INTER-AGENCY COMMUNITY PULSE SURVEY

FEBRUARY 2025

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Rationale and Background

The Syrian refugee situation in Türkiye remains one of the most significant displacement crises in recent history. While discussions on voluntary return have intensified following the political transition in Syria in December 2024, many refugees remain in a state of uncertainty regarding their future. The Inter-Agency Community Pulse Survey, conducted in early 2025 by the UNHCR-led Protection Sector, aims to capture the evolving needs, priorities, and perceptions of Syrian refugees in Türkiye following key developments in Syria and the region. This analysis provides insights into key areas such as housing, employment, access to services, social integration, and return intentions, helping inform humanitarian planning and coordination efforts.

Methodology

The UNHCR-led Inter-Agency Community Pulse Survey was designed to ensure a representative understanding of the Syrian refugee population in Türkiye. The methodology employed a stratified random sampling approach, ensuring that the sample accurately reflected the distribution of refugees across 26 provinces in Türkiye. The survey was conducted via structured phone interviews with individuals aged 18 years and above who had received services from partner organisations in the past year. This approach ensured that the findings were directly relevant to those actively engaging with humanitarian services. A total of 7 partners contributed to the survey by conducting phone interviews.

A total of 404 respondents participated in the survey, giving a sample size sufficient to ensure statistical significance at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error at national level. The gender balance was maintained with equal representation of male and female respondents, ensuring gendered perspectives. Data collection spanned three weeks, with trained enumerators administering a standardised questionnaire developed by UNHCR's Inter-Agency Coordination and Information Management Unit in collaboration with partners.

The survey covered multiple thematic areas, including access to rights and services in Türkiye, employment and economic conditions, social cohesion, intentions to return, housing, land and property rights, as well as information and support needs. The findings from this survey are intended to contribute to ongoing response planning in Türkiye and in Syria, with subsequent rounds scheduled as appropriate to track changes in the refugee situation and inform policy responses.

To provide deeper insights, enumerators were trained to ensure ethical data collection practices, including informed consent and confidentiality measures. The structured s allowed for both quantitative analysis and thematic trends, ensuring a holistic understanding of the evolving needs of Syrian refugees in Türkiye.

Overview of Key Findings

Key findings from the Community Pulse survey are highlighted below:

- **53% of participants reported living in Türkiye for over a decade**, highlighting their long-term presence in the country.

- **54% of respondents indicated that at least one household member has specific needs,** with the most common situations including **medical conditions (30%), disabilities (24%), and single-parent heads of household (7%)**.
- **Among households with school-aged children, 64% of respondents reported that all of their children attend school in Türkiye**, while 20% stated that none of their children are enrolled.
- Barriers in access to healthcare services in Türkiye continue to be reported, **with 13% of respondents indicating challenges**.
- **67% of respondents reported facing broader challenges in their daily lives in Türkiye**, amongst these 78% noted economic hardship as the most significant challenge.
- **48% of respondents are employed informally, while only 11% are formally employed** with a work permit or waiver in Türkiye. Additionally, 97% stated that their income is not enough to fully meet their basic needs, with rent, food, and household essentials cited as the most difficult expenses to cover.
- **Workplaces** (53% daily), **schools/universities** (42% daily), and **neighbourhood/public spaces** (32% daily) were identified as the primary venues for regular contact between Syrian refugees and Turkish community members.
- **25% of respondents reported owning property in Syria, yet among them 33% lacked documentation to verify ownership,** highlighting ongoing concerns around housing and property rights for Syrians.
- Against the background of uncertainty regarding the situation in Syria, **58% of respondents stated they do not intend to return to Syria.** An additional 12% are considering returning one day, 10% intend to return within the next 12 months, 8% within the next five years, 11% remain undecided, and 1% preferred not to respond.
- **Nearly 48% of respondents felt they lack sufficient information to make informed decisions about returning to Syria**, with the most requested information being safety and security updates (77%), housing and property rights (62%), and economic opportunities in Syria (52%).
- Regarding **support needs in Syria**, respondents prioritized **financial assistance** (76%), **healthcare access** (39%), and **help in securing livelihoods in Syria** (36%). **In Türkiye**, the primary support needs are **social assistance** (46%), **employment opportunities** (32%), and **safe and dignified housing** (28%).

Overview of Respondent Profiles and Demographics

Sample Overview and Distribution

The survey reached 404 respondents across 26 provinces, ensuring diverse representation. The gender distribution was 50% male and 50% female respondents. In alignment with registration figures published by the Presidency of Migration Management, most interviews were conducted in provinces with high numbers of Syrians under Temporary Protection. The Southeast region accounted for the largest share of responses (219 interviews), followed by Central Anatolia & Black Sea regions (92), Marmara (60), and the Aegean (33). This geographic distribution enhances the representativeness of the survey findings and allows for regional comparisons across key indicators. Of note, the majority of participants report they have been living in Türkiye for over a decade (53%), highlighting their long-term presence in the country.

