

## IRAQ

### INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE – SYRIAN REFUGEES IN IRAQ

16-31 March 2015

#### KEY FIGURES

**10**

UASC reunited with their families in Syria

**424**

New Arrivals from Syria

**467**

Children provided with psychosocial support

**995**

Individuals verified in Domiz camp

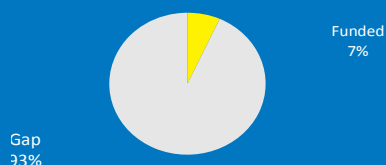
**1,469**

Individuals verified in Basirma camp

#### FUNDING

**USD 426,041,332**

requested by agencies for the operation (Source: 2015 3RP – Iraq, as at 24/03/2015)



#### PRIORITIES

- Protection services to newly arrived Syrian refugees and minors
- Continuous improvements in camp shelter and WASH
- Revamping the education sector

#### POPULATION OF CONCERN

**247,861** Syrian refugees

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ibrahim Khalil border crossing remained closed for Syrians displaced from Kobani traveling to Iraq via Turkey and remained open for commercial traffic. The Peshkhabour border crossing remained open for the admission of Syrians on Mondays only. It was closed for Nawruz on Monday 23 March, affecting the number of new arrivals from Syria. When open, all the new arrivals continued to be transported directly from the Peshkhabour border crossing to the Gawilan camp, where they were registered. 424 Syrians entered the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KR-I), bringing the total number of new arrivals from Syria in 2015 to 18,726.
- In the Erbil Governorate, a verification exercise for refugees with no biometric data in the proGres database was launched in the Qushtapa and Basirma camps on 12 and 15 of March respectively. The verification was completed in Basirma, and is expected to be completed on 2 April in Qushtapa.
- The issue of visitors hosted by their relatives in the camps has become a challenge in the Erbil Governorate, as some of them have been there for months. Most of them continue to ask for the allocation of plots and tents, which is not possible due to overcrowding.



Barzani Charity Foundation bringing medical packages to Gawilan PHC (UNHCR/ I. Gadoev)

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

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### Operational Context

Political relations developed positively between Baghdad and Erbil, as the Iraqi Government sent the promised installment of funds to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The KRG in return honored the deal made between the Central Government and Erbil pertaining to the KRG's oil exports.

The UN Secretary-General (SG), Ban Ki-Moon, visited Baghdad on 30 March for the first time since the establishment of the Al-Abadi Government. The new Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ján Kubiš took up his duties in the week of 23 March, and accompanied the SG during his meetings in Baghdad.

The security situation remained a concern in many parts of the country, with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) making significant gains in the Salahadin Governorate. In Tikrit, the ISF are reportedly still clearing some parts of the city from armed insurgents. The Iraqi Prime Minister conducted a visit to Tikrit during the reporting period to confirm to the Iraqis that Tikrit was fully liberated by the ISF. The operation against armed insurgents continues in the Anbar Governorate.

The economic situation remains challenging, as the salaries of civil servants for the months of February and March remain unpaid. Furthermore, the number of Iraqi citizens displaced since early 2014 has reached 2.7 million.

### Achievements



#### Protection

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##### CAMP

##### Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF in co-operation with its implementing partners provided psychosocial services to a total of 467 newly registered children in the Duhok, Suleimaniyah and Erbil refugee camps. UNICEF, through frontline workers, provided 56 newly registered children with specialized services, increasing the total in 2015 to 339. Cases included children with psychosocial distress and disorders, non-attendance at school, child labour, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), early marriage, violence and disability.
- In the Duhok Governorate, efforts are underway to ensure the presence of lawyers in the camps in order to reach more people of concern in need of legal assistance.
- 424 Syrians individuals entered the KR-I, bringing the total number of new arrivals from Syria in 2015 to 18,726. Families from Kobani who were interviewed previously resided in Gaziantep, Siroj and Mardin in Turkey, but reported not having applied for asylum there. They had been staying with host families who could no longer continue to support them. The families returned to Syria legally before paying smugglers around 200 USD per family to assist them in their journey from Derbasiye to Semelka.
- Most of the newly arrived Syrians opted to leave the camp following registration. Only three of the 54 families who registered at the Gawilan camp chose to remain there, as others moved onwards to reunite with family members living in Duhok city, and in the Erbil and Suleimaniyah Governorates.
- In the Duhok Governorate, the IRIS enrolment and verification exercise began on 24 March in Domiz 1. A total of 995 individuals were verified.
- The Department Of Labour and Social Affairs (DoLSA) in Erbil, with the support of UNICEF, conducted a 'tent-to-tent' campaign in the Basirma camp aiming to increase the community's awareness on child rights and establish child protection services in the camp.
- In the Erbil Governorate, a verification exercise for refugees with no biometric data in the proGres database was launched in the Qushtapa and Basirma camps on 12 and 15 of March respectively. The verification was completed in Basirma, and is expected to be completed on 2 April in Qushtapa, targeting 2,000 individuals in Basirma and 2,500 individuals. 1,469 individuals were verified in Basirma.

