

Safety from war does not come without struggle

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BEKAA VALLEY, Lebanon—The terror and violence became unbearable. About two years ago, a Syrian couple gathered their nine children at 4 a.m. and left their home, possessions and comfort to search for a better life, away from bombings and turmoil.



A Syrian refugee family lives in safety in the Bekaa Valley, nestled in the heart of Lebanon. But that safety does not come without struggle. (Photo / Leah Reynolds) Seconds later, the husband—whose name is withheld for security reasons—looked back and saw a bomb destroy his family’s house and everything in it. The family moved forward, cramming their children on a bus, joining many other people fleeing for the same purpose.

That family is just one of millions who have fallen victim to the unrelenting civil war in Syria, which first struck the nation four years ago. Since then, close to 1.08 million registered Syrian refugees have settled in Lebanon, located just west of Syria.

Today, the family of 11 lives in safety in the Bekaa Valley, nestled in the heart of Lebanon. But that safety does not come without struggle.

They reside in a tent, complete with a wooden frame and Nylon tarp. It includes two sleeping areas, a living area and a small space for cooking.

When the first winter struck, they were ill-prepared to handle the freezing temperatures and abundance of snow.

“We would have to take turns staying awake to clean the snow off the roof so our tent wouldn’t collapse,” the father explained.

Snow lay on the ground nearly 60 days straight, they said, causing them to huddle together for warmth.

“We were so happy to arrive here from Syria. But then the snow came and covered the entire camp, and we had nothing to keep warm,” the mother recalled.

In the nick of time, visitors from the local church showed up with life-saving items, the couple recounted.

“People came from the church bringing blankets and heaters and other provisions. We were so thankful to them for helping us,” he said. “The generosity was overwhelming.”

In the center of the living area is a heater for the family to circle around during the frigid winter months. In the bedroom are mattresses and blankets stacked high to the roof for the children and parents to lie on at night. In the cooking area is a small stove to heat water and cook hot meals.

These survival materials were hand-delivered by members of local Lebanese churches. A Lebanese pastor who helps coordinate some of the deliveries said he is certain God is using them to bring hope to the

refugees.

The refugees “have nothing, not even one pound in their pocket when they come,” he said. “We are doing our best to help them. ...We believe that God is turning everything upside down in our area so that we can plant the seeds, and we are sure God is planning something more amazing in our area.”

Today, the family lives in safety and is able to stay warm during the winter months, as do many other Syrian refugee families living in Lebanon. And thanks to the generosity of Christians, they have seen Christ’s love in action.

Through a partnership with the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development, Texas Baptists are helping purchase winter survival materials for Lebanese churches to distribute to the refugees. Find out how to give [here](#).