

Regional Flash Update #20

Syria situation crisis

27 March 2025



Little Kholoud and her cousins, children of an IDP returnee family benefiting from UNHCR Cash for Shelter programme in Dar'a, show their new clothes for Eid and smile. © UNHCR Syria/Celine Schmitt

Key Highlights

- As of 27 March 2025, UNHCR estimates that **some 371,900 Syrians** have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024.
- **UNHCR has largely resumed its work in Tartous and Lattakia**, with all eleven UNHCR-Community Centres now fully operational in addition to the continued distribution of essential non-food items to thousands of families in the coastal areas.
- During the week, **only in Aleppo and its rural areas, UNHCR distributed non-food items (NFIs) to over 5,000 individuals**, including mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, jerry cans, solar lamps, plastic sheets, rubber boots, transparent plastic sheets, buckets, and firewood stoves.

Country updates

Syria

As of 27 March 2025, UNHCR estimates that **371,900 Syrians** have crossed back into Syria from neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. This brings up the total of **732,700 Syrian individuals** that have crossed back into Syria since the beginning of 2024. As with previous weeks, most refugee returnees continue to cross from Lebanon, followed by Türkiye, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

Some **926,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** also returned to their places of origin in Syria since the 27 November 2024, according to latest data from the IDP Task Force.

UNHCR maintains its daily presence at border crossing points across the country, namely Joussieh, Jdaidet Yabous, Nassib, Bab Al-Hawa, and Bab Al-Salama, monitoring return trends and providing information, water, and Internet access. Daboussieh, Jesr Kamar, and Matraba border crossings are still closed due to extensive damage, with efforts underway for rehabilitation.

In the **coastal areas**, displacement tracking remained challenging, especially in rural areas, but thousands are estimated to have become IDPs. Some families fled to Lebanon through unofficial border points, while others relocated to safer areas within Syria. Preliminary findings by our partners and outreach community volunteers (ORVs) indicate that **some 1,979 families have been affected by the recent security incidents**, noting that this figure represents those who have reported burnt vehicles, looted homes and personal belongings stolen. UNHCR continued to respond to those displaced, with Community Centres reopening gradually since 16 March. By 25 March, **all 11 UNHCR-supported Community Centres in Lattakia and Tartous had resumed work**.

As per the **response to return movements**, UNHCR continued to facilitate transportation to those in need of transport assistance at the border crossings to their final destinations of return. Furthermore, UNHCR continued to provide assistance through its Community Centres, Cash for Shelter programme and diverse livelihood projects across all 14 governorates. Only on 23 March, UNHCR distributed 2,161 winter assistance packages, benefiting 7,972 individuals (1,990 families) in Deir-ez-Zor City. In addition, in Aleppo and its rural areas, UNHCR distributed non-food items (NFIs) to over 5,000 individuals during the week, including mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, jerry cans, solar lamps, plastic sheets, rubber boots, transparent plastic sheets, buckets, and firewood stoves. Legal consultations continued to be provided, such as the 40 sessions facilitated by SARC during the week across various locations in Homs and Hama governorates, including Al-Bayada, rural Al-Mukharram, Al-Waer, Baba Tadmur, and Baba Amr, covering marriage and divorce registration, real estate transactions, lost document processing, and legal procedures for returnees. Overall, **during the reporting period, humanitarian assistance reached thousands of vulnerable individuals across Syria**.

Türkiye

According to the [announcement](#) by the Vice President on 17 March, **145,639 Syrians** have voluntarily returned from Türkiye following the events of 8 December.

As part of Türkiye's ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with Syria, the Turkish Embassy in Damascus has announced that [Commercial Attaché Caner Bozat](#) and [Religious Affairs Attaché Hüseyin Demirhan](#) have officially assumed their roles. Furthermore, the Turkish Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloğlu outlined the details of the "[Syria Action Plan](#)," which includes 11 main actions and 39 steps focused on rebuilding Syrian civil aviation, maritime, railway, road, and communication systems.

The **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 of 27 March, Çobanbey / Al Rai and Zeytindalı / Jinderes are open for processing go-and-see visits.

UNHCR continues to monitor returns in 13 provinces and at the Cilvegözü/Bab al-Hawa, Yayladağı/Keseb, Öncüpınar/Bab al-Salama, and Karkamış/Jarablus border crossings, as well as at Istanbul Airport.

UNHCR's observations on returns remain largely consistent with previous weeks. Many returnees travel alone, often to assess conditions before reuniting with family. Most returnees aim to go back to their province of origin, primarily due to family ties, but some relocate elsewhere due to property damage, lack of infrastructure, security concerns, or economic challenges. Property ownership is relatively common, but a significant portion of returnees report damage or destruction, with varying levels of documentation available to support ownership claims. Many returnees lack essential civil documentation, including marriage and divorce registrations, potentially complicating their legal status upon return. In terms of livelihoods, a significant number of returnees anticipate economic hardship in Syria, with many planning to seek employment or rely on family support. Access to services in return areas remains inconsistent, with some returnees reporting availability while others cite gaps or a complete lack of access.

This week, **UNHCR consulted refugee-led organizations (RLOs) in southeastern Türkiye on return trends and temporary visits to Syria.** RLOs highlighted key priorities for safe and sustainable returns, including transitional justice, education, peacebuilding, social cohesion, mine risk education, shelter, and land rights. Return patterns vary across Syrian governorates, with higher numbers expected in Aleppo, Damascus, and Idlib, while Deir-ez-Zor, Dara'a, and As-Sweida have lower projections due to security and infrastructure challenges. Financial constraints remain a significant barrier, with expectations for support from the government or private sector.

