

Syria Situation

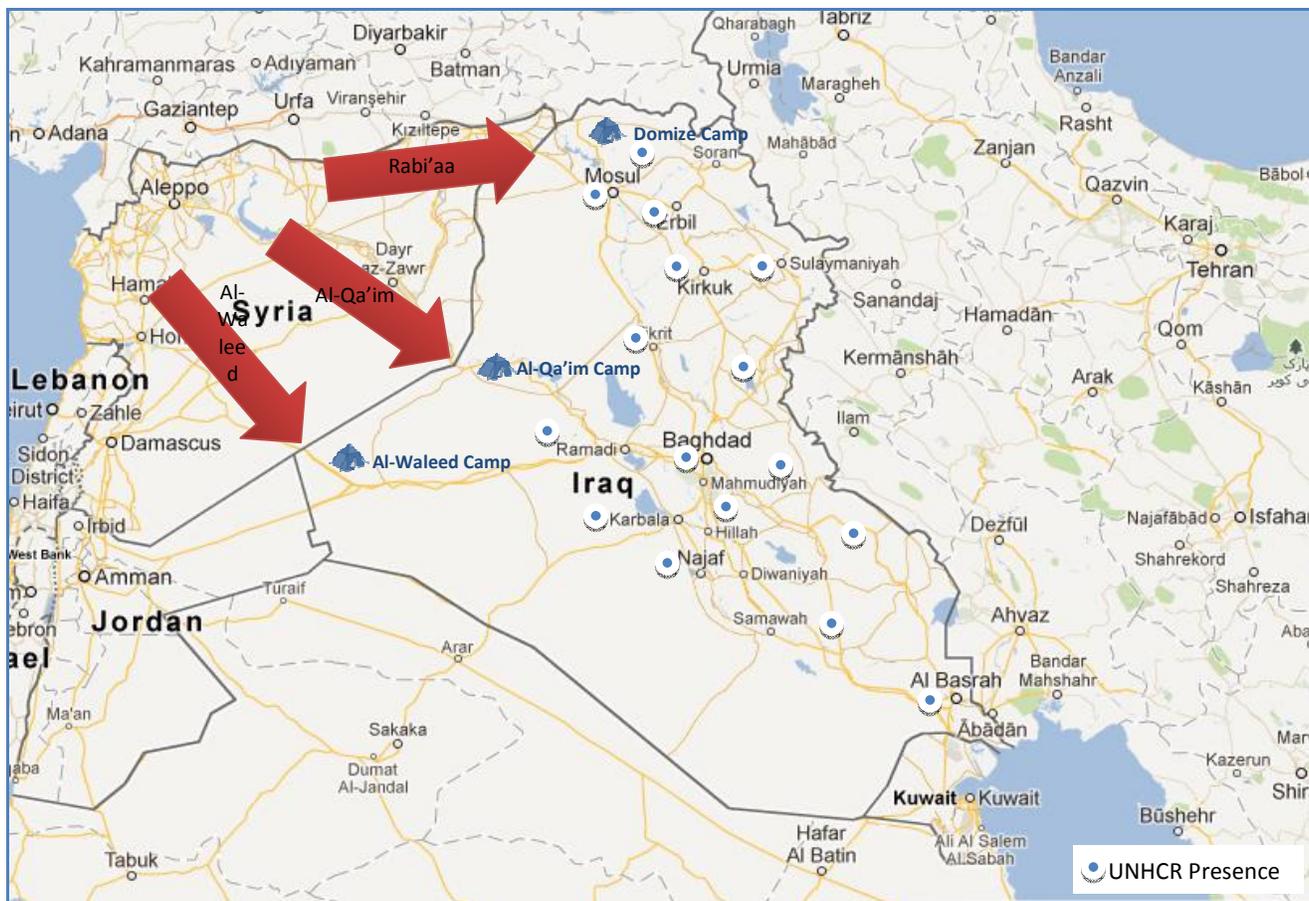
Weekly Update No.16

31 August – 6 September, 2012



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Iraqi – Syrian Border Points

