

## Dohuk Sub-Office

### Overview – December 2024

UNHCR's **Dohuk Sub-Office** covers the Dohuk governorate, including Amedi, Akre, Bardarash, Dohuk, Sumail, Sheikhan districts, and Zakho Independent Administration (ZIA). **Approximately 92,000 refugees<sup>1</sup> reside in these areas.** Most refugees are from Syria (93%), followed by Türkiye. Around 56% live in four refugee camps (Domiz 1, Domiz 2, Gawilan and Akre), while 44% resides in urban areas.

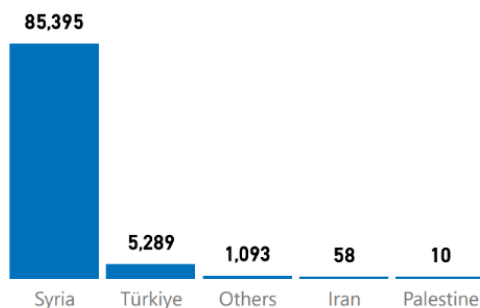
**Over 281,000 IDPs reside in Dohuk governorate. Of these, 65% live in urban areas while 35% reside in 14 camps** (Bajet Kandala, Berseve 1, Berseve 2, Chamishku, Darkar, Dawadia, Essian, Kabarto 1, Kabarto 2, Khanke, Mamilian, Mamrashan, Rwanga Community, Shariya, and Sheikhan). Over 90% are Ezidi ethnicity who fled the Sinjar district due to Da'esh conflict.

UNHCR in Dohuk promotes the inclusion of refugees in national services and implements protection and solutions-oriented programmes directly and through its partners in accordance with the **UNHCR Iraq's Multi-Year Strategy** as well as in line with the **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in Iraq** and the **Global Compact on Refugees**. In Dohuk, UNHCR works in partnership with governmental entities as well as national and international NGOs.

### ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

**91,845 refugees and asylum-seekers** are registered with UNHCR in Dohuk and Zakho.

#### Countries of Origin



**74% are women and children**

**20% are people with specific needs**

### INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND RETURNEES

**281,105 IDPs** reside in Amedi, Sheikhan, Akre, Dohuk, Sumail districts and Zakho Independent Administration (Source of data: DMCR)

**Over 98,000 individuals reside in camps**  
(data as of end of December 2024)  
 Source of data: DMCR/UNHCR

**Aproximately 30,000 individuals departed from camps**  
(data as of end of December 2024)  
 Source of data: DMCR/UNHCR



#### UNHCR STAFF

03 International Staff

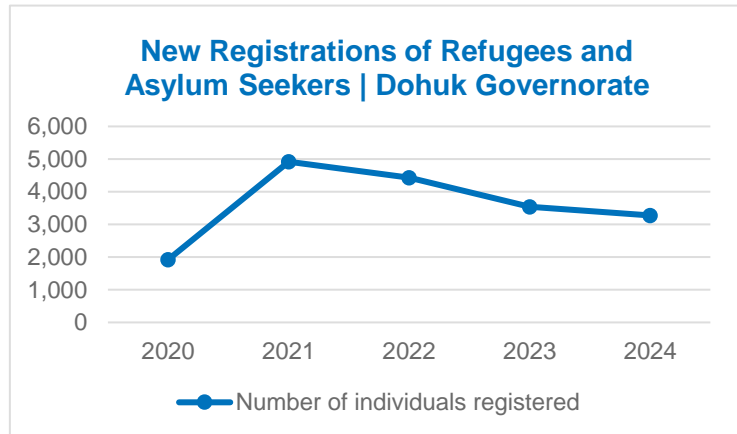
65 National Staff

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR data as of end of December 2024

## Protection Activities

### Registration

UNHCR conducts registration for refugees and asylum-seekers to enable them to obtain government-issued residency documentation. As of 30 November 2024, over 91,000 refugees and asylum-seekers are registered with UNHCR in Dohuk, with women and children comprising 74% of the population. This also includes almost 3,000 refugees newly registered in 2024, among them more than 900 are new arrivals, over 500 are in-situ registration (individuals who have been in Iraq for more than 12 months but only recently approached UNHCR for registration) and around 1,900 new births.



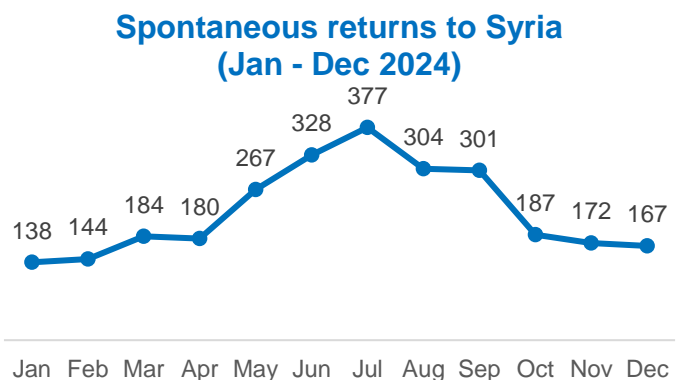
UNHCR registers asylum-seekers at registration centres located in Domiz and in Gawilan refugee camps, as well as through mobile missions in urban locations and remote areas. On average, UNHCR renews the registration of 1,100 refugee households per month through its team of 20 registration staff working in districts covered by the UNHCR Dohuk Sub-Office.

