

Response in Egypt to Syrian Crisis

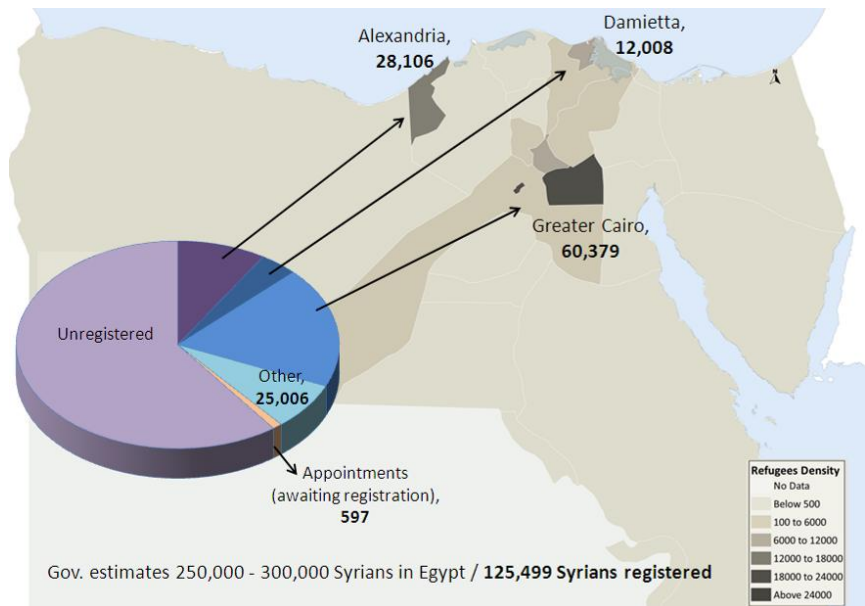
As the conflict in Syria continues to escalate, the number of people fleeing into other countries in the region in search of refuge has been increasing. Some 250,000 to 300,000 Syrians currently reside in Egypt according to Government estimates provided in June, of which UNHCR has registered 125,499 individuals as of 2 November.

As a result of alleged involvement of a few Syrians in the recent political turmoil, there has been a shift in perceptions and the level of sympathy afforded to the Syrian community. Syrians in Egypt have also been experiencing increasing incidents of verbal threats, physical assaults, detention and deportation.

Most Syrians in Egypt are scattered in urban neighbourhoods, renting and sharing accommodation. Lately, Syrians have expressed concerns over economic opportunities and anxiety over their security in Egypt. Some have indicated they will depart to Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon among other destinations. Some have also noted they intend to return to Syria. There have also been increasing reports of departures by sea to Europe.

UNHCR conducts registration, provides counselling, and works with partners to provide legal assistance and address the social needs of vulnerable Syrians in Egypt. UNHCR also operates hotlines for emergencies and inquiries, and sensitizes refugees of the dangers of involvement in political activities.

Registration of Syrians in Egypt (as of 2 November)



50% of registered Syrians arrived to Egypt through a transit country; of those, 77.2% passed through Lebanon, 12.3% through Jordan, and 10.5% through others countries.

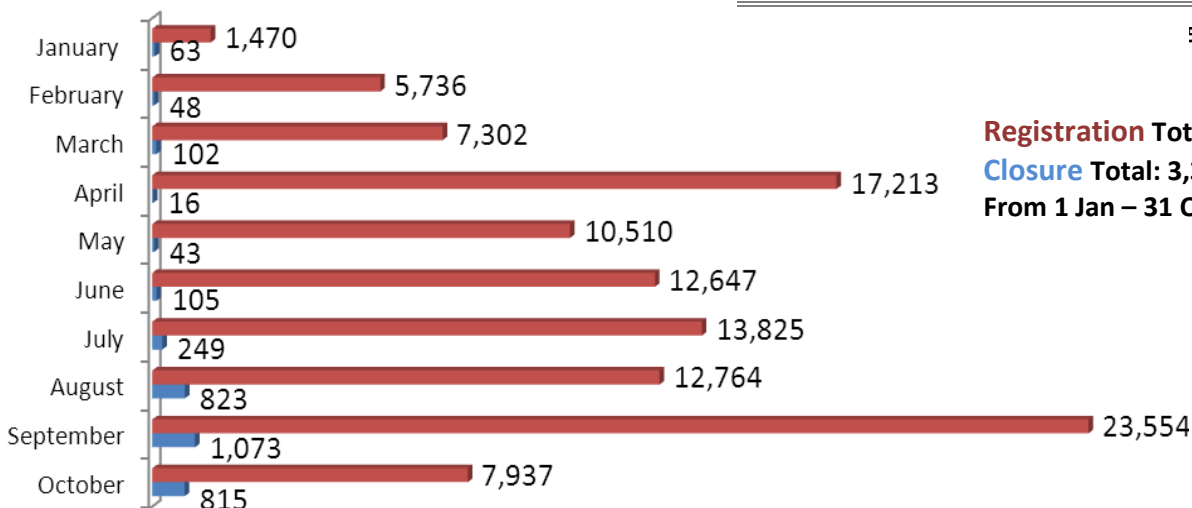
During the week, 1,470 individuals registered in the Zamalek Registration Centres; 64 persons were identified with specific needs.