MoDM/DDM/Local Authorities
Agencies: UNHCR | UNICEF | WFP | WHO | IOM
NGOs: IRW | Qandil | ISHO | IRC | HARIKAR | CDO

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

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1. Overview

Syrian refugees

Al-Qaim border crossing point is still closed and no entry of Syrian refugees is reported. UNHCR and other key partners continue to advocate with the Iraqi authorities to re-open the border crossing point for the entry of refugees. Iraqi authorities link the closure of the border to the lack of accommodation and the beginning of the period of exams in schools, which results in vacating schools.

During a joint mission conducted by UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and IOM, it has been assessed that about 3,000 Syrian refugees gathered at Al-Qaim border territory and are waiting to cross the border. Among them, there is a man, whose wife was killed in the clashes in Syria, with his 6-month child awaiting possible crossing into Iraq. The child was injured. Border be re-opened, It is estimated that additional 10,000 refugees may cross the border in a short time.

In Kurdistan region, the month of August witnessed an increased number of new arrivals, reaching a peak last week. Syrian new arrivals report that families are increasingly fleeing Reef-Damascus and Aleppo to Hasaka, the mostly Kurdish populated area. The reception capacity of the latter area is overstretched, with IDPs occupying schools and mosques. Lacking livelihood opportunities, families and singles head up to Kurdistan, seeking sanctuary. Many families and singles reported fear of being targeted by unconventional weapons, while others have family members reportedly targeted by the Syrian regime. Some reported having fled owing to fear of being kidnapping and rape. The last two weeks witnessed an alarming trend of new arrivals, with more than 500 persons seeking appointment for registration in one day. Currently the trend of arrivals amounts to 500 individuals a day versus 500 a week in the past.

During the week, a total of 3,063 Syrian arrivals approached UNHCR's registration centres to get an appointment: 434 families (comprising 1,704 individuals) and 1,019 singles in Duhok (Domiz registration centre); as well as 31 families (comprising 108 individuals) and 232 singles in Erbil. Adding to the number of those reported last week, the total number of Syrians in KR amounts to 17,473.

According to DDM in Duhok, 25,000 new Syrian arrivals were registered with the security Asayish in Kurdistan and as many as 1,500 persons are in the border, hosted by the local community and planning to relocate to Domiz Camp.

Iraqi returnees

Iraqi returnees continue to flee Syria and return to Iraq due to on-going fighting in Syria. As of today, only Al-Waleed and Rabiaa border crossing points are opened for returnees.

During the reporting period, a total of 1,306 Iraqis returned from Syria by land, with 954 entering through Al-Waleed border crossing point and 352 through Rabiaa. The total number of returnees has reached 33,120, including 5,997 returnees repatriated by air.

Border monitors report a total number of 1,015 Iraqis who left Iraq for Syria, with 770 leaving through Al-Waleed border crossing point and 247 through Rabiaa over last week.