UNHCR's registration process in Dohuk, as in the rest of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, is an important mechanism in realizing the implementation of [Administrative Instructions \(AI\) for regulating the affairs of asylum-seekers](#). Once refugees and asylum seekers receive their UNHCR registration certificate, they are able to approach the Residency Directorate to issue their residency documents, namely the Personal Identification Card (PIC) for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. With this documentation, refugees and asylum seekers have freedom of movement and access to national services.

### Border monitoring

The Peshkhabour Border Crossing Point is the only land border point in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for Syrians seeking to formally return home. UNHCR's border team, based in the Derabon Return Centre - located 10km away from Peshkhabour - provides return counselling to refugees and asylum-seekers wishing to return permanently to Syria.

Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR undergo a formal departure process at the Derabon Return Centre. This includes interviews, return counselling, protection assessments when warranted, such as for children not travelling with their parents, verification of their status as an asylum seeker or refugee with UNHCR through iris scan identification, and closure of their case in UNHCR's proGres database. In addition, at Derabon details such as their intended location of return and specific protection needs are recorded during the return process.



UNHCR's partner Harikar is also stationed at the arrival hall of the Peshkhabour border crossing to conduct sample interviews with new arrivals from Syria.

### Legal assistance

UNHCR and its partner Harikar provide legal assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless people, and those at risk of statelessness. This includes legal counselling and representation, assistance with administrative and legal procedures, and conducting legal awareness sessions. As of end of December, UNHCR provided some 1,200 refugees and asylum-seekers living in Dohuk governorate with legal awareness sessions. In addition, over 2,000 refugees received legal aid services, including counselling and representation before judicial and administrative bodies, supporting them to resolve legal issues.

For refugees and asylum-seekers in detention, UNHCR and partners also provide targeted legal assistance. So far in 2024, over 158 refugees and asylum-seekers who had been detained in Dohuk on migration-related charges were released with support from UNHCR and partners.

UNHCR also assists IDPs in accessing civil documentation through its partner Harikar. The programme concluded by the end of 2024 as UNHCR, and partners have made significant progress over the past five years in addressing civil documentation needs and the majority of IDPs have now obtained the required documents. In 2024, over 1,000 civil documents were secured by IDPs living in Dohuk governorate thanks to UNHCR and partner Harikar.

### Community-based protection

UNHCR and partners (Harikar and the Lotus Flower) provide child protection services, including counselling, recreational and educational activities for children at risk. UNHCR and its partners also provide comprehensive support for survivors and those at risk of gender-based violence, encompassing response, mitigation, and support services such as counselling, psychological support, and legal assistance. As of December 2024, some 41,000 individuals participated in awareness-raising sessions organized by UNHCR and partners.

In districts covered by UNHCR Dohuk Sub-Office, a total of 103 Community Outreach Volunteers work in camps and urban areas, identifying individuals at risk and facilitating a two-way communication between UNHCR and the refugee community.

UNHCR and its partner Harikar also run 13 part-time helpdesks across urban areas to which refugees can direct their concerns. In refugee camps, UNHCR also supports Refugee Welfare Committees, composed of elected members of the refugee community who serve as a link between the refugee community, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors. These committees help amplify the concerns and priorities of the community and increase their involvement in decision making in the camps.

Regarding IDPs, UNHCR supports Self-Governance Community Committees (SGCC) in all IDP camps. The SGCCs represent the community and share concerns and challenges of the IDP community in coordination meetings held in the camps every month. Moreover, in seven urban areas across Dohuk governorate and Zakho Independent Administration, including Dohuk City, Zakho, Derelok, Husseinia, Sumail, Batifa, and Qasrok, UNHCR supports Urban Leadership Committees, which are community-based structures comprising of IDPs, refugees in urban areas, and host community members. A total of 37 members from refugee, IDP and host communities participate in the Urban Leadership Committees and work to amplify the concerns and priorities of their respective communities living in the seven areas.

## Cash-based assistance

UNHCR provides [Multipurpose Cash Assistance \(MPCA\)](#) to enable socio-economically vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers residing in Iraq, including Dohuk governorate, to cover their basic needs, preventing them from falling into dire poverty and decreasing risks of harmful coping mechanisms such as reducing food intake and accumulating debt. During 2024, [UNHCR has provided approximately 10,000 refugees and asylum-seekers living in Dohuk governorate with MPCA.](#)<sup>2</sup>

In addition, UNHCR provided one-time [Emergency Cash Assistance \(ECA\)](#) and [Medical Cash Assistance \(MCA\)](#) to the most vulnerable refugees. As of December 2024, eight families (a total of 45 individuals) received ECA whereas 10 individuals received MCA in the Dohuk governorate<sup>3</sup>.

