

# Regional Flash Update #23

## Syria situation crisis

17 April 2025



On 15 April 2025, UNHCR was in Areesha IDP camp in Northeast Syria (NES) to support the first convoy of returning Syrians to Deir-ez-Zor. © UNHCR/Hameed Maarouf

## Key Highlights

- As of 17 April 2025, UNHCR estimates that **some 437,226 Syrians** have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. This figure is calculated based on a triangulation of data from Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and beyond.
- As of 10 April, **1.05 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their homes**, including **188,121 returning from IDP sites** since early December 2024, according to the [latest data](#) of the IDP Task Force.
- The hostilities in the Tartous, Latakia, Homs, and Hama Governorates of Syria in early March continue to displace people into the North and Akkar Governorates of north Lebanon now reaching 33,928 people. To date, 22 out of 27 targeted villages in Akkar have received emergency protection, shelter and core relief items, covering over 85 per cent of the targeted population.
- The Turkish Minister of Interior announced on 16 April that between 9 December 2024 and 13 April 2025, **175,512 Syrians (33,730 families) have returned from Türkiye to Syria voluntarily**.

- On 15 April, UNHCR organized the first convoy to support the **voluntary return of 84 displaced Syrians from Areesha IDP camp in Northeast Syria (NES) to Deir-ez-Zor** (Al Mayadin and Muhasan sub-districts). UNHCR provided transportation to the families with vans and minibuses as well as trucks for their belongings. More IDPs are approaching UNHCR and the Camp Administration showing their willingness to return. So far, 118 households (642 individuals) have registered for return since the registration started last week. The registration is ongoing, and departure will continue.

## Country updates

### Syria

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**UNHCR maintains its daily presence at border crossing points across the country**, namely Joussieh, Jdaidet Yabous, Nassib, Bab Al-Hawa, and Bab Al-Salama, monitoring return trends and providing information, water, and Internet access. Addabousieh, Jesr Kamar, and Matraba border crossings are still closed due to extensive damage, with efforts underway for rehabilitation.

Furthermore, this week, **UNHCR and partners provided vital assistance across Syria, supporting thousands of displaced individuals and returnees**. In **Aleppo**, child protection prevention activities for 770 children and caregivers were conducted, including 300 IDPs and refugee returnees. In Homs Governorate, core relief items (CRIs) and winter items were distributed to 927 households, benefitting 4,635 individuals. In **Hama** Governorate, 1,400 kits were distributed to 1,400 households, benefitting 7,000 individuals. The targeted families in both Homs and Hama were IDP and refugee returnees. In **Latakia** Governorate, agricultural tools were distributed for 150 returnee farmers in Wata Al-Khan and affiliated villages. Each tool kit includes a micro irrigation system, small cultivator, copper fungicide, and pheromone traps that attract insects. Finally, in rural **As-Sweida**, 40 hens, along with animal feed, veterinary kits, and barley seeds were distributed to 30 vulnerable families.

### Lebanon

As of 15 April, the Baalbek Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is reporting **approximately 87,390 arrivals from Syria since 8 December** (a slight decrease from 7 April), including approximately 29,401 arrivals in Baalbek Governorate, North Bekaa, residing in 192 informal collective shelters (CS), and approximately 57,989 residing in the community.

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## Türkiye

The Minister of Interior announced on 16 April that between 9 December 2024 and 13 April 2025, **175,512 Syrians (33,730 families) have returned from Türkiye to Syria voluntarily**. He also provided the breakdown of returns through each border crossing:

Border Gates Used for Voluntary Returns:

Hatay/Cilvegözü	87,867
Kilis/Öncüpınar	63,532
Hatay/Yayladağı	10,151
Gaziantep/Karkamış	7,127
Hatay/Zeytindalı	5,410
Şanlıurfa/Akçakale	1,425

Attended by the UNHCR Representative, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) took place on 11 – 13 April. The Forum hosted over 6,000 guests, including 21 Heads of State, including the President of Syria and Government and 64 Ministers from 155 countries. Key issues discussed included regional conflicts, diplomacy, and international cooperation.

In his speech during the closure of ADF on 13 April, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan announced that President Erdoğan plans to visit Syria, adding that officials are working to finalize the timing, conditions and location for the visit. Calling on all actors inside and outside Syria to exercise caution and avoid provocations, Minister Fidan criticised Israeli operations in Syria and called for technical agreements to avoid military confrontations among involved nations, such as Israel, the U.S., Türkiye and Russia.

President Erdoğan met with interim Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa during ADF on 11 April. They discussed Türkiye-Syria relations and regional issues. Erdoğan emphasized support for Syria's stability, welcomed the prevention of renewed chaos, and expressed Türkiye's intent to help lift international sanctions on Syria. He also highlighted the importance of enhancing economic cooperation.

During ADF, interim Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa emphasized Syria's strong commitment to dialogue and diplomacy as key tools for resolving conflicts and ensuring regional and global stability. He highlighted the forum as an important opportunity for international engagement and reiterated the importance of respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, particularly considering ongoing Israeli violations.

