

# Syria Situation

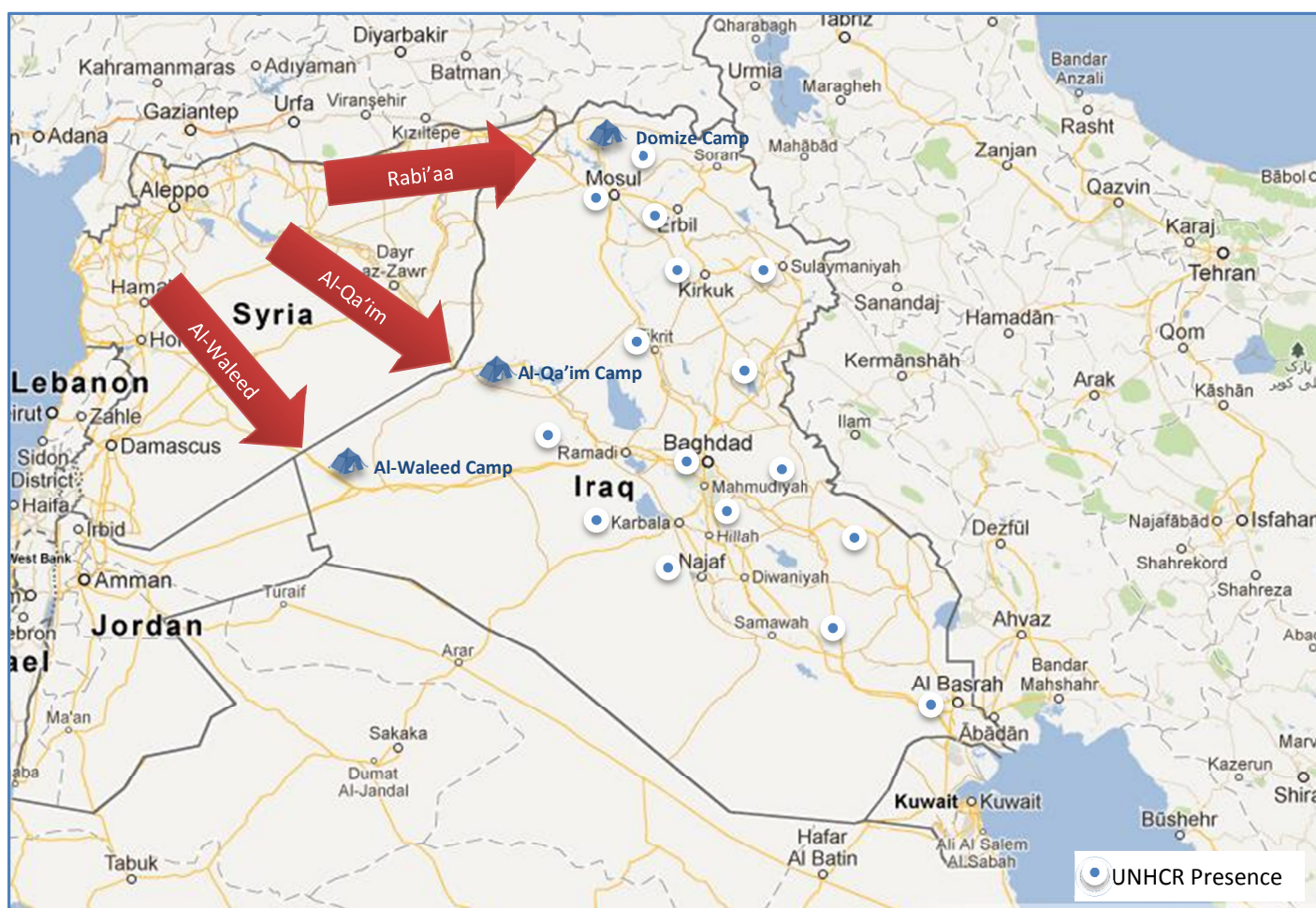
Weekly Update No.14

16 – 23 August, 2012



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Iraqi – Syrian Border Points

MoDM/DDM/Local Authorities

Agencies: UNHCR | UNICEF | WFP | WHO | IOM

NGOs: IRW | Qandil | ISHO | IRC | HARIKAR | CVO

## 1. Overview

The number of Syrian refugees in Iraq now stands at 15,898 persons, with Kurdistan now hosting some 11,626 persons. Access to Kurdistan remains unhindered, and during the reporting period, a total of 892 persons entered the region: 591 entered into Sulymaniyah and 300 to Erbil. Of the total number of refugees, 13,856 are registered with UNHCR and 2,042 are awaiting registration.

