



OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS:

Syrian individuals continue to arrive through the Peshkhabour border with 5,059 **new arrivals** in October 2015, of which 376 individuals were admitted as asylum seekers on family reunification grounds, while 4,683 Syrians entered as visitors or for medical reasons. In October, the number of spontaneous **returns** to Syria was comparable to the previous month, with 2,937 registered asylum seekers departing from the KR-I through the Peshkhabour border. A total of 3,100 Syrians (including 163 non-registered individuals) were counseled by UNHCR at the Bajet Kandala registration centre to ensure the voluntary nature of their return.

The majority of returnees to Syria were individuals residing out of camps in the KR-I, with reasons for return reported as economic and living conditions in the KR-I, the lack of livelihood opportunities, family reunification and the perception of improved security in the place of return. The majority of returnees reported Kobane, Qamishly and Hassakeh as intended destinations.

Spontaneous **departures** of Syrian individuals from the KR-I to Turkey continue to be observed, though the numbers of departures have decreased in October when compared to the previous month (representing a 33% decrease). It has been reported that 1,544 Syrians crossed legally into Turkey from the KR-I via the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing, with reasons for departure including the intention of onward travel to Europe. UNHCR has developed key messages on the risks of illegal migration which have been distributed in refugee camps and urban areas.

The **verification** exercise has been officially closed, with the remaining urban caseload to be verified through continuous registration processes.

A campaign against early marriage has been launched with key protection staff across UN agencies and NGOs trained on the campaign. The campaign also involves community and religious leaders, administrators, teachers and service providers. Awareness raising on **child protection** risks such as early marriage and child labour have also been coordinated with school social workers at Kawergosk camp, through UNICEF's implementing partner, Public Aid Organization (PAO).

An assessment plan for all unaccompanied and separated children in Erbil refugee locations was developed during the reporting period. Following training of case workers, assessment will commence in November. In Sulaymaniyah, UNHCR chaired a Best Interests Determination (BID) panel in which two BIDs were finalised and one reviewed. BID panel members included Kurdistan Save the Children, STEP, DOLSA, and UNICEF.

Capacity building of the General Directorate for Combatting Violence Against Women (DCVAW) was conducted this month through a training of trainers for 30 DCVAW staff from six different geographical directorates. Training was conducted by a family protection specialist on **SGBV** case management. SGBV referral pathways are also being finalised by the SGBV sub-working group, pertaining to KR-I locations hosting refugees. SGBV awareness sessions were also conducted for members of the women rights committee and the refugee council in Sulaymaniyah.

In October, 35 cases of 154 persons were referred for **resettlement**. Twenty-three cases of 91 persons were submitted to the UK and 12 cases of 63 persons were submitted to Australia. Eighty-nine persons departed for resettlement with 54 persons traveling to Sweden and 35 persons to the UK.



Erbil, UNHCR/ C. Covas

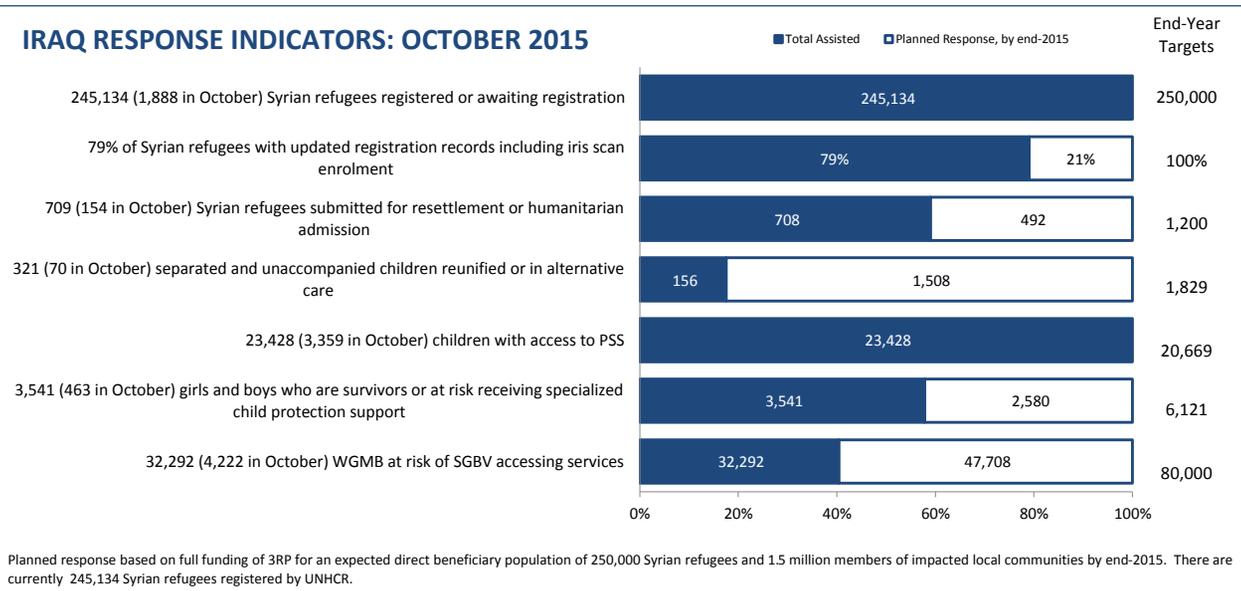
NEEDS ANALYSIS:

Currently, new arrivals from Syria are admitted into the KR-I through the Peshkhabour border on a 15 day visa, with only a small percentage (7.4%) admitted as asylum seekers for family reunification purposes. With several changes in admission procedures, the number of Syrians being admitted as asylum-seekers upon arrival into KRI has noticeably reduced.

The Al-Obaidy camp in Al Qaim received eight Syrian families during the reporting period, mainly from Deir Ez-Zor in Syria, where clashes continue. Owing to the security situation, new arrivals are unable to be registered. Due to delays in resettlement processing for some countries, a number of refugees already in the resettlement pipeline continue to spontaneously depart to Europe, negatively impacting on overall processing. Eight cases comprising 49 persons were put on hold from further resettlement processing due to reported spontaneous departures to Europe.

Due to the increasing departure trends among male individuals from both urban and camp settings who are opting to either return to Syria or move on to Europe, UNHCR has noted an increase in the number of female headed households in camps, a concern also raised by committee members at Domiz camps. Reports have also been received that the issue is aggravated by the fact that most departing are doing so based on borrowed money from other camp residents with the pressure for repayment raised as a critical concern by family members left behind. UNHCR is following up on such reports and is closely monitoring the situation.

IRAQ RESPONSE INDICATORS: OCTOBER 2015



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