

**Dom Migrants From Syria**

# **Living at the Bottom**

**On the Road amid Poverty and Discrimination**



**PRESENT SITUATION ANALYSIS REPORT**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AFAD</b>	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (Agency)
<b>CCEP</b>	Catch-Up Class Education Programme
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CRSR</b>	Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
<b>ECHR</b>	European Court of Human Rights
<b>EDROM</b>	Edirne Roma Association
<b>ERRC</b>	European Roma Rights Centre
<b>ERTF</b>	Council of Europe Roma and Travellers' Fund
<b>HCA</b>	Helsinki Citizens' Association
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>ICERD</b>	International Convention on Elimination of All Kinds of Racial Discrimination
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>MoNE</b>	Ministry of National Education
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>ROMFO</b>	Roma Rights Forum of Turkey
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund

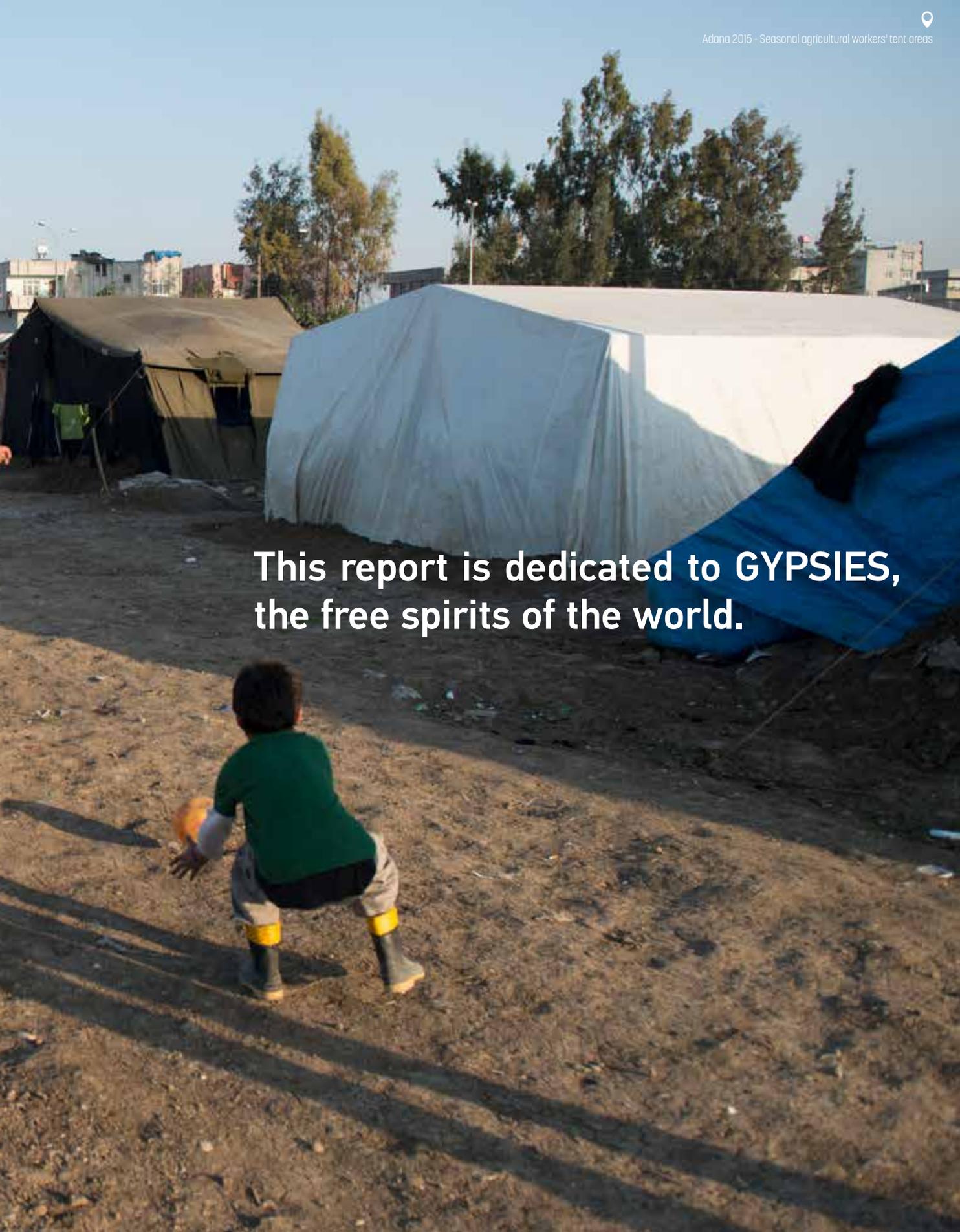
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To prepare this report, hundreds of members of Dom communities who are trying to survive in the provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin were interviewed to prepare this report. We became guests in their very poor tents, sat around their tables and shared their bread, tea, coffee and cold water. They did not have enough cups to offer tea, so we took turns drinking from the same cup. We can still taste their mirra (coffee), the most delicious of the region. There are too many of these people, connected to life, to nature and to humanity with such deep respect, for us to name here, but we can never thank them enough. And the children! Small people with big hearts who always welcome us with a smile and insist hosting us in their tents in their tents and their houses.

We would also like to thank all those working in national and international civil society organisations who have tried to meet every need of the Syrian migrants for the last five years, the representatives of public institutions and agencies, the Roma and Dom associations and the volunteers of the Development Workshop.



**This report is dedicated to GYPSIES,  
the free spirits of the world.**



# Foreword



As of 2016, the civil war in Syria has entered its fifth year, and the number of Syrian migrants in Turkey, which has constantly risen since 2011, has approached 3 million according to official statements by the UN High Commission for Refugees and the government of the Republic of Turkey.<sup>1</sup> While around 260,000 refugees are living in the 26 temporary accommodation centres in 10 different provinces, the remaining 2,484,000 are located throughout the 81 provinces of Turkey. The provinces with the largest populations of Syrian nationals are Şanlıurfa, İstanbul, Hatay, Gaziantep and Adana, in that order.<sup>2</sup> Those arriving from Syria generally work in agriculture in the eastern regions of Turkey; besides agriculture they are employed in manufacturing, construction and services sectors. The Development Workshop's June 2016 publication titled *The Report and Map on the Present Situation of Foreign Migrant Workers in Migrant Seasonal Agriculture in Turkey* has demonstrated the rising presence of Syrians in agricultural production and the migrant seasonal agricultural workforce.<sup>3</sup> The entry of Syrians into the seasonal agricultural labour force has caused competition between the poor, greater discrimination, and human rights violations. Syrian Doms are another fragile group of migrants in Turkey. In addition to the general hardship experienced by all Syrian nationals, they are also discriminated against by the authorities, the local population and other Syrian migrants due to their ethnic origins and way of life, and have almost no access to humanitarian aid.

In order to improve the living and working conditions of a fragile population, sustainable support is needed together with information and advocacy efforts for awareness raising. In order to achieve this, the following are necessary: evidence based advocacy through the preparation of a present situation analysis that identifies and maps the profile and basic needs of the Syrian Dom population; fulfilment of basic needs through a development-oriented humanitarian aid approach; and programmes that aim to meet the special needs and ensuring the social integration of these groups.

The Development Workshop implemented the *“Project on Improving the Protection and Health Conditions of Syrians and Migrants in the South of Turkey”* between May and November 2016 with the financial support of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and in cooperation with non-governmental organisation GOAL. The project was intended to lower the protection risks of fragile migrant groups through an holistic approach including information dissemination, advocacy and humanitarian aid.

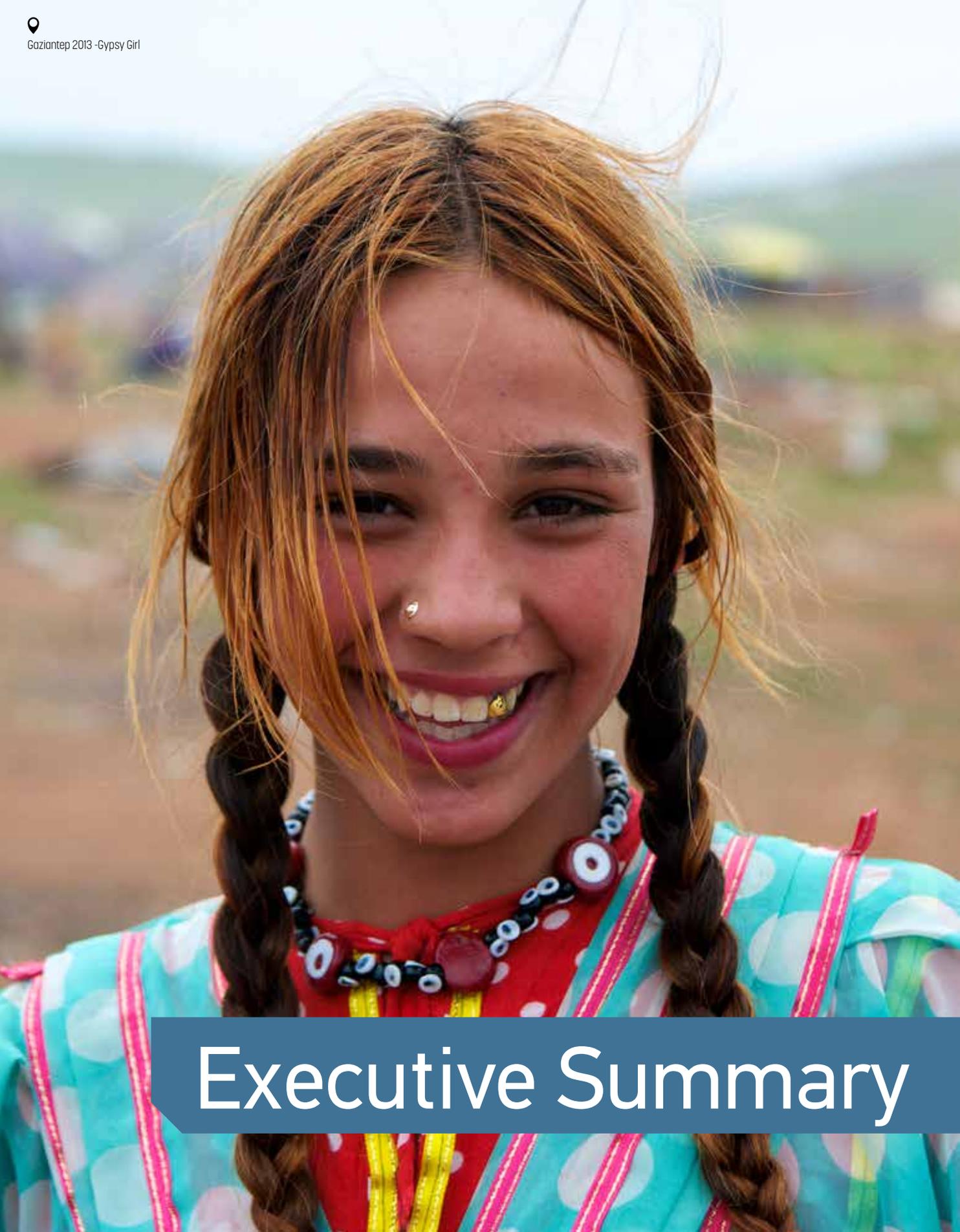
Doms arriving in Turkey from Syria generally do not or cannot live in temporary accommodation centres. Those who introduce themselves as Kurdish, Turkmen or Arab, according to the languages they speak, are generally driven away by other groups of the camps. Most of them lack employment and income to rent accommodation, so in urban areas they usually inhabit empty plots or abandoned buildings, while in rural areas they live in tents. They have difficulty in accessing basic services such as healthcare and education, and face inadequate shelter and nutrition conditions. They generally work in seasonal agricultural production, collecting recyclable waste and aid in the street. While most Doms are living in the provinces of Gaziantep, Kilis and Şanlıurfa, there are also Dom communities in Mersin and Adana. This present situation and mapping study on the Dom migrant groups from Syria, who experience the worst forms of discrimination and rights violations every day, will be used as the primary means of evidence-based advocacy and will make the low voice of “those at the bottom” heard.

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<sup>1</sup> [data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224)

<sup>2</sup> [english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2016/04/ankara-calculates-distribution-syrian-refugees-throughout-turkish-provinces/](http://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2016/04/ankara-calculates-distribution-syrian-refugees-throughout-turkish-provinces/)

<sup>3</sup> *The Report and Map on the Present Situation of Foreign Migrant Workers in Agricultural Production in Turkey*, The Development Workshop, May 2016



# Executive Summary

This report has been prepared as part of *“The Project on Improving the Protection and Health Conditions of Syrians and Migrants in the South of Turkey”* to analyse the present situation of Syrian Dom Migrants in Turkey. The study aims to describe the living conditions of Dom communities who have fled the civil war in Syria and taken refuge in Turkey, as well as the forms of discrimination and other problems they face.

This present situation analysis encompasses Doms and related groups who have taken refuge in Turkey since the beginning of the civil war in Syria in 2011. Dom groups are given various appellations by the peoples of the Middle East, such as Nawar, Zott, Ghajar, Bareke, Gaodari, Krismal, Qarabana, Karachi, Abdal, Ashiret, Qurbet, Mitrip, Gewende, Gypsy (Çingene), Dom, Tanjirliyah, Haddadin, Hacıye, Arnavut, Halebi, Haramshe and Kaoli; all of these groups are referred to collectively as the Dom in this report due to their coexistence under similar circumstances and their interrelated ties. The Abdal community, who are called the ‘Per-Dom’ by the Dom, to denote lower status, have also been studied as part of the Dom community despite their linguistic, religious and historical differences, since they are called Dom by the local community (and known collectively as ‘Nawar’ in Syria). The term ‘Gypsy’ denotes all Dom, Roma and Lom communities.

The field study phase of the research was carried out in July and August 2016 in the provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin, where the Dom populations are relatively high. More than 400 face to face interviews were conducted with Dom men and women as well as 27 group interviews. The interviews took place in neighbourhoods, migration areas and tents inhabited by the Dom and in the agriculture fields where they work. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish and were carried out by a research team consisting of Kemal Vural Tarlan, an expert in Dom studies, and Hacer Faggo, an expert in Roma studies. The interviews were based on semi-structured interview questions, and included observation and in-depth interview techniques, especially with groups. As the field study coincided with the first days of the coup attempt of July 15<sup>th</sup> in Turkey and the consequent declaration of a state of emergency, interviews with public institutions could not be accomplished as planned. Therefore, the public and administrative aspects of the field study have been based on the five years of field experience of the researchers, their previous meetings with representatives of public institutions concerning the matter, their former interview notes and an analysis of the relevant legislation and reports. The profile and basic needs of the Dom populations in the provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin were identified and the locations inhabited by communities were mapped to form the present situation analysis. The subject of this report is not the historical background, ethnic roots, language or socio-economic analysis of Dom communities – topics which are better left to the fields of sociology, anthropology and history – but the present issues faced by Dom migrants from Syria in Turkey: difficulties in accessing basic rights, the discrimination they encounter from the local population and public authorities, and the effects of the present “migration legislation” on the lives of their communities.

Syrians under “temporary protection” in Turkey are often referred by different terms including “guest”, “asylum seeker”, “refugee” and “migrant”. This report seeks to avoid the confusion created by the use of different terms by utilizing “migrant” based on the IOM’s definition. Migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence. This includes refugees, displaced people, uprooted people and economic migrants (IOM 2009: 22).

## **Background in Brief**

Years of conflict, war and violence in the Middle East have displaced the Dom community, rather like the Roma community in Europe. The recent civil wars and conflict in the region have subjected the Dom community to violence and forced migration, even though they are not party to the conflicts. The war in Syria, in particular, has caused Dom communities to migrate to neighbouring countries. However, the Doms who have taken refuge in countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey continue to face discrimination and exclusion. The tumultuous political and social atmosphere in the Middle East and the ongoing conflicts have made the lives of these people more difficult with each passing day. Dispossessed of their centuries-old migration areas, neighbourhoods and homes, the Dom have once more been forced into a migratory way of life.

## **Syrian Migrants: Current Conditions and Analysis**

Beginning in 2011, the five years of civil war in Syria has caused almost half of the pre-war population of 22 million to become migrants. While almost six million Syrians have migrated within the country, the number of those taking refuge in neighbouring countries is approaching five million. More than one million Syrians are refugees in European countries. Turkey has become the country with the most migrants in the world. According to data from the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) and Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), there are nearly three million Syrian migrants in Turkey. As of September 19<sup>th</sup> 2016, there were 254,938 Syrian and Iraqi citizens in 26 temporary accommodation camps established in 10 provinces in Turkey. Therefore, approximately 10 per cent of the Syrian nationals in Turkey live in camps, while the remaining 90 per cent are scattered throughout Turkey.

Although support and services of various kinds are being provided to Syrian migrants in Turkey by public institutions, as well as national and international NGOs, the fact that the migrants have arrived in a mass wave in very large numbers leads to quantitative and qualitative gaps in these services, as well as difficulties and problems in implementing them.

Turkey is a party, with reservations, to the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the New York Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Accord-



Gaziantep 2015  
Syrian Dom Women "access to clean water"

ing to this “geographical reservation” Turkey will only give refugee status to persons arriving from Europe and will not accord the status of refugee to persons arriving from outside of Europe. Turkey will grant persons arriving from outside Europe asylum until they are settled in third countries. However, both from the point of view of universal legal principles governing refugee rights, and in view of the *de facto* situation, it is no longer meaningful to persist with the geographical reservation.

On the assumption that the civil war in Syria would not be long lived, persons arriving from Syria were initially accepted on humanitarian grounds without being given legal status. Their situation therefore became uncertain as the civil war dragged on. Arriving in Turkey from April 2011 onwards, Syrians were initially described as ‘guests’. A temporary protection regime was introduced with the Law on Foreigners and International Protection of April 4<sup>th</sup> 2013, and the Syrians were counted as as persons under temporary protection under the Regulation on Temporary Protection issued as per article 91 of the said law on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014. The DGMM has made various further arrangements concerning the Syrians in this context.



## Migration of Doms from Syria

At the beginning of the civil war, Syrian opposition groups set off the first clashes in urban suburbs where the control of the regime was relatively weak. This naturally affected the Dom communities and the Syrian poor who lived in these low income areas. Finding themselves caught in the crossfire, these communities began to move, initially to relatively safe areas with less fighting. During the field study it was often stated that there was an initial thrust towards Latakia, Damascus and the safer areas under Kurdish control. Dom communities are still present in Kurdish-controlled Rojova, as they speak Kurdish. Crossings into Turkey increase during the winter months.

During interviews held as part of the study, it was often stated that those communities which speak Arabic had generally migrated to Lebanon and Jordan. It was reported that the camps set up for the refugee communities were inadequate from the point of view of needs such as water, power and sanitation, that the heat and the dust were oppressive in the summer, and that children were often ill due to the lack of sufficient hygiene.

When asked about the reasons for coming to Turkey, the Doms cited centuries of interrelatedness as the primary reason. All borders in the Middle East, especially the border between Turkey and Syria, have always been porous for these groups. They have learned Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and Persian from the communities they have lived with together. Speaking their own language along with these, and enjoying the advantages of multi-lingualism, these communities have their own "migration zones" throughout the greater region. One is at first surprised to see how Dom communities from Syria have managed to come to Turkey and set up their tents in the same migration zones as Doms from Turkey, even though they have never seen the place before. However, when asked about how they were able to find these places, they give responses such as: "Our grandfathers told us about this place. There should be a spring down there, but there's a road there now". This shows the power of the communal memory. A second reason they give for coming to Turkey is that they view it as a developed country where life will be easier for them. Their choice of Turkey seems to have been influenced by the idea that they would be able to find jobs and access social assistance more easily. Another factor observed to have played a role is Turkey's open door policy and clear support for the Syrian opposition.

There are many accounts of loss of life and property incurred by Gypsy communities during the war. The homes of settled communities in particular are reported to have been damaged and bombed, and that their possessions to have been taken away. Many families who had lost members were encountered during interviews in the field. These communities, which lived together in extended families before the war, have since been separated, with some members going to Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq or even Egypt, and others remaining in Syria.

# The Main Problems of Dom Migrants

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## ► **Damage to Communal Life**

The Dom society in the Middle East consists of sub-tribes and these groups of between 5 and 15 families lead a communal life. Although they may appear to live in independent tents or houses, the traditions of solidarity, co-existence and sharing are still prevalent. This communal lifestyle protects an introverted community from external threats. In times of turmoil, such as during war or conflict, families and individuals who lack individual survival skills find themselves in a strange world. The division of groups opens wounds in the fabric of society and individuals who are forced to become a part of a system that is foreign to them in order to meet even basic needs such as employment, shelter and food have to face the associated risks and threats alone. Children who sell goods in the street, women who collect aid and men who say “they would do any job” easily become involved in, or are obliged to take part in, criminal activity. Dom communities face all sorts of threats due to the splintering of groups and division of families.

## ► **Camps: Places of Discrimination**

The Dom constantly emphasise that they cannot live in and do not want to live in temporary accommodation centres. Camps are uninhabitable for these communities due to ethnic, religious and political divisions, the restrictions they impose on the independence of communities which have historically been semi-nomadic, the tough controls at entry and exit, the isolation and the feeling of claustrophobia for a community that has always lived close to nature. Therefore the Dom tend to live in tent settlements they have set up themselves, in makeshift tents, or abandoned and ruined buildings. As they lack the means to rent accommodation, barely surviving through daily labour, the Dom often change location. As they face greater pressures in small towns, they prefer to migrate to large cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, and to become inconspicuous in the crowd.

## ► **Registration and Non-Registration**

Dom communities have crossed the border into Turkey in two ways. The first is via border crossings. While initially records were not kept at the crossings, later records began to be kept. A Foreigner Identification Document, known as the “blue card”, was issued to the refugees enabling them to freely make use of hospital services until such time as they were given temporary migrant status. The scope of this document was later widened for the registration of Syrian migrants. The document is now known as the Temporary Protection Identification Document. All dealings with public organisations now require this document. In this way, approximately three million migrants who crossed the border without records have been registered.

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The second way in which Syrians have entered Turkey is via mined territory. Dom communities, Kurds without identification and those fleeing during attacks have generally had to enter Turkey via minefields. The reason why they have preferred this over entry through border crossings is that Dom communities want to have as little contact as possible with the state. They have many bitter experiences in their collective memory. Those who have crossed the border over mined land generally do not register unless they want to seek social assistance and healthcare services, and do not apply for documentation.

During the field study, it was observed that most Dom groups had Temporary Protection Identification Documents. The greatest handicap for these groups is the fact that the documents are only valid for use in the province in which they were issued. The Dom lead a migratory lifestyle and move around a lot. Under the circumstances, should they move to another province, they cannot benefit from services other than first-tier healthcare. This presents a special risk for women and babies. During vaccination periods, children need to remain in the province where they were registered. For women, pregnancies cannot be monitored and check-ups performed.

The Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM), which is responsible for the registration of Syrian migrants in Turkey, is unable to reach out to Dom communities, or cannot undertake their registration for various reasons: because they are a migratory people, for example, the *muhtar* (village foremen) may not give them the necessary documents, or they may regularly move from one province to another. Moreover, the institutions and persons responsible for registration tend to be reluctant to register them because of their prejudices. Members of the community have stated that they tend to avoid the authorities because of unpermitted crossings over the border, lack of information or misinformation about the documentation process and the prejudiced approach of officials towards them.

In addition, some of the migrants, having taken to the nomadic lifestyle again in order to find work, are registered but do not want to claim their Temporary Protection Identification Document because it is only valid for use in the province in which it is issued.

#### ► Lack of Decent Shelter

Dom families generally prefer to inhabit those neighbourhoods where Dom communities in Turkey are already settled, in empty houses, stores or cabins, in ruined and preferably abandoned buildings. If the space is owned, the owners generally ask for a monthly rent of TRY250–400. Yet these homes do not generally have separate toilets or kitchens and seldom have more than one room. As they cannot pay the bills, their power and water is cut off. These needs are sometimes met by willing neighbours. Water is sometimes procured from nearby parks or mosques.

Very few of the families taking part in the field study said that they had been able to meet their heating needs last winter through the coal and fuel aid provided by municipalities. They generally make use of fuel derived from refuse or given to them by their neighbours. In the spaces which are used as the kitchen in these dwellings, there are generally one pot and a few spoons and plates; h gas stoves and other necessary kitchen appliances are almost non-existent. Those that do have these items were either given them by their neighbours or found discarded ones.

Gypsy families are generally very large. Though the siblings may be married, they are all part of the same household. Married couples stay with elderly parents and single siblings.

Many migrants outside the camps live in unhealthy tents. The tents which the Dom migrants inhabit are in disrepair, are very inadequate in terms of hygiene and health, and have no toilets or baths. It has been observed that between five and ten people inhabit one tent. The hygiene conditions and unmet healthcare needs of those living in tents present a great risk of contagious disease. In the winter, the migrants' needs for warm clothes, blankets and heaters go unmet. The faces of the young children, who constantly live in the open, are covered in scars.

#### ► **Poor Health and Hygiene Conditions**

During the interviews, mention was often made of problems with disabilities and respiration, cases of leishmaniasis were observed and the risk of contagious disease was seen to be high. The communities were also observed not to be able to take advantage of many healthcare services due to lack of information. In some cases, healthcare services do not reach these communities at all. In many tent settlements there were Dom who were unregistered, who did not have a Temporary Protection Identification Document and who therefore could not access healthcare services. There was also a high proportion of persons who did not have access to healthcare because they were living in a province other than the one in which their Temporary Protection Identification Document was issued, for work or other reasons. One of the most important problems of the Dom is access to food. While they cannot find enough food for three meals a day, they also share the food they can get with others. Emotional disorders have been observed in children who are malnourished and who live in unhealthy conditions. Delayed development, stunting, tooth and eye disorders and some digestive tract disorders were also reported in children, again related to malnutrition.

Sores were observed on the bodies of babies and children due to inadequate attention. Some newborns were not vaccinated and the level of awareness of mothers was often low. Persons without Temporary Protection Identification Documents, or living in provinces other than those in which they are registered, are asked to pay for the full cost of treatment. Due to their financial circumstances, the Dom are also unable to take their medicines regularly. It was reported that the elderly and the disabled do not have access to preventive healthcare services. The illnesses of

many migrants who are mentally disabled or under mental health risks were said to have advanced due to a total lack of healthcare services.

The Dom have no hygiene materials other than warm water, soap and plastic hand basins for washing and bathing. As baths become impossible for days and even weeks during hard winter conditions, the children's hair is shaved very short. This is also a precaution against lice. Another reason why the hair of girls is cut very short is to prevent young girls who have to work from being sexually molested by men.

### ► **Obstacles to the Education of Children**

The education of Syrian migrant children in Turkey is seen as the most fundamental of their problems. This is compounded by issues in urgent need of attention such as the citizenship of the approximately 250,000 children who have been born in Turkey and remain "stateless". Children who cannot receive an education are sent to work in the street, workshops or fields so that they will learn a profession or contribute to the survival of their families. This has led to the issue of Syrian migrant child labour in Turkey.

In Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Adana and Mersin, Syrian child workers are employed in knitting workshops, textiles, dried fruit processing plants, shoemaker's workshops, garages and agricultural work, and in selling paper tissues and water in the streets. Evidence of this has been taken from reports in the national and international press.

In almost all of the interviews carried out as part of the field study, it was seen that none of the Dom children had access to education. The main reasons are the fact that the children are members of a community that regularly changes location, and the prejudices against their communities. Families think that their children will be discriminated against at school by both local children and by the children of other Syrian groups on account of their Dom identity.

### ► **Relations with the Local Community and Exclusion**

The Dom population is concentrated in the provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Osmaniye, Adana, Mersin, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, Mardin, Batman, Diyarbakir, Izmir, Kayseri and Konya. The presence of Doms has been identified in other provinces such as Istanbul, Ankara, Antalya, Denizli, Bursa, Kocaeli, Van, Şırnak, Elazığ, Malatya, Nevşehir, Aksaray, Sivas and Kırkkale.

These communities live as migrants in tents, in tents or rented accommodation in poor neighbourhoods and Roma or Dom neighbourhoods in cities, in unregistered tent sites they have themselves established, and in abandoned and semi-demolished houses in urban transformation zones in cities. Dikmen Vadisi in Ankara, Fikirtepe and Tarlabası in Istanbul and Kadife Kale in Izmir are just some examples of these urban transformation zones.

Where the Dom inhabit areas populated by people of the same identity, problems are at a minimum. Occasional marriages between groups and joint business ventures

have been observed, and many households are seen to undertake seasonal work together. Problems are more frequent with the local population who are not Gypsies and the security forces. The local population living close to groups living in tents are especially opposed to the presence of these people. Upon their complaints, the municipal police, the police or the gendarmerie request that the Doms move their tents elsewhere. If they do not comply, they destroy their tents and warn them to leave the area. In border villages and towns community members and security personnel frequently spoke of Doms being taken to the border and extradited.

► **Circular on Beggars: “We Don’t Want Them Either!”**

Dom migrants are often described in the Turkish press as “Syrian beggars” or “Syrian Gypsies”. This has made the already-difficult living conditions of this group even tougher. Media reports which suggest that the situation of Dom migrants is a consequence of their own preferences heighten the social exclusion and discrimination which they face.

The recommendation of the DGMM dated July 25<sup>th</sup> 2014 and the Circular No. 46 of the General Directorate of Security, which is known to the public as the “Circular on Syrian Beggars” state that “Those among Syrian foreigners who have become involved in crime or have otherwise disturbed public order or pose a risk to public safety, and those who continue to beg, live on the street etc. despite warnings ... should be escorted to accommodation centres by security personnel.” Governors of many provinces have instructed security forces to implement the circular strictly. All Syrian migrants living in the street and in tents have been given two options: to settle in camps or to rent accommodation. Otherwise they were told to return to Syria otherwise. In some provinces and districts, children collecting aid in the street have been sent to camps without their families being notified. Those who did not want to go to camps were displaced and some groups have had to return to their war-torn country. Many examples of the Dom being picked up off the streets and being sent to camps, and of those facing this injustice being unable to make their voices heard, have been encountered in press reports and in field study interviews. During the field study, many cases were cited in which security forces had taken members of Dom households, especially women and children, to camps against their will, and these people had had to stay in camps for months.

► **Dom Women: Discrimination First by Identity, Then by Sex**

After migration, women have come to shoulder the burden of household survival in place of men who cannot find work. Especially those women who have lost their spouses in the war have begun to work to ensure the survival of their children and households. In sectors with heavy working conditions, women have replaced men as workers. Agricultural labour, seasonal agricultural work, day work and domestic work have become fields of employment for migrant women. In face-to-face interviews held during the field study it was found that the wages of woman workers is around 30-40 per cent lower than that of men. Because the wages paid

to women and children are lower than those paid to men, women have been observed to be more widely employed than men, in agriculture in particular.

The prejudiced approach of the local population towards women is reflected in the daily lives of migrant women. Migrant women face exploitation both in the street and while doing daily shopping. They state that some local women see them as rivals, instead of acting in solidarity. The negative social perception of Syrian women is compounded for Dom women due to their ethnic origins and identity. Press reports of “Syrian Gypsies” and “Syrian beggars” are often accompanied by images of women. Women who have to collect aid in the street are open to all forms of exploitation, sexual violence and abuse. Cases of girls collecting aid in the street being sexually assaulted have been identified by women’s organisations and taken to court.

### ► **Employment and Unemployment**

Many traditional Dom occupations such as folk dentistry, performing music, peddling, iron and tin smithing, sieve and basket making, rifle repairing, saddle and harness making, and hunting wild birds are not viable forms of income today. This means a narrower field of employment for the Dom. Many communities have shifted to the more modern extensions of these occupations or to different occupations altogether. Most Doms interviewed for the study declared their occupations as waste/refuse collectors, seasonal agricultural labourers, porters, field and garden maintenance workers and construction workers. In groups whose traditional occupations are performing music and folk dentistry, unemployment runs very high. These communities rely on collecting aid for survival. When they are found out to be Gypsies, they are generally not given jobs and if they have already been employed they are laid off. Those working as seasonal agricultural labourers are given jobs out of necessity due to the shortage of work or a late harvest (i.e. a shorter period for gathering the crop).

The Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners Under Temporary Protection Status, which regulates the entry of foreign migrants under temporary protection into the labour force, was published and became effective in January 2016. During the field study, no Doms were encountered who were employed under the provisions of the circular or who were even aware of the circular and related legislation.

### ► **Lack of Access to Public Services**

Almost all the Dom migrants interviewed stated that they had had difficulty in accessing public services such as education, healthcare and social aid. They were observed to have little knowledge of the basic rights granted to migrants and they stated that they had not received any support from public institutions in this regard. They have difficulty in accessing public services because they do not speak Turkish. The Dom have a very low level of information regarding regulations and practices for migrants and migration. Lack of information on residence, registration, foreigner identification documents and work permits for foreigners is common. Information centres for migrants do not have outreach to these communities.

# What Does Civil Society Say?

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Many representatives of organisations interviewed during the field study stated that they help Syrian migrants in general but know nothing about the Dom community. Those of the organisations interviewed which are working with the Dom are listed below, along with their activities:

- ▶ **Kırkayak Culture, Art and Nature Association (Kırkayak Kültür Sanat ve Doğa Derneği)** The association has two centres in Gaziantep. It runs culture and arts workshops in neighbourhoods with Dom populations to support the education and school attendance of children. The association also conducts rights-based work on the problems of Syrian migrants. Experts at the association have been conducting a mapping study on such needs. They have been active in informing NGOs and public institutions, and accelerating bureaucratic procedures and processes, so that the necessary permits for the tent sites established by the Dom can be secured. In the near future, they are planning to carry out a study on the living conditions and problems of Syrian Dom communities in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, together with possible solutions.
- ▶ **The Roma Rights Forum of Turkey (ROMFO - Türkiye Roman Hakları Forumu):** ROMFO consists of the Roma Rights Association (Roman Hakları Derneği), İzmir Modern Roma Association (İzmir Çağdaş Romanlar Derneği), Sakarya Roma Association (Sakarya Romanlar Derneği), İznik Folk Dances, Youth and Sports Association (İznik Halk Dansları Gençlik Spor Derneği) and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). In 2014, ROMFO held a meeting on “Roma Strategy Plans in Europe and Turkey”. It was at this meeting that the problems of the Dom were voiced for the first time, under the heading “Dom Refugees from Syria”. Since this meeting, ROMFO elements have acted as intermediaries between Dom migrants and public institutions in the regions where they are active. Work has been undertaken on the problems of Dom migrants who cannot reach migrants’ associations or who live in the street. Support has been given to those without identity cards or experiencing problems with registration. Small-scale campaigns have also been organised for children in need of clothing. Between 2014 and 2016, ROMFO members held meetings with the General Directorate for Family and Community Services of the Ministry for the Family and Social Policies and the Human Rights Commission. In addition to the problems of the Roma, the issues of lifting the circular on begging targeting the Dom and finding solutions for the problems of the Dom have been raised at these meetings. In the period ahead, ROMFO members will undertake work on the education of Dom children and the employment of women in their own regions, and will try to focus the attention of the public sector on this issue.
- ▶ **Association of Drum and Zurna Players (Davulcular ve Zurnaclar Derneği):** “Syrian Abdals, who are our relatives, arrived in the neighbourhoods where we live in Gaziantep. We want to help them, but we’re also very poor. There are musicians among those who have arrived, but because weddings in the street are so few nowadays, we can’t find work either. The newly arriving groups are therefore finding it difficult to get jobs. They try to make a living by collecting waste and refuse. The great majority of them rely on collecting aid. They can only rent houses if several families live together. They are not allowed to

live in tents. Those who cannot pay rent have started to lead migratory lives. The aid that comes for the Syrians is not distributed to our tribes. The children don't get any education. They are just trying to survive.”

- ▶ **Gaziantep Abdals' Association (Gaziantep Abdalları Derneği):** “After the war in Syria began, Abdals from Syria came to Gaziantep. Because they were not allowed to live in tents, we opened up our neighbourhoods to them. Because rents are so high, many families live together. Those who cannot pay rent live in makeshift shelters and tents they set up in our courtyards and on empty plots. Some have become nomadic again, they work in the summer if they can find work. They go out to villages to get jobs in the fields and come back in the autumn. In the winter they either collect scrap or waste like plastic. Some collect aid. Some play music. They won't take our children in the schools and community centres where the Syrian children go. They face discrimination. They are very poor. They have no food, clothes or fuel for the winter. They have no fridges to in their homes to preserve their food. No one helps them around here. They pick up people collecting aid in the street or looking for work and take them to the AFAD camp in Osmaniye. They say “Kill us but don't take us to the camps.” We have become intermediaries, guarantors to take them out of the camps. The camps are hell for them, our tribes cannot live there. If they were to let them live in the tents they set up for themselves, they would get by, even if they ate from hand to mouth.”

- ▶ **Tarlabaşı Community Centre (TTM -Tarlabaşı Toplum Merkezi):** The Tarlabaşı Community Centre (TTM) is a rights-based NGO that was established in 2006 to support the equal participation in urban life of the residents of the neighbourhood of Tarlabaşı, a zone with multi-dimensional disadvantages in Istanbul. The TTM's work emphasises equality, participation, multi-culturalism and art; the association defends gender equality and is against all forms of violence. The TTM first encountered Doms from Syria in 2015. While the workshops they hold are geared towards teaching Turkish, they also include activities such as arts and crafts and motor skill building such as holding a pencil or scissors, writing, and modelling with play dough. Approximately 50 children have attended the basic reading and writing skills and pre-school education classes that are given at a primary school in Tarlabaşı by one teacher and three volunteers. In January-February the TTM came to an agreement with the Social Policies Centre of Boğaziçi University to visit Dom families and to study the demographic structure of Tarlabaşı in 2016-2017.

*“The Doms are the group who are most excluded by all groups, including other Syrians, and who face the most violence due to the work they do and the way they dress. They are also the most likely to meet with arbitrary interventions by law enforcement agencies. Their children are especially in danger as they collect aid in the streets. They are one of the most fragile groups and the most distrustful of their environment. Establishing relations of trust takes a lot of time. They are very adept at handicrafts. Early marriages are observed. It is very difficult for children to attend school as they remain outside the system.”*

# Basic Needs of Dom Migrants from Syria and Policy Recommendations

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**Combating Discrimination:** The Doms interviewed frequently spoke of being victims of discrimination due to their ethnic origin and sect. Comprehensive training programmes for public workers, who migrants come into contact with the most, are the primary requirement for work on combating discrimination and raising awareness. NGOs, public institutions and international organisations need to be given training and information to reduce prejudice and misinformation. This should be carried out by rights-based NGOs, activists and especially Roma and Dom NGOs. *The Strategy Document for Roma Citizens 2016-2012* prepared with the participation of academics and experts in this field could be shared with all bodies and organisations working on migration.

Through an examination of reporting on Syrian and Dom migrants, this study has revealed that discriminative, alienating and sometimes hateful language is used in the media with reference to Dom communities. University faculties of communication and departments of journalism, national and local media organisations and press associations have an important role to play in improving the situation.

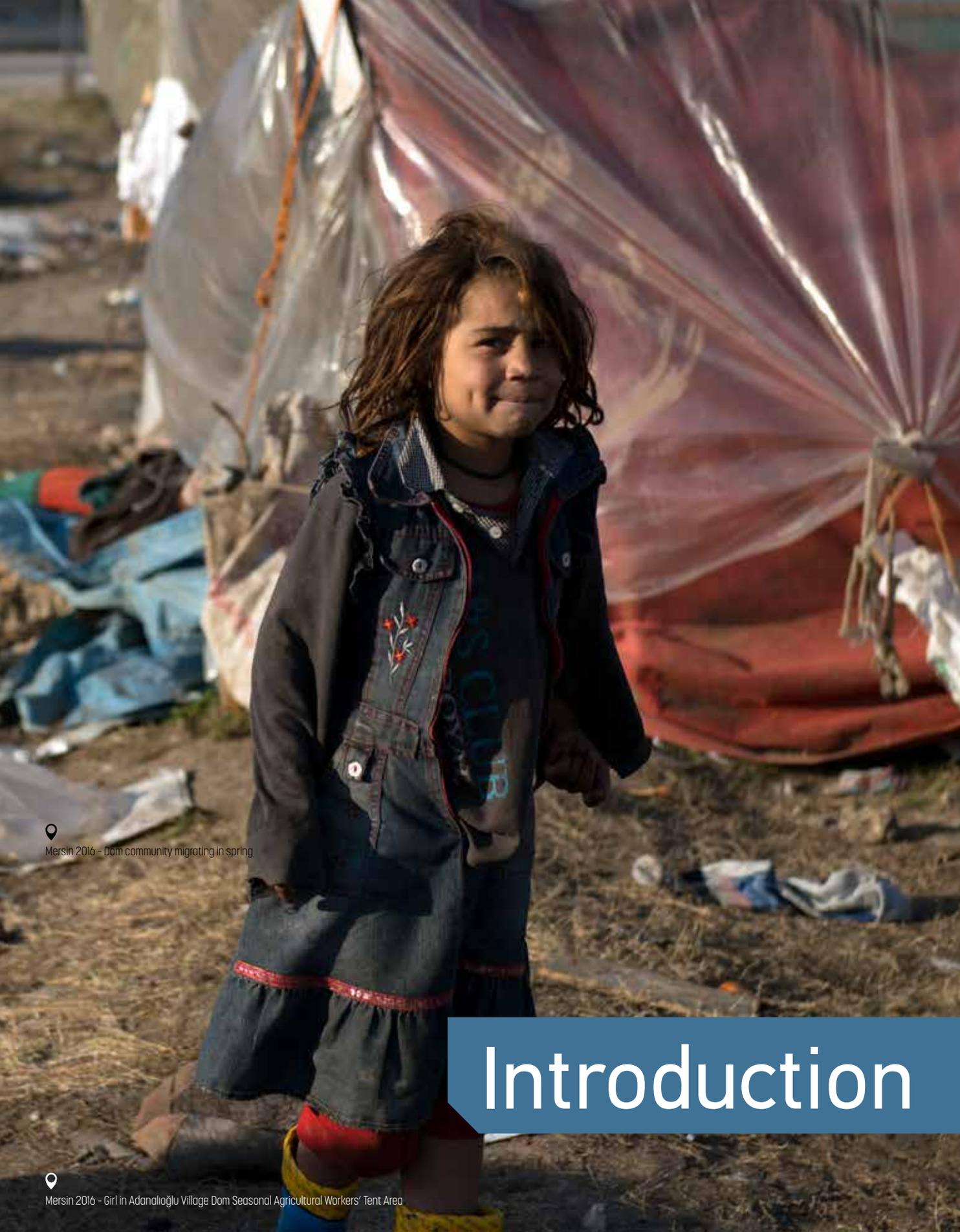
**Overcome the Absence of Data:** There are no official or unofficial sources of data on the Dom migrant population that has arrived from Syria and lives constantly on the move in Turkey. The socio-economic profiles of these groups, the state of their access to public services and basic rights, and their expectations and needs, require monitoring through concrete, realistic indicators that are updated according to need. Meanwhile, studies of the education, employment, healthcare and shelter situations of Dom migrants need to be carried out on the basis of concrete data and with a dynamic perspective, given that they are constantly on the move.

**Monitoring Mechanism:** It is essential to establish a monitoring mechanism to facilitate the access of Syrian Dom groups who are on the move and whose basic needs are not met for basic services such as education, shelter, employment, healthcare and social aid. Coordination and cooperation between public bodies and NGOs is required for such a monitoring mechanism to work correctly.

Since Circular No. 46 was published by the General Directorate for Security, the Dom community has been constantly on the move due to the fear of being sent to camps or deported. The circular has had the effect of splitting the Dom community into smaller groups so that they can disappear among the crowds in large cities and become invisible. This makes individuals with no experience of living alone susceptible to crime and especially affects women and children. Considering the ways of life and concerns of this group, initiatives should be undertaken for the annulment of the circular.

**Recommendations for Policy and Implementation:** A series of solution orientated recommendations have been prepared based on the present knowledge and experience of experts concerning Dom groups and their situation, data from the field study interviews and the media review that has been carried out. These recommendations have been grouped according to relevant public bodies and national and international NGOs. The recommendations are as follows:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • No Deportations or Sending to Camps            | • Clothing and Food Aid for Children                |
| • Fulfilment of Basic Needs                      | • Coordination                                      |
| • Access to Healthcare                           | • Combating Discrimination                          |
| • Registration                                   | • Nutritional Support                               |
| • Cooperation with civil society                 | • Healthcare Services for Pregnant Women and Babies |
| • Identification and Improvement of Living Areas | • Prevention of Discrimination                      |
| • Education of Children                          | • Directing Working Children Towards Education      |
| • Mediation System                               | • Healthcare Literacy                               |
| • Employment Policies                            | • Combating Contagious Diseases                     |
| • Vocational Training                            | • Information on Social Assistance                  |
| • Work for Community Benefit                     | • Rights for Persons with Disabilities              |
| • Communication with Security Forces             | • Monitoring Commissions                            |
| • Access to Public Services                      | • Capacity Building                                 |
| • Mobile Communications                          | • Equality of Opportunity and Access                |
| • Social Assistance and Services                 | • Monitoring Education                              |
| • Data Collection                                |   |



Mersin 2016 - Dam community migrating in spring

# Introduction



Mersin 2016 - Girl in Adanlıoğlu Village Dam Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Tent Area

Gypsies are an ancient community who lead a different lifestyle from settled peoples and live in almost every country in the world. Centuries ago they set out on the “great walk” that would never end, for various reasons and at different dates, before which they lived in what is today Pakistan and India in different castes, classes and locations. Their dates of departure, migration routes, class and caste differences have led to the distinct names the different group are known by today. Dom tribes have spread around the world and have been given the name “Gypsy”, probably by other societies. For a long time the word “gypsy” has been used by some people as a derogatory adjective. However, the name “Gypsy” deserves as much respect as the names of other societies (Fraser 2005; Aksu 2006; Marsh 2008; Kenrick 2006; Kenrick 1993).



Kilis 2016 - Dom community migrating in spring

Racism and discrimination against Gypsies have been going on for centuries. However, these artful communities, which have contributed much to the culture and lives of societies they coexisted with, and in a sense acted as bearers of world culture, have managed to survive throughout history.

During and after the Balkan Wars and the first and second World Wars, millions of Gypsies had to alter their migration routes and seek different geographies. Almost 500,000 Gypsies were killed in Nazi death camps and the survivors spread throughout Europe (Wieviorka, 2006).

This society, which has for centuries been asking, "This is your war, not ours. Gypsies have never fought anyone throughout their history. Why are we paying the price?" are now going through a very difficult period in the Middle East.

Throughout their history, Gypsies have been losers in "civil wars" that have occurred between the ethnic and religious groups in the societies they have coexisted with. The years of conflict, war and violence in the Middle East have displaced the Dom community, like the Roma community in Europe. The recent civil wars and conflict in the region have subjected the Dom community to violence and forced migration, although they are not party to the conflicts. In particular, the environment of conflict in Syria has led Dom communities in that country to migrate to neighbouring countries. However, Doms who have migrated to countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey face discrimination and exclusion in these countries too. They live far away from basic human needs such as education, healthcare and nutrition.

The 50,000 Doms (Tarlan, 2015) who have taken refuge in Turkey are trying to survive under very difficult conditions. The Dom represent a small proportion of the almost 3 million strong population of Syrian migrants in Turkey. However, , in addition to the general hardships experienced by Syrian migrants, the Doms in Turkey experience discrimination at the hands of the authorities, the local population and other Syrian migrants on account of their ethnic origin and way of life. Many Doms live in ruined and abandoned houses in poor urban neighbourhoods. Many others live a nomadic life in makeshift tent settlements which they have established around cities, towns and villages along Turkey's border with Syria, from the province of Mardin to Hatay. Those who manage to get into the temporary accommodation centres managed by AFAD try to present themselves as Kurds, Turkmen or Arabs, depending on which language they speak. Even so, they are excluded by the Arab, Kurdish and Turkmen denizens of the camps or are blamed for theft and immoral behaviour. They also face prejudiced attitudes from camp administrators. As a result, they end up unable to live in camps. Many stay away from camps altogether so as not to be enclosed by barbed wire and not to face discrimination and exclusion. Instead, Dom migrants live in their own tent settlements in makeshift tents, in ruins and abandoned buildings. Those who have nowhere to stay sleep in streets and parks; only a very few are living in rented accommodation, with several families coming together to rent a single dwelling. These rented houses are generally found in neighbourhoods inhabited by the local Dom community in Turkey. The Dom, who can barely survive on the work they can secure from day to day, do not have regular incomes with which to rent accommodation. For this reason, they are regularly on the move. Because they face greater pressures in small towns, they tend to prefer to migrate to large cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, where they can remain inconspicuous in the crowd. Some of the Doms lead a migratory lifestyle, supplying cheap labour as seasonal migratory agricultural workers in the Mediterranean and Central Anatolia regions. The communities experience many problems in terms of education, healthcare, shelter and nutrition, in addition to the constant effects of prejudice, exclusion and alienation.

This study intends to examine the problems of Dom communities which have migrated from Syria to Turkey because of the civil war, the difficulties they have in accessing basic rights, the discrimination they face from public authorities and the local population and the impact of the present migration legislation on the lives of these groups in order to analyse their present situation.

The study also intends to provide a perspective for all forms of work to be undertaken with the Dom migrants by public bodies, international organisations, NGOs and especially Roma and Dom NGOs.

## Research Methodology and Field Study

It is estimated that 50,000 Doms have migrated to Turkey as a result of the civil war in Syria that has been going on for five years as of 2016. In addition to the general hardships experienced by Syrian migrants, this community experiences discrimination from the authorities, the local population and other Syrian migrants on account of their ethnic origin and way of life. The dearth of studies on Dom migrants makes it all the more difficult to identify the problems faced by the community and the potential solutions to these problems. This *Present Situation Study on Doms from Syria*, conducted as part of the “Project on Improving the Protection and Healthcare Conditions of Syrians and Refugees in the South of Turkey”, has been carried out in order to describe the living conditions of Dom communities who have migrated from Syria to Turkey and to identify the forms of exclusion and discrimination and other problems which they are facing.

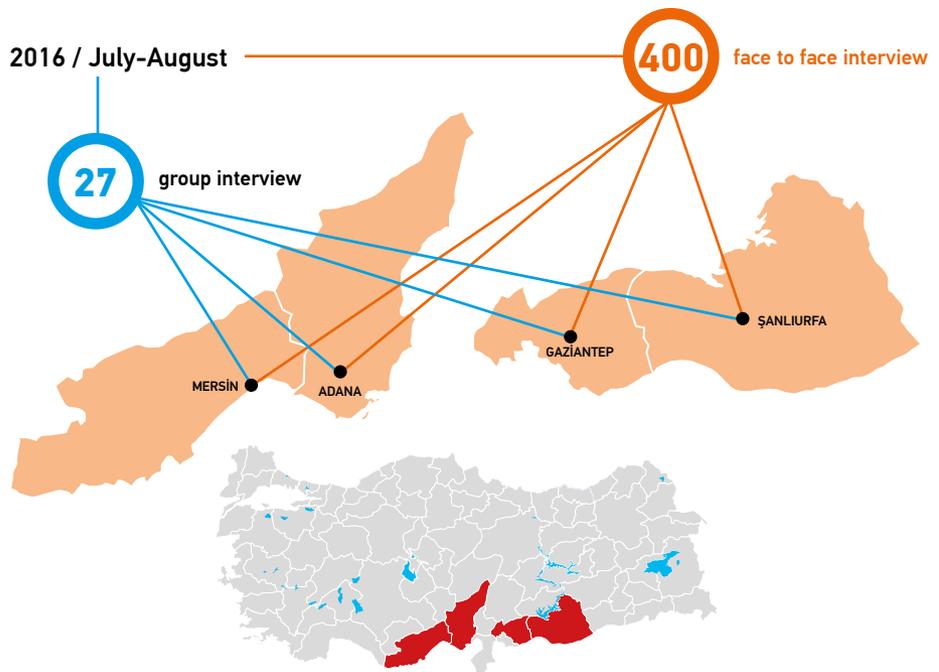
The field study which forms the basis of this report also contains a present situation analysis of the Dom community in the provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin including a mapping of its profile and basic needs and of the places of residence of the Dom community in the said provinces. The report also examines media coverage of Syrian Dom communities in the national international media, and features examples of reports and articles.

The field study phase of research was carried out in July and August 2016 in the provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin, where the Dom populations are relatively large, and consisted of more than 400 face to face interviews with Dom men and women and 27 group interviews. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish by a research team consisting of Kemal Vural Tarlan, an expert in Dom studies and Hacer Faggo, an expert in Roma studies. The interviews were based on semi-structured interview questions, and observation and in-depth interview techniques were also used, especially with the groups. Throughout the research, the experience and knowledge of the two researchers concerning the topic area was important for establishing relations of trust with the community. The interviews took place in neighbourhoods, migration areas and tents inhabited by the Dom and in the fields where they work. As the field study coincided with the first days of the coup at-



Urfa 2016 - Project consultant conducting interview

tempt of July 15<sup>th</sup> in Turkey and the consequent declaration of a state of emergency, interviews with public institutions could not go ahead as planned. Therefore, the public and administrative aspects of the field study have been based on the five years of field experience of the researchers, their previous meetings with representatives of public institutions regarding the matter, the discussions they have had in various meetings in which they have participated, their old interview notes and an examination of the relevant legislation and reports. **Annex 1** contains the interview questions.



