

# Regional Flash Update #14

## Syria situation crisis

13 February 2025

### Key Highlights



*UNHCR staff supporting refugee returnee families at the Nassib Border Crossing Point. Inside Syria and in neighbouring countries, UNHCR is providing a wide range of assistance, as well essential information about the available services, to Syrians choosing to return. © UNHCR/Field Office Sweida*

- As of 13 February 2025, UNHCR estimates that some **279,620 Syrians** have returned to Syria since 8 December 2024. These figures are based on a triangulation of sources from outside and inside Syria and include refugees registered with UNHCR and other Syrians returning from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, as well those transiting from beyond the region.
- In a cross-border coordinated effort, and as part of the **Facilitated Voluntary Return and Transport Assistance programme**, UNHCR continued to offer free transportation for the most vulnerable returnees in Jordan and inside Syria.
- In Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, refugees continue to express interest in returning, while also raising concerns around safety, damage to infrastructure, limited services, livelihood opportunities and raising practical questions on return processes. Refugees are also emphasizing a preference for "**go - and - see**" visits, similar to those facilitated by Türkiye, in order to help their families make informed decisions about returning.

- Following the ministerial meetings in Aqaba (14 December 2024) and Riyadh (12 January 2025), France hosted a high-level ministerial conference in Paris on the situation in Syria, with President Macron joining the discussions. The Conference [Joint Statement](#) also made reference to the importance of "facilitating the conditions necessary for the voluntary and lasting return of refugees including support for economic recovery, in line with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees's position on returns to Syria, and with a particular focus on recovering ownership rights."

## Country updates

### Syria

As of 13 February 2025, UNHCR Syria estimates that **279,620 Syrians** have crossed back into Syria via neighbouring countries.

The IDP Taskforce reports that, as of 9 February 2025, the total number of people newly displaced following the November and December hostilities stands at **617,000**. In total, there remain over 7.4 million IDPs in Syria. In parallel, around **680,000** internally displaced have returned to their areas of origin since December 2024.

Some areas such as Daria (Rural Damascus), have recently received a significant number of IDP families from Menbij (Aleppo) who fled the ongoing hostilities in the north of the country. UNHCR programmes and services are up and running with **102 UNHCR-supported Community Centres (CCs)** operational, providing a wide range of services for refugee and IDP returnees including MHPSS, GBV prevention and response, legal counselling, mine risk education, child protection activities. UNHCR also stepped up its child protection activities, including courses on how to manage feelings, effective communication, problem-solving skills in various CCs, such as Rural Damascus and Al-Hasakeh. Sessions were held individually and in groups to support children's psychological and emotional well-being in Idleb and Aleppo.

UNHCR Syria continued to conduct **regular home visits and shelter rehabilitation missions** to assess and provide support to those most in need. Through mobile teams and its network of outreach volunteers (ORVs), UNHCR reached thousands of families from the refugee and IDP returnee communities that are scattered in rural areas far from the Community Centres.

Furthermore, in a cross-border coordinated effort, and to respond to the needs expressed by refugees willing to return in the latest [Regional Survey on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions and Intentions on Return \(RPIS\)](#), UNHCR continued to offer **free transportation** to the most vulnerable refugees from neighbouring countries (Jordan and Türkiye) and from inside Syria. UNHCR received returnees arriving at the Homs' bus station and facilitated transportation for families heading to Idleb, Aleppo and several locations within Homs Governorate. UNHCR also continued to facilitate free transportation for those crossing the Bab Al-Hawa Border Crossing Point from Türkiye and for those returning through the Nassib Border Crossing Point from Jordan.

Taking into account the results of the recent RPIS, which identified economic challenges as one of the key barriers to return, UNHCR continued to scale up its activities to support the reintegration of

returnees throughout the country, including through the distribution of essential core relief items (CRI), livelihoods support, such as agricultural tool kits targeting farmers as well as solar panels to mitigate the scarcity of electricity and challenges in securing fuel.

### Türkiye

The processing of voluntary returns continues in Türkiye's provinces and at five border crossings: Cilvegözü / Bab al Hawa, Yayladağı / Keseb, Öncüpınar / Bab al Salama, Karkamış / Jarablus and Akçakale / Tel Abyad. The official number of returns to Syria as reported by the Minister of Interior remains at **81,576 individuals** since early December. The main reasons for return remain consistent, with most Syrians mentioning political changes, improved security, and family reunification.

The Turkish Embassy in Damascus [declared](#) that, as of 10 February 2025, **visa applications for Türkiye from Syria** will be processed through the intermediary company "Visa for The Globe."

Furthermore, Türkiye's Ministry of Trade [announced](#) the lifting of trade restrictions on Syria. This decision **normalizes exports, imports, and transit goods** under standard foreign trade regulations, though limitations on metal scrap remain. The move aligns with agreements made in December 2024.

