

Update 20
Iraqi Refugee Returns/Syrian Refugees
Syria Situation
9 August 2012

1. Overview:

Iraqis' reverse movement from Syria back home is taking a steady trend with more returns observed through the two border points of Al-Waleed and Rabi'aa than through Al-Qa'im. August 8 saw a total of 472 returnee arrivals, of whom 344 entered through Al-Waleed and 107 through Rabi'aa. A fewer number of returnees crossed Al-Qa'im border which received only 21 returnees. This brings the total number of Iraqi returnees since 18 July to 23,700, including 5,222 returnees by air.

Comparatively, a higher number of 143 Syrian refugees entered through Al-Qa'im border which has alone received total 3,945 Syrian refugees so far. This makes up a total of 3,957 Syrians who entered the country since the Iraqi government decision allowing them in, among them 5 through Al-Waleed, 2 through Rabi'aa and 5 by air. With 9,773 more Syrian refugees, mainly Kurds, in Kurdistan, the grand total of Syrian refugees across Iraq rises up to 13,730.

UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im today registered 61 more Syrian families (262 individuals) at three school locations, bringing the total number of registered Syrian asylum seekers to 652 families (2930 individuals).

During registration, one stateless refugee was identified and registered. He claims to be Saudi, born and lived in Syria, but has no documents.

The pace of work is accelerating at the two camp locations. On the first site, over 60% of the water pipelines has been laid, and wiring almost completed. On the second, 135 more tents have been installed and construction of the septic tanks has started.

The Head of the Emergency Cell in Al-Qa'im expected more Syrian refugees flowing into Iraq, requesting UNHCR to expand the camp with another 500 tents. He expressed the government readiness to contribute with services and manpower.

The Emergency Cell is still examining the possibility of relocating a group of Syrian refugees to the 7-kilo housing compound in Ramadi early next week. It was initially agreed with Anbar Governorate to move families to the 150 fully constructed apartments within the 700-unit compound. The arrangement will allow a family of 8 or more members or smaller families with some relation to share one apartment.

The Governor's Advisor stressed the governorate's willingness to cooperate in the transfer of refugees to the compound, though he acknowledged that some refugees might opt not to move, preferring to stay close to the border.

2. Statistics

2.1 Iraqi returnees

Border point	Number of arrivals 8 August 2012
Al-Waleed:	344
Total Al-Waleed: 14,670	
Rabi'aa:	107
Total Rabi'aa: 2,045	
Al-Qa'im:	21
Total Al-Qa'im: 1,763	
Total returnees on 8 August 2012:	472
By air: 5,222	
Grand total (since 18 July 2012):	23,700*

2.2 Syrian refugees

Border point	Number of arrivals 8 August 2012
Al-Waleed:	0
Total Al-Waleed: 5	
Rabi'aa:	0
Total Rabi'aa: 2	
Al-Qa'im:	143
Total Al-Qa'im: 3,945	
By air: 5	
Total arrivals since 18 July: 3,957*	
Total arrivals in Kurdistan since March 2011:	9,773
Grand total:	13,730

2.3 Regional statistics on Syrian refugees

Jordan

Total refugees – 45,869 individuals
Total registered and assisted – 41,631 individuals
Total assisted awaiting registration – 4,238 individuals

Lebanon

Total refugees – 36,841 individuals
Total registered and assisted – 35,141 individuals
Total assisted awaiting registration – 1,700 individuals

* Figures updated as at 12:00 am, Sunday, 9 August 2012
Sources of information: Border Immigration Offices/BIAP

Turkey

Total refugees – 50,227 individuals (all registered and assisted)

- According to government 2,200 new arrivals were recorded in the last 24 hours.

Iraq

Total refugees – 13,730 individuals

Total registered – 12,703 individuals

Total awaiting registration – 1,027 individuals

Total number of Syrian refugees in the region as of 09 August – 146,667 individuals

3. UNHCR assistance

Al-Qa'im:

- 135 more tents installed. Total tents erected: 385
- Two caravans transferred from Al-Waleed ready for use by UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im for accommodation.
- 200-KV generator to be purchased to supply the camp with electricity. Other 200-KVA and one 50-KVA generators to be bought through IP IRW.

Al-Waleed:

- Adequate NFI stock at rub-hall ready for distribution whenever needed.
- Water, sanitation, electricity ready to be installed.

Rabi'aa:

- Erbil stockpile ready to support Rabi'aa with tents and NFIs.

Centre/South Governorates:

- 110 NFI kits distributed to returnees from Syria through UNHCR's six RICCs in Baghdad.
- 25 NFI kits distributed to returnees in Fallouja.

Domiz camp (Duhok):

- Assistance ongoing

4. Returnee/refugee needs

Needs for NFIs, water network/tanks, generators with fuel and tents have been identified at locations set to receive Syrian refugees in Al-Qa'im and Al-Waleed.

Returnees' needs, however, stretch from documentation, including PDS cards, Jensiya (national ID) document, to shelter (for some), food, health care and cash as well as employment, based on a rapid assessment conducted by UNHCR staff both at the border and at the disembarkation point.

5. Interviews with new arrivals

- Most returnees interviewed by UNHCR team at Al-Waleed border spoke of an unsafe road trip through Syria, particularly in Dhumir and Athra. Some returnees confirmed that many fellow Iraqis willing to return home were stuck in areas where fighting was still raging.
- Returnee families were concerned that they might not be able to go back to Syria, mostly worried about the property and possessions they left behind. The majority were afraid of losing their resettlement cases processed in Syria.
- The team identified returnee cases with medical care needs upon arrival at the border.

- Due to the announced holiday, government offices were closed to day..

6. Coordination

UNHCR is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDM), MoI-PC, and Governorate Offices. In the meantime, the Office has engaged in a coordination process with various humanitarian actors/stakeholders, including the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) consisting of agencies and NGOs, to ensure necessary support to the Iraqi Government's efforts to respond to the returnees' immediate needs.