The border at Al Qaim remained closed throughout the period, with authorities confirming this to be a temporary measure until the camp at Al Qaim is further prepared. Some 70 persons (13 families) were reported to be waiting on the Syrian side of the border on 22 August. Al Waleed and Rabi'aa remained open but did not witness arrivals. On 23 August, UNHCR was informed that the border may be re-opened shortly. It was reported that relocations from schools may be suspended to allow persons presently waiting at the border to enter the camp directly first.

The majority of Syrian arrivals into Kurdistan are from Qamishly and Hasaka. Fears that chemical weapons may be used by the Syrian Government against rebels hidden within the Kurdish community remain a key trigger for flight from these areas. Many arrivals also claim to be from Damascus, having fled the on-going violence, indiscriminate bombing and large scale destruction in Damascus and suburbs, arriving into Iraq through Qamishly.

New arrivals into **Kurdistan** continue to be accommodated in **Domiz** camp, which is now accommodating a total of 2720 persons. 560 families (2,340 individuals) are residing in phases 1 and 2 in the families section, and 380 singles are residing in the singles section. Some are still in the transit area pending finalisation of the construction of section2.

The importance of maintaining the civilian nature of the camp has been emphasised to the authorities by UNHCR, following observations of persons wearing military uniforms within the camp, believed to be new arrivals who have joined the peshmerga whilst in Kurdistan.



Figure 1 transit area in Domiz

Work has continued to prepare the camp at **Al Qaim**, and the first section with 250 tents is completed. With the school season approaching, there is increasing pressure from local authorities to relocate the refugees residing in schools to the Al Qaim camp as quickly as possible. Groups of refugees from several schools were relocated during the past week – a total of 1,691 entered the camp, bringing the total population to 1,832 persons. Seven out of the 16 schools have now been vacated.

Despite the on-going violence in Syria, a number of Syrians have expressed a willingness to return to their country. In response, the Government of Iraq has granted Syrian nationals full freedom to return, but has requested that they sign forms confirming that their decision has been made voluntarily. During the past week, a total of 97 refugees returned to Syria via the Al Qaim border. 67 persons left from the Al Qaim camp on 16 August, and on the same day, according to Al Qaim border officials, a further 30 persons returned from the Al Qaim area.

**Iraqi returnees** are continuing to arrive from Syria, the majority entering through the Al Waleed border point. Lower numbers of returns were recorded during the Eid holiday, due to the lack of buses available in Damascus over these few days; slightly higher numbers could be expected in the coming days.

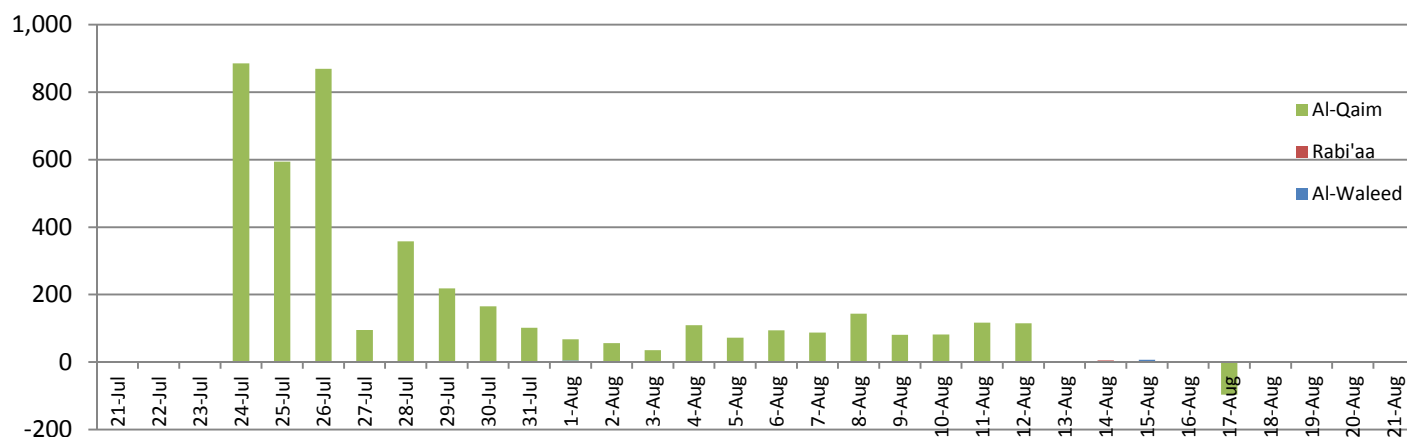
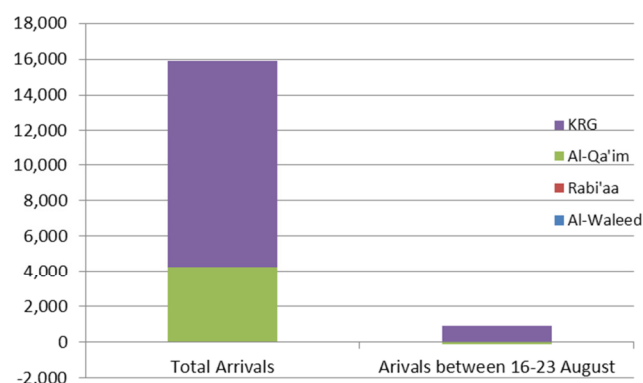
A total of 2,310 Iraqi returnees were reported in the period 16 – 22 August, 1,823 of whom were at Al Waleed and 487 at Rabi'aa. No returns were recorded at Al Qa'im due to the closure of the border). Including the 5,997 persons who have returned by air, the total number of Iraqi returnees since 18 July is 29,453 persons.