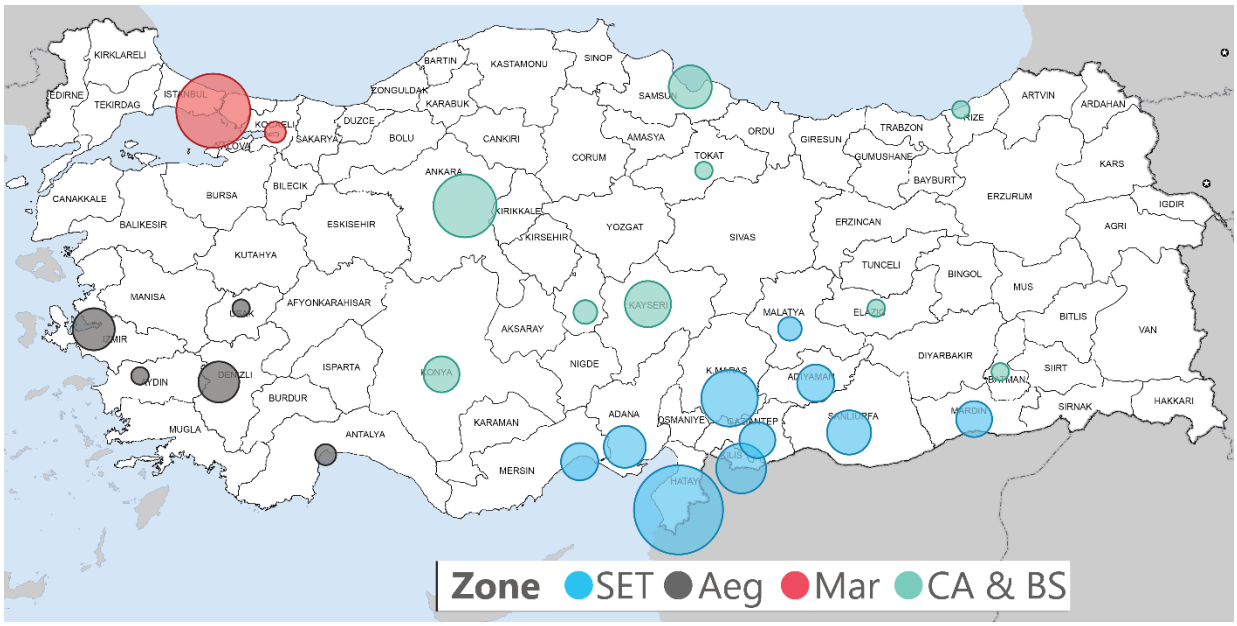

Figure 1: **Sample distribution by Location and Province (n=404)**

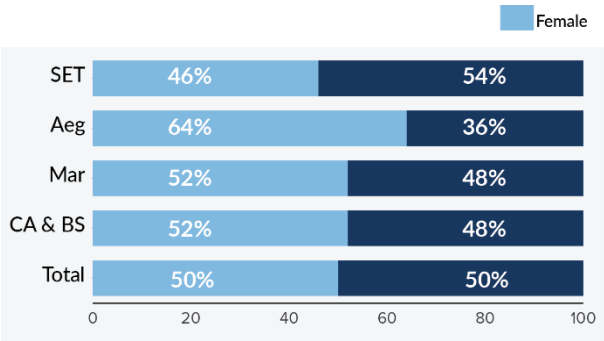

Figure 3: **Gender breakdown of respondents, by location**

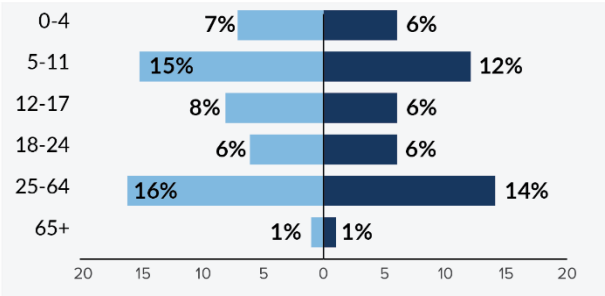

Figure 4: **Household Composition of the Interviewed Families**

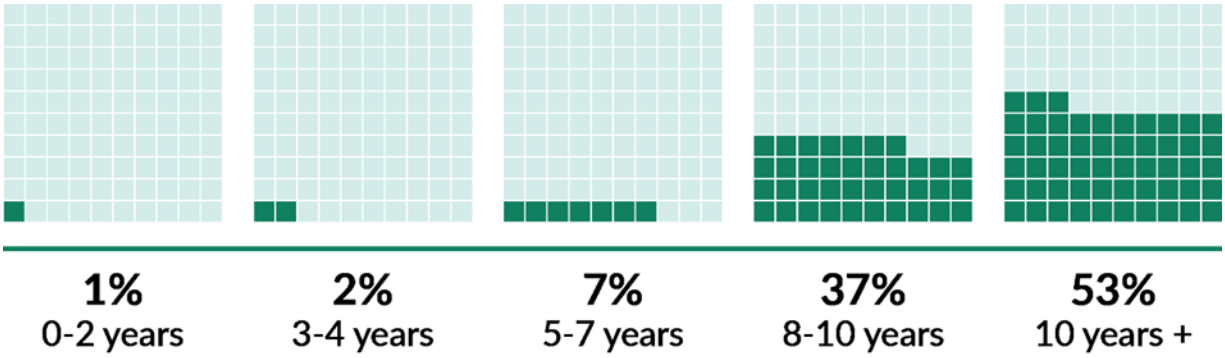

Figure 2: **Duration of residence in Türkiye**

Specific Needs at Household Level

The survey collected data on the presence of specific needs within households. Overall, 54% of respondents indicated that at least one household member has specific needs, while 46% reported none. Among those households with specific needs, the most common vulnerabilities include medical conditions (30%), disabilities (24%), and single-parent heads of household (7%).

Gender-disaggregated findings show that 54% of women and 53% of men reported having a household member with specific needs. For female respondents, the most commonly reported vulnerabilities are medical conditions (24%), disabilities (23%), and single-parent headship (10%). Among male respondents, the most frequent needs are medical conditions (37%), disabilities (24%), and mental health or psychosocial distress (5%).

Findings indicate significant geographical differences with respondents in the Aegean reporting the highest share of households with specific needs (82%). Aegean is followed by Central Anatolia & Black Sea (62%), the Southeast (53%), and Marmara (30%).

Respondents' Place of Origin in Syria

The top three governorates of origin of respondents are Aleppo (50%), Idlib (17%), and Hama (10%), reflecting historical movement patterns linked to conflict intensity and early displacement routes. When compared with registration figures from the Presidency of Migration Management, certain differences in representation emerge. PMM data indicates that 60% of Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye are originally from Aleppo, followed by 9% from Idlib, 5% from Deir-ez-Zor, 5% from Hama, and smaller percentages from other governorates such as Al-Hasakah, Damascus, and Ar-Raqqa. This comparison suggests that while Aleppo continues to dominate as the place of origin, the survey sample slightly overrepresents individuals from Idlib and Hama and underrepresents those from Deir-ez-Zor and Homs. These variations may be attributed to regional differences in service-seeking behaviour, accessibility, and sampling limitations within the phone survey method.

Overview of Situation in Country of Asylum

Access to Rights and Services in Türkiye

Respondents report relatively high levels of access to education in Turkiye. To specify, 64% of respondents note that all of their children attend school. However, a notable 20% of households stated that none of their children are enrolled in schools. Women reported slightly higher full attendance (65%) than men (63%). In terms of geographical differences, respondents based in Marmara report the highest rate of children not attending school (31%).

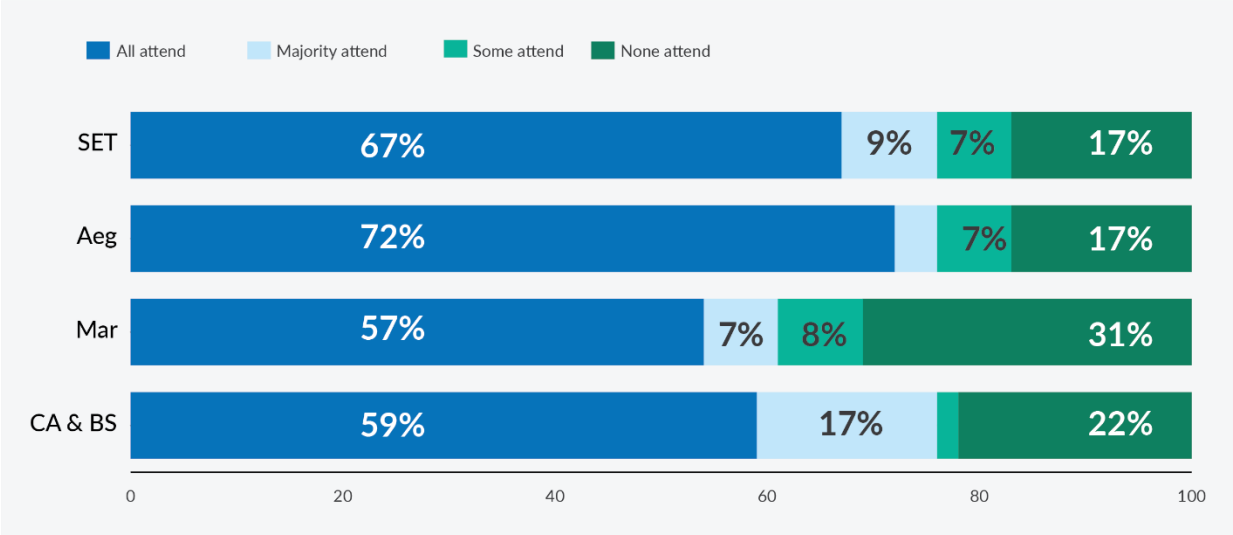

Figure 5: **Access to education by location**

Barriers in access to healthcare services continue to be reported, with 13% of respondents indicating challenges. Barriers are reported at highest levels in the Aegean, with 38% noting they are not able to access despite attempting to, compared to 4% in Marmara. Given that approximately half of households report at least one member with a specific need, with the top two needs identified as medical conditions (30%) and persons with disabilities (24%), ensuring accessible health care services is critical.

