

Response in Egypt to Syrian Crisis

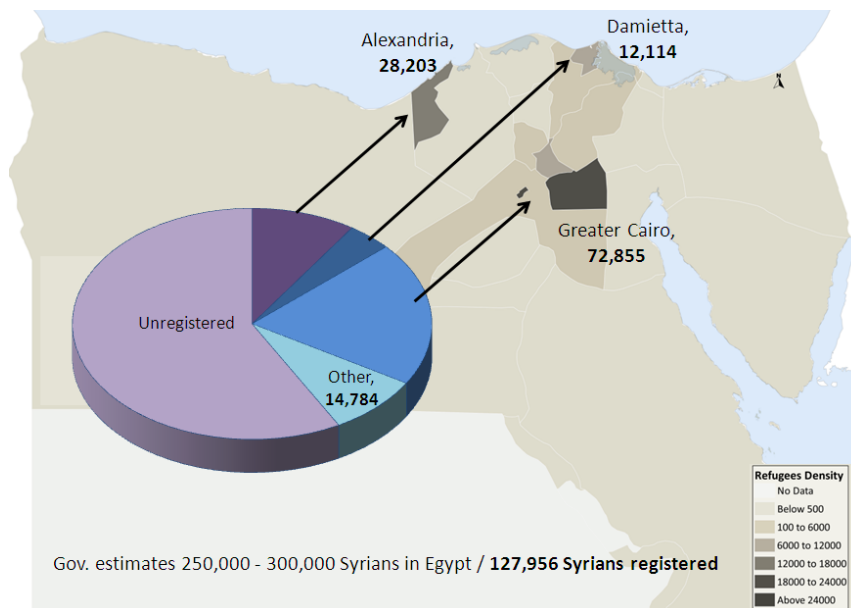
As the conflict in Syria continues to escalate, the number of people fleeing into other countries in the region in search of refuge has been increasing. Some 250,000 to 300,000 Syrians currently reside in Egypt according to Government estimates provided in June, of which UNHCR has registered 127,956 individuals as of 23 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 23 November)



50.1% of registered Syrians arrived to Egypt through a transit country; of those, 77.1% passed through Lebanon, 12.3% through Jordan, and 10.6% through others countries.

During the week, 947 individuals registered in the Zamalek Registration Centre and 752 were registered through mobile registration; 31 persons were identified with specific needs.

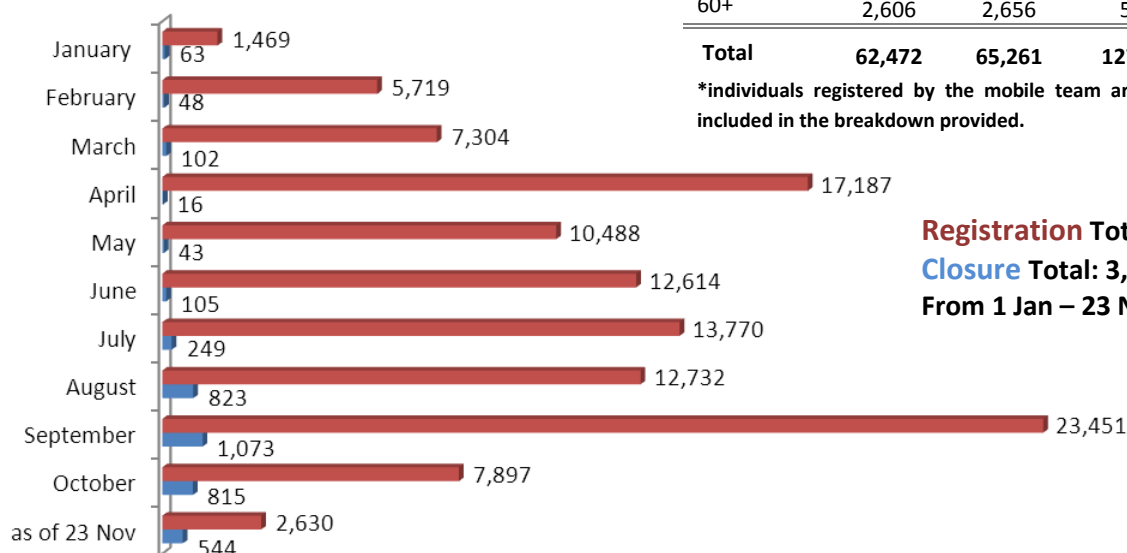
Gender and Age Breakdown

Age Group	F	M	Total
0 - 4	9,148	9,555	18,703
5 - 11	11,016	11,677	22,693
12 - 17	7,242	8,386	15,628
18 - 39	23,105	23,711	46,816
40 - 59	9,355	9,276	18,631
60+	2,606	2,656	5,262

Total 62,472 65,261 127,733*

*individuals registered by the mobile team are not yet included in the breakdown provided.