Gender and Age Breakdown

Age Group	F	M	Total
0 - 4	8,962	9,397	18,359
5 - 11	10,822	11,498	22,320
12 - 17	7,123	8,265	15,388
18 - 39	22,768	23,189	45,957
40 - 59	9,196	9,143	18,339
60+	2,546	2,590	5,136

5,499

Registration and Closure Trends in 2013

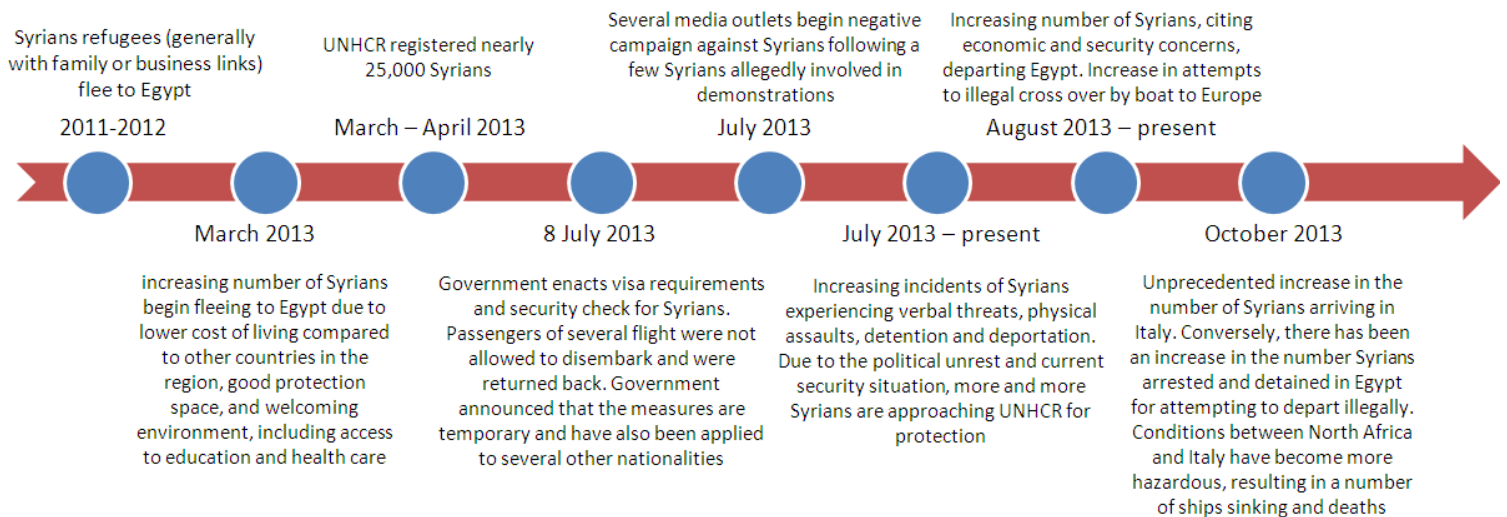


Registration Total: 112,958

Closure Total: 3,337

From 1 Jan – 31 Oct

Protection Timeline



Detentions/Deportations/Illegal Departures

Increasingly, Syrians who have been detained for irregular entry, stay or departure are being kept in administrative detention for unspecified national security reasons and, despite the prosecutor's office ordering their release; they are directed to buy their own plane tickets to leave Egypt to countries they can access. Such a decision, being made in detention, cannot be regarded as a free and well-informed decision made by the individual refugee; neither can in many cases the decision to leave for Turkey or Lebanon in order to exit detention. UNHCR has also provided further instructions to its legal partners in line with UNHCR's updated protection considerations of 22 October 2013 for people fleeing Syria and UNHCR's 2012 Detention Guidelines to enable them to provide better legal advice.

UNHCR has been receiving reports of the Egyptian police requesting the Syrian embassy renew the expired passports of some Syrians in detention. The passports are renewed for one month with a remark that the passport holder should return to Syria. The police subsequently inform the Syrians that they should buy tickets to return to Syria.

UNHCR is aware of Syrian refugees being detained in 35 detention facilities in Greater Cairo and Lower Egypt. Most of these facilities are police stations; not equipped in dealing with large numbers of detainees for a long period. UNHCR has verified the detention of **53** in Port Saeed and **44** in Cairo. While UNHCR has no formal access, on 27-31 October UNHCR visited 6 detention centres in Alexandria and nearby governorates, and confirmed the detention **208** persons that had fled Syria currently in administrative detention; with at least **12** separated minors and **3** unaccompanied minors.