Due to the closure of Government offices over the extended Eid period, no further registration with MoMD took place during the past week. Since 29 July a total of 1,154 returnees have been registered with MoMD throughout Iraq.

## 2. Statistics

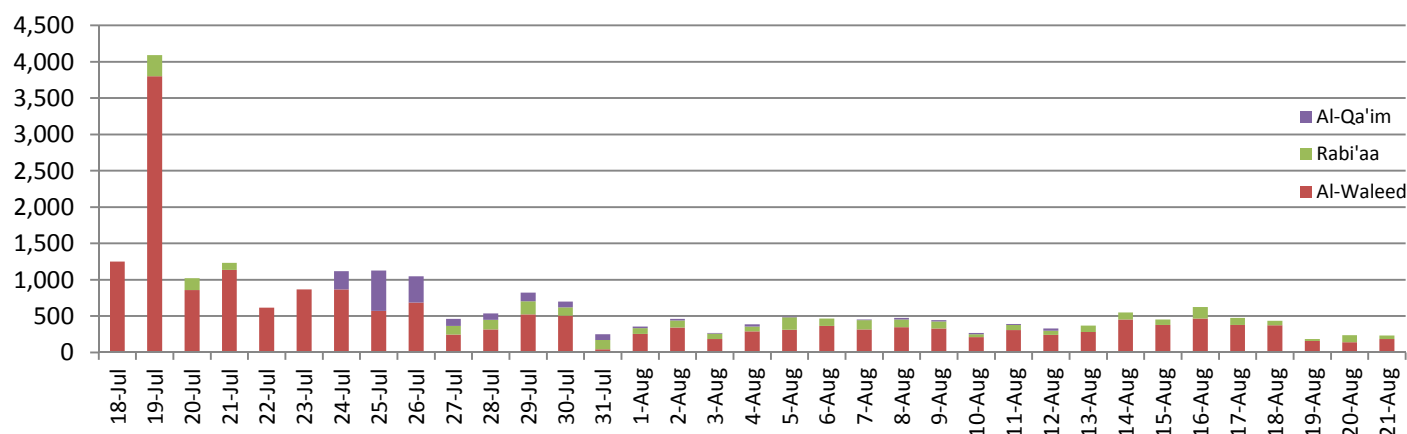
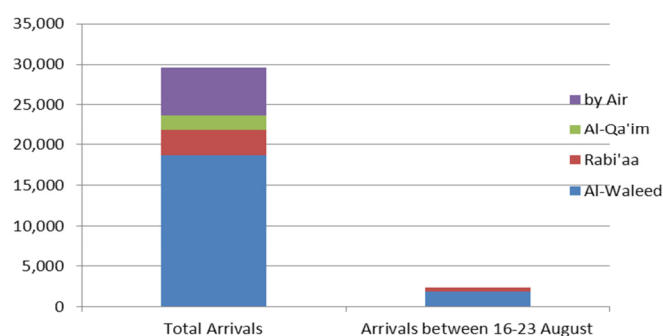
### 2.1 Syrian Refugees

Border Point	Arrivals on 16-23/08/2012	Total arrivals
Al-Waleed	0	18
Rabi'aa	0	8
Al-Qa'im	-97	4241
By Air	0	5
Arrivals to KRG	892	11626
<b>Total:</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>15,898</b>



### 2.2 Iraqi Returnees

Border Point	Arrivals on 16-23/08/2012	Total arrivals
Al-Waleed	1823	18,690
Rabi'aa	555	3,119
Al-Qa'im	0	1,844
By Air	0	5,997
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>29,650</b>



### 3. UNHCR Assistance Update

#### 3.1. Administrative institutions and practice

In **Kurdistan**, the Residency Directorate was closed during the Eid period; nine applications for residency were processed in Domiz camp.