- 1,021 cases comprising 3,288 Syrian refugees in the four camps of the Erbil Governorate had their registration data updated and asylum-seeker certificates issued, while 1,284 residency cards were processed for the population in the Erbil camps.
- 41 Syrian refugees were provided with legal assistance, including with the acquisition of marriage and birth certificates.
- Protection partners in the Erbil refugee camps are organizing a campaign to combat smoking amongst children. Awareness-raising sessions, distribution of publications and monitoring of the shops selling cigarettes to children is on-going.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Prolonged non-attendance of children in schools, due to the lack of appropriate level of schools in the camps, or the unwillingness of parents/care givers and/or children to go to school, constitutes a continued risk to the psychological wellbeing of many children. UNICEF continues to support its implementing partners in conducting individual awareness-raising sessions with the community leaders, parents/caregivers and children in order to address this issue.
- At the beginning of April, due to a lack of funds, Un Ponte Per (UPP) will close its Mental Health Psychosocial Support Services in the Gawilan camp. The cancellation of mental health services will create a serious gap in service provision to the refugees, considering that the UPP MHPSS Unit received about 20 to 25 persons daily, including children. Currently there are no other organizations that could take over the provision of quality mental health services to those in need.

#### NON-CAMP

##### Achievements and Impact

- 1,797 cases of 4,172 Syrian refugees had their registration data updated and asylum-seeker certificates issued in the urban areas of Erbil.
- The Residency Department in Erbil received 682 applications, issued residency cards for 342 Syrian refugees, and renewed 118 residency cards.



#### Durable Solutions

##### Achievements and Impact

- A total of 588 Syrians returned from the KR-I to Syria via the Peshkhabour border crossing point, bringing the total number of spontaneous returns since January 2015 to 4,173 individuals. Reasons for return include family reunification, family events, medical reasons, lack of job opportunities, and high living costs in the KR-I.
- In coordination with the KR-I Peshkhabour border officials, a total of 10 unaccompanied minors (8 males and 2 females) were successfully reunited with their families on the Syrian side of the border point in Semelka.
- Pre-assessment screening was undertaken for 16 cases, of which 15 were prioritized and one deprioritized. All the cases pre-assessed were received as internal referrals from other units within UNHCR across the KR-I, aside from one self-referral case.
- Interviews were carried out in all camps in the Erbil Governorate, as well as in the Suleimaniyah and Duhok Governorates. Case Identification interviews were conducted in 24 cases. 39 cases were reviewed, of which 14 were prioritized, and 25 deprioritized. Nine RSD/RST interviews were conducted.
- Six cases (21 individuals) were referred to the MENA Regional Hub in Amman (six individuals to Sweden and 15 individuals to USA) for submission for resettlement. Eighteen cases (52 individuals) were submitted for resettlement by the Regional Hub to the USA and one case (four individuals) was submitted to Sweden. One case (seven individuals) was accepted by Sweden on an emergency basis and is pending departure. Two cases (six individuals) departed for resettlement to Sweden.

## Education

- The Spring holiday took place from 11 to 24 March in all the camp and non-camp schools in the KR-I, with a resumption of classes during the last week of March 2015.