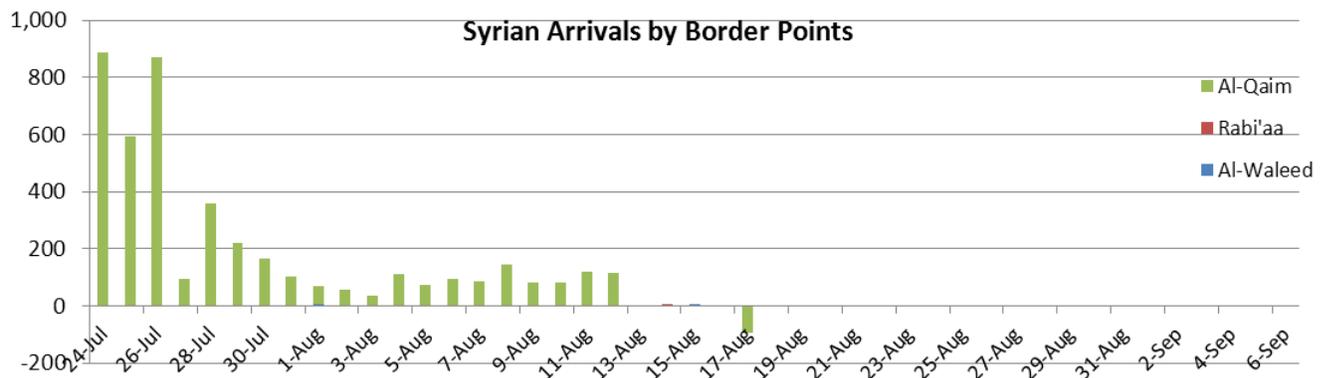
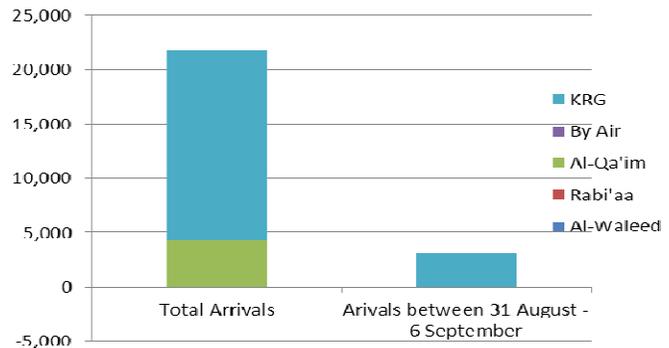
The majority of returnees noted Baghdad, Diyala and Anbar as their final destination, with a few heading to Erbil and Duhok. Some returnees disclosed their intention to return to Syria, the security situation permitting, to prepare for definitive return to Iraq. Returnees are also concerned about their cases with UNHCR- Syria.

Some returnees informed that many Iraqis are waiting for the stabilization of the situation in Syria so that they could travel safely back to Iraq. Some of the returnees reported having left their assets behind in Syria, particularly in Homs and Damascus, while others reported have seen their houses destroyed by fighting.

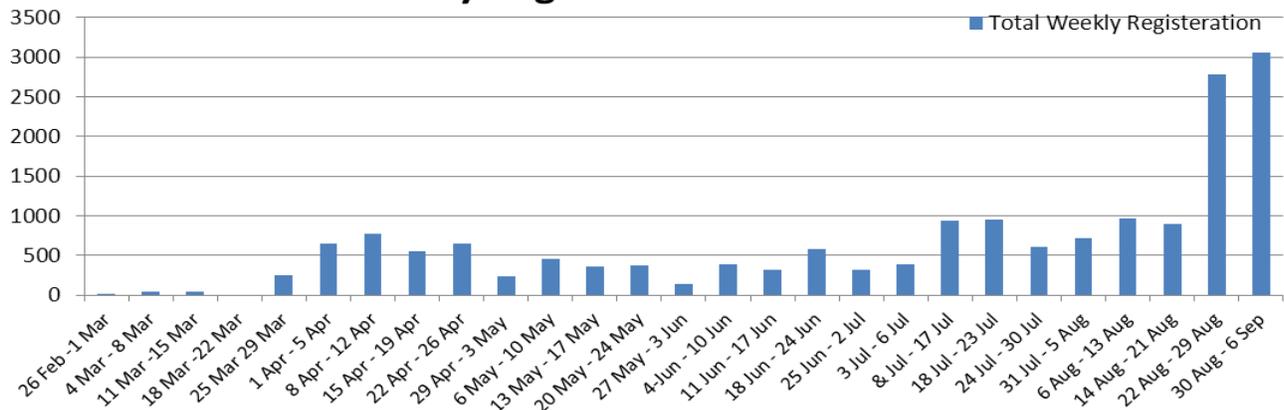
2. Statistics

Border Point	Arrivals on 31/08-6/9	Total arrivals
Al-Waleed	0	18
Al-Rabi'aa	0	8
Al-Qa'im	-1	4,240
By Air	0	5
Arrivals to KRG	3,063	17,473
Total:	0	21,744

