Syrian Arab Republic

April 2026

Syria's operational environment is increasingly defined by the coexistence of large-scale returns and persistent humanitarian vulnerability.

While around 1.6 million refugees and 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned since December 2024, humanitarian needs remain severe, with 15.6 million people requiring assistance and people still internally displaced.

This evolving context is driving a gradual operational shift from emergency displacement response toward return and reintegration support, in alignment with Syria's National Recovery Priorities and the Government's "no tents, no camps" vision, while maintaining protection and humanitarian assistance for highly vulnerable populations that remain.

The sustainability of returns continues to be constrained by damaged housing, limited access to services and livelihoods, documentation's needs protection risks, and overstretched local absorption capacity.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

100

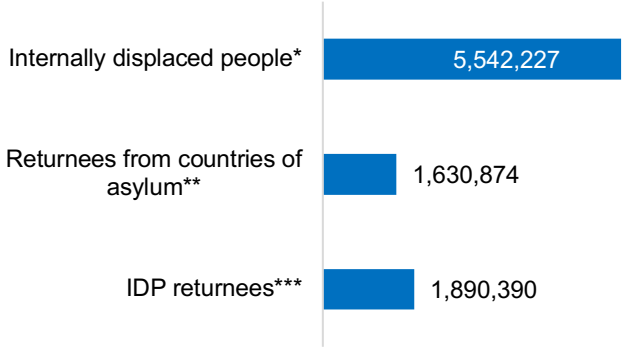
newly recruited Civil Affairs and Immigration staff participated in capacity building workshops in April

500

damaged houses were under repair in April

6,600

returnees have received transportation support to their areas since the onset of the emergency in Lebanon in March



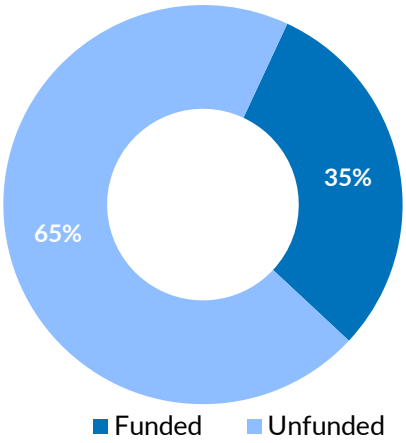
*Source: OCHA, August 2025
**Source: UNHCR, since December 2024. This is calculated by triangulating multiple data sources, including population-movement reporting and border-monitoring data.
***Source: OCHA and UNHCR, from December 2024 to April 2026

In collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, UNHCR installed a solar power system at the Tartous civil registry office, as part of its growing focus on restoring civil documentation infrastructure, recognizing access to documentation as a key enabler of sustainable return and reintegration for displaced Syrians. This upgrade ensures uninterrupted services for around 1,700 individuals daily. ©UNHCR/E.Kabbas

FUNDING (AS OF 30 APRIL 2026)

USD 323.9 million

requested for the Syria Operation in 2026



Operational Context

Syria is experiencing an increase in both refugee and IDP returns, yet internal displacement remains widespread, and humanitarian needs across the country continue to be substantial. Conditions remain volatile in parts of the country, while economic deterioration and insufficient access to basic services continue to undermine recovery prospects and sustainable reintegration.

On 27 April, UNHCR and the World Bank published the second round of the Enhanced Regional Perceptions and Intentions Survey, covering Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt While only 14% of refugee households indicated an intention to return within the next 12 months, 77% continued to express a long-term aspiration to return eventually. This suggests that emotional willingness to return continues to exceed confidence in current conditions inside Syria.

This context reinforces the fact that displacement dynamics are increasingly linked to access to housing, basic services, livelihoods, and food security, positioning broader recovery outcomes as central to sustainable reintegration.

Through the *area-based* and *community-based approaches*, UNHCR supports refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, host community members, and returnees (refugees and IDPs who have returned to their home areas). UNHCR's *community-based approach* focuses on community mobilization and building self-reliance. It aims at reducing vulnerabilities and protection risks by providing services through community-based structures and networks. UNHCR's *area-based approach* entails working with partners to enhance support in geographic areas where the needs are greatest.

UNHCR and partners continue to reach thousands of returnee families across Syria to support their reintegration and access to basic services.

In 2026, UNHCR collaborates with 22 partners, including ministries, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs in all 14 governorates.

Operational Updates

Response to the situation in Lebanon

Between 2 and 30 April, a total of 360,636 individuals, including 298,534 Syrians and 62,102 Lebanese, crossed into Syria, primarily fleeing intensified Israeli airstrikes affecting mainly southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburb. Movements were recorded through the three official border points of Jdaidet Yabous (Rural Damascus), Joussieh (Homs), and Arida (Tartous). While some Syrians opted for unplanned permanent return, others indicated intentions to remain temporarily until conditions in Lebanon stabilize.