### CAMP

#### Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF is supporting Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) in 16 camp schools across the KR-I (11 in Duhok, 4 in Erbil and one in the Suleimaniyah Governorate), with a monthly fixed grant of USD 300. The budget is utilized to address the needs of the children and school facilities, identified in the individual school improvement plans.
- UNICEF gave technical and financial support to the Directorate of Education (DoE) in Duhok, in order to repair leaking roofs in 11 refugee camp schools throughout the Duhok Governorate, benefitting some 5,500 children.
- In association with Peace Winds Japan, UNICEF completed 95% of the construction of six additional prefab classrooms for the school in the Qushtapa camp, 75% of the three additional prefab classrooms, and the new kindergarten in the Basirma camp. Twenty-five new students were already enrolled in the Qushtapa camp school prior to completion of the intervention.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Syrian refugee teachers have not received salaries since the start of 2015, due to the KRG's limited budget.
- Secondary education is not provided in the Erbil camps as the schools constructed by UNESCO lack teachers to conduct classes. Although some refugees have volunteered to teach, a lack of books and in some instances a lack of furniture have hindered the process. Unfortunately, due to the financial situation of the KRG, the DoE is in no position to provide such resources.

### NON-CAMP

#### Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF distributed stationery and school bags to 2,104 refugee students living in host communities in the Duhok Governorate.
- UNICEF is continuously supporting the transportation of over 90 students in the Suleimaniyah Governorate to their schools, offering Arabic as the language of instruction.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is a shortage of specialized teachers in many schools in the host communities, resulting in some schools relying on volunteer teachers.



## Health

### CAMP

#### Achievements and Impact

- An increased number of cases of scabies was reported in several camps. Joint action plans were developed with and implemented by health, WASH and camp management partners. The plans focus on the treatment of all family members, and supportive measures to control scabies in the accommodation, as well as health and hygiene awareness.
- A nutrition survey among Syrian refugees in camp and non-camp locations is planned for May, and will be implemented jointly by the Ministry of Health (MoH), UNICEF and UNHCR. The survey will look into global acute malnutrition and chronic malnutrition in children under 5, as well as into infant and young child feeding practices.
- UNICEF is continuously providing support to local and governmental health authorities to provide routine immunization services for Syrian refugees in camps. In eight refugee camps across the KR-I, a total of 590 under 5 years old (U5) children were immunized against polio, 118 infants under 1 year old were vaccinated against measles, 135 U5 children received MMR vaccine, and 245 U5 children received vitamin A supplements.

- In UNICEF-supported baby hut units, a total of 45 seminars were conducted, involving an estimated 400 pregnant and lactating women, discussing topics such as exclusive breast-feeding, well balanced diets, and complementary foods for infants.
- As part of the UNICEF-supported newborn home visit program, about 2,000 tents were visited by trained Syrian refugee nurses, across all refugee camps in the KR-I. During these visits, approximately 400 newborn babies and 300 post-delivery mothers received follow up examinations.



The clinic activities in Al Obaidy Camp by Ali/UIMS

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Six neonatal deaths have been reported in the Gawilan camp over the past six months. UNICEF, the Directorate of Health (DoH) in Duhok and UNHCR are jointly exploring the possible causes of this increase in neonatal mortality.
- Community Health Worker programmes need to be expanded in the Qushtapa and Basirma camps to increase health awareness. Mental health and psychosocial care services in urban areas are limited in all governorates and do not cover all refugees in need of support.

- In non-camp settings, access to mental health care and psychosocial support services remains limited for refugees and needs to be further expanded. Drug shortages remain a key concern in public health facilities.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### CAMP

#### Achievements and Impact

- During the second half of March, WFP in partnership with INTERSOS, ACTED and Islamic Relief Worldwide – Iraq, completed distributions in all Syrian refugee camps, with the exception of the Al Obaidy camp in Anbar.
- In camps WFP distributed vouchers, including in Akre, Domiz, Darashakran and Kawergosk, in the Duhok and Erbil Governorates. The voucher value remained at USD 19 per person, reduced from January's value of USD 28.20 due to funding constraints. The reduced value will be maintained in April in light of continued funding shortfalls. A fifth camp, Basirma, in the Erbil governorate, will also transition from individual food parcels to voucher assistance next month.
- The joint vulnerability targeting process continued in the second half of the month, with WFP's vulnerability assessment expert arriving in country to begin a desk review of data and key informant interviews. UNHCR's expert who will co-lead the process is expected to arrive in early April.
- Through the UNICEF-supported growth-monitoring program, a total of 1,100 children under 5 years old were screened throughout the reporting period in seven refugee camps across the KR-I. Children showing signs of malnutrition, such as wasting and stunted growth, receive treatment with supplementary or therapeutic food and referral. A total of 1,800 doses of supplementary nutrition food were distributed as preventive and therapeutic



