

# Refugee:

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**A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.**

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**Background:**

More than two hundred thousand Syrians have lost their lives and a further eleven million displaced in the four years since the Syrian civil war began. Death violence and torture are common place. What began as a conflict between those for or against President Assad has now become far more complicated:

*Iran and Russia have propped up the Alawite-led government of President Assad and gradually increased their support, providing it with an edge that has helped it make significant gains against the rebels. The government has also enjoyed the support of Lebanon's Shia Islamist Hezbollah movement, whose fighters have provided important battlefield support since 2013. The Sunni-dominated opposition has, meanwhile, attracted varying degrees of support from its main backers - Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Arab states along with the US, UK and France. However, the rise of hardline Islamist rebels and the arrival of jihadists from across the world has led to a marked cooling of international and regional backing<sup>1</sup>*

The recent shocking image of the drowned three year old Syrian boy washed ashore off the coast of Turkey has concentrated attention on what is fast becoming the biggest refugee crisis in living memory. Countries have approached the crisis in different and often contrasting ways, some with open arms, some with closed doors. There is no doubt the constant flow of refugees is causing fear, unease and confusion among many European countries. Ireland, often promoted as a leader of humanitarian activities, will continue to do its part possibly accepting between five hundred and five thousand refugees over a programmed period of time.

**Brief:**

As designers we need to communicate with clarity and purpose, openly and honestly. Our education and experience give us the ability to offer alternative solutions and our empathic approach gives us the skill to understand needs of others, whilst using design to address them.

As the Syrian refugees are brought to Ireland, what do you believe should be given as an introduction to our country?

Is this a pack? A booklet? A film? An event? What language should it be in? English? Arabic? Both? Neither? What percentage of your approach should be around culture, factual information, demographics? Is there a different introduction for young men and for families? Should there be emergency telephone numbers? Should yours be one of those? What about UN refugee status information? How do we convey cultural connections? How do we manage expectations? Should this be seen as an evolution of Irish culture? What about tips for adaptability and integration? Should Irish citizens also receive something? Could this be a template to be used in other countries?

It is your job to decide and design this.

**Research:**

UNHCR: [www.unhcr.ie](http://www.unhcr.ie). <sup>1</sup> Syria: The story of the conflict, BBC website. ([www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868))

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