

IRAQ

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE – SYRIAN REFUGEES IN IRAQ

1-15 March 2015

KEY FIGURES

6

UASC reunited with their families in Syria

432

New Syrians from Kobani registered in KR-I

542

Children registered for psychosocial support

1,947

Cases processed by registration centres in Erbil

2,635

Individual refugees relocated from temporary to permanent site in Kawergosk camp, Erbil Governorate

FUNDING

USD 426,041,332

requested by agencies for the operation (Source: 2015 3RP – Iraq, as at 17/03/2015)



PRIORITIES

- Protection services to newly arrived Syrian refugees and minors
- Continuous improvements in camp shelter and WASH
- Revamping the education sector

POPULATION OF CONCERN

246,836 Syrian refugees

HIGHLIGHTS

- Since 2 March, no refugee arrivals have been recorded at the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing due to its closure. The Assayish have stated that the closure is a temporary measure, pending a decision by the President of the KR-I. Meanwhile, the Peshkhabour border crossing remained open for arrivals from Syria on Mondays only.
- The number of new arrivals noticeably decreased, with about 100 individuals per day arriving through the Peshkhabour border.
- UNHCR and its partners supported the election of the first community-based committee in the Kaznazan urban area, Erbil. The committee has equal representation of host community, refugees and IDPs living in the area.
- On 8 March, International Women's Day was celebrated in all refugee camps in Erbil. Refugee communities were actively engaged in the preparations and the actual performances.
- UNHCR accelerated its verification and biometric registration in the Erbil camps and urban areas, and also prepared for the roll out of mobile verification and registration teams for urban refugees in Suleimaniyah.
- The last kerosene distributions for the winter were carried out in the Basirma and Kawergosk camps, in the Erbil Governorate.
- In the period 1-15 March, 594 Syrians returned from the KR-I to Syria via the Peshkhabour border crossing point during.



Youth presenting their drawings at celebrations of the International Women's Day, Darashakran camp, Erbil Governorate (UNHCR/V. Lionetti)

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

In the reporting period, the number of new arrivals decreased, due to the closure of the Ibrahim Khalil crossing point on 2 March. The Peshkhabour border remained open one day per week (on Mondays), receiving an average of 100 individuals per Monday. UNHCR continued to assess the needs and register the new arrivals at Gawilan camp, in Duhok Governorate; however, the majority of them move out after registration to reunite with family members outside the camp. UNHCR is assessing the reasons behind the reduced movement, and is consulting with UNHCR Turkey on the situation. Since 25 September 2014, the overall number of new Syrian refugee arrivals into the KR-I from Kobani has reached 33,810 individuals.

The general situation in Erbil Governorate remained stable. In Kawergosk camp, the exercise to relocate refugees from the temporary site to the permanent site was concluded successfully on 11 March, with 488 families (2,635 individuals) moved to 512 plots.

Suleimaniyah Governorate has also been detrimentally affected by the economic crisis facing the KR-I region. Many construction and business projects have stalled due to concerns that the Government is unable to pay salaries. This is in addition to the ongoing military offensive in Tikrit and elsewhere against ISIL-led militants, which makes investors nervous to resume activities. Increasingly, refugees are struggling to find employment, and many have asked UNHCR's support for increased livelihood projects. Refugee resources have greatly diminished. In Suleimaniyah, some refugees who were able to rent houses are now facing possible eviction, and are trying to enter the Arbat camp. In this regard, IRC raised concerns regarding refugees selling or buying tents and plots of land. UNHCR and IRC are working on an information campaign for refugees regarding the possible consequences of such actions.

The number of refugees in Obaidy camp, Anbar Governorate, has decreased significantly over the past two months, now totalling 851 individuals, including 103 unregistered individuals. UNHCR is not as yet able to ascertain the reasons and the trends behind the refugees departing the camp, given UNHCR's inability to access Al Qa'im since ISIL-led militants took control of the area in June 2014. UNHCR has also lost communication channels with the area due to the shutdown of the mobile towers. UNHCR is exploring the feasibility of conducting a protection survey in the Obaidy camp through its active partners on the ground, with a view to better understand the situation of the refugees.

