

Update 10
Iraqi Refugee Returns/Syrian Refugees
Syria Situation
30 July 2012

1. Overview:

A total of 822 Iraqis returned from Syria on 29 July, according to the figures obtained from the Iraqi border authorities at 12:00 am on Monday, 30 July.

Al-Waleed border point alone recorded the arrival of 522 Iraqis while Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im received 182 and 118 returnees respectively.

Since 18 July 2012, a total of 18,881 Iraqis returned to the country, including 5,222 individuals who returned by air, mostly on free flights.

Two hundred and eighteen (218) more Syrian refugees crossed the border into Iraq on 29 July, all through Al-Qa'im, while no refugee arrival was observed in Al-Waleed and Rabi'aa. This brings the total number of Syrian refugees who entered Iraq through Al-Qa'im since 24 July to 3,020.

Over the past week, 608 Syrians entered the northern Iraqi Region of Kurdistan, making up a total of 9,053 Syrian refugees in the Region. Of this number, 7,096 are registered with UNHCR and Kurdistan Department of Displacement and Migration (DDM) in Dohuk, 1,540 registered in Erbil and 417 registered in Suleimaniya.

The camp population in Domiz, Duhok, has reached 1,928 individuals, among them 417 families comprising 1,822 persons, and a number of 106 singles, 64 of them live in tents while 42 continue to live in the mosque.

Kurdistan Residency Directorate is to resume the issuance of residency permits to the new Syrian arrivals in early August following a brief suspension due to the recent return of many singles to Syria.. The reasons of departure remain unknown. Allegedly, single men return to secure the Kurdish areas after the withdrawal of the regular Syrian army.

Up to this date, the security deterioration has driven a total of 12,073 Syrians across the borders into Iraq.

The Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) has pledged to offer a ID400,000 grant to each refugee family and ID150,000 to the singles.

In the meantime, the Iraqi Cabinet has decided to allow Syrians who entered Iraq between 24-28 July to live with their relatives if they meet one of the below criteria:

1. Family headed by a male over 60 years old;
2. Female headed households;
3. Single females; and
4. Family with at least one member who is Iraqi national (husband or wife).

This decision will not be announced publicly.

In Al-Qa'im, UNHCR is continuing needs assessment of the refugees at their locations in schools and public centres, in coordination with the local authorities.

A team of 3 UNHCR staff will head for Al-Qa'im tomorrow, 31 July, to conduct initial registration of the Syrian arrivals. Two IRC staff will join the mission in Al-Qa'im.

Earlier today, MoDM handed UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im a no-objection letter from the Qa'im-maqam (mayor) of Al-Qa'im allowing UNHCR to establish a camp on the selected plot of land.

The ground levelling and compacting are underway at the camp site. The installation of tents is expected to start later today.

The proposed lay out of the camp has been finalized and discussed with the UNHCR IP IRW. The land can hold about 250 tents (1000 individuals). Local authorities have promised to supply a 200-KVA generator.

MoDM has also requested UNHCR assistance to set up a camp that holds 200 tents in Rabi'aa to manage any possible influx of Syrian refugees. UNHCR is yet to respond to this request.

2. Meetings:

-UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im attended a meeting with the Governor's Advisor and representatives of the concerned departments and local authorities to discuss the services that need to be provided to the new camp and means of removing the obstacles that may stand in the way.

-A meeting was held with MSF in Domiz camp on 24 July to discuss the issues of food distribution, health and water quality.

-UNHCR and UNICEF met with Kurdistan Department of Health (DoH) on 25 July. UNICEF requested DoH to submit a proposal about hygiene promotion and to mainly focus on water quality, personal hygiene and the causes of diarrhea.

-On 25th July, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene coordination meeting took place in the Directorate of Development and Modification Center of Dohuk Governorate; specific WASH indicators and targets were agreed and DDM will submit weekly monitoring and progress report..

