

## **The Peace on The Horizon - 70 Years after The World War 2 in the Middle East (55)**

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

### **Epilogue**

#### **7-2(55) Mass refugees**

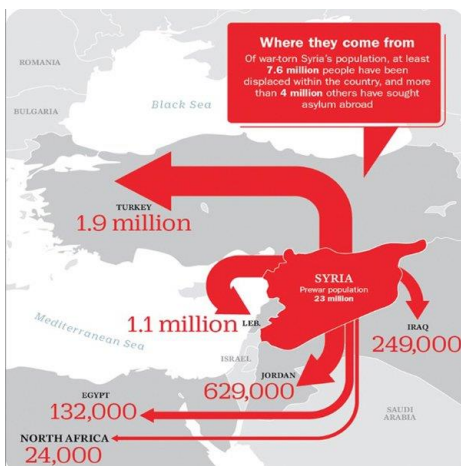
War or civil war creates many casualties of innocent citizens. They are not only death or injuries in the battle, but also refugees who lose their home and escaped to foreign countries.

After the World War II, the first refugees appeared in the Middle East during 1948 Arab-Israeli War, so called Israeli Independence War. They were called Palestinian refugees. They escaped to the Palestinian Autonomous Region in Israel or refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon. The number of Palestinian refugees registered in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reached 4.5 million. There were 12 refugee camps in Lebanon and 450,000 people had to live in a poor living condition.

In addition to the Palestinian refugees, new refugees were born in Syria. Triggered by "Arab Spring" in 2011, government troops and anti-government forces confronted in Syria. Furthermore, extremist of Islamic fundamentalism declared the independence of Islamic State (IS). The number of Syrian refugees was much larger than Palestine refugees. Mass refugees was borne in conflict zones across Syria and Iraq. The word "mass refugees" sounds ridiculous and might hurt the dignity of humankind. But there is no proper word except "mass refugees".

Approx. 4.1 million Syrian refugees fled to abroad and 7.6 million people were stranded domestically. It was about half of the total population of Syria. They occupied one fifth of the total number of refugees all over the world. The civil war in Syria became in a mire. Relief activities for domestic refugees were stagnated. Food and medicines for refugees were stopped. The refugees immigrated to the camps in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. But the camps in neighboring countries had no enough room to accommodate new refugees.

Refugees, therefore, tried to immigrate to Germany where was emigrant-friendly country. They started a long journey to Germany on foot. Many Syrian refugees were from the middle class living in urban areas. When they were in their hometown, they had enjoyed the peaceful and rich life of Western style. Then, they knew brutal and non-civilized behavior of "Islamic State" (IS). They scared and feared if their city was controlled by IS. As soon as they heard the footsteps of the IS, they sold all of their premise and rushed to Turkey. From Turkey they aimed to Germany.



Syrian refugees were not poor. On the other hand African refugees who struggled to cross the Mediterranean were poor. It can be categorized that African refugees were economic refugees, while Syrian refugees were political refugees. What Syrian refugees valued after their lives was a smartphone. They aimed for the West on foot with a smartphone to check the current location and collected information from their close friends going ahead. They asked their friends which border checkpoints would accept refugees. If the checkpoint was closed, they looked for the place where they could cross the border safely but illegally. They conveyed such information to friends and relatives who were following them. They kept in touch with relatives who have already migrated to Europe, asking for a good place to settle. A smartphone was a lifeline for them.

However, the capacity to accept refugees in European countries had reached to their limit. The reason why the government reject refugees was not only the economic burden but also the anxiety of unemployment by a huge number of immigrants or the fear of Islamic terrorism which had been spread among society. There were many African refugees settled in suburbs of the big cities in Europe. The unemployment rate of second generation of African Muslim immigrants was high. Some of young guys were influenced by Islamic extremism. They became desperate and carried out suicide bombings in the city. Native European citizens supported the extreme right powers. They kept out immigrants and became Islam phobia.

(To be continued ----)

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