

Regional Flash Update #18

Syria situation crisis

14 March 2025

Key Highlights



After 13 years as a refugee in Türkiye, Abdelfattah has returned home to Aleppo with his family. As he rebuilds his house and his livelihood, UNHCR support is helping him take the first steps toward a fresh start. © UNHCR Syria/Hameed Maarouf

- As of 14 March 2025, UNHCR estimates that **some 354,900 Syrians** have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. The figures are based on a triangulation of sources from outside and inside Syria and include refugees registered with UNHCR and other Syrians crossing from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, as well those transiting from beyond the region.
- On 13 March, the Caretaker Authorities [signed](#) a **Constitutional Declaration**, following the [announcement](#) on 10 March of the **integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) into Syrian State institutions**. UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen has [welcomed](#) the move toward restoring the rule of law and hoped the declaration can be a solid legal framework for a genuinely credible and inclusive political transition.
- Since 6 March, **escalating hostilities in the Tartous, Lattakia, Homs, and Hama** have resulted in the death of scores of civilians, damage to property and infrastructure, as well as thousands of people displaced in the coastal areas

Country updates

Syria

As of 14 March 2025, UNHCR estimates that **354,900 Syrians** have crossed back into Syria from neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. Most refugee returnees continue to cross from Lebanon, followed by Türkiye, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

Since 6 March, **escalating hostilities in the Tartous, Lattakia, Homs, and Hama** have resulted in the death of scores of civilians, damage to property and infrastructure, as well as thousands of people displaced in the coastal areas. On 13 March, Yasser al-Farhan, the Spokesperson for the Fact-Finding Committee on the Syrian Coastal Events, said that the committee is conducting its work on the ground and has lists of witnesses and potential suspects. Al-Farhan **confirmed** that the committee “will investigate all operations that took place on the coast,” noting that “the Syrian authorities’ position was expressed through the formation of a committee to investigate the issue of violations against civilians.”

Due to the dire security situation, UNHCR-supported Community Centres (CCs) in the Coastal Areas have been forced to temporarily suspend activities since 7 March. Nonetheless, as of 13 March, **two CCs have been able to reopen**, in Ras Al-Basit (Lattakia) and Tartous City, in order to provide assistance to the displaced families.

As per the political developments in the country, On 13 March, the Caretaker Authorities **signed a Constitutional Declaration**, following the announcement on 10 March of the **integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) into Syrian State institutions**. UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen **welcomed** the move toward restoring the rule of law and hoped the declaration can be a solid legal framework for a genuinely credible and inclusive political transition. Proper implementation will be key, along with continued efforts to ensure transitional governance in an orderly manner.

In terms of **UNHCR’s response**, the UN Refugee Agency continues to play a pivotal role in supporting displaced populations and returnees across Syria, ensuring access to essential services and protection. At key border crossing points, including Joussieh, Jdaidet Yabous, Nassib, Bab Al-Hawa, and Bab Al-Salama, UNHCR maintains a consistent presence to monitor return trends and provide crucial assistance. This includes offering information on available services at the destination, as well as facilitating basic services and transportation assistance to those approaching the posts.

UNHCR continues to identify and support IDPs, IDP returnees from Idlib, and Syrian refugee returnees from Lebanon, Türkiye, and Jordan through **home visits and referrals to UNHCR-supported Community Centres, mobile teams, and outreach community volunteers (ORVs)**. The most pressing needs identified include civil documentation (such as identity cards and marriage authentication), core relief items, hygiene kits, cash assistance, and livelihood opportunities. Only this past week, over 300 newly returned families in Aleppo benefited from the pioneer Shelter Packages Intervention, and in Deir ez-Zor City, winter chortling and blankets were distributed to over 2,200 returnees. Across the country, some other thousands of dignity kits, medical devices and core relief items were distributed to people in need, in addition to livelihood programmes, Mine Risk Education sessions as part of the child protection curriculum, Gender-Based Violence prevention and response activities and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services that continue to be well received by all population groups in Syria.