Beyond difficulties in accessing services, 67% of respondents report facing broader challenges in their daily lives in Türkiye. The most frequently cited issue is economic hardship, affecting 78% of participants. Other significant concerns include difficulties with accommodation such as high rental costs (41%), high food prices and nutritional insecurity (39%), as well as language barriers (11%) and a persistent fear of deportation (10%), highlighting the precarious conditions many refugees continue to navigate.

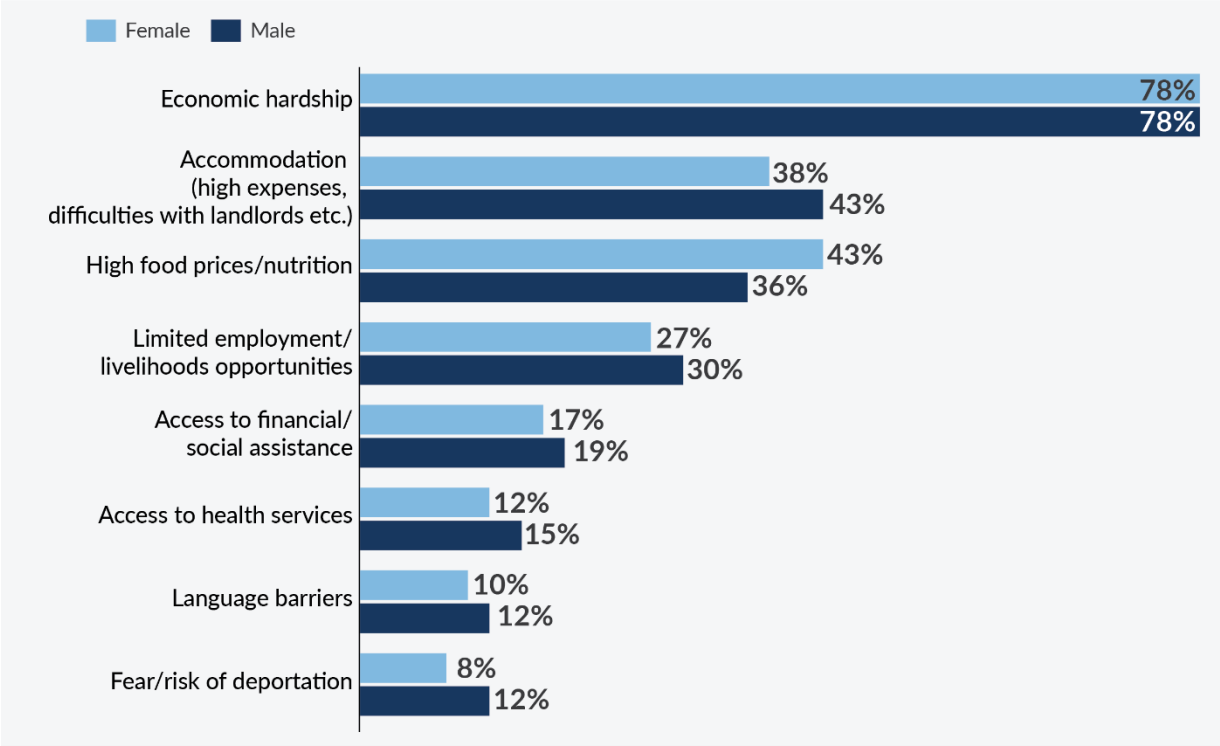

Figure 6: **Main challenges faced in Türkiye by gender**

Employment and Economic Conditions

Economic hardship continues to be a defining challenge for Syrian refugees in Türkiye with high levels of informal employment adding additional uncertainty and reduced protections. The survey shows that 48% of respondents are employed informally, while only 11% are formally employed with a work permit or with a waiver in Türkiye. Informal employment is more prevalent in the Marmara and Central Anatolia & Black Sea regions, while formal employment is highest in Marmara (25%). The industrial sector (44%) and services sector (24%) are the primary sectors of employment. Men report higher levels of employment in the industry sector (56%) and women in the services (49%). Women report higher levels of unemployment (31% compared to 12% of men), reflecting potential gendered barriers to access to the labour force.