3. Statistics

3.1 Iraqi returnees

Date: 29 July 2012	
Border point	Number of arrivals
Al-Waleed:	522
Total arrivals: 11,202	
Rabi'aa:	182
Total arrivals: 985	
Al-Qa'im:	118
Total arrivals: 1,472	
Total arrivals on 29 July 2012:	822
By air:	5,222
Grand total (since 18 July 2012):	18,881*

3.2 Syrian refugees

Date: 29 July 2012	
Border point	Number of arrivals
Al-Waleed:	0
Rabi'aa:	0
Al-Qa'im:	218
Total arrivals since 24 July:	3,020*

Total arrivals in Kurdistan:	9,053
Grand total (since March 2011):	12,073

*Figures updated as at 12:00 am, Monday, 30 July 2012
Source of information: Border Immigration Offices/BIAP

4. UNHCR arrangements

Al-Qa'im:

- 200 tents delivered to Al-Qa'im and 200 more arrived today.
- A second batch of 200 NFI packages to be distributed to Syrian families. The kits include rechargeable fans and water jerry cans.

Al-Waleed:

- 300 NFI kits delivered to Al Waleed camp.

Rabi'aa:

- Erbil stockpile is ready to support Rabi'aa with tents and NFIs.

Domiz camp:

- A total of 432 tents have been erected in the family section and 144 in the single section.
- Work in progress to build individual sanitation units and closed sewerage for families in sectors 1 and 2 and in the singles.
- Work is under way to construct tent foundations, walls, cooking areas and sanitation units for 214 family plots in sector 2.
- Working has started to establish 100 tents, cooking areas and sanitation units for singles.
- For the transit area, work has started to establish 48 tents with 24 sanitation units for newly arrived families. The work includes fixing water tanks for each family.
- UNHCR distributed 44 NFI packages and 43 tents for 176 singles. UNHCR staff unloaded 50 NFI packages and 100 pallets in the Domiz Rub-hall and 100 NFI packages and 100 canvas tents in the DDM/UNHCR warehouse.

5. Returnee/refugee needs

Needs for NFIs, water network/tanks, generators with fuel and tents have been identified at locations set to receive Syrian refugees in Al-Qa'im and Al-Waleed.

Returnees' needs, however, stretch from documentation, including PDS cards, Jensiya (national ID) document, to shelter (for some), food, health care and cash as well as employment, based on a rapid assessment conducted by UNHCR staff both at the border and at the disembarkation point.

6. Interviews with new arrivals

- Some returnees interviewed by UNHCR teams at the borders spoke of unsafe roads preventing other Iraqi refugees willing to return home from taking the risk of travel by road.
- Among the returnees, some shipped their assets, planning to return permanently.

- UNHCR Diyala team visited MoDM branch which reported one individual registered as returnee from Syria. Two other returnees approached UNHCR Return, Integration and Community Centre (RICC) today, guided by UNHCR leaflet received at the border, seeking any kind of assistance.
- UNHCR Hilla team was informed by MODM branch that 30 Iraqi families returning from Syria approached MoDM branch office. The office is still registering returnees who left Iraq before 2003. UNHCR is following up with the Ministry to ensure that all returnees, including those who fled after 2003, enjoy the same rights and privileges.
- In Karbala, MoDM already received official instructions from the ministry and started to register returnees from Syria but on the condition that they arrived after 20 June 2012. UNHCR Karbala staff discussed with the branch manager the possibility of distributing emergency NFIs for those returnees although not registered yet. Most of the returnees interviewed by the team sought cash assistance to enable them to rent a place for living.
- UNHCR Wassit team was informed by a member of Al-Suwaira City Council that there were many Iraqi returnee families from Al-Suwaira District who could not go back to their places of origin in Suwaira because they were Ba'athists wanted for justice. The City Council official said that those returnees might have left for Kurdistan or other countries.
- UNHCR South team reported the arrival of 11 returnees from Syria in Diwaniya and 35 others in Muthanna.

7. Coordination

UNHCR is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDM), MoL-PC, and Governorate Offices. In the meantime, the Office has engaged in a coordination process with various humanitarian actors/stakeholders, including the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) consisting of agencies and NGOs, to ensure necessary support to the Iraqi Government's efforts to respond to the returnees' immediate needs.