

Response in Egypt to Syrian Crisis

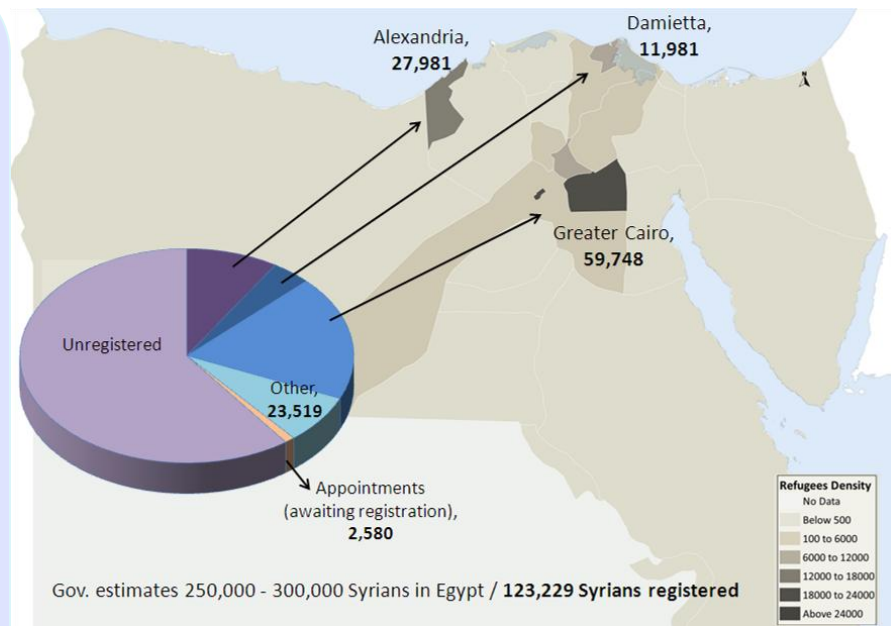
As the conflict in Syria continues to escalate, the number of people fleeing into other countries in the region in search of refuge has been increasing. Some 250,000 to 300,000 Syrians currently reside in Egypt according to Government estimates provided in June, of which UNHCR has registered 123,229 individuals as of 19 October.

As a result of alleged involvement of a few Syrians in the recent political turmoil, there has been a shift in perceptions and the level of sympathy afforded to the Syrian community. The Government of Egypt announced temporary measures on 8 July requiring Syrians coming to Egypt to obtain a visa and prior security approval. Syrians have also been experiencing increasing incidents of verbal threats, physical assaults, detention and deportation.

Most Syrians in Egypt are scattered in urban neighbourhoods, renting and sharing accommodation. Lately, there has been a sharp increase in the number of refugees closing their files with UNHCR and leaving Egypt, citing economic concerns, an interest in re-joining family members in other countries, and anxiety over their security in Egypt. Most have indicated they will depart to Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon among other destinations. Some have also noted they intend to return to Syria. There have also been increasing reports of departures by sea to Europe.

UNHCR conducts registration, provides counselling, and works with partners to provide legal assistance and address the social needs of vulnerable Syrians in Egypt. UNHCR also operates hotlines for emergencies and inquiries, and sensitizes refugees of the dangers of involvement in political activities.

Registration of Syrians in Egypt (as of 19 October)



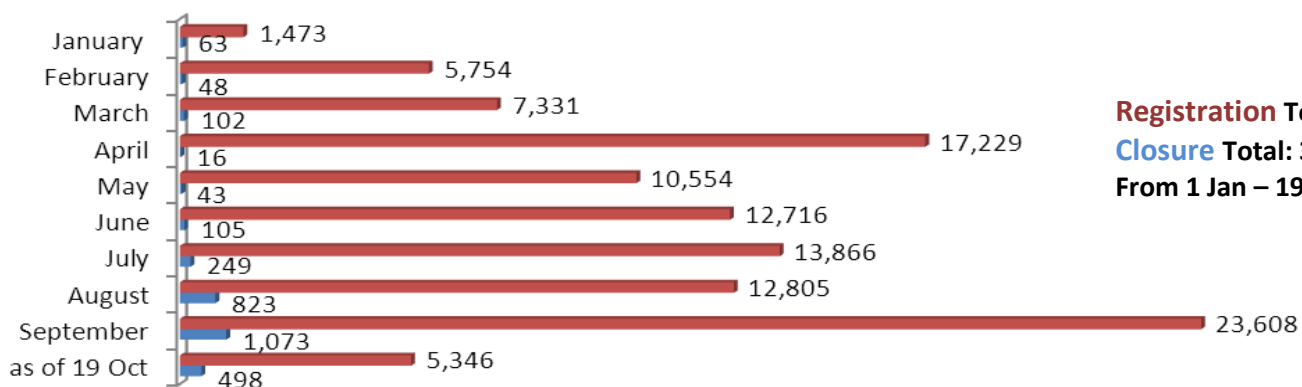
49.8% of registered Syrians arrived to Egypt through a transit country; of those, 77.2% passed through Lebanon, 12.3% through Jordan, and 10.5% through others countries.

