Middle East Situation

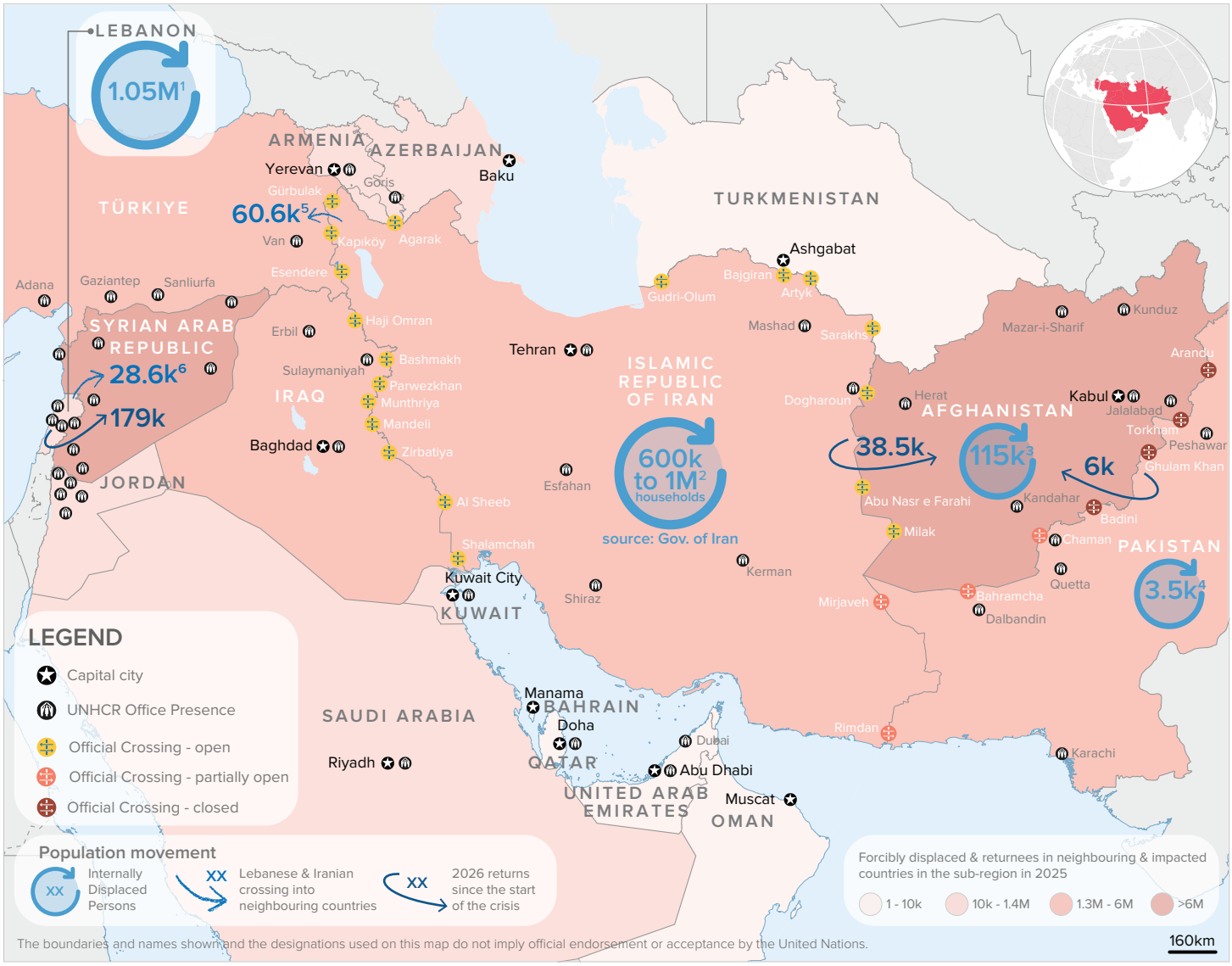
as of 29 March 2026

Overview

Escalating hostilities across Asia and the Middle East has led to a marked deterioration in the humanitarian situation. The affected areas already host 24.3 million forcibly displaced people, many of whom face significant protection risks and humanitarian needs, alongside vulnerable host communities. With limited funding, many countries are struggling to meet existing needs, making it increasingly difficult to absorb additional pressures and support newly displaced populations.

