

Weekly Update

02 JUNE 2026

Middle East Situation



Family returning from Lebanon to Syria: "We are facing a difficult reality, caught between the challenges that forced us to leave and the uncertainties we face upon returning home," Dheihiba said. "Despite the hardships, we will keep working hard to secure a better future for our children."

SITUATION OVERVIEW

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Since late February, escalating hostilities in Iran and Lebanon have triggered humanitarian consequences with impact across the region, including refugee returns in adverse circumstances to Afghanistan and Syria. Events are unfolding against an already fragile humanitarian baseline, with over 24 million forcibly displaced people hosted across the wider region prior to the current escalation, alongside host communities under significant economic and social strain.

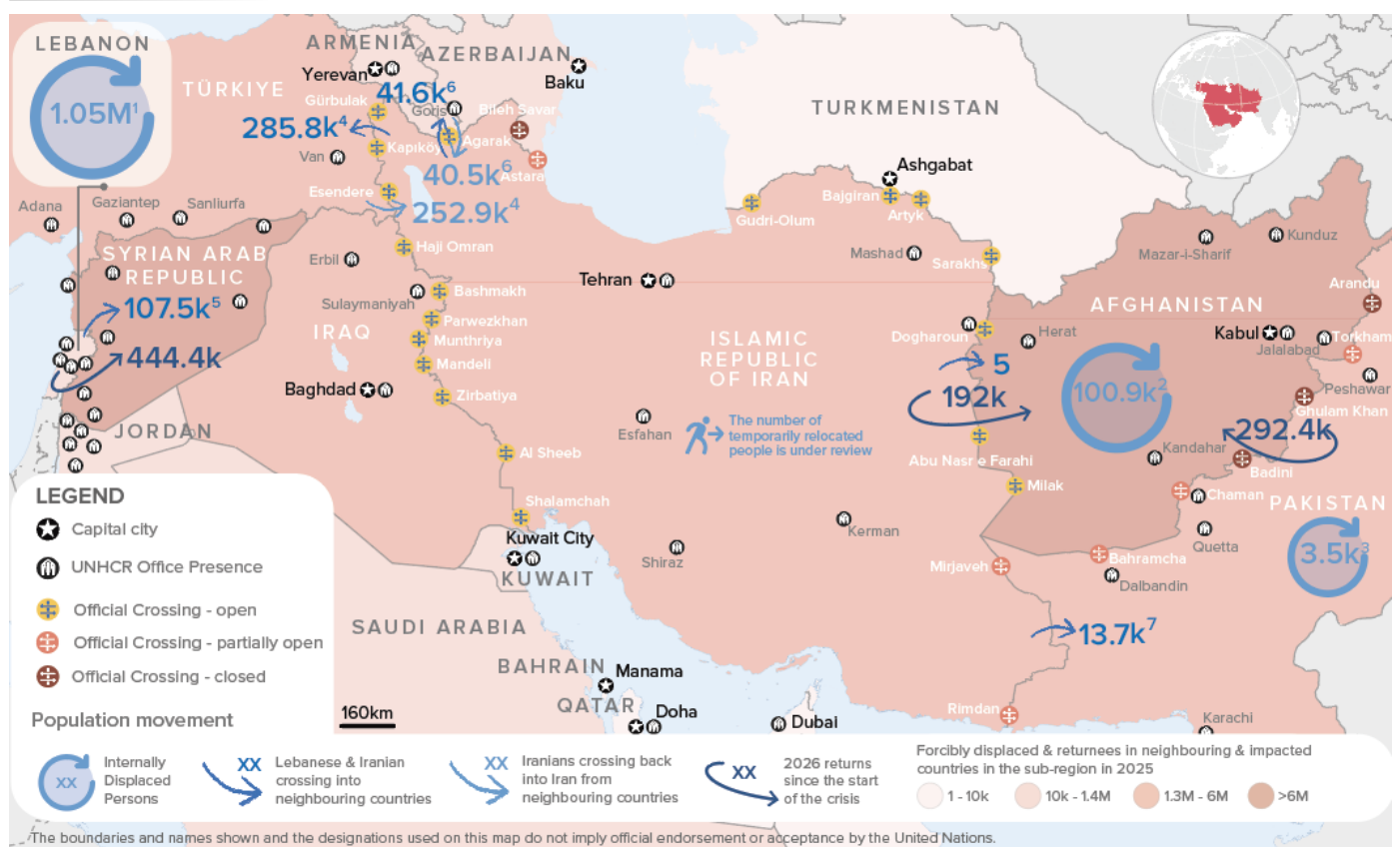
Inter agency emergency response is underway to address urgent needs. In Iran, the Flash Refugee Response Plan targets refugees and others in need of international protection alongside affected host communities. In Lebanon, a Flash Appeal complements the broader response under the Lebanon Response Plan to deliver life saving assistance and protection, including to Syrian refugees. In Afghanistan, the funding requirement for the returns response is outlined under the Humanitarian Needs & Response Plan.