## Definitions

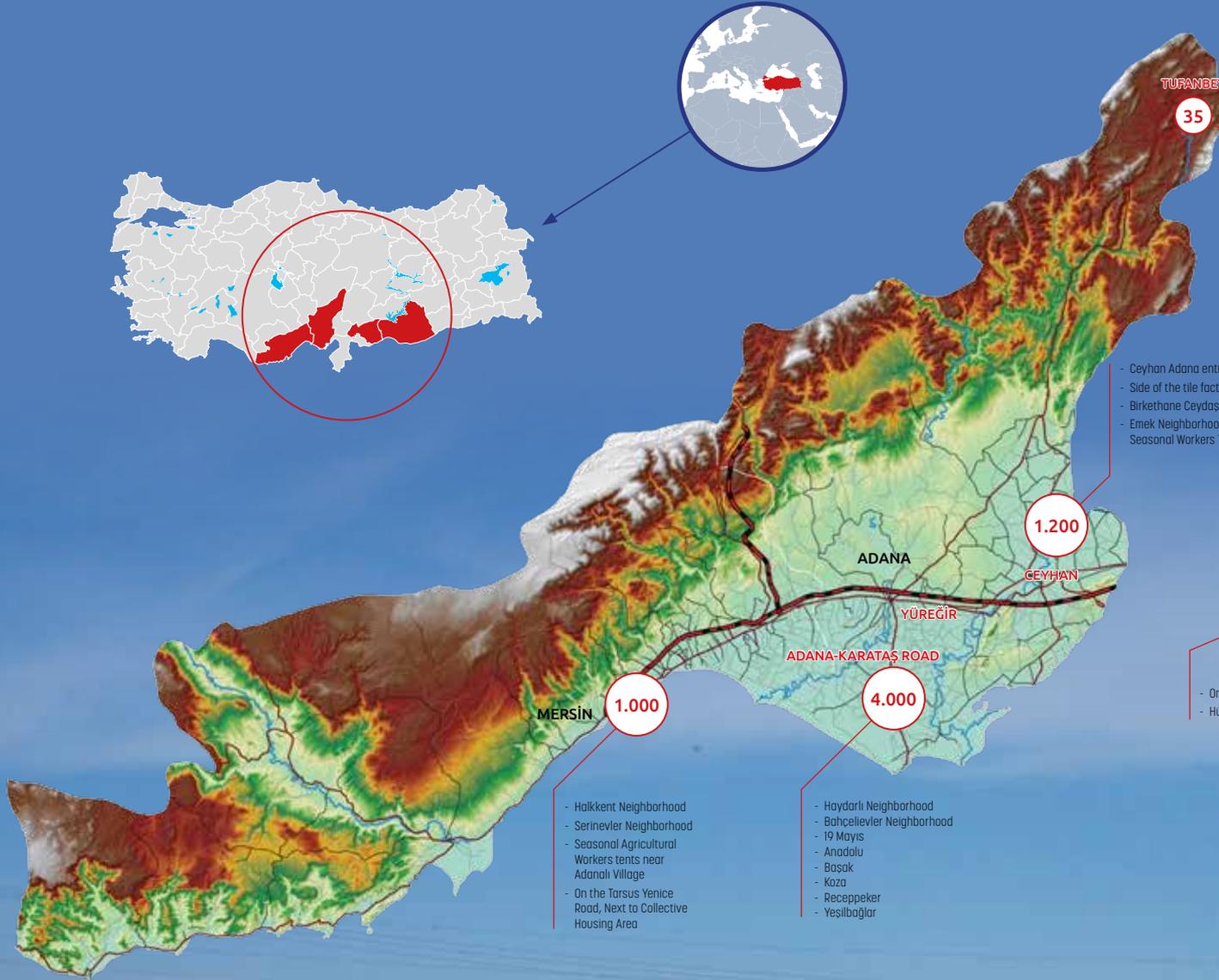
The report contains a present situation analysis of Dom and related groups who have migrated to Turkey as a result of the Syrian civil war that begun in 2011 and are known to the Middle Eastern people by different names such as Gypsy, Nawar, Dom, Abdal, Qurbat, Karachi, Tanjirliyah and Haddadin. These groups are referred to collectively as the Dom in this report due to their coexistence under similar circumstances and their interrelated ties. The Abdal community, who are called the 'Per-Dom' by the Dom, to denote lower status, have also been studied as part of the Dom community despite their linguistic, religious and historical differences, since they are referred to as Dom by the local community (and known collectively as 'Nawar' in Syria). For the purposes of this report all Gypsy communities arriving in Turkey from Syria have been termed "Dom society, communities and groups". The term Gypsy is used to refer to the entirety of Dom, Roma and Lom communities.

The term Dom society is used in general to refer to all the communities as a whole. References to Dom communities denote parts of this society, such as musicians, iron smiths, basket weavers, dentists or the Abdal. These communities can be further subdivided into groups. For example, the community of dentists is further divided into groups.

The subject of this report is not the historical background, ethnic roots, language and socio-economic analysis of Dom communities - which is better left to the fields of sociology, anthropology and history - but the issues currently faced by Dom migrants in Turkey, the difficulties they have in accessing basic rights, the discrimination they face from the local population and public authorities and the effects of the present "migration legislation" on the lives of these communities.

Syrians under "temporary protection" in Turkey are often referred to by different terms including "guest", "asylum seeker", "refugee" and "migrant". This report aims at avoiding the confusion created by the use of different terms by employing the concept of "**migrant**" to refer to the Dom who have had to migrate from Syria to Turkey, based on the IOM's definition of migrant as "a person who lives in another country for more than six months."

# Un-finished Route of Dom Migrants from Syria to Çukurova:



# Situation Analysis Map

- Tufaneyli entrance
- Next to Hastane Village

- Entrance
- Temporary
- Across factory
- Neighborhood
- Tents

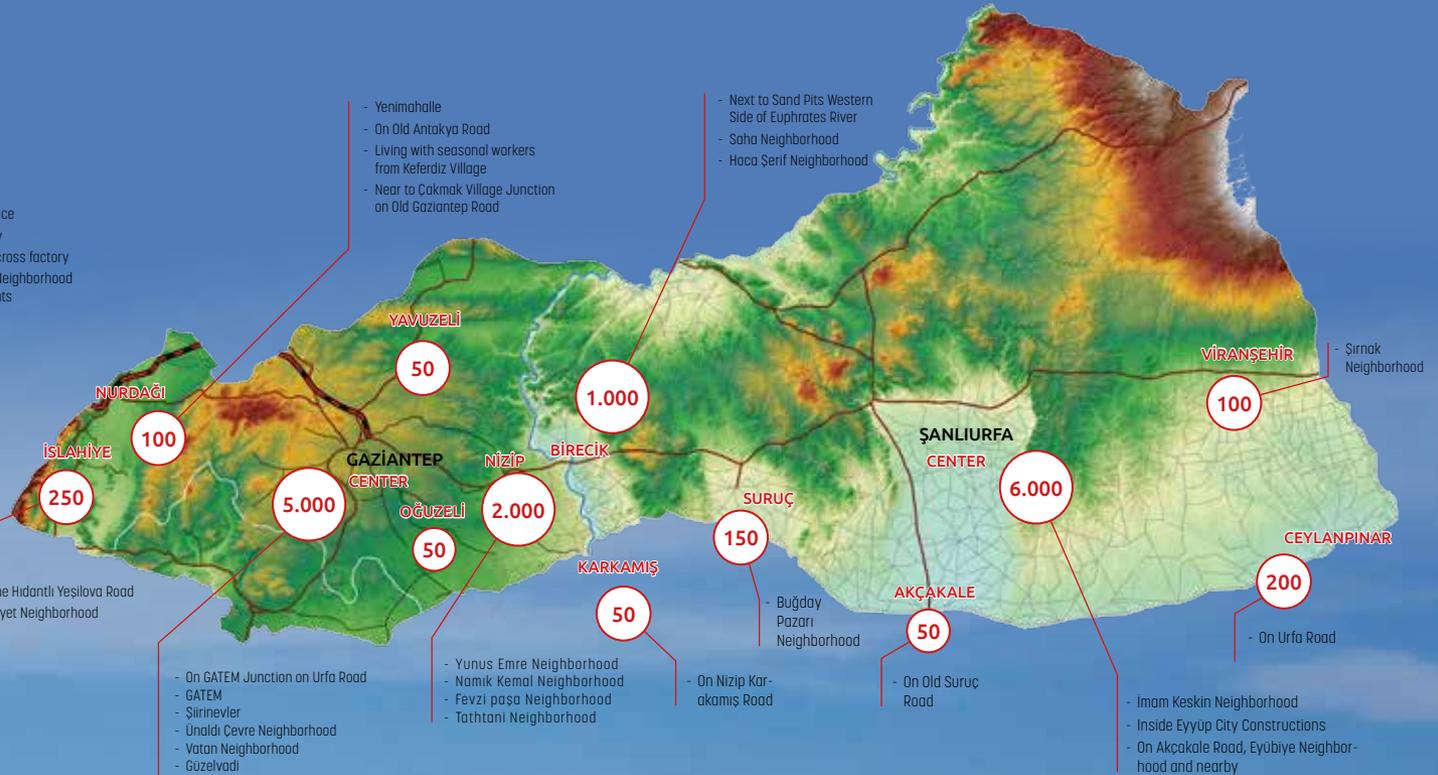
- On the Hidantlı Yeşilova Road
- Hurriyet Neighborhood

- On GATEM Junction on Urfa Road
- GATEM
- Şirinevler
- Ünalı Cevre Neighborhood
- Vatan Neighborhood
- Güzelvadi
- Hacibaba
- Yukarıbayır
- Çıksarut
- Güneş Neighborhood
- Ocaklar Neighborhood
- Barak Neighborhood
- Narlıtepe Neighborhood
- Yeşilvadi
- Karşıyak Hurriyet

- Yenimahalle
- On Old Antakya Road
- Living with seasonal workers from Keferdiz Village
- Near to Çakmak Village Junction on Old Gaziantep Road

- Next to Sand Pits Western Side of Euphrates River
- Saha Neighborhood
- Hoca Şerif Neighborhood

- Sırnak Neighborhood



- Imam Keskin Neighborhood
- Inside Eyyup City Constructions
- On Akçakale Road, Eyübiye Neighborhood and nearby

- On Nizip Karakamış Road

- Buğday Pazarı Neighborhood

- On Old Suruç Road

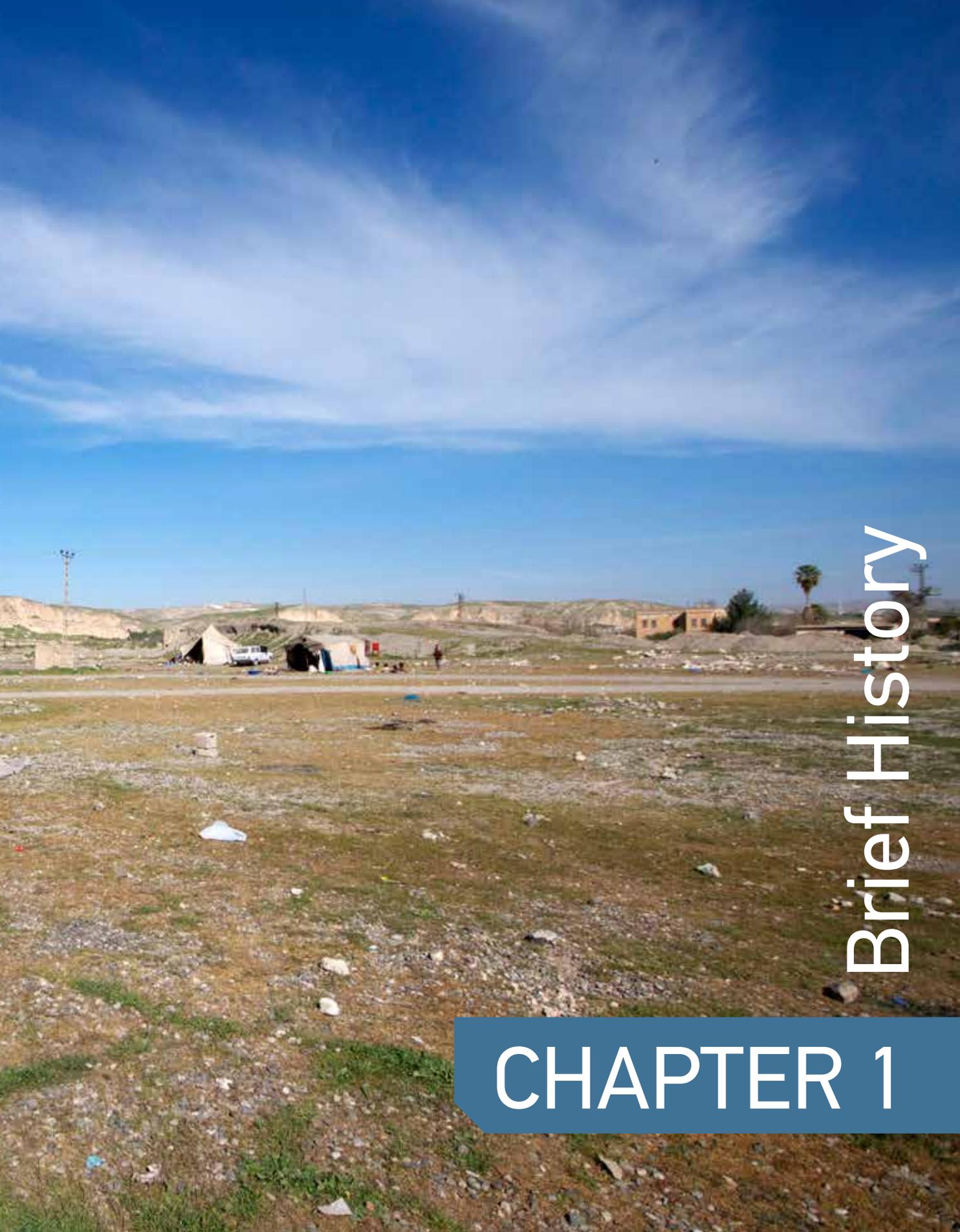
- On Urfa Road

- Yunus Emre Neighborhood
- Namık Kemal Neighborhood
- Fevzi paşa Neighborhood
- Tathtani Neighborhood





Sanliurfa 2013 - First Dom groups set up their tents in the historical migration area near the Euphrates



# Brief History

# CHAPTER 1

## Who are the Dom?



The Roma, Dom and Lom communities who are collectively known as gypsies and whose roots go back to India are known in anthropology as “peripatetic societies”. Peripatetic societies are those which do not produce their own food, but get it from other communities in exchange for providing certain arts and services and which are highly mobile by comparison with the other communities (Yıldır, 2016; Kenrick, 2006). For hundreds of years these communities have been supplying various services to settled societies and even to rural migratory communities, constantly on the move, living alongside other societies, and striking a balance between a nomadic and a semi-nomadic life (Kenrick, 2006). According to widely accepted hypotheses, the Dom (later Roma and Lom) Indian migrants who left India and Pakistan for various reasons (such as war or famine) between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and embarked on the “great walk”, and who have been spreading across the globe for hundreds of years, have been named Gypsies by other societies. The meanings attached to the word Gypsy, which was given to them by others, not by the Gypsies themselves (Fraser, 2005), have resulted in those same other people attaching derogatory connotations to the word, contributing to their exclusion. Recently, due to the negative connotations associated with the word Gypsy, it has been common within the Gypsy community to assert the use of the terms Roma/Romany instead. On the other hand, it is clear that the appellation Roma cannot represent Lom or Dom groups. In recent years, with the new identity building process of the Dom society, the use of the terms Dom has become widespread. The different names of Gypsy tribes (Roma, Lom, Dom) which are still used today have to do with their dates of departure from India, the routes they adopted and the class and caste differences that applied among them there.



The Dom are a Domari-speaking community that live in many Middle Eastern countries including Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt. They are a specific linguistic group of Indian origin.

The Roma (Romany) communities have crossed into Europe via Anatolia and the Black Sea and live in many countries around the world from Russia to the USA, including Turkey. They speak the language known as Romani.

Lom communities are communities which currently live in Caucasia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Armenia and eastern and northern parts of Turkey and speak Lomari (Lomavren). Lomari differs from Romani and Domari. The origins of the Lom are very uncertain. However, it is possible that they are a group that “split off” from the Roma in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and instead of going westwards, remained in the east of Anatolia during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods (Marsh, 2008).

The societies with which these groups coexisted gave these dark, dark-haired migratory people who practiced metalwork, basket-making, music, soothsaying and dentistry<sup>1</sup> names such as Gypsy, Mitrip, Kipti, Sinti, Zigeuner, Zingari, Tigani and Gitane. In their own languages, these groups called themselves Dom, Rom or Lom within themselves. According to various sources, all three words mean ‘man’, ‘person’ or

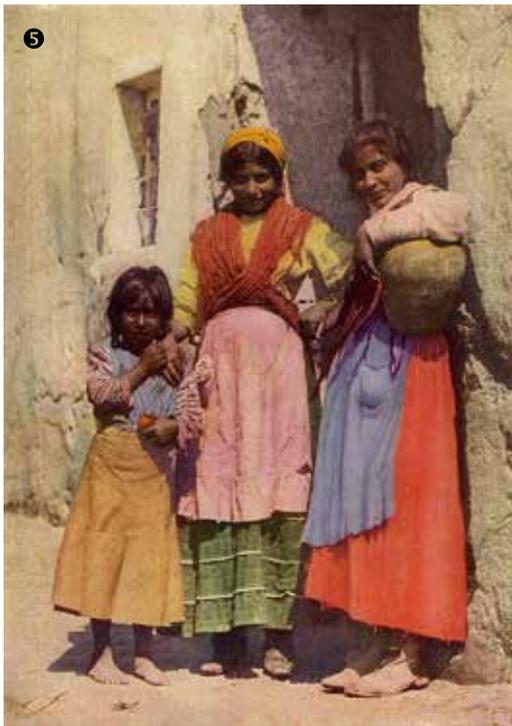
<sup>1</sup> Dentistry: The dentist Dom group practices folk medicine by pulling out teeth, making (sometimes silver or gold) implants and offering other treatments for teeth. This traditional occupation of many Doms is today banned in Turkey, but is practiced in many Middle Eastern countries.



'human' in their own languages (Kenrick, 1993; Kolukirik, 2008). Today, in some regions of India, one of the castes is called *Dom*.

Around the world it has been observed that the migratory lifestyle faces discrimination, and that peripatetic migrants plying crafts and trades are the focus of much greater prejudice than rural migrants who raise cattle or sheep. The story of Abel and Cain contained in the sacred books is an indicator that settled societies' fear of migratory peoples goes back to the beginning of civilisation (Kenrick, 2006).

The way of life and traditions which these communities have upheld over the centuries has led to the emergence of a distinct social memory. The way in which they have managed to tightly control the boundaries between themselves and other societies, and so been able to survive for centuries, should be seen as a great achievement (Kenrick, 2006). They have beliefs rooted in India which posit a strong value

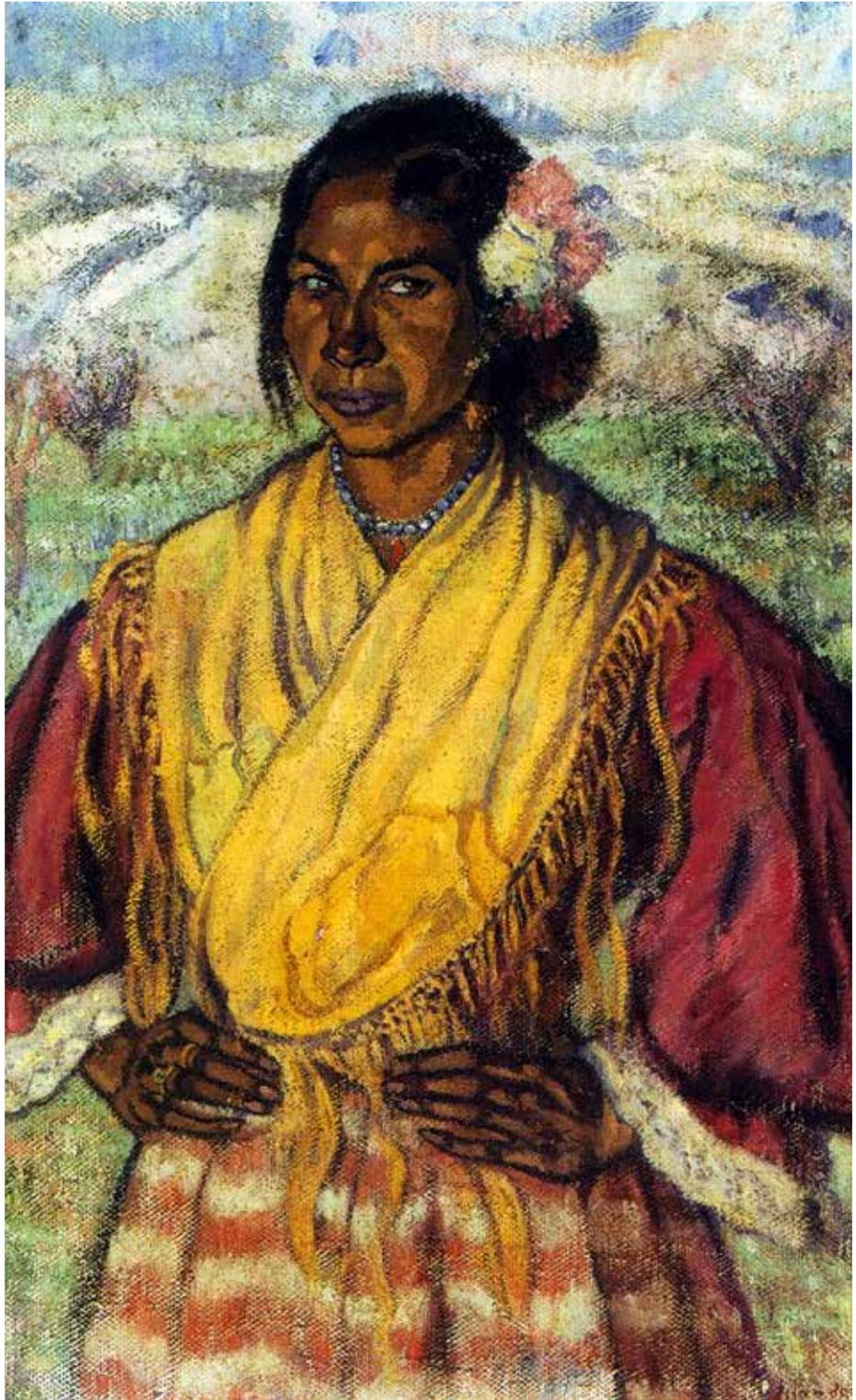


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- 1 [listele.me/cingenelerin-gizemli-tarihi/](https://listele.me/cingenelerin-gizemli-tarihi/)
- 2 [fraksiyon.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/gypsies2.jpg](https://fraksiyon.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/gypsies2.jpg) cadirda bulunan cingenerler
- 3 [www.hakssozhaber.net/avrupa-nin-vatansizlari-cingenerler-33269h.htm](http://www.hakssozhaber.net/avrupa-nin-vatansizlari-cingenerler-33269h.htm)
- 4 [tour-scotland-photographs.blogspot.com.tr/2014/11/old-photograph-gypsy-with-donkey-and.html](https://tour-scotland-photographs.blogspot.com.tr/2014/11/old-photograph-gypsy-with-donkey-and.html)
- 5 [tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87ingenerler#/media/File:Spanish\\_Gypsy\\_Giris\\_NGM-v31-p267.jpg](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87ingenerler#/media/File:Spanish_Gypsy_Giris_NGM-v31-p267.jpg)

system based on purity and corruption. The relationship of members of the community with others (strangers, Gadjó) and the world is based on protecting their purity and cleanliness of the soul. This necessitates maintaining one's distance from the other and the system created by the other and to remain neutral in the face of evils created by the other's world. This belief naturally leads to a new way of life and the tradition borne by social memory needs to constantly take in new elements and renew itself. While the community constantly maintains boundaries against the outside world it must necessarily take in other beliefs, languages and music in order to provide them as services to the other after mingling them with its own. Differences have always been jealously protected. Tradition allows for these communities to keep themselves separate from the other - the stranger or Gadjó. This has led to the centuries-old world of two distinct human communities which on the surface live together but have never intertwined. Examples can be found in the specificities of music, dance, belief and profession that characterise Gypsies living in many places around the world today. These arts-and-crafts communities need to target a very large consumer base for the goods and services they provide. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the societies that coexisted with the Gypsies were largely migratory themselves. The difference between them and the Gypsies was that while the former migrated for agriculture and husbandry, the latter led a migratory lifestyle to display their goods and offer their services. Actually, the Gypsies' migratory lifestyle differed most in that they had their *"homes on their backs"*.

