

Regional Rapid Response plan to the Syrian crisis: Situation in Iraq: 21 March 2012

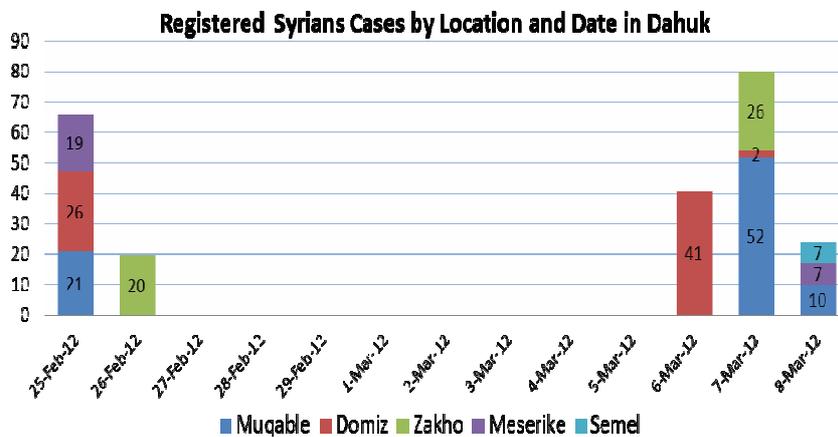
1. Syrian Kurd New Arrivals to Dohuk and Erbil Governorates:

As a result of the ongoing security and political situation in Syria, the number of Syrian Kurds arriving into Dohuk and Erbil Governorates, increased in February and March 2012. As of 18th March, UNHCR had registered a total of 335 individual Syrian nationals who are temporarily accommodated in various locations in Dohuk including Moqable (83 individuals), Domiz (69 individuals), Meserike (26 individuals) and scattered in Zakho (46 individuals) and Semel district (7 individuals), as well as to scattered in Erbil (104 individuals). 98% of the registered cases are singles (328 cases), while 2% are families, among them one family is headed by a single female.

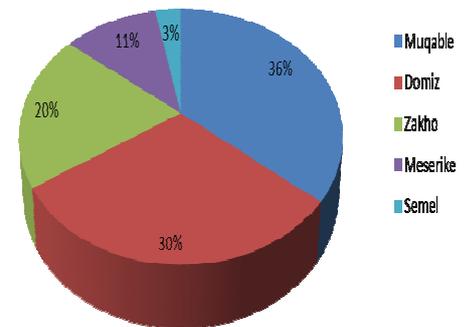
Additionally, approximately 150 individuals recently arrived in Erbil and 200 individuals recently arrived in Dohuk are waiting to be registered.

Registered displaced Syrians in February-March 2012

January	8 Individuals
February	172 Individuals
March	155 Individuals



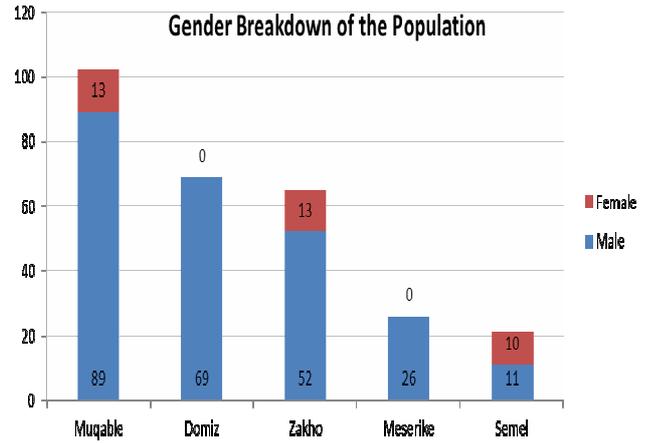
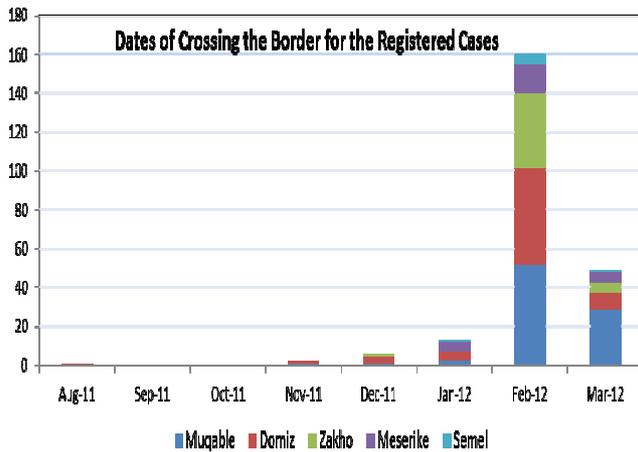
Registered Syrians Cases In Dahuk by Location



Background:

All the 335 cases registered entered the Kurdistan Region and few through Ninewa Governorate.

