Middle East Situation

as of 2 May 2026

Overview

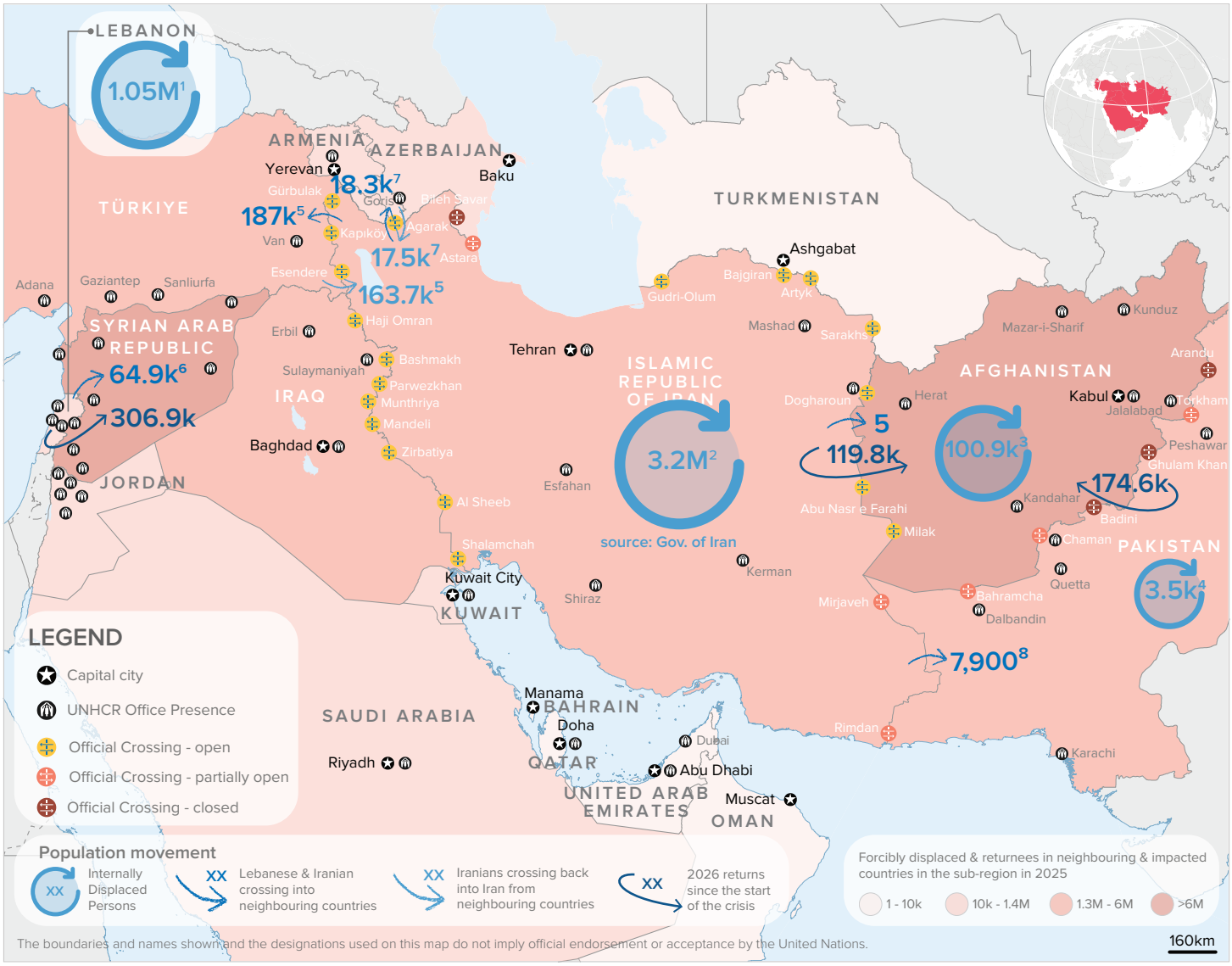
Escalating hostilities across Asia and the Middle East have led to a deterioration in the humanitarian situation. The affected areas already host 24.3 million forcibly displaced people, many of whom, alongside host communities, face significant protection risks and humanitarian needs.

With limited funding, many countries are struggling to meet existing needs, making it increasingly difficult to absorb additional pressures and support newly displaced populations.

Protection needs are rising, alongside heightened risk of internal displacement, new cross-border outflows, and onward movements to neighbouring countries.

An inter-agency emergency response has been launched to address urgent needs across the region. In Iran, the Flash Refugee Response Plan targets 1.65 million Afghan and Iraqi refugees and others in need of international protection, alongside 1 million host community members and 150,000 Afghans of other status. In Lebanon, a USD 308.3 million Flash Appeal aims to support 1 million people with lifesaving assistance and protection.