Girmata Gypsy, Juan de Echevarría  
Source: [upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5e/Juan\\_de\\_Echevarria%27s\\_Gitana\\_de\\_Granada.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5e/Juan_de_Echevarria%27s_Gitana_de_Granada.jpg)



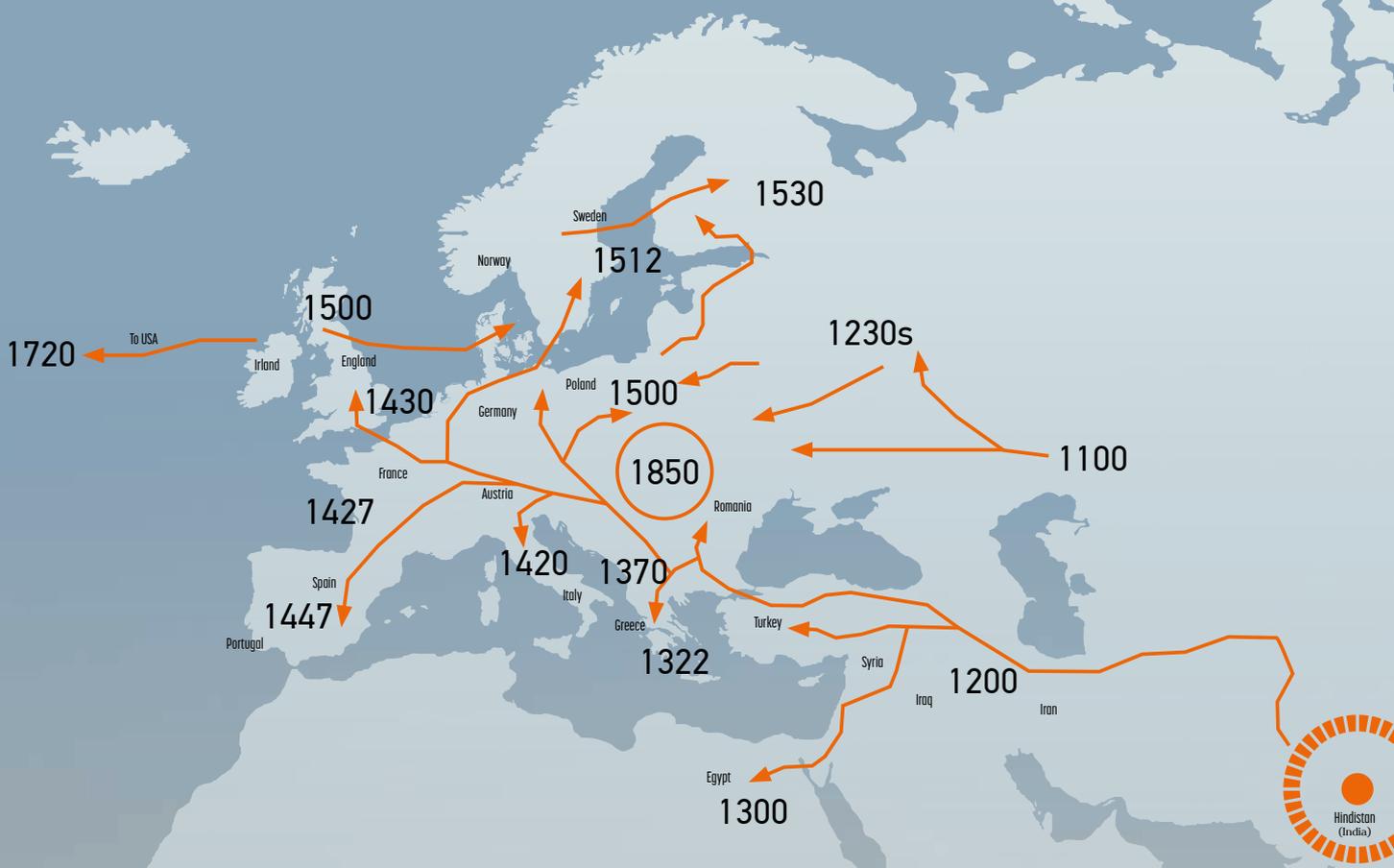
In recent years, a series of calls have been issued to international organisations and national governments to take positive measures to protect the settlement rights and improve the housing conditions of the Roma/Gypsy communities under their responsibility. In 2000, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted General Recommendation No. 27 on "Discrimination Against Roma". The fourth section of this recommendation specifically concerned improvements to the living conditions of Roma/Gypsy groups.

In 2003, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) adopted an Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area. This includes special advice on the housing and living conditions of the Roma. In 2005 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted recommendation Rec(2005)4 calling for improvements in the housing conditions of the Roma and migratory peoples. Similarly, a decision of the European Parliament on the Roma called on EU member states to put an end to ghettos and discrimination in housing and support the Roma in finding alternative, healthy homes.

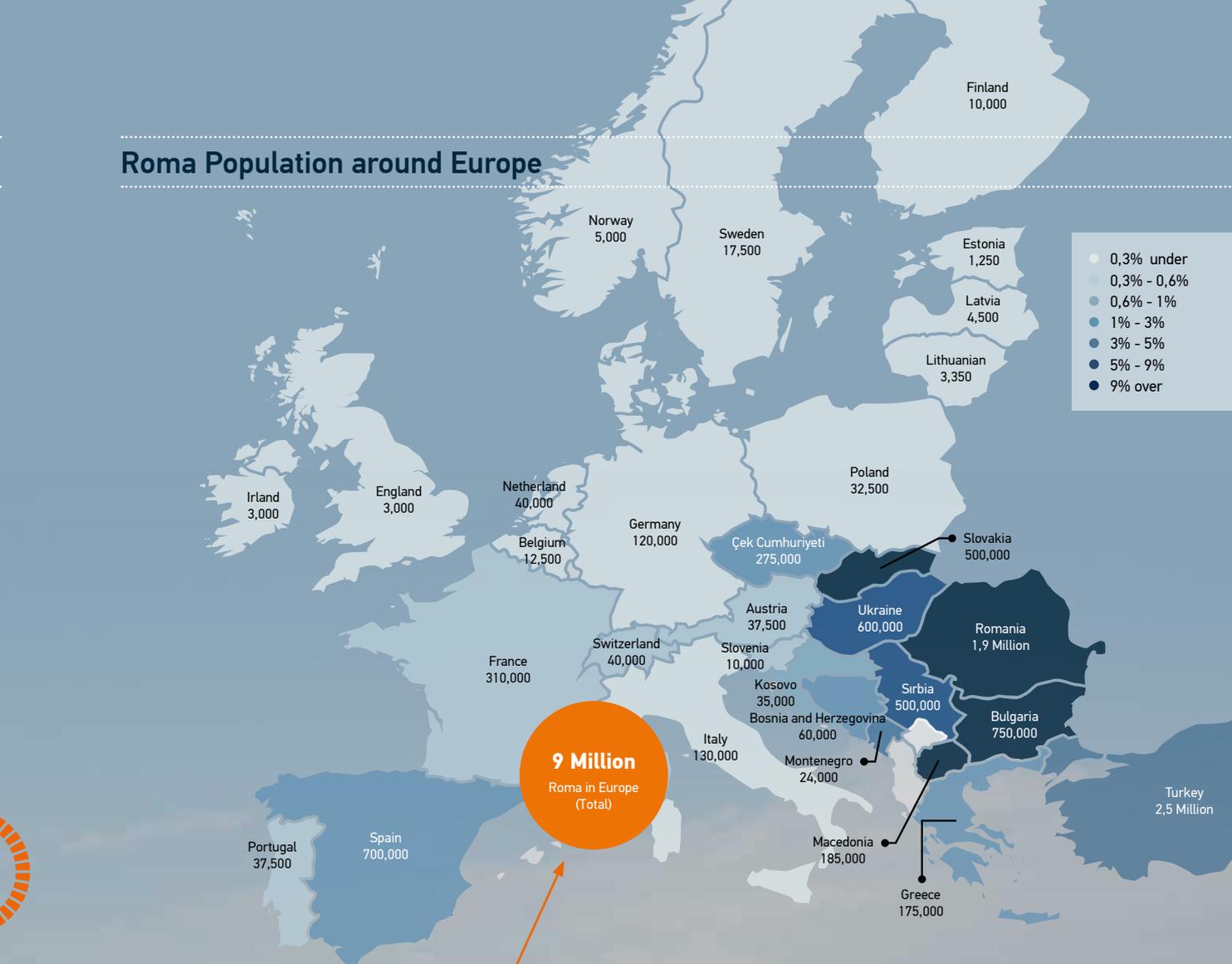
Gypsies, who have faced exclusion and discrimination at the hands of the other societies they have lived with, led a semi-nomadic lifestyle throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to survive and above all to continue their traditional arts and crafts. As the development of industry and means of production limited the opportunities for them to practice their arts and crafts in cities, they either took up different occupations in urban areas or travelled between small towns and rural areas to continue practicing their traditional arts and crafts.

Peripatetic communities have made tools and kitchenware and practiced iron and tin work, basketry, harness and tackle making, tanning, dentistry, circumcision and music services to meet the needs of settled or migratory societies engaged in agriculture or husbandry. With the development of capitalist forms of production and the changes in population structure, the validity and fields of application of these traditional occupations have declined. Especially over the last century, the social ramifications of the rapid change in relations of production, urbanisation and population growth have pushed these communities to the bottom of the social structure. The minority policies of countries implemented in the transformation to nation states have exposed Gypsies to problems such as poverty, prejudice, discrimination and violence over and beyond their historical and cultural precedents.

# Gypsy Migrations 900 - 1850



# Roma Population around Europe



**9 Million**  
Roma in Europe  
(Total)



# The Dom Society in Syria

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Dom communities, which have their origins in India, today live in many Middle Eastern countries, number around five million, call themselves Dom, Dummi or Deman, and are multilingual, speaking Domari, which belongs to the Indo-European family of languages, as well as the languages of the societies in the regions they inhabit (Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish) (Herin, B. 2012; Matras, Y. 2000). Experts on Indian languages claim that the Doms must have left about a thousand years ago, as some changes observed in Indian languages since then are not present in Domari (Kenrick 2006). Communities of Indian origin are given different names in the Middle East, as they are around the world. Nawar, Zott, Ghajar, Bareke, Gaodari, Krismal, Qarabana, Karaçi, Abdal, Ashiret, Qurbet, Mitrip, Gewende Çingene, Dom, Tanjiriyah, Haddadin, Hacıye, Arnavut, Halebi, Haramshe, and Kaoli are some of these names (Marushiakova, Vesselin, 2001; Kenrick, 2006). **Nawar**, the most common of these names, is supposed to have been derived from the Arabic *nar*, meaning fire, and is thought to have meant ironsmith (Kenrick, 2006). These communities, which historically have migrated in order to practice their professions, have become semi-nomadic over the last 50 years. They have lived settled lives for 3-4 months in the immigrant areas on the outskirts of urban areas, and taken to the road to practice their professions for the rest of the year. After centuries of meeting the needs of the communities they lived with for work tools and kitchen equipment, and of serving as dentists and musicians, they have become unable to practice the professions of their forebears due to the development of industry and mass production and have ended up without any profession. Their former occupations in arts and crafts have largely been replaced by seasonal migrant agricultural labour, waste and refuse collection, the selling of lottery tickets and newspapers, hairdressing, dental technician work and daily manual labour.

It is estimated that there were more than 300,000 Doms throughout Syria before 2011: known as Dom, Dummi, Nawar, Kurbet, Abdal, Helebi or Zott (Williams, 2000), they were settled or semi-nomadic. When the Syrian civil war began, these communities, which lived in the poor neighbourhoods of towns throughout the country, were already facing discrimination. Some of them led settled lives especially in the Hadradiye and Sheimaksut districts of Aleppo, while others settled down for the winter and continued to play their traditional arts and crafts as iron and tin smiths, basket makers, dentists circumcisers, fortune tellers, waste and refuse collectors, hunters, tanners, boiler making and playing music. The majority, however, worked on agricultural land as seasonal workers or as daily labourers in construction and transport. While those who had turned to a settled life tried to continue their arts and crafts, they were also engaged in selling lottery tickets, construction work, playing music and waste and refuse collection. Others were engaged in trade and throughout the Middle East there were those who worked as dentists. Some groups were known to own land around Damascus and Jazira and lived in villages.



The Dom society in Syria generally did not own up to its identity. They were left without citizenship rights by the government of Syria for being migratory and nomadic. There were individuals among the Dom community who were not registered and had no citizenship. If the children were not going to school, identity cards would not be issued to them until they reached the age of military service.

The proportion of the Dom in Syria who were semi-nomadic and practiced their traditional arts was known to be quite high. Abdal groups played drums, *zurna* and other instruments at weddings and festivities. Haramshe and Hadjiye Dom communities specialised in festive music and dancing. Male musicians and female dancers from these communities are still employed in night clubs in Syria and Lebanon (Berland, Rao, 2004; Tarlan, 2013).

Dentist Doms, who were the traditional practitioners of dentistry in the Middle East, and are known to Arabs as *Siyaghin* (*Dandekam* in Domari) still practice this profession. Dentist Doms from Syria enjoy a sound reputation in countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine (Bochi, 2014).

In recent years the political and social turmoil in the Middle East, and the climate of civil war and conflict, has made life more difficult for these people. With the occupation of their centuries-old migration routes, neighbourhoods and houses, settled communities have once more become nomadic. After the Iraq War of 2003, in particular, with Iraq rapidly becoming destabilised, many Doms were forced to migrate from the towns and villages where they had settled. While this was partly due to the impact of war and violence that affected the Dom as well as other groups, the main factor was that with power changing hands, new governments exhibited a negative attitude towards the Dom. War and conflict have created new fault lines in Middle Eastern societies and have added religious and sectarian differences and accompanying violence to strong Arab nationalism. (Tarlan, 2015).

An old woman who relocated from Iraq to Syria in 2005 and has since come to Turkey had this to say:

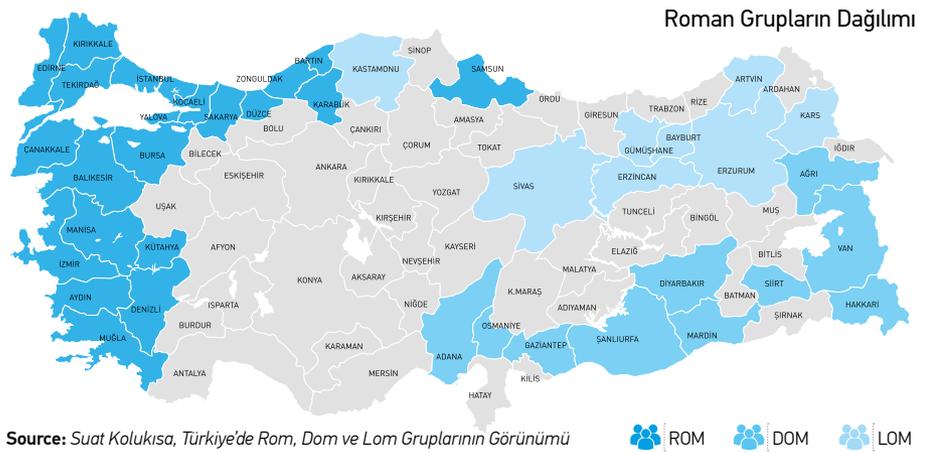
*“For seven years we lived as nomads in various parts of Syria. In the winter we stayed in the Haydariye neighbourhood of Aleppo and the men worked in seasonal jobs. We women collected produce from the fields. The men worked as porters and construction workers. In the summer we lived as nomads....*

*“They expelled us from there, from Baghdad, the land of our forebears, after the war.*

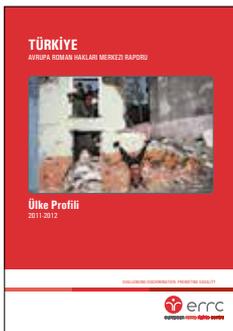
*For what? For being Gypsies. Yes we are Gypsies, but we are also human.”*

# The Dom Society in Turkey

Studies of Gypsy communities in Turkey have shown that these communities are of Indian origin. They left India after the 9<sup>th</sup> century and some came to Anatolia following various migration routes. The Sulukule neighbourhood in Istanbul, which was completely demolished in 2009 as part of an urban transformation scheme, had housed these groups since the time of the Byzantine Empire. Sulukule is the second oldest recorded settlement of the Roma in the world. Gypsies who live in Turkey fall into three groups: the Roma, the Dom and the Lom. The Dom generally live in southern and eastern Anatolia and speak Domari, the Lom live in the north eastern Black Sea region and speak Lomari. Gypsies in other parts of Anatolia, especially the Mediterranean, Thrace and Aegean regions, are known as the Roma.



There is no official data on the total number of Gypsies in Turkey. The number of Roma, Dom and Lom is still an area of research. The only official data on the number of Gypsies in Turkey is 500,000, which is based on an Ottoman census of 1831. Roma and other NGOs claim that the Gypsy population in Turkey numbers between 3 and 5 million. Experts from the European Roma Rights Association (ERRC), the Helsinki Citizens Association (HCA) and the Edirne Roma Association (EDROM) who took part in a study covering cities in all seven geographical regions of Turkey have estimated the Gypsy population to be between 4.5 and 5 million. The Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) estimated that the Roma made up 3.83 per cent of Turkey's population of 71,892,807 in 2010. The Roma are concentrated especially in the province of Edirne. They also live in Ankara, Samsun, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli, Mersin, Adana, Izmir, Balikesir, Keşan, Söke, Çorlu, Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakir and Istanbul. Doms are concentrated in the provinces of Hatay, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep and Şan-





liurfa, while the Lom community is concentrated in the province of Sinop. The Roma are one of the most numerous ethnic groups in the cultural structure of Turkey and have established more than 300 associations and more than 10 federations. They have difficult accessing public bodies to voice their demands in the areas of basic socio-economic rights such as education, employment, healthcare, shelter and discrimination. A Roma Workshop organised by the State Ministry on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2009 was attended by representatives of five federations and 80 Roma associations, and the workshop report noted the demands of their representatives for the suspension of discriminatory laws against them and improvements in their rights to shelter, education, employment, healthcare and citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Following the government's "Roma opening", the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security held meetings in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir in 2011-2012 and prepared reports on the situation of the Roma with respect to employment and education respectively.<sup>3</sup> In the light of these reports, the Ministry for the Family and Social Policies was in 2012 made responsible for the rights of the Roma and the services to be provided to them, as part of the government's "democratic opening" process.

The 2016 Action Plan of the 64<sup>th</sup> Government made public on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2015 contained the following pledge regarding the Roma, under the heading of "Fundamental Rights and Freedoms":

*"The alleviation of the problems of Roma citizens, especially in education, employment and housing, will be accelerated, and work will begin on removing all grounds for discrimination."*

In 2011 the European Union adopted the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Policies aimed at eliminating the discrepancies between the living conditions of the majority population and the Roma and integrating the latter more fully<sup>4</sup> and called on member states to develop national policies for the integration of the Roma. With

<sup>2</sup> [t24.com.tr/haber/roman-calistayi-raporu,71526](http://t24.com.tr/haber/roman-calistayi-raporu,71526)

<sup>3</sup> [ysop.meb.gov.tr/dosyalar/diger%20calismalar/Risk%20altindaki%20cocuklar%20calistay%20raporu.pdf](http://ysop.meb.gov.tr/dosyalar/diger%20calismalar/Risk%20altindaki%20cocuklar%20calistay%20raporu.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/turkey-country-profile-2011-2012-in-turkish.pdf](http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/turkey-country-profile-2011-2012-in-turkish.pdf)

respect to countries with candidate status, the relevant European Commission circular states that the EU's aims for Roma integration apply equally to all countries, and calls on the candidate countries to revise their present policies to bring them into line with the declared targets. Emphasis was placed on the production of a National Roma Strategy Document during the visa exemption dialogue between the EU and Turkey in 2016 and the roadmap adopted for this purpose, and Turkey adopted its Strategy Document for Roma Citizens (2026-2021) on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2016.<sup>5</sup> While the strategy document contains proposed solution for the educational, employment, healthcare and shelter problems of the Roma, it makes no mention at all of the Dom community. Yet the earlier draft, the National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma Citizens Draft Document, which was sent to the Roma Rights Forum of Turkey (ROMFO), and published in January 2016, had indeed referred to separate Roma groups, including the Dom. In this draft document the concept of Roma was discussed as follows:

*“Another point of contention is the definition of the social group described by the term Roma. The term Roma is used as a general descriptive term for groups such as the Rom, Lom, Dom and Abdal who have different cultures. These groups and others with similar ways of life are sometimes locally called arabacı (carter), elekçi (sifter) and mitrip (musician) in reference to their sources of income. The term Gypsy (Çingene) is also used to denote these groups and other similar groups in other countries. However, although there are persons and groups who feel that the use of “Gypsy” is more appropriate and demand that it be used, this word is mostly used by those outside of these groups and is an exonymous term. The term has sometimes been used to denigrate and belittle members of these groups and as an insult towards those who are not members of these groups. Therefore, the use of the term Roma to describe all mentioned groups has been deemed appropriate for this policy paper. The use of the term Roma to describe a wide cultural range should neither be taken as ignoring the authentic culture of those who take themselves to be Roma, nor as dismissive of cultural diversity and the imposition of a one type mentality by ignoring those who do not describe themselves as Roma or use other terms. The use of the term Roma is a result of practical and pragmatic necessities. To this end the phrase “The Roma and groups which live like the Roma” may also be used. This expression is a useful social policy concept that has been produced to denote those groups which, whether they take themselves to be Roma or not (or be accepted or not as Roma by the Roma or other groups and persons), have common problems such as poverty, unemployment, lack of access to educational services, living in unhealthy and inappropriate environments and face social exclusion. (The use of the term Roma for these groups was accepted in the Strasbourg Declaration produced at the European Council High Level Meeting on the Roma held on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2010 and the integration problems of the Roma were emphasised to be citizenship and equal rights issues.) In summary the prin-*

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<sup>5</sup> [www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160430-11.htm](http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160430-11.htm)

*principle is that it should be accepted that the Roma are excluded for being Roma, but other disadvantaged groups should not be left out and be given equal treatment while combating the social exclusion of the Roma. (A similar principle was included as the “clear but non-divisive aim” among the Ten Joint Principles for the Social Inclusion of the Roma accepted by the European Platform for the Social Inclusion of the Roma that gathered in Prague on April 24<sup>th</sup> 2009. The significance of this expression among the ten joint principles is also that the discrimination and social exclusion against the Roma should be openly stated, but those who are not Roma should not be left out of the scope of combating discrimination.)*

Unfortunately, this viewpoint was excluded from the final form of Turkey’s Strategy Document for Roma Citizens published in the Official Gazette.

The Dom arrived in south eastern Anatolia (Antakya, Gaziantep, Kilis, Adiyaman, Urfa, Mardin, Diyarbakir, Batman, Van) in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. Today they inhabit the southern and eastern regions of Turkey. Although they try to make a living out of their traditional occupations of drum and *zurna* playing, rifle repairing, dentistry, iron and tin smithing, and sieve, basket and bag making, as these professions are becoming less valid as a way of earning an income they have also turned to day labour such as seasonal migrant agriculture and waste and refuse collection. They have preserved their Domari language. They also speak Kurmanji, Zazaki and Turkish and generally prefer to use Domari mostly when within their own group. Although they are close to the Kurdish population culturally, they face discrimination from them also. It is thought that the Doms number around 500,000 in Turkey. This data is in need of further verification. They are generally very poor and most of them are nomadic (Marsh, 2008). In recent years they have found employment in seasonal work in agriculture and in day labour, as they can no longer practice their traditional occupations (Tarlán, 2014).

In seasonal agricultural work, the Dom generally migrate in the print and throughout the summer in order to work in the hazelnut harvest in the Black Sea region, in hoeing and the harvesting of legumes in Central Anatolia, and in picking vegetables, pistachios, citrus fruits and cotton in South Eastern Anatolia and Çukurova. This results in significant disruption to the education of their children. Families take to the road in March and only return to their home provinces in November. In recent years the migratory lifestyle has been observed to last throughout the year. On the other hand, some families have become totally settled, which makes it easier for their children to receive an education. Today some young Doms have undergraduate degrees and professions, although these are still very few. Talented Dom musicians perform in many places around the world. The Mitrip community, whose name is derived from the Arabic word for musician, and who live mainly in the eastern and south eastern provinces of Turkey, are the most famous for their music (Keskin, 2006).





# Syrian Migrants

Current Situation and Analysis

## CHAPTER 2

## International Law



Turkey is party with reservations to the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees\* and the New York Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.\*\* According to its “geographical reservation” Turkey will only give refugee status to persons arriving from Europe and will not accord the status of refugee to persons arriving from outside of Europe. Turkey will grant persons arriving from outside Europe asylum until they are settled in third countries.

The UN Convention on Refugees and Asylum (UNCRA) and the New York Protocol are not the only documents to place guarantees on the rights of refugees. The UN Convention on Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on Eliminating All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Disabled, all of which Turkey is party to, also apply in terms of guaranteeing the rights of non-citizens. Article 90 of the constitution of Turkey stipulates that international conventions prevail over national law if there is no relevant national legislation or if national and international legislation are incompatible.

\* [www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/multec%C4%B1er%C4%B1nhukuk%C4%B1statusune%C4%B1l%C4%B1s-k%C4%B1sozlesme.pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/multec%C4%B1er%C4%B1nhukuk%C4%B1statusune%C4%B1l%C4%B1s-k%C4%B1sozlesme.pdf)

\*\* [www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/M%C3%9CLTEC%C4%B0LER%C4%B0N%20HUKUK%20STAT%C3%9CS%C3%9CNE%20%C4%B0L%C4%B0C5%9EK%C4%B0N%201967%20PROTOKOL%C3%9C%281%29.pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/M%C3%9CLTEC%C4%B0LER%C4%B0N%20HUKUK%20STAT%C3%9CS%C3%9CNE%20%C4%B0L%C4%B0C5%9EK%C4%B0N%201967%20PROTOKOL%C3%9C%281%29.pdf)

**T**he popular revolutions in the Middle East, which resulted in the toppling of regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, reached Syria in March 2011, at which point it was anticipated that the Baath regime would soon fall. This expectation proved false due to the ethnic and religious structure of Syria, its geographical location, the power relationships the Baath regime had built using the many different elements and the international conjuncture. The regime has remained in place. The civil war, which has entered its sixth year, has forced millions of people of diverse ethnic origins to leave their homes. Some Syrians have migrated to cities which are safer and where the fighting is less intense, while millions of Syrians have left their country to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. The five years of civil war in Syria since 2011 has caused almost half of the pre-war population of 22 million to become refugees. While almost six million Syrians have migrated within the country, the number of those taking refuge in neighbouring countries is approaching five million. More than one million Syrians are refugees in European countries. The world thus faces the largest phenomenon of migration since the first and second World Wars.

With the civil war in Syria, Turkey has become the country with the most refugees in the world.<sup>1</sup> Turkey has followed an open door policy, allowing many of the Syrians fleeing the fighting to cross into its territory. Although various kinds of support and services are provided to Syrian refugees in Turkey by public institutions, as well as national and international NGOs, the fact that the refugees have arrived in a mass wave in very large numbers has resulted in quantitative and qualitative gaps in these services, as well as difficulties and problems in implementing them (Mutlu, Kırımsoy, Antakyalıoğlu, 2016).

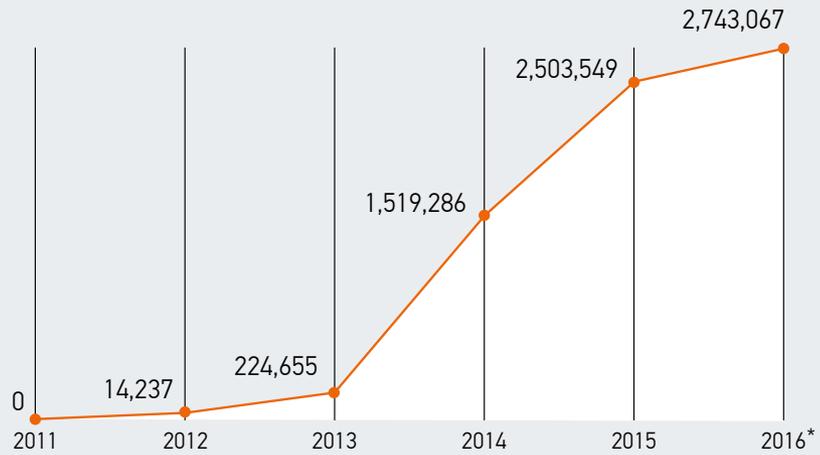
According to data from the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), there are nearly three million Syrian migrants in Turkey. As of September 19<sup>th</sup> 2016, 254,938 Syrian and Iraqi citizens were living in 26 temporary accommodation camps established in 10 provinces in Turkey. This means that approximately 10 per cent of Syrian refugees in Turkey live in camps, while the remaining 90 per cent are scattered around the country.