2.1 Syrian Refugees

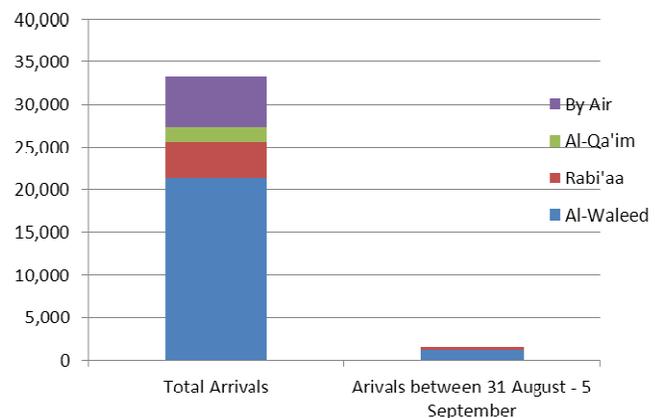


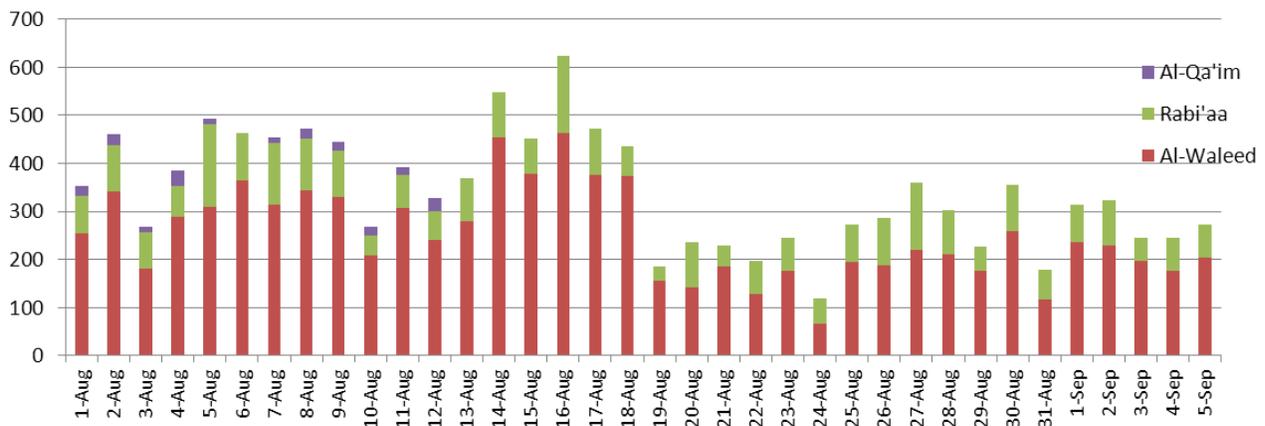
Weekly Registration Trend in KRG



2.2 Iraqi Returnees

Border Point	Arrivals on 31/08-6/9	Total arrivals
Al-Waleed	1,213	21,131
Rabi'aa	512	4,148
Al-Qa'im	0	1,844
By Air	0	5,997
Total	1,661	31,459





3. UNHCR Assistance Update

3.1. Administrative institutions and practice

The Office continues to advocate for expansion of the sponsorship programme, hence allowing more refugees to live with their relatives, hence decreasing the number of refugees in need of accommodation in **Al-Qaim Camp**.

MoDM has declared its intention to provide one time emergency cash grants to Syrian refugees in the amount of 400,000 Iraqi Dinars per family and 150,000 ID per single/individual.

According to information received recently by UNHCR, a total of 259 Iraqi returnees have received MoDM grants in the amount of 4 M Iraqi Dinars per family.

In addition, according to official sources' estimates, 643 Syrians have to date benefited from the sponsorship programme.