UNHCR and partners have been working across countries neighbouring Iran to strengthen preparedness for possible large-scale refugee flows, in support of national authorities. Preparedness measures are in place, including border monitoring, reception and protection readiness, but these arrangements remain highly dependent on flexible and predictable funding in an increasingly constrained resource environment.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION NEEDS

UNHCR considers that Iranian and Lebanese nationals outside their countries of origin may have international protection needs on account of the armed hostilities in Iran and Lebanon. Armed hostilities and return pressures may compel Afghans to return or move onward; UNHCR maintains that a substantial number of Afghans will have international protection needs regardless of documentation status. Armed hostilities in Lebanon have compelled significant numbers of Syrians to return to Syria in adverse circumstances; among them there may be Syrians with continued international protection needs.

REGIONAL SITUATION MAP



As-of dates: crossings to Syria (Syrian returnees and Lebanese refugees) 31 May; crossings to/from Armenia and Afghan returnees (from Iran and Pakistan) 30 May; crossings into Pakistan 28 May; crossings to/from Türkiye 21 May; Afghan IDPs 27 April; Lebanese IDPs 1 April; Pakistan IDPs mid-March.

Sources: ¹ Govt of Lebanon. ² OCHA Afghanistan. ³ Govt of Pakistan. ⁴ 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. ⁵ UNHCR and Govt of Syria. ⁶ Source: UNHCR estimates based on triangulation of information. Official statistics shared by the Government of Armenia indicate 18,300 entries to Armenia and 17,500 from Türkiye to Iran, between 28 Feb and 15 April. ⁷ IOM-UNHCR Joint Border Monitoring.



IRAN

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Temporarily internally relocated people in Iran

Since increasing numbers of people are likely returning to their places of residence, the numbers are under review.

1.65M

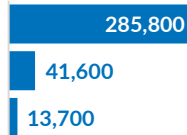
Refugees & others in need of international protection



341,300

Iranian nationals
crossed into
neighbouring countries

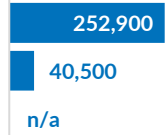
Türkiye
Armenia
Pakistan



293,400

Iranian nationals crossed
back into Iran from
neighbouring countries

Türkiye
Armenia
Pakistan



ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Iran continues to host the largest refugee population in the sub-region, the vast majority of whom are from Afghanistan. Since the start of the crisis, approximately 192,000 people have returned from Iran to Afghanistan, bringing total returns in 2026 to more than 298,100 as of 30 May. During the reporting period (17–30 May), deportations accounted for around 79 per cent of returns. Returns decreased slightly in the week of 17–23 May, by 3 per cent to 19,800, averaging some 2,800 daily. In the subsequent week (24–30 May), figures decreased further, likely due to the Eid holiday period. At the same time, increased arrests in Sistan and Baluchistan, Iran point to continued irregular entry of Afghan nationals from Pakistan, with those detained subsequently returned to Afghanistan via formal border crossings. Bilateral engagement between Iranian and Afghan authorities at the end of May focused on managing cross-border movements and the situation of Afghan nationals in Iran.

Since the beginning of the crisis, monitoring in neighbouring countries indicate 341,300 Iranian nationals have crossed into neighbouring countries while 293,400 crossed back. People who were temporarily relocated within the country through March, are likely returning to their places of habitual residence with public order remaining largely stable.

PROTECTION MONITORING

From 1 March to 30 May, the UNHCR Helpline in Iran received close to 96,500 calls, including some 17,100 during the reporting period (17–30 May), of which nearly 1,300 required follow-up by helpline operators. During the same period, around 2,200 people approached UNHCR offices across the country.