The legal status of Syrian migrants in Turkey is still uncertain. On the assumption that the civil war in Syria would not last long, those arriving from Syria were initially accepted on humanitarian grounds without being given legal status. Their situation therefore became uncertain as the civil war dragged on. Arriving in Turkey from April 2011 onwards, the Syrians were initially described as 'guests'. However, as this definition has no basis in the law, Syrians were treated for two years in a manner that had no basis

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<sup>1</sup> [data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php) son erişim 21.09.2016, son güncelleme 18.09.2016

## Syrians Under Temporary Protection by Years



\* As of 25.08.2016

254,938

In 26 temporary accommodation centers in 10 provinces, 254 bin 938 Syrian and Iraqi citizens are living.

90%

10%

10% of the migrants living in Turkey are in the temporary accommodation centers and the rest of them have been spread out to all cities of Turkey





# Definitions related to Migration

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## Who is a Refugee?

According to international law, a refugee is someone who is outside the country of their citizenship and who cannot return to their country of citizenship for “grounded fears about facing persecution due to their race, religion, citizenship, membership of a given social group or political opinions.” In Turkey those arriving from outside Europe are not given refugee status and the legal system does not recognise the term “asylum seeker”.

## Who is an Asylum Seeker?

An asylum seeker is someone who is looking for international protection but whose legal status has not officially been formalised. The term is usually used for persons who have applied for refugee status and who are awaiting decisions from governments or the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Although their status has not been officially recognised, asylum seekers cannot be forcefully deported to their countries of their origin and their rights must be upheld.

## Who is a Migrant?

A migrant is a person and household members who have travelled from one region or country to another in order to improve their financial or social situations or to increase future expectations of themselves or their countries. It may be defined as people who have left their countries not for fear of oppression, but for other reasons such as education or employment. Migrants continue to enjoy the protection of the country they are citizens of, and undertake their journey of their own volition to achieve a better standard of living. While some of these journeys are undertaken regularly through the use of valid passports and visas, others are undertaken irregularly, out of keeping with the legislation of some countries.

## Who is an Irregular Migrant?

The term irregular migrant applies to people who have entered their destination countries in violation of the laws of that country, who do not have legal grounds for remaining in that country, or who leave the country in violation of that country's laws. The status of a migrant may become irregular in a number of ways. Some might become irregular due to carelessness, while other irregular migrants may become so due to arbitrary and illegitimate reasons. Depending on government policies and visa practices, a migrant may become irregular and then regular again during a single journey.

## Who is a Stateless Person?

A stateless person is someone who is not considered the citizen of any state, according to their own laws.

## What Causes Confusion in Turkey?

Turkey ratified the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1961. In 1967 it ratified the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, it chose to persist with the principle of geographical reservation regulated by the Geneva Convention. In Turkey, these concepts are regulated by the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection dated 2014.

In other words, Turkey does not accord refugee status to persons arriving from outside of Europe. Those arriving from outside of Europe are allowed to stay temporarily in Turkey as conditional refugees until they are settled in third countries.

Foreigners seeking international protection need to apply for refugee or temporary refugee status when they enter Turkey. Until they are given such a status, these persons are known as “international protection applicants”. Turkey’s legislation does not contain the term “asylum seeker”.

## What is the Legal Status of Syrians in Turkey?

In Turkey Syrian nationals are under temporary protection status. Temporary protection defines the protection afforded to those foreigners who have been forced to leave their countries, and cannot return to their country of origin, who have arrived en masse at or crossed over Turkey’s borders in search of urgent and temporary protection and who cannot be individually assessed for international protection status.

According to the Regulation on Temporary Protection published as part of Law 6458, the status of the approximately 3 million registered persons who have arrived in Turkey from Syria is defined by the temporary protection regime, and they cannot apply for conditional refugee status, which is an individual procedure.

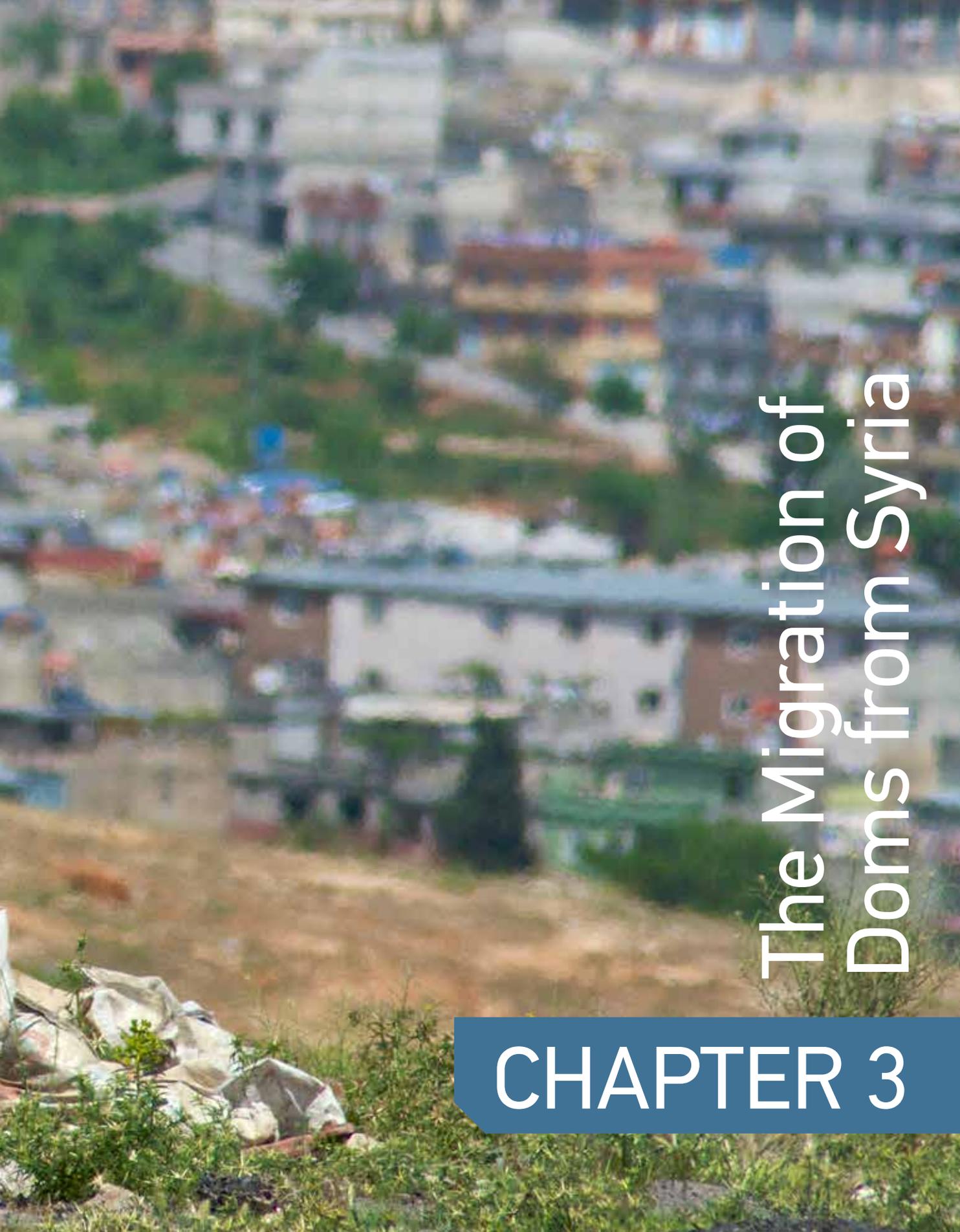
Migrants generally travel over the same routes as refugees. A sinking boat can contain both refugees and migrants, depending on the reasons for their journey. Therefore, for people whose reasons for travelling are not known, the terms migrant or refugee may equally apply.

*Source: Mülteci, Göçmen, Sığınmacı Arasındaki Farklar?*

*[bianet.org/bianet/toplum/167434-multeci-gocmen-siginmaci-arasindaki-farklar](http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/167434-multeci-gocmen-siginmaci-arasindaki-farklar)*



Gaziantep 2013 - Dom family walking to their tents in the outskirts of the city



The Migration of  
Doms from Syria

CHAPTER 3

## On the Road Once More

At the onset of the civil war in Syria, the Dom communities remained neutral. An elderly Dom said of this:



*Whenever they fight each other, we suffer the most, it is our homes they attack first. They don't want us. Yet, we're only after winning our bread. We have hurt no one, not them, nor the others. But they would like to get rid of us first.*

At the beginning of the civil war, Syrian opposition groups set off the first clashes in urban suburbs where the control of the regime was relatively weak. This naturally affected the Dom communities and the Syrian poor who lived in these low income areas. Finding themselves caught in the crossfire, these communities began to move, initially to relatively safe areas with less fighting. During the field study it was often stated that there was an initial thrust towards Latakia, Damascus and the safer areas under Kurdish control. It was also reported that Abdal groups, who mostly follow the Alawite/Bektashi faith, went to regime-controlled Western Syria, but later had to migrate from there to other countries due to the lack of food and work. Later on, they were not allowed through checkpoints into settlements and cities.

An Abdal *Dede* (community elder/leader) recalls the experience:

*"We took refuge with them because they are of the same faith as us, but they said "Have we got bread ourselves that we should give any to the Abdal."*

As they speak Kurdish, Dom communities continue to live in Kurdish-controlled Rojova. Due to ISIS attacks from Kobane and Jazira, significant numbers of Dom communities have recently entered Turkey. These entries tend to increase in the winter months. In the Afrin region, significant numbers of Dom families live alongside other ethnic groups. From time to time, Dom groups travel from Afrin to Kilis and Gaziantep.

During the interviews conducted as part of the field study, it was stated that the Arabic speaking population had generally migrated to Lebanon and Jordan. Many groups and families who had been to these countries were encountered in the field study. In an interview held with one of the groups at a recent migration area, they stated that after the fighting began they had stayed in central Damascus for a while. About a year later, the fighting reached their location, and the young men were called up for military service. Whether one young man who was forcefully conscripted is alive or not is unknown. Community members believe that he is dead, while his elderly mother believes her son is alive.

## We don't want you here!

In the face of conscription, increasingly difficult living conditions, and the intensification of fighting and attacks, some Doms went to the Lebanese border with Syria and even further south. They state that they were attacked by some Salafi groups, that their vehicles, cash and belongings were confiscated and that they were oppressed because they were Gypsies. They recount that radical religious groups mistreated the men and said, "We don't want you here". Upon crossing into Lebanon, they say that they could not find food and shelter because there were so many Syrian migrants there, that the camps were expensive, and that NGOs would not assist the Dom groups. They state that conditions in the camp sites reserved for migrant groups were very difficult and needs such as water, power and sanitation were very inadequately met. They recount that they crossed into Jordan and stayed there for a month, that conditions there were also very poor and that the security forces regularly deported them. They add that during the summer the heat and the dust made things very difficult, water was very inadequate and the children were often ill. They say that they returned to Lebanon and went to Beirut. They recount that Beirut was very expensive but men could find jobs in construction for brief spells. They tell of how they wanted to return to the regime-controlled areas of Syria, but could not get through pass checkpoints and often faced violence.



They recount how they walked at night for two months for fear of opposition radical Islamists, made it to the border with Turkey, living for fifteen days under olive trees on the Syrian side of the border eating nothing but bread and the herbs they picked. They crossed the border before dawn and they say that the soldiers did not see them. This group has been living in the provinces of Kilis, Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş for nearly two years. Group members state that their tents are often demolished by security forces and that because of this they are constantly on the road, with some group members migrating to cities such as Izmir and Istanbul. They add that most of their relatives are still in Lebanon and Jordan.

## Arrival in the Turkey their Grandfathers spoke of

When asked about their reasons for coming to Turkey, the Dom primarily cite centuries of kinship relations. The Dom communities in the Middle East have lived with other societies in the region for centuries. Having spread throughout the region, the Dom have provided societies with work and kitchen tools, folk medicine, circumcision and dentistry services while at the same time serving as vessels for their culture. As playing an instrument, especially music for entertainment and dancing, is proscribed among the Arab, Turkmen and Kurdish tribes in the Middle East, these communities have lived together with Gypsy communities who performed these services for them. Some of these Gypsy communities still earn their living by playing music and dancing at weddings and festivities. They have played many genres including Arab Sufi music, the music and dances known as Haramshe and Hadjiye in Syria, the Kawliya dance in Iraq, the Roma music and Barak folk songs in Anatolia, the Bozlak music in Central Anatolia, the Mitrip and many others. Dom and Abdal musicians, always very familiar with the other communities and cultural strata, have been instrumental in transmitting forms of music formed by other groups (Duygulu, 2006; Girgin, 2015).



*Everybody called us Nawar (Gypsy) and looked down on us. What have we got to do with the war? Then the villages emptied, the soldiers and the opposition arrived. We were left without work, our homes were controlled by soldiers and opposition fighters. One night they fired on my brother and his family. My brother died at 32. His children, his daughter were wounded. After this we went to Lebanon and stayed there for two years. The camps there charged money and we decided to come to Turkey for financial reasons. We returned to Syria and crossed over to Turkey. We came to find work, but there is no work here. We entered Turkey two years ago, crossing the border illegally. We crossed the border at night, four families, more than 30 people. Our relatives have stayed behind, some have gone missing in Syria. There are others in Lebanon but we don't hear from them.*

All borders in the Middle East, especially the Syria-Turkey border, have been porous for these groups. Since Ottoman times Gypsy communities have led a nomadic life in the region. They have learnt different languages including Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and Persian from the societies they coexisted with. Speaking their own language, as well as others, the communities have formed their migration zones throughout the territory. The migration zones are stops along the migratory route. Due to elements of the beliefs they have preserved from their roots in India, as well as to vital necessities, these zones were established near springs, around ancient trees, or by rivers and streams. In time they became social spaces. These spaces where the



*“When the war began we stayed neutral like the other Dom tribes. What good is war for us? We could not find food for ourselves anyway. They would not give us jobs there, just like they won’t give us any here. Then the opposition came. Al-Nusra, we call them DAESH (ISIS), these were warriors with long red beards, we don’t know where they were from, but they spoke different languages. Most of them didn’t speak Arabic. They took over the town, order collapsed, the regime troops left their arms and ran away. Those who fought they executed at the side of the road. They would not let anyone go near their bodies, so that they would rot and be eaten by the dogs. Those in town either fled or made no objections out of fear, some of them supported this group and took up arms to fight. They told us they had established an Islamic State. As though there was anything but Islam before. Then they began to attack our homes and neighbourhoods and read out announcements from mosques to drive us and the Kurds out of town. So that everyone should leave but the Arabs. They entered our neighbourhoods and took away everything in our homes. They spilt our flour on the floor. They called us ‘heathens’. They called us heathens who would not pray, who would not attend mosques. They attacked the men. They said if we didn’t leave they’d cut our throats. They said we were worse than animals, that we were not Muslims, our women were astray and spoke with strangers.*

*“Our Arab neighbours attacked us the most fiercely, they had grown beards and taken up arms. They said they would not let Kurds, Gypsies, heathens stay. We left them everything we had and came here to save our lives. Now we seek refuge here. Here every day the police come and say you either go to the camps or back to Syria. They pull down our tents and burn them. Those who turned us away from the camps have relatives. They don’t want us there either. They threw our relatives out of the camps. They say they don’t want to be neighbours with us. They beat up our children.*

*“Now we seek refuge here. We’re all related. If they’d let us, we’ll stay here, but we won’t go to camps. They take those who don’t go to camps away and leave them on the other side of the border. There is a war there and they don’t want us here. We don’t know what to do.”*

**Sex**  
Male  
**Age**  
55



**Place of birth**  
Rasulayn

**Marital status**  
Married

**Number of children**  
8

**Number of household members**  
13

**Languages spoken**  
Arabic, Domari, Kurdish

**How he describes himself ethnically**  
Dom

**Level of education**  
Literate





**Spoken Languages:** In Syria, Gypsy Society (Nawar) is a multi-lingual society which also speaks the languages of the people ( Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish, Persian) they are living with. In the graphic, spoken languages displays a third language that they speak apart from Arabic and their own language.

**Professions and Crafts:** Some traditionally performed professions and crafts are written.

**Kali:** In Iran, Gypsies are given the name Kaboli (Kabila) due to their arrival from the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul. They are also named as Abdal Karaçi, and Gorbati currently in Iran. Gypsy groups in Iran are also dispersed to Iraq and Syria. Kowli Gypsies generally spoke Persian and Arabic, but as a second language, they speak an intertwined language with Persian that is named as Darvisi, Lutina among themselves. These communities make some tools such as sieve, tin, basket and comb by forging iron and wooden. They also perform music, acrobatics, comedians.

**Albanian/ Roman:** One of the rare Rom, Roman Communities which lives in the Middle East. After the Balkan War, a part of the Romani groups who had moved from the remaining lands of the Ottoman Empire may have migrated to Adana (There are some groups of Romani that speak Albanian currently in Adana.) and Gaziantep. They remained in the Syria territory as the borders of Turkey redrawn. Today, they define themselves as Albanians. This society is among the petipatetik Gypsy communities practicing blacksmithing, tinner, hotsmithing.

**Turkoman/ Abdal Society:** There are three separate Abdal Societies define themselves as Turkoman and speak Turkish in Syria. They differ from each other mainly because of their different religious beliefs. The majority of these communities which have Sunni, Shiite, and Alevi beliefs, are musicians. They are also peddler, driver, basket maker. Today they are mostly working as a seasonal worker, casual laborer, and musicians. There is an Abdal community named as Tanjarlie lives in both Syria and Turkey which are traditionally tinman, repairman or plumber. The Teber language that community spoke is nearly forgotten.

**Dom Communities:** The society that defines itself as Dom is the biggest Gypsy community in Syria. They commonly speak Domari language. This community also speaks the languages of the people (Kurdish, Arabian, Turkish, Persian) they lived with. Since, historically they have lived with the Kurdish people for a long period, they also define themselves as Kurdish in some areas.

Doms define other Gypsy groups (Abdal, Albanian/Roma) as Per-Doms. This naming indicates a lower status than themselves, while still specify them as Gypsy. In Dom Society, there is classification similar to the caste system. Musicians are in a lower status due to the disapproval of the tribal structure of the Arab, Turkmen, Kurdish, and Iranian communities they lived with, while dentists and physicians have the top status. In between, there are craftsman.

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Gaziantep 2014 - Syrian Dom migrants set up their tents in the outskirts of the city



Gaziantep - Nizip 2015 - Dom woman cleans the ground to set up the tent

**Sex**  
Female

**Age**  
53

**Place of birth**  
Manbij

**Marital status**  
Married

**Number of children**  
4

**Number of household members**  
8

**Languages spoken**  
Arabic, Domari, Turkish

**How he describes himself ethnically**  
Dom

**Level of education**  
Non



*We crossed the border at Karkamış, they wouldn't let us through the crossing. So we tried to cross over the minefield. The others, Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, no one stopped them. Us, they would not let through. We waited for days on the other side, every time we tried to cross over the soldiers would start firing. The children, the women would be scared and run away. The ISIS was coming from the other side, we were very afraid that they would come and kill us. One morning we saw our chance and crossed over the barbed wire. Planes were dropping bombs and everyone was fleeing Jarabulus. We joined the crowd and crossed over to this side. If it weren't for the bombing, perhaps the others fleeing wouldn't have taken us in.*

nomadic people bury their dead, give birth to children and hold their weddings also shape their communal memory. One is at first surprised to see how Dom communities from Syria have managed to come to Turkey and set up their tents in the same migration zones as Doms from Turkey, even though they have never seen the place before. However, when asked about how they were able to find these places, they give responses such as: “Our grandfathers told us about this place. There should be a spring down there, but there’s a road there now”. This shows the power of the communal memory.

Another reason why the Dom have come to Turkey is that they view it as a developed country where life will be easier for them. Their choice of Turkey seems to have been influenced by the idea that they would be able to find jobs and access social assistance more easily. Another factor observed to have played a role is Turkey’s open door policy and clear support for and promises made to the Syrian opposition.

### Loss of Life and Property

There are many accounts which indicate that the war caused much loss of life and property among Gypsy communities as well as among others, that the homes of settled communities in particular were damaged and bombed and that their possessions were confiscated. During the field interviews, frequent statements were made about families who had lost members. In some cases, children were reported to have died, particularly in bombings. Especially in regions controlled by radical Islamists, it was often said that people had had their hands cut off as punishment for theft under Sharia law. Reports of Gypsies who had been caught in crossfire and been injured or crippled were also frequent.

A man who said he had been an iron smith and a mechanic in Syria, working in these professions along with his brothers in Aleppo, recounted their situation as follows:

“My finances were sound in Syria, I had a house and a car. My children went to school. Our neighbourhood was bombed by regime aircraft, our house was destroyed, so we first took refuge in Manbij and later in Kobane. We were in Rojava for two years and had to cross the border after the DAESH (sic) intensified its attacks. I know some of my relatives are still in Syria but don’t know where. Perhaps they were killed by the DAESH, or perhaps they crossed over into Iraq, we don’t know.

These communities, which lived together in extended families before the war, are known to have split up, and their members have lost one another, some going to Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq or even Egypt, while others are still living in Syria. (Tarlan, 2016).



*The camps are like prisons, the gendarmerie watch the doors. They give you food, but how does one live in a prison? Our children, they must go outside and wander around, otherwise at home, in the tent, they would go crazy. [In Syria] They intimidated us, saying we supported the regime. The Shabiha [regime militia] came and searched our homes often. They beat up the men. They harassed the women. They said they would kill us if we supported the terrorists. We supported neither them, nor the others. We were after winning our bread. There too we ate from hand to mouth, like we do here. The Nawar live like this everywhere, they go half hungry. But at least we had a roof over our heads there. We were not nomads like our grandfathers and grandfathers. They would go to Aleppo, Damascus, Jazira even as far as Baghdad where they worked as iron smiths and tin smiths. They did not know how to read and write, they would live without identification. We were not like them, we had a house, we sent our children to school as far as our means would allow. We wanted them at least to be able to read. We relied on no one but ourselves. The men worked with iron. We women took care of the children and cooked. Then the war came to our neighbourhood, bombs fell from the sky every day. We left Aleppo, went to Kilis and then came to Gaziantep.*

**Sex**  
Female

**Age**  
50

**Place of birth**  
Aleppo

**Marital status**  
Married

**Number of children**  
4

**Number of household members**  
8

**Languages spoken**  
Arabic, Domari, Turkish

**How she describes herself ethnically**  
Dom

**Level of education**  
Non





Urfa - Haran 2014 - Dom child in the Refugee Camp



# The Main Problems of Dom Migrants

## CHAPTER 4



Gaziantep 2013 - Syrian Dom tents in a historical migration area

### Damage to Communal Life

The Dom society in the Middle East consists of sub-tribes and consists of groups of between 5 and 15 families who lead a communal life. Although they may appear to live in independent tents or houses, the traditions of solidarity, co-existence and sharing are still prevalent. The leader who directs the group also manages relations with the external world. The communal lifestyle protects an introverted community from outside threats and allows ancient traditions to be kept alive. There is an almost complete lack of private property: whatever individuals or families lack, it is made up for in the group. Women and children are protected and there is a general resilience to tough living conditions. It is this way of life that has made it possible for the group to withstand the social and economic system of the gadjo, and to resist assimilation for hundreds of years.

In times of turmoil, such as during war or conflict, families and individuals who lack individual survival skills find themselves in a strange world. The division of the groups opens wounds in the fabric of society. Individuals are forced to become a part of a system that is foreign to them in order to meet even basic needs such as employment, shelter and food. They face the corresponding risks and dangers alone. Children who sell goods in the street, women who collect assistance and men who willing to do “any kind of work” can easily become involved in - or be dragged into - criminal activity. The splintering of groups and division of families leaves members of Dom communities facing all sorts of threats (Tarlan, 2016).



## Camps: Places of Discrimination

The Dom constantly emphasise that they cannot live in and do not want to live in temporary accommodation centres. This is chiefly because the Dom are discriminated against by officials and other denizens of the camps due to their ethnic identity and way of life. Camps are uninhabitable for these communities due to ethnic, religious and political divisions, the restrictions they impose on the independence of communities which have historically been semi-nomadic, the tough controls at entry and exit, the isolation and the feeling of claustrophobia. Therefore the Dom tend to live in tent settlements they have set up themselves, in makeshift tents, or in abandoned and ruined buildings. Those without a place to stay tend to sleep in the street and in parks. A minority come together to rent accommodation, several families sharing one home. These homes are generally located in the neighbourhoods where Turkey's local Dom community live. As per Circular 46, the tents which Doms set up are often pulled down and burned. As most lack the means to rent accommodation, barely surviving through daily labour, the Dom often change locations. As they face greater pressures in small towns, they prefer to migrate to large cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, and to become inconspicuous in the crowd.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Syrians' Tents Pulled Down and Burnt  
[www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/suriyelilerin-cadirlari-sokulup-yakildi-1125685/](http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/suriyelilerin-cadirlari-sokulup-yakildi-1125685/)



### Views Expressed by the Dom, when Asked at Interviews, on why they do not Want to Stay in Temporary Accommodation Centres:

- Semi-nomadic groups in particular see living in camps as a kind of “prison” and do not want to stay in enclosed spaces.
- The isolation and restrictions on movement in the camps leads to a sense of defencelessness and loneliness in communities which are used to leading introverted communal lives.
- Having practiced their arts and crafts for centuries, these groups feel that living in camps without any occupation or work goes against human nature.
- Communities such as the Dom who have remained neutral in the fighting fear that if they stay in camps they may be portrayed as having taken a side or that their children may come under the influence of political groups.
- That Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen who live in camps do not want to live with Gypsies, which often leads them to make complaints about them to camp officials.



Mardin 2014 - A Syrian Dom family awaiting the spring to come in their tent set up in a construction site



- In addition to discrimination against these groups in the camps, attacks amounting to physical violence have been reported. These assaults are usually directed against children and men. These groups are also often accused of theft.
- Control in the camps is usually in the hands of Syrian opposition groups, who are Sunni Arabs. This leads the Dom and other minority groups to think they will be discriminated against. The things that went on in the camps in the early stages support this expectation.
- The Dom groups think that there are many agents of the Syrian regime in the camps and fear this will cause them harm if they return to Syria one day after staying in the camps.
- Camp administrations suspect and accuse these groups first of any criminal activity that occurs in the camps.

“ It is very difficult to stay in camps, the gate is closed, there are soldiers there. They took us in when we first arrived, but it was very, very difficult. They call us Nawar there, they don't want us and our children. Our children are naughty, they say. They are children! They play and they fight. But we know that they mean something else by it, they don't want us there. We don't want to stay in that prison either. You can't go out, you're in the tent all the time, in the summer it's very hot, in the winter it's very cold. The children all fell ill there. They were so bored as well. We couldn't stay, we left. If we hadn't they would have driven us out anyway. We're used to walking around outside, we wander hills and valleys. It's the same with the children. Now we've been nomads for four years, we keep moving from one place to another. Wherever our luck may take us. Are we the only people the whole wide world can't find a little food for?