The border assistance focused on immediate protection and basic needs support, including transportation assistance, legal counselling, referrals, and emergency relief items. In the areas of return, UNHCR and partners continued following-up on the post-return situations of returnees, through a range of monitoring activities and home visits, and actively referring those in need to available services, including to those provided at UNHCR-supported community centres most accessible to their locations.

While initial and immediate assistance is provided at crossings, demand for services is increasingly shifting to areas of return, where needs continue to grow and place pressure on available resources.

Regular response

Protection

- UNHCR advanced its protection interventions to strengthen individuals' access to essential services and the enjoyment of their rights, contributing to more sustainable and durable reintegration outcomes for returnees.
- UNHCR Syria has published its report *Protection and Reintegration Insights - Voices of returnees and host communities across Syria*. The report, based on 7,120 household interviews conducted across all 14 governorates in Syria during the first quarter of 2026, examines return dynamics, reintegration conditions, and protection risks affecting returnees. The interviews suggest that some return movements are being driven less by improved conditions inside Syria than by deteriorating conditions in host countries, repeated displacement cycles, and declining coping capacity during displacement.
- UNHCR continues to support the rollout of a new digital service launched by the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment enabling users in Damascus, Dar'a, Quneitra, and Latakia to request real estate record extracts through an application and a platform. The initiative enhances access and efficiency in property documentation.
- Following the activation of the Little Sura Civil Registry in As-Sweida, UNHCR convened meetings with partners' legal teams, supported their engagement with local authorities and monitored challenges affecting beneficiaries in order to improve access to civil documentation for affected populations.
- In April, UNHCR and partners organized several awareness-raising sessions mostly in Al-Hasakeh Governorate on the application of Decree No. (13) of

2026 concerning the acquisition of Syrian nationality by members of the Kurdish population. In parallel, legal counselling was provided to individuals at application centres, with lawyers and outreach volunteers maintaining a daily presence to support applicants throughout the process.

- UNHCR and partners delivered integrated protection services in Akburhan camp (Aleppo) hosting individuals returning from Al-Hol camp (Al-Hasakeh), focusing on community engagement, child protection, gender-based violence prevention and response, and mental health and psychosocial support. Legal assistance was scaled up through awareness sessions and individual consultations, alongside ongoing household data collection.
- The Syria is Home platform, launched in April 2025 to help Syrian refugees make informed decisions about return to Syria, recorded around 125,000 visits by the end of April, with most new users from Syria, Lebanon, the United States, Germany, and Türkiye.
- By the end of April, UNHCR supported 56 community centres and 72 mobile units across the country, assisted by a network of 994 community outreach volunteers in all 14 Syrian governorates.

UNHCR and its partner Namaa established a community centre in Al-Bab city, Aleppo to deliver services to people in the area with a particular focus on returnees from Al-Hol camp (Al-Hasakeh). ©UNHCR/H.Maarouf

Shelter

- In April, shelter rehabilitation efforts remain limited relative to scale, with 500 damaged houses under repair against continued widespread housing damage and large-scale return movements.
- UNHCR continues to rehabilitate the Dabbousieh Bridge in Homs at the border with Lebanon, assisting the dignified return of individuals, as well as the Zablatani Immigration Centre and 12 civil registry offices across the country.
- Maintenance and infrastructure improvements are ongoing in Akburhan camp (Aleppo). So far, 1,150 shelter units and their relevant cooking areas have been rehabilitated, in addition to the installation of six common toilets.
- To facilitate sustainable shelter solutions for vulnerable families, UNHCR is conducting 4,000 assessments, prioritizing households relocated from camps, informing the expansion of the cash-for-shelter intervention over the next six months.

Core Relief Items

- In April, 8,506 families (44,356 individuals) across Syria received core relief item (CRI) kits, bringing the total number receiving this assistance since the beginning of the year to 28,183 families (133,262 individuals). The kits comprised essential household items including blankets, mattresses, sleeping mats, jerry cans, plastic sheets, solar lamps, kitchen sets, and winter items.

Livelihoods

- UNHCR Syria assessed 256 IDP and returnee households for livelihoods support, out of whom 157 were prioritized to benefit from the start-up small business support, which includes business development services and cash assistance to enable beneficiaries to initiate or expand small-scale enterprises.
- Coordination with national counterparts and development partners continued, focusing on aligning with broader recovery frameworks and linking humanitarian assistance to systems' strengthening and social protection.
- The provision of cash to assist families in restoring and sustaining their livelihoods continued, reaching 429 households (2,762 individuals) since the beginning of the year.

Cash Assistance

- In April, 1,419 returnee families (5,612 individuals) received return and reintegration cash assistance. Since the beginning of the year, 18,642 returnee families (72,829 individuals) received this type of assistance. UNHCR started this programme in 2025 to enable returnees to meet essential needs upon return, reaching so far 50,653 households (173, 452 individuals).

Refugee Response

- In April, UNHCR and partners prepared for legal assistance and awareness-raising sessions for refugees and asylum-seekers following the issuance of a waiver by the immigration authorities enabling the regularization of residency status for foreigners who have overstayed their permitted period. The decision helps reduce legal and financial burdens on refugees

and asylum-seekers and lower protection risks in terms of freedom of movement and access to services.