measures for under 5 years old children, benefitting both children showing outward signs of malnourishment and children at risk.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- WFP was unable to deliver food commodities to Al Obaidy camp in the Anbar Governorate, where insecurity is hindering access to the camp. WFP aims to deliver individual food parcels as soon as possible in order to resume monthly food distributions and meet the food needs of refugees remaining in the camp. In the meantime, ISHO continued to distribute two pieces of bread per refugee per day for the camp population. ISHO also distributed the complementary food assistance IQD 17,500 (equivalent to 15 USD) to 749 refugees in the Al Obaidy camp.
- In the Duhok Governorate, refugees report being affected by the high price of food items, resulting in reduced food quantities. It is reported that some parents are withdrawing their children from school to go and work in order to provide the families with enough food.



## Water and Sanitation

### CAMP

#### Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF, with the support of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), conducted water quality testing for Free Residual Chlorine (FRC) in Domiz camp. The average reading for the water trucks and boreholes was within the required range. However, at household level the average was below the acceptable level. As a follow-up to improve the water quality at the household level, NRC conducted a hygiene promotion awareness campaign, messaging specifically about water storage, and targeting the affected households. To increase the impact beyond the identified affected households, NRC additionally conducted a tank cleaning campaign in the camp, during which 250 tanks were cleaned.
- In the Qushtapa camp in Erbil, the construction of the water and sanitation network with the support of UNICEF was completed and tested for its performance. The relocation of the refugees has yet to start.
- In response to the low water pressure in the tanks in Arbat camp in the Suleimaniyah Governorate, UNICEF's partner the International Rescue Committee (IRC) provided 90,000 liters of safe drinking water through water trucks on a daily basis.
- UNICEF, in partnership with NRC, completed the construction of a 100 meter-long and 80 meter-wide drainage channel, in order to drain off storm water and grey water from 407 households in Domiz camp in the Duhok Governorate. In addition, the construction of a holding tank (3x2x2 meters) was completed, which will ensure the collection and storage of grey and black water from 43 households.
- UNICEF supported the rehabilitation of latrines in the Domiz camp, which benefited a total of 158 households. In total, 13 new latrine windows were constructed and two latrine doors were fitted.
- 400 students in the Bnar primary school in Domiz 1 Refugee Camp and 2,000 households in Domiz 1 and 2 Refugee Camps received key hygiene messages through UNICEF's partners, supplemented with the delivery of soap bars. The campaign aimed to prevent the further spread of lice in the camps, increase awareness of the importance of hand washing with soap at critical times, and other crucial hygiene practices.
- UNHCR provided a pool tester to measure Free Residual Chlorine (FRC) in the Akre camp following reports of poor water quality. The test results of water samples will further be analyzed by UNHCR and the Akre Camp Management for recommendations.
- The Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs (BRHA) provided a water network connection to the school in the Gawilan camp, addressing what had been a gap for some time.
- The construction of a sewer line for 40 shelter plots was completed in the Basirma camp.



Duhok UNICEF WASH Team ensuring water quality by testing for E. Coli Bacteria

- In the Al Obaidy camp, 890 refugees in the camp, and 2,000 individuals (refugees and host community) outside the camp, are being provided with water by the water network. An awareness campaign was conducted by Afkar Society for the community about the proper use of the water taps and about water preservation. Afkar Society also conducted a hygiene awareness session for the children at the camp school.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Gaps in the coverage of hygiene promotion in schools in the Domiz camp will be covered by FRC under a new partnership agreement with UNICEF.
- Water quality monitoring at the household level needs to be expanded and sustained in all the camp areas.
- There is still inadequate access to safe water in some quarters of Domiz camp due to reduced water pressure, loss of water, as well as uneven distribution and usage. In the short term, BRHA will supplement with temporary water trucking activities.



## Shelter and NFIs

### CAMP

- **Achievements and Impact** Sites of the new extensions for Domiz camp were handed over to Peace Winds Japan (PWJ). The construction of the new plots in Domiz 1 (438 plots), Domiz 2 (216 plots) and Gawilan (26 plots) will start in April 2015.
- With UNHCR funding, KURDS completed four green houses in the Gawilan camp, as part of pilot projects for the refugee camps. Similar projects will be replicated in other camps depending on the availability of funds.
- In the Basirma and Darashakran camps, the construction of 40 and 220 concrete slabs, respectively, is in progress. Following the completion that is expected within one week, the site will be handed over to ACF to start WASH works.
- The construction of 190 tent slabs was completed in the Darashakran camp, in the Erbil Governorate.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The Akre settlement requires construction works, such as roof repairs, installation of additional toilets, and improvement of drainage channels.