Achievements



Protection

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF, in co-operation with its implementing partners, newly registered 542 children (242 boys; 300 girls) for psychosocial support services in the Duhok, Suleimaniyah and Erbil refugee camps, and 67 children (36 boys; 31 girls) received specialized services from frontline workers. Cases include children with psychosocial distress and disorders, non-attendance of school, child labour, early marriage and disability.
- 432 Syrians, the majority from Kobani, were admitted to the KR-I through Ibrahim Khalil border (open only on 1 and 2 March) and Peshkhabour border. A total of 10 UASCs and 39 persons with special needs were identified among the new arrivals. All the new arrivals were transported from the border to Gawilan, where they were registered by UNHCR.
- On 8 March, the Women's Listening Centre (WLC) in Gawilan camp, organized an awareness session on SGBV. The event was attended by some 40 women. In addition, discussions between UNHCR and the WLC took place on how to engage boys and men in the prevention of SGBV.
- In the Qushtapa camp, Erbil Governorate, UNICEF's partner ACTED conducted a small-scale awareness raising campaign on gender based violence, primarily targeting the youth and parents residing in the camp. One of the

concrete aims achieved through the campaign was the reduction of harassment of adolescent girls leaving UNICEF's Youth Friendly Spaces (YFS) by male youngsters, thus creating a safer and more comfortable environment.

- On 8 March, International Women's Day was celebrated in all refugee camps in Erbil. Communities were actively engaged in the preparation and actual conduct of the activities. Key messages on equal access to rights and services, including education, women's participation in leadership and management structures of community, and early marriage were delivered.
- Registration centers in all four Erbil camps processed a total of 1,947 cases (5,493 individuals) for eventual issuance/renewal of UNHCR documentation and KRG residency cards. The PARC/Qandil legal team assisted the camp-based beneficiaries in obtaining 20 marriage certificates and 24 birth certificates.
- On 15 March, in Suleimaniyah, UNHCR conducted training for its partner CDO protection staff and for UNHCR field staff on protection monitoring tools for both IDPs and refugees. The training was followed by a joint field test of the tools in Arbat camp.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Providing specialized services to children with disabilities remains a challenge due to the limited number of organizations/institutions providing these services on a long-term basis. Handicap International partially covers the needs of children with audio, visual and physical disabilities by providing specialized devices to those in need, while the needs of children with mental disabilities remain largely unattended.

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- In coordination with and in support of the KR-I Peshkhabour border officials, a total of six registered UASC (boys) were successfully reunited with their families on the Syrian side of the Semalka border crossing point.
- In partnership with the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs (DoLSA), Suleimaniyah Governorate, 25 children were referred to specialized services through the two Child Protection Units (CPUs) in Suleimaniyah city and Bazyan District. The cases included child labour (22), early marriage (1) and children with disabilities (2). PARC lawyers provided 239 legal consultations, mainly in relation with issuance and notary of marriage certificates/contracts.
- In Suleimaniyah, the Child Protection mobile team met with 193 children in Dukan, Tasluja and Permagroun towns. Five separated and traumatized children were identified in Dukan and Tasluja. The team took appropriate immediate action such as provision of appropriate clothing, parental guidance and first-aid psychological support; and activated the family reunification process.
- Erbil UNHCR/PARC Registration Centre registered 1,360 cases (3,392 Syrian refugees).
- The Residency Department in Erbil City interviewed 649 cases of Syrian Asylum Seekers. Residency cards were issued for 318 individuals and 123 cards were renewed.
- The Erbil PARC team identified 9 female and male early marriage cases among the Syrian refugees (below 18 years of age). The team provided counseling including prevention of early pregnancy and referred the cases to the public hospitals for health awareness.



Durable Solutions

Achievements and Impact

- Pre-assessment screening was undertaken for 42 cases. Medical cases continue to be the highest referral profile.
- Interview missions took place to the Basirma, Darashakran and Qushtapa camps in Erbil Governorate, as well as to the Duhok Governorate. Case Identification interviews were conducted in 28 cases, and 12 cases were reviewed, of which 6 cases were prioritized (survivors of violence and/or torture).
- Eight cases (30 individuals) were referred for submission to the USA authorities. One emergency case requiring brain surgery was accepted by Sweden and is pending departure. Five cases (16 individuals) departed for resettlement to Sweden.

