



Weekly Update

29 April 2026

Middle East Situation
Cross Regional Refugee Coordination



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | WEEKLY UPDATE

Key Figures from the Cross-regional Response as of 26 April 2026

IRAN/Neighbouring Countries	LEBANON	SYRIA	AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN
3.2M Temporarily internally relocated <i>75% Tehran · Gov. of Iran</i>	1.05M IDPs <i>35% children · Gov. of Lebanon</i>	279,800 Syrian returnees from Lebanon <i>77,276 intend permanent return</i>	254,400 Afghan returns since start of crisis <i>Total number of returnees: 530,200 in 2026</i>
1.65M Refugees & others in need of intl. protection	115,400 IDPs in 631 collective shelters	56,600 Lebanese refugees in Syria	99,300 Returns from Iran · 77% deportation-driven
140,200 120,500 Iranians → Türkiye Türkiye → Iran	Ceasefire Extended 24 April for 3 weeks	~1,000 Daily Lebanese arrivals on average	155,100 Returns from Pakistan · IFRP pressure
18,300 17,500 Iranians → Armenia Armenia → Iran	19% Decline in sheltered IDPs since pre-ceasefire	Top areas of return Rural Damascus 20% · Aleppo 19% · Idleb 13%	115,000 Newly displaced in SE Afghanistan
6,600 Iranians → Pakistan (Taftan)	3,270 Refugee families known to UNHCR remain displaced		3,500 Internally displaced in Pakistan

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Since late February, escalating hostilities in Iran and Lebanon have triggered humanitarian consequences with impact across the region, including refugee returns in adverse circumstances to Afghanistan and Syria. Events are unfolding against an already fragile humanitarian baseline, with over 24 million forcibly displaced people hosted across the wider region prior to the current escalation, alongside host communities under significant economic and social strain.

Inter agency emergency response is underway to address urgent needs. In Iran, the Flash Refugee Response Plan targets refugees and others in need of international protection alongside affected host communities. In Lebanon, a Flash Appeal complements the broader response under the Lebanon Response Plan to deliver life saving assistance and protection, including to Syrian refugees. In Afghanistan, the funding requirement for the returns response is outlined under the Humanitarian Needs & Response Plan.

UNHCR and partners have been working across countries neighbouring Iran to strengthen preparedness for possible large-scale refugee flows, in support of national authorities. Preparedness measures are in place, including border monitoring, reception and protection readiness, but these arrangements remain highly dependent on flexible and predictable funding in an increasingly constrained resource environment.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION NEEDS

UNHCR considers that Iranian and Lebanese nationals outside their countries of origin — whether already present in or newly arriving to third countries — may have international protection needs on account of the armed hostilities in Iran and Lebanon, or other reasons. Armed hostilities in Iran, together with return pressures, may compel Afghans to return to Afghanistan or move onward; UNHCR maintains that a substantial number of Afghans will have international protection needs regardless of documentation status, in line with UNHCR's September 2025 Guidance Note. Armed hostilities in Lebanon have already compelled significant numbers of Syrians to return to Syria in adverse circumstances; among them there may be Syrians with continued international protection needs.

IRAN

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS



3.2 M

Total number of people temporarily internally relocated (Gov)



1.65 M

Refugees and others in need of international protection in Iran

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

A 32 per cent increase in Afghan returns from Iran was observed between 19 and 25 April, compared to the preceding week, with a daily average of 2,900 returns. In parallel, the period following the 7 April ceasefire has seen a steady rise in irregular entries of Afghan nationals through the Saravan border area along the Iran–Pakistan frontier, likely linked to improved security conditions and the resumption of cross-border routes after conflict-related disruptions. Afghan families who had temporarily relocated from Bushehr have since returned to their homes (UNHCR Shiraz).

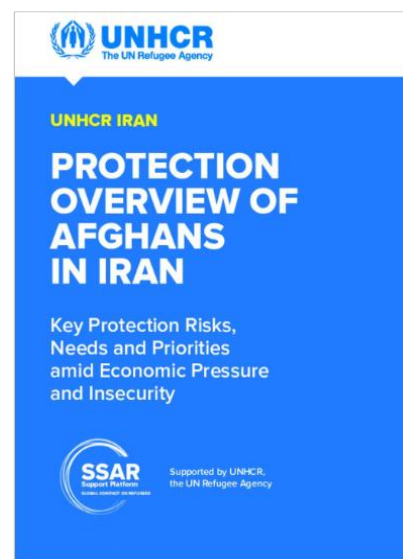
PROTECTION MONITORING

UNHCR maintains a full operational presence across five locations in Iran – Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Kerman, and the Dogharoun border – enabling continuous monitoring and the delivery of protection, documentation, and assistance to refugees despite a challenging operating environment.