At border crossings with Afghanistan, including Zaranj and Islam Qala, protection interviews continued to indicate a large number of Afghans being deported from Iran. Deportees reported arrests during attempted re-entry into Iran as well as during travel, routine checks, and at workplaces. They also reported wage loss, family separation, and inadequate food and water in detention. Returnees including deportees also cited economic hardship, high food prices, unemployment, lack of documentation, legal uncertainty, and continued risk of detention.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Since the start of the crisis, UNHCR Iran has assisted nearly 149,600 Afghan refugees through helplines, in-person counselling, registration, legal aid, multipurpose cash assistance, and psychosocial support.

On 21 May, UNHCR convened an inter-agency meeting with partners to review coordination progress under the Iran Refugee Response Plan (RRP), share updates on reporting, and discuss potential adjustments to strengthen coordination structures, while emphasising the importance of enhanced protection mainstreaming and collaboration in response to evolving risks. UNHCR is also working with inter-agency partners to update the RRP for the period June–December, as the initial flash RRP covered March–May 2026.



LEBANON

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

+1M

Total people self-registered through GoL relief platform as displaced (1 April)

+3,270

Refugee families known to UNHCR remain internally displaced

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Displacement in Lebanon remains fluid, recurrent, and increasingly widespread. The geographic scope continues to expand, with movements originating from Beirut's southern suburbs, South Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, and areas near Palestinian camps. Most displaced families continue to rely on host communities and informal accommodation. The security situation is extremely grave: continued hostilities in South Lebanon, combined with growing fears of escalation into Beirut and Mount Lebanon, are driving further movements, fear, and uncertainty. Beirut's southern suburbs witnessed a massive exodus on 1 June following statements by Israeli leadership ordering military strikes on the area. Widely circulated footage showed heavily congested roads as residents fled in anticipation of strikes, underscoring the scale of fear and urgency among civilian populations.

Displacement is also becoming more protracted, with repeated movements complicating population tracking and response efforts while deepening vulnerabilities and protection risks. Living conditions continue to deteriorate sharply, and prospects for safe, sustainable return or other durable solutions remain extremely limited.

PROTECTION MONITORING

The protection environment has deteriorated further following intensified airstrikes, with rising civilian casualties, including among refugees. Insecurity is increasingly restricting access to healthcare, shelter, and humanitarian assistance, while attacks on civilian and emergency infrastructure are disrupting essential services and humanitarian operations. The situation is becoming untenable for many displaced families, particularly in areas already under severe pressure.

UNHCR partners report that poor shelter conditions, overcrowding, and growing eviction risks are heightening protection concerns, especially for women, girls, and female-headed households. In Baalbek-El Hermel, Mount Lebanon, and North Lebanon, many displaced families face eviction due to rising rents, prolonged displacement, and limited financial means. Families are increasingly resorting to harmful coping mechanisms, including reducing essential household spending and relying on child labour. People with disabilities, those with chronic illness, pregnant and breastfeeding women, widows, and female-headed households remain particularly at risk. High levels of psychological distress among children and caregivers underscore the urgent need for mental health and psychosocial support.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs and within the framework of the Lebanon Response Plan, UNHCR continues to scale up life-saving assistance across the country, including protection services, shelter support, core relief items (CRIs), and cash assistance for displaced Lebanese and refugees. Needs are intensifying rapidly, while the operating environment remains highly challenging. A total of 76 collective shelters are benefiting from repair and maintenance, reaching more than 15,300 displaced individuals. UNHCR is also expanding its Cash for Shelter programme for vulnerable refugee families outside collective shelters; around 180 of the 600 targeted families have received USD 250 to cover rent and other immediate shelter costs. More than 86,400 displaced people in collective shelters have been reached with over 221,500 CRIs, while 12,250 displaced people in host communities and informal settings have received more than 41,600. 127,714 internally displaced people are hosted 631 emergency collective shelters (DRM 26 May 2026)

UNHCR continues to play a central role in emergency cash assistance for refugees. More than 128,000 refugees have been reached through the joint UNHCR-WFP Emergency Multipurpose Cash Assistance programme, while 12,600 displaced refugees facing acute protection risks have received Emergency Protection Cash Assistance. UNHCR and partners also continue to operate 19 Community Development Centres across the country, which have recorded more than 85,250 participations since 2 March. Overall, more than 37,200 people have been reached with information, awareness-raising, and counselling on services and protection risks, while nearly 8,500 individuals have received mental health and psychosocial support. Since the launch of support for return to Syria due to Force Majeure on 1 April 2026, 19,000 individuals have received counselling on return options, and 11,375 Syrian refugees have returned to Syria with a USD 100 cash grant per person.