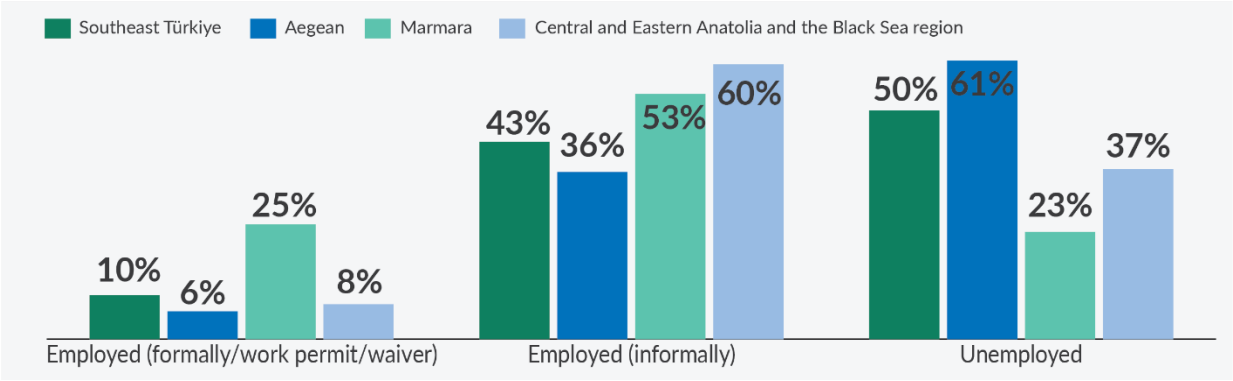

Figure 7: **Comparison of informal and formal employment by region**

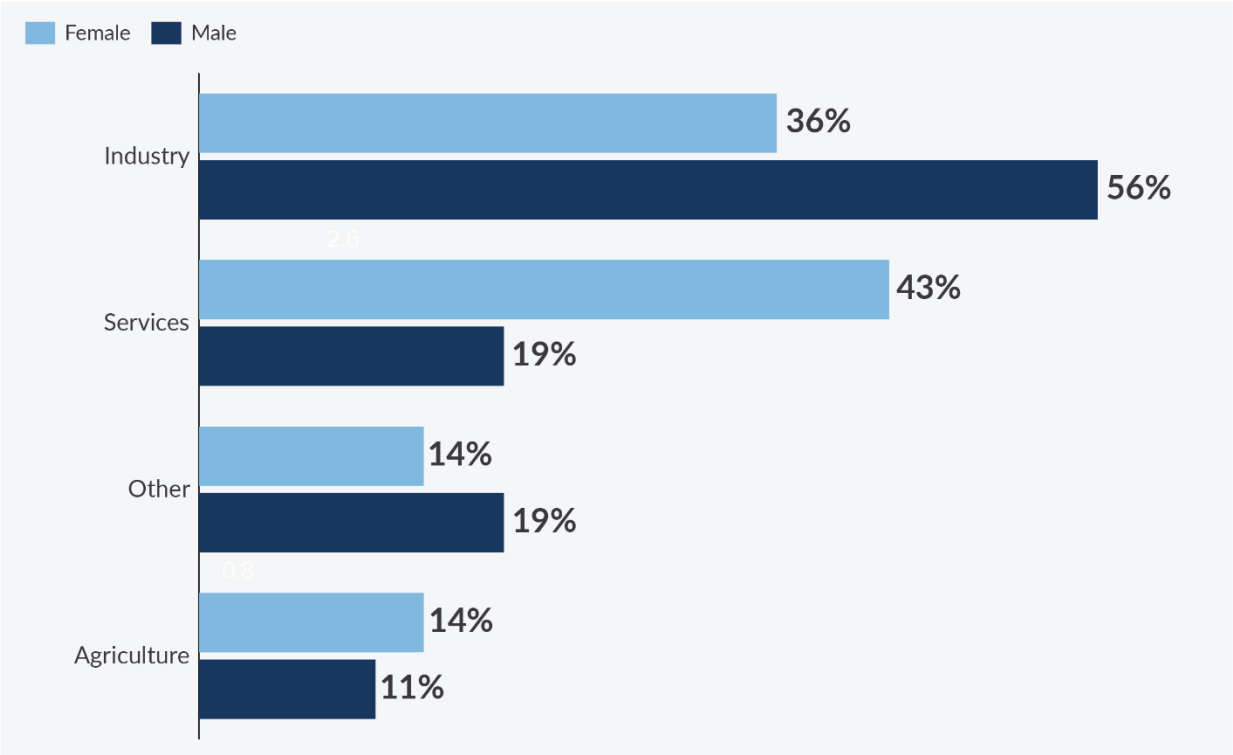

Figure 8: **Employment sector by gender**

67% of respondents state that their income does not allow them to fully meet their basic needs, with rent, food, and household essentials cited as the most difficult costs to cover. Across Türkiye, inability to meet basic needs and monthly expenses is reported to be highest in the Southeast (75%), followed by Aegean (59%), Marmara (56%), and Central Anatolia and Black Sea regions (53%). The percentage of those who report their income is only partially sufficient ranged from 21% in the Southeast to 43% in the Central Anatolia and Black Sea regions. Only 3% of respondents indicate their income allows them to fully meet their basic needs.

Social Cohesion and Perceptions

The survey revealed a complex picture regarding social cohesion and perceptions of safety among Syrian refugees in Türkiye. Interactions with the host community vary considerably by setting. Workplaces (53% daily), schools/universities (42% daily), and neighbourhood/public spaces (32% daily) emerged as the primary venues for regular contact between Syrian refugees and Turkish community members. In terms of differences between men and women vis a vis spaces of interaction with host community members, both mention workplaces as the main space (66% for men compared to 40% for women). Additionally, women are more likely to report no interaction in community, health, or religious spaces.

Levels of interaction between host community members and Syrian refugees are also shaped by access to employment. Across all spaces of interaction[1], individuals employed both formally and informally indicated much more frequent interaction with Turkish community members as opposed to currently unemployed individuals. 88% of formally employed respondents indicate they interact most with Turkish community members in the workplace, compared to 70% reported by informal workers. Additionally, 77% of respondents employed through work permit waivers note highest levels of interaction in the workplace.

Community spaces such as markets, public transportation, and neighbourhoods were also amongst areas of frequent interaction with Turkish community members. While 61% of respondents indicated daily or weekly interaction at markets, 51% did so for neighbourhoods and public spaces. Rates were particularly high for those employed under work permit waivers with 62% reporting weekly market interactions, and 46% reported daily interaction in public spaces, indicating a moderate level of integration in daily life.

In contrast, lower levels of interaction are observed in social or cultural events and religious or community centres across all employment types. For instance, only 3% of formally employed respondents reported daily interaction in social or cultural settings, with 34% never participating. These findings suggest that while employment (particularly formal employment) is a means of fostering engagement in functional spaces like workplaces and markets, broader community and cultural engagement remains limited and may benefit from targeted social cohesion efforts.

[1] Spaces of interaction between Turkish community members and Syrian refugees as defined in the questionnaire include: workplace, school/university, markets/shopping centers, healthcare facilities, public transportation, religious/community centers, social or cultural events, neighborhood/public spaces, other places.

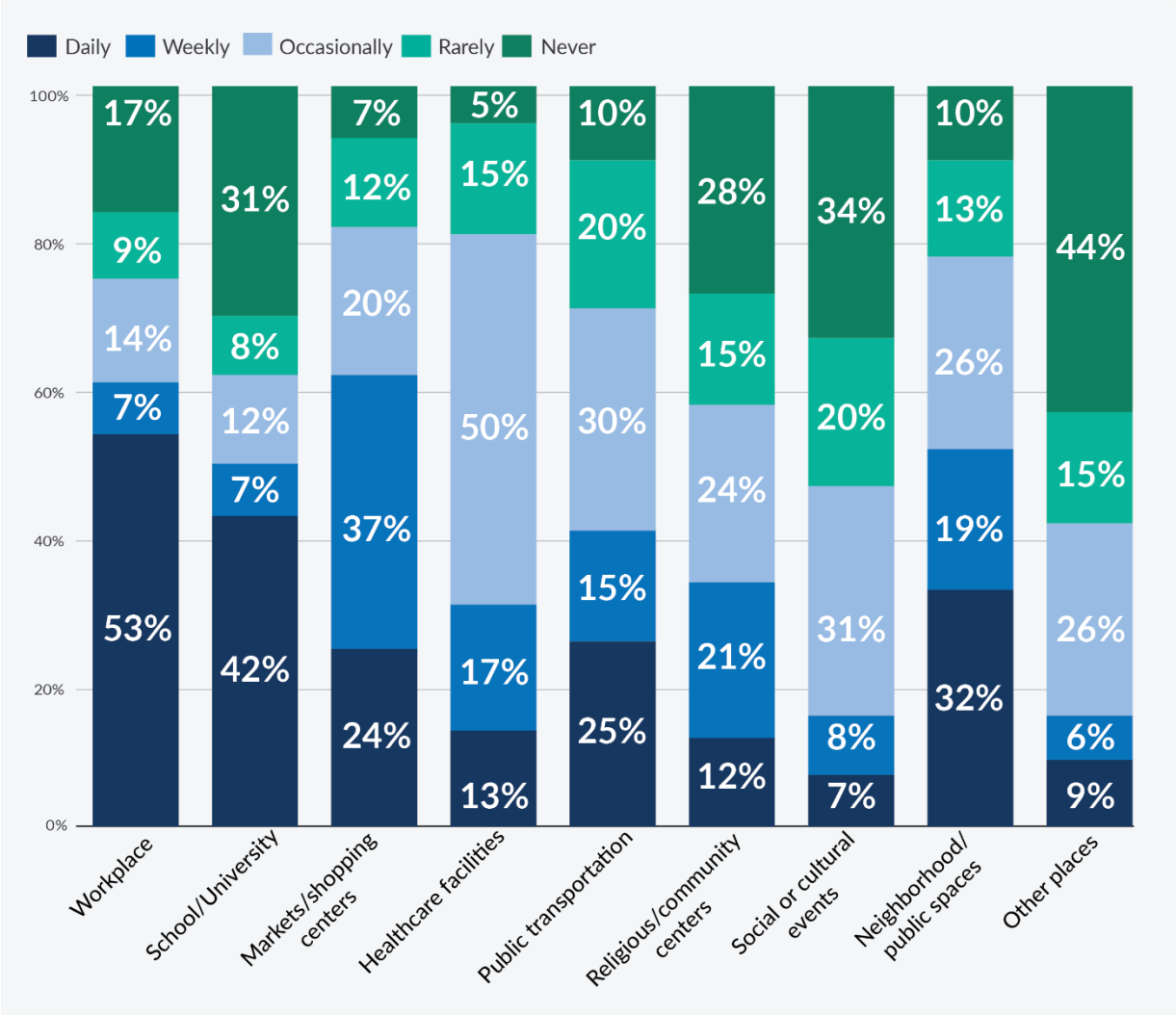

Figure 9: **Frequency of interaction by setting**

When asked about broader perceptions of their situation in Türkiye, the results reflected both optimism and concern. While 62% agreed that Syrians have integrated well into Turkish society and want to contribute positively and 47% agreed that Syrians are happy in Türkiye, worries around discrimination were also prominent. 38% of respondents acknowledged facing discrimination, with reports highest in Aegean (58%). Furthermore, 71% expressed concerns over being forcibly returned due to recent developments, with Central Anatolia & Black Sea and Aegean reporting the highest levels of concern.