Education

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF and its partner NRC continued the train-the-trainer programme for 154 teachers in the four refugee camps of Erbil, aimed at improving teaching methods and techniques, positive discipline, and psychosocial support. NRC with UNICEF enrolled in the 'Catch-Up Classes' programme an additional 127 children (61 boys; 66 girls) in Kawergosk, 420 (195 boys; 225 girls) in Darashakran, 56 (26 boys; 30 girls) in Qushtapa, and 132 (75 boys; 57 girls) in Basirma Refugee Camps.
- In the Kawergosk camp, UNESCO started the rehabilitation of the secondary school so as to resume catch-up classes, and requested support from UNHCR in its effort to rehabilitate the school.
- The school of Obaidy camp, Anbar Governorate, resumed classes as planned. No change in the curriculum was made by ISIL, currently in control of the area.



Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is an overall shortage of teachers across all camp schools. Particularly challenging is the recruitment of teachers for new schools.

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- In order to facilitate their studies, 2,104 refugee students in Zakho and Dohuk host community received stationery supplies.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Most of the Syrian families in Twa, Soran and Bazyan, Suleimaniyah Governorate, do not send their children to school due to their precarious financial condition.
- There is a shortage of professional teachers in most of the schools.

School in Al Obaidy camp, Anbar Governorate (UNICEF)



Health

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- Due to the increased number of refugees with lice across several camps, health, WASH and camp management partners developed joint action plans to address the issue.
- WHO visited the Basirma refugee camp, Erbil Governorate, to assess tuberculosis (TB) services, increase awareness of TB and follow up on the referral mechanism for TB cases. The health facility was found to need to develop TB guidelines and health educational materials, as well as staff training on TB. An orientation on TB control and guidance on the referral of suspected TB patients to the public health system was provided. WHO, IMC and MOH devised a joint plan to train all doctors and paramedics on TB, to conduct health education campaigns among the refugees, and to facilitate the transportation of suspected TB patients.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The health status of newly arriving refugees needs to be closely monitored. Prevention of communicable disease outbreaks remains a key priority. Mental health and psychosocial care services in urban areas are limited in all governorates, and do not cover all the refugees in need of support. Drug shortages affect the implementation of primary health care services.

NON-CAMP

- In response to the shortages of supplies used in X-Ray imaging, WHO delivered X-ray technical supplies to the Directorate of Health (DOH) in Duhok, as part of its support to ensuring access to quality health services by populations affected directly and indirectly by forced displacement, namely refugees, host communities and IDPs.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Access to mental health care and psychosocial support services remains limited for non-camp refugees, and needs to be further expanded. Drug shortages remain a key concern in public health facilities.



Food Security and Nutrition

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- WFP, in partnership with INTERSOS, ACTED and Islamic Relief Worldwide - Iraq, started food parcel distributions in all Syrian refugee camps, with the exception of the Al Obaidy camp in the Anbar Governorate.
- Distributions in Domiz and Kawergosk are ongoing, while those in the other camps assisted by vouchers – Akre and Darashakran– have been completed. WFP is working with UNHCR to verify families who attended the distribution but were not on the camp master lists, to ensure that all those verified by UNHCR receive the needed assistance in a timely manner. WFP plans to transition Basirma camp to a food voucher scheme in April.
- The vulnerability targeting process continued with WFP and UNHCR meeting to discuss roles and timelines. Experts on vulnerability assessments from both agencies will arrive in country this month to lead the process.



Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Food distribution in Gawilan camp, Dohuk Governorate (UNHCR/A. Othman)

- The voucher value for March remained at USD 19 per person, reduced from January's value of USD 28.20 due to funding constraints.
- The distribution of food assistance in Al Obaidy camp is planned for the second half of March. WFP is preparing to deliver food parcels to the camp sufficient for three months.
- As demanded by refugee communities, the feasibility for a transition from food parcels to vouchers is being studied for the Gawilan camp, Dohuk Governorate.