Overall funding remains insufficient in the face of sharply rising needs. The 2026 Lebanon Flash Appeal, which requires USD 308 million, is currently 60 per cent funded, while confirmed funding and projections for the UNHCR emergency appeal cover only around 45 per cent of the USD 61 million required to date. The revised 2026 Lebanon Flash Appeal (March–August 2026) will be launched on 5 June in Beirut. The revision reflects prolonged displacement, increasing needs outside collective shelters, pressure on essential services, and rising affordability constraints.

SYRIA

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

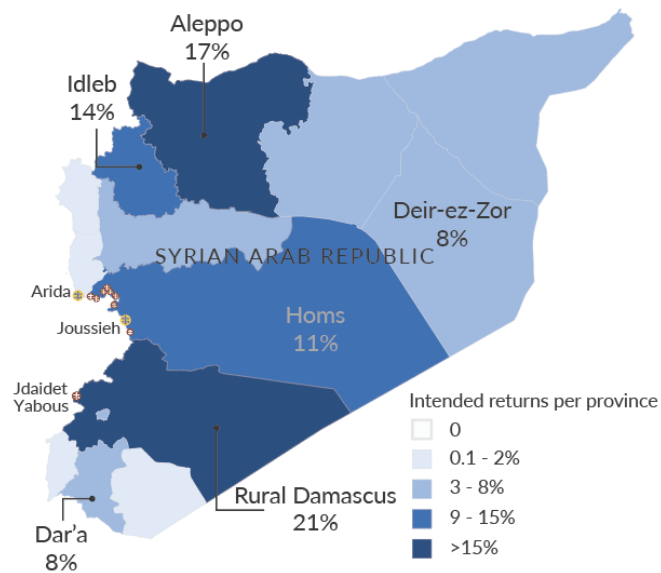
444,400
Syrian returnees from Lebanon

107,500
Lebanese refugees crossing into Syria

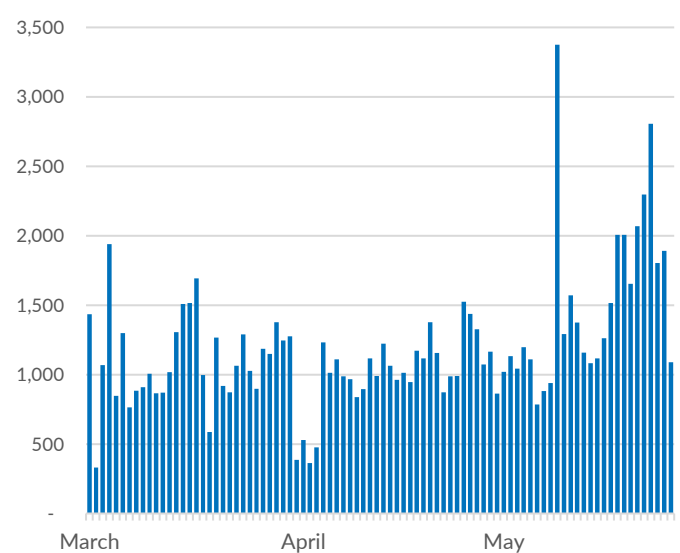
ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Population movements from Lebanon into Syria through the four official border crossing points—Jdaidet Yabous (Rural Damascus), Joussieh and Jisr Qamar (Homs), and Arida (Tartous)—remain within the operational capacity of border authorities. The numbers of people crossing remain relatively consistent, though movements continue to be influenced by developments in Lebanon and seasonal factors. Since 2 March, 551,839 individuals have crossed from Lebanon into Syria, including 444,389 Syrians and 107,450 Lebanese. Among the Syrians, 109,792 indicated an intention to return permanently, while many others continue to adopt a wait-and-see approach, monitoring conditions in both Lebanon and their areas of return. Movements remain at normal levels, primarily for work, trade, education, medical appointments, and consular procedures. Recent observations—including trucks transporting household belongings—point to a shift toward more sustained or potentially permanent returns.