Screening interviews of army deserters has continued in Kurdistan. Out of 1,550 persons screened and interviewed, 430 are army deserters who had renounced military activities and sought protection in Domiz camp. The majority of the persons interviewed were reportedly found to be young men who were subjected to compulsory military conscription.

In **Al-Qaim**, authorities will now allow 'second-kin' relatives to be included in the sponsorship programme. For persons wishing to live with relatives in the Al-Qaim area, the criteria remain the same: i. families with the head of the household over 60 years; ii. female headed households; iii. Single female; iv. families with at least one Iraqi national.

The MoMD has announced that it will distribute cash grants of IQD 400,000 per Syrian family, and IQD 150,000 per single person.

#### 3.2. Protection, Registration and Profiling

In **Kurdistan region**, of the 11,626 arrivals reported, 6,379 have been registered on UNHCR's ProGres database (Level '2' registration). All apart from 892 persons have had a basic (level '1' registration).

As there were no new arrivals into Al Qaim during the reporting period, there have been no new registrations during the reporting period. UNHCR is currently entering the registration data into its ProGres database.

Protection staff in Domiz continue to undertake protection monitoring, counselling and follow up on any cases and issues identified. One case of domestic violence was identified, and counselling provided. One case of sexual harassment against a minor was reported, and the victim provided with medical and psychosocial support. The alleged perpetrator has reportedly left the camp.

In **Al Qaim**, protection monitoring is also being conducted by UNHCR protection staff from Baghdad presently on mission.

#### 3.3. Security for refugees

The absence of adequate security presence in **Domiz** camp has remained a concern. During the reporting period, UNHCR conducted a meeting with the Assayish, police and DDM to accelerate the presence of required security staff. The importance of maintaining the civilian nature of the camp has also been reiterated.

Construction works for the security cabins near to the entrance of the camp are ongoing and a small cabin provided for police. UNHCR Duhok is providing the cabins through QANDIL.

The Community Safety Committee convened two meetings in the camp. UNHCR, DDM Camp Manager, Assaysh, as well as a female and male representing the community, attended the meetings. TORs were shared and approved by all members.

In **AlQaim**, the police is in charge of the security of the camp.

#### 3.4. Assistance by Sectors: Basic Needs and Essential Services

##### *a- Shelter and infrastructure:*

Dohuk: DDM has engaged a contractor for the installation of electricity in phase 2 and single area, the company started the work on 01 August 2012. It was expected that the work would be completed by August 15<sup>th</sup> as confirmed earlier by the company and DDM, however some delays occurred. The new deadline set is August 28<sup>th</sup>. An engineer from The Department of Electricity in Fayda is supervising the work of the company.

20% of phase one and the entire transit area remain un-supplied by electricity. UNHCR raised the matter with DDM who advised that an approval is needed from the Governor office for extra funds to cover the corrections needed for





phase one and the transit area, phases 3 and 4 and the extended single area(if needed). Currently funds are only available to cover electricity supply for phase 2 and the single area

**Al Qaim:** Works have progressed in the camp (in Zones A-C and E-G), and by the end of the reporting period, installation of 476 tents had been completed. Electrical cables installation for tents in Zones E,F and G, and 80% for Zones A, B and C. Internal roads have been completed. A 'non-objection' letter has been received from the owner of land in zones D and H, and works are due to start on 24 August. MoDM is starting also to set up a new camp for 500 tents in the close vicinity.

#### **b- Water:**

In **Domiz**, the supply of water has been increased to 400,000 litres per day, following the distribution of 112 water tanks by UNHCR and DDM during the past week. Daily water tests are conducted by Fayda to the water source and by DDM to the tanks. Five metal storage tanks of 23 cubic metres have been installed by the local NGO Kurds and will shortly be connected to the water network.

In **Al Qaim**: UNICEF will conduct assessment for the installation of a proper water system through water tanks and gravity. For the time being, water tanks are providing water. Water tanks and air coolers have been completed for zones E, F and G, and 90% for A, B and C.



#### **c- Nutrition:**

WFP food shipment was received, offloaded and stored in the rubhall. The shipment consisted of: oil 11 mt, sugar 16 mt, salt 2 mt. lentils 16 mt, wheat .flour 92 mt. Distribution of food was due to commence after the Eid holiday. DDM continued to provide two hot meals per day during the month of Ramadan to single males.