A new [UNHCR Protection Overview of Afghans in Iran](#), published on 27 April, draws on analysis from more than 4,000 interactions with Afghan refugees and other Afghans in need of international protection across 17 provinces in March 2026. It highlights increased vulnerability as living costs rise, livelihoods are impacted, and legal uncertainty fuels stress and fear – affecting people's ability to meet basic needs and access essential services. Psychosocial distress is rising across all age groups due to prolonged uncertainty, financial strain, and disruption to daily routines.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

UNHCR and inter-agency partners continue to expand cash and psychosocial assistance and have supported the distribution of generators to government-run health facilities to ensure continuity of life-saving services, while sustaining close coordination to mobilise resources for the humanitarian response in Iran. Since the onset of the crisis, UNHCR Iran has supported approximately 92,300 Afghan refugees through helplines, in-person counselling, registration, legal aid, multipurpose cash assistance, and psychosocial services, with helpline demand remaining high. From 1 March to 25 April, the UNHCR Helpline received around 53,400 calls, of which 9,400 were received between 19 and 25 April. Most requests relate to difficulties affording Amayesh renewals and health insurance, with rising costs and livelihood losses driving increased risks of irregular status, eviction, and unmet needs for rent and healthcare.




HUMAN IMPACT


A 35-year-old refugee mother of four internally relocated to Mashhad, Iran after repeated strikes forced her family to flee in fear. The move has left the family facing financial hardship, overcrowded living conditions, and ongoing psychological distress. UNHCR is supporting the mother and her family through protection services and psychosocial assistance.

LEBANON

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

 **+1 M**

Total number of people self-registered as displaced

 **+3,270**

Refugee families known to UNHCR remain internally displaced

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Following the ceasefire announcement on 16 April and its subsequent three-week extension on 24 April, population movements have remained fluid rather than consolidating into durable returns. Displaced families are undertaking short, exploratory movements – primarily to assess damage or retrieve belongings – while maintaining displacement locations as fallback options. These movements should be understood as precautionary and do not indicate conditions conducive to safe, voluntary, and dignified return.

Outflows from collective shelters currently exceed new arrivals. Collective shelters decreased from 690 to 631, and sheltered IDPs declined from 141,733 to 115,432 – a 19 per cent decrease since pre-ceasefire levels. Daily ceasefire violations and widespread destruction, including north of the Litani River, continue to trigger new displacement while constraining return prospects, reinforcing the need to maintain a large-scale humanitarian response. Israel Defense Forces are not permitting returns to areas under their control in southern Lebanon, evacuation orders and continuous strikes are compelling further displacement daily, and border villages and areas most severely affected by hostilities remain largely inaccessible.

Despite diplomatic efforts leading to the ceasefire extension, continued violations, widespread demolitions, and ongoing hostilities underscore the fragility of the arrangement. Early ceasefire phases have produced limited, partial movements rather than large-scale returns, with displacement expected to remain around one million amid continued short-term, circular movements. An unpredictable operating environment and ongoing violations continue to constrain return prospects and underscore the need to sustain a large-scale humanitarian response. Preparedness planning continues to prioritise shelter, protection, and cash modalities.

PROTECTION MONITORING

Displaced refugees and Lebanese families report delaying return decisions until the ceasefire proves durable, citing destroyed homes, unexploded ordnance, lack of services, and the high cost of renewed displacement. In hard-to-reach southern areas, some families report being unable or unwilling to move due to limited transport, livelihood needs, or lack of alternative shelter, while others make brief visits without returning permanently.

