
REFUGEES UNITED, ERICSSON AND MOBILE OPERATORS JOIN TO RECONNECT SYRIAN FAMILIES

- Ericsson and operators in Middle East announce the launch of the Refugees United service to help reach the nearly 800,000 Syrian refugees residing in Jordan and Iraq
- According to the UN, an estimated 2.4 million refugees from Syria have been forced to move to surrounding countries
- The Refugees United family reconnection platform will be made available to Syrian families via a mobile application and toll-free lines; awareness will be created using SMS campaigns in the countries surrounding Syria

The United Nations estimates that due to the crisis in Syria, people are being displaced at the rate of one every 15 seconds. In response to this, Ericsson (NASDAQ: ERIC), Refugees United, and mobile operators across the Middle East are uniting in order to use mobile communications as a means of expanding the family reconnection service.

This innovative action aims to reach the nearly 800,000 displaced Syrians residing in Jordan and Iraq and help those separated to locate each other via a mobile search tool. This is replicating the successful deployment of the Refugees United service in East Africa where the service is already live through mobile operators in Kenya, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somaliland. Some 280,000 refugees have registered on the service and Refugees United estimates that hundreds of families have been reunited.

The coalition of mobile operators will launch several new initiatives to accelerate registrations of Syrians in these countries, including a free mobile application, a toll-free line, and a free SMS notification service. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), there are 4.25 million Syrians displaced internally and 2.4 million displaced in neighboring countries.

Ericsson is the technology partner to the initiative, helping to develop and maintain the overall mobile platform and will provide technical support and integration of the tool into mobile networks in Jordan and Iraq.

The Ericsson Mobility Report estimated 803 million mobile subscriptions in Africa and 354 million in the Middle East in the third quarter of 2013. Capitalizing on the ever-growing mobile phone usage across the region, this intentionally low-tech initiative empowers refugees to take the search for missing family into their own hands – from any device.

Christopher Mikkelsen, co-founder of Refugees United, says: “Everyone has the right to know where their family is. We are seeing camps quickly become crowded and family members losing touch with each other. We hope that the launch of this service and our toll-free line can prevent some family tragedies.”

Mobile operators will send text messages to people living in refugee camps and refugee prone areas, offering an opportunity to register for the service with toll-free lines and SMS. The hotline will be manned out of a Refugees United office, where people can get help with registrations and other questions.

Scott Gegenheimer, Zain Group CEO, said: "Mobile telecommunications have played a critical part in saving countless people's lives and rejoining families in emergency situations all over the world. The need to act and support people in dire situations such as those suffered by Syrian refugees is as pressing as ever. Joining this initiative reconfirms Zain's commitment of using vital telecommunications to provide an important human service."

Faruk Rasul, Chairman of Asiacell, said: "Connectivity is a basic human need and it is important for all of us as drivers of this connectivity to do everything we can to help Syrian refugees use this service to find their lost family members."

"Mobile network technology is the most reliable and economical tool to connect the refugee camps to the world and provide their habitants with the means to communicate with their relatives, access health services, establish business and, most importantly educate their children," he continued.

Elaine Weidman-Grunewald, Vice President, Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility at Ericsson, said: "The crisis in Syria is a tragic example of how thousands of people are being displaced every single day, putting immense tolls on individual families that are being uprooted and torn apart. The service has proven successful in Africa, and now we want to bring this to the Middle East to address the Syrian crisis. We hope more operators will join us in deploying the service, and we are grateful to Zain and Asiacell for their leadership."

Mikkelsen concludes: "Each family reconnection is special – for Syria time is of the essence, giving hope in a hopeless moment for Syrians."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Refugees United

Refugees United connects displaced populations with long-lost families. Globally, more than 280,000 refugees in camps and urban areas have registered on the Refugees United platform with support from partners, such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and Kenya Red Cross Society.

Around the world, more than 45 million people are living as refugees, internally displaced people or stateless persons. Countless families are separated, often never to find each other again due to a lack of an information infrastructure. Formed in 2008, Refugees United has created the world's biggest platform for separated refugee families. The organization has a strong presence in countries with large refugee populations, such as Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Uganda and Egypt.

www.refunite.org

[Estelle's story of reconnection](#)

Facts and figures from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees

According to UNHCR's website on Syria (entitled "Syria Regional Refugee Response"), the numbers are as follows:

<https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

- Total 'Persons of Concern in Jordan is: 574,410 (last updated 20 Feb 2014)
- Total 'Persons of Concern in Iraq is: 222,574 (last updated 10 Feb 2014)

Terms: In each county, the numbers pertaining to 'People of People of Concern' are exactly the same as 'Registered Syrian Refugees.'

For the entire region, there are 2,448,352 'Registered Syrian Refugees' according to UNHCR.

The Ericsson and RU partnership is also a Clinton Global Initiative commitment, in which partners set a goal to register 1 million refugees by 2015.

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