Registration and Closure Trends in 2013

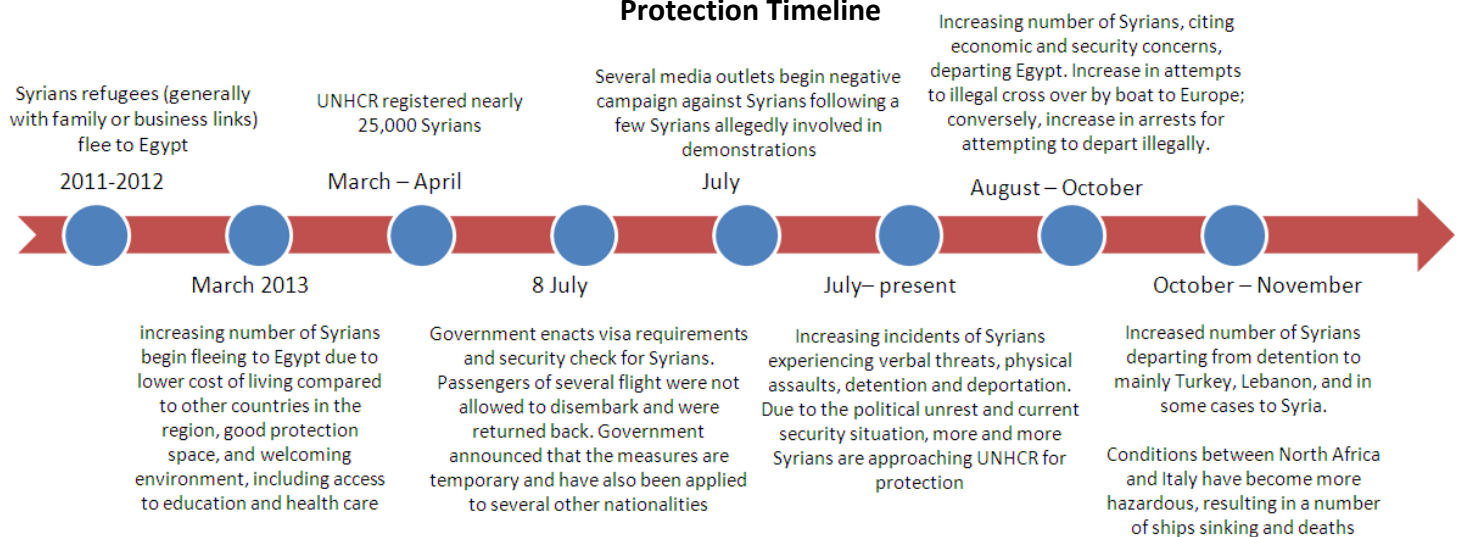


Registration Total: 115,261

Closure Total: 3,881

From 1 Jan – 23 Nov

Protection Timeline



Irregular Departures/Detentions

On 22 November, refugees detained in Montaza II police station started a hunger strike, as a form of appeal to the West to resettle them. UNHCR met with the detainees to convince them to end the hunger strike and accept food provisions. However, the detainees insisted on their position. As a result, UNHCR spoke to its partners, activists and doctors in the area to monitor the health of the detainees closely. In addition, it contacted its legal partners to try to take any action available to address the detainees' conditions.

On 23 November, detainees in the Edko and Rahmaniya detention facilities also joined the hunger strike. However, after long negotiations, UNHCR was able to convince the detainees in Rahmaniya to finally accept food. UNHCR remains in close contact with the refugees and the authorities.

On 25 November, the Governor of Alexandria informed UNHCR's Senior Refugee Law Advisor on emergency deployment to Egypt that the Government will be releasing Syrians in detention whose release had already been ordered by the public prosecutor's office.

At present, UNHCR is aware of **207** persons remain under administrative detention based on national security considerations after attempting irregular departure. Currently the majority of the refugees are being detained in Alexandria, with other verified detentions in Shabrakheit, Port Said and Cairo. Numerous persons that were detained have already departed at their own expense, mainly to Turkey and Lebanon.

UNHCR also met with community leaders in Alexandria who expressed their concern about attempts to depart irregularly via sea and highlighted the need for an awareness raising campaign about the problems and dangers of such a journey, and also to focus on programmes that support coexistence. According to the community leaders, National Security has expressed a willingness to issue visas allowing Syrians to come to Egypt to be reunited with relatives in Egypt. According to the community leaders, National Security is making an effort to improve the reputation and image of the Egyptian authorities and their attitude vis-à-vis Syrian refugees.