**Sex**  
Female

**Age**  
35

**Place of birth**  
Aleppo

**Marital status**  
Married

**Number of household members**  
3

**Number of household members**  
7

**Languages spoken**  
Arabic, Turkish

**How she describes herself ethnically**  
Abdal

**Level of education**  
Non



## Registration and Non-Registration

Whether Dom communities possessed identity documents when they lived in Syria depended mostly on whether they were settled and had jobs. Those who had jobs related to official organisations or owned a property with a title deed had IDs as citizens. For example, among Dom communities who practiced dentistry, the proportion of those who had ID documents and passports was quite high. This was because these people could find work in various Middle Eastern countries by virtue of their trade. While travelling within Syria, they needed IDs to stay in hotels. These groups also had better access to documents as they were literate and relatively better off. However, among those who lived as nomads practicing traditional crafts, there were communities with no identification documents. It is mainly the elderly, women and children who did not have IDs; the men are said to have identification due to compulsory military service. Some Dom communities who spoke Kurdish were not issued with documents on the grounds that they were not Syrians and had arrived in Syria as migrants.

Dom communities have entered Turkey in two ways. The first is via border crossings. Due to the open door policy maintained by Turkey until about a year ago, the practice was for everyone arriving at almost all of the border crossings with Syria to be admitted into Turkey. If there were places available in camps near the border, the arrivals

“ Before the war we lived in Qamishli in Jazira and other towns and villages of the same region. We worked as seasonal labourers. Sometimes we crossed into Iraq and at other times into Turkey. But we were always nomads, like we are now, like our grandfathers were before us. We have relatives in Iraq, in Mardin, in Diyarbakir, we used to marry off our daughters and sons to one another. When the war began we stayed in Qamishli. There was no fighting there, but there were no jobs either. With the war, everyone became poorer. Some of us came here, some stayed behind. They tell us, you are not registered, you need to get papers from the muhtar [village foreman]. The muhtar won't give them to us. He says “You're here today, elsewhere tomorrow.” He's not wrong. Now we've come here so that the men can perhaps find work, but there is none. Those who offer jobs won't give them to us. Only those who can't find any workers, those whose workers have fled, and poor landlords whose harvest is due will give us jobs. They pay us very little. Others get 30-40 liras a day, we get maybe 20-30 liras. Sometimes they make us work but don't pay us at all: once the work is done they complain to the gendarmerie. ‘We don't want Gypsies here,’ they say. Life is very difficult in Turkey, very difficult.”

**Sex**

Male

**Age**

50

**Place of birth**

Qamishli

**Marital status**

Married

**Number of children**

4

**Number of household members**

8

**Languages spoken**

Arabic, Kurdish, Domari

**How he describes himself ethnically**

Dom

**Level of education**

Literate





were placed there if they wished. If there were no places available in the camps, the new arrivals first went to various provinces along the border and then moved on further in the hope of finding work. Those arriving in 2011 and 2012 generally preferred to settle in camps, or to live in the border provinces of Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Gaziantep and Hatay, in the hope that the war would end soon.

While initially records not kept at the border crossings, records later began to be kept. Due to their health problems, and the fact that they had started to rent homes, the need had arisen for a document identifying these people. Accordingly, the migrants were given “guest identification cards” to serve them until such time as they were granted the temporary refugee status envisaged in the relevant legislation.

A circular was issued which allowed for all kinds of emergency treatment to be provided to wounded persons taken to hospital. However, migrants applying to clinics for non-emergency healthcare needs were still required by law to provide a standardised identification document. The government took the decision to issue migrants a “Foreigner Identification Card”, which came to be known as the “blue card”, with which they could access healthcare services free of charge. Although this document was only valid for healthcare institutions, in time it came to be used by other institutions – for example by members of the security forces conducting identity checks. Aid organisations and NGOs also began to accept this card as an official document for identifying those in need.

The card was later expanded in scope so as to ensure the registration of all Syrian migrants. It was now known as a “Temporary Republic of Turkey Identity Card”, and each one was numbered with a number that began with 98 or later 99. At present the card is called “Temporary Protection Identification Document”.

Now all procedures are carried out with this card. This has necessitated the registration of nearly three million migrants who crossed the border without being registered.



Some Dom communities, especially those who arrived in 2010-2011, entered Turkey within groups of other migrants. There are some who spent their first year in camps. They were among the first to be registered, in the camps.

They were among the first to be registered, in the camps. Those who were the first to be registered became unable to use their cards when they left the camps to travel to other provinces. For example, if a person was initially registered in the province of Kilis and later travelled to Gaziantep, their document will have become useless.

The other way in which Doms have entered Turkey is via mined territory. One reason for this is that at times the fighting in Syria has flared up and caused waves of displacement. Under such circumstances, if people are far away from a border crossing, they will use old smugglers' routes that cross minefields, and security forces on the border are obliged to let them in. Dom communities, Kurds without identification and those fleeing during attacks have usually had to enter Turkey via minefields. The reason why Dom communities have preferred this to entry via border crossings is that they want to have as little contact as possible with the state. The Dom particularly express fear of radical Islamist groups. They have many bitter experiences in their collective memory. They have heard about, or experienced at first hand, the frequently-violent attitudes which rising radical Islamist groups have adopted towards groups such as theirs in the places they have come to control. Alawite-Bektashi Abdal groups in particular have preferred the dangerous minefield route as a way of crossing the border. Those who have crossed the border over mined land generally do not register unless they want to seek social assistance and healthcare services, and do not apply for documentation. If they have relatives living in Turkey, which most of them do, then they make use of their resources, or obtain the identification card with their help and support.

During the field study it was observed that most Doms possessed Temporary Protection Identity Documents. The groups which were the first to arrive from Syria have Guest Cards, which do not have identity numbers. Many people have updated their cards with a number starting with 98 and obtained a Temporary Protection Document with a number starting with 99. The greatest handicap for these groups is the fact that the documents are only valid for use in the province in which they were issued. The Dom lead a migratory lifestyle and often change places. Under the circumstances, should they move to another province, they cannot benefit from services other than first-tier healthcare. This presents a special risk for women and babies. During vaccination periods, children need to remain in the province where they were registered. For example, if a baby born in Kayseri and her family move to Gaziantep, they cannot

make use of healthcare services there except in emergencies. When they go to general practitioners or hospitals, they are told to travel to the province where they were registered and

the vaccinations are not carried out. The same applies to pregnant women. As a result, pregnancies cannot be monitored and check-ups performed. The health of the mother and the baby are put under risk.

The way of life of the Dom migrants prevents most of them from being registered. However, registration is a very important obligation for foreigners in Turkey and provides the legal grounds for their access to public services including healthcare and education. The Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM), which is responsible for the registration of Syrian migrants in Turkey, is unable to reach out to Dom communities, or cannot undertake their registration for various reasons: because they are a migratory people, for example, the muhtar (village foremen) may not give them the necessary documents, or they may regularly move from one province to another. Moreover, the institutions and persons responsible for registration tend to be reluctant to register them because of their prejudices. Members of the community have stated that they tend to avoid the authorities because of unpermitted crossings over the border, lack of information or misinformation about the documentation process and the prejudiced approach of officials towards them

During the interviews, those without Temporary Protection Identification Documents explained the situation as follows:

*“ The muhtars won't give us documents stating we live here, they want to see our electricity or water accounts. We don't ask for many documents from the muhtar anyway, but when we go to register, they keep giving us another date so that we get fed up of it.*

Among the Dom families who were observed during the field study not to have Temporary Protection Identification Documents, some were living in tents or in abandoned buildings and could not get the residence documentation necessary for registration. Others met all the criteria but were made to wait for no reason and were still unable to get their Temporary Protection Identification Documents.

In addition, some of the migrants, having taken to the nomadic lifestyle again in order to find work, are registered but do not want to claim their Temporary Protection Identification Document because it is only valid for use in the province in which it is issued. Dom migrants who have taken refuge in Turkey have major problems finding work.

They wander the streets all day in the hope of finding daily employment, and are mostly only able to get jobs in waste collection and recycling, which have long working hours and low pay. They are forced to work on exploitative terms and in poor conditions. Women and children either peddle goods in the street or collect food and aid in order to survive (Yıldız, 2015).



Foreigners Residence Identification Document





## **Legal Arrangements of the Directorate General of Migration Management for Registration of Syrians under Temporary Protection Status**

### **Temporary Protection Regulation**

The Temporary Protection Regulation of October 22nd 2014 drawn up by the Directorate General of Migration Management includes the Syrians within the scope of the temporary protection regime and permits them to stay in Turkey with a Temporary Protection Identification Document issued in their name.

This document:

- Is not equivalent to the resident permit or documents valid in place of a residence permit governed by Law No. 6458, other than the right to stay in Turkey.
- Is not subject to any charge or fee.
- Includes a foreigner identification number that provides the foreigner with access to the assistance and services provided.
- Does not accord the right to transition to long-term resident permission.
- Does not secure the right to apply for Turkish citizenship since its duration is not taken into account in calculating the total length of legal residence.
- Makes it possible to enter into subscription agreements for other services including electronic communication services.

### **Circular No. 22 of 13/08/2014**

Sets out the actions to be performed and procedures to be followed with respect to the determination of Syrian foreigners' identities and their registration, encouragement of registration, the non-access of those who are not registered to rights other than emergency health services, the permission of those registered to remain in the country, their access to assistance and services, the departures of Syrians in Turkey for third countries, those who constitute a risk to the public order and the security of the public, requests for change of province of residence, and those who voluntarily leave the country or go to places unknown.

### **Circular No. 29 of 17/10/2014**

Governs the earliest possible completion of the registration of Syrian foreigners, the increase in policing policies aimed at identifying Syrians who have not been registered, the accompaniment of those who are not registered to registration centres by law and order officials, the personal monitoring and supervision of the registration process by provincial governors, and the establishment of commissions within provincial governorates to monitor the keeping up to date of registration procedures.

Sources: Directorate General of Migration Management [www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/gecici\\_koruma\\_alanında\\_yapılan\\_calismalarımız\\_ek3\(1\).pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/gecici_koruma_alanında_yapılan_calismalarımız_ek3(1).pdf)

Temporary Protection Regulation Official Gazette [www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141022-15-1.pdf](http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141022-15-1.pdf)

## Lack of Decent Shelter: Ruined Residences, Cabins, Tents

Dom families generally prefer to inhabit those neighbourhoods where Dom communities in Turkey are already settled, in empty houses, stores or cabins, in ruined and preferably abandoned buildings. If the space is owned, the owners generally ask for a monthly rent of TRY250-400. Yet these homes do not generally have separate toilets or kitchens and seldom have more than one room. The doors and windows of these structures are often in disrepair and do not work properly. Repairs are carried out with whatever materials the migrants can salvage. As they cannot pay the bills, their power and water is cut off. These needs are sometimes met by willing neighbours. Water is sometimes procured from nearby parks or mosques. Very few of the families taking part in the field study said that they had been able to meet their heating needs last winter through the coal and fuel aid provided by municipalities.



Adana 2015 - Syrian Dom family in the house they rented

“ *Before the war, we would migrate between Jarabulus, Manbij and the nearby villages. We women would work in the fields and men in construction if they could get work. If there was no work, we would collect aid. In those villages they knew us, our fathers, our grandfathers. Because of this no-one looked down on us. The young men would go to weddings and play music. Now we're here and we're wretched. They want 250 liras a month for this ruin. There is no glass in the windows, just one room and a kitchen, the toilet is outside. It's very cold in the winter. We have relatives here in Birecik. The children sometimes get work in the neighbourhood with their help. If they find a job they work, if not they stay at home. Now they've gone to clear stones from a field. They get 30 liras a day. It only pays for vegetables. There are 11 people here, grandchildren, daughters, sons-in-law. Where else can they go? They do not let us live in tents, it is forbidden to live in tents, that's what the police and the gendarmerie say.*

*We went to Urfa, they wouldn't let us stay, they pulled down the tents. We went to Gaziantep, the same happened. They said tents were allowed in Kilis. Then a tent burned down there with a woman and a child inside, the police came and took down the tents. Then we came here, near our relatives and they found us this house, bless them. We've been here for almost a year. Such is our life.*

**Sex**

Female

**Age**

48

**Place of birth**

Jarabulus

**Marital status**

Married

**Number of children**

5

**Number of household members**

11

**Languages spoken**

Arabic, Kurdish, Domari

**How she describes herself ethnically**

Dom

**Level of education**

Non



They generally make use of fuel derived from refuse or given to them by their neighbours. In the homes, the stove in the common room is used for both heating and cooking. In the spaces which are used as the kitchen, there are generally one pot and a few spoons and plates; gas stoves and other necessary kitchen appliances are almost non-existent. Those that do have these items were either given them by their neighbours or found discarded ones.

### **Crowded Families: Our Relatives are Here**

Gypsy families are generally very large. Even if brothers and sisters are married, they tend to live in the same accommodation. Married couples live together with elderly parents and single siblings. This helps to keep the Gypsies together, so that they live in greater safety against the dangers of the outside world. It also means that there are many people to bring home food and income, while costs are reduced. Extended families are encircled by a wider community of relatives. Beyond this circle can generally be found the community of Dom from Turkey, and this greater circle forms the neighbourhood.

Gypsy communities feel safer in this way. This is especially important for Dom communities. These communities often answer the question "Why did you come here?" with the words "merime le verin" (Our relatives are here). For the Abdal community, these kinship relations stem from a concern to live in close proximity to communities who follow the Alawite/Bektashi faith. Today in Turkey, for example, many Abdal communities prefer to live in neighbourhoods inhabited mostly by Alawites.

### **Life in Tents**

The right to shelter is one of the most significant of all basic rights and freedoms. It is a basis for the realisation of many other rights and freedoms. In other words, it is one of the fundamental rights for a decent life. However, shelter is often one of the main problems faced by migrants and refugees. Many migrants outside camps live in unhealthy tents. The tents which the Dom migrants inhabit are in disrepair, very inadequate in terms of hygiene and health and have no toilets or baths. It has been observed that between five and ten people inhabit one tent. The hygiene conditions and unmet healthcare needs of those living in tents present a great risk of contagious disease.

A 50 year-old woman interviewed in a tent in Gaziantep said: *"Because we live in tents, the gendarmerie come every two weeks after getting complaints and want us to move on. But we do no-one any harm."*

Yet there is a need for very urgent measures first and foremost to identify places of residence so that the migrants can have access to basic services, and to grant them long term permission and enable them to benefit from healthcare and education services regularly. In the winter they need blankets, heaters and clothes for young children ap-

proprate to the season. The main reasons why the faces of the children are covered in scars are the poor living conditions in the tents and the fact that they are always out in the open. soba ve küçük çocukların mevsime uygun giyeceğe ihtiyaçları oluyor. Çocukların yüzlerinin yara bere içinde olmamasının en önemli nedeni sürekli açık havada ve çadırlardaki kötü koşullarda yaşamaktır.

## Poor Health and Hygiene Conditions

In interviews and discussions with the Dom community, mention was often made of problems with disabilities and respiration, cases of leishmaniasis were observed and the risk of contagious disease was seen to be high. There were many migrants with mental disabilities, and some had problems with teeth, eyes and digestion. The communities were also observed to not to be able to take advantage of many healthcare services due to lack of information. In some cases, healthcare services do not reach these communities at all. In many tent settlements there were Dom who were unregistered, who did not have a Temporary Protection Identification Document and who therefore could not access healthcare services. There was also a high proportion of persons who did not have access to healthcare because they were living in a province other than the one where their Temporary Protection Identification Document was issued, for work or other reasons.



*I'm eight months pregnant, I've been for checks a few times. They accept me at the emergency room, but not at the family health centre. They tell me that I got my ID in Kayseri and I should go there. They won't give me a new ID here. Everyday my hands and feet go numb and I can't stand up. Sometimes I have pains, we go to the state hospital accidents and emergency unit, only they will accept me. At the unit, a doctor examined me, gave me an IV drip and medicine. I stayed there for a night then the doctor sent me away. My husband used to collect scrap metal, now they've banned that as well. Now he collects plastic and iron, that's all we have to live on. He makes 15-20 liras a day. He can't find a job to work in. If I weren't pregnant, perhaps we'd have gone somewhere else for seasonal work. The war will never end now, we can't go back. All we had we left behind. Even coming here, they hardly let us in. At the border, while everyone was crossing over, the gendarmerie wouldn't let us in, they said 'These are Gypsies, what are they doing here.' We went elsewhere and crossed over a minefield, and came here to our relatives. It was with their aid that we've survived until now, they gave us our meals most of the time.*

**Sex**  
Female

**Age**  
20

**Place of birth**  
Manbij

**Marital status**  
Married

**Number of children**  
1

**Number of household members**  
6

**Languages spoken**  
Arapça, Kürtçe

**How she describes herself ethnically**  
Abdal

**Level of education**  
Literate





Gaziantep - Nizip 2015  
Syrian Dom girl  
washing dishes

One of the most important problems of the Dom is access to food. While they cannot find enough food to have three meals a day, they also share the food they can get with others. Emotional disorders have been observed in children who are malnourished and who live in unhealthy conditions. Delayed development, stunting, tooth and eye disorders and some digestive tract disorders were also reported in children, again related to malnutrition.

A 35 year-old man interviewed for the study said:



*We can't get food aid, we generally eat what vegetables we can find. But our most important problem is water, we have trouble finding clean water.*

## Infants and children

Infants and children in particular have been found to have sores on their bodies because they have not been well cared for. Some new-born babies had not been vaccinated and mothers were found to have insufficient information on this topic. Health institutions are reported not to do anything for pregnant women and babies who live in tents. Many illnesses occur because persons without Temporary Protection Identification Documents, or living in provinces other than those in which they are registered, are asked to pay for the full cost of treatment, and because the Dom are also unable to take their medicines regularly due to their financial circumstances. Some infants and children in the groups of Dom living in tents who were visited during the field work were found to have chickenpox or leishmaniasis<sup>2</sup>. It was reported that the elderly and the disabled do not have access to preventive healthcare services. The illnesses of many migrants who are mentally disabled or under mental health risks were said to have advanced due to a total lack of healthcare services.



*We call this the “Oriental ulcer.” [leishmaniasis] Look! We all have it. The flies around the Euphrates give it to you, they say. It first grows like a pimple, then it spreads, eats the flesh from the inside. It is very difficult for the children. It leaves marks on the face. We can’t get treatment. We don’t have a card, we got one in Kilis when we were there. They won’t treat us here, they tell us to go where we got the card from. We adults bear up, but the children suffer a lot. What are we to do? We have no one here, they don’t treat us like people, they won’t let us pitch our tents. They won’t take care of our sick. We’re desperate. They call us Qurbet. As if we were not human beings.*



**Sex**  
Female

**Age**  
55

**Place of birth**  
Manbij

**Marital status**  
Married

**Number of children**  
6

**Number of household members**  
9

**Languages spoken**  
Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish

**How she describes herself ethnically**  
Dom

**Level of education**  
Non



<sup>2</sup> Çadırlarda Kalan Suriyeli Çocuklarda ‘Şark Çıbanı’na Rastlandı  
[www.milliyet.com.tr/d/t1.aspx?ID=598557](http://www.milliyet.com.tr/d/t1.aspx?ID=598557)

## Trauma and Worries about the Future

Trauma caused by the war and the fighting, and concern about the future, were apparent among the Dom migrants interviewed during the field work. They constantly repeated that they did not know what they would do in the future, that they were unable to make plans, and that if the war came to an end almost all of them wanted to go back. Being forced to move on as a result of the interventions of the law enforcers in the places where they now lived leads to additional trauma. However, neither the children nor any other members of the family were receiving any kind of psychosocial support service.

The main reasons for trauma are as follows:

- Having difficulty in obtaining food, water and clothing,
- Being made to work for low pay, on top of the discrimination and difficulties faced when seeking work,
- Constantly wanting to live together among themselves for reasons of safety, and a belief that there is no other mechanism for their protection,
- Fear of families and groups being dispersed,
- Distrust of the local society,
- Vulnerability of women and girls to sexual abuse on account of their different identities, their living conditions and their housing situation,
- Being obliged to move on frequently for reasons such as local administrations and neighbourhood pressure,
- Fear of being sent to camps and of being deported.

## Baths and washing

The Dom have no materials for washing and bathing other than warm water, soap and plastic hand basins. Warm water for bathing is usually warmed on the stove in the winter months. As baths become impossible for days and even weeks during hard winter conditions, the hair of all the children, boys and girls alike, is cut very short. This is also a precaution against lice. Another reason why the hair of girls is cut very short is to prevent young girls from being sexually molested by men in the places where they work.





2016 Sanlurfa - Dom children bathing  
in the Euphrates, Bireck

Esma, a sixteen year-old girl interviewed during the field research, was quite upset at having her hair cut short. Gypsy women, particularly the Abdals, pay a lot of attention to their hair and make-up. Esma and her family live in a ruined stone house in the old Armenian quarter of Gaziantep.

The family have previously lived in different parts of the city and in tents in settlement areas traditionally used by Dom communities. The men work in temporary jobs or day-labour or collect aid in the streets. The women and girls usually stay in the tents looking after the children. Esma and her family had been encountered before on a number of occasions when they were living in different places. These historical settlement areas outside the city are places where the local Dom groups lived mainly, and which are known in local society as Gypsy Camp Sites. In Kilis, Gaziantep and İslâhiye, these areas are usually empty pieces of land situated close to a spring or a drinking fountain. For hundreds of years, they have been known as the “migration spaces” or camps of the Gypsy communities. Esma’s family stated that these places were often checked out by the police, gendarmerie or municipal police, and that Syrian groups in particular would be warned to rent houses or to go to one of the camps. They said that this was the reason why they had to live in a house – otherwise they would be threatened with being sent to Syria. They explained that as they had no financial resources, they had taken refuge in this ruined house and occupied it. For this reason, everybody, even the children, were obliged to work or to seek assistance on the street or by visiting the houses in nearby neighbourhoods. They said that the women in particular felt very uncomfortable about this and that young women were often molested. In a field interview conducted about two years ago, Esma’s mother had said that they cut her hair so that people would think she was a child. Esma stated that she was very upset about this. During the field work for the present study, when Esma was interviewed again, she was found to have covered her hair with a headscarf. “I don’t cut my hair anymore, so when I go out on the street I cover my head,” she explained. Esma said that when her hair was cut she looked like a boy, but actually she had lovely hair.



Antakya 2013 - Dom family came from Syria,  
children carrying tent poles

## Obstacles to the Education of Children



Figures from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) put the number of Syrian migrant children in Turkey at 1,490,033 as of April 4, 2016 (They make up 54% of the Syrian population). Of these, 860,000 were of the age of compulsory education. The number of children enrolled in school was 325,000. There is no information as to how many of these children attend school regularly.

The education of Syrian migrant children in Turkey is seen as the most fundamental of their problems. This is compounded by issues in urgent need of attention such as the citizenship of the approximately 250,000 children who have been born in Turkey and remain “stateless”. Children who cannot receive an education are sent to work in the street, workshops or fields so that they will learn a profession or contribute to the survival of their families. This has left Turkey facing a new issue – the issue of Syrian migrant child labour.

With respect to combating child labour, directly or indirectly, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Minimum Age Convention no 138 and ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention no. 182, all of which Turkey has signed, as well as national laws and regulations, have forbidden the employment of children who have not yet reached the age of 15. The age limit for the worst forms of child labour is 18.

Child labour creates important problems for human development. Working children are to a large extent deprived of their education, of a healthy environment and of basic free-

### THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Most of the Syrian children do not know any language apart from Arabic, so they come up against a language barrier in schools that teach in Turkish.

### ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

Families do not have enough money to pay for expenses such as transport, school equipment and in the case of temporary education centres school fees. Concerned about the potential impact on its own unemployed population, Turkey has only permitted the Syrian refugee population limited rights to work, and child labour is quite widespread. Mothers and fathers who have no security in terms of working life, are unable to earn a fair living in return for their labour, and so many families are reliant on the income brought home by their children.

### SOCIAL ADAPTATION

Some Syrian children do not enrol their children in the state schools in their places of residence because they fear that they will be bullied and that they will have difficulty getting on with their Turkish classmates.

doms. Work at an early age is also known to damage the physical, social, cultural and emotional development of the child.

Deprived of the right to education, migrant children, the greatest victims of the civil war in Syria, end up working in order to contribute to their families' struggle for survival. Children are made to work in fields and orchards in rural areas, and in workshops or on the street in towns and cities. The fact that adults cannot find jobs also forces children to work. In provinces like Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Adana and Mersin, and the other border provinces in which the Syrians live, Syrian children have to work in knitting workshops, textiles factories, dried fruit plants, shoemakers' workshops and garages where cars are repaired, and in tasks such as agricultural labour, selling paper handkerchiefs on the street and selling water. This burden of work unsuitable for their ages compounds the trauma of having escaped from the civil war in Syria, abandoned their homes, and lost - or been separated from - their loved ones. All this increased the negative physical and psychological impact on the children. The increasing number of news items on the subject in the international and national media constitutes the evidence of the study in this respect. According to these news items, children are also widely employed in most of the manufacturing workshops opened by Syrian employers. Child labour has become particularly prevalent in fields of heavy manual work such as plastics, shoe-making and knitwear. Working for 12-14 hours a day alongside adult workers in dark workshops that never see any sunshine, the child labourers are generally low paid. Their bodies are exposed to chemicals and difficult working conditions at an early age, and signs of occupational diseases soon start to appear.<sup>3</sup>



Gaziantep – 2016  
Children gathering good left over  
from their tents demolished by the Police

<sup>3</sup> Syrian child labourers are unable to go to school, forced to work cheaply  
[www.evrensel.net/haber/283807/suriyeli-cocuk-isci-asansorde-can-verdi](http://www.evrensel.net/haber/283807/suriyeli-cocuk-isci-asansorde-can-verdi)

Reuters reports on Syrian child labour  
[www.birgun.net/haber-detay/reuters-suriyeli-cocuk-iscileri-yazdi-121790.html](http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/reuters-suriyeli-cocuk-iscileri-yazdi-121790.html)

H&M admission on Syrian child labourers  
[www.birgun.net/haber-detay/h-m-den-suriyeli-cocuk-isci-itirafi-102436.html](http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/h-m-den-suriyeli-cocuk-isci-itirafi-102436.html)

BBC Turkish Service – Syrian child labourer: The lesson was hard but working is harder  
[www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/02/160209\\_suriyeli\\_cocuk\\_isci](http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/02/160209_suriyeli_cocuk_isci)

When the parents can't find jobs, the children work  
[www.dw.com/tr/ebeveynler-iş-bulamayınca-çocuklar-çalışıyor/a-19068094](http://www.dw.com/tr/ebeveynler-iş-bulamayınca-çocuklar-çalışıyor/a-19068094)

course of the fieldwork were found not to have benefited in any way from educational opportunities. Together with the prejudices they face, the most important reason for this is the fact that they belong to a community that constantly has to live on the move, and must frequently change their places of residence. One nine year-old child who was interviewed summed up the situation as follows:

“*If we go to school they will keep us away. In any case, we never stop in one place, we are always moving around. I am working here. So my mother doesn't send me.*”

The families think that their children will be discriminated against on account of their ethnic identity both by other Syrian groups and by Turkish children. Nevertheless, these migrant children, who live in tents and are frequently on the move, need to be directed towards the state schools in the places where they are living, regardless of their identity or their place of residence. Under the Circular No. 2014/21<sup>4</sup> of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), it is possible for Syrian children to enrol in any state school with the foreigner identification document given to them (MoNE, 2014). In addition, if they have a regular place of shelter, transport problems that prevent them from accessing education can be resolved through school bus services. It would also be possible to conduct educational activities with the educators, the children and the families on the elimination of prejudices. One of the most important problems of children who live in tents and do not go to school is the lack of data and information concerning these children. According to their parents, not a single public official has asked them for information about the problem of education for these children. During the interviews, the families were seen to be particularly interested in their children learning Turkish. It was also observed that there was hardly any communication among public institutions, civil society organisations and the Dom groups. It appears that these migrants have not in any way been informed about the assistance available and education activities under way, or about their basic rights.<sup>5</sup>

## Relations with Local Society and Exclusion

The Dom migrants mainly come into contact with the local people when they are working or when they go out to seek aid and work. The provinces with the most Doms are Hatay, Kilis, Osmaniye, Adana, Mersin, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, Mardin, Batman, Diyarbakir, Izmir, Kayseri and Konya. The study of news items

<sup>4</sup> Circular on education and training services for foreigners  
[kayapinar.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2014\\_10/31103130\\_genelge.pdf](http://kayapinar.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2014_10/31103130_genelge.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF: Syrian Children should Go to School not Work  
[bianet.bianet.org/bianet/cocuk/175760-unicef-suriyeli-cocuklar-okula-gitmeli-ise-degil](http://bianet.bianet.org/bianet/cocuk/175760-unicef-suriyeli-cocuklar-okula-gitmeli-ise-degil)

and the responses given in interviews conducted during the field research concerning the places where the groups interviewed had resided or gone to work, or where they had relatives or friends, showed that they have also lived in other provinces besides the above. The other provinces mentioned are Istanbul, Ankara, Antalya, Denizli, Bursa, Kocaeli, Van, Şırnak, Elazığ, Malatya, Nevşehir, Aksaray, Sivas and Kırıkkale.

