



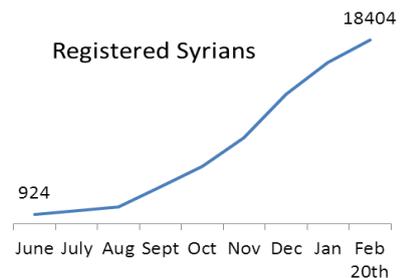
# Note on Syrians

## General Information

The number of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Egypt is 18,404 individuals (6,883 families) as of 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2013. In addition, there are some 10,000 Syrians awaiting registration, bringing the number of total Syrians in contact with UNHCR to more than 28,000 individuals.

Syrian refugees face a number of challenges regarding their protection, health care, education and livelihood. UNHCR and its partners are striving to support them.

In February, World Food Programme (WFP), Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), and Mahmoud Mosque Society started implementing programs designed to support Syrian refugees in Egypt. An interagency mission was conducted in Alexandria and Damietta to assess the needs of Syrians living there and explore available facilities.



## Updates

### 1. Protection

#### 1.1. Registration

UNHCR registered 1,746 Syrian refugees in Alexandria last week, bringing the number of registered Syrians in Alexandria and its surroundings to 6,007 individuals. In addition, 1,350 Syrian refugees were registered in Damietta the week before, making the number of registered Syrians living in Damietta and neighboring areas, such as Gamasa and Ras Al-Bar, reach some 2,615 individuals.

Two additional registration missions will take place in Al-Obour and 6<sup>th</sup> of October cities in 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February respectively.

Zamalek registration center is continuing to register 50-100 Syrians on a daily basis.

#### 1.2. Detention & Deportation

UNHCR has continued its discussions with Egyptian authorities to improve the detention environment at the airport of Syrian refugees, who were detained for using forged passports or visas, and to prevent them from being deported.



Mobile Registration, 6 October City, 12-13 October 2012



# Note on Syrians

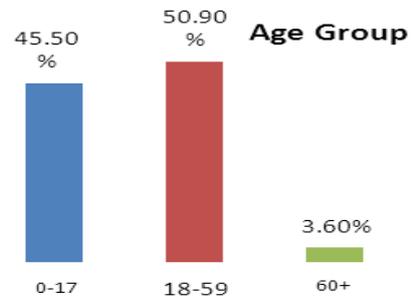
## 1.3. Residency

Syrians' passports are stamped by "arrival data is transferred to asylum card", when refugees change their residencies from their passports to their UNHCR asylum seeker's cards.

This stamp discourages many Syrians from registering with UNHCR in Egypt, and thus, not receiving the protection and services provided by UNHCR. Syrians fear retaliation from the regime against their families in Syria, or against them when they return with their passports showing their registration with UNHCR.

UNHCR informs Syrians of this procedure upon registration.

38 Syrians closed their files with UNHCR Cairo in the last three weeks. The main reasons listed for closures were the governmental stamp requirement and travelling out of the country.



## 1.4. Exploitative Marriages

UNHCR is aware of Egyptian men approaching Syrian families with young daughters for marriages. UNHCR staff in Damietta were informed by Syrian families that these proposals were rejected by the concerned families, who feel insulted by the assumption that their daughters can be exploited for marriage because they are in asylum, and hence, more vulnerable.

Further protection monitoring is underway to understand the phenomenon better.

## 1.5. Palestinians

192 Palestinian families/458 individuals with Syrian travel documents requested to be registered with UNHCR Cairo. The office does not register Palestinians with Syrian travel documents to date as per the Egyptian authorities' instructions.

## 2. New Programs

### 2.1. Food Voucher Distribution

WFP launched monthly food voucher distribution program in February 4<sup>th</sup>. WFP distributed food vouchers, to 366 individuals in Al-Obour City, 1,830 individuals in 6<sup>th</sup> of October City, and 1,200 individuals in Damietta within a week. Some 4000 Syrians in Alexandria are receiving the vouchers starting from Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>.



Discussions during food distribution, New Damietta, 5 Feb. 2013



# Note on Syrians

## 2.2. Health Care

Mahmoud Mosque Society, through Mahmoud hospital, started delivering integrated health care services, in February 4<sup>th</sup>, to Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Cairo. Mahmoud Mosque Society delivered health care services to 135 patients in its first three weeks of operation.

