



## SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS:

Syrian individuals continue to arrive through the Peshkhabour border with 4,679 new arrivals in September 2015, of which 279 individuals have sought asylum on a 30 day Asylum Request Card sometimes as a direct result of informal advocacy by UNHCR staff present at the border crossing. The majority of new arrivals have family links in urban areas in the KR-I and are families of Kurdish ethnicity arriving from Al Hassakeh Province, Kobane, Al Raqqa and Aleppo sub-Provinces.

The number of spontaneous returns to Syria has seen a slight decrease in the reporting period, with 3,127 individuals departing from the KR-I through the Peshkhabour border. Returnees continue to cite economic and living conditions in the KR-I, family reunification, agricultural purposes including the preparation of winter harvesting and, more recently, the purposes of migration to Europe as reasons for return.

A trend has been observed of an increasing number of individuals requesting to inactivate their cases because they have decided to leave the country. Expressed intentions are to reach Europe via Syria or Turkey. UNHCR understands that the Zhin Organisation for Refugee Services continues to issue passports to Syrians in the KR(I). These passports are said to be recognized by KR-I and Turkish authorities allowing for legal crossings into European countries. UNHCR Protection teams continue to monitor departures.



Registration, PARC Erbil, May 2015. QANDIL/ Sebastien Lafont

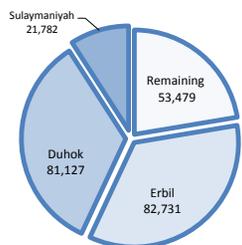
## NEEDS ANALYSIS:

Access to safety, and access to asylum remains a concern with changes in exit and admission procedures into the KR-I. Although the KR-I authorities request support for developing humanitarian admission criteria, the majority of new Syrian arrivals into the KR-I were admitted on 15 day visas for visiting or medical reasons, whereas only 279 individuals (6%) were admitted as asylum seekers, mainly on family reunification grounds. Starting from September, the decision on whether to convert a 15 day-visa into permission to register as asylum-seeker is no longer processed at the Peshkhabour border. According to border authorities, the Residency Department will now process conversions however UNHCR is following up on the issue.

The Al-Obaidi camp in Al Qaim received 14 Syrian families, mainly from Deir Ez-Zor where there has been a recent intensification in clashes. Though protection activities in the camp remain suspended since June 2014 owing to the security situation, it has been reported that a number of Syrian families have departed the camp to Turkey. Conditions in Al Qaim, including acute shortages of electricity and medical facilities are also reportedly driving medical patients to depart to Syria in order to seek treatment.

Reports of Syrian families in KR-I camps intending to depart to Europe continue.

**Iris-Scan in KR-I**  
78% enrolled  
22% remaining



**Biometric registration and verification** is ongoing for the residual caseload living out of camps. UNHCR continues to advocate for harmonization and simplification of the governmental procedures to ensure that refugees are registered and documented in their place of residence.

Partners Harikar, Qandil and CDO continued to provide **legal support to refugees** in need of civil status documents (birth, marriage, death and divorce certificates). In some semi-urban areas, refugees struggle to obtain residency permits due to the complex and lengthy residency procedures. In addition, security has imposed further restrictions on access to residency cards for those refugees who returned to Syria, and seek now to re-activate their case in the KR-I. During recent participatory assessments, some Syrian refugees reported not being able to receive their documents when re-entering the KR-I.

Efforts to support refugee birth registration continued with UNICEF and the Public Aid Organization (PAO) in Kawergosk refugee camp enabling 20 children access legal representation services for the purposes of birth registration. In Sulaymaniyah, a Best Interests Determination (BID) training was conducted by UNHCR with **child protection** actors directly involved in case management.

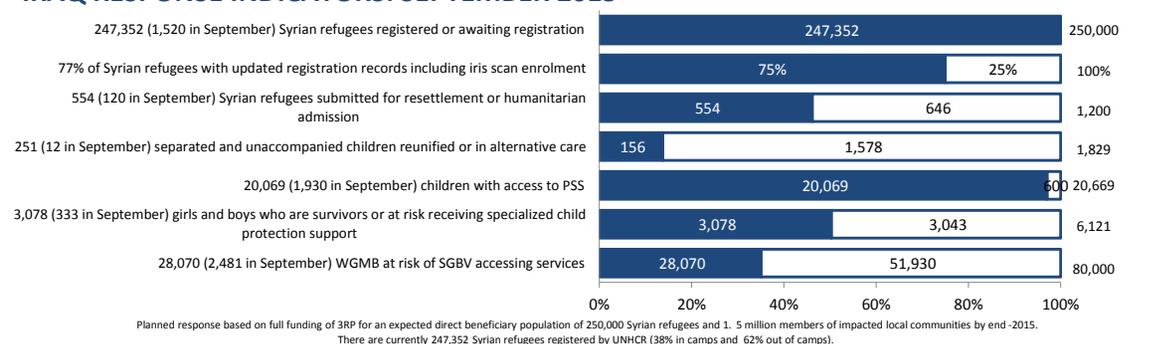
With the issue of early marriage remaining a predominant **SGBV** protection concern in the KR-I, awareness raising sessions on the impact and risk of early marriage and that of domestic violence were held in Duhok and Sulaymaniyah in camp and urban locations respectively. In September, 34 cases of 158 persons were referred for **resettlement**. Nine cases of 43 persons were submitted to Australia and 19 cases of 77 persons were submitted to the United Kingdom. The UK has also agreed to accept an additional 350 Syrian refugees from Iraq this year.

UNHCR conducted a series of Focus Group Discussions in Erbil camp and non camp locations, with reasons prompting migration to Europe attributed to; the lack of employment and livelihood opportunities further compounded by the IDP influx into the KR-I and the subsequent competition for jobs, political instability and insecurity of the region, the lack of quality healthcare, limited educational opportunities, the decreasing level of humanitarian assistance and the perception of European states' admissions policy.

During protection monitoring visits to camp and urban areas, UNHCR found an increase in the number of children encouraged by their parents to drop out of school and cross through illegal borders to seek asylum in European countries. Additionally, due to delays in resettlement processing for some countries, some refugees already undergoing the UNHCR resettlement process are opting to travel on their own to Europe leaving families behind, further negatively impacting overall processing. Key messages warning against illegal migration to Europe have been developed and are being shared with all refugees undergoing resettlement consideration.

Though the new school year has commenced, there remains a lack of educational staff in Duhok refugee schools, with reports of parents reluctant to send their children to school. Furthermore, UNHCR has observed an increase in the number of children returning to Syria, coinciding with the start of the new school semester and with children at the Bajet Kandala return centre reporting the lack of education services in the KR-I, high transportation costs for those living in urban areas and other concerns linked to language, as reasons for return. Coordination meetings will be taken with the educational sub-working group to discuss the issue the lack of teaching staff in refugee camp schools.

## IRAQ RESPONSE INDICATORS: SEPTEMBER 2015



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