Some refugees report having crossed into Syria because they feel they have no viable alternative, citing insecurity, limited shelter options, and broader protection concerns in Lebanon. UNHCR continues to support refugees returning under force majeure circumstances through counselling, risk-informed information, and limited cash assistance.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Inter-agency partners continue to deliver large-scale emergency assistance. UNHCR and protection partners have reached 142,970 people nationwide with protection, child protection, and GBV services – including 53,890 high-risk individuals who received MHPSS – and provided emergency protection cash assistance to 7,560 displaced refugees. UNHCR and Shelter Sector partners distributed core relief items to 204,870 people, completed repairs at 163 collective shelter sites, and continued shock-responsive cash assistance, reaching 490,880 individuals through the Government-led Shock Responsive Safety Net and approximately 110,000 refugees through emergency multipurpose cash assistance.

The Flash Appeal will be lightly reviewed as will the 2026 Lebanon Response Plan to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the evolving context.

HUMAN IMPACT

In Madame Baaini School (Beirut), displaced families are sheltering in an overcrowded courtyard with minimal privacy – particularly affecting older persons and those with chronic illness. UNHCR and partners are rehabilitating the site by installing wooden partitions to create enclosed family spaces and improve security and dignity within the shelter. "Before the partition, there was nowhere for my father to rest after dialysis; now he finally has some quiet and privacy," said Ali, a displaced father of three staying at the site. While families remain unable to return home, the intervention is helping reduce immediate protection and health risks linked to prolonged overcrowding.

SYRIA

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

 **279,800**

Syrian returnees from Lebanon

 **56,600**

Lebanese refugees crossing into Syria

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Since 2 March, more than 336,443 people have crossed the Syria–Lebanon border, including nearly 279,800 Syrian nationals – of whom 77,276 reported their intention to return permanently – as well as 56,600 Lebanese refugees. Cross-border population movements from Lebanon into Syria across all three border crossings remained steady and within the operational capacity of border authorities.



PROTECTION MONITORING

UNHCR engaged with new arrivals both at border crossings and in areas of return. Information gathered from more than 3,000 families indicates varied return intentions, including long-standing plans to return as well as movements prompted by worsening conditions in Lebanon. Lebanese refugees crossing into Syria were largely from mixed families and intended to stay with relatives.

Interactions with returnees identified shelter, food, livelihoods, healthcare, children's education, and civil documentation as the most urgent needs. Many returnees have damaged homes and are staying with relatives or in tents with limited belongings and immediate needs. In areas of return, some Syrians indicated an intention to remain in Syria despite ongoing challenges, citing perceived instability in Lebanon, experiences of discrimination while displaced, and exhaustion from repeated cycles of displacement.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

A joint committee in Homs comprising the Syrian Department for Social Affairs and Labour, UNHCR, WFP, and partners has been established to assess and respond to the situation of returnees living in tents. Initial assessments in Ashira, covering more than 45 families, represent a coordinated effort to identify needs and support transitions toward more sustainable shelter solutions. This reflects a shift toward area-based, inter-agency planning to address reintegration challenges, with findings expected to inform the broader response across Homs Governorate.

HUMAN IMPACT

Samiha, a widowed mother who recently returned to Dar'a, found her home destroyed and now struggles to access basic services. Nearby landmines and lack of income have also disrupted her son's education. UNHCR has supported her by assessing her needs, providing information on available services, and referring her to assistance through community centres and partner support.

AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN


MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

 254,400

Total number of Afghan returnees since start of crisis

 99,300

Afghan returnees from Iran since start of crisis

 155,100

Afghan returnees from Pakistan since start of crisis

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Since late February, approximately 254,400 people have returned from Iran and Pakistan, with total returns since the start of the year surpassing 530,000 as of 26 April. In the past week, returns averaged 9,500 per day, representing a 9 per cent decrease compared to the previous week. Returnees from Pakistan accounted for 70 per cent of arrivals during the week. Afghans in Pakistan continue to face a deteriorating protection environment within the broader context of the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP), where intensified enforcement, evictions, arrests, and loss of livelihoods are compelling many families to leave under pressure. Returns from Iran continue to be predominantly deportation-driven, with deportations accounting for 77 per cent of total returns in the past week, compared with 8 per cent of total returns from Pakistan.

PROTECTION MONITORING

Afghanistan

Between 19 and 25 April, UNHCR Afghanistan conducted protection and border monitoring interviews with newly arrived returnees across formal and informal crossing points, identifying significant protection concerns among returnees from both Pakistan and Iran, with women and children comprising approximately 78 per cent of arrivals. Movements from both countries are shaped by arrests, document checks, insecurity, rising costs, and reduced access to services, with return, economic, and onward movements often reflecting multiple, interlinked drivers rather than distinct categories.