In Kurdistan region, DDM and UNHCR continue to advocate for the Syrian arrivals to be allowed to settle in urban areas. They are negotiating with the Ministry of Interior to secure issuance of residence permits to those living in urban settings. Residence permits have so far been issued solely in Domiz Camp, inciting Syrians to relocate to the camp. Therefore, the Camp must be expanded to accommodate the increased number of refugees.

3.2. Protection, Registration and Profiling

In Al Qaim, a total of 4,240 individual refugees and 958 families have been registered. "Level one" of the registration process was completed and registration cards, containing names, date and registration numbers, were provided to heads of families.

UNHCR continues to conduct initial registration in its refugee database (ProGres). Presently, some 60% of the data has been recorded.

During site visits, it was revealed that refugee families living in hospitals, schools and with relatives were not registered as they came after UNHCR registration mission had ended. These families will be registered in the Camp.

In Kurdistan, 3,063 new arrivals have received appointments for registration during the week: 2,723 in Duhok and 340 in Erbil. UNHCR discontinued "level one" registration and is currently conducting "level two" registration for all Syrians. The practice consists of two phases: one for those registered at "level one"; these are being registered in ProGres - a total of 8,456 were registered in the system and provided with documentation -; and another one for newcomers; these are recorded based on scheduled appointments and issued with appointment slips. The UNHCR registration team is stepping up its efforts to register all the Syrian arrivals in ProGres and to issue them documentation that provides them with an asylum-seeker status in Kurdistan region.

3.3. Security for refugees

In Al-Qaim, during a coordination meeting, it was suggested to assist the Iraqi Army in establishing a security committee for the Camp. The Iraqi Army requested UNHCR to install additional fences (3.5 to 4 metres high). Also, a meeting point is expected to be opened for refugees' relatives visiting the Camp. The Iraqi security forces are responsible for security in the Camp.

In Domiz, a Safety Committee was established to deal with any incident in the Camp. The police presence was enhanced and a cabin for the security team is being established at the entrance. Domiz Camp is constantly expanding and the police presence is provided. DDM, as the camp management agency, is planning to hire additional 24 security monitors among the refugees to assist in monitoring the security situation in the Camp 24/7 and reporting any incident to the safety committee.

The overall security situation remains calm. However, during the reporting period, 25 newly arrived families who were not provided with NFIs at the day of arrival occupied UNHCR' cabins and refused to leave until the police interfered and evacuated them. Tensions among families and aggression incidents are increasingly reported; non-availability of space to install tents and sanitation units remain the major reason for tension.



A 250 KVA capacity generator has been installed in Al-Qaim

3.4. Assistance by Sectors

a- Shelter and infrastructure:

In Al-Qaim, the construction work is taking place in Zone D. It includes the construction of communal cooking areas, roads, the installation of chain-linked fences, electrical extensions for each tent, construction of toilets/showers, septic tanks and water pipe nets. For the time being, the construction of 600 tents was completed and this number is expected to increase up to 700 after local government allocates new land for additional 100 tents.

A total of 600 UNHCR tents arrived in the warehouse in Al Qaim. 500 will be delivered to MoDM for the second camp and the rest will be used for Zone H in Al-Qaim.

The land approval for Zone H of the Camp has been received on September 6. MoDM led the negotiations.

In Domiz, construction of walls for 224 concrete blocks was completed and casting of concrete floor, approx. 3x4m for 83 tents was also completed up to 37%. Casting of concrete floor for 75 out of 174 baths and WC was completed. Also, casting of concrete floor for 77 cooking areas up to 44% and 33 concrete blocks were achieved up to 19%. 40 out of 44 septic tanks were excavated up to 91% and concrete block walls for 23 septic tanks were completed up to 52%.

In the newly extended single area, the construction of 33 out of 75 (44%) concrete blocks and high walls were completed. UNHCR has sought the assistance of Fayda Municipality to identify a new land for a second transit area. The latter marked a plot of 12,000 sqm in an open area near phase 1 from the eastern side, expected to host 200 tents for the newly arrived families.