Against this backdrop, the escalation of hostilities since 28 February 2026 is placing increasing strain on humanitarian capacities and host communities. Protection needs are rising, alongside heightened risk of internal displacement, new cross-border outflows, and onward movements towards neighbouring countries. There is also a risk of increased returns of Afghans from neighbouring countries under adverse conditions. UNHCR is closely monitoring developments and strengthening preparedness efforts to support protection and the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to affected populations across these regions.

Situation Overview

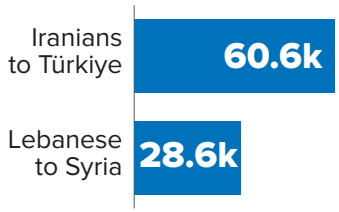


Türkiye estimates, IDPs, and Afghan returns' estimates (from Iran & Pakistan) are as of 29 March and crossings to Syria (Syrian returns and Lebanese nationals) are as of 28 March.

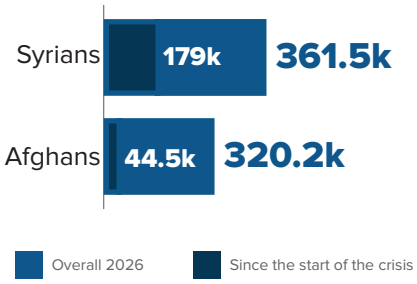
[1] Source: Government of Lebanon. [2] Source: Government of Iran. [3] Source: OCHA Afghanistan. [4] Source: Government of Pakistan.
[5] Source: UNHCR. Some Iranian nationals may be entering Türkiye under the visa-free short-term stay regime (up to 90 days). Such movements may reflect precautionary or temporary travel while individuals assess the situation in Iran.
[6] Source: Government of Lebanon.

Population Movements
numbers are in thousands

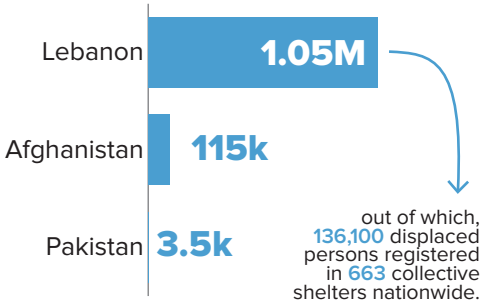
Lebanese & Iranian nationals crossing into neighbouring countries



Individuals crossing into their country of origin



New IDPs since the start of the crisis



While the number of Lebanese crossing into Syria has increased, the number of Iranians crossing into Türkiye has remained below the levels observed prior to recent developments. In addition, between 3 and 29 March, **some 46,000 Iranian nationals were recorded crossing from Türkiye back into Iran**. For some Iranian nationals entering Türkiye under the visa-free short-term stay regime up to 90 days, movements may reflect routine purposes, such as visits, tourism, or transit to catch a flight, or precautionary or temporary travel while individuals assess developments in Iran.

In **Armenia**, comprehensive border crossing data are being consolidated in coordination with relevant authorities and partners, and will be shared as they become available. In **Azerbaijan**, land border crossing remain closed due to public health restrictions except for commercial traffic; Limited movements may be permitted in specific cases, including evacuations of third-country nationals.

In **Pakistan**, per authorities as reported by IOM (as of 23 March), more than 2,500 Iranians crossed mainly via Taftan for routine business or family visits. Movements between **Iraq** and Iran remain routine; border conditions are fluid.