Following the recent agreement between the Caretaker Authorities and the SDF, UNHCR has started coordinating and assessing four CCs in **areas that are potential for returns from Northeast Syria** – Dayr Hafir, Maskaneh, Khafseh, and Rasm Haram El-Imam – to relaunch their services to assist returnees and their host communities.

Türkiye

On 6 March, President Erdoğan **announced** that, since the fall of the Assad regime, **133,000 Syrians have returned to their home voluntarily and in a dignified way**, adding that the number of Syrians who have returned to Syria safely to date has reached 873,000.

UNHCR continues to monitor returns in various locations, including in 13 provinces with adding recently Kahramanmaraş and at border crossing points: Cilvegözü / Bab al Hawa, Yayladağı / Keseb, Öncüpınar / Bab al Salama, Karkamış / Jarablus as well as at the Istanbul International Airport. As of 11 March, Çobanbey / Al Rai and Zeytindalı / Jinderes are open for processing go-and-see visits for Syrians under temporary protection as well as all Syrian nationals legally residing in Türkiye and those who acquired Turkish citizenship. Processing of voluntary returns continues in provinces and at five border crossings: Cilvegözü / Bab al Hawa, Yayladağı / Keseb, Öncüpınar / Bab al Salama, Karkamış / Jarablus and Akçakale / Tel Abyad.

As with previous weeks, many returnees travel alone, often to **assess conditions before reuniting with family**. While security and political changes drive returns, nostalgia and economic factors also play a role. Most aim to resettle in their home province, but destruction, security, and economic conditions influence their final destination. Property ownership is common, but documentation gaps persist. In Türkiye, income came mainly from informal work and aid, while returnees expect to seek employment in Syria. Service access remains uncertain, requiring continued support. **Go-and-see visits** reveal that longing, curiosity, and missing relatives motivate visits, but security, living conditions, and economic instability remain major concerns.

This week, **UNHCR's Representative in Syria conducted a two-day mission to Ankara** to have exchanges with key Turkish government counterparts on needs, gaps and potential cooperation with those in Syria.

Lebanon

Since 6 March, escalating hostilities in the Tartous, Latakia, Homs, and Hama Governorates of Syria have resulted in the death of scores of civilians, damage to property and infrastructure, as well as hundreds of people displaced in coastal areas. The fighting has also resulted in **Syrians fleeing across the border into Lebanon, with the majority arriving in the preceding days**. 10,500 individuals (2,596 families, of which 63 are Lebanese families who were residing in Syria) have newly arrived in 20 locations across the North and Akkar Governorates since 6 March, according to local authorities. Coordinated response from humanitarian partners has already begun for immediate needs, including core relief items distribution, ready to eat food, shelter repairs and mobile medical teams.

As of 5 March, the government's Disaster Risk Management reported approximately 90,540 arrivals from Syria in Baalbek Governorate, North Bekaa, including 32,948 in 193 informal collective shelters, with 57,600 in community including 20,000 Lebanese returnees.

Jordan

On 9 March, His Majesty King Abdullah II received representatives of Syria, Türkiye, Iraq and Lebanon participating in a high-level meeting for Syria's neighbouring countries, hosted by Jordan. During the meeting, His Majesty **emphasized** the need to create **suitable conditions for the voluntary and safe return of Syrian refugees to their country, to enable them to contribute to the rebuilding process**.

Over the past week, passenger movement across the Jaber border remained light, while commercial traffic continued to be heavy. On 7 March, the Minister of Interior **announced** an **extension of**

working hours at the border, with the Jaber centre now operating from 08 a.m. to 12 a.m., seven days a week.

As of 8 March, **more than 48,000 refugees registered with UNHCR have returned from Jordan to Syria since 8 December 2024**. Over the past week (from 1 to 8 March) the number of refugee returns decreased with an average of 240 individuals returning to Syria compared to around 450 returnees for the previous reporting period (from 23 February to 1 March).