Following a verification mission in Domiz, it is reported that as per September 5th, around 7,277 individuals are residing in Domiz Camp. Among them, 989 families (4,451 persons) are residing in phase 1 and 2 in the families' section; 230 families (1,063 persons) reside in the transit area and 325 single groups (1,300 singles) reside in the singles area.

The total number of tents erected in Domiz Camp is 1,437 of which 1,892 tents are erected in phases 1 and 2; 215 tents in the transit area and 130 in the singles area. Newly arrived families and singles increasingly opt to relocate in Domiz Camp, creating pressure on the Camp's capacity. It is reported that 2 to 3 families live in one tent, while as many as 8 singles live in one tent in the singles area. UNHCR is stepping up its efforts to increase its capacity in expanding the camp and speeding up the infrastructure work.

b- Water

In Al-Qaim, UNICEF has installed the permanent water system and latrines through its IP ISHO and local authorities continue providing water to the tanks near each tent (used for air coolers) on daily basis.

In Domiz, DDM continues the provision of 500,000Ltr per day by tanker to families in phase 1 and 2, as well as in the singles areas. Water chlorine is maintained in the water source and a water test was conducted by DDM at the households' locations. A water project was completed by a local NGO "Kurds" and the previously constructed deep

well was provided with a chlorine machine. It still needs to be provided with chlorine by Fayda water department, through DDM.

Families in Domiz Camp continuously complain about shortage of potable water. The provided quantity is not sufficient considering the fast increase in the number of families. An additional source of water for filling tankers and accelerating the functioning of the constructed deep well is needed. Moreover, spontaneous erection of tents is blocking the way for tankers providing families with water. 139 water tanks were distributed to families by DDM during the reporting period.

c- Nutrition

In Al-Qaim, all refugees are provided with three meals per day by MoDM. The Human Relief NGO, in coordination with the camp management and UNHCR staff, distributed food, particularly canned peas, milk powder, baby milk powder, biscuits, beef meat cans, chicken meat cans, syrup and juice powder.

In Domiz, daily provision of three hot meals to singles by DDM continues. WFP, through Islamic Relief NGO, will start the distribution of food rations to families and singles on September 6.

DDM has not distributed dry food to the families since August. Consequently, all the newly arrived families remain without food; they either get food from the single area or rely on the previously arrived Syrians to feed their family members. DDM continues the provision of baby formula for under two years old children.



Garbage collection in Domiz Camp

sanitation units, except for the 24 latrines that were provided to 48 families in the first transit area. Sanitation construction in phase 3 is in progress. Families from Derbandikhan District donated ID 26,350,000 and 1000 Pieces of clothing to 527 families.

d- Sanitation/Hygiene

In Al-Qaim, latrines and showers (1/20 persons) were installed by UNICEF for zones A,B,C,E,F,G. These are emergency and mobile latrines that will be progressively replaced by long-term ones. As it was planned, 122 latrines and 122 showers were installed. The construction of common toilets/showers in concrete is taking place in Zone D.

In Domiz, irregular garbage collection, cleaning of septic tanks and garbage bags distribution continues and is conducted by DDM. 794 families in phases 1 and 2 in the transit area lack

e- NFIs Assistance

- The distribution of NFIs to returnees Iraqi families is ongoing through UNHCR Returnees centers. So far, 797 were distributed.

In Domiz

Number of NFIs received during the reporting period: 700 packages (462 full packages of NFI with canvas tents and 238 packages without tents)

Number of 453 families and 65 groups of singles (4 singles per group) received full packages with canvas tents

Number of 120 families with 42 groups of singles received full packages with tents

Total Number of 573 families and 107 groups of singles received NFIs.