UNHCR had relatively easy access to the six detention centres, and found that detainees are held in tents, prayer spaces, halls, or big offices, and allowed to move freely within police stations. UNHCR also coordinated with its partner, Caritas, which has been providing assistance (food, water, medicine) to the detainees on behalf of UNHCR.

Field/Protection

UNHCR conducted a field visit to Ismailia Governorate, on 29 October to establish contact and set up mechanism for the exchange of information with local authorities. UNHCR also established contact with the local community and set up a Community Based Protection Network to assist in flagging protection concerns and disseminate information throughout the community, including raising awareness about the importance of registration and services available to the Syrian community.

The Governor's office estimates that there are around 1,028 Syrians in the governorate, and noted that Syrians in the area have the same access to public schools, public health and other social facilities as Egyptians. Many of the Syrians in the area noted, however, their savings are becoming depleted and are increasingly finding it difficult to afford housing and survive. An increasing number of families are in desperate need of financial assistance. As well, many Syrians in Ismailia are concerned about their inability to obtain Egyptian visas for their relatives still in Syria.



UNHCR's field team discuss support and assistance for Syrian refugees with the Governor of Ismailia Ahmed Bahaa El-Din Al-Qassas. (Photo: Wageed Al Ayouty)

Field/Protection (cont.)

On 30-31 October UNHCR and UNICEF conducted a joint exploratory mission to Damietta to develop an understanding of protection needs for children in the governorate. The mission identified various protection concerns, such as incidents of harassment and verbal abuse towards Syrian children in and outside of schools, and met with partners, NGO with a focus on children, and members of the Syrian refugee community, including members of the Community Based Protection Network, to discuss potential programmatic response.

During the week, UNHCR also hosted a meeting with community leaders in 10th of Ramada and Obour (Greater Cairo) to discuss WFP's suspension of the distribution of food vouchers in October following complaints by Awlad Ragab supermarket, which accepts WFP's food vouchers, of significant property damage perpetrated by refugees in previous months. WFP and UNHCR took into account the concerns of refugees, and WFP shared with the refugees the policies for the food vouchers for the coming year. The refugees also expressed their concerns over access and the distance to medical services.

Health

UNHCR met with the head of the Ministry of Health's Expanded Programme of Immunization to coordinate efforts to ensure the coverage of refugees in the National Polio vaccination campaign due to take place 17-20 November for all children under 5 in Egypt. UNHCR has also developed an action plan to promote the campaign among refugee communities and support coordination between NGO health partners, community leaders and health authorities at district and governorate levels.



Syrian refugee children in Masaken Osman in Greater Cairo.
(Photo: T. Leposky)

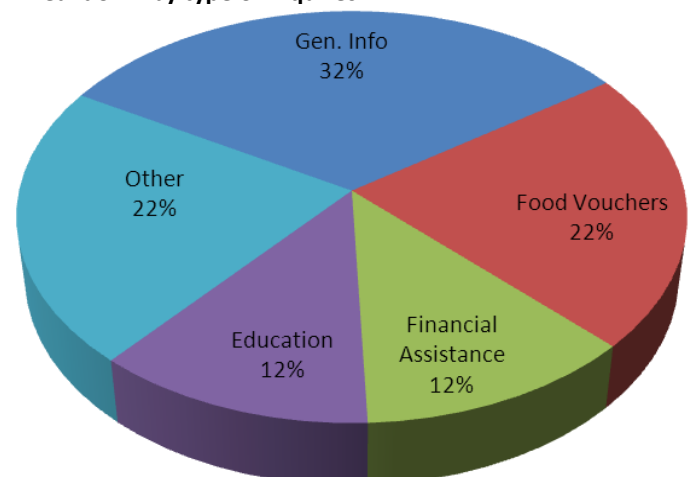
Community Outreach

UNHCR conducted a training session on 28 October for 30 newly recruited psychological workers with UNHCR's partner, PSTIC, in Cairo on UNHCR's mandate and the basic principles of refugee international protection.

UNHCR also conducted an awareness session on 30 October for 26 volunteers from the Community Based Protection Networks (CBPNs) in Obour City. The session focused on UNHCR's mandate and information about registration and protection of Syrian refugees in Egypt. The session stressed the importance of respecting Egyptian laws and regulations and the illegality of any participation in demonstrations. Moreover, the participants were advised to get their residence permit on their Asylum Cards and to disseminate this advice among the Syrian community in their respective residential areas. The participants were briefed on the services UNHCR provides to Syrian refugees in Egypt and how to access them.

Hotline

UNHCR responded to 648 calls:

Breakdown by type of inquires**Partners:**

Caritas • Catholic Relief Services (CRS) • Islamic Relief Worldwide • Mahmoud Mosque society • Refuge Egypt • Resala Association • Terre Des Hommes - TADAMON and Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC) • Save the Children • UNICEF • WFP • WHO • UNFPA

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