Arab uprising at the end of 2010, started in Tunisia out of social stress, poverty, unemployment and loss of liberty, human rights, justice and equal opportunity and has spread to Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan and Syria. The Arab spring “Printemps Arab” toppled regimes of Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak of Egypt, Ali Saleh in Yemen, Kadaffi in Libya, chaos in Syria, constitutional reforms in Morocco and Jordan.

In Syria the uprising started as modest protest in Dara’a, it was met by harsh military force resisting demands for reforms or change from a totalitarian one-party-system to a democratic multiparty pluralistic system. Protests escalated to major cities across Syria to become a major civil war between the regime and oppositions who went out to the streets expressing themselves peacefully, then took arms to resist military atrocities. Statistics show more than 125,131 deaths and 5 million Syrians displaced across the country out of 23 million population.

As Jordan shares a lengthy border with Syria and share the Horan plateau of the fertile crescent between Dara’a, a Syrian border town, and Damascus, the capital of Syria, and
also, shares: social, economic and historical roots, huge influx of Syrians flee to Jordan for security, stability and proximity, estimated at 1.5 million people comprising 20% of the population of Jordan, 130,000 settled in refugee camps out of them 110,000 in Zaatari alone, others spread in the country on their own or with relatives and close friends. The cost of hosting Syrians on the economy of Jordan in 2013, was $2 billion annually.

This influx has put pressure on schoolings, shifting to two periods classes, on water resources, on power, on housing, job opportunities, on health care and on food. If we add other refugees influx of two million Palestinians, 450,000 Iraqis, then Jordan becomes the first country in the world in terms of ratio of refugees to total population.

Recent study on Syrian refugees in Jordan which was done by Olwan and Shiyab shows that 80% of children were enrolled in governmental schools, and 99% of respondents who illegally crossed the border to Jordan stated that they have not been arrested by the Jordanian security for reasons of residence in Jordan, as a matter of fact, they admitted that they were provided with adequate protection. The government and NGO’s have provided schools, health facilities, material and monetary aid. But Jordan has limited potential to deal with housing and long term residency for jobs opportunities. From the survey, 20% of the refugees got jobs and were sending aid to their families at home, some
started small business in Jordan, in bakeries, food catering and small medium industries (SMEs).

Instability in Syria and the continuing violence is leading to a country-wide civil war which will exert more pressure on host countries particularly Jordan to receive more waves and waves of refugees in the future.

It looks that war in Syria may continue for many years, no military or political solution is insight. Arming one fraction will give legitimacy of arming another opposite fraction and conflicts will yield more wars and conflict. As a matter of fact, it may lead to open-land militias of outlaws as happened in Libya. Civilians who suffer the most particularly women and children. Therefore, long term strategy should be taken before it is too late:

1. Donor countries, agencies, foundations NGO’s should address priority funding of schools and healthcare to accommodate the influx of Syrians to the country (20% increase to Jordan’s population).

2. Donor countries, agencies, foundations, NGO’s should address the infrastructure of expanding quantity and quality of water, sewage and health sanitation, roads, housing etc .... to take care of the 20% influx increase to Jordan’s population.
3. Vocational training and career development, continuing education, job training to empower the refugees for developing a business with microfinance to become self-reliant if this migration rests for a long time without resolving the Syrian conflict, so as to allow Syrians to be self-dependents and empowered even when they go back to their home-country.

4. Refugee camps should be protected from dogmatic education or practicing ideology of hatred and violence, otherwise camps may become incubators of terrorist building. This is why it is important to develop career through training and awareness, to the refugees – to become productive and effective.

   Education therefore is the pivot to promote dialogue and help remove the roots of ignorance, prejudice, intolerance and conflicts. But it has to be proper secular education, liberating the minds and freedom of expression.

5. I think it is the duty of the world’s community to come together in meeting the challenge and helping Jordan, as host country in-needs.

   Thank you