## Camp coordination and management

UNHCR supports the [Directorate of Migration and Crisis Response \(DMCR\)](#) in managing four refugee camps in Dohuk. For IDPs, UNHCR provides training to government authorities and Self-Governance Community Committees to improve camp management. DMCR alongside the Barzani Charity Foundation manage IDP camps and coordination at the governorate level.

UNHCR also facilitates shelter allocation committee meetings in both refugee and IDP camps to address shelter issues, such as relocation requests. UNHCR works with camp management to provide core relief items for lifesaving purposes, for example in case of fire incidents. In IDP camps, following the Kurdistan Regional Government's decision to allow the IDP community to upgrade their own shelters, UNHCR provides technical support to the IDP community to enhance shelter safety. [As of end November 2024, a total of 4,016 shelters have been upgraded by IDPs themselves, with UNHCR technical support, across the 14 IDP camps in Dohuk governorate and Zakho Independent Administration.](#)

## **Towards the inclusion of refugees in national systems**

In Iraq, refugees and asylum-seekers have access to [public services such as healthcare and education](#), and they can pursue [livelihood opportunities](#), primarily in the informal sector.

In line with [UNHCR Iraq's Multi-Year Strategy 2025-2029](#), UNHCR seeks to build on this inclusion over the coming years, working closely with government and local authorities to expand other public services to also be available to refugees and asylum seekers.

To increase the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the public education and healthcare services, UNHCR [supports the Directorates of Education and Health in Dohuk, including through the construction and rehabilitation of schools and primary healthcare centres.](#)

### **Education**

In 2024, UNHCR built [two new schools and renovated two other schools across Dohuk governorate to support the Kurdistan Regional Government in implementing the Refugee Education Integration Policy \(REIP\)](#) and help achieve the full inclusion of refugees in public schools. In addition, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Directorate of Education and its partner the Norwegian Refugee Council, provides [Kurdish language courses to refugee teachers](#) to strengthen their capacity to instruct in

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR figures as of end of October 2024

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR figures as of end of October 2024

Kurdish at public schools and to refugee parents to improve their ability to help their children with their schoolwork and interact with the teachers.

UNHCR also implements the **Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI)** scholarship programme in Dohuk, through its partner **Sorouh for Sustainable Development Foundation (SSDF)**. Currently, [40 refugee students \(20 girls, 20 boys\) are enrolled in the DAFI programme](#) in the public universities in the areas covered by UNHCR Dohuk Sub-Office.

## Health

UNHCR also collaborates closely with the Directorate of Health to identify and address gaps in [healthcare services for refugees and host communities](#). Projects undertaken in Dohuk include the construction of new primary health centres, the expansion of storage spaces at health facilities and laboratories, and renovations. In 2024, UNHCR constructed [a new primary healthcare centre in Domiz and expanded the storage spaces and laboratory of Sumail Hospital](#) to enhance health services for both the refugee and host communities in these areas.

## Livelihood

UNHCR and the **International Trade Center (ITC)** are working together on a project in Dohuk governorate [to help refugees and local farmers grow their businesses and boost the local economy](#). The project focuses on supporting small agricultural businesses and creating job opportunities for refugees in the food and farming sector.

Under this project, UNHCR and ITC in collaboration with the **Directorate of Agriculture (DoA)** in Dohuk and ITC's partner, the **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**, have established a farmer alliance comprised of 47 farmers (23 refugees, 18 host community members and 6 IDPs). [In 2024, these farmers have been trained on a diverse range of topics, including on how to improve their farming techniques, working collaborating, and connecting with markets to sell their products.](#)

To further support these farmers, UNHCR is currently constructing an aggregation hub, in Faida sub-district. This facility will serve as a collection point where farmers can gather and store their produce before connecting with buyers and broader markets. Construction is expected to be completed in August 2025.

## Partnerships

In Dohuk, UNHCR works with a range of implementing partners to deliver services and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. These include:

- **Harikar** for legal assistance, border monitoring, response to gender-based violence, community-based protection
- The **Lotus Flower** for child protection,
- The **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** for education.

In addition, UNHCR collaborates with a host of government entities within the Kurdistan Regional Government, including the **Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC)**, the **Directorate of Migration and Crisis Response (DMCR)**, and the **Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF)**.

Furthermore, UNHCR collaborates with the local directorates of the **Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD)**, and the **Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Planning, and the**

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.** UNHCR also works closely with other **UN/humanitarian organizations** to support the government's responses to refugees and IDPs, exchange information and coordinate advocacy.

**UNHCR thanks its major donors of unearmarked funds, as well as those who contribute to directly to the Iraq operation and to the regional response for Syrian refugees:**

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Japan | Grand Duchy of Luxembourg | Netherlands | Norway | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Private Donors



*Faisal and his family were displaced from Syria in 2014. They sought refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and settled in the Domiz camp, located in Dohuk Governorate. Faisal works in the construction field and supports his family through this work. His wife is a housewife, and his children attend school in the camp.*