The majority of the registered Syrian new arrivals reported that they fled following the prolonged unrest, insecurity and continued retaliation against demonstrators in Qamishli and Hassake, some claimed to have deserted the army or others were called to serve in the army but are unwilling to do so. The majority of the new arrivals were between 18 and 21 years old and single males.



Protection:

The new Syrian arrivals are first received and referred to the Assayish in the villages along side the border, in the part which is under defacto Kurdish control in Ninewa Governorate. They are then registered with a simple official letter mentioning their basic biodata, verifying that the person is a Syrian Kurd and is free to enter and move in KR. This letter is valid for two weeks. After two weeks it should be renewed by Asaaysh in the district they will chose to reside. Upon entering KR , they also report/inform the relevant Directorate of Internal Affairs (MOI), about their location in KR. All the registered individuals are allowed to reside in places of their choice pending the final establishment of a new camp. Following this process DDM jointly with UNHCR in Dohuk record their basic biodata and identify persons with specific needs. The local authorities have proven to be generous in the reception and assistance of Syrians and no case of refolement was recorded to date.

Coordination:

A solid and coordinated response with the local authorities has been put in place in preparation for an influx of Syrian new arrivals. The UNHCR team, lead by the Head of Office, has discussed with the Ministry of Interior in Erbil and the Governor of Dohuk the best way to provide assistance and protection to those new arrivals in need and already hosted by the community. The KRG has decided to arrange for a site where the new Syrian arrivals would be accommodated. They identified a site in Domiz settlement with a surface of 275,000 m2 is located in the south west of Domiz around 60 km from the Syrian borders. This settlement already accommodated 113 families Syrian POC old caseload.

In a joint effort, the local authorities will be responsible for the provision of the site and necessary equipment for preparing the site, levelling the land and laying gravel, construction of latrines and septic tanks, in addition to the erection of the tents and the management and security of the camp. UNHCR is contributing with the provision of the tents, non food items, and water tanks, in addition to support in the joint administration of the camp with the relevant authorities in order to address the needs of the families. Work began on the 19th March by the Municipality of Fayda with levelling the ground, setup of tents, digging of sceptic tanks and delivery of road construction materials and is planned to be completed in few days, taking into account the Newroz holidays.

It has been agreed that all new arrivals from Erbil governorate and other locations in Dohuk (Zakho, Moquble and Sumel) will be relocated to Domiz new camp with the support of the local authorities. The families will be kept separate from the single men in the camp.

Space will be allocated for the management and security units as well as for a health centre. Children will join the already existing school facility within the camp. UNHCR will work closely with the Government to ensure that the camp is installed as per the UNHCR's standards. UNHCR protection staff will closely monitor the protection needs of the newly arrived Syrians families and ensure that persons with specific needs are identified at an early stage and provided with the necessary assistance.

UNHCR Erbil continues to lead and coordinate the response with UNCT members in Erbil. In collaboration with the Government Emergency Cell, UNHCR also aim to provide regular updates on the situation of the Syrian new arrivals, and ensure coordination of the assistance and response in the Domiz new camp.

Assistance:

So far, DDM in Dohuk Governorate and the Governor Office had distributed non food items and Kerosene to some 34 singles in Moquble camp. The federation of the civil society called “Alind Organization for Youths Democratizing” is distributing clothes to children and women and some basic food items and the Directorate of Health is screening the new arrivals and providing vaccination to those in need. UNHCR and the UNCT members will provide non food assistance when the new camp is established and UNHCR has coordinated with ICRC which provided one time food assistance in Dohuk. .