During the week, 554 individuals registered in the Zamalek Registration Centres; 18 persons were identified with specific needs.

Gender and Age Breakdown

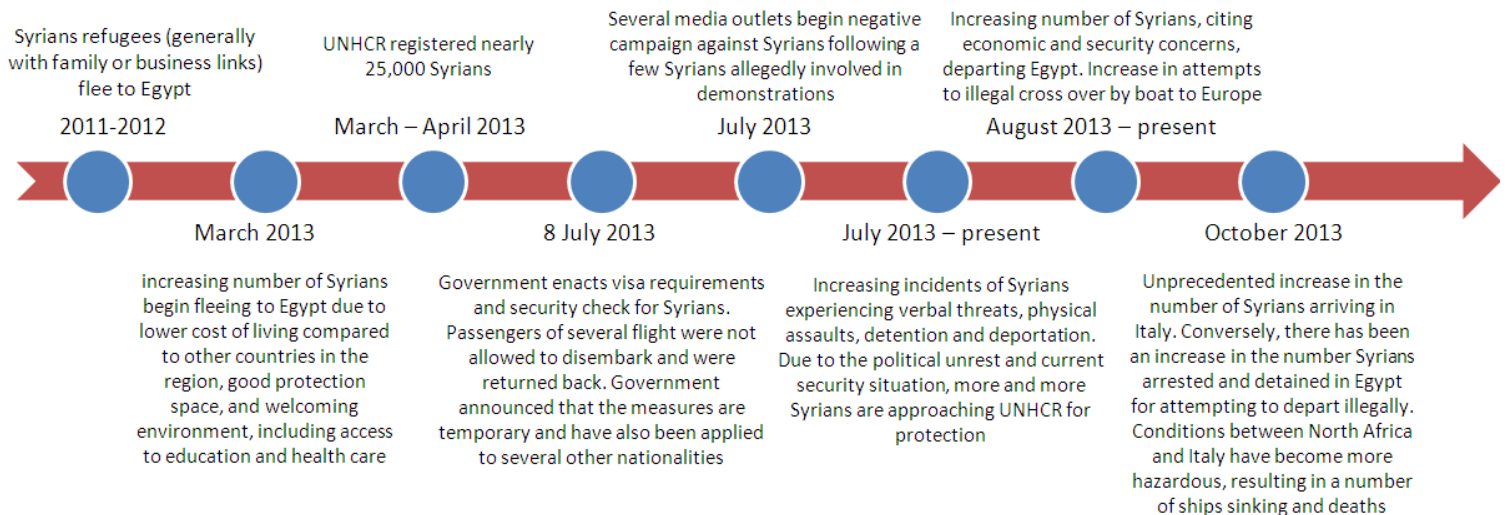
Age Group	F	M	Total
0 - 4	8,769	9,244	18,013
5 - 11	10,649	11,342	21,991
12 - 17	7,024	8,130	15,154
18 - 39	22,372	22,607	44,979
40 - 59	9,059	8,999	18,058
60+	2,493	2,541	5,034
Total	60,366	62,863	123,229

Registration and Closure Trends in 2013



Registration Total: 110,682
Closure Total: 3,020
From 1 Jan – 19 Oct

Protection Timeline



Illegal Departures

Since August there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Syrians attempting to cross the Mediterranean from Egypt to Italy. From January to 30 September, some **7,557** Syrians and Palestinians have arrived along the coast of Italy; **6,233** have arrived along the coast of Italy since August. This is compared with an estimated **350** Syrians who arrived in 2012. Most of the Syrian refugees that make landfall are not seeking asylum in Italy and continue on to other countries in Europe.

Although Egypt is not the only point of departure for Syrians bound for Italy (some are arriving from Libya, Turkey, Syria, etc.), a reported **63** boats have arrived along the coast of Italy from Egypt since the beginning of the year.

UNHCR recognizes that there have also been an increasing number of unaccompanied minors making the voyage. As the cost of travel can range from 2,000-5,000 USD per person, some families are spending their resources to send their children with a distant relative or friend.