In the provinces to which these communities have migrated, they are encountered following a nomadic way of life in tents, living on the outskirts of the cities, residing in rented housing or tents in the Roma or Dom neighbourhoods of the cities, camping in the irregular tent settlements they have set up themselves, or living in houses that have been vacated or partly knocked down in urban transformation zones such as Ankara's Dikmen Valley, the Fikirtepe and Tarlabaşı areas of Istanbul, and Kadife Kale in Izmir.

Where the Dom inhabit areas populated by people of similar identities as their own, there are no major problems in their relations with their neighbours. Indeed, among all the Syrian migrants, the Dom communities can be said to be one of the most harmonious groups. Among the Doms there is a great social harmony. There are occasional marriages and joint business ventures between the groups, and many households are seen to undertake seasonal work together.

Problems are more frequent with local people who are not Doms and with the security forces. Local people living close to groups who are living in tents, in particular, frequently complain about them. They do not want to see these people in the vicinity of their living areas. Upon their complaints, the municipal police, the police or the gendarmerie ask the Doms to move their tents elsewhere. If they do not comply, they destroy their tents and warn them to leave the area. Especially in smaller towns and districts, local administrations often demand that these people be moved outside their borders. In these situations, the tents are pulled down or burned, or the group's belongings are gathered up and taken away by the municipal police. In border villages and towns, community members and security personnel frequently spoke of Doms being taken to the border and extradited.<sup>6</sup>

The relevant authorities also obstruct the assistance which civil society organisations and other humanitarian aid organisations provide or would like to provide to the Doms, on the grounds that this kind of assistance will only encourage them to live on the streets. Living in makeshift tents, and collecting aid on the streets or working, the Doms are also confronted with the interventions of the law enforcement agencies, based on the complaints of the local people.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Syrians and Gypsies are Living Together  
[www.urfahaber24.com/sanliurfa/suriyeli-ve-cingeneler-karmasik-yasiyor-h17131.html](http://www.urfahaber24.com/sanliurfa/suriyeli-ve-cingeneler-karmasik-yasiyor-h17131.html)

<sup>7</sup> Syrians living in tents in Ankara removed with difficulty  
[www.ihha.com.tr/video-ankarada-cadirda-yasayan-suriyeliler-guclukle-tahliye-edildi-78787/](http://www.ihha.com.tr/video-ankarada-cadirda-yasayan-suriyeliler-guclukle-tahliye-edildi-78787/)

## Circular on Beggars: “We Don’t Want Them Either!”

Dom migrants are often described in the Turkish press as “Syrian beggars” or “Syrian Gypsies”. This has made the already-difficult living conditions of this group even tougher. Media reports which suggest that the situation of Dom migrants is a consequence of their own preferences heighten the social exclusion and discrimination which they face.

Under the influence of reporting in some media sources, the anti-Syrian sentiments which occasionally come to the surface in Turkey tend to be directed towards the Dom. Statements are often made to the media, including - unfortunately - by representatives of Syrian migrants, to the effect that “These are Gypsies, they begged in Syria, we don’t want them here either, they are not Arabs” . This leads to a reaction against the community among society and security forces.

The recommendation 48952707/205/000 of the DGMM dated July 25th 2014 and the Circular No. 46 numbered 313111769.4976(91244) of the General Directorate of Security dated July 25th 2014 state that:<sup>8</sup> “Those among Syrian foreigners who have become involved in crime or have otherwise disturbed public order or pose a risk to public safety and those who continue to beg, live on the street etc. despite warnings should be escorted to accommodation centres run by AFAD by security personnel.” This circular is known in public as “the circular on beggars” and leads to discrimination against and

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<sup>8</sup> Governorate of the Province of Muş website report: We’ve Sent Begging Syrians to Camps  
[mus.goc.gov.tr/tr/news/suriyeli-dilencileri-kamplara-gonderdik](http://mus.goc.gov.tr/tr/news/suriyeli-dilencileri-kamplara-gonderdik)

### Organised Crime

[www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/organize-isler](http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/organize-isler)

### Syria’s most hated refugees find sanctuary in an Istanbul ghetto

[www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jun/02/syrias-gypsy-refugees-sanctuary-istanbul-turkey-ghetto-how-long-will-last?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jun/02/syrias-gypsy-refugees-sanctuary-istanbul-turkey-ghetto-how-long-will-last?CMP=share_btn_tw)

### The forgotten children of Turkey’s Syrian refugee crisis

[www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/the-forgotten-children-of-turkeys-syrian-refugee-crisis](http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/the-forgotten-children-of-turkeys-syrian-refugee-crisis)

### Some of Syria’s most marginalized people don’t even feel safe in refugee camps

[www.pri.org/stories/2015-10-21/some-syrias-most-marginalized-people-dont-even-feel-safe-refugee-camps](http://www.pri.org/stories/2015-10-21/some-syrias-most-marginalized-people-dont-even-feel-safe-refugee-camps)

### Syrians and Gypsies Live Together

[www.urfahaber24.com/santiurfa/suriyeli-ve-cingeneler-karmasik-yasiyor-h17131.html](http://www.urfahaber24.com/santiurfa/suriyeli-ve-cingeneler-karmasik-yasiyor-h17131.html)

### Action Plan to Combat Begging in Aydın

[www.haberturk.com/yerel-haberler/haber/47201131-aydinda-dilencilikle-mucadele-eylem-plani-uygulamaya-konuldu](http://www.haberturk.com/yerel-haberler/haber/47201131-aydinda-dilencilikle-mucadele-eylem-plani-uygulamaya-konuldu)

### Hunt For Syrians in the Heart of Istanbul

[www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/m/haber/turkiye/531945/istanbul\\_un\\_gobeginde\\_Suriyeli\\_avi.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/m/haber/turkiye/531945/istanbul_un_gobeginde_Suriyeli_avi.html)

### Our Work on Syrian Refugees Under Temporary Protection

[www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/gecici\\_koruma\\_alaninda\\_yapilan\\_calismalarimiz\\_ek3\(1\).pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/gecici_koruma_alaninda_yapilan_calismalarimiz_ek3(1).pdf)

### Operation Against Syrian Refugees in Bursa

[m.bursadabugun.com/haber/bursa-da-suriyeli-multecilere-operasyon-614993.html](http://m.bursadabugun.com/haber/bursa-da-suriyeli-multecilere-operasyon-614993.html)

### Syrians Living in Turkey Are Upset By ‘Syrian Beggars’

[www.haberler.com/turkiye-de-yasayan-suriyeliler-suriyeli-dilenciler-7979462-haberi/](http://www.haberler.com/turkiye-de-yasayan-suriyeliler-suriyeli-dilenciler-7979462-haberi/)

### They Are Gypsy Tents, Not Syrian Tents

[www.antalyakorfez.com/guncel/16300/2/olnarsuriyelidegilcingenecadiri](http://www.antalyakorfez.com/guncel/16300/2/olnarsuriyelidegilcingenecadiri)

### How will the issue of Syrian beggars, which bothers Arab tourists most, be solved?)

[www.gunebakis.com.tr/haber/104656/arap-turistlerin-en-cok-rahatsiz-oldugu-suriyeli-dilenciler-sorunu-nasil-cozulecek.html](http://www.gunebakis.com.tr/haber/104656/arap-turistlerin-en-cok-rahatsiz-oldugu-suriyeli-dilenciler-sorunu-nasil-cozulecek.html)

maltreatment of Gypsy communities (i.e. the Dom community) who have arrived from Syria (Tarlan, 2014).

The circular was sent out to all 81 provincial governorates and the security forces have offered Syrian migrants living in tents two options: to settle in camps or to rent accommodation. This circular directly targets the Dom. Governors of many provinces instructed security forces to implement the circular strictly. A hunt begun in some provinces. Children collecting aid in the street were sent to camps without their families being notified. Those individuals or groups who did not want to go to the camps run by AFAD were displaced and some groups were forced to return to war-torn Syria. Under the circular, security forces have sometimes arbitrarily sent Dom migrants back to Syria. Many examples of the Dom being picked up off the streets and being sent to camps, and of those facing this injustice being unable to make their voices heard, have been encountered in press reports and in field study interviews. During the field study many cases were cited in which security forces had taken members of Dom households, especially women and children, to camps against their will, and these people had had to stay in camps for months. Many Doms were held for months in Osmaniye Düziçi Temporary Accommodation Centre, where they were heard by no one and desperately waited. Public administrators cite the circular and claim that camps offer better conditions for Doms.

A Dom man who was kept for approximately five months at the Osmaniye Düziçi Temporary Accommodation Centre recounted his experiences as follows:

*“I used to work on a farm in Bursa with my family. My four children, wife and I worked on the farm for about a year. My sons worked as shepherds, the rest of us did field work. One night the gendarmerie came and picked us up. We stayed in Bursa for a week. My sons, 16 and 13, were grazing the animals so they couldn't find them. They sent me, my daughters and my wife to Osmaniye. We stayed in Osmaniye for five months and found no one who would listen to us. They wouldn't let us out. When we asked for permission to go out, they kept our children behind as hostages. We stayed there doing nothing for months, waiting. They gave us food. Believe me it was worse than prison for us. How can one just sit around, doing nothing all day? Around 600 people were picked up from different provinces and brought there. They called it the camp for thieves, beggars, Gypsies. We had found work in Bursa, somehow managed to get by. They split up our household. My two sons were left behind, we did not see them for months.”*

The report *Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Adjustment*, which was published by the Migration and Policy Studies Centre of Hacettepe University in 2014, states that

“Syrian beggars” are one of the most disturbing topics for Syrians in Turkey. Syrians have claimed that these people did not become impoverished after coming to Turkey but are “Dom groups” and “professional beggar groups” who used to beg in Syria. The perspective of the report is indicative of the prejudice towards Dom communities in all countries, including Syria. The report has the following to say concerning the detention and forceful placement of these migrant groups, who continue to face discrimination in Turkey, as they did before the war in Syria, in accordance with the June 2014 circular (Erdoğan, 2014):



*“The policy of picking up beggars and placing them in camps which began after June 2014 has brought apparent relief, however the issue of begging needs to be taken up seriously both from a security perspective and as a perception that has ‘stuck’ to all Syrians. Begging triggers alienation, denigration, hatred and enmity and the demand that even tougher measures should be taken against it is widespread.”*

The report claims that tougher measures beyond placement in camps will be a measure for preventing hatred. It ignores the fact that these groups who are detained and sent to camps as “beggars” are discriminated against by the other Syrian groups there due to their ethnic identity and therefore do not want to stay in camps. The perception that all Doms are “beggars” is the greatest obstacle to ensuring that this group benefits from the same rights as all the other groups arriving from Syria. The ethnic discrimination against this group by others in camps is the foremost reason why they do not want to stay in camps and have to opt for a nomadic lifestyle.

For all these reasons, the Dom try to survive by travelling from place to place and without compromising their own traditions. Whatever its identity, culture, language or beliefs may be, every community has the right to shelter and life. Accessing these basic rights has become a matter of life and death for the Dom in Turkey. Due to prejudices and the exclusion they face, and for economic and social reasons, many migrants live on the outskirts of towns, only near enough to have access to water, and yet they still lack water. As the tents they inhabit do not have toilets or bathrooms, they pose significant health risks. A number of families live together, with each tent housing five to ten individuals. As these groups lack access to healthcare as a result of being constantly told to go away by security forces citing “complaints”, they run a high risk of exposure to contagious diseases. The communities constantly come in contact with other communities, increasing the risk of infection and of the hosting of contagious diseases such as measles. Groups which are constantly on the move have very low access to healthcare services when they travel to provinces other than the one in which they were registered.

## Dom Women: Discrimination First by Identity, Then by Sex

Following the migration, Dom women have sometimes come to shoulder the burden of household survival in place of men who cannot find work. Those women who have lost their spouses in the war, in particular, have begun to work to ensure the survival of their children and households.

A migrant woman with children recounted her time looking for work in a poor neighbourhood where they had taken refuge, speaking of her will to life, her desperation and her belief that only she could light the way for herself:



According to men whose doors I knock on to ask for work, I am just a woman in need. They think 'poverty begets poverty'. I want to work and be justly rewarded for my labour. I am not offering up my body, but my labour. In return I ask for bread for my children, because I have no other choice if I'm to live like a human being.

In the history of labour migration, migrant women have often worked in the most vulnerable, unqualified jobs with the worst conditions and the lowest pay. Especially in labour intensive sectors women have come to replace men. Women are intensively employed in agricultural work, work in seasonal agriculture, daily cleaning etc. and domestic work. Their situations as women, migrants, members of a different ethnic group and working class people, all combine to increase their exploitation to the maximum. The migrant working woman is disadvantaged compared to the local working woman as a migrant, disadvantaged compared to men as a woman and disadvantaged compared to qualified migrant workers as an unqualified worker. Working migrant women get almost 40 per cent less pay for their labour than men (Toksöz, 2004).

All of these points were underlined by the interviews conducted for the current study. The pay of working women was found to be 30-40 per cent lower than for men. Because the wages paid to women and children are lower than those paid to men, women were observed to be more widely employed than men, especially in agriculture.

The prejudiced approach of the local population towards women is reflected in the daily lives of migrant women. Migrant women face exploitation both in the street and while doing daily shopping. They have stated that some local women see them as rivals, instead of acting in solidarity. In this context, a 45 year-old local seasonal agricultural worker in Adana had the following to say about Syrians:





Gaziantep 2013  
Dom mother and child coming recently from Syria



*“Don’t talk to me about Syrians. They should go back to their country. They came and now we go hungry. They take our husbands away. They cover up, but they have their night clothes on underneath. They tell us that we dress like cabbages, layer after layer. They draw the curtains and go around in their underwear at home. It’s time they left. They wander around all day.”*

The negative social perception of Syrian migrant women is exacerbated when it comes to Dom women due to their ethnic identity. Press reports of “Syrian Gypsies” and “Syrian beggars” are often accompanied by images of women. Women who have to collect aid in the street are open to all forms of exploitation, sexual violence and abuse. Cases of girls collecting aid in the street being sexually assaulted have been identified by women’s organisations and taken to court.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Campaign Against the Sexual Exploitation of Syrian Girls  
[bianet.org/bianet/cocuk/163224-suriyeli-kiz-cocuklarina-yonelik-cinsel-somuruye-karsi-kampanya](http://bianet.org/bianet/cocuk/163224-suriyeli-kiz-cocuklarina-yonelik-cinsel-somuruye-karsi-kampanya)  
 Syrian Girl, 9, Sexually Exploited in a Cafe in Izmir  
[www.birgun.net/haber-detay/izmir-de-bir-kafede-9-yasindaki-suriyeli-cocuga-cinsel-istismar-107848.html](http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/izmir-de-bir-kafede-9-yasindaki-suriyeli-cocuga-cinsel-istismar-107848.html)  
 Syrian Beggar Girls Face Sexual Harrassment  
[www.urfanatik.com/yereel/suriyeli-dilenci-kizlar-tacize-maruz-kaliyor-h38385.html](http://www.urfanatik.com/yereel/suriyeli-dilenci-kizlar-tacize-maruz-kaliyor-h38385.html)



*I arrived from Syria four years ago. My father was killed during the war, in a bombardment. We waited a long time before we could cross the border. They would not give us permission to pass, we pitched tents and waited. A month later, for some reason, they let us pass. We set up tents in İmam Keskin, not long afterwards we went to Diyarbakir. There was no work in Diyarbakir. There was fighting there. We stayed in a house in the Sur district. They forced us out of there because of the fighting. It was like Aleppo in Syria, every day explosions could be heard. We left and came back here to Urfa. We are living in tents. There is no work, we go and collect aid in the street, that’s how we buy food. There is no work for our men.*

**Sex**

Female

**Age**

25

**Place of birth**

Aleppo

**Marital status**

Married

**Number of children**

2

**Number of household members**

9

**Languages spoken**

Arabic, Domari, Turkish

**How she describes herself ethnically**

Dom

**Level of education**

Non



## Employment and Unemployment

Many traditional Dom occupations such as folk dentistry, performing music, peddling, iron and tin smithing, sieve and basket making, rifle repairing, saddle and harness making, and hunting wild birds are not viable forms of income today. This means a narrower field of employment for the Dom. Many communities have shifted to the more modern extensions of these occupations or to different occupations altogether. Traditional dentistry is banned in many countries including Turkey on grounds of hygiene and expertise. Some Doms who practiced this occupation in Turkey in the past have become dental technicians or qualified workers at implant workshops. Some Dom traditional dentists continue to practice their occupations by travelling to Middle Eastern countries.



*Before we came to Turkey we worked in seasonal agriculture in fields around Kobane, Raqqa and the surrounding villages. After the civil war in Syria began, we escaped from the heavy fighting around Raqqa and took refuge in Kobane. We stayed there for about a year, then we came to Turkey because of the lack of food and work and the ISIS attacks. Some of our relatives stayed in Syria, others took refuge with relatives in Iraq. We passed through Urfa and on to Mardin. We have relatives there, we settled down in their neighbourhood. We came to Adana with them for seasonal agricultural work. There are no jobs, sometimes women and children get some work, a few days a week. The men can't work, they aren't given jobs. It is very hot in these parts and the neighbours don't want us here. If we were to ask them for one piece of ice for a cure, they wouldn't give us one.*

**Sex**  
Female

**Age**  
23

**Place of birth**  
Kobane

**Marital status**  
Married

**Number of children**  
2

**Number of household members**  
12

**Languages spoken**  
Arabic, Domari, Turkish

**How she describes herself ethnically**  
Dom

**Level of education**  
Non



Groups who are musicians and play the drum and zurna, as well as the clarinet have also started playing other orchestral instruments, especially percussion and the bağlama, and play at weddings and celebrations.

Most Doms can no longer practice their traditional occupations. Those living in rural areas undertake daily or seasonal work in agriculture and those in towns work in collecting waste and refuse, as porters, construction workers and peddlers. Most Doms interviewed for this study declared their occupations as waste/refuse collectors, seasonal agricultural labourers, porters, field and garden maintenance workers and construction workers.



Antakya - 2006  
A musician Dom group

In groups whose traditional occupations are performing music and folk dentistry, unemployment runs very high. These communities rely on collecting aid for survival. Dom communities work as agricultural and construction workers, porters and scrap collectors in the provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin. When they are found out to be Gypsies, they are generally not given jobs and if they have already been employed they are laid off. Those working as seasonal agricultural labourers are given jobs out of necessity due to the shortage of work or a late harvest (i.e. a shorter period for gathering the crop).

Another issue which the communities face – particularly those who live in towns and work as daily labourers or peddlers – is the attitudes of law enforcers. In an interview carried out during the field study, a Dom man said that he sells small items such as nail clippers, pen-knives, car ornaments and hand torches, as he did in Syria, carrying them around in a large bag in the small industrial zones where transporters, truckers and garages are located. However, his goods are often confiscated. A similar account was given in an interview with an Abdal group. The interviewee stated that he sells small cards with verses of the Quran printed on them, but that the trade police had confiscated his cards.

The Regulation on the Working Permits of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection was published in January 2016, regulating the entry of migrants into the work force.

During the field study, no Doms were encountered who were employed under the provisions of the regulation or who were even aware of the regulation or legislation. Article 5 of the regulation states, under the heading of “Applications for work permits and work permit exemptions”, that:

“Foreigners under temporary protection who are to work in agriculture and livestock are covered by the exemption from work permits. Work permit exemption applications are to be made to the governorate of the province where temporary protection as been provided. These applications will be forwarded to the Ministry by the relevant governor’s office. As the majority of Dom migrants from Syria work in jobs covered by the work permit exemption, they do not require work permits. However, no procedures concerning work permit exemptions have been carried out so far.<sup>10</sup>”

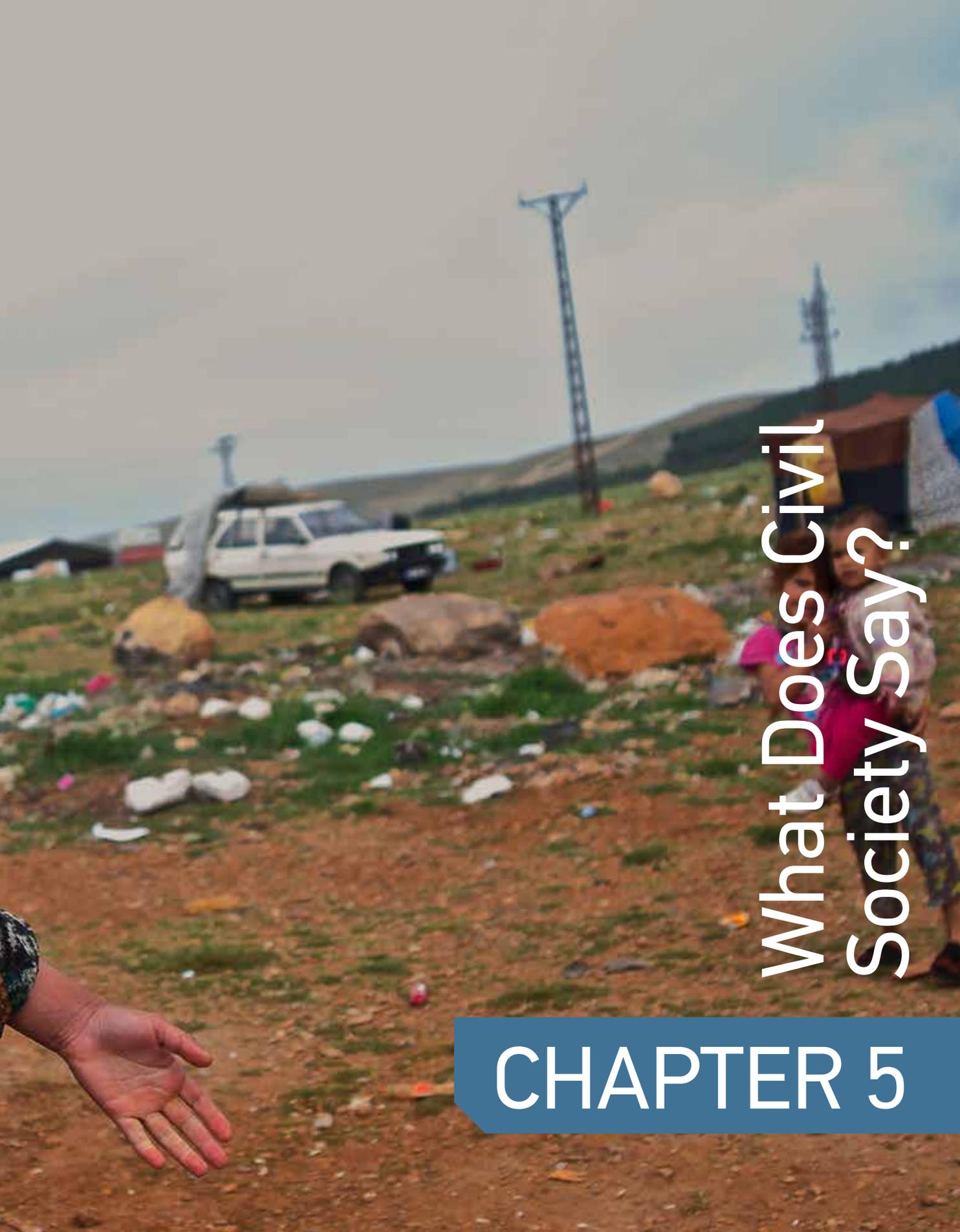
### Lack of Access to Public Services

Almost all the Dom migrants interviewed stated that they had had difficulty in accessing public services such as education, healthcare and social aid. They were observed to have little knowledge of the basic rights granted to migrants and they stated that they had not received any support from public institutions in this regard. They have difficulty in accessing public services because they do not speak Turkish. A muhtar (village foreman) in Adana was observed not to provide information about public services to the Dom, because he did not want them there. The Dom have a very low level of information regarding regulations and practices for migrants and migration. Lack of information on residence, registration, foreigner identification documents and work permits for foreigners is common. Information centres for migrants do not have outreach to these communities. Members of this group need to be informed about these matters, not least to avoid cases of forced deportation or placement in camps. On the issue of granting citizenship to Syrians, which appeared on the public agenda at the time the study was being conducted, the Dom have little hope. They were of the opinion that they would be the last group to be granted citizenship. According to a 55 year-old Dom,

“When the president said he would grant citizenship to Syrians, the hatred towards us in Turkey increased. But we know the president was not talking about people like us who live in tents. They would not give us citizenship and we don’t want it anyway; once the war is over we will go back immediately. If they wanted to make us citizens, they would not kick us out of everywhere we go. As I said, we don’t want it; we will not stay for another moment once the war is over.”