### Lebanon

As of 12 February 2025, the government's Disaster Risk Management Unit reported around **93,300 arrivals from Syria** in Baalbek Governorate, including 35,700 people in 210 informal collective shelters and 57,600 living within host communities, among them 20,000 Lebanese returnees. A household profiling exercise is underway in Hermel and Baalbek, led by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and UNHCR's partner Intersos, with 1,500 households profiled so far and the most vulnerable referred to assistance programmes.

In the Bekaa, daily crossings at the Masnaa Official Crossing Point (OCP) remain low but stable, averaging **1,500 entries and exits per day**, according to the General Security Office. Meanwhile, in northern Lebanon, the Arida OCP has been closed since 3 February 2025 due to ongoing public works, while unofficial border crossings continue.

In response to cross-border displacement, UNHCR in Lebanon is working closely with authorities to enhance material assistance. Through the **Basic Assistance Sector**, UNHCR and partners are distributing **core relief items** - including blankets, mattresses, winter clothes, and pillows - to newly arrived families in **collective shelters**, alongside **basic protection services and referrals** for individuals with specific needs. At the government's request, UNHCR has adapted its Referral Health Care SOPs to ensure new arrivals can access life-saving hospitalization care. In January 2025, 50 new arrivals received treatment in UNHCR-contracted hospitals.

### Jordan

According to [an interview](#) with the Minister of Interior on 11 February 2025, **34,690 refugees** have left Jordan since the fall of the regime, including more than **4,800 refugees from camps**. In [another interview](#) on 6 February, the Minister reported that **110,000 Syrians** have left the country since 8 December 2024.

UNHCR has analysed the profiles of nearly 30,500 registered refugees who departed over the past two months. Women and girls represent around 45% of the total number, compared to 55% men and boys. Children constitute around 41% of the overall returnees. More and more registered refugees return with their complete families, and by now, 48% of those who have returned have done so as complete family households. 52% of the returnees continue to return alone or as partial family units. Registered refugees who return from the camps accounted for around 12% of the overall returns during the reporting period. Most returnees had been residing in Amman (27%) and Irbid (24%) with smaller numbers from other governorates.

As most returns from Jordan are spontaneous, UNHCR does not have data on the intended destination of return. However, previous intentions surveys indicate that the majority of refugees in Jordan intend to return to their area of origin. Since early December 2024, returnees from Jordan originate from [Dara'a](#) (34%), Homs (27%) and Rural Damascus (12%).

Between 7 and 13 February 2025, UNHCR **facilitated transportation for 200 refugees** seeking to return to Syria and requiring support in the process. Before departure, UNHCR conducted in-person interviews to ensure that each return was **voluntary and well-informed**. Refugees also received counseling and information on the availability of services inside Syria. The return process was closely coordinated with UNHCR Syria, ensuring continued support upon arrival at their final destination. UNHCR teams in Jordan and Syria maintain regular communication to share lessons learned and improve the efficiency of the return process.

During recent focus group discussions, refugees expressed concerns about the **security situation** in Syria and various challenges related to the return process, particularly **documentation**. However, some participants were optimistic about resuming their studies in Syria, noting that Syrian universities might offer better opportunities.

### **Iraq**

Since 8 December 2024, **over 6,000 Syrians** have returned from Iraq to Syria, including **over 400 registered refugees**. This includes Syrians who have returned through the Peshkhabour border crossing and the Al-Qaim border crossing. The number of registered Syrian refugees returning has slightly decreased compared to the previous week (45 refugees compared to 73 refugees).

During the reporting period, UNHCR continued to observe **arrivals from Syria to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq**, mainly from the Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, and Ar-Raqqa areas, at an average of 300 individuals daily. Most of these Syrians are coming to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq family visits, medical purposes, marriage, or to use KR-I as a transit point to go to Europe, with most expressing their intentions to return to Syria following the visit. Few Syrians arriving through the Peshkhabour border crossing express their intention of applying for asylum and registering with UNHCR.

### **Egypt**

As of 11 February 2025, 143,840 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt, making up over 15% of the country's total refugee population.

Over the past months, there has been a **sharp rise in case closure requests**, with **5,122 applications affecting over 10,782 individuals** submitted since early December 2024 - a

significant increase from the November average of just 7 to 116 requests per day. Of those seeking case closures, 66% are male, with the majority originating from Damascus (43%), followed by Rural Damascus (26%), Homs (11%), Aleppo (7%), and other areas in Syria (13%).

## Useful links

- [Regional Flash Update #13, Syria Situation Crisis](#)
- [UNHCR Operational Framework for Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs \(February 2025\)](#)
- [January 2025 Refugee Perceptions and Intentions Survey \(RPIS\)](#)
- [UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic \(16 December\)](#)
- [Syria Situation Data Portal](#)
- [UNHCR Help Site](#)

**UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to its operations in the Middle East in 2025, including:**

Australia | Austria | Belgium | Denmark | European Union | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Luxembourg | Monaco | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Norway | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Central Emergency Response Fund

Islamic Development Bank

### CONTACTS

**UNHCR Syria**

[SYRIAreporting@unhcr.org](mailto:SYRIAreporting@unhcr.org)

**For more information, please visit:**

[UNHCR Global Focus – Middle East and North Africa](#)