Middle East Situation

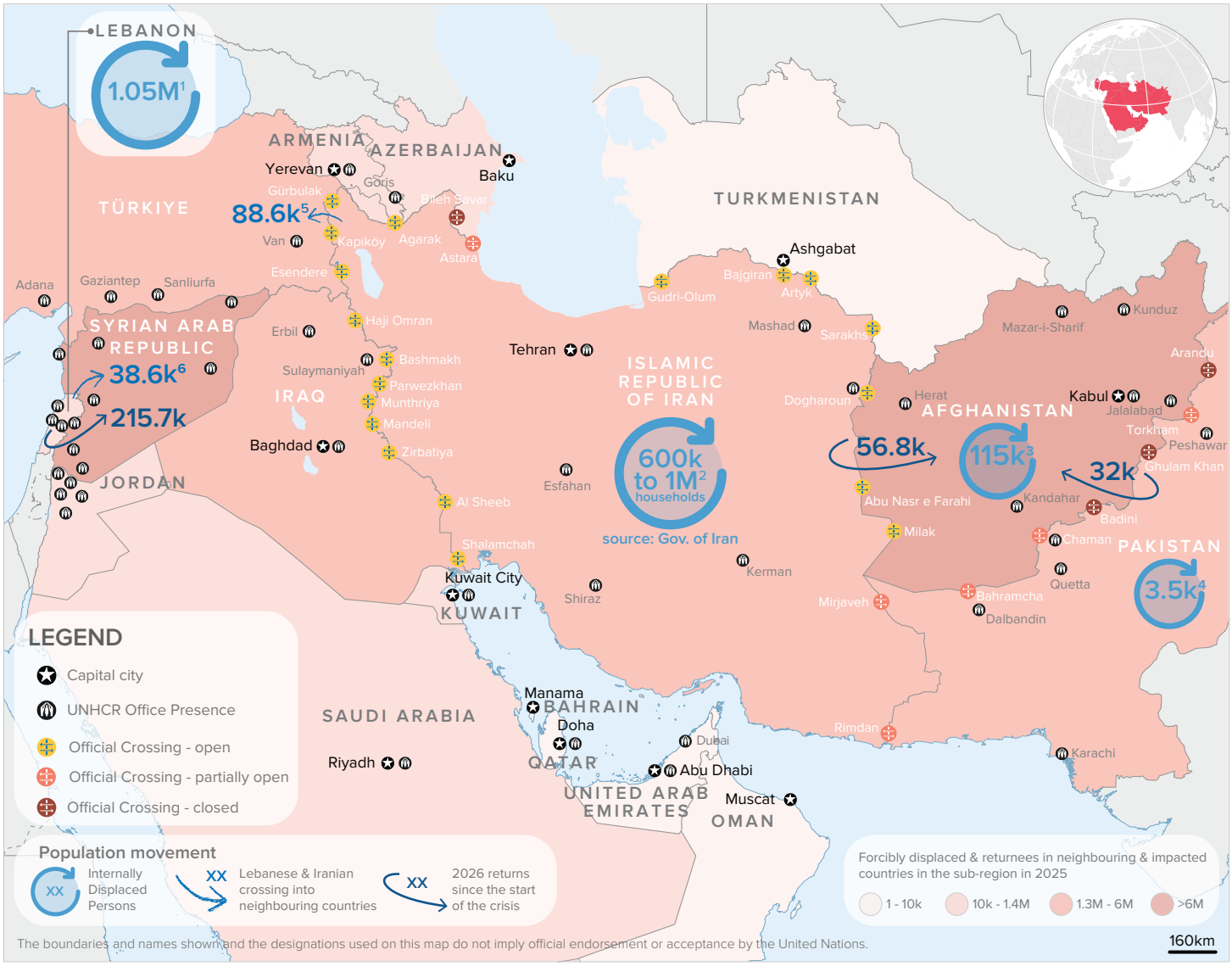
as of 8 April 2026

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



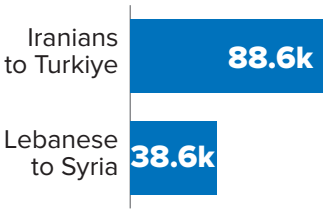
Türkiye estimates, IDPs, and Afghan returns' estimates (from Iran & Pakistan), crossings to Syria (Syrian returns and Lebanese nationals) are as of 8 April.

