

Jordan Closing Doors to Syrian Christian Refugees

The situation in embattled Syria is getting worse for Christians.

That's what a contact in Syria told Open Doors.

"The Christians who have a way out of the country are leaving, but unlike the time after the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, when hundreds of thousands Christians fled Iraq, the surrounding countries have closed their doors to Syrians," the contact says.

For the Syrian Christians who want to flee the country during the civil war, there are not many possibilities left. They are trying to flee to countries which have a degree of **freedom of religion**, but Jordan and others have closed their borders to them.

The contact adds: "Only Lebanon is still a way out. Whoever has the money and the ability to leave is leaving, especially from Aleppo. Another contact person said that there are rumors in the country that the number of Christians has decreased significantly with hundreds of thousands fleeing."

The population of Syria is an estimated 22.5 million. Open Doors estimated in 2011 the number of Christians at least 1.6 million. "We don't believe hundreds of thousands of Christians have left the country," the spokesman for Open Doors says in reaction to the mass exodus rumors. "Many stay in the country because they can't go anywhere. Only the wealthier ones can go to Lebanon. Among the Internally Displaced People, there are a number of Christians, but they certainly don't number hundreds of thousands."

According to the Syrian contact, the Christian leaders are

“still standing strong.”

He adds: “The pastors and leaders want to stay for now and want to encourage their congregations. Some of them have received advice from recently emigrated relatives to leave. But they are refusing, wanting to stay and help others.”

In the midst of the chaos of war, Open Doors continues its ministry through local churches.

“In spite of the delicate situation in the country, we continue our work with the churches in Syria,” the Open Doors spokesman says. “This summer we supported churches for their summer camps for children and helped them with their discipleship programs. We also continued supporting several churches that distribute food and other relief articles.”

Open Doors USA president and CEO Carl Moeller notes that “churches are reaching out to others and serving faithfully in Syria. The message of the **gospel** is being spread and people are more receptive to it. Praise the Lord that He is working in the midst of violence and chaos. Continue to pray for the brave believers in Syria.”