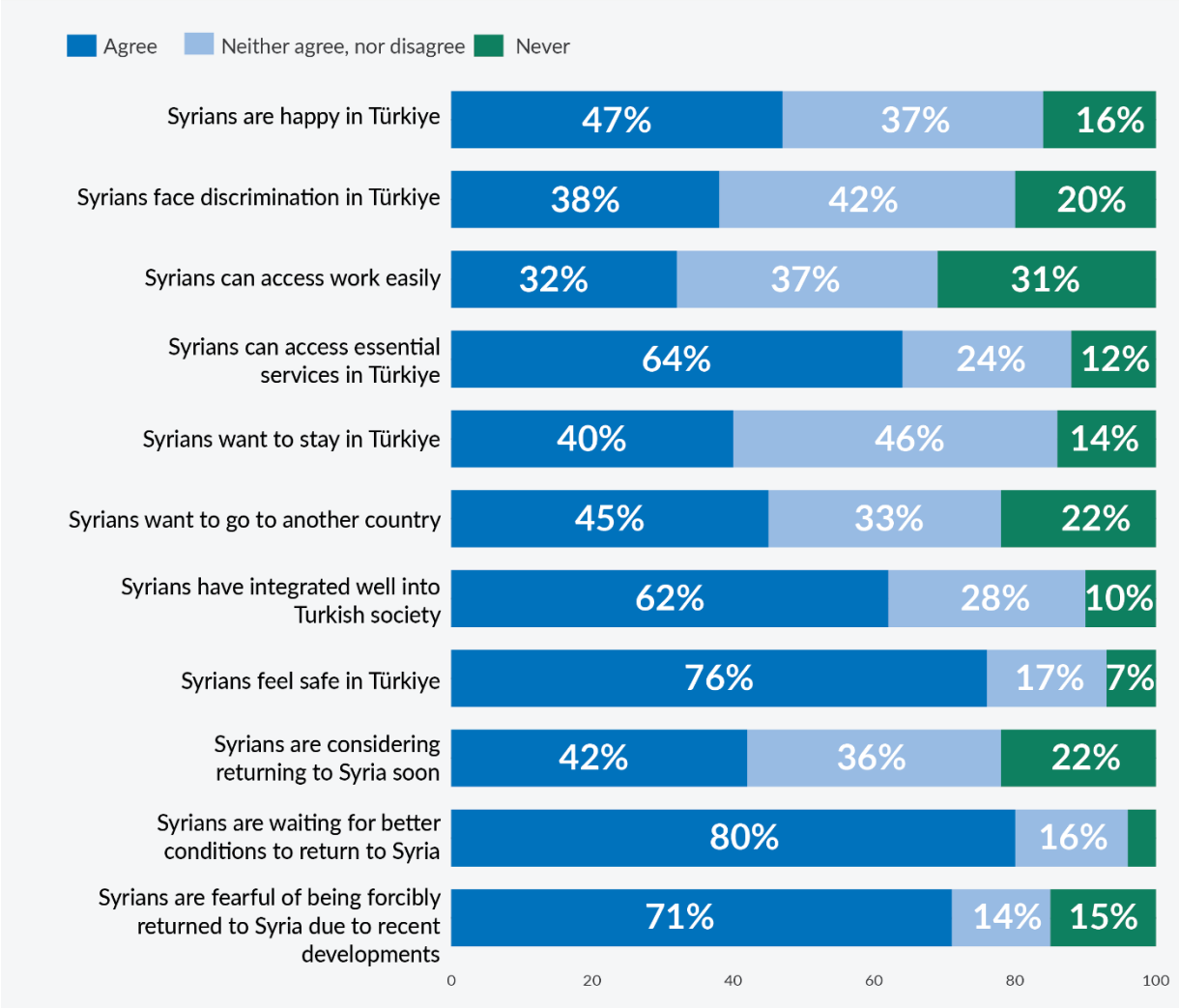

Figure 10: **Key perception statements**

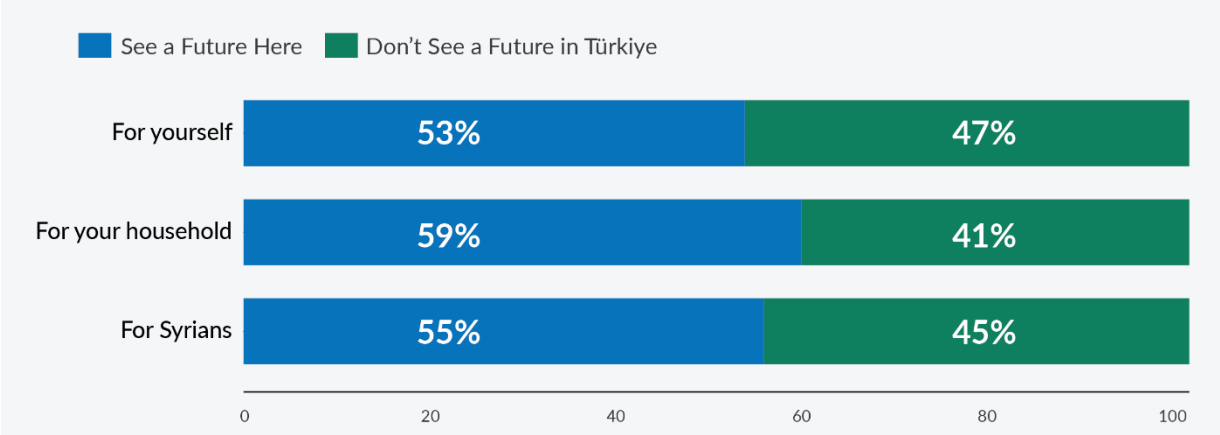

Figure 11: **Syrian's Future in Türkiye**

Overview of Refugees' Perception of Situation in Country of Origin

Housing and Property Ownership in Syria

Housing and property rights remain a significant concern for Syrians, particularly for those contemplating return. 25% of respondents report owning property in Syria, with 55% indicating that they have valid ownership documents. However, among respondents that report owning property, an additional 33% lack documentation to prove ownership, with consequences for potential future restitution processes. An additional 10% have documentation but are unsure of its validity, and 2% preferred not to respond.

Women were slightly less likely to report owning property than men (23% vs. 28%), but more likely to possess valid documentation. Furthermore, gender-disaggregated data shows that 63% of female respondents have valid documents compared to 49% of male respondents. Conversely, 42% of men reported lacking documentation altogether, compared to 22% of women.

Disparities in documentation status were also observed across areas of origin, within Syria. Among respondents planning to return to Aleppo, 65% had valid documentation, while 20% had none and 10% were unsure of its validity. In Idlib, 50% lacked documentation, and only 43% reported holding valid documents. In Hama, documentation levels were more mixed, with a significant number of respondents preferring not to disclose.

Based on communication with their networks in Syria[2], 81% of respondents indicated that their homes in Syria were either fully or partially destroyed, posing a major obstacle to return and reintegration. The damage or destruction of properties is attributed to both the conflict in Syria as well as the 2023 earthquakes.

As for the physical status of housing in Syria, 43% of respondents reported their homes were fully destroyed, while 38% described them as partially destroyed and uninhabitable. Only 8% of homes were deemed inhabitable, another 8% intact, and 4% of respondents were unsure. Gender differences emerged here as well: 50% of women reported their homes were fully destroyed compared to 37% of men. In comparison, 39% of men described their homes as partially destroyed and uninhabitable versus 37% of women.