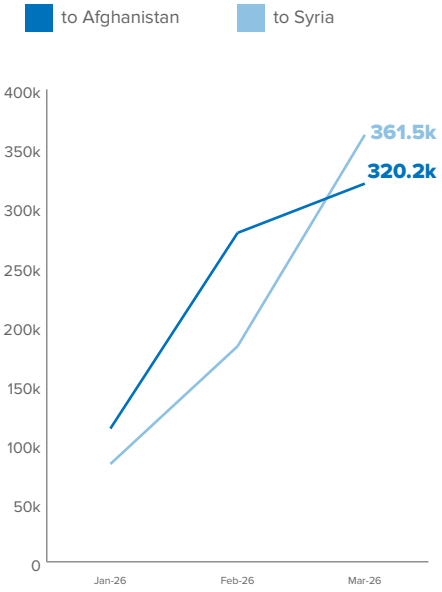
Afghan return figures are preliminary and expected to fluctuate upon validation on a weekly basis.

Syrians crossing the border include those who had planned to return before the conflict and others compelled to cross due to current conditions. **51,351** reported intending to return permanently.

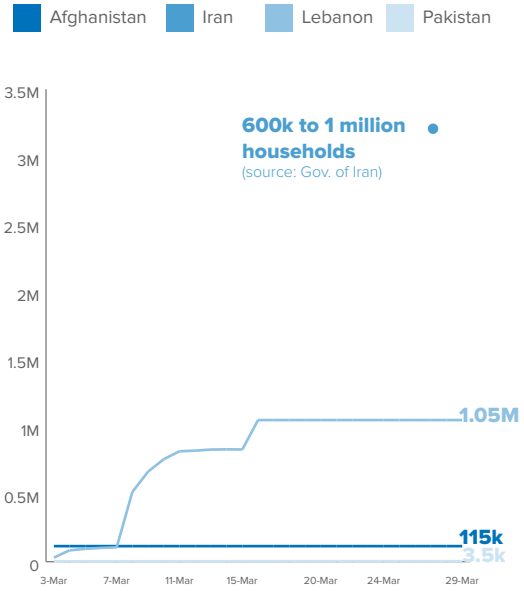
According to the Government of Iran, between **600,000 to 1 million households** are estimated to have temporarily left their homes to seek safety across the country. Using the average 3.2 family size provided by the most recent national census this amounts to **1.9 to 3.2 mililion individuals**. Most Iranian households are temporarily fleeing from Tehran and other major urban centres, towards the north of the country and rural areas to seek safety.

Trends
numbers are in thousands

Individuals crossing into their country of origin (cumulative)



New IDPs since the start of the crisis per country (cumulative)



Profiles

In Lebanon, 35% of IDPs are estimated to be children.[7]

In Afghanistan, 73% of the IDPs are women and children. Protection concerns have arisen in displacement sites. Authorities have ordered IDPs in seven displacement sites to return to their areas of origin, with two sites already fully vacated.[8]

In Pakistan, IDPs moved to safer areas, where the district administration has established two IDP centers, one in Drosh and another in Akroye. 57% are children, and 28% are women.

56% of Iranians crossing into Türkiye are families.

Based on 2,038 interviews conducted by UNHCR with arriving Iranian nationals between 4 and 29 March, the age and gender breakdown was as follows: 59% adult men, 29% adult women, 6% girls, and 6% boys.

Crossings into Syria are primarily family-based, with Syrians comprising the majority of those returning. Among the families interviewed, females account for approximately 52%.

Since the start of the crisis, 76% of Afghan returnees assisted by UNHCR were women and children, returning from both Iran and Pakistan.

[7] Source: UNICEF. [8] Source: OCHA Afghanistan.

UNHCR Preparedness and Coordination

UNHCR is leading cross-regional preparedness and response coordination for potential cross-border refugee movements, working with authorities, UN agencies and humanitarian partners. The Regional Bureaux for Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, and Europe are working closely with country operations to monitor developments and advance preparedness and response planning.

Should a response be required, emergency financial aid would be the primary assistance modality, supported by systems already in place in Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Türkiye and through our global stockpiles and UNHCR's mechanism to reinforce staffing capacity.

Operational Presence

Forcibly displaced persons & returnees in neighbouring & impacted countries in the sub-region in 2025. For more information on Forcibly Displaced definition and methodologies, click here.