Demographics of returnees remained largely unchanged from previous weeks, with women and girls representing around 45 per cent of the total refugee returnees. Children accounted for around 42 per cent, and men of military age (18-40 years old) made up 23 per cent of overall returns. Most refugees (83 per cent) continue to return from host communities, primarily from Amman (24 per cent) and Irbid (23 per cent). More details about the numbers and profile of returnees are available on [UNHCR Jordan's returns dashboard](#).

Since the start of the transportation pilot project on 20 January 2025, **UNHCR has supported over 1,300 refugees to return to Syria**. Before departure, in-person interviews are conducted to ensure that returns are voluntary and well-informed, with counselling and information provided on available services inside Syria. The return process is closely coordinated with UNHCR Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination. On 11 March, UNHCR organized one bus from Azraq for 33 refugees wishing to return to Syria. The transportation assistance provided by UNHCR has slowed down in March, as many refugees have reported that they choose to delay their return until after Ramadan.

During recent information sessions and focus group discussions, refugees noted **they feel very unsafe about the current security situation in Syria**, citing fears of armed groups, unstable conditions, and a lack of adequate housing and services. Recent incidents of violence in Syria have made refugees even more reluctant to return. Refugees also mentioned that some returnees who had traveled in the past few months are reporting that they regret their decision due to the housing and economic challenges in Syria, while others said that their families in Syria are advising their relatives in Jordan to delay their return.

Iraq

Between 8 December 2024 and 27 February 2025, **over 8,900 Syrians** have returned from Iraq to Syria, including some 600 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR. This includes Syrians who have returned through Peshkhabour and Al-Qaim border crossing points. The number of registered Syrian refugees who returned this week (65 individuals) is higher than the number of returns in the previous week (54 individuals). The improved security situation in Syria, reuniting with family, and avoiding overstay fines in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq are the most common reasons Syrians report for their return.

During the reporting period, UNHCR continued to observe arrivals from Syria to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, mainly from the Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh areas. Over the past week, about 300 Syrians arrived through the Peshkhabour border crossing point. Visiting family, returning from visit to Syria, family reunification, or transiting through the Kurdistan Region to other destinations were indicated as the main reasons for arrivals, with most expressing their intentions to return to Syria following their visit. Only a few Syrian families arriving to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq expressed their intention to register with UNHCR in Iraq.

Egypt

As of 13 March 2025, over **140,600 Syrian refugees** are registered in Egypt. Syrians represent almost 15% of the total refugee population in the country.

Since the regime change in Syria, there has been a significant increase in Syrians approaching UNHCR in Cairo and Alexandria to request the **closure of their asylum cases**. As of 10 March 2025, some 6,500 closure requests involving almost **13,300 individuals were submitted since 8 December 2024**, averaging 104 requests per day - compared to just seven per day in November.

UNHCR observed a slowdown in the number of Syrian households requesting closing their refugee files in February 2025 (daily average of 80) and in early March 2025 (daily average of 39), compared to the peak seen in January (daily average of 147). This decline may indicate a stabilization of the situation. For March, the remarkable decrease of requests may also be due to the beginning of Ramadan. However, according to the findings of the [Flash Regional Survey](#), conducted in January 2025, on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions and Intentions on Return to Syria, UNHCR expects an increase in Syrians returning from Egypt after Ramadan and the end of the academic school year.

Regarding their **return plans**, 60% intend to return to Damascus, 11% to Homs, 9% to Rural Damascus, 4% to Al Bab, and the remaining 16% to other locations within the country. 98% identified these locations as their original home areas. The percentage of applicants originating from Damascus dropped from 43% at the start of February to 39% towards the beginning of March, with male applicants remaining consistently around 66%.

Useful links

- [Regional Flash Update #17, 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](#)

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