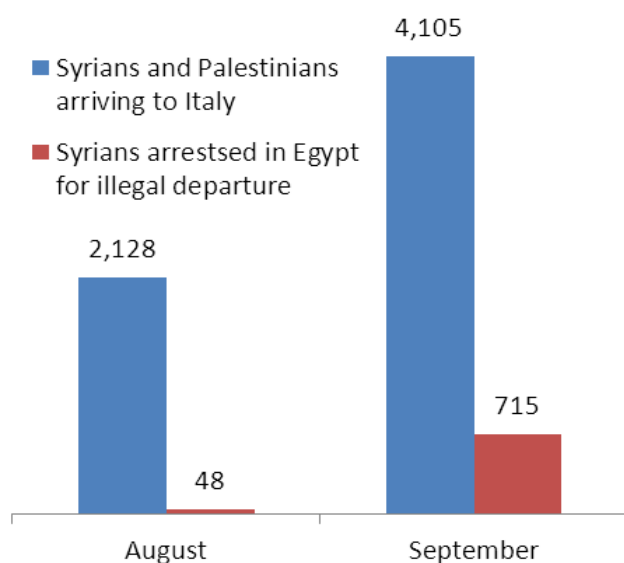
Detentions/Deportations/Releases

UNHCR is aware of **873** Syrians arrested in Egypt since August for attempting to illegally depart; **144** have been deported to third countries (at least **44** were children). Although the Egyptian prosecutors have not placed charges, approximately **653** Syrians remain in administrative detention, including women and **141** children. UNHCR is also aware of **65** deported and some **46** that remain in detention, following arrests between July and September due to lack of valid residency permits, out after curfew, or suspicion of violence. UNHCR is in the process of obtaining access to detention centres and works together with legal partners who have been reviewing cases of Syrian refugees in detention.

The process of deportation has involved the authorities ordering a number of those detained to leave the country, even in cases in which the prosecutor's office has not pressed any charges. Family members are instructed to purchase tickets for their departure and most have departed to Turkey, Lebanon, or other countries where they do not require a visa to enter. Some, however, have opted to return to Syria. In a recent incident, a 16 year-old who had been arrested for trying to illegally depart to Italy opted to return to Syria in order to gain release from detention. According to reports he no longer has any close family in Syria and his mother resides in Egypt.

As a further update on the shipwreck off the coast of Alexandria on 11 October, the 116 survivors were arrested, of whom 36 are Syrians (16 children), and remain in two detention centres in Alexandria. After recovery of the dead bodies, the number of the dead rose to 14, including 6 children.

During the week, a further 94 persons, of whom 61 are Syrians (37 children) were arrested in Alexandria for attempting to illegally depart. In Beheira Governorate, 21 persons were arrested for attempting illegal departure; including 7 Syrians (4 children). All have been cleared of charges by the General Prosecutor, but remain in detention a decision from National Security.



QIPS

Masaken Osman is one of the poorest and marginalized areas in Greater Cairo. Many Syrians settled there because of the low rental costs and the support some NGOs had been providing in the area. Since they first arrived, however, they have faced security challenges and limited access to basic services such as schools and hospitals. Condition for Syrians in Masaken Osman has further deteriorated since late June with the rise of anti-Syrian sentiment.

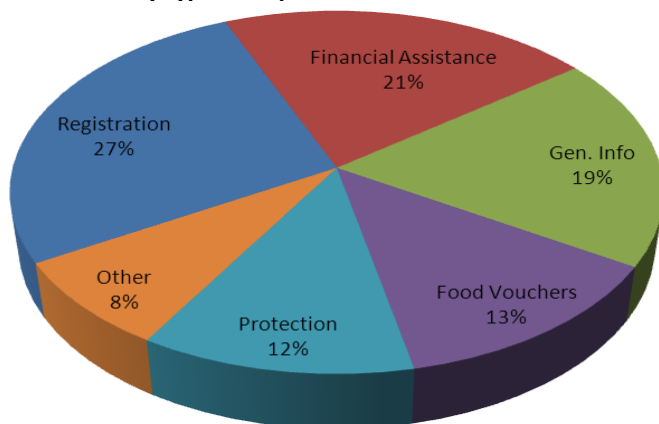
Following a series of meetings meeting to generate ideas of how to promote coexistence between the Syrian and host community, UNHCR in coordination with Save the children, Tadomen, Fard, and Sharawy associations organized a joint Eid celebration for Syrians and Egyptian children in Maskan Osman on the second day of Eid to kick off a series of Quick Impact Projects (QIPS).

The fun day for children under the theme “Our Eid is one” took place in Al Mustaqbal Primary and Middle School in Bet Eleyla, the neighbourhood just opposite Masaken Osman. More than one thousand Syrian and Egyptian attended the event and were entertained by clowns, enjoyed arts and crafts, dancing, and face painting. The event provided a fun and peaceful environment for the Syrian and Egyptian children, and many parents also participated.

Hotline

UNHCR responded to 161 calls:

Breakdown by type of inquires



Partners:

Caritas • Catholic Relief Services (CRS) • Islamic Relief Worldwide • Mahmoud Mosque society • Refuge Egypt • Resala Association • Terre Des Hommes - TADAMON and Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC) • Save the Children • UNICEF • WFP • WHO

For further information:

Teddy Leposky • Associate Reporting Officer

leposky@unhcr.org

Marwa Hashem • Assistant Public Information Officer

hashemma@unhcr.org

