A longtime State Department employee, Mark Ward has been director of the Syrian Transitional Assistance and Refugee Response Team based at the U.S. embassy in Jordan since December 2014. He has overseen funding for two million dollars in U.S. assistance to Syria from Turkey, where millions of Syrians have fled to Turkey in recent years.

Ali met Mark Ward in April 2014 at a U.S. refugee agency in Gaziantep, where the 35-year-old diplomat often visits. Ali wanted to migrate to Europe, maybe Germany or Denmark, where two of his brothers are. But those maybe Turkey or in recent years. The team is responsible for coordinating the Syrian Transition Assistance and Refugee Response Team based at the U.S. Embassy in Jordan, where the 15 million dollars in U.S. assistance to Syria has been spent.

Of the Syrian Transition Assistance and Refugee Response Team based at the U.S. Embassy in Jordan, where the 15 million dollars in U.S. assistance to Syria has been spent.


A sponsor is someone who agrees to watch over a refugee for them for six months in the country. The sponsor helps a refugee find a place to live and learn about the community. The new driver “took us to his car,” Ward recalls. He and the others left the van and walked a couple of kilometers, in broad daylight, to a spot at the border where a hole had been cut through the high barbed wire fence. They would need to find a spot in the border to cross illegally — and the driver knew of one. Ali paid the driver 5,000 lira, about $20 in U.S. currency. The driver had arranged for another person to drive them to the border with a driver who had been there before.

The driving force is compelling for young men in Syria after they turn 20. Ali says he served in the Syrian Army from September 1, 2012 to March 2, 2014.

“Very dangerous to leave (Syria),” he recalls. “He didn’t want to go back (to Syria),” Ali says. “If they found me, they would take me to military.”

This is why he left, he says, long after most of his family had already fled.

He said he was tipped by a friend in the Syrian government that the military was due to visit him on March 2. He fled that day, he says. He took nothing with him, except his keys and a small bag. Later, his roommate confirmed military officers knocked on his door later that day.

Ali took a bus to Mardin, about 30 miles northeast of Aleppo, where a sister lived, and stayed there three days. A driver drove him north to Kobani, where he stayed a few days with his brother. Ahmed, who is now a refugee in Germany, arranged for Ali to get a ride to the border with a driver who was taking 15 others.

They would need to find a spot in the border to cross illegally — and the driver knew of one. Ali paid the driver 5,000 lira, about $20 in U.S. currency. He and the others left the van and walked a couple of kilometers, in broad daylight, to a spot at the border where a hole had been cut through the high barbed wire fence.

The driving force is compelling for young men in Syria after they turn 20. Ali says he served in the Syrian Army from September 1, 2012 to March 2, 2014.

“Very dangerous to leave (Syria),” he recalls. “He didn’t want to go back (to Syria),” Ali says. “If they found me, they would take me to military.”

Ali met Mark Ward in April 2014 at a U.S. refugee agency in Gaziantep, where the 35-year-old diplomat often visits. Ali wanted to migrate to Europe, maybe Germany or Denmark, where two of his brothers are. But those maybe Turkey or in recent years. The team is responsible for coordinating the Syrian Transition Assistance and Refugee Response Team based at the U.S. Embassy in Jordan, where the 15 million dollars in U.S. assistance to Syria has been spent.


A sponsor is someone who agrees to watch over a refugee for them for six months in the country. The sponsor helps a refugee find a place to live and learn about the community. The new driver “took us to his car,” Ward recalls. He and the others left the van and walked a couple of kilometers, in broad daylight, to a spot at the border where a hole had been cut through the high barbed wire fence. They would need to find a spot in the border to cross illegally — and the driver knew of one. Ali paid the driver 5,000 lira, about $20 in U.S. currency. The driver had arranged for another person to drive them to the border with a driver who had been there before.

The driving force is compelling for young men in Syria after they turn 20. Ali says he served in the Syrian Army from September 1, 2012 to March 2, 2014.

“Very dangerous to leave (Syria),” he recalls. “He didn’t want to go back (to Syria),” Ali says. “If they found me, they would take me to military.”

This is why he left, he says, long after most of his family had already fled.

He said he was tipped by a friend in the Syrian government that the military was due to visit him on March 2. He fled that day, he says. He took nothing with him, except his keys and a small bag. Later, his roommate confirmed military officers knocked on his door later that day.

Ali took a bus to Mardin, about 30 miles northeast of Aleppo, where a sister lived, and stayed there three days. A driver drove him north to Kobani, where he stayed a few days with his brother. Ahmed, who is now a refugee in Germany, arranged for Ali to get a ride to the border with a driver who was taking 15 others.

They would need to find a spot in the border to cross illegally — and the driver knew of one. Ali paid the driver 5,000 lira, about $20 in U.S. currency. He and the others left the van and walked a couple of kilometers, in broad daylight, to a spot at the border where a hole had been cut through the high barbed wire fence.

The driving force is compelling for young men in Syria after they turn 20. Ali says he served in the Syrian Army from September 1, 2012 to March 2, 2014.

“Very dangerous to leave (Syria),” he recalls. “He didn’t want to go back (to Syria),” Ali says. “If they found me, they would take me to military.”

This is why he left, he says, long after most of his family had already fled.

He said he was tipped by a friend in the Syrian government that the military was due to visit him on March 2. He fled that day, he says. He took nothing with him, except his keys and a small bag. Later, his roommate confirmed military officers knocked on his door later that day.

Ali took a bus to Mardin, about 30 miles northeast of Aleppo, where a sister lived, and stayed there three days. A driver drove him north to Kobani, where he stayed a few days with his brother. Ahmed, who is now a refugee in Germany, arranged for Ali to get a ride to the border with a driver who was taking 15 others.

They would need to find a spot in the border to cross illegally — and the driver knew of one. Ali paid the driver 5,000 lira, about $20 in U.S. currency. He and the others left the van and walked a couple of kilometers, in broad daylight, to a spot at the border where a hole had been cut through the high barbed wire fence.

The driving force is compelling for young men in Syria after they turn 20. Ali says he served in the Syrian Army from September 1, 2012 to March 2, 2014.

“Very dangerous to leave (Syria),” he recalls. “He didn’t want to go back (to Syria),” Ali says. “If they found me, they would take me to military.”

This is why he left, he says, long after most of his family had already fled. He said he was tipped by a friend in the Syrian government that the military was due to visit him on March 2. He fled that day, he says. He took nothing with him, except his keys and a small bag. Later, his roommate confirmed military officers knocked on his door later that day.

Ali took a bus to Mardin, about 30 miles northeast of Aleppo, where a sister lived, and stayed there three days. A driver drove him north to Kobani, where he stayed a few days with his brother. Ahmed, who is now a refugee in Germany, arranged for Ali to get a ride to the border with a driver who was taking 15 others.

They would need to find a spot in the border to cross illegally — and the driver knew of one. Ali paid the driver 5,000 lira, about $20 in U.S. currency. He and the others left the van and walked a couple of kilometers, in broad daylight, to a spot at the border where a hole had been cut through the high barbed wire fence.