



Cross-regional Refugee Coordination
Middle East Situation

Inter-agency Refugee Protection Overview

June 2026



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Shimaa and Reem's mother stands with her grandchildren inside her damaged home in Dar'a, Syria where the family now lives after fleeing Lebanon, following years of displacement there.

Timeframe: This document focuses on developments across the wider Middle East region between 28 February and 31 May 2026. Data related to population movement and response actions is included up until 31 May, unless otherwise stated.

Geographic scope: This overview focuses on protection dynamics linked to the escalation of hostilities in the Middle East since 28 February 2026. It does not seek to analyse all conflict dynamics across the region in detail, including the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which is covered under complementary processes (please see [UNRWA](#) and [OCHA](#) resources).



MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

Inter-agency Refugee Protection Overview

Regional Overview

This Inter-Agency Refugee Protection Overview provides a cross-regional analysis of emerging protection risks and trends linked to the Middle East Situation, drawing on country-level inter-agency protection analysis of developments since 28 February 2026, when renewed hostilities in Iran and Lebanon triggered the current cross-regional escalation. The overview focuses on cross-regional protection dynamics that have resulted from or been exacerbated by the situation, while recognising that these developments are occurring within a broader regional context shaped by multiple, interconnected conflict situations. The document contains country summaries informed by Protection Working Groups or other relevant protection coordination forums working to support refugees, asylum-seekers and affected host communities across the region. The document is intended to support shared situational awareness, inform preparedness and further adjust responses, and help partners and decision-makers to identify where displacement-related protection risks are intensifying, even in contexts where large-scale refugee movements have not occurred. The overview also intends to highlight the central role of protection analysis and protection response needs and gaps in the current situation to inform advocacy at multiple levels and mobilization of resources for protection activities in the region.

From a displacement perspective, the escalation has unfolded on top of an already overstretched regional baseline, with over **31 million** forcibly displaced people and recent returnees across the wider Middle East region before 28 February 2026 (including Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate). The current cross-regional protection environment is shaped by the convergence of multiple compounding factors that have escalated in 2026 – including active conflict, erosion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and gender equality norms, macroeconomic decline and underlying climate-related vulnerabilities – producing increasingly complex and multilayered protection risks that require integrated, sustained inter-agency response.

The escalation of hostilities has contributed to acute protection crises in Iran and Lebanon, where conflict has directly resulted in large-scale internal displacement (including of Syrian and Palestine refugees in Lebanon), loss of civilian lives and injuries, damage to civilian infrastructures and contamination from explosive ordnance, disruption of basic services, and severe strain on legal, administrative and other national protection systems. In these contexts, the crises have generated threats to life, to the safety, dignity and well-being of civilian populations, exacerbating risks for children, women and girls, older persons and persons with disabilities. Monitoring has also revealed how – amidst displaced populations – refugees and other undocumented foreigners face heightened exposure to protection risks linked to their legal status. This includes constraints in obtaining or renewing personal documentation, often causing reduced freedom of movement and exposure to detention or deportation, alongside loss of shelter and livelihoods, disrupted access to health, education and protection services. Women and girls are often disproportionately affected, facing increased exposure to gender-based violence, increased caregiving responsibilities and barriers to accessing assistance and recovery opportunities.

Aside from the acute crises in countries directly affected by hostilities, pressure is felt also across neighbouring countries and the wider region, including in locations already hosting large displaced populations. Country-level analysis highlights growing risks for civilian populations, and refugees in particular, driven by macroeconomic shocks affecting employment, household economies and national systems, degradation of public services and infrastructure, legal insecurity, psychosocial distress due to the prolonged uncertainty, even in the absence of large new population movements.

The socioeconomic implications of the situation are expected to be significant. Current projections suggest that the conflict could lead to uneven development reversals globally, with as many as 32.5 million people pushed into poverty due to a combination of energy affordability and availability challenges, rising food prices, and economic downturns (UNDP, 2026). This is happening at a time of significant reduction to funding for humanitarian and development action, with continued shifts in national expenditure priorities likely to place additional constraints on social spending. This is already curtailing operational actors' ability to contribute to protracted displacement response in support of national authorities, as well as preparedness and emergency relief.

Returns under adverse circumstances, falling short of voluntary and dignified character and of sustainable conditions, are a central cross-regional protection concern. Returns to Syria and Afghanistan (including deportations from Iran and Pakistan) are taking place in contexts where reintegration capacity remains constrained. This can in turn derail fragile recovery efforts, overwhelm communities and generate new protection concerns as well as new displacement or onward movements.

Taken together, these trends point to an overall protection environment under stress, with risks affecting populations unevenly across contexts, deepening vulnerabilities, placing increasing strain on national institutions, and disrupting community-level protection and support mechanisms. Ensuring flexible and sustained funding to protection actors remains essential to guarantee presence, preparedness and response capacities in support to national authorities. As the situation has significant implications for broader national development trajectories, it underscores the need to systematically link refugee protection considerations to national systems and development planning frameworks.

AT A GLANCE

Acute protection crises in conflict-affected contexts

including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. According to authorities, **3,375** people have been killed and **33,806** injured in Iran and **3,151** have been killed and **9,571** injured in Lebanon (Government figs - [WHO, 27 May](#)). Significant *ongoing* internal displacement, including of refugees, in Lebanon.

Intensified protection risks across the region

driven by economic shocks, legal insecurity and service degradation, even in the absence of mass outward refugee movements. The situation affects over **31 million** forcibly displaced people and recent returnees across the wider Middle East region (incl. 5.9m Palestine refugees).

Returns under adverse circumstances

to Afghanistan and Syria, including of individuals that may still have international protection needs, and to areas where reintegration capacity remains severely constrained.

Heightened child protection, GBV and mental health risks

as the effects of displacement, insecurity, and service disruption intersect with pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Socioeconomic pressures affecting States and protection outcomes

macroeconomic shocks are straining national systems and public services across the region, with significant implications for refugees and other vulnerable groups – underscoring the need for inclusive, shock-resilient national systems.

Protection systems under growing strain

including legal, administrative, health and social protection services, with extra barriers for refugees.

Underfunding of protection response

undermines the capacity for protection actors to support national protection systems and meet the needs of vulnerable people (including GBV, CP and legal assistance and other specialized protection services).



4 COMMON CROSS-REGIONAL EMERGING PROTECTION RISKS

Common protection risks are emerging across diverse country contexts impacted by the Middle East Situation, reflecting how the military escalation and its knock-on effects – including dire socioeconomic consequences - are interacting with pre-existing vulnerabilities. These risks are shaping the overall protection situation and are present even in contexts where new forced displacement remains absent or limited. The themes below highlight how protection pressures are manifesting in practice across countries of asylum, transit and return.

DIRECT CONFLICT-RELATED RISKS

Attacks on Civilians and Civilian Objects

The escalation of hostilities in Iran and Lebanon has been characterized by high levels of violence against civilians, with reported impacts on civilian infrastructure and populations also observed elsewhere in the region. Basic norms of International Humanitarian Law have been contravened – including the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, inadequate precautions to limit harm to civilians, forced displacement, and destruction of civilian infrastructure such as residential areas, hospitals, schools, water and energy facilities. Hostilities have exacerbated civilian suffering and triggered forced movements of the population, while the effects of military operations, the destruction of civilian objects and contamination by explosive ordnance risk prolonging displacement.

▲ Explosive ordnance (EO) - Even if people survive active hostilities, weapons contamination encountered during displacement is a significant risk that causes death and injury, impacting safety and freedom of movement. High levels of explosive ordnance and lack of timely clearance will hinder safe returns, most acutely in Syria and Lebanon, where legacy contamination exists, but across all new areas affected by hostilities.

Forced Displacement

Forced displacement has been triggered by the escalation of hostilities, including in Lebanon, where it continues despite the ceasefire and temporary relocation in Iran, where many people are likely now returning to their areas of habitual residence. The situation remains fluid. This has compounded existing vulnerabilities and the risk of driving secondary displacement. Border monitoring has been strengthened across contexts, recognizing that Iranian and Lebanese outflows may include people in need of international protection.

Returns under Adverse Circumstances

Returns from Lebanon to Syria and from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan are taking place in contexts where conditions for safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return are not assured. Women and girls returning under adverse circumstances may face heightened barriers to housing, civil documentation, livelihoods and access to services, including education, particularly in countries such as Afghanistan, where they are facing systematic legal and institutionalized discrimination that effectively excludes them from society. In all situations, female-headed households often experience increased economic and protection risks during displacement and reintegration processes.

STRUCTURAL & AGGRAVATED PROTECTION RISKS

Impediments and/or Restrictions to Access to Legal Identity, Remedies and Justice

Loss, expiry or non-renewal of personal and asylum documentation has become a central protection concern, affecting refugees, returnees and other displaced populations, especially as the regular function of public institutions and asylum authorities have been disrupted. Documentation constraints undermine freedom of movement and access to basic services, livelihoods and legal remedies, while contributing to fear or effective situations of arrest, detention or deportation.

Disruptions in the regular functioning of administrative and judicial authorities, including civil registries and courts, compound delays in accessing documentation, therefore prolonging legal uncertainty – particularly in refugee-hosting and return contexts – and increasing exclusion from assistance and consequent exposure to deprivation and exploitation.

Discrimination & stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access

The hostilities and broader crisis have a diverse impact across the population, driven by age, gender and other characteristics. Older persons, persons with disabilities and other groups at risk of exclusion are recurrently identified as facing heightened protection risks.

Mobility limitations, disruption of specialized health and social care, rising costs and reduced outreach disproportionately affect marginalized groups, including LGBTIQ+ individuals, increasing isolation, dependency and the risk of targeted violence and exploitation. In displacement and return settings, lack of accessible shelter due to affordability, physical or administrative barriers, or lack of inclusive approaches, further erode dignified standards of living and aliment displacement-related risks.

EXACERBATED PROTECTION AREAS

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence risks are heightened by overcrowded or inadequate shelter, restricted freedom of movement, loss of livelihoods triggering harmful coping strategies.