Water and Sanitation

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNICEF, through its implementing partners, continued to scale up and improve water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion services for encamped refugees; and to provide new emergency services to the newly arriving Syrian refugees from Kobani.
- The performance test of the completed water network in the Qushtapa camp, Erbil Governorate, yielded positive results. Consequently, UNICEF started the dismantling and recovery of sanitation facilities in the transit areas of the camp. The recovered pre-fabricated toilet units and shower units are going to be stored for future use.
- The refugees in the temporary transit area of the Kawergosk Camp, Erbil Governorate, have been relocated to the permanent area where there is a fully functional water supply network as well as sewerage system. Sanitation facilities in the transit locations have been dismantled, recovered and stored for future use. Fencing of the water storage tank has been completed.
- UNICEF and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) have signed a partnership agreement governing the provision of WASH services in Basirma and Qushtapa camps. The key provisions of the agreement cover water quality monitoring, maintenance repairs of the water supply and sanitation system, WASH in schools, and hygiene promotion.
- UNICEF, the Directorate of Surrounding Water (DSW) of Duhok, NRC and the French Red Cross (FRC) continued to provide WASH services to the refugees in the Domiz Camp, including support to local authorities with the running and operation costs of water and sanitation, water quality testing and reporting, and the construction of an open grey-water drainage system (length 135m).
- In Duhok Governorate, a cleaning campaign was conducted in the Domiz 1, Domiz 2 and Gawilan camps in coordination with the community, sector leaders, BRHA staff and partners.
- In the Basirma Camp, Erbil Governorate, ACF completed the sewage network for 220 concrete slabs. The construction work of the remaining 20 is in progress, as well as the connection of the grey water network to the stream outside the camp.
- On 9 March in the Qushtapa camp, QRC completed the WASH activities and two broken water pipes were fixed. The water network was then tested successfully with no reported technical issues related to flow, quantify and gravity.
- In the Kawergosk camp, 3 water tanks have been fenced by UNICEF through the Directorate of Surrounding Water, in order to deter unauthorized access, as well as to minimize eventual contamination of potable water.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The grey water drainage in the Darashakran camp, and the presence of saline water in the Basirma camp, continue to pose a challenge for which an appropriate technical solution is under consideration by UNICEF, the KRG technical directorates and NGO partners.
- In the Gawilan camp, the lids of some septic tanks and manholes have been vandalized, causing safety risks to children. UNHCR brought up the issue to relevant actors for an appropriate solution.
- FRC identified WASH problems related to holding tanks in the Domiz camp, but repairs are not envisaged at the moment due to a lack of funds.
- In the Darashakran camp, the lack of a permanent solution for the safe disposal of solid waste is of particular concern for its negative health and environmental effects to the refugee community. The Mayor informed that the process to allocate a new site (about 5 km from the camp) is underway, with the municipality handling the matter with the owner of the land. For the time being, the garbage is currently being dumped and burned within the camp.

Shelter and NFIs

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- The second and last round of winter kits to 4,193 families in the Domiz 1 and 2 camps were distributed.
- BRHA allocated 64 plots to 55 new families (2,013 individuals) in the Gawilan camp.
- KURDS finished the shading works for the reception centre in the Darashakran camp and constructed 220 concrete slabs. The site should be ready by the end of March.
- At the Qushtapa camp, 384 tents were installed at the permanent site and all plots connected to the electricity network.
- At the Kawergosk camp, the relocation process to the 512 shelter plots at the permanent site was completed, including all the kitchens. DRC distributed 467 sleeping mats and 934 packs of polystyrene boards to the relocated 467 families.
- At the Basirma camp, 240 plots are now connected to the sanitation network, and work is nearing completion for the connection of the last 40 shelter plots.
- At the Al Obaidy camp, Anbar Governorate, ISHO distributed 4,300 sanitary napkins, 6,420 baby diapers and 1,690 soap bars to the refugee population.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- In an effort to resume the long-awaited provision of women sanitary napkins in the Gawilan and Akre camps, UNHCR is stepping forward and is currently in the process of procuring the items to re-start the distribution.
- In the Gawilan camp, 30 fire extinguishers need to be replenished.

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- In Duhok Governorate, the distribution of sleeping bags for non-camp refugees has been completed, reaching 1,966 families in eight non-camp locations.
- On 2 March, UNHCR with assistance from its partner YAO, distributed CRIs to 404 refugee families living in Rania and Qaladiza districts, Suleimaniyah Governorate.

Access to Energy

Achievements and Impact

- Kerosene distribution as part of the winterization strategy has been completed. On 9 March, in the Basirma Camp, DRC distributed the last 20 litres of kerosene per household. In the Kawergosk camp, ACTED distributed the same quantity, reaching 2,133 families.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Achievements and Impact

- During the CCCM Working Group meeting at the Erbil Governor's office on 10 March, it was decided to change the frequency of the meetings from a bi-weekly to a monthly frequency, considering that overall, the camps are relatively stable and most service providers have established sectoral coordination meetings at the camp level. However, given the ongoing works, bi-weekly meetings will be maintained until further notice in the Basirma and Qushtapa camps.