Top intended provinces



Lebanese refugees crossing into Syria - Daily trends (1 March to 31 May 2026)



Top 3 needs of returnees in Syria

- 83%** Housing/accommodation
- 51%** Food
- 49%** Employment/Income generation opportunities

PROTECTION MONITORING

Engagement with border authorities continues to facilitate verification of arrivals and monitoring of movements. Protection concerns persist across crossing points, particularly related to gaps in civil documentation—including unregistered children and unformalized marriages—which may affect access to services upon return.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

At Joussieh and Jdaidet Yabous crossing points, UNHCR and partners continue to support returnees through transportation assistance (403 individuals in the past week), post-arrival follow-up, and provision of guidance and referrals to specialised services, including legal support for documentation issues. A mobile clinic ambulance remains available at Joussieh for emergencies. Informational materials are also distributed at both locations to facilitate access to services. Given the limited number of arrivals through Arida crossing point, UNHCR has reduced its operational presence there. Assistance demands are increasingly shifting toward areas of return, where needs are rising rapidly and outpacing available resources. UNHCR-supported community centres continue to provide integrated protection support, prioritising vulnerable groups.

AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

484,400
Total Afghan returnees since start of crisis

192,000
Returns from Iran

292,400
Returns from Pakistan

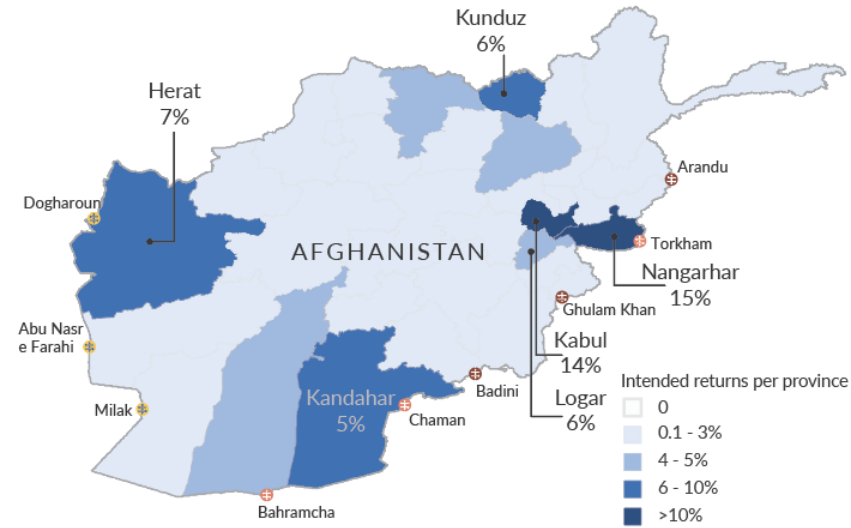
ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Since the onset of the crisis, approximately 484,400 people have returned from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan, bringing total returns in 2026 to some 751,000 as of 30 May. During 17–23 May, returns averaged 8,300 per day, representing a 2 per cent decrease compared to the previous week (10–16 May). Returns in the week of 24–30 May were considerably lower due to Eid holidays. During the reporting period (17–30 May), returnees from Pakistan accounted for 60 per cent of arrivals, with deportations from Pakistan representing 4 per cent.

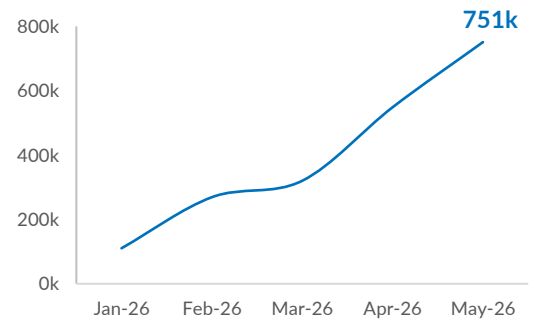
Returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan continued but slowed across multiple border points, largely due to temporary closures during the Eid holiday. In Spin Boldak, a reported shooting at Zero Point on 24 May prompted a temporary border closure, with UNHCR and partners closely monitoring the situation. Reception activities resumed once the crossing reopened.

Underlying pressures on Afghan populations in Pakistan persisted, as reflected in the continued vacating of refugee villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – 23 of 43 refugee villages are now fully vacated – ongoing deportations in Sindh and Balochistan, and government efforts to update data on remaining Afghan populations.