The response is challenged by reduced access to safe and confidential services, including those offered by national systems. This is evident in acute crisis settings as well as other contexts affected by the situation, also as a result of the loss of resources and dedicated funding.

Child Protection

Child protection concerns include the killing and maiming of children, rising psychological distress and increasing exposure to violence, involuntary family separation, gender-based violence, including child marriage, as well as increased child labour, and disrupted access to Best Interests Procedure, birth registration and other child protection services – particularly in contexts of repeated displacement or unstable return.

These risks are exacerbated by the weakening of national child protection systems and disruption of essential services including education and health.

Mental Health & Psychosocial Distress

Mental health conditions and psychological distress are increasing across all contexts – driven by the direct and indirect effects of conflict, displacement and loss of life, prolonged uncertainty, economic stress and deprivation. and disruption of critical social and health services. Women and adolescent girls experience heightened distress linked to exposure to violence, caregiving responsibilities, family separation and uncertainty regarding return and recovery prospects. Children are likely to require psychosocial support. Access to appropriate MHPSS remains limited where health and social protection systems are overstretched or disrupted.



5 ECONOMIC & SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS – FROM REGIONAL SHOCKS TO REFUGEE PROTECTION OUTCOMES

The regional escalation is generating wide-ranging socioeconomic impact in and beyond directly affected conflict contexts, placing additional strain on States already managing protracted displacement situations. Macroeconomic shocks – including rising energy and food prices, disrupted trade routes and fiscal pressures – negatively impact Governments' ability to sustain public services, social protection systems and inclusive policies. In this context, impacted labour markets, reduced institutional capacity and shifting national priorities (including social spending) are increasingly affecting access to services, legal status and livelihoods for displaced populations. Disruption to internet access has curtailed jobs and services in some locations, affecting refugees and others' direct access to information on available services and two-way communication. As a result, existing vulnerabilities among refugee populations are deepening, with these socioeconomic pressures directly increasing protection risks.

This underscores the need for integrated humanitarian and development responses that reinforce national systems, safeguard inclusive access to services and ensure refugees are effectively integrated in responses to socioeconomic shocks.

HOST CAPACITY & SERVICE EROSION

Host economies risk contracting due to energy price shocks. Fiscal strain has driven subsidy cuts and administrative backlogs, for example in Iran and Egypt, placing pressure on public institutions. Governments face domestic pressure as humanitarian and development funding decreased substantially including for refugee programming.

In Iran, state-provided services, including access to justice, healthcare and other protection services, have been significantly disrupted. Protection partners' programming has been adapted to community-identified priorities of economic survival and service access.

In Egypt, the commercial closure directive, including work-from-home measures, are delaying refugee registration. The cumulative effect risks a chain of slower registration, residency renewals and asylum determinations, leading to higher numbers of individuals with irregular status and potential for heightened refoulement risk.

RISING POVERTY LEVELS

Up to 32.5 million people could be pushed into poverty globally under UNDP's highest-intensity disruption scenario due to the triple shock: energy, food prices, GDP downturns ([UNDP](#), April 2026). In the Levant, poverty could rise by ~5 percentage points, putting 2.85–3.30M people at risk – over three-quarters of the Arab States regional total ([UNDP](#), March 2026).

Global evidence shows that refugees are consistently poorer than host populations and experience deeper levels of deprivation. Given limited assets, restricted access to employment and weaker coping mechanisms, this makes refugee households particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, with rising costs expected to have a disproportionate impact on their ability to meet basic needs.

LOGISTICS & SUPPLY

The situation has had widespread impact on markets and supply chains are contributing to rising costs across countries – likely to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable over time.

Humanitarian logistical hubs faced shipping disruptions, rising freight/insurance costs, and vessel rerouting, delaying emergency supply. These pressures are compounded by broader humanitarian funding contraction, rising operational costs and growing needs. [OCHA](#) and the UN Secretary-General have identified contracting global humanitarian funding as the principal constraint on the 2026 response.

CROSS-CUTTING RISK: SOCIAL COHESION

Core drivers of risks to social cohesion linked to the situation include resource competition, unequal service access, and misinformation fuelling exclusion and inter-communal tension across Lebanon, Türkiye, Pakistan and Syria. Examples include - Lebanon: IDP-host community tensions reported alongside refugee-related antagonism. Syria: tensions in areas of return escalating over scarce housing, employment and infrastructure.

Integrating displaced populations into national development planning remains essential – including evidence-based adjustments to service provision in times of crisis – alongside ensuring that conflict-sensitive approaches are embedded at the heart of emergency response.

FOOD SECURITY

The current escalation underscores close interlinkages between food security, system capacity and protection outcomes. Reduction in assistance, disruptions to access, and pressure on national systems are contributing to rapid deterioration in food security alongside heightened protection risks. WFP analysis: up to 45 million additional people globally – including over 5 million in MENA – could face acute hunger if current pressures persist. FAO analysis also indicates that rising energy and fertilizer costs are likely to increase food price volatility and place additional strain on vulnerable populations. WFP has already reduced assistance to 1.5M people globally; risk of increasing to 9M should elevated costs persist. Returns under adverse circumstances combined with increasing pressure on host systems risk secondary vulnerability and onward movement without sustained support ([WFP](#)).



KEY MESSAGES – PROTECTION RESPONSE & PREPAREDNESS

The protection risks and trends generated by the Middle East Situation give rise to important cross-regional implications for protection, asylum space and response capacity. These implications stem from acute protection crises in Iran and Lebanon, refugee return under adverse circumstances in Syria and Afghanistan, and the cumulative effects of economic pressure, service degradation, constrained mobility and conditions for refugees across multiple contexts. These messages are for use in dialogue with response actors and Governments.

Respect the protection of civilians to reduce loss of life, human suffering, mitigate displacement, and facilitate return and recovery

The protection of civilians remains a fundamental obligation of parties to the conflict, grounded in International Humanitarian Law and the moral principle of humanity. Disregard for these principles has directly resulted in unnecessary harm, including civilian casualties.

Where IHL is respected, civilian harm is reduced, essential infrastructure and services necessary to the population are preserved, and humanitarian actors are better able to operate. Lack of respect for IHL –including indiscriminate attacks, insufficient precaution in military operations, destruction of homes and attacks on objects indispensable to survival– are among the primary drivers of displacement. Compliance with IHL would significantly reduce displacement, within countries and across borders. It will also be essential to avoid that displacement becomes protracted, and returns are voluntary and more sustainable.

Maintain access to territory, asylum space and protection safeguards

Respect for access to territory, and to fair asylum procedures and protection safeguards remains essential across the region, irrespective of the scale or visibility of population movements. Restrictions on access to territory, to fair asylum procedures, restrictive policies and administrative procedures limiting registration and documentation are increasing protection risks for people in need of international protection, including exposure to detention, family separation, involuntary and undignified return and risk of onward movement under unsafe conditions.

Continuous adherence to the principle of non-refoulement, together with protection-sensitive border management and guaranteed access to fair individual asylum procedures are indispensable to upholding international protection obligations and safeguarding asylum space.

Provide life-saving assistance for refugees who return under adverse circumstances and facilitate reintegration

Returns of refugees under adverse circumstances have emerged as a defining cross-regional protection concern, including movements from Lebanon to Syria and from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan. These returns are occurring in contexts where conditions for safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return are not met, and where reintegration capacity remains limited.

It is essential that returns are genuinely voluntary, and not driven by pressure, deprivation or insecurity.

Adequate support to sustainable reintegration is essential. Without it, alongside sustained access to services and robust protection safeguards, including mine action, returns risk generating new protection concerns, undermining social cohesion and increasing the likelihood of secondary displacement and onward movement.

Reinforce and adequately resource inclusive national protection systems alongside targeted protection interventions to mitigate risk

Protection interventions are critical across all contexts – including legal assistance, civil documentation, child protection and GBV response, mental health and psychosocial support, specialized assistance for older persons, persons with disabilities and others at risk of exclusion. Inclusive and shock-resilient national systems are essential to mitigate socioeconomic drivers of protection risk.

As economic pressure and service degradation intensify (including the displacement of some of the service providers themselves), diminishing coverage, accessibility, affordability and quality of protection services is often associated with increased exposure to violence, exploitation and harmful coping strategies. This is particularly the case for children, women and persons with specific unmet needs. Sustaining protection capacity at national, local, and community levels, including by supporting refugee-led and women-led organizations, is central to mitigating protection risks, avoiding exclusion and preventing further displacement. This should be done in alignment with national plans and structures where possible.



RESOURCING EFFECTIVE PROTECTION RESPONSE & ADEQUATE PREPAREDNESS

Support required for protection response and protection-centred preparedness, including through strengthened national systems

KEY MESSAGE

The current context underscores the need for protection-centred preparedness and response approaches that can adapt to evolving risks, including in countries where new refugee flows remain constrained, but protection needs are escalating as a result of the wider implications of the situation. Timely, flexible and predictable resourcing is required to sustain protection services, reinforce reintegration capacity in areas of return and enable rapid scale-up of emergency protection interventions where conditions deteriorate. This includes sustaining emergency protection delivery, including cash and in-kind assistance, alongside engagement to strengthen *inclusive* national social protection systems. Governments' prioritization of inclusive shock-resilient national protection systems remains imperative. Constrained humanitarian and development funding - alongside fiscal pressure on host countries - risks accelerating protection erosion if not addressed proactively.

KEY PROTECTION FUNDING PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY COUNTRY-LEVEL PROTECTION COORDINATION FORUMS

Iran

Scale up flexible cash and in-kind assistance for the most vulnerable Afghan households to bridge the loss of livelihoods while advocating for recovery measures.

Sustain individualised protection responses – legal counselling, MHPSS and partner referrals – alongside timely communication with communities.

Advocate for extension of documentation, with tailored support for the most vulnerable individuals.

Lebanon

Prevention and response services are severely underfunded, leaving critical gaps in life-saving support and sustained service provision.

