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UN Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie meets with Syrian refugees in Turkey



UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie [File Photo]

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Greeted by chanting and shouts of “look who is here,” Hollywood actress and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie met today with some of the thousands of Syrians who have fled the violence in their country and have taken refuge in neighbouring Turkey.

Ms. Jolie, who advocates on behalf of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), visited the Altinozu camp in Hatay province, 20 kilometres from the Syrian border.

“The people in this camp have fled in fear for their lives, and many told me they were distraught about the safety of loved ones still in Syria,” she [said](#) at the camp, where some 1,700 people are staying.

Syrian authorities have been widely criticised for their bloody repression of the protests that began earlier this year, part of a broader uprising in recent months across North Africa and the Middle East that has already toppled the long-standing regimes in Tunisia and Egypt and led to ongoing conflict in Libya.

The UN human rights office says that as of mid-June, the number of people killed is believed to have exceeded 1,100, many of them unarmed civilians; among them were women and children.

According to UNHCR, the number of people fleeing from northwest Syria has increased over the past two weeks, with more than 9,600 people now living in four camps managed by Turkey with the Turkish Red Crescent.

Among those who shared their stories with Ms. Jolie, herself a mother of six, was a woman who managed to leave Syria heavily pregnant, and has since given birth to her child in the camp, as well as another woman who feared for her husband who is still in Syria and unable to cross the border.

During her visit, the Academy Award-winning actress also praised Turkey for welcoming the refugees, saying it is critical in these situations that people have access to safety. “I am really grateful for the open-door policy of Turkey in allowing these people to enter and the assurances that there will be no forced returns.”

She added that UNHCR stands ready to assist if the situation starts to escalate. “It is a really complex situation and everyone needs to be doing all they can for the innocent families caught in the crossfire.

“I will be following this situation very closely and doing everything I can.”

Top UN officials, including [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon, have strongly urged President Bashar al-Assad to listen to the wishes and aspirations of the Syrian people and to take care to protect human lives.

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