

UNHCR Syria Emergency Response Brief

21 November 2024



Core relief items distributed in Hama for new arrivals who fled Lebanon to Syria due to the escalating hostilities | ©UNHCR Syria



Population Movement*



557,000
Estimated Individuals
Who arrived in Syria from
Lebanon since 24 Sep 2024



63% of arrivals are **Syrians**
and
37% are **Lebanese** nationals

The security situation in Syria remains unpredictable due to the escalating hostilities in Lebanon. Last week, several Israeli airstrikes targeted locations across Syria, including Al Mazzeh neighbourhood in Damascus and Qudsaya city in Rural Damascus. Several deaths and injuries were reported as a result of the attacks. All UN staff were safe and accounted for.

* The numbers of new arrivals in this document are based on "SARC Emergency Response for Lebanese Refugees and Syrian Returnees" (issued 19 November) and daily updates from UNHCR Border Posts. Figures are undergoing verification and are subject to change.

Rural Damascus Governorate

On 18 November, over 700 individuals crossed from Lebanon through Rural Damascus' Jdaidet Yabous crossing point. The heavy rain in the last two days resulted in sludge and muddy conditions, putting additional challenges to those crossing through the craters on the road from Masnaa (Lebanon) to Jdaidet Yabous (Syria).

The Syrian Ministry of Interior recently announced a decision to allow Syrian private cars to transport individuals from Masnaa directly into Damascus, providing more options to new arrivals seeking to enter Syria through that border crossing.

On 19 November, a UNICEF delegation visited Jdaidet Yabous to observe the operational mechanisms of humanitarian actors at the crossing point and the assistance being provided to new arrivals. UNHCR teams were present on the ground to facilitate the visit and provide information on the response at the border, including legal assistance, core relief items and transportation services.

Homs Governorate

On 18 November, some 460 individuals – predominantly fleeing hostilities in Baalbek, Hermel, Chtoura and Bekaa in Lebanon – arrived at the Dabboussieh and Jesr Qmar crossing points. The majority of those who recently arrived travelled onwards to Homs, Aleppo and Damascus. Since the airstrikes that hit near the Joussieh crossing point between 14 and 15 November, the rate of arrivals remained limited, with approximately only five families crossing through the border daily, and none after 6pm.

Tartous Governorate

On 18 November, some 90 individuals crossed from Lebanon through the Al Arida crossing point in Tartous.

Overall, there was a higher number of Lebanese arriving than Syrians during the reporting period.

Six Lebanese families (25 individuals – including two vulnerable women, one diagnosed with cancer and another elderly) who had recently arrived in Syria, returned to Lebanon. They cited challenging living conditions in Syria as their primary reason for crossing back, despite the ongoing hostilities. Others who had chosen to return to Lebanon (albeit a very small number) had done so after securing accommodation in the relatively safer northern Lebanon or stated that they wanted to stay in Lebanese collective shelters for the displaced instead of remaining in Syria. A number of those returning were observed to be elderly. Some indicated that they were returning to Lebanon briefly only to collect items needed for the winter.



Operational Highlights

The vast majority of new arrivals comprised women and children who require particular attention and protection services, as do older persons and persons with disabilities. UN agencies and their partners continue to support new arrivals across Syria with tailored protection services to help them cope with the distress and trauma they are experiencing as a result of the hostilities in Lebanon.

Between September and the end of October, 4,599 people were reached through awareness messages around the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, family separation, mine risk education and available child protection services. A total of 9,784 individuals, including 7,668 children, participated in mental health and psychosocial support activities to help them restore normalcy.

During the reporting period, the UNHCR Representative met with the Minister of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates. The Representative raised a range of issues relating to the current influx of Syrian returnees, seeking their assistance and support for common challenges and specific situations affecting returnees that have been observed by UNHCR over the course of its ongoing monitoring activities of the returnees from Lebanon.



Protection

**114**

Community Centres

**90,175**

Individuals Reached

New arrivals continue to be supported at the host communities with assistance and services, either through community centres or outreach volunteers and mobile teams. From the home visits conducted, Syrian returnees and Lebanese refugees reported the lack of job opportunities and access to quality healthcare, as well as shelter rehabilitation, as some of their primary needs. Those reached through the mobile teams furthermore reported the need for core relief and winter items. Some returnees also reported that the lengthy civil documentation procedures imposed additional financial burdens on those travelling from rural areas to reach the civil registries.

At the locally established hosting centres in Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Tartous and Latakia, some 8,000 individuals continue to be accommodated and supported with assistance from UN agencies and their partners. More than 145,000 new arrivals are being hosted by relatives, with the majority in Ar-Raqqa, followed by Aleppo and Rural Damascus. Most of those who arrived in Syria previously resided in southern Lebanon and Beirut.

As of early November, over 330,000 new arrivals were supported with some 600,000 core relief and winter items dispatched to hosting governorates with a high number of new arrivals.



Inter-Agency Coordination

On 18 November, the Protection Sub-national Sector with OCHA and partners held a meeting on the prevention of gender-based violence. The sector updated participants on the recent influx from Lebanon and discussed preparations for the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. Recent developments, including the latest figures for newly arrived returnees and refugees, were also presented. The Sector highlighted the vulnerabilities observed and available services, along with the referral pathways for the most needed services.

Emergency Appeal Funding

Against the total financial requirement of US\$ 324 million of the Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria, US\$55 million - including received and projected funds - were provided to date, bringing the funding level to approximately 17 per cent.

In response to the growing needs, particularly for winterization, many agencies have been compelled to reallocate existing resources, thereby straining their response capabilities. Urgent financial support is essential to address the needs and provide life-saving assistance to new arrivals and host communities in Syria.