Protection emergency and recurrent cash assistance for highly vulnerable families prevents harm and stabilizes those most at risk.

Safe spaces, community centers and child-friendly spaces provide group MHPSS, including community based physio-social support (CBPSS).

Protection staffing is insufficient to deliver prioritized protection activities.

Syria

Scale up protection monitoring and response capacities, including MHPSS, GBV and child protection services, legal assistance, and mine action, to address emerging return-related risks and support vulnerable populations.

Strengthen community-based protection mechanisms, including dispute resolution and social cohesion initiatives, in areas experiencing high levels of return.

Invest in national and local systems that underpin solutions, including social protection, legislative and policy reforms, and institutional capacity to effectively respond to the needs of returnees and vulnerable communities.

Afghanistan

Scale up returnee cash and immediate protection responses at border points to address urgent needs, reduce exposure to protection risks and support safe onward movement.

Sustain comprehensive protection services for individuals at heightened risk, including protection case management, MHPSS, GBV and child protection services.

Facilitate timely access to civil documentation for vulnerable returnees facing barriers to legal identity.

Pakistan

Restore and sustain community-based protection services, including outreach, legal assistance and case management, including to address refoulement and barriers to access in hard-to-reach areas.

Scale up protection activities, including monitoring, GBV services, psychosocial support and child protection, as access constraints intensify.

Expand protection cash assistance and community-based support to address rising vulnerabilities and harmful coping mechanisms.

Iraq

Support government-led protection services – MHPSS, child protection and services for survivors of gender-based violence – given overstretched capacity.

Strengthen government registration capacity to ensure timely registration and issuance of documentation for new refugee and asylum-seeker arrivals as well as enhance access to birth registration and civil documentation.

cash assistance for vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, whose needs have intensified due to the regional socio-economic situation.

Türkiye

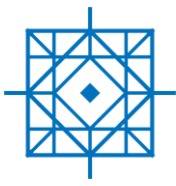
Support national capacity to **access asylum procedures** for those seeking international protection;

Support **government-led protection services and preparedness actions**. Ensure operational readiness of existing systems, including **preparedness** for stock prepositioning, warehousing arrangements, preparation for scaled-up case management and targeted assistance, should the government request support in case of large movements. Sustain **communication with communities and CBOs** to monitor concerns, information needs and emerging protection risks.

Armenia

Support expansion and readiness of temporary reception and accommodation to enhance national preparedness capacity.

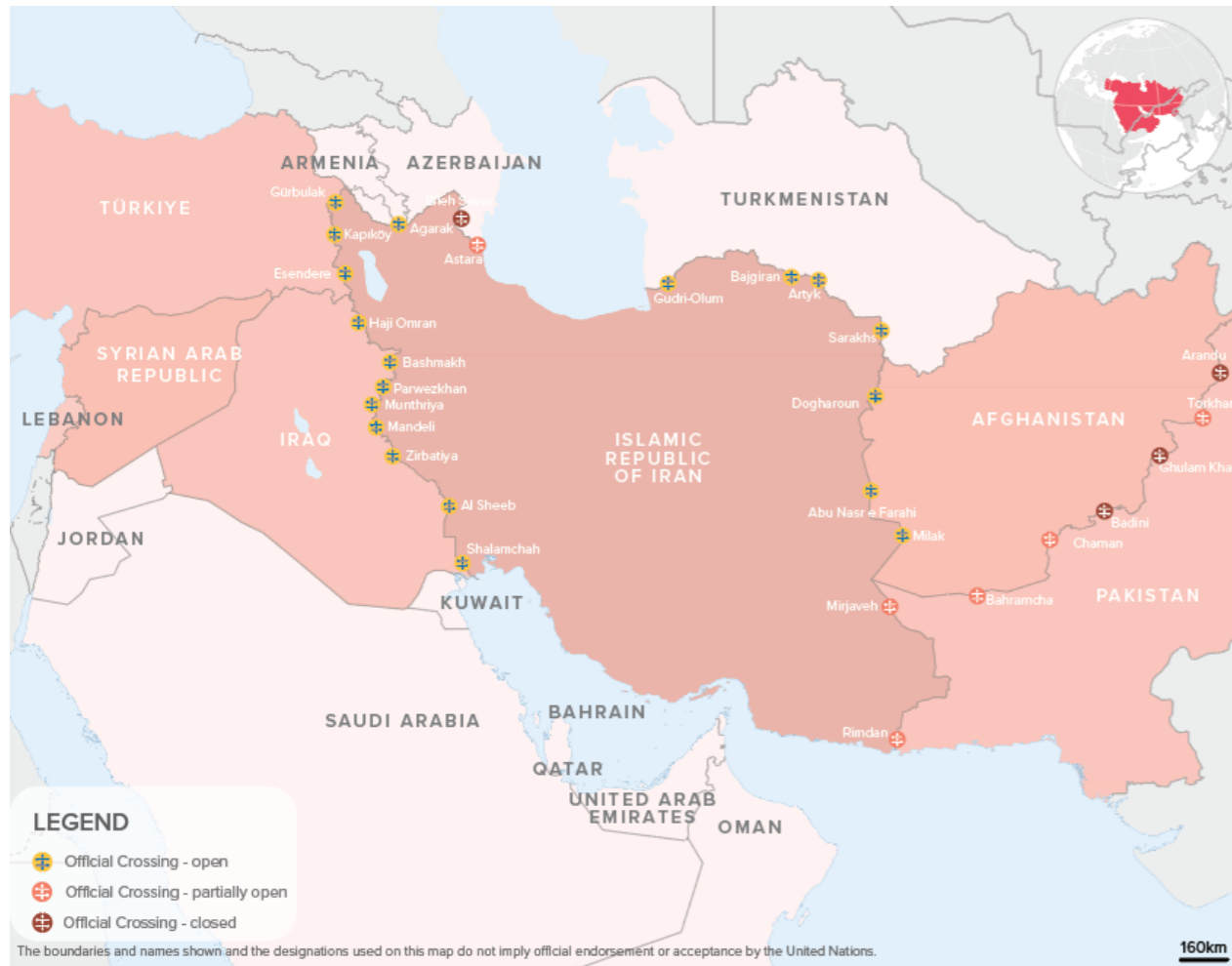
Support mobile registration arrangements, technical equipment, interpretation services and preparedness to enable timely registration and processing if required. **Provide flexible short-term assistance, including cash-based support**, for vulnerable individuals and families when reception capacities face temporary pressure.



8

CROSS-BORDER MONITORING SUMMARY

BORDER CROSSING STATUS



Official border-crossing status across the Middle East situation. Source: UNHCR, May 2026.

BORDERS	STATUS	KEY HIGHLIGHTS
Lebanon - Syria	OPEN	Among over 444,000 Syrian returnees who crossed into Syria between 2 March and 31 May, 109,792 indicated (at the borders) their intention to remain permanently. Return of Syrians from Lebanon surged in March, tripling the monthly average observed since November 2025, before normalizing to baseline levels in April and May. Crossings of Lebanese refugees from Lebanon to Syria remained relatively similar between March and April (30,000 per month). However, this increased in May to over 45,000 (UNHCR and government of Syria).
Iran - Afghanistan	OPEN	Despite the conflict, protection monitoring in Iran suggests that Afghans prefer to remain in Iran. 193,800 have returned 28 Feb -31 May; 40% below same period 2025 (peak for returns from Iran was July 2025). Returns largely involuntary. Return data is jointly validated by UNHCR and IOM and aligned under Afghanistan RC's Office.
Iran - Türkiye	OPEN	Between 3 March and 21 May, more than 286,000 Iranians arrived in Türkiye while 253,000 Iranian nationals returned to Iran. Entries continue predominantly under the visa exemption regime. These movements continue to largely reflect routine mobility rather than large scale displacement. Some individuals have indicated an intention to seek international protection, reporting that their decision to cross was taken following recent developments in Iran. Based on monitoring conducted by UNHCR, movements, on both sides, continue predominantly as families.
Iran - Pakistan	PARTIALLY OPEN	Around 13,700 Iranians crossed to Pakistan between (1 Mar-28 May) movements occurred primarily through Taftan-Mirjaveh BCP and Gabd-Kumb-Rimdan BCP individuals, many travellers are crossing for trade-related or family reasons. Border authorities reported no influx of Iranian nationals other than those with valid passports and visas in Pakistan (UNHCR-IOM Pakistan Joint border monitoring report).
Iran - Iraq	OPEN	Border conditions remained broadly stable with all crossing points remaining open and no major new restrictions reported. Incoming movements of Iranian nationals were driven primarily by family visits (43%), employment (33%), and tourism (12%), with no movements reported as conflict or insecurity related during the period. No BCPs reported emergency response or security incidents during the reporting period (IOM, Mobility Report: 28 May 2026) while UNHCR records small numbers of Iranians arriving due to escalating hostilities.
Iran - Armenia	OPEN	Observed movements remain predominantly routine and commercial in nature. Current trends do not indicate large-scale displacement movements or significant changes in the protection environment. Crossings remain broadly balanced, indicating continued regular two-way movements, without a significant surge in arrivals.
Iran - Turkmenistan	OPEN	Turkmenistan shares an extensive 1,148 km border with Iran. No major changes to the protection environment have been observed in the country since the start of the regional escalation. Since February 2026, safe transit of third-country nationals has been facilitated by the government through its borders as a "humanitarian corridor".



9 PROTECTION RISK TRAJECTORY BY COUNTRY · 2025 → POST-28 FEB 2026

This table summarises baseline protection conditions in 2025 and key developments since the onset of the Middle East Situation on 28 February 2026 across eight countries. Country-specific protection risks, response highlights, and operational priorities are elaborated in the country pages that follow.