## Camp Coordination and Camp Management

### Achievements and Impact

- In the Suleimaniyah Governorate, discussions have been underway with Camp Management and the Government Emergency Cell on the vulnerability criteria for the selection of families in the new sectors of Arbat camp. Some 300 families are currently hosted by friends and relatives, and are awaiting the issuance of tents/plots.
- On 30 March, the Field Team unit met with the head of the Government Emergency Cell of the Suleimaniyah Governorate to discuss issues regarding camp administration (selling tents and plots, and permits for shops in the Arbat camp) as well as a request for UNHCR to assist the authorities in this regard. UNHCR is working with IRC (the camp manager) to train Government authorities on camp management/administration as well as the roles and responsibilities of the police and other actors.



## Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

### CAMP

#### Achievements and Impact

- In the Duhok Governorate, UNHCR continued to provide counseling services to refugees through a Community Services Desk that functions throughout the week. A total of 328 individuals in need of assistance were identified in both camps and urban areas through counselling and field visits. Identified cases were referred within UNHCR or to

other service providers for assistance, as appropriate. A total of 87 Syrian refugees with special needs were assessed as being extremely socio-economically vulnerable and were recommended to benefit from livelihoods programs.

- UNHCR attended the reception of 140 Syrian refugees arriving from Kobani and other parts of Syria at the Peshkhabour border crossing and provided support and counseling on available services, during which 44 individuals were identified as having specific needs.



## DONOR INFORMATION

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Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

### Donors who have contributed to the operation:

- Australia
- Canada
- CERF
- European Union
- France
- Germany
- Iraq
- Italy
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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AOG	Armed opposition group
ANC	Antenatal care
BIA/BID	Best Interests Assessment/Best Interests Determination
CRI	Core Relief Items (formerly known as non-food items/NFIs)
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
KR-I	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
IDP	Internally displaced people
KR-I	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MoDM	Ministry of Migration and Displacement
PARC	Protection Assistance Reintegration Centre
PHC	Primary Health Care
RSD	Refugee status determination
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
UASC	Unaccompanied and separated children
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

### Surviving in the city

**Duhok city, 10 March 2015 (UNHCR)** – Abdullah focuses as he arranges items at the grocery store where he works in Duhok city. He usually off-loads items from trucks to the storage room, then arranges them on the shelves of the supermarket. He has been employed for over a year now.

Originally from Al-Qamishli, Syria, Abdullah fled to northern Iraq back in December 2012 after the security and economic situation deteriorated. He is married and has two small children. They decided to settle in Duhok city.



Abdullah arranges items at the grocery store. He spends almost all of his income on bills, finding himself with no savings at all (UNHCR/ H. Suliman)

“For a refugee like me, life in the city is expensive”, he confesses. Despite being employed, Abdullah argues that his salary is barely enough to cover the basics. He makes US\$ 600 per month, but spends 90% of his income on rent and transportation. “It is very difficult for me to survive in the city, but I have children and I have no choice but to continue on this cycle,” says Abdullah. He works 12 hours a day.

As he expresses frustration, Abdullah finds comfort reminiscing about his life back in Syria. He used to work as a chef at a restaurant. He made good money and did not have to pay for rent. “Life was simple in the village, I was mentally comfortable and stable,” he says. “My work would end at three in the afternoon. I would go back home, eat, rest and go out to play soccer, and at night watch the English and Spanish leagues with my friends. Life was great, and without any hardship”, he recalls.