Pakistan

Reports received through UNHCR's Helpline point to growing protection and socioeconomic pressures on Afghans, including eviction notices across multiple locations driven by government directives, rent arrears, and financial hardship, alongside a sharp increase in arrests affecting both documented and undocumented individuals after a brief lull. Returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face significant transport challenges, with delays from the separation of passenger and luggage movement, limited outbound truck capacity for personal belongings, and rising fuel prices compounding costs and placing additional financial strain on returning families.

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

In Afghanistan, UNHCR provided cash-based assistance to nearly 12,000 individuals between 19 and 25 April, primarily at the Omari Reception Centre in Torkham, while expanding disability-focused cash support through partners, reaching more than 2,600 households since late February. UNHCR and partners continued life-saving assistance to conflict- and flood-affected communities in eastern provinces through shelter and relief item distributions, with improved access enabling complementary aid and sustained high arrivals at Torkham confirming the effectiveness of preparedness measures, including surge support, hot meals, and disability assistance.

In Pakistan, high volumes of returnees continued to be processed at the Azakhel Voluntary Repatriation Centre during late April, resulting in congestion that has begun to ease. At the Baleli Voluntary Repatriation Centre, a marked increase in recent processing reflects a sharp rise in return movements compared to earlier months.

High-level inter-agency coordination was reinforced in both countries, with IOM and UNICEF engaging authorities in Kandahar on border preparedness for potential increased returns via Spin Boldak, and UNHCR Balochistan and IOM coordinating on border monitoring and movement trends along the Iran-Pakistan border.

HUMAN IMPACT

Afghanistan: An Afghan family of nine returned through Torkham in April with no shelter or resources and was referred by UNHCR partner WADAN to Omari Camp for assistance, highlighting the importance of reception and referral mechanisms for vulnerable returnees.

Pakistan: On 22 April, an Afghan family detained in Loralai for deportation was released on humanitarian grounds following UNHCR advocacy, enabling a family member with a serious heart condition to receive urgent treatment and the family to return safely to Quetta.

TÜRKIYE

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

 **140,200**

Iranian nationals → Türkiye

 **120,500**

Iranian nationals → Iran

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Since 28 February, approximately 140,200 Iranian nationals entered Türkiye via the Kapıköy (Van), Gürbulak (Ağrı), and Esendere (Hakkari) border crossings, while approximately 120,500 departed to Iran.

PROTECTION MONITORING

UNHCR continues to monitor the border in close coordination with authorities and partners, with the Kapıköy (Van), Gürbulak (Ağrı), and Esendere (Hakkari) crossings remaining generally operational. As of 20 April, daily entries exceeded 5,000 for the first time in several weeks, though exits were higher; movement dynamics remain fluid. The most frequently cited reason for crossing is routine travel, followed by business, visiting relatives, and transit. However, a large proportion of individuals in the routine travel category indicated that their decision to cross was influenced by recent developments in Iran. Some of those crossing may have international protection needs.


PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

The Ministry of Interior's Presidency of Migration Management is coordinating national preparedness plans, while UNHCR is reinforcing coordination with UN agencies and partners in both Ankara and the border regions to enhance preparedness and strengthen information management. Response capacities are being mapped and data coordination consolidated in preparation for potential contingency plan activation, should authorities request support in the event of large-scale movements.


UNHCR is holding regular inter-agency coordination meetings with civil society actors active in Van. Partner observations confirm that entries and exits at all three border crossings continue routinely, including limited daily crossings by local small and medium business owners. The Turkish Red Crescent confirmed that four trucks carrying hygiene items, blankets, and tents, along with one truck of medical first aid supplies from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, were safely delivered to the Iranian Red Crescent.

ARMENIA

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | COUNTRY ANALYSIS

 **18,300**

Iranian nationals entered Armenia

 **17,500**

Iranian nationals exited through Agarak

ANALYSIS & TRENDS

Cross-border movements of Iranian nationals through the Agarak border crossing remained elevated but broadly balanced during 20–25 April, with approximately 6,900 crossings recorded – around 3,500 entries and 3,400 exits – indicating continued two-way mobility rather than displacement pressure. Trucks accounted for 47 per cent of crossings, pedestrians 39 per cent, and private vehicles or buses 14 per cent, reflecting the continued significance of commercial traffic alongside civilian movement.