- In line with its accountability to affected populations, UNHCR held a townhall meeting with refugees in Damascus amid frustration over recent assistance reductions. This promoted transparent communication on funding constraints and captured community feedback to inform follow-up actions and continued engagement.
- **Registration:** As of the end of April, 14,107 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR in Syria. The majority of the registered refugees are from Iraq and reside primarily in urban areas in Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and Latakia Governorates. In April, UNHCR also renewed the identification cards of 68 refugees. These cards protect refugees against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.
- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD)**: In April, four families (four individuals) were recognized as refugees, helping to facilitate access to basic services and ensure protection from refoulement and detention due to irregular stay.
- **Durable solutions:** UNHCR maintained communication with persons with and for whom it works, through weekly counselling over the dedicated helplines.

Return

- Following the political transition in Syria on 8 December 2024 until the end of April 2026, 1,630,874 Syrians returned to the country, mainly from the region[1]. Returns are taking place in the presence of ongoing structural vulnerabilities, rather than as a result of improved conditions.
- UNHCR facilitates voluntary return based on informed decision-making. However, return intentions and actual movements continue to be shaped by structural constraints inside Syria.
- In April, UNHCR received two organized convoys from Jordan consisting of around 100 returnees at Nassib border crossings. Interactions with returnees from the region identified shelter, food, livelihoods, healthcare, children's education, and civil documentation as the most urgent needs. Many returnees from Jordan and Lebanon have found their homes damaged and are temporarily residing with relatives or in tents, often with limited belongings and pressing immediate needs. Some expressed their intention to remain in the country despite ongoing challenges, citing perceived instability in Lebanon, experiences of unequal treatment during displacement, and fatigue from repeated cycles of displacement. Across return areas, UNHCR community centres continue to provide assistance, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.
- In April, 2,597 vulnerable Syrians were supported with transportation at the border crossing points of Joussieh (Homs-Lebanon) and Bab Al-Hawa (Idleb-Türkiye). This brings the number of refugee returnees provided with UNHCR's transportation support since the beginning of 2025 to around 40,400.
- In April, 1,901 returnee families (7,471 individuals) consented to share their basic information through the Returnee Support Windows[2] established in coordination with Syria's General Authority for Borders and Customs at official border crossings to advise returnees on available services and assistance. This brings the total of consented families to 31,000 families (126,000 individuals) since June 2025, allowing UNHCR to follow up on their situation in the return areas.
- On 15 April, the third return convoy from north-east Syria to Afrin (Aleppo) brought over 800 families (4,000 individuals) displaced for more than eight years, following earlier convoys on 9 March and 4 April. UNHCR supported 250 families with core relief items, while continuing to assess needs.
- UNHCR is working closely with Syria's General Authority for Borders and Customs to support the installation of key structural components of the Dabbousieh border crossing bridge, alongside the rehabilitation of Immigration and Customs offices.
- UNHCR also completed the installation of solar-powered street lighting at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing (Rural Damascus). The system is expected to enhance safety and security and reduce reliance on unreliable grid electricity at the facility.
- UNHCR is supporting the government's "No Tent, No Camp" vision by contributing to the camp survey exercise in north-west Syria, led by the Planning and Statistics Authority in collaboration with the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Sector' partners. This includes capacity-building, technical assistance, and end-to-end support to enumerators, enabling comprehensive coverage of settlements.
- UNHCR conducted two capacity building workshops in April in coordination with the Ministry of Interior/Civil Affairs and Immigration Directorate, the Syrian Bar Association, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and the Syrian Development Organization (SDO). Approximately 100 newly recruited Civil Affairs and Immigration staff participated in the workshops which aimed to strengthen knowledge of international protection standards for returnees and stateless persons.

[1] This figure is calculated based on a triangulation of data from Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and beyond.
2 These windows are currently operating at the following border crossings: Nassib (Syria–Jordan); Jdaidet Yabous, Arida, Joussieh (Syria–Lebanon); Kassab, Bab Al-Hawa, Al-Salama, Jarablus, Al-Ra'ee, Tell Abyad (Syria–Türkiye); and Alboukamal (Syria–Iraq) borders.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

- UNHCR Preliminary Protection Analysis on New Arrivals from Lebanon (April 2026)
- UNHCR IDPs and IDP returns overview (30 April 2026)
- UNHCR refugee return overview (30 April 2026)
- UNHCR IDPs and IDP returns overview (23 April 2026)
- UNHCR refugee returns overview (23 April 2026)
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- UNHCR IDPs and IDP returnees overview (9 April 2026)
- UNHCR refugee returns overview (9 April 2026)
- UNHCR IDPs and IDP returns overview (2 April 2026)
- UNHCR refugee returns overview (2 April 2026)
- UNHCR Syria Protection and Reintegration Insights Q1 2026

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