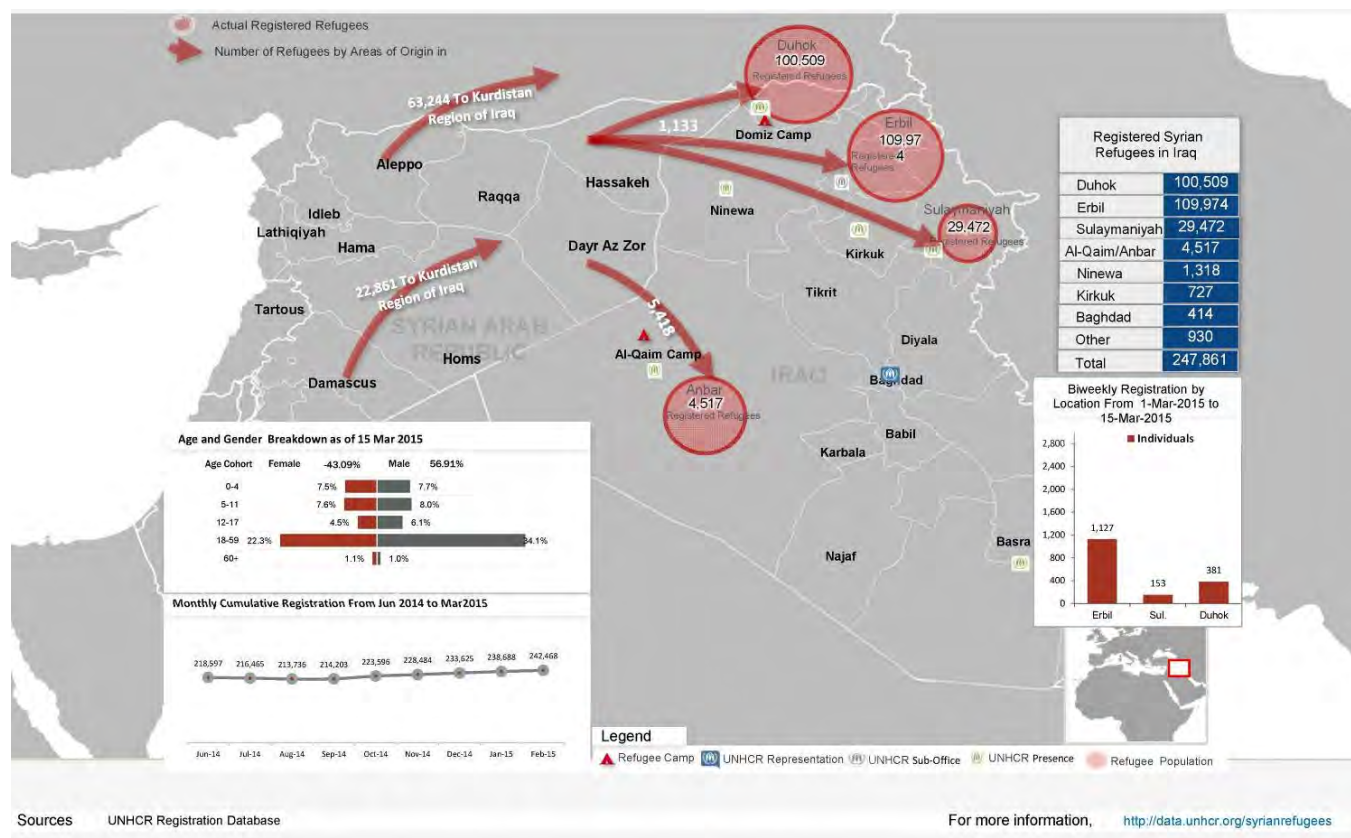
To save money, Abdullah admits he is willing to live in a camp, but only if the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) can offer him a spot in the Domiz camp, as the other camps are far away from the city. Unfortunately, Domiz camp has reached its capacity. The only option would be the Gawilan camp, but it is 2 hours travel away from Duhok city.

Abdullah and his family will continue working at the grocery store and live in Duhok for now. He realizes that his situation is relatively good, compared to that of other refugees. However, deep in his heart, Abdullah remains hopeful that the simple and good life he used to enjoy back in Syria may become possible again.

By Husam Eldin Mustafa

## ANNEXES

## Refugees by Areas of Origin in Syria

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**Links:**

For information related to the Regional Response Plan (RRP6) please click on <http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/>.

Announcements of all sector meetings along with respective agendas and minutes, and other information on sector-wide progress such as 3Ws, dashboards and camp profiles, are available on the inter-agency information sharing portal at <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>.

For more information on the work of UNHCR and our partners in Iraq, please follow us on Twitter at [@unhcriraq](#) and on Facebook at ["UNHCRinIraq"](#)

# UNHCR Registration Trends for Syrian Persons of Concern