Among respondents originating from Aleppo, 49% said their homes were partially destroyed and uninhabitable, and 33% were fully destroyed. Respondents from Idlib stated that destruction was evenly split, with 36% fully destroyed and 36% partially destroyed. The most severe damage was reported by respondents from Hama, as 91% of respondents indicated their homes were fully destroyed. Respondents from other cities noted their properties to be only partially habitable, particularly in Ar-Raqqa (67%) and Damascus (50%). These figures illustrate the extensive reconstruction needs across intended areas of return and underscore the importance of tailored shelter interventions.

[2] Respondents were providing information on damage levels based on information received via their networks from within Syria, not from go-and-see visits.

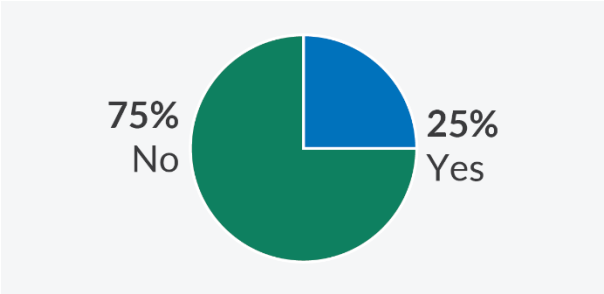

Figure 12: **% of respondents who own property in Syria**

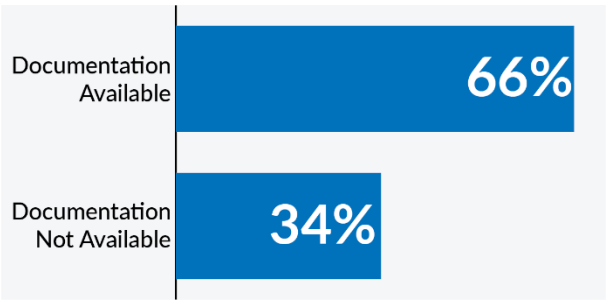

Figure 13: **% of property owners with/without documentation**

Patterns of property ownership varied significantly by location of intended return. Among those who reported planning to return to Aleppo, 25% reported owning property, compared to 21% for those returning to Idlib and 24% for respondents intending to return to Deir-ez-Zor. Ownership rates were lowest among those planning to return to Al-Hasakeh (20%) and Damascus (20%).

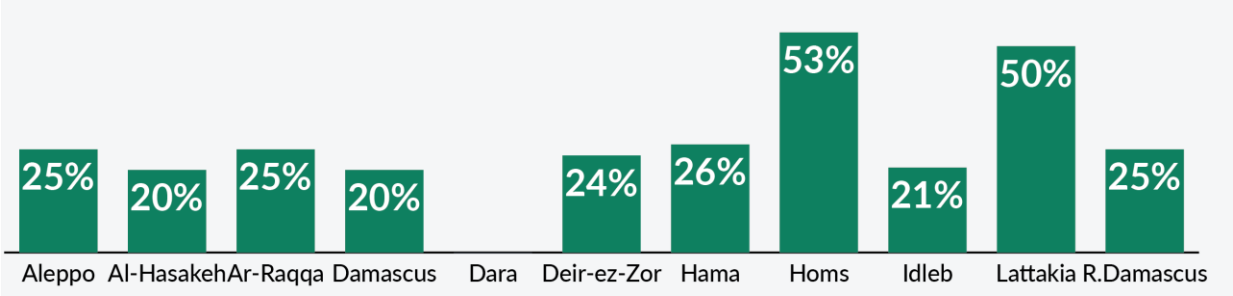

Figure 14: **% Property ownership by intended return governorate**

Overview of Respondents Future Intentions

Overview of Return Intentions and Barriers

Against the background of uncertainty regarding the situation in Syria and despite increased discussions about voluntary return, the survey found that currently 58% of respondents do not intend to return to Syria. However, 12% mention they are considering returning one day, 10% are intending to return within the next 12 months, 8% consider returning within the next five years, 11% remain undecided and 1% preferred not to respond to this question.

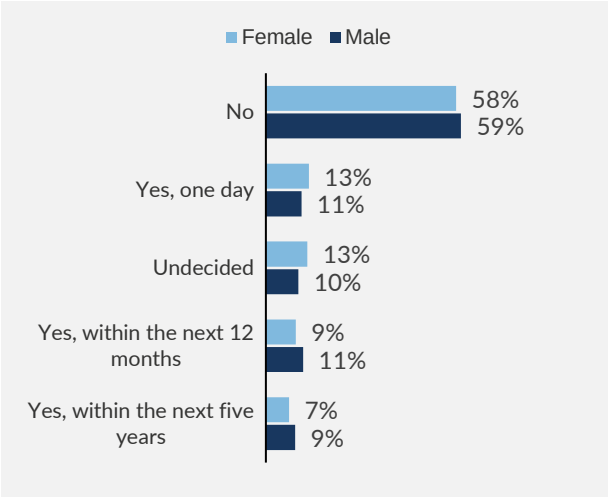

Figure 15: **Intention to Return to Syria by Gender**

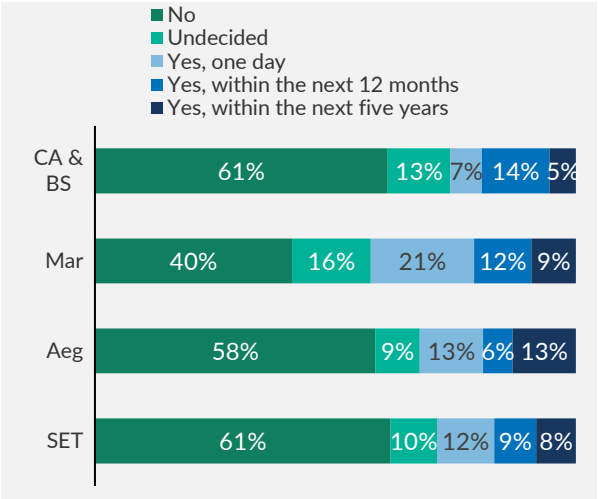

Figure 16: **Intention to Return to Syria by Zone**

Respondents' primary motivations for return include improved security conditions (47%), changes in political circumstances (44%), economic challenges, including high cost of living, lack of employment (36%) and family reunification (24%). Return motivations also varied significantly by gender. Men were more likely to cite improved security conditions (56%) and political change (51%) as their top reasons for returning to Syria, compared to 38% and 36% of women, respectively. Meanwhile, women were nearly equally concerned about economic challenges (36%) and family reunification (22%) as their male counterparts. Men were also more likely to note checking on family members as a reason for return (22% vs. 17%). These differences highlight the influence of complex dynamics including familial factors in shaping return considerations across genders.

However, as indicated in the graph below, multiple barriers are indicated to impact return decisions. The most cited concerns include economic instability in Syria (59%), lack of housing (50%), and security risks (42%). Barriers such as safety concerns were particularly high in Aegean (64%) and Central Anatolia & Black Sea (62%). Many refugees expressed uncertainty regarding their ability to reclaim property and access essential services, making the prospect of return complex, especially in the short term.