The host community distributed dry food to families living outside of Domiz camp, as well as cash assistance to residents inside the camp.

The local community in Al Qaim is also donating hot meals to the refugees in and outside camp.

#### **d- Sanitation / Hygiene:**

DDM continued with the irregular garbage collection in phase one, phase two, singles area and transit area . a number of 4500 garbage bags were distributed among camp residents during the reporting period. DDM planned to conduct garbage collection 5days/week after Eid vacation.

**Al Qaim** : Latrines and showers 1/20 persons are installed by UNICEF in AL Qaim. These are emergency and mobile latrines that will be progressively replaced by more long term ones. 95 out of 122 latrines have been installed, and 89 out of 122 showers have been installed.

#### **e- NFIs assistance**

In Domiz camp, UNHCR distributed 236 packages of NFIs for 200 families and 36 groups of singles.

In Al Qaim, 200 NFI kits will be delivered to the camp. The Ministry of Displacement and migration provide aircoolers to each tent.



#### **f- Health Status and psycho-social support**

A gynaecologist from the Department of Health attended the clinic to conduct ultra sound x-rays for pregnant women in Domiz camp. A vaccination team also visited the site on 16 August to provide children under 5 with essential vaccines.

MSF reported four cases of severe diarrhoea and two cases of Malnutrition that were referred to the public hospital for treatment. .

#### **g- Education**

The school in Domiz camp continues to provide intensive two months summer classes. The final examination will take place in September to determine the level of each student. UNHCR, through Qandil, is paying the teachers' incentives.

UNICEF will support the school building with five cabins and two toilets. The Department of Education has requested UNHCR to provide an additional three cabins to be used as laboratories .The school will operate in two shifts; morning shift in Kurdish and afternoon shift in Arabic.

The Department of Education informed the education sub-working group that Syrian teachers will not be given regular post in the school and, instead, qualified teachers may be requested to teach and be paid per lecture. DoE requested UNHCR to contribute to the payment of teachers' salaries/incentives.

In Al Qaim, UNICEF erected school tents in the camp and is working in order to open the school in a short period of time.

### **5. Syrian Refugee / Iraqi Returnee Needs**

Syrian refugees' needs include documentation, employment, sponsorship programmes and family tracing. In addition, needs for NFIs, water tanks, Water pipelines network, Fuel, generators and tents have been highlighted at the locations set to receive 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.

### **6. Interviews with new arrivals (including Iraqi returnees)**

**Iraqi returnees** interviewed at the Al Waleed border have continued to provide consistent reports of targeted attacks and threats directed against Iraqis in Syria, including Damascus and Aleppo. Reports were received that Iraqis in Saiyda Zainaba area of Damascus had faced threats by unknown groups to force them to leave Syria. Threats were issued via loud speakers attached to mosques as well as letters posted on Iraqi-owned apartments, and distributed in neighbourhoods with Iraqi concentrations. One family gave an account of a relative killed in Sayyida Zainab with his car and money stolen. Some claimed to have witnessed dead bodies of some 35 Iraqis at the morgue of Al-Mujtahid hospital with their passports placed over their corpses as a means of identification.

Other areas of Damascus reported to be particularly dangerous for Iraqis include: Al-Hujera, Wadi Al Hajer, Juhayna, Al-Thiyabiya, Al-Husainiya, Al-Mashtel, Kafr Sousa, Hay Al-Tadhamun and Jdeiydat Atoz. Iraqis are fleeing these areas to safer locations. Families are reportedly being forced to evacuate school buildings where they had sought safety. There were reports of instances where Iraqis' property and apartments were either stolen or occupied by internally displaced Syrian families that fled Aleppo and Homs.

Returnees also reported a systematic threat campaign targeting Iraqi university professors in Damascus, forcing them to resign. A professor interviewed by the UNHCR team stated that 27 teachers working with Syrian universities, including Idlib and Al-Qalmon were been forced by unidentified groups to resign.

Despite this situation, many Iraqis are reportedly reluctant to return to Iraq for reasons related to their resettlement cases or to fear of not being able to travel back to Syria if they receive MoDM grant. Some are reportedly remaining in Syria to receive medical treatment which is not available in Iraq, and which for the time being, remains available in Syria.

6. Coordination

UNHCR is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDM), Mol-PC, and Governorate Offices. In the meantime, UNHCR 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. To strengthen cooperation, UNHCR is regularly organising inter-agency meetings to involve more institutions and organisations to provide assistance to the camps. Secotrial working groups are established in the Kurdistan region, and are being established in the central region.

6. Annex :Map of Al-Qaim Camp