Number of 500 families is waiting to receive NFIs.

f- Health

In Al-Qaim

- **Immunization:** a total of 1539 Syrian refugees living in Al-Qaim have been vaccinated with TB and HBC vaccines following the vaccination campaign launched by Al-Qaim Health Directorate on 27 August 2012. Some Syrian males refused vaccines. It was recommended to include those who refused vaccines in health awareness sessions to be conducted by UNICEF in September.

- During the coordination meeting with key partners, it was discussed to accelerate the medical referrals from the Camp to Al-Qaim hospital or from Al-Qaim hospital to Ramadi hospital. The referral procedure is too complex. It has been decided that one security staff (police) will accompany the ambulance for each case.

- The camp's medical unit doctor (from MOH) explained the procedures of the medical unit, the possible treatment that can be provided and the benefit of issuing medical cards for each refugee. The delivery of such cards is under process, starting with patients with chronic diseases.
- UNICEF will closely work with Al-Qaim Health Directorate on the health campaign. Polio campaign and nutrition survey will start early this month.
- Al-Qaim Health Directorate informed it will conduct HIV survey in the camp. UNHCR is planning to further discuss this issue with key partners.

In Domiz, safety measures are being reviewed in order to avoid any accidents during the construction work.

e. Education

In Al-Qaim, UNICEF and the Education Directorate are working on the opening of a school in the Camp. EC (Emergency Cell) will submit a request to the Education Directorate to provide UNICEF with 500 desks.

In Domiz, the Education Sub-working Group meeting was held on September 3. Members of the SWG reviewed the current situation and discussed requirements to increase the number of students for the academic school year starting September 10.

4. Syrian Refugee / Iraqi Returnee Needs

An inter UN agency mission conducted a quick 2 day assessment in Al-Qaim, both in the camp and with refugees in schools. The complete report will be part of the next weekly update. Freedom of movement, allowing refugees freely go out of the school or the camp is an essential issue. Health problems were raised by refugees due to the lack of response.

Syrian refugees' needs include documentation, employment, sponsorship programmes and family tracing. In addition, needs for NFIs, water tanks, generators and tents have been highlighted at the locations set to receive refugees in Al-Qa'im and Al-Waleed.

The needs of Syrian refugees living out of Domiz Camp in Erbil and Suleimaniya include lack of residency permits, livelihood opportunities and income, access to remedial summer schools and lack of assistance from the host government and the international community.

Based on a rapid assessment conducted by UNHCR staff, both at the border and at the disembarkation point, returnees' needs include documentation, PDS cards, Jensiya (national ID) document, shelter (for some), food, health care and cash as well as employment.

Returnees' needs in **Erbil** and **Duhok** similarly include lack of documentation (PDS and national ID), non-recognition of school certificates, lack of cash assistance, income and NFIs. In addition, based on the protection monitoring conducted by PARC, many medical cases are reported among returnees, particularly amongst children, including cases of trauma resulting from the violence in Syria, the arrest of family members by the Syrians and the property left behind.

Many of the returnees interviewed in the KRG originated from Mosul and Baghdad but have opted to relocate in the Kurdistan region for better security. PARC is monitoring the situation of the Iraqi returnees by conducting house to house visits. When needed, NFIs are being provided and PARC is referring the cases with medical needs to service providers and ensuring follow-up. Therapeutic milk is another need but so far such assistance has not been provided. Discussion with MoDM is ongoing to enhance assistance to the returnees and to ensure cash assistance is received shortly.

5. Interviews with New Arrivals (including Iraqi returnees)

Syrian refugees fleeing to **Kurdistan** reported that they would continue to flee, fearing the possible use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government against rebel groups hidden within the community, especially in Kurdish areas. Whilst most of the new arrivals reported Qamishly and Hasaka as their areas of former habitual residence, many Kurdish families have been arriving from Damascus and Aleppo, fleeing to Iraq through Qamishly. Large scale destruction and indiscriminate bombardment in Damascus and its suburbs were reported as the main reasons for flight. New arrivals reported that Qamishli capacity to accommodate IDPs is overstretched. IDPs are occupying

schools and mosques. The deteriorating economic situation was also reported as a reason of flight. According to the same group of Syrians, hundreds of families headed up to the Iraqi-Syrian border, knowing about the protection in Kurdistan and the assistance provided, and will enter the Kurdistan region seeking sanctuary in Domiz Camp.