Returns to Afghanistan Top intended provinces



Cumulative monthly trends (2026)



Top 3 needs of returnees

- 79%** Financial support
- 59%** Housing/accommodation
- 51%** Food

PROTECTION MONITORING

In Afghanistan, border monitoring indicates that many returns from Pakistan are driven by pressure rather than informed choice, with returnees citing movement restrictions, limited livelihoods and services, and fear of arrest. Deportees report arrests, family separation, asset loss, document confiscation, and poor detention conditions. Women – particularly widows – face additional risks, including limited income opportunities, lack of documentation, psychosocial distress, and forced marriage, while unaccompanied and separated children continue to be identified and referred for family tracing and support.

In Pakistan, despite a temporary slowdown linked to Eid-related border closures, enforcement measures – including arrests, detentions, and deportations – continued across multiple locations. Socio-economic hardship, documentation barriers, and limited livelihood opportunities persist and remain key drivers of onward movement or attempts to re-enter Pakistan.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

From 17–30 May, UNHCR and partners distributed over 20,000 hot meals at border points, conducted continuous protection screening, and completed 163 referrals for cash assistance, legal aid and case management. Funding constraints have limited child protection capacity, with unaccompanied and separated children prioritised for tracing and reunification.

Emerging response funding gaps include reduced WASH and health as well as child protection coverage, the suspension of WFP Cash for Food from 1 June, and barriers including limited SIM access, documentation needs and weak referral follow-up. Coordination continues to focus on sustaining border services, strengthening referral pathways and monitoring protection risks.



TÜRKIYE

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

285,800

Iranian nationals → Türkiye

252,900

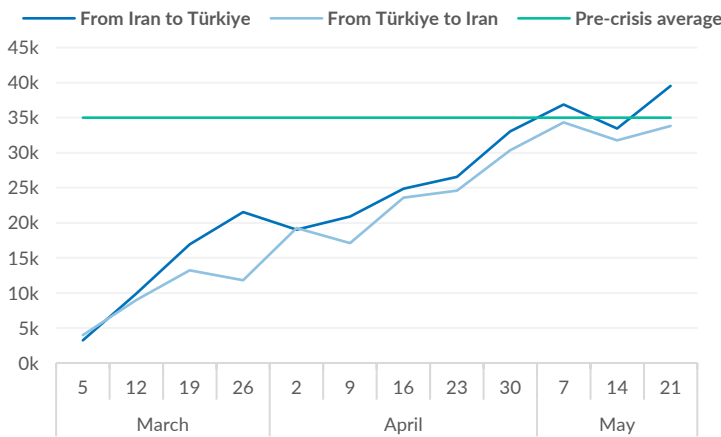
Türkiye → Iran

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Cross-border movements have returned to pre-conflict levels, including daily crossings by traders for commercial purposes. The Kapıköy (Van), Gürbulak (Ağrı), and Esendere (Hakkari) border crossings remain generally operational. Current movements largely reflect routine mobility, family travel, and precautionary movement; some individuals cited recent developments in Iran as their reason for crossing, and some among those crossing may have international protection needs.

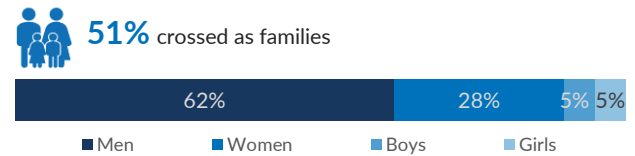
Since late February to 21 May, more than 286,000 Iranian nationals entered Türkiye via the three crossings, while approximately 253,000 departed to Iran. Entries continue predominantly under the visa exemption regime, with a mixed civilian population profile and no mass irregular movement observed. Observations indicate that movements continue predominantly as families or as part of wider groups, with those travelling alone in the minority. The largest single category of stated arrival purpose is routine travel, followed by business, visiting relatives, and transit – though a substantial proportion of individuals within the routine travel category indicated their decision to cross was taken following recent developments in Iran.

