providing help to the refugees, in the cities of Sultangazi and Arnavutkoy. They have been giving long-term help and concern to the Syrian refugees in Turkey.

In Sultangazi, there are more than 6,000 Syrian families and in Arnavutkoy more than 1,200 Syrian families, of whom 695 have been receiving long-term help from Tzu Chi. However, there are still over thousands of families were unable to receive any help. Moved to see their suffering, the foundation decided to hold a large-scale distribution for them in Sultangazi in 2015.

On the day of the distribution, a large number of refugees came to seek help. One volunteer said: "Please come to this side, see your registration number and remember it, then tell us your number there." The Syrian refugees came and looked for their number, in the hope that they would qualify for the distribution.

The volunteers announced over the broadcasting system: "for those who are not on the list, please forgive us. We have limited resources. Please forgive us." The man announcing this was volunteer Hu Guang-zhong, who spoke in a soft voice. The volunteers prepared for a distribution of 900 refugee families; those whose names were not on the list stood at one side and hoped for a chance to receive the goods. One woman said: "you can please come to our house and see our needs."



Then a man named Adham came forward with his wife and four children; they have been in Turkey for two months and came to the distribution center in the hope of something. "Because of my leg, I am unable to work," he said. "Is there any way you can help us?" Hu embraced Adham and told his fellow volunteer: "We might be able to help him. But first we must visit to his house and survey the need."

In Syria, Adham was the owner of a telecommunications company; the civil war forced him and his family to flee. In Turkey, they are safe but do not have enough to live on. As a child, Adham suffered from polio; so now he is unable to work outside but do handcrafts at home. The family pay 800 yuan a month in rent. Even two of his children, 11 and 12, go out to work, the incomes still do not meet the basic expenses of the family.

Facing these difficulties, Adham said: "In my life, I have never asked anyone for help, except

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Allah. This is the first time..." He began to choke and volunteer Hu Guang-zhong felt it. He hugged him with both arms warmly.

Adham continued: "when we lived in Syria, I worked and did not need to ask for help. I thank Allah." Hu listened carefully and said: "I understand."

After four years of the civil war, more than 1.8 million Syrians have fled to Turkey. One of them, Cuma, said: "Now the biggest problem is that they do not have the money to meet daily needs, to pay the rent or to see the doctor."

In Syria, Cuma was a university lecturer. When he saw the plight of his countrymen, he could remain inactive and began to look for resources for them. "But our strength is too little. After we found Tzu Chi, I believe that Allah has answered our prayers for help. You have enabled us to help these people who need it."

It was in 2014 that Cuma and his fellow Syrian volunteers began to co-operate with Tzu Chi. The foundation bought the materials and also asked the Taiwan students in Turkey to help. One Syrian volunteer Yassim said: "we thank all the volunteers, from Syria, Turkey and Taiwan, for their help. Everyone is helping the Syrians together. We thank everyone for all they have done."

No matter what their religion or nationality, Tzu Chi Foundation and volunteers are working together to help Syrian people in Turkey.

Report by Yang Jing-Hui, Deng Zhi-ming and Yu Zi-cheng in Turkey 20/7/2015