[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.

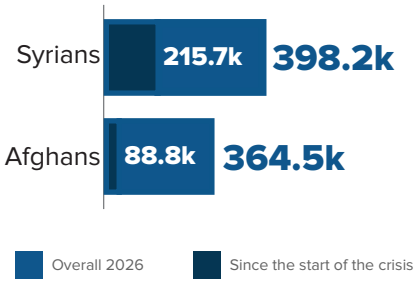
Population Movements

numbers are in thousands

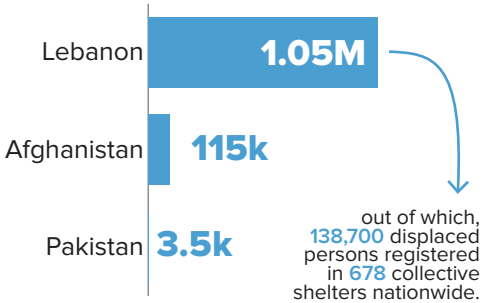
Lebanese & Iranian nationals crossing into neighbouring countries



Individuals crossing into their country of origin



New IDPs since the start of the crisis



While more Lebanese have crossed into Syria, the number of Iranians entering Türkiye remains below pre-conflict levels. These figures do not necessarily indicate permanent departures, as available data do not clearly distinguish between those who remained and those who later returned to Iran. For some Iranian nationals entering Türkiye under the visa-free regime (up to 90 days), movements may reflect routine travel, such as visits, tourism, transit to catch a flight, or precautionary trips while they assess the situation in Iran. Between 3 March and 8 April, **more than 72,000 Iranian nationals were recorded crossing from Türkiye back into 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.

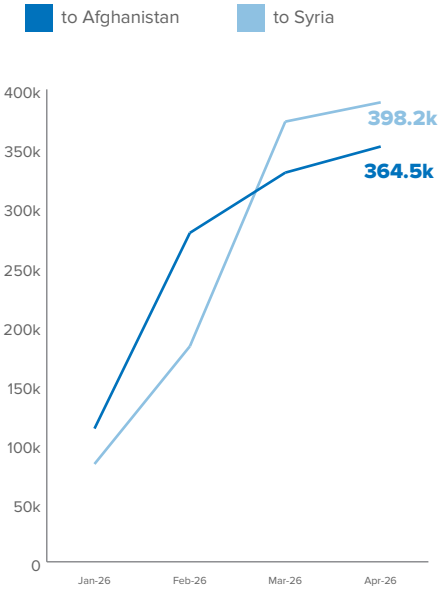
Syrians crossing the border include those who had planned to return before the conflict and others compelled to cross due to current conditions. **60,916** reported intending to return permanently.

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.

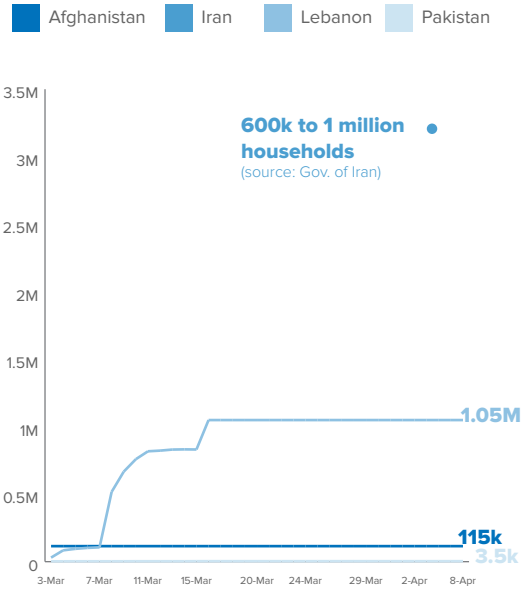
Trends

numbers are in thousands

Individuals crossing into their country of origin (cumulative)