Iraqi returnees interviewed by UNHCR staff have continued to report the dire security situation across Syrian cities. The Damascus suburb of Jaramana District is reportedly extremely tense; many Iraqis who live in this area have decided to move to other secure zones or return to Iraq. Three Iraqi individuals were reported to have been killed by an explosion in Jaramana in recent days and as a consequence, many are planning to return to Iraq.

A group of returnees confirmed that due to the unstable situation in Syria and the blocking of main motor roads inside this country, it is hard to access the Syrian-Iraqi border. Some refugees have instead gathered at Syrian airports and are waiting for possible departure to Baghdad by air.

UNHCR protection staff in Baghdad interviewed a number of Palestinian refugees who have recently returned to Iraq from Syria due to the deteriorating security conditions. They reported that more Palestinians may be planning to return in the coming weeks, although exact numbers are unclear. Staff will continue to monitor the situation, and to follow-up on their legal and protection needs.

Some refugees are concerned about long procedures and pending approvals related to their participation in the sponsorship programme by local authorities. Some cases have been under consideration for about 20 days.

In Kurdistan, a group of returnees mentioned that their family members were arrested and they were forced to flee Syria leaving behind their property. Returnees in the KR opt to return to areas in Erbil and Duhok while they originate from Baghdad and Mosul and claim fear of return to their places of origin. Returnees received no cash assistance for now.

Most of Iraqi returnees request to assist them in returning to their governmental jobs in Iraq. The returnees claim that they left their previous jobs for security reasons.

The returnees mentioned that the Syrian authorities stopped the procedures of granting residency to the majority of Iraqis in Syria for unknown reasons and now they are living illegally there and prefer to return to Iraq.

6. Coordination

UNHCR is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDM), MoI-PC, and Governorate Offices. In the meantime, UNHCR Office 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. To strengthen cooperation, UNHCR is regularly organising inter-agency meetings to involve more institutions and organisations to provide assistance to the camps.

In Al-Qaim, a coordination meeting was conducted to review the assistance plan of MoDM in the Camp. Local authorities including health and education offices, UN agencies and NGO participated in the meeting.

Visits:

Al-Qaim

Representatives from ACTED visited the Camp. UNHCR team briefed the visitors about the Camp. The purpose of the visit was to familiarize with the Camp and needs for further elaboration of proposal to provide hygiene support and also NFIs distribution. ACTED representatives will work on the proposal and UNHCR will be involved in the process as well.

ICRC team also visited the Camp. Nabdh Al-Hayat National NGO visited the Camp and voiced its interest in providing assistance in the fields of NFIs distribution and health.

A mission comprising of representatives from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UNICEF and IOM was conducted in Al-Qaim. The objective was to familiarize with the situation of refugees in tents and refugees waiting for the opening of the border to cross into Iraq.

Representatives from the Iraqi Parliament and Emergency Cell visited Al-Qaim to meet with Syrians. UNHCR Team briefed the delegation about on-going construction work in Zone D.

Dohuk

KRG President visited Domiz Camp on September 2 and met with numbers of Syrian asylum-seeker representatives later in Duhok city. Syrian asylum-seekers in Domiz expressed satisfaction with the visit of the president of KR. On September 5, a brigadier general from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and a brigadier from KRG Mol paid a visit to Domiz Camp, UNHCR and DDM Dohuk received the delegation and briefed them on the situation of Domiz Camp in term of assistance and protection, challenges and the requirements of support from the Iraqi Government to meet the increasing needs of newly arrived Syrians in Domiz were discussed.

Media Coverage:

Al-Arabiya Channel, which covers the Middle East and North Africa, visited the Camp and covered the mosque opening ceremony and life in the Camp.
