

# Lebanon

## Key findings: UNHCR Facilitated Return Feedback and Post-Distribution Monitoring Survey of Syrian Refugee Returnees

### Background

Following the opening of new prospects for voluntary returns to Syria at the end of 2024, the General Security Office (GSO) waived administrative fines and the re-entry ban for refugees returning to Syria as of 1 July 2025, and UNHCR launched its facilitated Voluntary Return (VolRep) programme. Under this, refugees receive counselling, support with civil documentation, \$100 return cash grant/person, and a Repatriation Form accepted as an identity document for cash assistance collection at financial service provider (FSP) outlets countrywide. Refugees can choose to return in a:

- **Self-Organized** manner, where the household organizes their own logistics including transport.
- **Organized (UNHCR-IOM)** manner, where the household benefits from transportation of the family members and luggage by IOM.

Refugees can also choose to return in a **spontaneous** manner, without support.

In 2025, UNHCR inactivated **501,603** refugees as having returned to Syria, of whom **54,673** were supported under UNHCR's VolRep Program. 95% (51,793) returned in a self-organized manner and 5% (2,880) in an organised manner. This report presents the findings from UNHCR's January 2026 survey of a representative sample of Syrians supported through UNHCR's VolRep programme in 2025, including post-distribution monitoring of the return cash grant. **It does not include those returning spontaneously.**

### Methodology

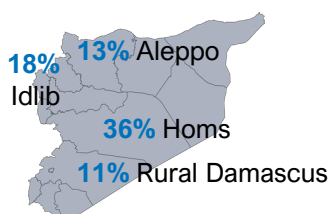
**1,281** returnees contacted via WhatsApp. Survey sample was based on the intended area of return.

**839** participated in a WhatsApp interview and KoBo assessment

**87%** Self-organized  
**12%** Organized

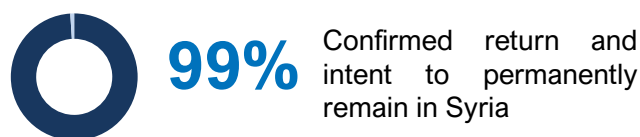
**78%** Head of household | **22%** Other adult

**88%** Lebanese number | **12%** Syrian number



### Presence and Intentions

The vast majority of respondents reported an intention to remain in Syria with all family members who returned under the VolRep programme, with most having returned to their areas of origin. Among those who reported challenges returning to their district of origin, the main issues cited were related to housing unavailability and insecurity.



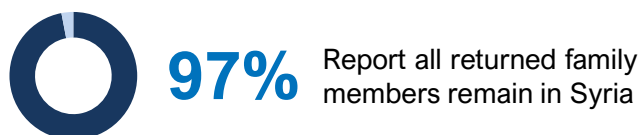
Of the remaining 1%, the situation and underlying reasons reported included:

#### Not yet returned (remain in Lebanon)

- 1 Change in the security situation in Syria
- 2 Barriers in Lebanon (debt, judicial warrants)
- 3 Could not secure housing/shelter in Syria
- 4 Medical issues of a family member
- 5 Detention of a family member in Syria

#### Temporarily staying in Syria

- 1 Visiting family before return to Lebanon
- 2 Assessing conditions for permanent return
- 3 Limited livelihoods and living hardships
- 4 Security situation in Aleppo



Of the remaining 3%, the situation and underlying reasons reported included:

#### Changed family composition post-return

- 1 Unique situation (i.e. death, divorce) (2%)
- 2 Family member re-entered Lebanon (1%)
- 3 Moved to a third county (0.1%)



**80%** Returned to their district of origin in Syria

**Of those who did not return to their district of origin, main reasons reported included**

- 1 Housing unavailability
- 2 Insecurity in the district of origin

## VolRep decision-making

Most respondents underscored the voluntariness of their return decision, noting that the process generally involved—though did not always guarantee—a consultative family process. Three-quarters reported having sufficient information to make an informed decision, while highlighting the need for more detailed information on services, housing, and security in intended areas of return.

### Decision making process



**97%** Noted their decision was voluntary and collective



**84%** Noted the decision was made jointly with family

### Access to information



**74%** Had sufficient information to make a return decision

### Key information needs

- 1 Services in the intended area of return
- 2 Availability of housing, land, and property
- 3 Security conditions
- 4 Humanitarian assistance and services
- 5 Access to education
- 6 Access to healthcare
- 7 Government assistance/services

Additional information needs: employment opportunities, cost of living and challenges related to utilities and infrastructure.

## VolRep Programmes

Most respondents reported satisfaction with UNHCR's VolRep programme, including the information provided on available return options and smooth facilitation at border crossing points.