Iranian nationals crossing Iran ↔ Türkiye (since 28 February)

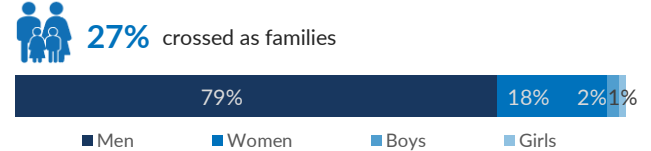


Iranians crossing to Türkiye, by age and gender

Based on 3,400+ UNHCR interviews · 4 March – 30 April 2026



Based on 950+ UNHCR interviews · 1 May – 1 June 2026



PROTECTION MONITORING

Current cross-border movements largely reflect routine mobility, family travel, and precautionary movement, with some individuals citing recent developments in Iran as their reason for leaving. Some of those crossing may have international protection needs. UNHCR continues to monitor the situation along the border in close coordination with authorities and partners.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

National preparedness plans are being coordinated by the Ministry of Interior's Presidency of Migration Management. UNHCR is reinforcing coordination with UN agencies and partners in both Ankara and the border regions to enhance preparedness and strengthen information management. Response capacities are being mapped and data coordination consolidated in preparation for potential contingency plan activation should authorities request support in the event of large-scale movements. UNHCR is also holding regular inter-agency coordination meetings with civil society actors active in Van and has maintained regular communications with local authorities.



ARMENIA

41,600

Iranian nationals crossed into Armenia

40,500

Iranian nationals crossed back through Agarak

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Cross-border movements of Iranian nationals through Agarak remained active and balanced during 17–30 May, 6,700 Iranian nationals crossed into Armenia and 6,830 crossed back – consistent with routine commercial activity, short-term travel, and precautionary mobility rather than displacement-driven movement. Truck-related movements accounted for approximately 58 per cent of crossings, pedestrian for 23 per cent, and private vehicles for 15 per cent. No notable increase in family groups, persons with specific needs, or displacement-associated profiles was observed.

Cumulatively since 28 February, a total of 41,600 Iranian nationals have crossed into Armenia and 40,500 crossed back – indicating high-volume but broadly balanced two-way mobility. Movements remain heterogeneous and primarily non-displacement-driven: pendular and circular movement is the dominant pattern, with commercial truck traffic accounting for most activity alongside short-term personal travel and precautionary relocations.

PROTECTION MONITORING

During 17–30 May, 53 individuals approached UNHCR or partners seeking asylum procedure information, legal counselling, accommodation, documentation, and financial assistance; 44 (83 per cent) were newly arrived. Profiles were predominantly adult and individual-based – 72 per cent male, 28 per cent female – with no notable increase in families, children, or persons with specific protection needs. Intentions were mixed: a significant proportion were considering asylum or temporary stay while assessing options; others were undecided or exploring onward movement.

Cumulatively since 28 February, 404 individuals have approached UNHCR and partners – 74 per cent newly arrived. Main requests comprised asylum procedure information (337), legal counselling (132), accommodation (130), and financial assistance information (103). Reported intentions were split between considering asylum (200; 50 per cent) and temporary stay (110; 27 per cent). While approaches remain modest relative to more than 82,000 border crossings over the same period, the volume of asylum-related enquiries is notable against Armenia's typical annual caseload, underscoring the importance of monitoring whether information-seeking behaviour translates into asylum applications and additional pressure on reception, registration, and case-processing capacities. A newly arrived family from Iran recently contacted UNHCR's hotline regarding legal status and accommodation; a partner provided asylum counselling and identified temporary housing, illustrating how integrated referral pathways function as a safety net for arrivals navigating uncertainty.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

The inter-agency community – UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, WFP, and WHO – continues to operate under a nationally led preparedness framework; no adjustment to contingency planning or activation thresholds is required at this time. A key milestone was the signing of a Letter of Understanding between the Migration and Citizenship Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and UNHCR, establishing a cooperation framework to strengthen preparedness and refugee protection capacities in the event of arrivals of forcibly displaced persons, including from Iran. The agreement covers emergency preparedness, registration and reception, humanitarian assistance, asylum procedures, digital registration, technical capacity strengthening, data protection, and information-sharing arrangements – an important step toward reinforcing institutional readiness should displacement dynamics change.

Financial & Partner Information

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | FUNDING, PARTNERS & CONTACTS

Funding Status & Presence

UNHCR BY OPERATION · AS OF END - APRIL 2026

Operation	Req.	Funded	%
Afghanistan	USD 216M	<div style="width: 25%;"></div>	25%
Pakistan	USD 94M	<div style="width: 27%;"></div>	27%
Iran	USD 140M	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>	15%
Lebanon	USD 472M	<div style="width: 19%;"></div>	19%
Iraq	USD 61M	<div style="width: 40%;"></div>	40%
Türkiye	USD 210M	<div style="width: 45%;"></div>	45%
Armenia	USD 9M	<div style="width: 58%;"></div>	58%
Turkmenistan	Upon Request		

Turkmenistan falls under the UNHCR Multi-Country Office (MCO) in Kazakhstan, which also covers the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The 2026 financial requirements for the operations in Kazakhstan MCO amount to USD 7.9 million, of which 31% is currently funded.