Country	2025 Baseline Conditions	Post-28 Feb 2026 Key Protection Developments	Key Additional Data Points
Iran	~2M+ Afghans returned in 2025; mass deportations; documentation & employment crises	3,375 civilian deaths; loss of jobs during difficult economic situation and increased overall costs of living; school enrolment for next school year resumed for documented children only	193,800 Afghans returned 28 Feb–31 May 2026; 40% below same period 2025
Lebanon	Post-Nov 2024 ceasefire; return intentions of Syrian refugees surged (Flash RPIS: 24% intent 12mo); extreme socio-economic distress (VASyR 2024)	Renewed hostilities 2 Mar; 1M+ displaced; 585,000+ crossed to Syria (incl. 444,400 Syrians, 74,000 Lebanese, 1,200+ PRS); 90% refugees outside official shelters; GBV acute; documentation loss	3,151 deaths (incl. 97 Syrian refugees of whom 24 are children); 9,571 injuries
Syria	1.6M refugee + over 1.3M Syrians returned from countries of Asylum + 1.7M IDP returns since Dec 2024; 40% households report MHPSS needs; 34% cannot access services; HLP, high levels of unexploded ordnance, documentation gaps	585,000 additional crossings from Lebanon (Syrians (80%), Lebanese refugees (19.7%) and Palestine refugees (0.3%) crossed into Syria (31 May); regional instability affecting perceptions of safety; social cohesion pressures intensifying; civil documentation systems strained	1 in 6 families newly arrived from Lebanon lacking key documents; 52% of refugee returnees are women and girls
Afghanistan	2.9M returned in 2025; GDP per capita fell 4% (WB); stagnant livelihoods; increasing household debt; worsening food/shelter security	487.5K Afghans (28 Feb 2026- 31 May 2026); reception capacity overwhelmed; border closures at Torkham & Spin Boldak; reintegration infrastructure in crisis	754K+ returns in first 5 months of 2026 vs. 2.9M in full year 2025; 5.4M+ total since Oct 2023
Pakistan	1M+ returned 2025 (154,600 deported); 54 refugee villages are no longer approved by the government to be inhabited by refugees/denotified; climate of fear; GBV and child labour rising	293K+ Afghans returned 28 Feb–31 May 2026; 26 of 54 refugee villages vacated; Iran influx preparedness in place	Torkham & Azakhel VRC are open; 16,000+ Afghans processed at Voluntary Repatriation Centers in May 2026
Türkiye	2.3M+ Syrians; post-earthquake recovery ongoing; increasing social and economic pressure	286K Iranians crossed (visa-exempt); 253 returned (as of 21 May); ; Afghan MHPSS stress from Iran situation; 667,565 voluntary Syria returns since Dec 2024	32.37% annual inflation Apr 2026 (partly fuel costs from regional instability)
Iraq	350,433 refugees & asylum seekers; Syrian return intent lowest in the region at 2%; protracted IDP situation	8,926 Iranian refugees and asylum-seekers registered; Iranian settlements in Kurdistan Region of Iraq repeatedly attacked leading to relocation of residents; Strait of Hormuz blockade drove inflation; inter-agency contingency plan finalised	Oil production fell ~70%; IQD-USD fluctuated ±20%; economic shocks deepening vulnerability across Iraq
Armenia	600 asylum applications in 2025; 170 in Q1 2026; sole reception centre at full capacity (60 beds); government cash support insufficient	16 Iranian asylum apps 28 Feb–5 May; near-equal entry/exit (18,270/17,515); no mass influx; UNHCR scaled border monitoring; GoE RSD office being established	USD ~55/month family head (government cash support); insufficient to cover basic needs



UNHCR, Displaced family in Beirut, Lebanon, March 2026

Country Summaries: Protection Risks & Response



11 IRAN – PROTECTION RISKS & RESPONSE

1.65M

Refugees and others in need of international protection (Iran Flash RRP)

1M

Host community and 0.15M Afghans of other status targeted in Flash RRP

150,800+

People reached through Protection interventions

PRIORITY ANALYSIS & PROTECTION RISKS

During the hostilities, a total of 3,375 civilian fatalities were recorded as of 5 May (Iranian Ministry of Health). The destruction of civilian infrastructures and essential services, including hospitals, schools and emergency facilities reduced basic living conditions. Temporary relocation within the country was driven by the hostilities and extensive damage to homes: as of 29 April, IOM estimated 400,000 people, including Afghans, had seen their homes directly affected, with the government reporting more than 120,000 residential units damaged or destroyed. WHO reported 26 attacks on health facilities since 28 February, killing 11 health workers. According to the Ministry of Education, strikes on educational infrastructure have killed 245 students and 58 education personnel and injured a further 178 students and 24 staff. The security crisis in March and April exacerbated the protection situation of Afghans in Iran. Between 28 February and 31 May, more than 193,800 Afghans returned from Iran - 40% below the same period in 2025 (the peak for returns from Iran was July 2025) - amid reports of increased anxiety due to the security and economic situation, with greater impact on vulnerable individuals. This shows that, despite the hostilities, Afghan nationals prefer to remain in Iran.

Since May, reports have identified inflation, unemployment, loss of daily wage labour, rising rent and health costs and documentation-related expenses as the main drivers of household vulnerability. The legal and documentation environment also remains a source of anxiety particularly due to the documentation renewal process, among Afghan households unable to meet the new financial and administrative requirements. Households increasingly reported negative coping mechanisms, including selling assets, accumulating debt and child labour. Rising rent and landlord pressure increased eviction risks. Communities continued to report requiring urgent support to meet basic needs and maintain access to legal stay, health care, education and protection services. Children are among the most severely affected: school disruption across at least 14 provinces, exposure to the insecurity and heightened household stress, including family separation, are increasing the psychosocial distress.

Women at risk, female-headed households and older persons face increased isolation, movement restrictions and loss of livelihoods, raising exposure to exploitation and triggering harmful coping responses. Persons with disabilities face disrupted access to specialized care. State-provided GBV services – including access to justice, health care, and other life-saving services – have been sustained while significantly disrupted. Mental health and psychosocial support are among the most frequently reported community needs, with anxiety being the most common presenting symptom. Communities consistently identify remaining in Iran as the preferred option, viewing return to Afghanistan, or onward movement, as unfeasible in the current setting.

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PROTECTION RESPONSE

Protection responses have been adapted to community-identified priorities of economic survival, service access and mental health. Protection partners maintained an operational presence across its main locations in Iran, enabling continued identification of the most vulnerable people, counselling, legal aid, documentation-related support, emergency cash assistance and psychosocial support despite a challenging operating environment. Emergency cash assistance has been scaled up, alongside provision of Universal Public Health Insurance support targeting 75,000 vulnerable individuals in 2026. Resettlement departures of 195 individuals were suspended Mar-May 2026 due to conflict.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC
ADVOCACY &
OPERATIONAL
PRIORITIES

Scale up flexible cash and in-kind assistance for the most vulnerable Afghan households to bridge the loss of livelihoods while advocating for recovery measures.

Sustain individual protection responses including legal counselling, MHPSS services and referral to partners and continuous and timely communication with communities.

Advocacy for extension of documentation with tailored support for the most vulnerable individuals.



12 LEBANON – PROTECTION RISKS & RESPONSE

1M+

Internally displaced since 2 March 2026 (MoSA) and over 1.4M in need

225,900+

Reached by Protection Sector (30 May)

585,000+

Syrians (80%), Lebanese refugees (19.7%) and Palestine refugees (0.3%) crossed into Syria (31 May)

PRIORITY ANALYSIS & PROTECTION RISKS

From the signing of the November 2024 cessation of hostilities declaration until the eruption of renewed hostilities on 2 March 2026, UNIFIL recorded more than 15,000 ceasefire violations committed by Israel in Lebanon. The escalation of hostilities in March resulted in the rapid displacement of over one million people. Despite the ceasefire announcement on 17 April, continued military activity by Israel and non-state armed actors has led to further displacement, casualties and destruction: the death toll as of 27 May stands at 3,151 (including 97 Syrian refugees, of whom 24 are children) and 9,571 injuries (including 130 Syrian refugees, of whom 24 are children).

Many non-Lebanese – notably refugees and migrants – were unable to access collective shelters despite government assurances. Persistent barriers linked increased administrative measures, non-inclusive practices, and documentation requirements, while those within shelters faced severe overcrowding, inadequate hygiene and lack of privacy, with heightened risks for women and girls, persons with disabilities, older persons and children. Of identified displaced refugees, 10 per cent lack any safe accommodation, 40 per cent rent accommodation, and another 40 per cent are hosted by friends or family. Those cumulative 90 per cent of refugees outside of official collective shelters face harsh weather, exposure to exploitation, harassment and limited access to services. Women and girls, including refugee, migrant and returnee populations, face heightened protection risks in overcrowded shelters and informal accommodation arrangements. Limited privacy, safety concerns and reduced access to essential services increase exposure to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, exploitation and intimate partner violence. Women with disabilities, older women and female-headed households face additional barriers to accessing assistance and protection services. Additionally, more than 1,000 refugees have reported being unable to leave conflict-affected areas, with access to healthcare and essential services severely constrained.

The escalation of the conflict has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities and generated disproportionate protection risks for women and girls across affected populations. This resulted in large-scale cross-border movements to Syria considered return under force majeure. Since the start of the escalation and as of 31 May, according to Syrian authorities, over 585,000 Syrians (around 80%), Lebanese refugees (19.7%), and Palestine refugees(0.3%) had crossed into Syria.

GBV risks – including sexual assault and intimate partner violence – have been elevated across collective shelters and in host communities, with women and girls with disabilities, female-headed households, as well as refugee and migrant women facing particularly acute exposure to physical violence, sexual exploitation and coercion. Repeated displacement, economic insecurity, caregiving burdens and uncertainty regarding return prospects are also contributing to heightened psychosocial distress among women and girls. Children show high-levels of psychological distress due to displacement conditions, family separation, child labour and learning disruption. Repeated displacement cycles have caused systemic documentation loss – reducing households' ability to re-establish legal identity and exercise housing, land and property rights – with displaced Syrians disproportionately exposed to detention and deportation risk. Unequal access, resentment and misinformation have intensified intra and inter-communal tensions, which have led to exclusion and sporadic exposure to violence for refugees.