<sup>10</sup> Regulation on the Work Permits of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection  
[www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/gecici\\_koruma\\_saglanan\\_yabancilarin\\_calisma\\_jzinlerine\\_dair\\_yonetmelik.pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/gecici_koruma_saglanan_yabancilarin_calisma_jzinlerine_dair_yonetmelik.pdf)  
Implementation Guidelines on the Work Permits of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection  
[www.calismaizni.gov.tr/media/1035/gkkuugulama.pdf](http://www.calismaizni.gov.tr/media/1035/gkkuugulama.pdf)





# What Does Civil Society Say?

## CHAPTER 5

The provinces included in this study - Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin - are heavily populated by Syrian migrants. The headquarters or representatives of many national and international NGOs which work with migrants or on migration issues are therefore located in the provinces. These organisations have been providing Syrians with aid and various services, especially education, for the last five years. The field study and five years of private observations suggest that these institutions know very little about the Dom migrants from Syria. Many representatives of organisations interviewed during the field study stated that they help Syrian migrants in general but know nothing about the Dom community. Those of the organisations interviewed which work with the Dom are listed below, together with their activities and statements:

**Kırkayak Culture, Art and Nature Association (Kırkayak Kültür Sanat ve Doğa Derneği):** The association runs its activities from two centres in Gaziantep, on culture and arts on the one hand and social issues such as migration and migrants on the other. The Kırkayak Cultural Association organises various cultural and social activities in the awareness that the Dom community is a cultural asset for the Middle East and a bearer of the cultures of other societies. It sometimes runs culture and arts workshops in neighbourhoods where the Dom live to support their education and school attendance. Their film viewing programme in April 2016 was dedicated to the Dom and the community was introduced to the audience to mark World Gypsies' Day (April 8th).

The association also conducts rights-based work on the issues of Syrian migrants. Foremost among them are work on promoting coexistence and social harmony with Syrian migrants in Gaziantep. The association also cooperates with NGOs and other organisations working in the field of migration and refugee legislation.

Experts at the association have been conducting a mapping study on the migrants' needs. They are carrying out rights-based work to develop cooperation among public institutions to solve issues the Dom face in education, healthcare and shelter. They have been active in informing NGOs and public institutions, and accelerating bureaucratic procedures and processes, so that the necessary permits for the tent sites established by the Dom can be secured. In the near future, they are planning to carry out a study on the living conditions and problems of Syrian Dom communities in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, together with possible solutions. This project is expected to make a significant contribution to the recognition of Dom communities and culture in the Middle East.

**The Roma Rights Forum of Turkey (ROMFO - Türkiye Roman Hakları Forumu) Members:** The Roma Rights Association (Roman Hakları Derneği), Izmir Modern Roma Association (Izmir Çağdaş Romanlar Derneği), Sakarya Roma Association (Sakarya Romanlar Derneği), İzmit Folk Dances, Youth and Sports Association (İzmit Halk Dansları Gençlik Spor Derneği). In 2014, ROMFO and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) held a meeting on "Roma Strategy Plans in Europe and Turkey". They invited researcher and Dom expert Kemal Vural. As a result, the problems of the Dom were voiced for the first time, and closely examined, under the heading "Dom Refugees from Syria". After the meeting a participant commented "Today we've understood once more that we are oppressed in peace time and in war time.

We've never wanted war and never been a side in one." In the two years since this meeting, ROMFO elements have acted as intermediaries between Dom migrants and public institutions in the regions where they are active. Work has been undertaken on the problems of Dom migrants who cannot reach migrants' associations or who live in the street. Support has been given to those without identity cards or experiencing problems with registration. Small scale campaigns have also been organised for children in need of clothing. Most importantly, between 2014-2016, ROMFO members held meetings with the General Directorate for Family and Social Services of the Ministry for the Family and Social Policies and the Human Rights Commission. In addition to the problems of the Roma, the issues of lifting the circular on begging targeting the Dom and finding solutions for the problems of the Dom have been raised at these meetings. In the period ahead, ROMFO members will undertake work on the education of Dom children and the employment of women in their own regions, and will try to focus the attention of the public sector on this issue.

**Association of Drum and Zurna Players (Davulcular ve Zurnacılar Derneği):** Bileç Davulcu, President "Syrian Abdals, who are our relatives, arrived in Ünalı, Barış, Yeşilova and other neighbourhoods in Gaziantep. We want to help them, but we families from Turkey are also very poor. There are musicians among those who have arrived, but because weddings in the street are so few nowadays, we can't find work either. The groups that have just arrived are therefore finding it difficult to get work too. They try to make a living by collecting waste and refuse. The great majority rely on collecting aid. They can only rent houses if several families living live together. They are not allowed to live in tents. Those who cannot pay rent have started to lead migratory lives in order to work. Nobody helps. The aid that comes for the Syrians is not distributed to our tribes. The children don't receive get any an education. They are just trying to survive."

**Gaziantep Abdals' Association (Gaziantep Abdalları Derneği):** Niyazi Buluter, President "Since the war began in Syria, Abdals have been arriving in. Some of them are our relatives. Because they are not allowed to live in tents, we opened up our neighbourhoods to them. Because rents are so high, many families live together. Those who cannot pay rent try to make do with the makeshift tents and shelters they have set up in our courtyards and in empty plots in the street. Some have become nomadic again, they work in the fields in the summer if they can get work and return in the autumn. In the winter they either collect scrap or waste like plastic and plastic bottles. Some collect aid. Some play music. No one helps them. They know they are of the tribe. The other Syrians don't want our people anyway. They won't take our children in the schools and community centres where Syrian children go. There is discrimination. If you were to ask them, they would not own up to discriminating. But in practice there is open discrimination because they call them nomads. In our own Hürriyet neighbourhood, even now there are one hundred and fifty households. The population is at its lowest at the moment because most of them are away as nomads. If we consider other neighbourhoods, it adds up to thousands of families. These people are very poor. They have no food, clothes and fuel to heat their homes in the winter. They have no fridges in their homes to preserve their food. No one helps them around here. Last year an association from Izmir distributed fuel; it was only enough to give each household twen-

ty bags [of coal] We split it up with the families in the neighbourhood and it was at most ten bags for every household.

“They pick up people collecting aid in the street or looking for work and take them to the AFAD camp in Osmaniye. These people cannot live in the camps. They say ‘Kill us but don’t take us to the camps.’ We have become intermediaries, we acted as guarantors and took thirty families out. The camps are hell for them, our tribes cannot live there. If they were to let them live in the tents they set up for themselves, they would get by, even if they ate from hand to mouth. These people wouldn’t harm anyone.”

**Tarlabaşı Community Centre (TTM -Tarlabaşı Toplum Merkezi):** Ceren Suntekin – Social Services Expert The Tarlabaşı Community Centre (TTM) is a rights-based NGO that was established in 2006 to support the equal participation in urban life of the residents of the neighbourhood of Tarlabaşı, a zone with multi-dimensional disadvantages in Istanbul. The TTM’s work emphasises equality, participation, multi-culturalism and art; the association defends gender equality and is against all forms of violence ([www.tarlabasi.org](http://www.tarlabasi.org)).

“Our first encounter with Doms arriving from Syria occurred in summer 2015. Those living in Tarlabaşı started coming to the centre and asking for things. Because they don’t speak Turkish, we communicated in Kurdish with them.

“It was very difficult to get the children to understand what kind of place the TCC is, what we do here and what our working principles are. They often resorted to violence when expressing themselves and hurt each other and damaged the environment. They took things from the centre, knocked things over, made a mess and treated each other and the other children very roughly. I can say we ‘struggled’ with them at the centre for a while, but we never gave up on them. In the summer months we asked our volunteers who speak Kurdish for support, and planned a workshop for the children.

“We were aware that they wanted to be a part of the centre like the other children. We told them about the rules of the centre repeatedly. In September we began working with them twice a week.

“While the workshops are geared towards learning Turkish, they include activities such as arts and crafts and motor skill building such as holding a pencil or scissors, writing, and modelling with play dough. The work continued regularly for six months. The workshop group was split into two by age and we worked on more specialised needs. By spring there was an incredible improvement in the children’s violent behaviour. They were very careful about attendance hours. We continued our work with another volunteer who taught at the primary school in Tarlabaşı and spoke Kurdish. With the primary school teacher, work became even more effective. Until July work with the Dom children was carried out by four volunteers, including basic reading and writing skills and pre-school education. During this period, approximately 50 children between the ages of 7 and 14 attended.

- “In January-February 2016, the TTM came to an agreement with the Social Policies Centre of Boğaziçi University to visit Dom families and to study the demographic structure of Tarlabaşı in 2016-2017.

- As there is constant migration in all directions, the number of attendees sometimes fell and sometimes rose.
- In May 2016 security forces carried out raids and children who were collecting aid and their families were taken away from their homes, first to the camp in Pendik and then to the camp in Osmaniye and other camps along the border. During this time we continued to work with those who were in hiding and those who had not been taken away.
- Five children were oriented towards school. Two continued to attend.
- In August 2016, some of our regular attendees left for seasonal agricultural work.
- For the first time, some families came to ask about their children to the centre. Some took their children away in the middle of the workshop to go and collect aid.
- In the beginning, children generally did not give their names. At the end of the year they had begun to use their names and to bring other individuals from their families to the centre.
- The teacher and volunteers visited some homes, but as they were afraid, interviews were carried out on the doorstep.
- No work was done with the Dom in July and August 2016. In July the centre was closed and in August no volunteers could be found.
- Since September 2016, they have been taking part in all the activities at the TCC. Their Turkish has improved very much. All our work is done with mixed groups.
- They make use of the TCC toy library that began operating in September.

“These communities are the ones that are the most excluded by all groups, including other Syrians, and who face the most violence due to the work they do and the way they dress. They are also the most likely to meet with arbitrary interventions by law enforcement agencies. Their children are especially in danger as they collect aid in the streets. They are one of the most fragile groups and the most distrustful of their environment. Establishing relations of trust takes a lot of time. They are very adept at handicrafts. Culturally, all adolescent children are considered adults/caregivers. Early marriages are observed. It is very difficult for children to attend school as they remain outside the system. Whenever incidents of lice, illness or theft occur, they are the first to be blamed by teachers, classmates and other parents.

“We carry out all our work in mixed groups and we believe that there should be more mixed groups in all institutions, to promote social inclusion. We also know that issues of discrimination and violence need to be worked on with the local population; we include this in all the workshops we have with children and families.

“As I mentioned earlier, we are planning to do research that will safeguard the rights of Dom children and families, so that we can understand their culture better and develop more effective strategies. Apart from that, we’re looking for resources. There are no institutions working with these groups. We want to work more systematically and comprehensively. For these more regular activities we are in need of human resources and suitable and sufficient grants.”





# Basic Needs and Policy Recommendations

## CHAPTER 6

## Combating Discrimination

The Doms interviewed frequently spoke of being victims of discrimination due to their ethnic origin and sect. Comprehensive training programmes for public workers, who migrants come into contact with the most, are the primary requirement for work on combating discrimination and raising awareness.

The lack of information and prejudices of national and international NGOs, international organisations and public employees who work with migrants and refugees about the “Gypsy community” is one of the main problems in this field. In order to overcome this prejudice and lack of information, training and information work should be undertaken with NGOs, public institutions and international organisations. This should be carried out by rights-based NGOs, activists and especially Roma and Dom NGOs.

Roma and Dom civil society organisations are unfortunately unable to address the issues of the Dom from Syria adequately and their own communities are not sufficiently sensitive to the issue. The Strategy Document for Roma Citizens 2016-2012<sup>1</sup> prepared with the participation of academics and experts in this field could be shared with all bodies and organisations working on migration.

Through an examination of reporting on Syrian and Dom migrants, this study has revealed that discriminative, alienating and sometimes hateful language is used in the media with reference to Dom communities. University faculties of communication and departments of journalism, national and local media organisations and press associations have an important role to play in improving the situation. Joint efforts and informative seminars should be held to this end and activities should be conducted to inform and raise the awareness of the public.

## Overcome the Absence of Data

There are no official or unofficial sources of data on the Dom migrant population that has arrived from Syria and lives constantly on the move in Turkey. The socio-economic profiles of these groups, the state of their access to public services and basic rights, and their expectations and needs, require monitoring through concrete, realistic indicators that are updated according to need. Meanwhile, studies of the education, employment, healthcare and shelter situations of Dom migrants need to be carried out on the basis of concrete data and with a dynamic perspective, given that they are constantly on the move. The tent settlements established by the Dom groups could be provided with water systems, toilets, baths and temporary education centres to ensure them a decent standard of living. If these conditions are met, both the integration of Dom communities and their registration will become easier.

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<sup>1</sup> Strategy Document for Roma Citizens, the Official Gazette  
[www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160430-11.htm](http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160430-11.htm)



It is essential to establish a monitoring mechanism to facilitate the access of Syrian Dom groups who are on the move and whose basic needs are not met to basic services such as education, shelter, employment, healthcare and social aid. Coordination and cooperation between public bodies and NGOs is required for such a monitoring mechanism to work correctly.

Since Circular No. 46<sup>2</sup> was published by the General Directorate for Security, the communities that have been trying to live in tents which they have set up in the cities – generally in Dom, Roma or Lom neighbourhoods - have been constantly on the move due to the fear of being sent to camps or being deported. The complaints of local populations, which are aware of the circular, have made it impossible for the communities to stay in the places where they have settled. Considering the ways of life and concerns of this group, initiatives should be undertaken for the annulment of the circular. The circular has had the effect of splitting the Dom community into smaller groups so that they can become invisible in large cities. This makes individuals with no experience of living alone susceptible to crime and especially affects women and children.

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<sup>2</sup> Governors Given Orders on Syrian Beggars: Pick Then Up!)  
[www.milliyet.com.tr/d/t.aspx?ID=1919986](http://www.milliyet.com.tr/d/t.aspx?ID=1919986)

Syrian Beggars Being Rounded Up  
[www.sabah.com.tr/yasam/2014/12/07/suriyeli-dilenciler-toplaniyor](http://www.sabah.com.tr/yasam/2014/12/07/suriyeli-dilenciler-toplaniyor)

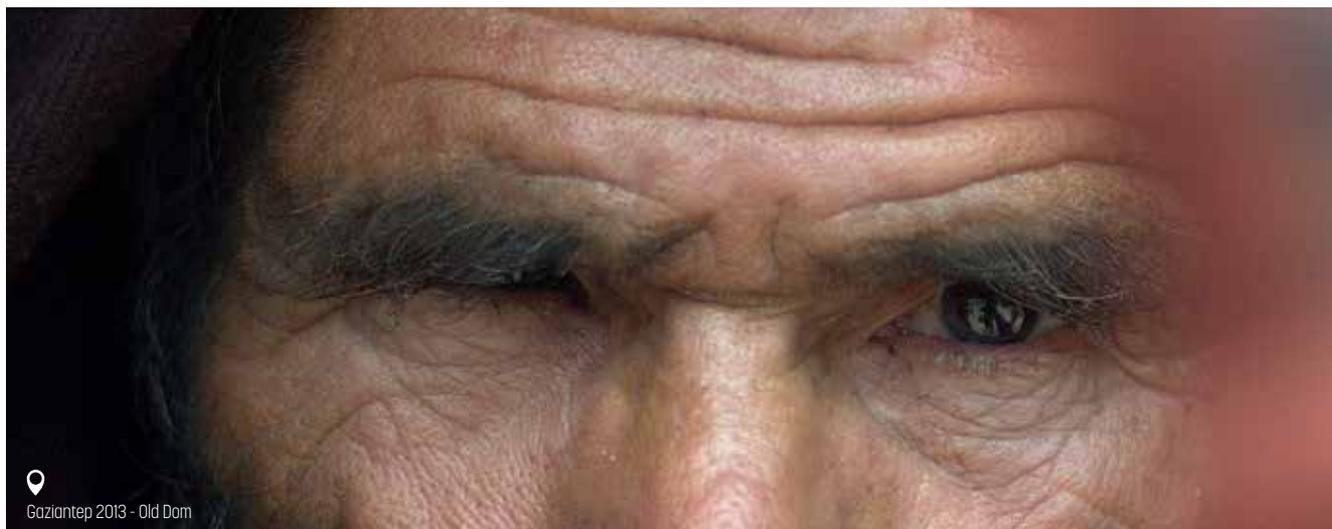
There is a Circular and there are Syrians Begging  
[antakyagazetesi.com/H5666-genelge-var-dilenciler-suriyeliler-de.html](http://antakyagazetesi.com/H5666-genelge-var-dilenciler-suriyeliler-de.html)

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[www.ihha.com.tr/haber-suriyeli-dilenci-operasyonu-418110/](http://www.ihha.com.tr/haber-suriyeli-dilenci-operasyonu-418110/)  
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# Policy Recommendations

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## Recommendations for Public Institutions

**No deportations or sending to camps:** Doms who have taken refuge in Turkey from the civil war in Syria should never be forcefully deported or sent to camps on any grounds including differences of culture and lifestyle, their ethnic origin, their language or beliefs or pretexts such as “begging”.

**Fulfilment of basic needs:** Efforts towards meeting the basic needs of the Dom and ensuring that they have access to basic services should be increased. Human as well as financial resources should be allocated for this. All efforts should be implemented and monitored in a systematic and planned manner.

**Access to healthcare services:** Emergency medical screening should be conducted in regions with Dom populations and access to healthcare services should be ensured immediately for those who require it. Provincial directorates of health should assign mobile health units to areas settled by the Dom.

**Registration:** The security of the Dom should be ensured by registration and urgent work should be undertaken to ensure that they have access to the basic humanitarian assistance required by temporary protection, and that they benefit from basic services regardless of their province of registration.

**Cooperation with civil society:** Given the fragility and needs of Dom groups, provincial governorates, municipalities and local branches of public institutions should cooperate and share information/experiences with NGOs in projects and implementations for the Dom.

No deportations or sending to camps  
 Fulfilment of basic needs  
 Access to healthcare services  
 Cooperation with civil society  
 Identification and improvement of living areas  
 Education of children  
 Mediation system  
 Employment policies  
 Vocational training  
 Work for community benefit  
 Communication with security forces  
 Access to public services  
 Mobile communications  
 Social assistance and services  
 Data collection  
 Clothing and food aid for children  
 Coordination  
 Combating discrimination

**Identification and improvement of living areas:** First of all, the places where Dom live or are likely to live should be identified and steps should be undertaken to ensure that basic human needs such as water, power and sanitation are available in these locations. The Doms' tents should be replaced by prefabricated residences. Spaces where they can meet their basic needs, such as toilets, showers and laundries, should be set up in the same places. Their shelter conditions must be improved immediately. Living areas should be regularly treated with pesticides to prevent contagious diseases.

**Education of children:** Given that Dom children are not going to school because the groups are constantly on the move and changing places, mobile education units should be established in their settlements and at the same time the Catch-Up Class Education Programme (YSÖP) should be implemented together with the Ministry of National Education and its representatives in the province or district. Transport to temporary education centres should be provided for children who cannot access education. For pre-school age children, mobile kindergartens or similar preparatory centres should be established in the places where Doms are found. Scholarships should be created for the education of Dom children.

**Mediation system:** A mediation system should be established in places where the Dom are present, including representatives of the community and NGOs. These intermediaries should inform communities about the basic services provided by public institutions.

**Employment policies:** A new policy should be developed for the employment of the Dom that takes their way of life and cultural characteristics into account.

**Vocational training:** Given that the Dom are employed in temporary work in agriculture, construction etc., the group should be provided with vocational training and mechanisms should be created to prevent them from becoming a cheap source of labour.

**Work for community benefit:** The legislation should be revised to allow this group to take advantage of the Work for Community Benefit Programme of the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR).

**Communication with security forces:** In order to alleviate the concerns which the Dom have about law enforcers, an initiative should be undertaken to develop communication between the security forces and these groups.

**Access to public services:** As the Dom are constantly on the move, public services headed by healthcare, education and shelter should be provided in the places where they are located in order to provide them with better access to such services.

**Mobile communications:** Mobile services and SMS messages should be used by intermediaries to ensure that the Dom community are also quickly informed about legislative changes affecting the Syrians.

**Social assistance and services:** Since the Dom have difficulty in reaching social assistance and services, and sometimes encounter prejudice, priority should be placed on providing them with rapid access to social services through the active participation of public institutions .

**Data collection:** Under projects and programmes to be implemented for the Dom, data should be collected and analysed about their demographics and basic needs with a view to facilitating their access to basic services.

**Clothing and food aid for children:** Meeting the food and seasonal clothing needs of Dom children should be prioritised in the framework of the resources available.

**Coordination:** Public institutions and NGOs working to provide basic education, healthcare, shelter and employment services to the Dom should carry out this work in a coordinated and effective manner.

**Combating discrimination:** In order to combat discrimination, the awareness of the local population should be raised, bearing in mind the fragile structure of Dom community, and measures should be taken to prevent discriminatory practices and hate crimes.

## Recommendations for National and International NGOs

**Nutritional support:** Food kitchens or similar facilities should be set up in places inhabited by the Dom and arrangements should be made in cooperation with local ad-

ministrations or private firms to ensure that hot meals are delivered daily, as well as milk or yoghurt for the children.

**Healthcare services for pregnant women and babies:** Pregnant women and babies who live in tents and have no access to healthcare should be identified and directed towards healthcare institutions for monitoring, check-ups and vaccination.

**Prevention of discrimination:** In order to prevent all forms of discrimination and prejudice against the Dom, NGOs should report violations, and experts on discrimination should run awareness raising activities with public workers.

**Directing working children towards education:** Children of the Dom community, especially those working as seasonal agricultural labourers, should be directed towards education and educational activities and programmes that will develop their skills.

**Healthcare literacy:** Activities should be conducted to raise awareness of healthy living among women and to increase healthcare literacy levels.

**Combating contagious diseases:** Information on contagious and epidemic diseases should be provided in every region where the Dom live in order to increase the levels of knowledge and awareness of individuals.

**Information on social assistance:** The Dom communities should be informed about social assistance, social services and all kinds of education and counselling services.

**Rights of persons with disabilities:** NGOs working on the rights of persons with disabilities should run special programmes and projects to ensure that members of the Dom community living with disabilities are able to benefit effectively from all rights and services.

**Monitoring commissions:** Monitoring commissions should be set up in every region through partnerships between the public sector and civil society in order to monitor the policies to be developed on the basis of data.

**Capacity building:** NGOs should implement capacity building programmes for the prevention of all forms of abuse against women and children from Dom communities.

**Equality of opportunity and access:** NGOs should carry out urgent work to ensure the access of Doms to public services and provide them with equal opportunities, to prevent social exclusion and to overcome the prejudices of public employees.

**Monitoring education:** NGOs should monitor the access to education and school attendance of children of school age.

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# APPENDIX

## Appendix 1: Dom Situation Analysis Research Interview Questions

Location : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee : \_\_\_\_\_

### Demographic Questions

Gender : \_\_\_\_\_

Age : \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Place : \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status : \_\_\_\_\_

Children : \_\_\_\_\_

Children : \_\_\_\_\_

Family Size : \_\_\_\_\_

Languages spoken : \_\_\_\_\_

Ethic and religious

Identification : \_\_\_\_\_

Education : \_\_\_\_\_

### LIFE IN SYRIA

Which city they were living in before coming to Turkey?

What was their occupation back then?

### POSTWAR

What are the effects of the war (in Syria)?

Why Turkey?

When and how did they enter Turkey? Did whole family arrive together?

Their experience in border crossing, the first arrival city (settled initially), what are the other cities (of Turkey) they moved to?

### CAMPS (Temporary Accommodation Centers)

Did they stay in the camp?

If not, why?

If so, what are their experiences?

## REGISTRY

Did they register? Did they get identity card?

## HOUSING

Where do they live now, what are the housing/shelter conditions and problems?

How many people live in the household?

## FOOD AND NUTRITON

How they obtain food?

Do they receive any assistance for food?

What are the problems they faced about food and nutrition?

## ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Have they visited any healthcare provider?

Have they paid any fee?

Do you have difficulties in buying/obtaining medication?

What are the problems faced in case of emergency medical assistance need, such as birth?

Are children being vaccinated?

Do pregnant women have prenatal controls?

## EMPLOYMENT

What are the work experiences?

What are the problems they face during work?

What kind of difficulties they are having in finding a job?

Are they exposed to discrimination while working or looking for a job?

## EDUCATION

Do they have children in school age?

Were they going to school back in Syria?

Do they go to school now (in Turkey)?

Do they benefit from state or NGOs' educational assistance, courses etc.?

## EXPERIENCE WITH LAW ENFORCES

Did they have any contact with the law enforces?

What are the problems they experienced in this process?

Did they experience of refoulement to Syria or forcing to go to another city or camp?

## RELATIONS WITH TURKISH SOCIETY

How is their relationships with people who (localy) live in the places they move to?

Did they have negative experiences?

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

Do they have language problems?

How they communicate?

## WOMEN

Do women have war trauma? (who lost their husband, children, relatives)

What are the experiences of pregnant women? (Prenatal care, any health assistance at birth, post-natal health care, food assistance, etc.),

What are the problems faced in terms of hygiene?

## CHILDREN

What kind of jobs they work and under which conditions?

Do they get education?

Is food and nutrition sufficient for children?

Through educational authorities or NGOs, did they receive support for education, social activities and psychosocial needs?

## FUTURE EXPECTATIONS AND WORRIES

If/When the war lasts, do they want to stay in Turkey or want to go back to Syria?

What are their future plans and worries?

## Appendix 2: Studies and Official Documents on Syrian Migrants and Syrian Dom Communities

- Nowhere to Turn: The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey  
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**Project on Improving the Protection and Health Conditions of Syrians and Migrants in the South of Turkey** implemented by Development Workshop between May and November 2016 with the financial support of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and in cooperation with international non-governmental organisation GOAL Global, has targeted to reduce the protection risks of vulnerable migrant groups using an integrated approach of information dissemination, advocacy and humanitarian aid.

Activities has been implemented within the 3 components of the Project that has the main goal of mitigating the protection risks of migrant populations through research and advocacy, information dissemination, and distribution of non-food items;

### **1. Information Management / Situational Analysis**

Presenting evidence based policy recommendations for mapping of where and which agricultural commodities irregular migrants engaged in, understanding their conditions and addressing and mitigating protection risks.

### **2. Information Dissemination via Networks**

Supporting and facilitating Access and use of available services by Syrian migrants through providing information about fundamental rights, responsibilities and services.

### **3. Distribution of Non-Food Items**

Distribution of non-food items including hygiene and protection kits to target population in order to provide fundamental needs.

## **Dom Migrants From Syria On the Road amid Poverty and Discrimination**



DEVELOPMENT  
WORKSHOP