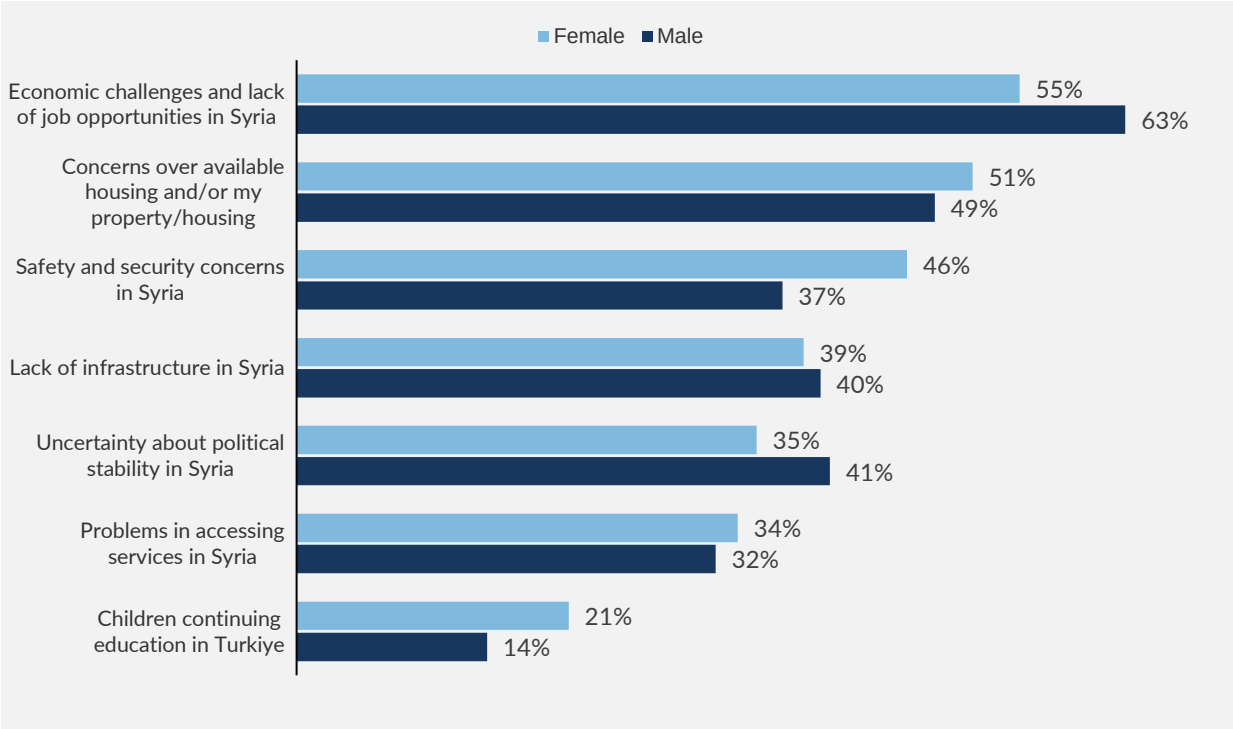

Figure 17: **Main reasons preventing returning to Syria by Gender**

The assessment inquired into whether access to employment in Türkiye impacts respondents' future intentions. Accordingly, findings indicate that among respondents intending to return within the next 12 months, only 12% are formally employed, and 32% are employed informally. In contrast, 52% of those who stated they do not plan to return are employed informally, with only 7% reporting formal employment. Unemployment among those previously employed in Türkiye is most common among those planning to return within the next 12 months (34%) and within five years (19%). Respondents with no prior employment in Türkiye are more likely to express an intention to return within the next five years (34%) or are undecided (29%).

These findings show that although employment status varies slightly across groups, the differences are not stark, suggesting that access to employment alone is not a primary driver of return intentions. Similarly, while economic hardship and inability to meet basic needs is widespread among all respondents, the marginal differences in ability to meet basic needs indicate it may not be the decisive factor influencing decisions to return. To specify, among those who expressed no intention to return to Syria, 66% reported that their basic needs were not met, 31% said they were partially met, and just 3% indicated their needs were fully met. 75% of respondents who indicated they may return one day reported to not be able to fully meet their basic needs in Türkiye. Similarly, 62% of those planning to return within 12 months and those who are undecided about return also report they are not able to fully meet their basic needs. Notably, only 3% of respondents indicate they are able to fully meet their basic needs in Türkiye.

Information Gaps and Support Needs Related to Intentions

The survey highlighted critical gaps in information that influence decision-making regarding future intentions. Nearly 48% of respondents felt they lack sufficient information to make informed choices about their return. Women report lower confidence in their access to information (25%) compared to men (37%). Geographically, Marmara have the lowest proportion of respondents who feel informed (10%).

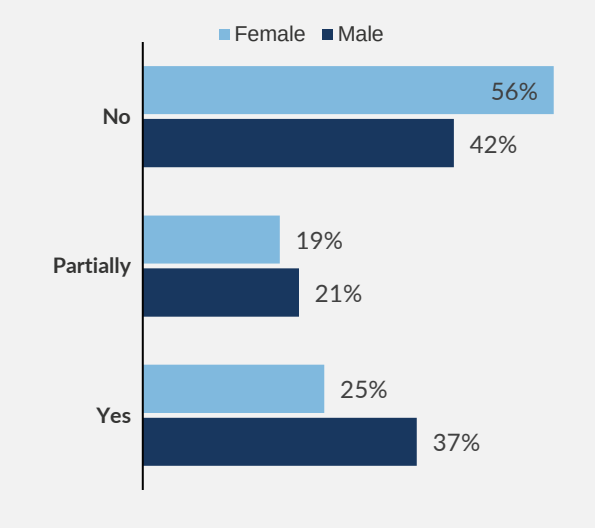

Figure 18: **Perceptions of Information Sufficiency for Return Decisions**

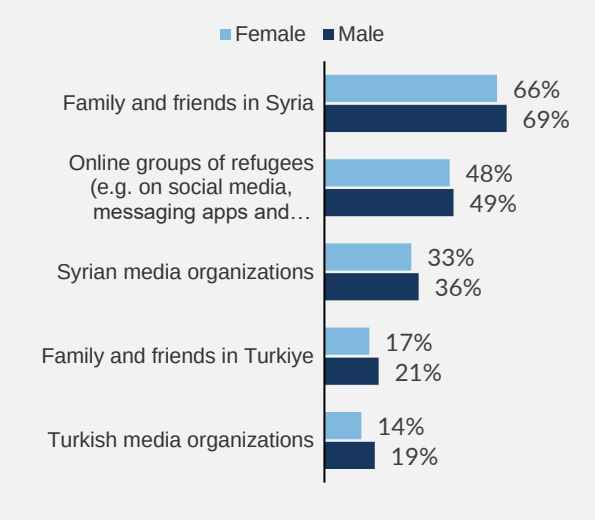

Figure 19: **Primary Source of Information**

The most requested information includes safety and security updates (77%), housing and property rights (62%), and economic opportunities in Syria (52%). While all respondents prioritise the security updates, second preferences differ slightly by gender, with women prioritising economic opportunities in Syria and men emphasising housing, land and property rights and economic issues.