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



Afghan refugees in Iran

Iran continues to host **1.65M** refugees and others in need of international protection. Based on an analysis of calls received through the UNHCR helpline from 1-31 March, the following are **the three highest priority needs reported by Afghan refugees in Iran.**

Financial assistance for basic needs and relocation

By mid-March, most calls related to requests **for cash assistance to cover basic needs such as food, rent, utilities and transport,** with these requests increasing over time. Afghans also need cash to relocate from high-risk areas but cannot afford to move.

Safe shelter and physical safety from attacks

Across all four weeks, Afghans report **bombings, explosions and house damage** and ask for **safe shelter or relocation.** This includes both **emergency shelter** after damage and **preventive relocation** away from areas at risk of future strikes.

Access to healthcare

Many Afghans report having **serious or chronic illnesses** and being unable to pay for treatment or medicines.

Profiles

52% Iranians crossing to Türkiye are **families.** Based on 2,630 interviews conducted by UNHCR with arriving Iranian nationals between 4 March and 8 April, the age and gender breakdown was as follows: **61% adult men, 28% adult women, 6% girls, and 5% boys.**

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

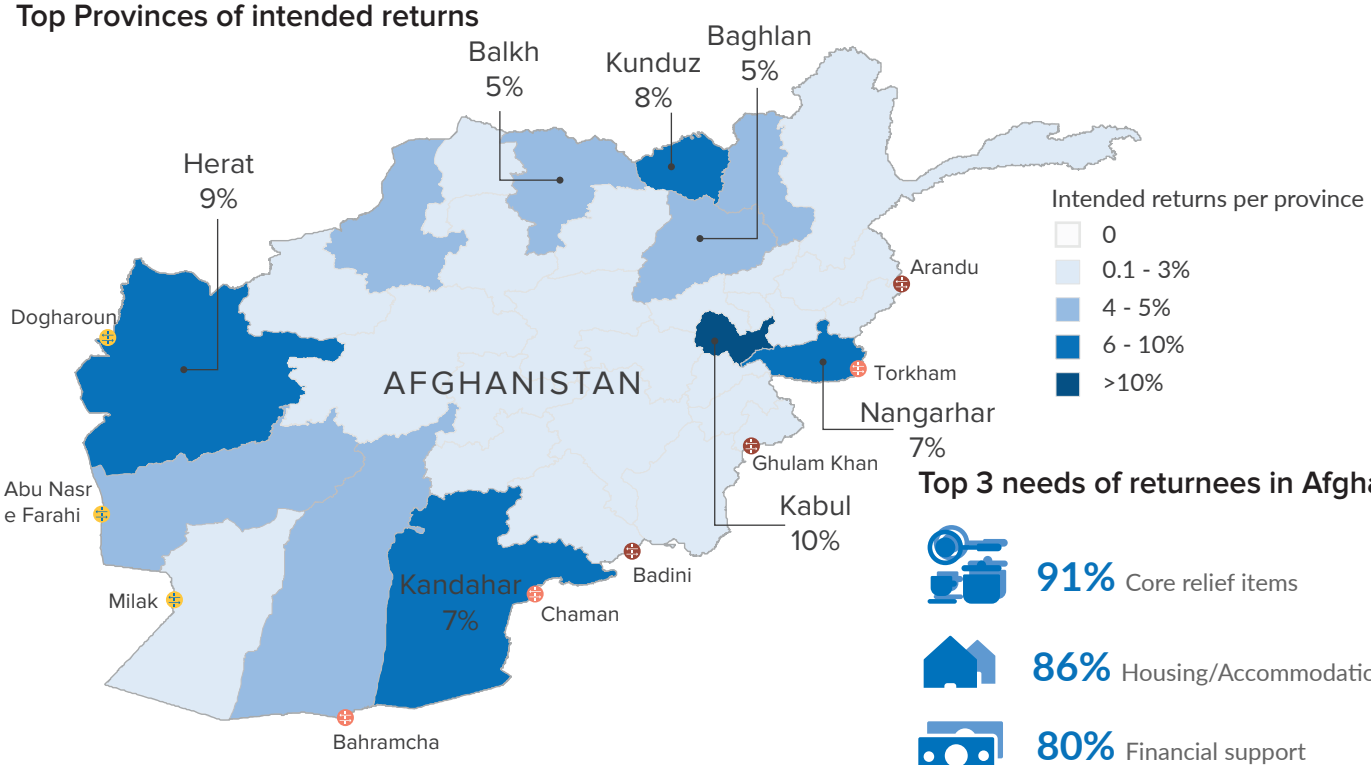
In **Afghanistan, 73% of the IDPs are women and children**. Protection concerns have arisen in displacement sites. Authorities have ordered IDPs in seven displacement sites to return to their areas of origin, with two sites already fully vacated.[8]