- On 2 March, Kawergorsk camp hosted two visits of camp managers, administrators and camp councils from the Qushtapa and Darashakran camps. The visitors learned how the relocation was managed in order to replicate the good practices in their respective camps.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The CCCM regular meetings for the Al Obaidy camp continue to be hindered by the lack of presence of most actors in the camp, including UNHCR staff and the Al Qa'im local authorities, and exacerbated by the non-functioning of the mobile network, making communications with camp staff even more constrained.



Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- In Duhok Governorate, UNHCR and DRC have started the identification and selection of 900 beneficiaries for inclusion in the 2015 livelihoods programme.
- UNHCR and its partners have supported the election of the first community-based committee in the Kaznazan urban in Erbil. The committee has equal representation of host community, refugees and IDPs living in the area. The local authorities (Mukhtars, Police and Assayish) were fully engaged in the process from an early stage. Of the 43 candidates, 15 members were elected, including women.
- The Mayor of Darashakran and the camp administration, in coordination with DRC and UNHCR, established a women's committee in the Darashakran camp.

NON-CAMP

- International Women's Day was celebrated in non-camp locations in the Erbil Governorate. PARC Qandil actively participated in the organization of the event.

Working in partnership

- The Inter Sector Working Group for the Syrian refugee response has been meeting to review the critical funding gap situation of the 3RP. Funding proposals have been jointly submitted to the CERF and for the refugee component of the Fast Track Priority Initiative launched by the Humanitarian Coordinator. The 2014 Multi Sector Needs Assessment is being finalized, which will provide critical data to review baseline data and re-engineer the joint response.
- In order to improve monitoring, impact evaluation and reporting, the ActivityInfo software is being roll-out satisfactorily, with over 230 persons trained throughout KR-I.

DONOR INFORMATION

Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

Donors who have contributed to the operation:

- Australia
- Canada
- CERF
- European Union
- France
- Germany
- Iraq
- Italy
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOG	Armed opposition group
ANC	Antenatal care
BIA/BID	Best Interests Assessment/Best Interests Determination
CRI	Core Relief Items (formerly known as non-food items/NFIs)
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
KR-I	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
IDP	Internally displaced people
KR-I	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MoDM	Ministry of Migration and Displacement
PARC	Protection Assistance Reintegration Centre
PHC	Primary Health Care
RSD	Refugee status determination
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
UASC	Unaccompanied and separated children
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Library as a Second Refuge

Akre, Dohuk Governorate, 19 February 2015 (UNHCR) – Nazeer, a refugee from Syria, has been a regular visitor to the Akre camp library after arriving in the camp more than a year ago. The library has been accommodating his passion for reading as it offers a good selection of his favourite books.

Seeking safety, Nazeer fled his home in Al-Hasakah, Syria, with his wife, six daughters and one son to Northern Iraq. After settling in the camp and being unemployed, Nazeer found refuge in the library. "I had so much free time; so I spent it in the library," recalls Nazeer.

Today, the library has expanded, thanks to the camp management, UNHCR and the local NGO Harikar. It can now accommodate between thirty to forty individuals.

The new space allocated to the library includes a sitting area, providing a quiet reading environment. The library now has more books brought in by local volunteers, as well as a new computer room, big enough to accommodate 9 persons.

"Refugees have always loved the library, and now that it's bigger, and has internet, it will attract more people. We are also thinking of organizing computer lab training at the library for the refugee students of the nearby school" says Jihan Jamil, the Community Services Assistant of Harikar, UNHCR's local partner.



