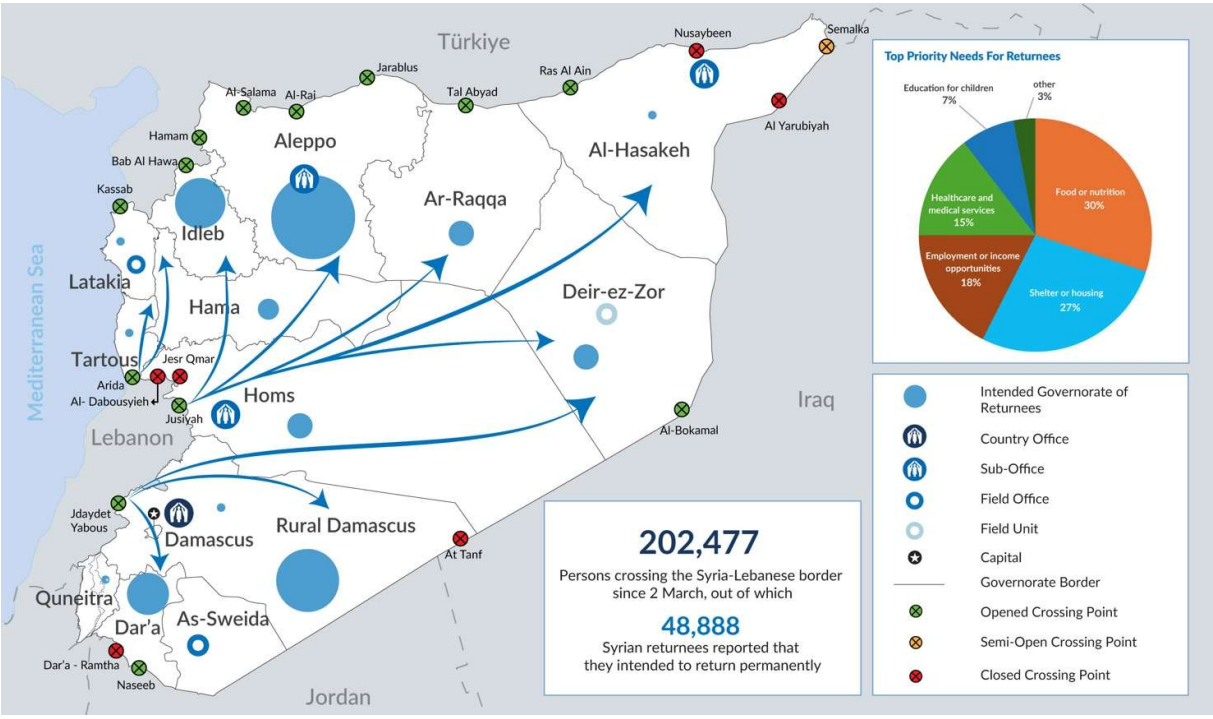
UNHCR Syria: Flash Update – Middle East Situation

27 March 2026



Situation overview

Escalating hostilities in the region in late February triggered an increase in cross-border movements from Lebanon into Syria. Between 2 and 27 March, **over 202,477 individuals** crossed into Syria through the three official border crossings, according to Syrian authorities. This includes **175,134 Syrians — 48,888** of whom indicated an intention to return permanently — and **27,343 Lebanese nationals**. Arrivals reflect a complex mix of profiles: Syrians who had already decided to return to Syria or had been considering returning for some time, as well as those fleeing the recent airstrikes and the deterioration of the security situation in Lebanon. Movements have been concentrated through the Masnaa-Jdeidet Yabous (47%) and Al Qaa-Joussieh (38%) border crossing points, both now operating 24 hours-a-day and are facilitating vehicle and cargo transit. The Arida border crossing point, which re-opened on 7 March, remains limited to pedestrian access due to a collapsed bridge and closes at 20:00.

Early March saw a peak in new arrivals from Lebanon, mainly Syrians returning from the southern suburbs of Beirut and southern Lebanon. While most movements involved families, some women and children returned ahead of husbands who planned to follow later. Roughly half of the individuals interviewed at the border reportedly intended to remain permanently despite limited access to housing, livelihoods, and services, while the others intend to stay in Syria temporarily. The vast majority planned on staying with extended family members or rented accommodation. Smaller numbers of Lebanese nationals and Syrian Palestinians also crossed, often as part of mixed nationality families.

In the lead up to Eid, patterns shifted, with increased arrivals of Syrian men—some visiting family for the holiday, others reuniting with relatives who had already returned. Intentions remained mixed between staying permanently and returning to Lebanon for work.

In general, those planning to stay in Syria cited the increased hostilities as the main trigger for departure, although a significant number had already been considering return beforehand. Across profiles, immediate needs are consistently **food, shelter, healthcare, livelihoods**, and **civil documentation**.

Syrians were returning to all parts of Syria, with the main intended destination governorates being **Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Rural Damascus, Idleb, Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a,** and **Homs**. UNHCR, through its country-wide network of Community Centres, outreach volunteers and partner organisations, has been engaging and responding to returnee households in need, primarily in Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hassakeh, Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a, Aleppo and Tartous.

Response from the border to intended destinations

Thanks to the Syrian Government and border authorities, UNHCR quickly increased operations at the three official border crossings with OCHA and partners, with tailored assistance. Continuous monitoring enables real-time adjustments to the response. UNHCR has provided:

- **Legal assistance** to over **468 families** to access civil documentation, including birth and marriage registration, critical for protection and access to services.
- **Water** to **30,000 people** in transit at the border crossings.
- **Relief items,** including blankets and plastic sheets, dignity kits and child-focused items, reached more than **600 vulnerable individuals**.
- **Transportation** that enabled over **3,550 people** to reach their final destinations.
- **Infrastructure improvements,** such as solar streetlighting to enhance safety at the border points.

In addition, humanitarian partners, including UN agencies and NGOs delivered a comprehensive package of support, such as food, water, healthcare, dignity kits, and items for children.

> **"We came back to Syria, to our country. God willing, the situation here will be better."**
>
> *Say's Wael*

After living abroad for 15 years, Wael and his family returned to Syria after heavy shelling in Lebanon destroyed their home, hoping for greater safety and stability. ©UNHCR/ Vivian Toumeh

Beyond the border, UNHCR's network of Community Centres is playing a critical role in supporting returnees as they attempt to reintegrate.

- Across the country, UNHCR Community Centres are conducting needs assessments for returning families and registering them for assistance and available services.
- Centres are providing psychological first aid and mental health support to new arrivals. Vulnerable individuals are referred to specialized services, including legal assistance, child protection, healthcare and education.
- Mental health and psychosocial support remain priorities, with targeted case management and awareness sessions helping individuals cope with trauma, stress, and uncertainty.
- Outreach efforts, including through trained volunteers, are extending the reach of services into communities hosting new arrivals.
- To date, over **20,000 returnees** have been identified and supported through Community Centres across Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idleb and Quneitra governorates.

UNHCR would like to recognize the work of the Government of Syria and all humanitarian partners responding to new arrivals at the border crossings

Al-Batoul | Al-Bir Charity | Child Care Society (CCS) | Elaf Association for Relief | Hand in Hand Organization | HiHFAD | IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation | Independent Doctors Association (IDA) | IOM | Mar Afram | Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) | OCHA | Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) | Syrian Association for Relief and Development (SARD) | Takaful Al Sham | The Syrian Association for the Protection of Civilians | The Syrian Family Planning Association (SFPA) | UNFPA | UNICEF | UNRWA | Violet organization | WFP **and others**