Protection

Several incidents were reported recently of authorities stopping and arresting Syrians that have expired residency permits, as well as a poor awareness among authorities about the UNHCR Yellow Card, which functions as an identity document. Syrians have also continued to face difficulties in renewing their residency permits, including delays in the immigration department that lead to expired permits.

On 25 November, Syrian refugees conducted a protest in front of UNHCR's 6th of October office. Protesters noted that several Syrian community associations that UNHCR has met with do not represent their interests. They also provided complaints over the disbursement of assistance and called for resettlement.

Field

UNHCR conducted a field visit to Qena Governorate on 20 November to establish contact with local authorities. UNHCR also established contact with the local community and took note of the specific concerns, particular difficulties in obtaining residency permits. There are around 60 Syrians in the governorate, and most have been finding it increasingly difficult to survive as their savings become depleted and cannot afford to cover housing and other basic needs.



The Governor of Alexandria, Tarek Mahdy Abdel Towab (centre), UNHCR's Senior Refugee Law Advisor, Kees Wouters (left), and Senior Protection Associate, Mahmoud Amin (right), during a meeting in Alexandria on 25 November. (Staff photographer, Governor's Office)

Health

In conjunction with the Ministry of Health's (MoH) rollout of a national polio vaccination campaign, UNHCR, WHO and UNICEF provided support and conducting monitoring. UNHCR distributed flyers and sent out 48,000 sms messages to Syrian families with children under the age of 6 advising them of the polio vaccination campaign, UNHCR field teams mobilized parents and community leaders in preparedness for the November 17-20 National anti-Polio campaign, including going door to door in refugee communities so that children did not miss out on the vaccination. In Damietta, through coordination with local MoH, a mobile vaccination team conducted vaccinations during UNHCR mobile registration.

Community Outreach

On November 20-21, UNHCR held a workshop in collaboration with the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) on international refugee protection. Participants included the Association of Syrian Women, Syrian activists, in addition to lawyers and researchers working with AOHR. The workshop provided a better understanding within the Syrian civil society in Egypt about the rights, obligations and needs of refugees, with specific focus on the Syrian refugee situation. The Syrian participants were particularly advised to get their residence permit on their Asylum Cards and to disseminate this advice among the Syrian community.

On 25 November, UNHCR and the Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) through the American University in Cairo held a Round Table Discussion on the findings of a joint CMRS/UNHCR field research on Syrian refugees in Egypt. The report focused on Syrians that have not registered with UNHCR and notes that many Syrians in Egypt are not aware or properly informed about UNHCR and its mandate. It explores why many Syrians have settled in marginalized areas in search of a higher degree of security, chance for employment and lower prices, and how these locations hinder their ability to register with UNHCR or receive its services. The report also noted that perceptions about restricted mobility of Syrian women and early marriage have been blown out of proportion by the Egyptian media and society. Challenges mentioned include education, child labour, child trauma and livelihood. Recommendations highlight the need to include host communities, governments and development actors in the overall response strategy, and to reach out to Syrian refugees living in other governorates, as well as conducting campaigns that counteract misconception about Syrian refugees.

For further information:

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Kuwait Contribution

Through the generous contribution of 4.1 million USD from the Government of Kuwait, UNHCR and its partners implemented a four-pronged cash assistance programme (Non-food item cash grants, one-time emergency grants, subsistence grants for persons with specific needs, and education grants) to support Syrian refugees in Egypt meet their basic needs. Between April and November the cash assistance programme reached over 90,700 Syrian refugees (42,300 families).

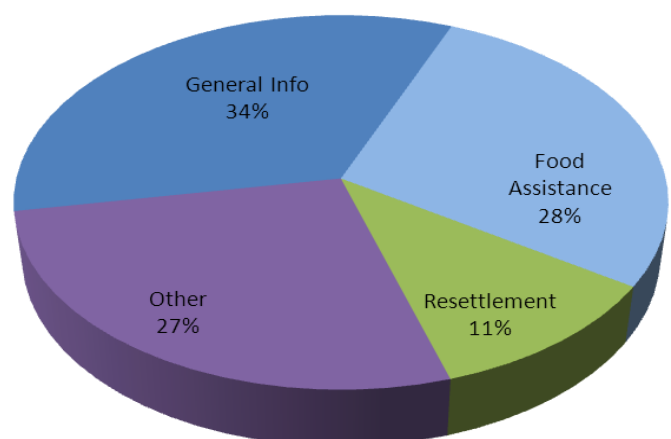


Five Syrian children alongside their Egyptian peers in a fifth grade class in 6th of October in Greater Cairo. There are around 22,000 Syrian children currently enrolled in public schools in Egypt. Over 17,000 students have received education grants; of which over 14,000 were provided through the generous support of the Kuwaiti Government. (UNHCR/M. Hashem)

Hotline

UNHCR responded to 544 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 • UNHABITAT • WHO • UNFPA