### Information on the VolRep programmes



**88%** Felt UNHCR gave sufficient information on its VolRep programme

### Impression of the VolRep programmes



**97%** Were highly satisfied with UNHCR-facilitated return

Of the remaining 3%:

### Feedback on the VolRep programme included

- 1 Insufficient cash grant value
- 2 Delays in collection of cash grants
- 3 Need for timely post-return support



**99%** Were satisfied with the organized movements



In parallel, **26%** underlined the need for an increased luggage allowance



**84%** Noted the Repatriation Form was helpful at the border, for redeeming cash, and for movement within Lebanon

### Border facilitation



**97%** Reported using official border crossing points (47% Arida, 26% Al Qaa, 24% Masnaa)



**97%** Noted the GSO border provisions facilitated safe and dignified return

HELP Lebanon

Help.unhcr.org/Lebanon/  
return-to-syria



سوريا هي الوطن  
SYRIA IS HOME



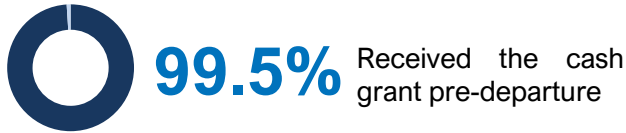
Syriaishome.org



## Return Cash Assistance

Nearly all respondents reported receiving their return cash grant from UNHCR via a financial service provider (FSP), with the majority using it to cover return-related needs such as transport. Nonetheless, a significant proportion noted relying on personal resources to supplement the grant to meet overall return expenses.

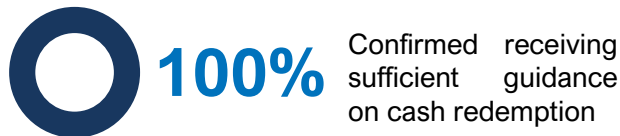
### Accessibility of the return cash grant



Of the four respondents (0.5%) who did not receive a return cash grant prior to departure:

#### Barriers to receiving the cash grant included:

- 1 No SMS notification (3)
- 2 Urgent need to return before distribution (1)



Of the 2% who were unable to redeem the grant at first attempt, all successfully redeemed it later:

#### Challenges to redemption:

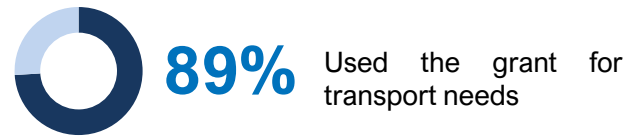
- 1 Documentation requests by FSP
- 2 Operational/liquidity issues at FSP

#### Avenue for resolving redemption challenges:

- 1 Contact the UNHCR National Call Center
- 2 Approach another FSP branch

## Use of the return cash grant

Of the 99.5% who received a return cash grant:



#### Other main expenses:

- 1 Food and basic needs (15%)
- 2 Debt repayment (10%)
- 3 Household items (9%)
- 4 Shelter/housing materials (9%)
- 5 Accommodation in Syria (7%)
- 6 Savings for post-return (7%)
- 7 Health expenses (4%)

### Sufficiency of the return cash grant



Of those 30%, **half** reported spending an additional **USD 200**, primarily on return transport (69%), followed by shelter or housing material (16%), accommodation in Syria (12%), and household items (11%).

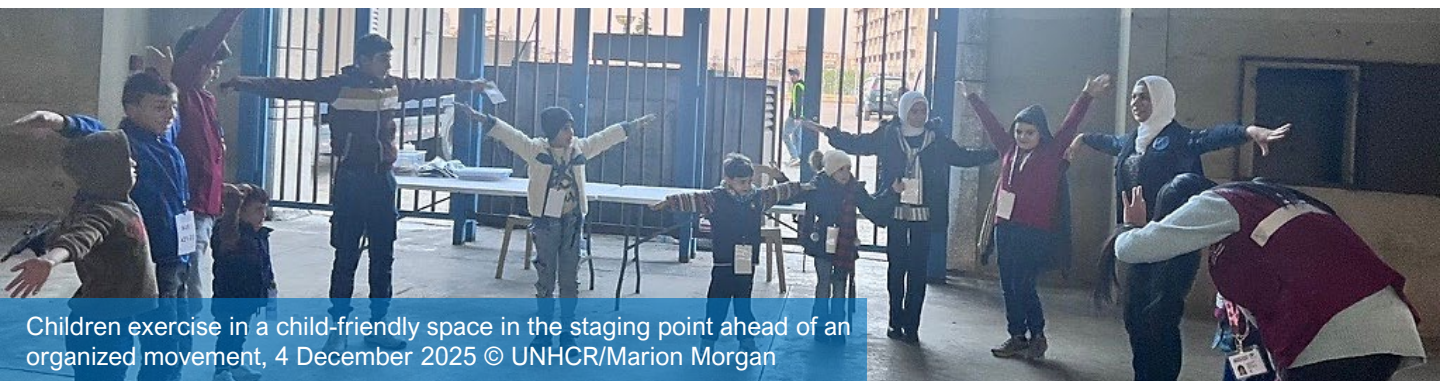
### Perceptions of the cash grant process



Of the 3% who were partially or not satisfied:

#### Concerns around the cash grant process:

- 1 Insufficient value per returnee
- 2 Need further support to cover basic needs
- 3 Difficulties withdrawing from FSP



Children exercise in a child-friendly space in the staging point ahead of an organized movement, 4 December 2025 © UNHCR/Marion Morgan