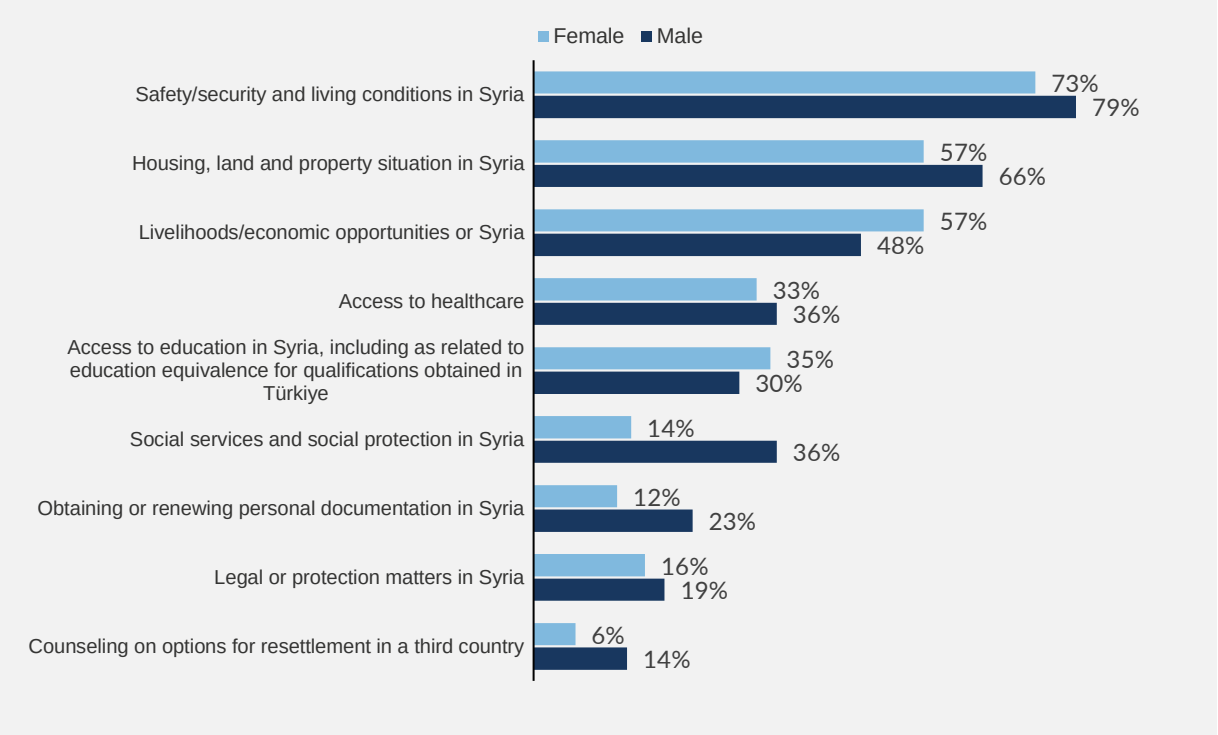

Figure 20: **Topics of information needed**

When asked about support needs in Syria, respondents emphasize the need for financial assistance (76%), healthcare access (39%), and help in securing livelihoods in Syria (36%). In Türkiye, priorities for increased support include social assistance (46%), employment opportunities (32%), and safe and dignified housing (28%).

Conclusion

The UNHCR-led Inter-Agency Community Pulse Survey conducted in February 2025 demonstrates current realities and future aspirations of Syrian refugees in Türkiye. While many refugees have increased their participation in Turkish society including the labour market over the past decade, persistent challenges—from economic hardship to legal uncertainties—continue to shape the daily lives of Syrian refugees in Türkiye.

In February 2025, shortly after the changes inside Syria, most refugees – men and women alike – indicate to remain uncertain to return, citing safety and economic instability as well as housing shortages as primary concerns. Most refugees in Türkiye do not own property in Syria while those who do are faced with high levels of destruction and an unclear outlook with regards to potential restitution processes. Although Syrian refugees receive information on the situation in Syria via their networks, they indicate a need for timely, reliable and accurate, and accessible information, including on return procedures and the situation in Syria, supporting informed decision making.

To contribute to ensuring voluntary, informed, and dignified decision making on returning to Syria, continued support to refugees in Türkiye through targeted policy interventions and direct assistance remains essential. Given the current situation as highlighted in this report, priorities remain enhancing access to education and (vocational) trainings, supporting access to decent work, and removing uncertainties regarding safety and legal status in Türkiye.

This survey underscores the importance of sustained engagement in Türkiye. Without adequate support to improve living conditions and reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities, refugees may consider decisions regarding their future that are not fully informed. Ensuring people can meet their basic needs is foundational to achieving any of the different durable solutions.

Annex 1: Summary of Key Disaggregated Findings

This annex presents a summary of key findings from the survey disaggregated by gender and geographic zone. It highlights where notable differences exist and supports targeted programming and analysis based on demographic and regional dynamics.

Indicator	Gender Differences	Geographic Differences (Zones)
Property ownership in Syria	28% men vs. 23% women	Highest in Homs & Hama; lowest in Al-Hasakeh
Formal employment	9% men vs. 7% women	Highest in Marmara (23%)
Industrial employment	52% of employed men	Most common in SET& Aegean
Service sector employment	38% of employed women	Widely reported in Aegean & Marmara
Never worked (unemployed)	31% women vs. 12% men	Most prevalent in Central Anatolia & Black Sea
Children out of school	Slightly more boys affected	Highest in Marmara (31%)
Health access barriers	Similar by gender	Highest in Aegean (38%)
Fear of deportation	Similar by gender	Highest in Aegean and Central Anatolia & Black Sea
Information gaps	25% women informed vs. 36% men	Lowest in Marmara (10%)
Desire to return with entire family	Higher among women	N/A
Security as return driver	56% of men vs. 38% of women	Strongest in SET
Discrimination faced	Slightly higher among women	Highest in Aegean (58%)

Annex 2: Gender and Age Considerations

Building on the Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) lens applied throughout the analysis, this section outlines population-specific needs and considerations to support inclusive and equitable programming.

Women and girls continue to experience compounded challenges across various domains, particularly in accessing healthcare, formal employment, and reliable information regarding available services and return processes. These gaps underscore the importance of tailored outreach efforts and gender-sensitive services, including dedicated support for survivors of gender-based violence, maternal health programs, and psychosocial support systems.

Men, meanwhile, were more likely to be employed in high-risk informal labor settings and identified security concerns as a principal driver for return to Syria. These insights highlight the importance of occupational safety initiatives and the provision of accessible mental health support for men facing prolonged displacement and uncertainty.

Adolescents and youth, especially boys aged 12 to 17, often face barriers to school enrolment due to financial pressures and the need to work. Vocational training programs and more flexible, alternative education models can help bridge this gap and ensure continued development and protection for this age group.

Finally, older refugees and persons with disabilities, reported in over 64% of surveyed households, face distinct vulnerabilities, particularly with regard to healthcare access and mobility. Expanding home-based healthcare and integrating long-term care services into existing assistance frameworks will be crucial to addressing their needs with dignity and efficiency.

Annex 3: Geographic Priorities by Zone

These geographic priorities are derived primarily from the disaggregated quantitative findings presented in earlier sections of the report. Where applicable, they are complemented by anecdotal and qualitative observations raised by partners during follow-up discussions.

Across the four geographical zones, distinct trends emerged that highlight the need for context-specific programming. In Southeast, economic hardship stood out as the most pressing challenge, with a high reliance on informal employment among respondents. This underscores the urgency of strengthening livelihood initiatives, particularly those that expand access to formal employment and promote income stability.

Aegean registered the highest rates of perceived discrimination and reported barriers to healthcare access. To address these intersecting concerns, the expansion of protection monitoring systems and targeted health services outreach efforts is recommended, with a focus on improving trust and reducing exclusion.

In Marmara, the highest percentage of children not attending school was observed, alongside the lowest rates of respondents feeling informed about their rights and return-related matters. These findings highlight the critical need to invest in education access and improve communication strategies to ensure affected populations can make informed decisions.

Finally, Central Anatolia & Black Sea revealed elevated levels of fear related to deportation and concerns regarding safety in the context of potential return. Strengthening legal counselling services and expanding psychosocial support interventions in this zone will be vital to alleviating fear and uncertainty among refugee households, primarily from the disaggregated quantitative findings presented in earlier sections of the report.