## 2.3. Financial Assistance

Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) started on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the assessment process in order to grant vulnerable Syrians monthly cash assistance. IRW received more than 235 files, of 817 individuals, for assessment in its first three weeks of operation.



Mobile Registration, New Damietta, 7-9 Feb 2013

## 3. Needs Assessment Mission in Alexandria

An interagency needs assessment mission took place in Alexandria from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February by UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, CRS, and Caritas. The mission assessed the needs of Syrians and facilities available. The mission covered three main areas: protection, education, and health.

Syrians expressed their concern of petty crimes and harassment. Children are in need of psychosocial support to overcome the trauma faced in their country of origin.

There are some challenges facing Syrians in education. Some have expressed the difficulty of enrollment after the start of academic year, or the problems associated with transportation to distant places to get the needed governmental clearances. Residents of some areas, such as Agami, were not enrolled due to lacking in knowledge about available schools and long distances required for transportation. On the other hand, some areas are having high enrollment rates, such as Borg Al-Arab, in which Syrians did not complain.

Two meetings were held with the Deputy Education Minister in Alexandria, and with Director of Education in Borg Al-Arab. Both officials area expressed their willingness to support Syrians' education, and providing them with extracurricular classes to teach Syrian history and geography.

Regarding health care services, many Syrians living in distant areas such as Borg Al-Arab, 30 km from Alexandria, were having problems with accessing Caritas clinic in Ibrahimeya. Public health care facilities exist in distant places, such as Ministry of Health hospital in Borg Al-Arab, and family health care centers in Borg Al-Arab and Hanoville. Yet, these facilities provide only primary and emergency care, therefore, UNHCR presence to provide referral specialized health care services in these remote areas is needed.

Syrians complained of hygiene related diseases, expensive medication, and costly care for chronic diseases.



## Note on Syrians

### 4. Needs Assessment Mission in Damietta

Another interagency needs assessment mission was conducted in New Damietta from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February by UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, CRS, and Resala. The mission, similarly, covered the areas of protection, education, and health.

Protection risks are minimal in New Damietta. Most Syrians living there are from Eastern Ghouta in the Damascus suburbs, other areas include Homs, Halab, Damascus and Daraa.

Concerns among newcomers are higher than those who have been settled for several months. Some Syrian children work to support their families. A few cases of female-headed families were reported by the assessment mission.

Access to education does not appear to be a major problem in Damietta. Reported difficulties are related to the Egyptian education system, such as documentation, curriculum differences, density in classes, accent barriers, unavailability of seats, incidents of violence, and financial problems of enrollment in private schools.

A meeting with the Deputy Education Minister in Damietta showed the Egyptian government willingness to provide Syrians with additional support, including extracurricular courses about Syrian history and geography.

Health appeared to be an important concern for many Syrians in Damietta. They lack knowledge about entry-point for health care services. They benefit from ad hoc medical services, and consequently, suffer from exploitation. Many Syrians suffer from chronic diseases, heart problems, rheumatism, or disabilities. In addition, a few families complained about the quality of tap water.

Resala, in coordination with UNHCR, is organizing health care services access with primary health care as entry-point to other specialized care services.

The local community in New Damietta is supporting Syrian refugees through local NGOs and philanthropic individuals. Support includes paying rents, facilitating education documentation, providing job opportunities, and limited cash assistance.

### Other existing services

In the last three weeks, Caritas clinics in Cairo delivered primary health care to 339 Syrians; and Refuge Egypt provided antenatal, natal, and children health care to 17 Syrians as well.

Caritas in Alexandria provided 75 Syrians with primary health care services, 49 Syrians under fifteen years received polio vaccination, 43 received specialized health care treatment or referral to hospitals, and three women received antenatal health care.



*New Damietta Mobile Registration 15-17 November, 2012*



## Note on Syrians

Last week, 192 individuals received psychosocial support by trained Syrian psychosocial workers and two other psychosocial workers from the Psycho-Social Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC). The psychosocial workers are present daily at the UNHCR Registration Center in Zamalek, downtown Cairo, and at the new Syrian community center in 6<sup>th</sup> of October City.

The community center, run by Tadamon, has provided social and recreational activities to 253 individuals last week.

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**UNHCR Cairo,  
February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013**



*Permanent Registration Center, Zamalek, 7  
November, 2012*