Government of Armenia statistics indicate that during 28 February to 15 April, approximately 18,300 Iranian nationals entered Armenia and 17,500 exited through Agarak – cumulative crossings of approximately 35,800 – with no indication of a significant surge in arrivals.

A total of 289 individuals from Iran approached UNHCR during this period – 64 per cent male – with primary needs centred on asylum information (82 per cent), financial assistance (26 per cent), and accommodation (24 per cent). During 20–26 April, 29 individuals approached UNHCR – 86 per cent male – with primary needs recorded as asylum information (83 per cent), accommodation (66 per cent), and financial assistance (66 per cent).

PROTECTION MONITORING

Profiles during the reporting period were predominantly adult male (86 per cent male, 14 per cent female), with no significant increase in family groups or vulnerable profiles. Reported intentions were mixed: 55 per cent considering asylum in Armenia, 21 per cent undecided, and the remainder considering temporary stay or onward travel. Primary needs were asylum information (83 per cent), accommodation (66 per cent), and financial assistance (66 per cent).

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Activities remain focused on preparedness and communication readiness, including review, harmonisation, and translation of key public information materials.

Inter-agency engagement remains focused on technical preparedness and information alignment.

Government–UNHCR and inter-agency engagement reflects a shared assessment that the Armenia–Iran border remains stable, with no immediate change in operational posture required. Cross-border movements are expected to remain active but broadly stable over the coming one to two weeks, with potential for short-term fluctuations linked to regional developments. Preparedness will continue under Government leadership, focused on technical coordination, scenario planning, and contingency support review. No triggers for large-scale response activation are currently anticipated.

HUMAN IMPACT

An individual from Iran approached UNHCR seeking information on regularising temporary stay and available asylum options, citing uncertainty about duration of stay and accommodation access. UNHCR and partners provided counselling on legal pathways, procedural information, and referrals for temporary support – reflecting the broader trend of individuals seeking clarity rather than emergency assistance.

Financial & Partner Information

MIDDLE EAST SITUATION | FUNDING, PARTNERS & CONTACTS

Funding Status

INTER-AGENCY APPEALS

IRAN FLASH REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

USD 80M

2.8M people in need
Launched 26 Mar 2026
1.65M refugees + 1M host community in need
9 partners: USD 36.2M

LEBANON FLASH APPEAL (in line with the LRP)

USD 308.3M

1M people
Issued 13 Mar 2026 · 3-month window
Vulnerable Lebanese · Syrian Refugees · Palestine Refugees in Lebanon · Palestinian Refugees from Syria · Migrants

UNHCR BY OPERATION · AS OF END-MARCH 2026

Operation	Req.	Funded	%
South-West Asia (Afghanistan)	USD 454M	<div><div style="width: 19%;"></div></div>	19%
Iran	USD 140M	<div><div style="width: 11%;"></div></div>	11%
Lebanon	USD 472M	<div><div style="width: 19%;"></div></div>	19%
Iraq	USD 61M	<div><div style="width: 38%;"></div></div>	38%
Türkiye	USD 210M	<div><div style="width: 43%;"></div></div>	43%
Armenia	USD 9M	<div><div style="width: 51%;"></div></div>	51%
Turkmenistan*		Upon Request	

*Due to contextual considerations, requirements are not mentioned but can be shared upon request. UNHCR budget for Turkmenistan falls under the UNHCR Multi-Country Office (MCO) in Kazakhstan, which also covers the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. UNHCR MCO Kazakhstan operation budget is \$7.9 million, currently 15% funded.

CRITICAL FUNDING GAP

Severe funding shortfalls risk creating a 'crisis within a crisis' at a time when humanitarian needs and operational risks are rapidly increasing. Without additional resources, UNHCR's ability to scale up preparedness, protection and response will be critically constrained.

INTER-AGENCY PARTNERS · IRAN FLASH RRP



INTER-AGENCY PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Partners directly involved in preparedness efforts include AASW, ACH, ARCS, ASAM, FAO, Harikar, InterSOS, IOM, IRC, JCCC, KRISO, MH, Mission Armenia NGO, NRC, PC-MOI, PiN, RSPN, SCI, SOROUH, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, WFP, WHO; coordinated with UN OCHA and DCO.

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For more information, visit the Operational Data Portal (data.unhcr.org) and unhcr.org.