Syrian families hosted in tents in Moquble camp

New Arrivals next to the Syrian Refugees/Asylum seekers Settlement-Domiz



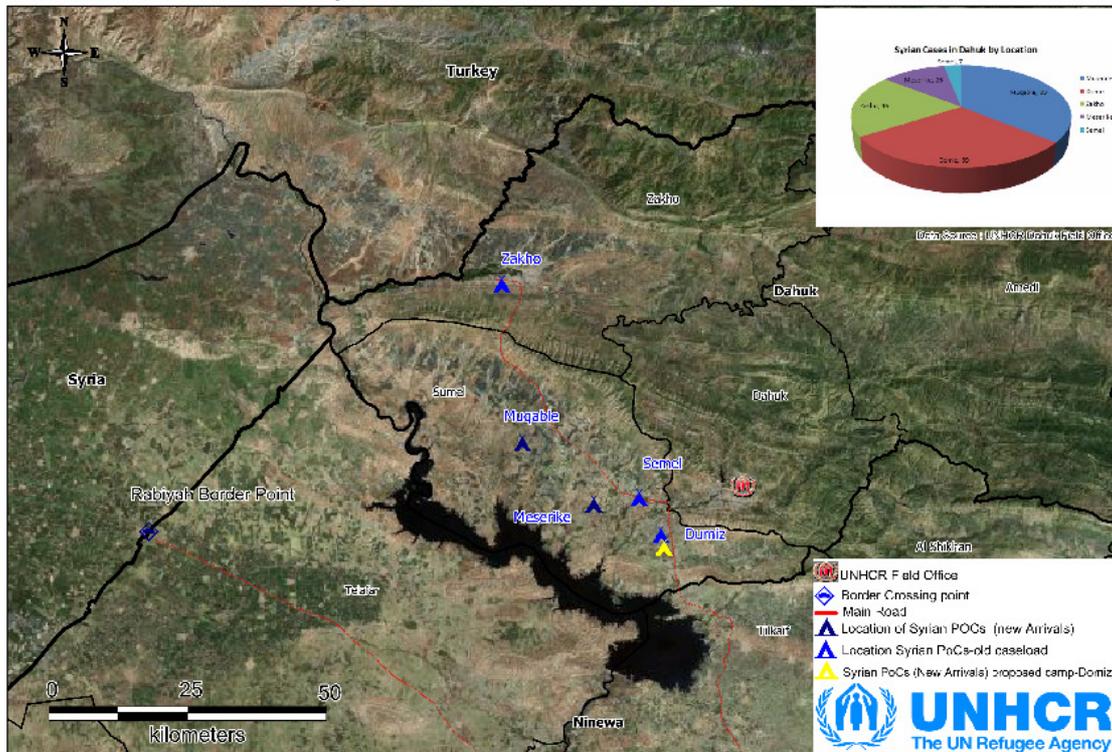


Working on the arrangement of the new site

New Arrival families accommodated in muqable to be moved to the new Arrival site in Domiz



Location of Syrian Persons of Concern in Dahuk - December 2011 - March 2012



2. Iraqi Refugee Returnees from Syria to Iraq

UNHCR Iraq Returnee monitoring continues on a regular weekly basis at the main bus/ taxi station in Baghdad serving passengers returning from and departing to Syria and Jordan. This is additional to daily monitoring conducted at all three Iraq – Syria border locations monitoring conducted at Returnee Assistance Centres in major locations of return in Iraq. Recent registration as a Refugee Returnee with the Government of Iraq Ministry of Displacement and Migration is not unfortunately a clear indicator of recent Refugee returns from Syria (or any country of asylum) to Iraq. January 2012 (most updated statistics available from MoDM) saw an increase in Iraqi Refugee Returnees registering with MoDM of some 1200 individuals (compared to December 2011). However, Iraqi Refugee Returnees who have decided on

permanent return often wait for between 3 - 6 months, (sometimes longer) after return before registering as a returnee with MoDM if at all. It is estimated that 75-80% of families/ individuals registered in January 2012 returned to Iraq in the last 12 months.

MoDM registration for returning Refugees and IDPs remains voluntary. Consequently, and much like Iraqi nationals choosing not to register with UNHCR in regional countries of asylum, a significant but unknown number of Returnees do not register with MoDM. For Iraqi Refugee Returnees two of the major reasons reported for not registering are being ineligible to receive Government of Iraq returnee cash assistance (currently \$3400 per returnee family) and/or due to their former or current actual or imputed political profile they may fear targeting from state and/or non state agents as a result of registering as a returnee.

There has been an increase in Iraqi nationals (both UNHCR Syria registered Refugees and unregistered) returning to Iraq by privately hired GMC taxis and buses. While in December 2011 and January 2012 taxi and bus companies had one vehicle a day or every two days leaving to and returning from Damascus, now there are 2-3 a day. This has resulted in a recent increase in the price of a taxi/ bus prices from Damascus to Baghdad. Most Iraqi Refugee Returnees from Syria (85%) continue to claim to be returning to Iraq for a temporary or uncertain time period to Iraq.

The total number of Iraqi national returning to Iraq and departing to Syria of all types (including commercial traffic) from all three Border Crossing was slightly higher between the month of February and the first three weeks of March 2012 (compared to December 2011 and January 2012 cross border traffic volumes) but continue to remain at comparatively lower compared to total volume of cross border traffic in October and November 2011 for all three Border locations (Al Waleed, Al Rabiya and Al Qa'im).

UNHCR Iraq

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