PROTECTION RESPONSE

The Protection Sector developed a prioritised package of life-saving interventions, including: Protection monitoring and analysis leading to enhanced protection mainstreaming; community engagement and mobilization; awareness and information sessions coupled with provision of protection-specific in-kind support; targeted outreach and identification of people at heightened risk, linking them to case management programs and cash assistance and specialized programs addressing needs and care services for unaccompanied/separated children, persons with disabilities and others at heightened risk. As of 12 May, the Sector has reached over 184,000 people through 77 partners. Women-led and community-based organizations continue to play a critical frontline role in providing referrals, psychosocial support, protection services and humanitarian assistance despite severe funding constraints and increased operational pressures. This includes 84,000 people reached with information, 66,000 with CP/GBV/PRT case management and MHPSS, 24,000 dignity kits distributed, and 1,796 households supported with emergency cash, with coverage extended to 87% of collective shelters. In parallel, over 12,000 Syrian refugees received counselling and a one-time USD 100 cash grant, with UNHCR introducing the Return under Force Majeure (RFM) modality to support those compelled to return due to lack of alternatives.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC
ADVOCACY &
OPERATIONAL
PRIORITIES

Scale up funding for protection and linked shelter activities, particularly GBV, child protection, MHPSS and disability support, including protection mainstreaming in shelters

Ensure returns to Syria must be safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable and sustain funding for existing programs

Maintain access to territory, ensure protection, non reoulment and basic services; Support populations unable to return

Address protracted internal displacement through national solutions (housing, livelihoods, preparedness)



13 SYRIA – PROTECTION RISKS & RESPONSE

1.6M+

Refugee returns since December 2024

585,000+

Syrians (80%), Lebanese refugees (19.7%) and Palestine refugees (0.3%) crossed into Syria (31 May)

955,000+

Reached with protection interventions (30 April)

PRIORITY ANALYSIS & PROTECTION RISKS

Since December 2024, Syria has witnessed large-scale return movements, with more than 1.6 million refugees and 1.9 million IDPs returning to their areas of origin. Women and girls account for approximately 52 per cent of refugee returnees, while children represent 58 per cent. Since the start of the escalation and as of 31 May 2026, over 585,000 Syrians, Lebanese nationals, and Palestine refugees had crossed into Syria, often driven by the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, around 49 per cent of Syrian were females, with 25 per cent of the total Syrians returns expressing an intention to remain permanently. These returns are taking place amid continued humanitarian and protection challenges, with an estimated 15.6 million people requiring humanitarian assistance across sectors in 2026.

At the same time, the protection environment remains fragile and continues to be shaped by the cumulative impacts of years of conflict, including widespread destruction of infrastructure, economic hardship, and limited access to essential services. An estimated 5.5 million people remain displaced within Syria, while millions continue to face risks associated with explosive ordnance contamination, gender-based violence, child protection concerns, psychosocial distress, and barriers to accessing civil documentation, housing, land and property rights, and justice services. The scale of return movements has also increased pressure on host and return communities, placing additional strain on housing, basic services, and livelihood opportunities, while exacerbating social cohesion challenges in areas of return. These pressures are compounded by overlapping unmet needs—including food, shelter, employment, healthcare, and psychosocial support—which continue to constrain prospects for sustainable reintegration. Returns from Lebanon have been characterized by rapid and often uncertain movements, with patterns of women and children returning alone, and many of whom have experienced heightened levels of psychosocial distress. These factors have increased vulnerabilities and protection risks during transit and upon return, underscoring the need for sustained support to facilitate safe, dignified, and sustainable reintegration.

As return movements continue to expand in scale and geographic reach, protection needs are increasing accordingly, underscoring the importance of strengthened protection monitoring and response capacities, including MHPSS, GBV and child protection services, legal assistance, and mine action. Addressing barriers to housing, documentation, livelihoods, and essential services, while strengthening national and local systems, will be critical to supporting sustainable reintegration and longer-term recovery.

PROTECTION RESPONSE

Authorities have continued to uphold access to territory. Protection partners under the umbrella of the Protection Sector have been strengthening their responses through an integrated package of services, complemented by enhanced border and community-based monitoring and response. At the border, the inter-agency response carried out jointly with the authorities, ensures provision of transportation assistance, core relief items, water, food, legal counselling on civil and HLP documentation, as well as information on available services in areas of destination to facilitate timely access to support upon arrival. In country, over 150 protection partners have together reached more than 955,000 people, including returnees, with protection services of 30 April through the sector’s network of community centres, mobile teams and outreach volunteers. The response includes protection interventions through community centres, such as legal assistance and GBV, Child Protection and MHPSS case management. Cash assistance and essential relief items have also been prioritised for the most vulnerable.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC
ADVOCACY &
OPERATIONAL
PRIORITIES

Scale up protection monitoring and response to address growing return-related risks

Invest in strengthening governance and protection systems, including social protection and referral mechanisms

Strengthen the legal and institutional framework for durable solutions by supporting reforms on legal identity



14 AFGHANISTAN – PROTECTION RISKS & RESPONSE

6 million+

Returns (including deportations) from Iran & Pakistan (Sept. 2023 until - May 2026)

754,100

Returns (including deportations) from Iran and Pakistan in 2026 (Jan-31 May 2026)

200,100

Returnees assisted with protection interventions in areas of return in 2026 (Jan-30 April 2026)

PRIORITY ANALYSIS & PROTECTION RISKS

The Refugee Coordination Model has not been activated in Afghanistan; however, the Afghanistan Protection Coordination Group, co-coordinated by UNHCR and NRC, brings together protection partners to identify protection risks and ensure coordinated responses at national and sub-national levels. While Afghanistan has not experienced direct attacks on civilians or civilian infrastructure linked to the hostilities involving Iran, Israel and the United States since February 2026, more than four million Afghans in Iran have been directly or indirectly affected. The resulting large-scale forced returns, restrictive mobility policies and shrinking protection space in Iran have significantly compounded pressures linked to ongoing returns of Afghanistan from Pakistan, cross-border clashes and pre-existing humanitarian, socio-economic and human rights challenges. In 2026 alone, more than 754,100 Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan including many who held valid refugee status and documentation (IOM and UNHCR). Returns have been largely involuntary and at a scale exceeding reception and reintegration capacity, contributing to secondary displacement, family separation, loss of assets and harmful coping strategies. Large-scale returns are also compounding pre-existing protection risks within an already fragile humanitarian and human-rights context shaped by systemic discrimination against women and girls and other vulnerable groups, further complicated by a stagnant economy, widespread poverty, the collapse of basic public services and frequent natural disasters. UNHCR’s Post-Returnee Monitoring Report indicates persistently weak - and in several sectors worsening - reintegration outcomes exacerbating protection risks: livelihoods remain stagnant, household debt has increased, food security has declined, and shelter insecurity has grown. Without scaled-up livelihoods, shelter, protection and legal assistance, and with 2.6 million returns anticipated between April-December 2026, reintegration will be further undermined and protection risks will increase for both returnees and host communities. Many returnees lack civil documentation, limiting access to services, livelihoods, freedom of movement and property rights. Psychological and emotional distress is widely reported among returnees across all corridors, linked to physical violence, prolonged detention and family separation before and during return (IOM; and UNHCR 2025 Protection Monitoring data).

Women, girls, children, older persons and persons with disabilities face heightened protection risks - including GBV, child labour and explosive ordnance exposure in border areas - compounded by the severe restrictions of women and girls’ human rights, including the ban on girls’ education above sixth grade, restrictions of movement, work and participation in public life, also limiting participation of national female staff in the humanitarian response. Cross-border movements have been repeatedly disrupted by insecurity, border closures, and damaged infrastructure, cutting off tens of thousands from assistance and protection services. Returnees and deportees from Iran report discriminatory treatment, loss of livelihoods and reduced freedom of movement, with returns driven by heightened uncertainty, shrinking protection space in countries of asylum, rising prices and disruptions to daily life. Women returnees in Afghanistan face compounded protection risks alongside severe barriers to services and housing security, with 45 per cent reporting eviction or threat of eviction compared to 14 per cent of male-headed households. No significant inflows of Iranian nationals into Afghanistan have been verified.

PROTECTION RESPONSE

Protection partners continue delivering life-saving services at border and return areas, including protection monitoring and counselling, protection screening and referrals, child protection and GBV case management, safe spaces and services, family tracing and reunification, MHPSS, mine awareness and clearance, and community-based protection interventions. As of the end of April 2026, 200,100 returnees have received protection interventions in their areas of return. Of this total, 48 per cent were female, 58 per cent were children, and 16 per cent were persons with disabilities. The broader humanitarian response provides integrated support to returnees and displaced households through multipurpose cash, health care, emergency shelter, food, education and civil documentation assistance. Inter-agency contingency planning through the Inter-cluster Coordination Team and Border Consortium addresses return scenarios from Iran and renewed Afghanistan-Pakistan hostilities. Additionally, integrated planning with durable solutions actors ensures nexus linkages between humanitarian and early recovery interventions. Despite sustained efforts, protection response capacity remains insufficient given the scale and complexity of needs, especially considering the multifaceted protection crisis in the country.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ADVOCACY & OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES	Remove restrictions for women and girls and ensure protection and participation. Respect humanitarian space, preserving neutrality and impartiality.	Halt deportations to Afghanistan; uphold non-refoulement and ensure returns are safe, dignified and voluntary.	Provide flexible, multi-year funding aligned with the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).
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15 PAKISTAN – PROTECTION RISKS & RESPONSE

1M+

Afghans returned from Pakistan in 2025 (154,600 deported)

450,000+

Afghans returned from Pakistan in 2026 (as of 31 May)

54

Refugee villages de-notified (26 vacated)

PRIORITY ANALYSIS & PROTECTION RISKS

Following the implementation of the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP), all Afghans in Pakistan – except visa holders – had been designated as illegal foreigners by August 2025, exposing them to arrest and forced deportation. More than one million Afghans returned in 2025, of whom approximately 154,600 were deported; pressure continues in 2026 with more than 450,000+ returning as of 31 May, including 50.3% females and 52.1% children. Since 2025, Afghans have been required to relocate out of the Islamabad Capital Territory and adjacent urban areas. All 54 refugee villages have been de-notified, of which 26 had been vacated by May 2026.

Worsening conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan from late February 2026 led to the temporary closure of major border crossings and the Azakhel Voluntary Repatriation Centre (VRC), leaving many Afghans intending to return in limbo. Pakistan-Afghanistan border crossings have now reopened, as has the Azakhel VRC which processed more than 16,000 Afghans in May (scheduling has been put in place to manage the numbers). Truck congestion at the Torkham border has been cleared and border processing is now relatively smooth. All borders are open for returns/deportations.

Continuing implementation of the IFRP has driven increased arrests, detention and raids targeting Afghans – particularly those lacking valid documentation – resulting in harassment, evictions and mounting host community pressure. Those unable to return, including those who would be at heightened risk of harm upon return to Afghanistan due to their profiles, remain largely confined to their homes due to fear of arrest and deportation, with consequent loss of livelihoods and disrupted education. Afghan refugees continue to face significant barriers to health, education and WASH services alongside escalating protection risks: GBV is widely reported; child labour and early and forced marriage are rising due to economic hardship; family separation is increasingly documented in the context of arrests and deportations; and access to mental health and psychosocial support remains limited.

Persons with disabilities and older persons face compounded barriers to services. Delays in accessing scholarship disbursements have forced some refugee students into work. The indirect impacts of the Middle East escalation – including fuel price surges and disrupted supply chains – have further eroded already fragile household livelihoods. While the evolving situation in Iran has not yet had a significant direct impact on Pakistan in terms of refugee movements, preparedness planning and coordination are in place.

PROTECTION RESPONSE

Alongside legal and targeted assistance, the key response is advocacy (and offers of support) to the Government of Pakistan’s establishment of a profile-based procedural mechanism permitting issuance of protective documentation granting the holder exemption from forced deportation. These registration-based documentation procedures would prevent harm to vulnerable Afghans at heightened risk upon return and those with other humanitarian needs. For the broader Afghan population, advocacy continues at federal and provincial levels, complemented by support to facilitate gradual, dignified, sustainable returns while ensuring interim access to essential services. Support for vulnerable refugees focuses on adapting community-based protection structures and service access through mobile, virtual and area-based delivery, including for Afghans living in hiding or frequently relocating. A community-based, survivor-centred GBV and MHPSS response is being implemented, with integrated specialized care from trained counsellors and psychologists. Service delivery is being expanded in Voluntary Repatriation Centres and plans are in place for the development of Multi-Purpose Hubs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In response to the Iran situation, additional border monitoring and inter-agency coordination are reinforced for potential influx.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC
ADVOCACY &
OPERATIONAL
PRIORITIES

Grant IFRP exemptions for individuals with international protection needs and uphold non-refoulement.

Call for the operationalization of Legal Stay Options for Afghans with valid reasons to remain in Pakistan including students and those married to Pakistanis.

Returns be conducted in a dignified manner. Access to essential services be maintained in the interim. Activate RCM for any Iran influx.



16 IRAQ – PROTECTION RISKS & RESPONSE

8,926

Iranian asylum-seekers & refugees

8,691

Of whom in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

350,433

Total Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Iraq

PRIORITY ANALYSIS & PROTECTION RISKS

Hostilities in the Middle East have had so far a limited impact on the existing protection context for refugees and asylum seekers in Iraq in general. Small numbers of Iranian asylum-seekers and refugees have entered Iraq due to the conflict, with approaches to UNHCR for registration remaining stable and in line with previous trends.

The main impact has been on existing Iranian refugee communities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where 8,691 of the 8,926 Iranian asylum-seekers and refugees registered with UNHCR as of end May 2026 reside – a protracted population present in Iraq for many years, including women and children. Some of these communities reside in settlements repeatedly targeted by drone attacks, including after the ceasefire, prompting many families to relocate. These dynamics heighten protection risks for children, including exposure to violence and psychological distress. Freedom of movement for Iranian asylum-seekers and refugees has been restricted in one governorate, and instances of discrimination driven by heightened local security sensitivities have been reported, with risks – including the physical and psychological impact of continued attacks – persisting for this population, particularly affecting children’s well-being.

For other refugee and asylum-seeker populations, the security situation in March and April caused temporary disruptions to in-person protection services including registration and legal counselling, and departures for resettlement were affected by the temporary airspace closure. Further disruptions to the issuance of documentation, including birth registration, would heighten child protection risks, constraining their access to services. Additionally, interruptions to in-person education risk increasing child labour, child marriage and other harmful coping strategies.

Across Iraq, the broader regional situation – particularly the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz – has driven inflation and rising prices of basic goods. Iraqi oil production reportedly fell by as much as 70 per cent, with potential long-term economic repercussions. The IQD–USD exchange rate has fluctuated by up to 20 per cent.

These economic shocks, combined with energy and food price volatility, have deepened socio-economic vulnerability across Iraq including among refugee populations increasing risks of harmful coping mechanisms that disproportionately affect children. Women and girls may face heightened protection risks as economic pressures, displacement-related vulnerabilities and family separation intersect. Early signals also point to heightened anxiety and precautionary behaviour affecting women’s and girls’ movement and engagement in public life. These constraints may further limit women’s participation in economic and community life, reduce access to support networks and protection services, and undermine prospects for sustainable reintegration and recovery.

PROTECTION RESPONSE

In preparation for a possible influx from Iran, in support of the government, an inter-agency contingency plan was developed by UNHCR together with WFP, WHO, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women as the core group. The plan describes a comprehensive government led response upholding non-refoulement, access to registration and documentation, and access to national services. Activities at the border crossing points and border data will complement and inform planning at all stages of the response, including border and protection monitoring conducted by UNHCR, with IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix complementing data on population movements. Registration and legal assistance remain UNHCR’s frontline mechanism: once registered, refugees and asylum-seekers can obtain government-issued documentation and access public services, including education, health, child protection and GBV. Strengthening gender-responsive protection services – both government and locally led - remains critical to ensuring that women and girls, including female-headed households, can access legal documentation, protection services, livelihoods support and community-based assistance, while reducing barriers to participation, recovery and durable solutions. It is worth noting, however, government service capacity is increasingly under strain, including limitations in social workforce capacity. Some GBV survivors may also not feel safe in accessing government facilities. As such, targeted capacity support to national protection systems and local actors will be essential to sustain access to these services.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC
ADVOCACY &
OPERATIONAL
PRIORITIES

Protect Iranian refugees and asylum seekers, including those in settlements or relocated in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Maintain non-refoulement, access to territory, registration and documentation and access to national services for any new arrivals.

Apply an out-of-camp approach from onset for new arrivals.



285,800

Iranians crossed into Türkiye (as of 21 May 2026)

252,900

Iranian nationals crossed back into Iran (as of 21 May 2026)

667,565

Voluntary returns to Syria

PRIORITY ANALYSIS & PROTECTION RISKS

The recent regional escalation is placing growing pressure on Türkiye's already stretched resources for refugees. Annual inflation reached 32.37% in April 2026, partly driven by rising fuel costs linked to regional instability, making everyday essentials more expensive for both host communities and the over 2 million refugees Türkiye supports. A prolonged conflict risks pushing Türkiye's current account deficit significantly higher, pressuring the overall national capacity. The impact of the regional situation on socio-economic conditions in Türkiye warrants continued monitoring.

Cross-border movements continue to largely reflect routine mobility rather than large-scale displacement. Iranian nationals may enter Türkiye under the existing visa-exemption regime for up to 90 days, and entry and exit figures have remained stable, with no indication of change in the profile or reasons for travel of arriving Iranian nationals.

The vast majority interviewed by UNHCR upon arrival reported no restrictions on crossing and no impediments to access to territory. While movements remain predominantly orderly and regular – comprising families and individuals travelling for varying reasons – some individuals have indicated an intention to seek international protection, and the proportion reporting that their decision to cross was taken following recent developments in Iran continues to increase rather than stabilise.

Afghan nationals continue to constitute the majority of those apprehended in border provinces with Iran, with no large-scale influx directly linked to the conflict observed during the reporting period. The Afghan population in Türkiye nonetheless describes the situation in Iran as a source of heightened psychological stress, particularly due to concerns for relatives remaining there and difficulties maintaining communication with them.

Voluntary returns to Syria from Türkiye continue, though at a slightly reduced rate compared to previous months, with community feedback indicating that hesitancy is driven primarily by economic conditions, limited livelihood opportunities, housing shortages and access to services inside Syria rather than broader regional developments. The impact of the regional situation on socio-economic conditions in Türkiye warrants regular monitoring. Continued monitoring of demographic profiles – including sex, age, disability, and household composition – is ongoing to identify emerging protection needs, with particular attention to vulnerable groups, including women travelling alone, female-headed households, and older persons. Changes in mobility patterns, economic stress, and family separation may heighten exposure to GBV, trafficking, exploitation, and psychosocial distress; gender-specific protection return monitoring and referral pathways should be maintained.

PROTECTION RESPONSE

Cross-border movements of Iranian nationals have not resulted in major changes to the protection environment or triggered large-scale emergency response measures, with most arrivals continuing to enter regularly through the visa-exemption regime. UNHCR continues to monitor the situation in close coordination with the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) and partners.

Preparedness focuses on reinforcing coordination, strengthening information management and analysis, and mapping response capacities to ensure readiness should movements increase. Inter-agency coordination mechanisms remain in place. The response is anchored in support to national systems through technical capacity sharing, coordination support and engagement with public institutions and municipalities.

Existing protection services continue through national and partner systems, including community-based protection, information and counselling, legal assistance and referrals, and child protection and GBV prevention and response.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC
ADVOCACY &
OPERATIONAL
PRIORITIES

Maintain protection space and access to asylum procedures for those seeking international protection.

Reinforce existing national systems and PMM-led coordination structures through preparedness.

Maintain CP, GBV, MHPSS and interpretation capacities ready for scale-up.



18 ARMENIA & TURKMENISTAN

ARMENIA

The regional escalation has not materially altered the protection environment in Armenia. The Agarak border crossing with Iran remains open, with no impediments to access to territory, freedom of movement, or risk of refoulement. Official statistics for 28 February–15 April indicate near-equal entry and exit volumes (18,270 entries; 17,515 exits), with those entering predominantly commercial truck drivers. No large-scale displacement-driven movements have been observed. Iranian nationals may enter, transit, and remain in Armenia visa-free for up to 90 days in any 180-day period; this arrangement remains in place.

Since 28 February, UNHCR has scaled up border monitoring and engaged national authorities on emergency preparedness and mass influx response. The Government of Armenia remains committed to its 1951 Convention obligations, and regular RSD procedures apply. Between 28 February and 5 May, 16 asylum applications were received from Iranians and 2 from Iraqi nationals who had transited through Iran. In April, the Migration and Citizenship Service extended consideration of pending Iranian claims submitted prior to 28 February by one month. The number of Iranians approaching UNHCR for counselling has increased significantly, focused on asylum procedures, financial and housing assistance, and resettlement.

Reception and assistance capacity remains constrained. The sole reception centre – at full capacity of approximately 60 beds before the conflict – faces pressure against 600 asylum requests in 2025 and 170 in the first quarter of 2026. Government cash assistance is limited to three months: approximately USD 55 per month for a household head and USD 40 per additional family member. Preparedness priorities include an RSD office in Meghri, closer to the point of entry, and additional translation capacity through MCS and UNHCR's partner.

Armenia remains in a preparedness phase. Planning has been carried out in support of Government-led preparedness, with UNHCR coordinating refugee-oriented discussions in line with its mandate, working closely with WFP, UNDP, IOM, UN Women, UNICEF and UNFPA. This has included a focus on asylum access and protection-sensitive planning. NGO contributions have been coordinated by the Government of Armenia, supported by UNHCR. The current operational response remains limited and is primarily focused on supporting individuals accessing the asylum system, providing necessary counselling and referrals, and delivering assistance to persons with identified protection needs.

TURKMENISTAN

Turkmenistan shares an extensive 1,148 km border with Iran. No major changes to the protection environment have been observed in the country since the start of the regional escalation. All four border crossing points with Iran (Sarakhs, Gaudan, Altyn Asyr and Artyk) remain open for all nationalities in line with entry and exit requirements of the country. Since February 2026, safe transit of third-country nationals has been facilitated by the government through its borders as a "humanitarian corridor".

The Government of Turkmenistan retains primary responsibility and operational leadership for all emergency preparedness and response activities within its territory. The country remains committed to its obligations under the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Temporary protection, preparedness and response measures are grounded in the national legal framework, including the Law on Refugees, the Law on Humanitarian Assistance in Emergency Situations, and other relevant legislation.

Preparedness and response efforts are focused on supporting national protection capacity to respond effectively in the event of a mass influx.

The Inter-Agency Contingency Plan (IACP) was developed by the UN Country Team in Turkmenistan, defining the role of UN Systems for preparedness and response in case of a mass influx. The plan establishes the inter-agency coordination architecture, whereby the UN Resident Coordinator will facilitate system-wide coordination among UN agencies (UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, WHO, UNFPA, OHCHR and UNDP), while the inter-agency response will be coordinated through the Refugee Coordination Forum and guided by the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), with UNHCR providing overall coordination leadership under RCM and sectoral co-leads designated in line with global guidance.

UNHCR, together with UNICEF in Turkmenistan, is coordinating a series of joint preparedness activities planned for June and July under the framework of the IACP. In addition, UNHCR has established a partnership framework agreement with the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan to strengthen the operational preparedness capacities on the ground.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ADVOCACY & OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES	Armenia: Expand reception capacity, including operationalising the new Abovyan reception centre.	Increase budgetary allocations and per-capita CBI value to cover accommodation and basic needs.	In a mass-influx scenario, conduct registration and RSD in Syunik province close to the Iran border.
	Turkmenistan: Maintain access to territory and uphold 1951 Convention obligations and national legal framework.	Expand joint preparedness activities under IACP (June–July 2026) with UNICEF and National Red Crescent.	Support RCM coordination architecture and ensure readiness for mass-influx scenario if conditions change.

WIDER EFFECTS ON REFUGEE PROTECTION IN HOST CONTEXTS IN THE REGION

The wider impact of the situation is also affecting host country contexts in the region that are not facing direct refugee inflows or returns due to the hostilities in Iran and Lebanon, including through economic consequences and government reprioritisation during a period of heightened security concern. Protection actors also highlight that the knock-on effect of the situation in Lebanon on Syria's refugee returns sustainable reintegration capacity may impact the returns decision-making of Syrian refugees elsewhere, highlighting the need for continued quality of asylum in host countries.

Given the complex dynamics and grave humanitarian consequences of ongoing hostilities in Gaza, the situation for forcibly displaced in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is covered in detail outside of this document (see box below).

JORDAN

2025 Baseline: 404,179 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan as of 31 May 2026 as well as more than 2.39 million registered Palestine refugees, some 3,000 of whom are Palestine Refugees from Syria without legal status in Jordan. The VAF 2026 ([UNHCR, published 20 May 2026](#)) provides the most current baseline for sociology-economic vulnerabilities and protection risks refugees in Jordan face and should be referenced for all current vulnerability data. The UNHCR Basic Needs Cash Assessment (April 2026) identifies cash assistance as the primary stabiliser for refugee households. Debt is a significant barrier to return, with households holding debts averaging 1,600 JOD per household (49% cite debt as barrier to return).

Post-28 February 2026: Indirect Exposure: No direct refugee inflows from the 2026 escalation have been recorded. The primary indirect impact channel is economic spillover through trade disruption and energy prices, compounding pre-existing fiscal pressures on the Jordanian government.

Funding constraints and response adjustments: The government has launched technical consultations with line ministries, UN agencies and donors on a revised and prioritized Jordan Response Plan for the refugee response given the changes in Syria since December 2024, the needs of refugees wishing to return to Syria and the needs of those who wish to remain in Jordan. Severe funding shortages, however, place vulnerable refugees in a critical situation, especially in the camps, where refugees are almost entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance. The knock-on effect on donor and government attention being absorbed by the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and acute needs in countries other than Jordan is being felt operationally at a moment of heightened need.

Return dynamics – downstream implications: No direct impact on Syrian return decision-making from Jordan has been recorded to date, though continued insecurity in areas of origin from where many refugees in Jordan hail, such as Dara'a, and the sharp increase in largely-involuntary crossings from Lebanon to Syria (413,800; 2 Mar-11 May 2026) is placing pressure on absorption capacity in Syria, and may negatively affect return decisions over the medium term.

Advocacy: Maintain programming and funding for protection, including for continued registration and documentation, and for priorities emerging from the government-led consultations on the updated Jordan Response Plan.

SYRIAN REFUGEE RETURN INTENTIONS – Flash Survey (January 2025, UNHCR): Egypt 42% near-term intent (12 months) – highest of all countries; Jordan 40%; Lebanon 24%; Iraq 12%; Regional average 27%. Both Egypt and Jordan show high long-term aspiration (83% and 85% respectively). 70% of Jordan-hosted Syrians interested in 'go-and-see' visits before committing to return. ERPIS Wave 2 (April 2026): updated Egypt- and Jordan-specific findings published 26 April 2026. **Note:** these figures predate the 28 February 2026 escalation.

EGYPT

2025 Baseline : ~98,089 registered Syrian refugees in Egypt (UNHCR, May 2026), alongside 851,590 Sudanese refugees (31 May 2026; 76% of total registered population; with ~55,000 in registration backlog, speaking to already strained protection systems, following the Sudan shock). According to the EVAR 2025, 65% of refugee households are highly or extremely vulnerable. Female-headed households face the most severe deprivation. 58% are food insecure; 38% of food-insecure households have at least one child under five needing urgent nutrition support; 92% rely on food consumption-based coping strategies. **Service access and legal environment:** 48% of school-age children are out of school; 29% cannot access health services (94% cite cost); 76% of refugee HHs rent; 61% face eviction risk. Negative sentiment from host community towards refugees has been surging as the socio-economic situation has worsened. A new asylum law enacted December 2024 transfers key registration, RSD and documentation responsibilities from UNHCR to the Egyptian authorities (PCRA); executive regulations issued on 21 May 2026. Humanitarian funding gap exceeded 70% of total requirements by end-2025, triggering cuts in food, cash, and protection services.

Post-28 February 2026: Indirect Exposure and Documented Knock-On Effects: While not directly affected by the hostilities, Egypt has experienced energy and economic pressures explicitly attributed by the Egyptian government to the regional situation. Fuel prices have increased as a result, further affecting the purchasing power and resilience to protection risks of the refugee population. **Government measures:** Government-mandated closure of commercial establishments from 9pm for the month of April 2026 – explicitly announced as an energy-saving response to the regional situation – directly reduced informal income for urban refugees. **Detention and child protection:** A surge in detention of persons of concern is an ongoing and documented protection concern running in parallel to the conflict-related dynamics. Child protection risks – early marriage, child labour, and informal work as negative coping strategies – were identified in the EVAR 2025 baseline and are assessed to have worsened under post-escalation economic pressure.

Advocacy: Scale up protection and access to essential services for refugees, promote social cohesion and counter xenophobia, strengthen protection safeguards, including throughout the transition to a national asylum management system.

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY (oPt): More than 934,000 registered Palestine Refugees live in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Gaza the population includes some 1.6 million Palestine Refugees. The OPT faces a protracted political crisis, marked by decades of Israeli military occupation, non-compliance with IHL and IHRL and internal Palestinian divisions. The Gaza Strip has been under blockade since 2007 and has experienced recurrent escalations of hostilities between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups. The latest round of hostilities, which began in October 2023, has led to unprecedented levels of death, destruction, and suffering. For more information, please visit [UNRWA](#) and [OCHA](#) resources.



Country	Inter-Agency Protection Coordination Mechanism
Iran	Country Refugee Response Plan (CRRP) – Protection Working Group (PRT WG) (10 protection partners, chaired by UNHCR).
Afghanistan	Protection Coordination Group (PCG) – bringing together protection partners at national and sub-national levels (74 protection partners, coordinated by UNHCR and co-coordinated by NRC).
Pakistan	Refugee Protection Working Group (RPWG) under the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) – coordinating protection response for Afghan refugees (61 protection partners, co-chaired by UNHCR and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees).
Türkiye	Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) – Protection Working Group coordinating inter-agency protection response (57 protection partners, chaired by UNHCR).
Iraq	Ad-hoc inter-agency protection coordination mechanism for contingency planning including both UNs and NGOs – following the deactivation of the Protection Platform at end of 2025, coordination continues through thematic groups (Example: Gender) alongside dedicated contingency planning meetings with 7 UN agencies as a core group.
Lebanon	Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) –Protection Sector / Working Group coordinating inter-agency protection response (78 protection partners, led by MoSA, coordinated by UNHCR and co-coordinated by OXFAM).
Syria	Protection Sector– coordinating protection response across Syria in line with the IASC cluster approach (154 protection partners, coordinated by UNHCR and co-coordinated by IRC).
Jordan	Refugee Coordination Model (RCM-Protection Sector and sub-sectors (GBVCP) – Protection Working Group (53 protection partners, co-chaired by UNHCR with the National Council for Family Affairs).
Egypt	Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) – Protection Working Group (43 protection partners, chaired by UNHCR).
Turkmenistan	Joint preparedness framework – coordinates preparedness activities under the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan (IACP), with RCM coordination architecture to be established for mass-influx scenarios (4 protection partners).
Armenia	Inter-agency preparedness coordination – Armenia remains in a preparedness phase. UN agencies and partners coordinate through established inter-agency mechanisms, with UNHCR facilitating refugee preparedness discussions with the Government on asylum access, protection-sensitive contingency planning, and preparedness (8 protection partners).



21 INTER-AGENCY PROTECTION PARTNERS

Country	Protection Partners
Afghanistan	For purposes of ensuring confidentiality , the full list of protection partners in Afghanistan is not made public. Please reach out to the Protection Coordination Group for any questions related to partners in the country.
Armenia	UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, PiN, Mission Armenia NGO, ACH, UNDP, UN Women
Egypt	Protection WG: (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, WHO, WFP, UN Women, MSF, DRC/MMC, Plan International, CRS, TdH, SCI, HI, ACF, DIHR, EFRR, CARE Egypt, Caritas Egypt, StARS, Etijah, Al Ghad, Balqees, Dajo (URN), CEMC, EUAA, ICRC, RCO, INGO Forum), Child Protection WG: (UNHCR, UNICEF, SC, Caritas, Plan International, CRS, stARS, URN, MSF, Etijah, Tdh/PSTIC, Lifemakers), Community Based-Protection WG: (URN, CEMC, EFRR, CRS, ERC, HI, IOM, Plan International, stARS, Elghad Foundation, UNICEF, SC, WFP, Independent diplomat, Bunyan, EFACC, WatanCBO), GBV WG: (UNHCR, UNFPA, IOM, ICRC,WFP, CARE, Caritas, CRS, EFRR, Etijah, Mersal, MSF, Plan International, Refuge Egypt, SC, stARS, Balqees,URN, Tadamon, UNFPA-MoYS Project)
Iran	UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA, NRC, WHO, WFP, INTERSOS, RI, ICRC
Iraq	UN Core group (UNHCR, WFP, WHO, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women), RAMI (Rapid Assistance Mechanism for Iraq, INGO led consortium including Action against Hunger, DRC, Intersos, La Chaîne de l'espoir, MAG, TdH, Tearfund) and other NGOs
Jordan	ACF, AAH, ACTED, AHS, AMR, ANERA, ARCS, ARDD, AVSI, AWO, Caritas Jordan, CDE, COOPI, DRC, EFE - Jordan, HA, Habitat for Humanity, IFH/NHF, IMC, Intersos, IOCC, IOM, IRC, Islamic Charity Center Society, JHAS, JRF, JWU, LWF, Madrasati, Mateen, MEDAIR, Mercy Corps, MOSD, NRC, OXFAM, Plan International, Questscope, SAMS, SCJ, SOS, TDH, TDH-Italy, TUA, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, VDT, VTC, WFP, WVI.
Lebanon	ABAAD, AICA, Al Fayhaa, Al Midan, ALA, Alpha, AMEL, AND, ANERA, Arcenciel, AVSI, B&Z, CARE, Caritas Lebanon, CESVI, CVC Charity, DCA, DPNA, DRC, Embrace, FSF, Handicap International, Himaya, Himaya Daeem Aataa (HDA) Association, HOOPS, IDRAAC, Imam Sadr Foundation, Intersos, IOM, IRC, Justice Without Frontiers, KAFA, Key of Life, Lavender Gate, Lebanese Social Responsibility - LSR, LECORVAW, LOST, LUPD, Makhzoumi, MECC, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP-UK), Michel Daher Social Foundation - MDSF, Migration Services and Development - MSD, MMM, Mouvement Social, Nabaa, Nabad, NISCVT, NRC, OXFAM, Plan International, PUI, Rahma Association, RDFL, RESTART Lebanon, Right to Play, RMF, Roaa, Sanabel Al janoub, SAWA Group, SCI, Seenaryo, SHEILD, Shift, SI - Solidarités international, SIDC, SIF, Social Urjuwan, Tabitha-Dorcas, TdH-It, TdH-L, The Forum for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, The Lebanese Association For Family Health - SALAMA, UN Women, UNICEF, Utopia, War Child, WVI
Pakistan	National Disaster Management Authority, Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, Sarhad Rural Support Programme, Balochistan Rural Support Programme, Health Department Balochistan, MSF, PDMA Balochistan, BBW, IRP, DANESH, CAR-Balochistan, Taraqee Foundation, SWD, SPO, PPHI, RDO Buner, Pakistan Red Crescent Society, IRC, AHO, SHARP, BWDO, RDO, WAJ, HI, UNHabitat, SPARC, SPADO, MERF, IWO, IOM, SEHER, WEO, IMC, UNHCR, UNICEF, Rahnuma Family Planning Association of Pakistan, Active Help Organization, Shuaa Welfare Foundation, Alpha Foundation, ACTED, Pelican Development Organization, Youth Front Pakistan, Sustainable Peace and Development Organization, INSPIRE, BUIITEMS, MDM, Sabawon, WESS, DFCA, IHHN, Civil Society Support Programme, KK, Medecins Sans Frontieres/Holand(OCA), Peace Foundation, The Aware Foundation (TAF) Pakistan, CPWC, NADRA, UNOPS, RI, ROZAN, RISE Foundation.
Syria	Due to the large number of Sector partners and for the purposes of ensuring confidentiality, the full list of protection partners in is not shared here. Please reach out to the Protection Sector for any questions related to partners in the country.
Turkiye	AHF, ASAM, CARE International, DDD, Dünya Evimiz, Eksi 25, EVSAD, Field Ready Türkiye, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Genç Hayat Vakfı, GOAL International, Hand in Hand, Hatay Metropolitan Municipality, HRDF, Human Appeal, ICMPD, IGAM, IOM, Islamic Relief Worldwide, KADAV, Kaos GL, Kilis Provincial Municipality, LEAP NGO, LWA, Mavi Kalem, Maya Foundation, MUDEM, Multeciler Derneği, NSPPL, Qatar Charity, REALs, Refugee Rights Türkiye, Relief International, RET International, SAMS, Sanliurfa Metropolitan Municipality, SARD, SC, SENED Organization, SEVKAR, STL, TARDE, TKV, TRC, UMHD, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WALD, WHH, World Human Relief, Yedi Basak, Yeryüzü Çocukları Derneği, YSF, Zero Discrimination Association
Turkmenistan	UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, UNHCR



22 METHODOLOGY AND COORDINATION

This inter-agency Refugee Protection Overview synthesizes country-level observations and analysis from Protection Working Groups and other IA protection fora engaged in refugee protection across the Middle East situation. Inputs were gathered via a standardised template in April 2026, updated at end-May. This was complemented by NGO and UN agency inputs at cross-regional level, including drawing on monitoring data, assessments and field insights. Written input at the cross-regional level was directly provided by DRC, IRC, IOM, UN-DCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNRWA, UN Women, WFP. A dedicated cross-regional meeting was held to discuss and validate the analysis at technical level in May. A Cross-Regional Refugee Coordinator led meeting with NGOs' and UN Agencies' regional directors and members of the donor community was held in early June, ahead of finalization of the document. UNHCR expresses sincere gratitude for strong collaboration at all levels.

This product aims to provide a narrative overview and highlight key emerging themes, Further analytical products will follow based on inter-agency agreement, including a planned protection snapshot for Q2-2026 (cross population).



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REFUGEE EXPERIENCES

Over the last couple of months, the list of people who have debts and owe me money has got longer and longer. This book is full of their names and the amount they owe me. I have to sell people things on credit and don't know if I will ever be repaid.

Bahzad Mohammad

Syrian refugee and small market owner, Basirma refugee camp, Iraq

I felt trapped in fear, unable to sleep, work, or even leave enclosed spaces, but after the livelihoods support received, today, I am unable to plan my days, support my family, and look toward the future.

Abu Mohammad

Recent refugee returnee to Syria - Mawaddah community centre, Homs Governorate, Syria

The overall atmosphere within the community is high - tense with widespread anxiety and stress driven by rising inflation and loss of livelihoods. Many families rely on daily wages, and the loss of work has made it increasingly difficult to afford food, rent and medical expenses.

Afghan Refugees in Iran

Protection Overview of Afghan Refugees in Iran - Key Protection Risks, Needs and Priorities amid Economic Pressure and Insecurity, April 2026