Lebanon

The hostilities in the Tartous, Latakia, Homs, and Hama Governorates of Syria in early March continue to displace people on a daily basis into the North and Akkar governorates of north Lebanon. **Newly arrived refugees are now across 27 different locations**, predominantly in Akkar in 24 villages near the border with Syria. Local authority official figures from Disaster Risk Management (DRM) cite 14,108 individuals (3,126 families) as of 20 March in Akkar. Following the Lebanese Red Cross's (LRC) enumeration exercise, a total of 7,529 individuals (1,760 families) were counted in North governorate, divided into 1,567 Syrians and 193 Lebanese families. Geographically, most families are residing in Jabal Mohsen area of Tripoli (1,447 families) and Dhour el Hawa, North Lebanon (256 families). Coordinated response from humanitarian partners for immediate needs continues, including core relief items distribution, ready to eat food, shelter repairs and mobile medical teams.

As of 24 March, the Baalbek Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is reporting **approximately 88,530 arrivals from Syria since 8 December**, including approximately 30,938 arrivals in Baalbek governorate, North Bekaa, residing in 186 informal collective shelters, and approximately 57,592 residing in the community. These numbers fluctuate due to reported movement from Hermel to collective shelters in other governorates, including Bekaa and Beirut governorates.

Jordan

Over the past week, passenger movement across the Jaber border crossing remained light, while commercial traffic continued to be heavy. As of 25 March, the border officially transitioned to a 24/7 operation. During the first few days of 24-hour service, UNHCR and authorities both observed that

commercial movement remains heavy around the clock, while passenger movement is very slow after 6 pm – with authorities only supporting transit buses from Queen Alia International Airport on late-arriving flights.

As of 22 March, **nearly 50,000 refugees registered with UNHCR have returned from Jordan** to Syria since 8 December 2024. From 16 to 22 March, the number of refugees returns increased slightly with an average of 180 individuals returning to Syria compared to around 135 returnees for the previous week.

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 around 23 per cent of overall returns. The vast majority of refugees continue to return from host communities, primarily from Amman and Irbid. 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 1,370 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 operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

During recent focus group discussions, UNHCR continued to observe **concerns about escalating tensions and insecurity in Syria**. Challenges in Jordan also continue to influence return decisions. Economic hardship, including restricted work permits, rising living costs, and delays in resettlement processing, create pressure to return. However, the lack of livelihoods and basic services in Syria, along with security risks, make the decision extremely difficult. **Refugees reiterated their request for assistance with go-and-see visits to make an informed decision about returning**.

Moreover, **Jordan hosted high-level delegations from Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom**. On 27 March, the Austrian and German Ministers of Interior, visited Zaatari Refugee Camp, while the British Minister [visited Azraq Refugee Camp](#) on 24 March. Each visit included a briefing with the UNHCR Representative on the refugee situation in Jordan. Refugees highlighted that safety remains a primary concern for return to Syria. Some expressed a willingness to return but cited ongoing insecurity and poor living conditions, while others, due to the trauma they endured, saw return as unfeasible in the near future. **The visits reinforced the need for continued international support and the importance of ensuring voluntary, safe, and dignified returns**.

Iraq

Between 8 December 2024 and 20 March 2025, **over 10,900 Syrians have returned from Iraq to Syria**, including **850 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR**. This includes Syrians who returned through Al-Qaim and Peshkhabour border crossing points. The number of registered Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers who returned this past week (68 registered refugees) is about 60% higher compared to the previous week (39 registered refugees). 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.

Following UNHCR's engagement with border authorities in Baghdad and in Al-Qaim on **enhanced collaboration on monitoring the returns of Syrians**, border authorities have agreed to capture and share data with UNHCR on the number of registered refugees departing Iraq through Al-Qaim border crossing point.

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 250 Syrians arrived through Peshkhabour border crossing. Family visits, returning from visits 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.

Egypt

As of 25 March 2025, around **139,700 Syrian refugees** are registered in Egypt, some 450 less than a week ago. 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 25 March 2025, almost 6,949 closure requests involving over 14,245 individuals were submitted since 8 December 2024, averaging 94 requests per day - compared to just seven per day in November 2024.

The trend of case closure requests in March 2025 shows a fluctuating pattern with a significant spike on 16 March, reaching 65 cases, the highest recorded for the month. In the first half of March, daily requests ranged between 21 and 51, showing moderate variations. However, following the peak on 16 March, the **numbers remained relatively high, consistently exceeding 45 cases on most days until 24 March.** According to the [Flash Regional Survey](#), conducted in January 2025, UNHCR anticipated a rise in case closure requests after Ramadan and the academic school year, as more Syrians in Egypt consider returning home. However, with Eid approaching, this surge suggests that some individuals are initiating their return process earlier than expected, potentially to facilitate family reunification and re-establishment in Syria ahead of the holiday. This early movement indicates that the anticipated post-Ramadan increase in returns may have already begun, as some refugees seek to ensure a smoother transition and settlement before the holiday period.

Useful links

- [Regional Flash Update #19, Syria Situation Crisis](#)
- [UNHCR Operational Framework for Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs](#)
- [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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