The processing of voluntary returns continues in provinces and at five border crossings: Cilvegözü / Bab al Hawa, Yayladağı / Keseb, Öncüpınar /Bab al Salama, Karkamış /Jarablus and Akçakale / Tel Abyad. Go and see visits take place from Zeytindalı/Jinderes, Çobanbey/Al Rai and Yayladağı/Keseb border crossings.

Currently, UNHCR monitors returns in 13 provinces and at the Cilvegözü/Bab al-Hawa, Yayladağı/Keseb, Öncüpınar/Bab al-Salama, and Karkamış/Jarablus border crossings in the southeast, as well as at Istanbul Airport, capturing diverse demographic trends and motivations.

UNHCR's observations on returns remain largely consistent with previous weeks. The profiles of returnees remain diverse, including a notable number of female-headed households and individuals returning alone, often due to the absence of family members in Türkiye or with the intent of assessing conditions before reuniting with relatives. Many returnees are adults, though children and older persons are also represented. The primary motivations for return include political and security developments, family reunification, and personal reasons such as nostalgia. A majority choose to

return to their province of origin, mainly to rejoin family, though damaged housing and changing local conditions also influence their destination. While some returnees go back to their properties or those of close relatives, many face issues such as destroyed homes or a lack of ownership documentation. Access to civil documents and essential services remains inconsistent, particularly among vulnerable groups. Many returnees relied on informal employment before return, and future income prospects remain uncertain.

A significant proportion of returnees are children under the age of 12, highlighting the urgent need to prioritize the reconstruction and rehabilitation of education facilities in areas of return. Many of these children face additional challenges in reintegration, as they may have limited proficiency in Arabic or have been educated under different curricula while in Türkiye, making adaptation to the Syrian education system particularly difficult.

## Jordan

As of 12 April, nearly **56,000 refugees registered with UNHCR have returned from Jordan to Syria since 8 December 2024**. The average daily number of refugee returnees has increased since the end of Ramadan. From 6 to 12 April, an average of 370 refugees crossed the border daily, compared to 200 in the preceding week.

Demographics of returnees remained largely unchanged from previous weeks, with **women and girls representing around 45 per cent of the total refugee returnees**. Children accounted for around 41 per cent, and men of military age (18-40 years old) made up around 23 per cent of overall returns. The vast majority of refugees continue to return from host communities, primarily from Amman and Irbid. More details about the numbers and profile of returnees are available on [UNHCR Jordan's returns dashboard](#).

From 15 to 17 April, UNHCR **facilitated transportation for nearly 190 refugees**. Overall, since the start of the transportation pilot project on 20 January 2025, UNHCR has supported approximately 1,670 refugees to return to Syria. Before departure, in-person interviews are conducted to ensure that returns are voluntary and well-informed, with counselling and information provided on available services inside Syria. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

During recent focus group discussions, refugees continued expressing concerns about reductions in humanitarian assistance and the security situation in Syria. Refugees continue to report that their relatives in Syria are advising them to delay their return until conditions in Syria improve. Some participants hope to return after the end of the school year, while many others are adopting a “wait-and-see” approach.

## Iraq

Between 8 December 2024 and 10 April 2025, over **13,000 Syrians returned** from Iraq to Syria, including some **1,100 refugees and asylum-seekers** registered with UNHCR. This includes about 5,400 Syrians who returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and some 7,500 through Al-Qaim border crossing.

Over the past week, about **153 registered Syrian refugees returned from Iraq**, a significant increase from 76 registered refugees who returned the previous week. This uptick in the number of returns is mainly attributed to the end of Ramadan and Eid holidays. The improved security situation in Syria, reuniting with family, and avoiding overstay fines in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq are the most common reasons Syrians report for their return.

During the reporting period, UNHCR continued to observe arrivals from Syria to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, mainly from the Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh areas. Between 30 March and

10 April, **700 individuals arrived through Peshkhabour border crossing point**. The increase in the number of arrivals during this period is largely attributed to the end of Ramadan and Eid holidays, with many families coming from Syria to visit their relatives in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Overall, family visits, returning from visits to Syria, family reunification, or transiting through the Kurdistan Region to other destinations were indicated as the main reasons for arrivals, with most expressing their intentions to return to Syria following their visit. Only two of some 30 households interviewed by UNHCR's partner on arrival to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq expressed their intention to register with UNHCR in Iraq.

### **Egypt**

As of 14 April 2025, approximately 137,580 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt, around 1,170 fewer than the previous week, marking nearly a twofold decrease from the previous week. Syrian refugees now account for approximately **14.5% of the total refugee population in the country**.

Since the regime change in Syria, there has been a significant increase in Syrians approaching UNHCR in Cairo and Alexandria to request the closure of their asylum cases. As of 15 April 2025, almost **8,146 closure requests involving over 16,612 individuals were submitted since 8 December 2024**, averaging 92 requests per day – compared to just seven per day in November 2024. In addition, 10,381 individuals have been closed as spontaneous departures, reflecting a growing perception among many Syrians that return may now be viable.

## Useful links

- [Regional Flash Update #22, Syria Situation Crisis](#)
- [UNHCR Operational Framework for Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs](#)
- [January 2025 Refugee Perceptions and Intentions Survey \(RPIS\)](#)
- [UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic \(16 December\)](#)
- [Syria Situation Data Portal](#)
- [UNHCR Help Site](#)

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