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.**

Returns to Afghanistan

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

Top Provinces of intended returns



Top 3 needs of returnees in Afghanistan

91% Core relief items

86% Housing/Accommodation

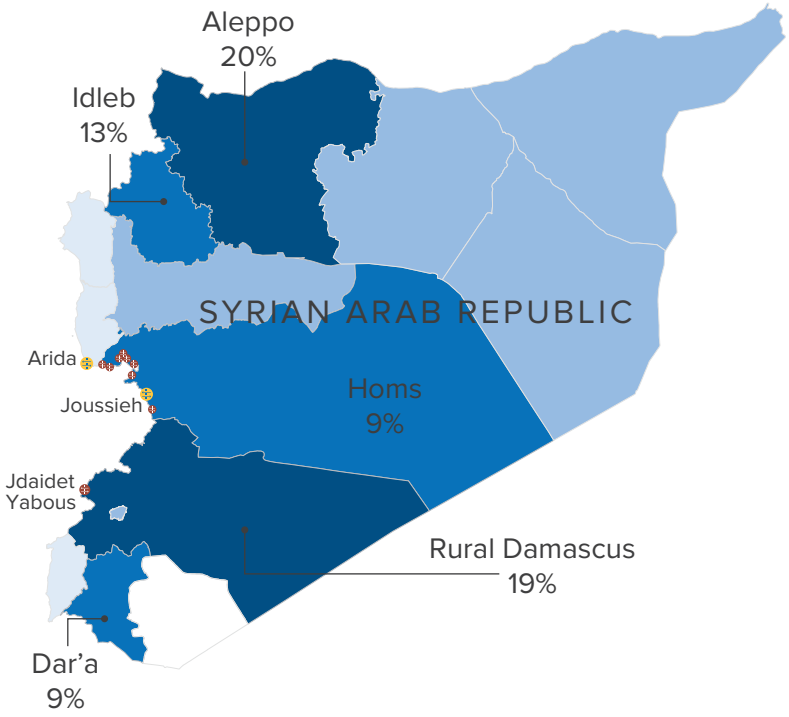
80% Financial support

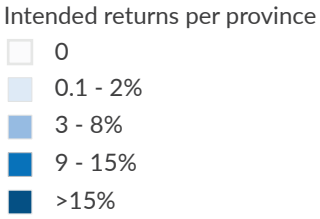
[7] Source: UNICEF. [8] Source: OCHA Afghanistan.

Returns to Syria

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

Top Provinces of intended returns





Top 3 needs of returnees in Syria

83% Housing/Shelter

81% Food or nutrition

53% Employment or income opportunities

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.