Situation Overview



Crossings to/from Türkiye, crossings to Syria (Syrian returnees and Lebanese nationals), Afghan returnee estimates (from Iran and Pakistan) and IDPs are as of 2 May; crossings into Pakistan are as of 23 April and crossings to/from Armenia are as of 15 April.

[1] Source: Government of Lebanon. [2] Source: Government of Iran. [3] Source: OCHA Afghanistan. [4] Source: Government of Pakistan.

[5] Source: UNHCR. Some Iranian nationals may be entering Türkiye under the visa-free short-term stay regime (up to 90 days). Such movements may reflect precautionary or temporary travel while individuals assess the situation in Iran. [6] Source: UNHCR and Government of Syria.

[7] Source: Official statistics shared with UNHCR by the Government of Armenia, April 2026. [8] IOM-UNHCR Joint border monitoring

Population Movements

Lebanese refugees

64,900
Lebanese refugees arrived in Syria

Since the onset of the crisis, the number of Lebanese refugees arriving in Syria has increased, with arrivals averaging around 1,000 individuals per day.

Border Crossings of Iranian Nationals to / from neighboring countries

213,200
Iranian nationals crossed into neighbouring countries

Türkiye	187,000
Armenia	18,300
Pakistan	7,900

181,200
Iranian nationals crossed back into Iran from neighbouring countries

Türkiye	163,700
Armenia	17,500
Pakistan	n/a

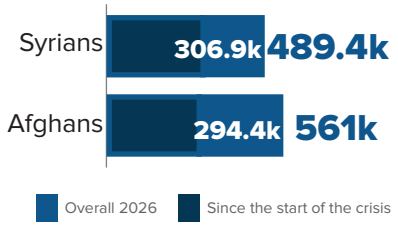
UNHCR considers that Iranian nationals outside the country – whether already present in or newly arriving to third countries – may have international protection needs on account of the armed hostilities in Iran, or other reasons.

The number of Iranians entering **Türkiye** remains below pre-conflict levels. These figures do not necessarily indicate permanent departures, as available data do not clearly distinguish between those who remained and those who later returned to Iran. For some Iranian nationals entering Türkiye under the visa-free regime (up to 90 days), movements may reflect routine travel, such as visits, transit to catch a flight, or precautionary trips while they assess the situation in Iran.

In **Armenia**, crossings remain broadly balanced, indicating continued regular two-way movements, without a significant surge in arrivals. In **Azerbaijan,** land borders remain closed due to public health restrictions except for commercial traffic and limited exceptions such as third-country evacuations.

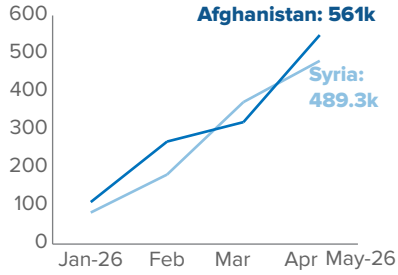
In **Pakistan**, as per IOM and UNHCR joint border monitoring, some **7,900 Iranians crossed** between 1 March and 23 April mainly via Taftan for routine business or family visits. Movements between **Iraq** and Iran remain routine; border conditions are fluid.

Afghan and Syrian returnees[9]

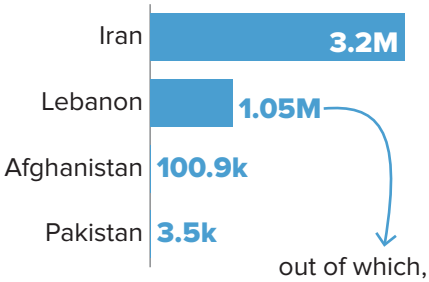


Afghan return[10] figures are preliminary and expected to fluctuate upon validation on a weekly basis.

Syrians crossing the border include those who had planned to return before the conflict and others compelled to cross due to current conditions. **83,374** reported intending to return permanently.



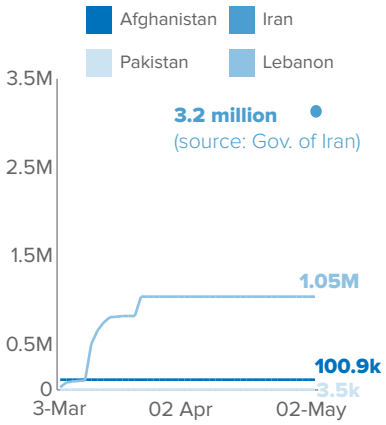
New IDPs since the start of the crisis



out of which, **124,231** displaced persons registered in **625** collective shelters nationwide.

According to the Government of Iran, around **3.2 million people (800k HHs)** internally relocated in the country, which has resulted in one of the largest internal relocations in Iran in recent decades. **75% of the relocated people are in Tehran** followed by Hormozgan (8%), