

Update 12
Iraqi Refugee Returns/Syrian Refugees
Syria Situation
1 August 2012

1. Overview:

The number of Iraqi returnees from Syria recorded a decline on 31 July, with only 251 Iraqis crossing the three border points of Al-Waleed, Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im.

According to the figures released by the border immigration offices at 12:00 am, Wednesday, 1 August, 42 Iraqis returned through Al-Waleed while 82 returnees entered through Al-Qa'im and 127 through Rabi'aa, bringing the total number of returnees since 18 July to 20,353, among them 5,222 returnees by air.

UNHCR is following up with MoDM Return Assistance Centres (RAC)s that have been registering returnees as well as with its Return, Integration and Community Centre (RICC)s to track the resettlement cases of refugee returnees with the relevant embassies to ensure that the resettlement process will continue unhindered.

Syrian refugee movement into Iraq maintained the same trend, with Al-Qa'im border point receiving 102 more refugees. Al-Waleed has seen no refugee movement so far. UNHCR interviewed two Syrian Arabs, both soldiers, who fled Syrian Ya'rubiya border point into Iraq on 21 July, the day the border point fell to the Free Army (it was later retaken by the regular army). The mayor of Rabi'aa requested UNHCR to move them either to Domiz camp in Duhok or to Al-Qa'im. UNHCR is following up on their relocation options as their movement to either location is to be discussed with the concerned authorities.

Since the outbreak of violence in Syria, a total of 3,289 Syrian refugees have entered Iraq. This makes up a grand total of 12,342 Syrian refugees across the country, of whom 9,053 are in Kurdistan.

UNHCR Protection team in Al-Qa'im has registered 51 Syrian families (214 individuals) in a school in Rummana district.

A visit to the border point was conducted by UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im to monitor the refugee movement. The team met with the immigration officers and Iraqi security forces (ISF) commander. The officers confirmed the decreasing number of Syrian refugees mainly because of the difficult conditions of fellow citizens who entered Iraq and were not allowed to join their relatives.

As a part of the Government of Iraq commitment, the local authorities visited the camp to locate the place of intervention in order to start providing the necessary services. The Electricity Department agreed with UNHCR Shelter staff on where to install the electricity pylons and wiring equipment. The Department of Oil Products delivered a letter to UNHCR to start the provision of an amount of 4,000 litres of fuel per month for the generators. The Water Department met with UNICEF and agreed to lay water pipes lines extending from the existing water compact.

The ISF commander, who visits the camp on a regular basis, has expressed his readiness to provide 2 water tankers for showering the camp ground.

Twenty-eight ambulances, fully equipped with medical supplies from Baghdad and Ramadi, are on standby ready to respond to any emergency.

The installation of tents at the camp site is, meanwhile, continuing round the clock, under UNHCR supervision. Sixty tents have been installed at the location which can hold 254 tents.

2. Meetings:

UNHCR had a meeting with MoDM Deputy Minister who heads the emergency cell in Al-Qa'im to discuss the main points of the registration process.

A letter to facilitate access to the registration centres was issued. The security of the staff and centers during registration will be provided by the police and army. Two patrols are to accompany the staff during the process.

Copies of the registration form and card were submitted to the emergency and security cells in Al-Qa'im in order to recognize these documents as official UNHCR papers.

The security cell stressed the need to hand only one card per family rather than per individual.

Approval was granted by the PM Office to proceed with implementing the sponsorship instructions.

UNHCR had a meeting with UNICEF and discussed details of UNICEF's interventions in water, sanitation and education sectors in Al Qaim camp in accordance with the Contingency plan. It was agreed that UNICEF will provide water storage tanks and garbage containers to the camp, in addition to the sanitation facilities.

3. Statistics

3.1 Iraqi returnees

Border point	Number of arrivals 31 July 2012
Al-Waleed:	42
Total Al-Waleed: 12,271	
Rabi'aa:	127
Total Rabi'aa: 1,226	
Al-Qa'im:	82
Total Al-Qa'im: 1,634	
Total returnees on 31 July 2012:	251
By air: 5,222	
Grand total (since 18 July 2012):	20,353

3.2 Syrian refugees

Border point	Number of arrivals 31 July 2012
Al-Waleed:	0
Rabi'aa:	0
Al-Qa'im:	102
Total arrivals since 24 July: 3,289*	
Total arrivals in Kurdistan since March 2011:	9,053
Grand total:	12,342

4. UNHCR arrangements

* Figures updated as at 12:00 am, Wednesday, 1 August 2012
Source of information: Border Immigration Offices/BIAP

Al-Qa'im:

- 450 tents delivered to Al-Qa'im.
- 60 tents installed at the new camp location which holds 254 tents.
- A second batch of 200 NFI packages to be distributed to Syrian families. The kits include rechargeable fans, mattresses, quilts, kitchen sets, stoves and hygiene kits, and water jerry cans.
- Registration forms, laminating machine, refugee cards provided.

Al-Waleed:

- 300 NFI kits delivered to Al Waleed camp.
- NFI items stored in Al-Waleed rub-hall: 1,800 mattress, 1,800 blankets, 208 heaters, 204 plastic sheets, 138 water tanks, 296 kitchen sets, 300 fans and 300 hygiene kits.
- 120 tents installed.
- Water, sanitation, electricity ready to be installed.
- UNHCR RICCs and PACs mobilized in all concerned governorates together with MoDM branches to locate newly arrived returnees and assist them with NFIs, provide them legal assistance.

Rabi'aa:

- Erbil stockpile is ready to support Rabi'aa with tents and NFIs.

Baghdad:

- 60 emergency NFI kits to be delivered to Baghdad's six RICCs, 10 kits each to be distributed to registered new arrivals.

Domiz camp (Duhok):

- A total of 432 tents have been erected in the family section and 144 in the single section.
- Work in progress to build individual sanitation units and closed sewerage for families in sectors 1 and 2 and in single the singles.
- Work is under way to construct tent foundations, walls, cooking areas and sanitation units for 214 family plots in sector 2.
- Working has started to establish 100 tents, cooking areas and sanitation units for singles.
- For the transit area, work has started to establish 48 tents with 24 sanitation units for newly arrived families. The work includes fixing water tanks for each family.
- UNHCR distributed 44 NFI packages and 43 tents for 176 singles. UNHCR staff unloaded 50 NFI packages and 100 pallets in the Domiz Rub-hall and 100 NFI packages and 100 canvas tents in the DDM/UNHCR warehouse.

5. Returnee/refugee needs

Needs for NFIs, water network/tanks, generators with fuel and tents have been identified at locations set to receive Syrian refugees in Al-Qa'im and Al-Waleed.

Returnees' needs, however, stretch from documentation, including PDS cards, Jensiya (national ID) document, to shelter (for some), NFIs, food, health care and cash as well as employment, based on a rapid assessment conducted by UNHCR staff both at the border and at the disembarkation point.

6. Interviews with new arrivals

- Iraqi returnees arriving at Al-Waleed border reported that many Iraqis were still besieged in Aleppo, now scene of fighting between the government army and the opposition. The final destination of most returnee arrivals was Baghdad.

- UNHCR Karbala team reported the arrival of 30 families (121 individuals) from Syria. MoDM branch office in Karbala still has no record of the returnees from Syria, having postponed registration pending further clarification from the Ministry.
- Thirty-seven families (160) individuals are reported to have returned from Syria to Hilla between 29 July - 1 August 2012. Today, UNHCR Hilla staff visited MoDM branch office which was approached by 5 returnee families for registration.
- In Najaf, 3 families (23 individuals) visited MoDM branch for registration and assistance. During the day, a bus with 28 Iraqis on board arrived in the city, coming from Damascus.
- An Iraqi Returnee from Syria was not able to register with MoDM Wassit branch office because of lack of documentation. UNHCR team offered the necessary advice and support to help the returnee obtain the official papers needed.
- UNHCR South team reported the arrival of 62 families (362 individuals) from Syria in Thi-Qar and 5 families (28 individuals) in Diwaniya.

7. Coordination

UNHCR is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDM), Mo-PC, and Governorate Offices. In the meantime, the Office has engaged in a coordination process with various humanitarian actors/stakeholders, including the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) consisting of agencies and NGOs, to ensure necessary support to the Iraqi Government's efforts to respond to the returnees' immediate needs.