CRITICAL FUNDING GAP

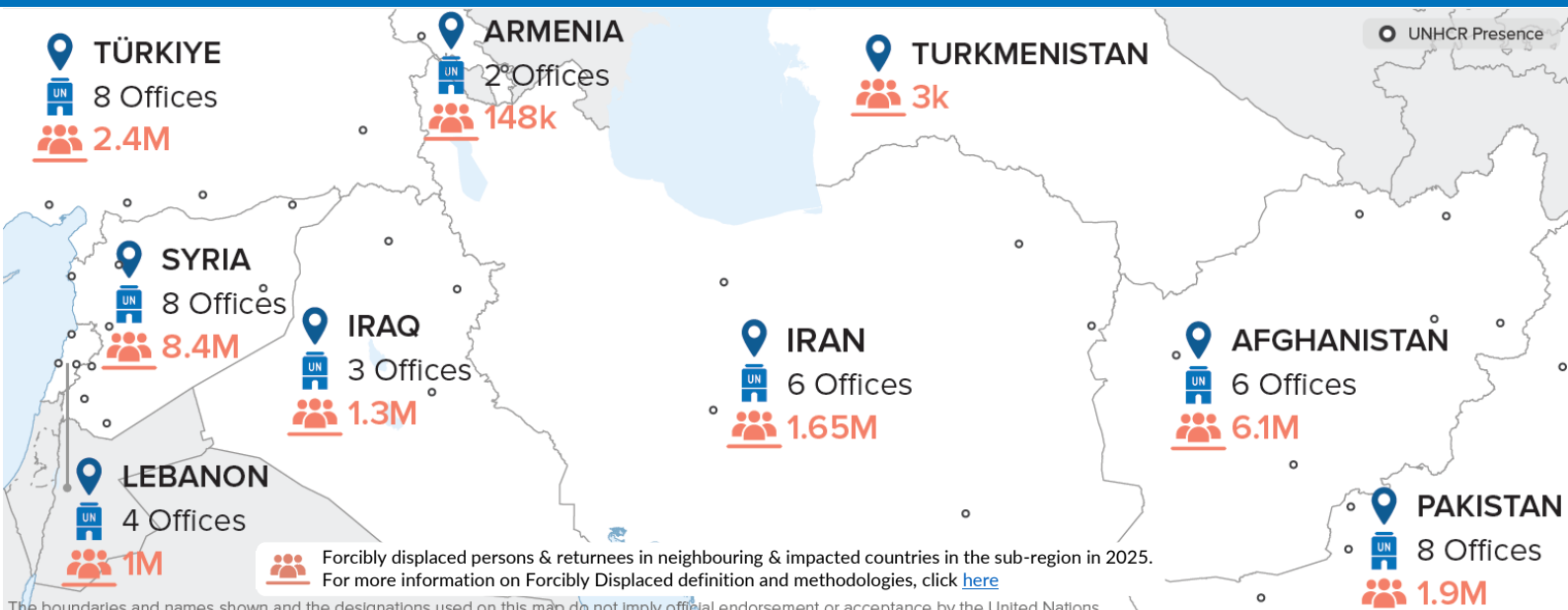
Severe funding shortfalls risk creating a 'crisis within a crisis' at a time when humanitarian needs and operational risks are rapidly increasing. Without additional resources, UNHCR's ability to scale up preparedness, protection and response will be critically constrained.

INTER-AGENCY PARTNERS · IRAN FLASH RRP

UNHCR	IOM	UNDP	WFP
WHO	UNICEF	UNFPA	INTEROS
NRC			

INTER-AGENCY PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Partners directly involved in preparedness efforts include AASW, ACH, ARCS, ASAM, FAO, Harikar, InterSOS, IOM, IRC, JCCC, KRISO, MH, Mission Armenia NGO, NRC, PC-MOI, PiN, RSPN, SCI, SOROUH, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, WFP, WHO; coordinated with UN OCHA and DCO.



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](#)

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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For more information, visit the [Middle-east Situation Operational Data Portal \(data.unhcr.org\)](https://data.unhcr.org) and unhcr.org.