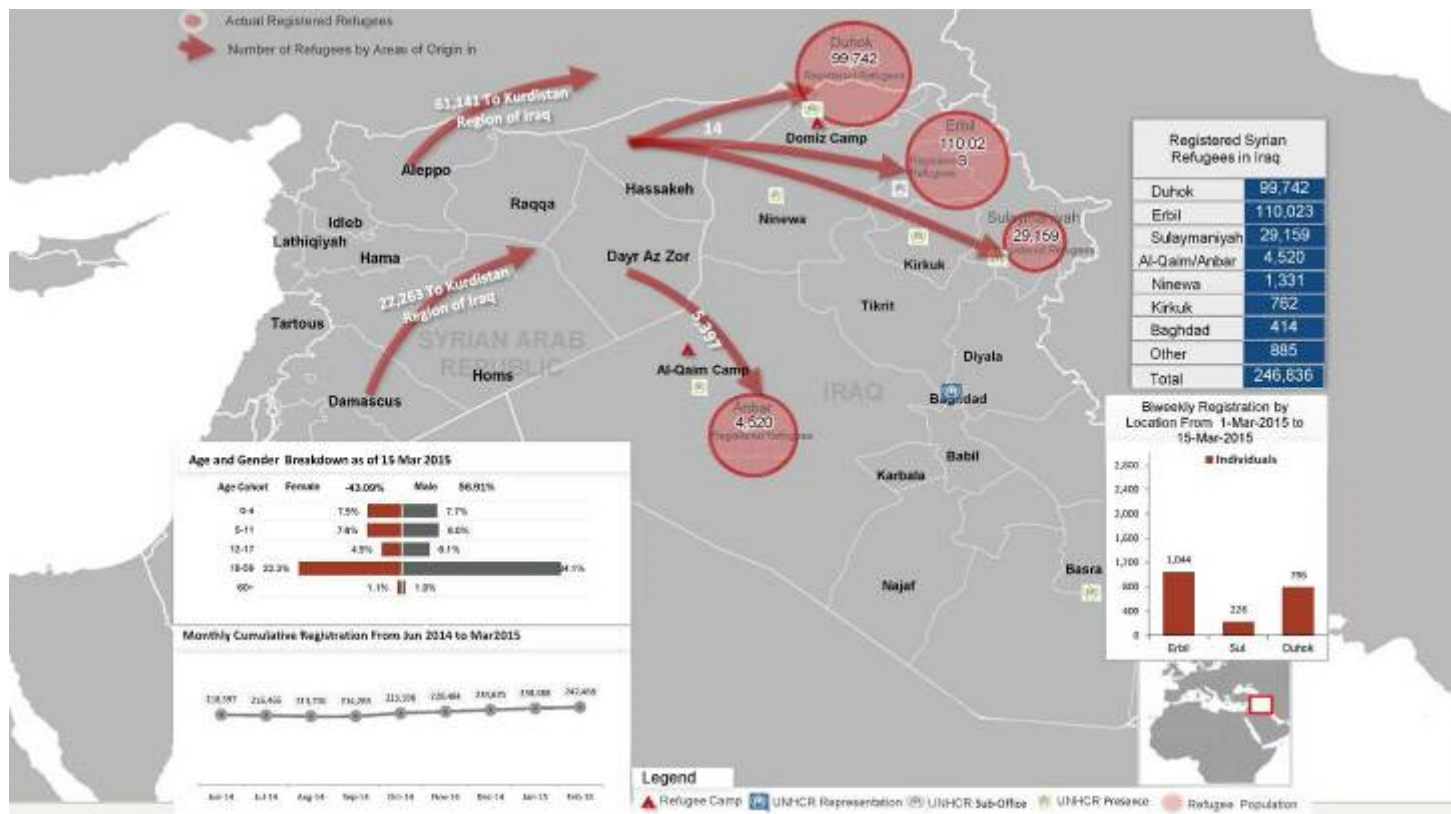
The Akre camp library became a refuge for Nazeer and accommodates his passion for reading (UNHCR/ H. Suliman)

With a bit of luck, Nazeer has recently found a job; nevertheless, he still finds ways to spend some time at the library. He believes that expansion of the library is a great idea. He used to bring books to his children to help them improve their writing and reading skills. "Now two of my daughters are regular visitors of the library," says Nazeer with a big smile. "I would like to see more young people spending time here."

By Husam Eldin Mustafa

ANNEXES

Refugees by Areas of Origin in Syria



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Links:

For information related to the Regional Response Plan (RRP6) please click on <http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/>.

Announcements of all sector meetings along with respective agendas and minutes, and other information on sector-wide progress such as 3Ws, dashboards and camp profiles, are available on the inter-agency information sharing portal at <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>.

For more information on the work of UNHCR and our partners in Iraq, please follow us on Twitter at @unhcriraq and on Facebook at "UNHCRinIraq"

UNHCR Registration Trends for Syrian Persons of Concern

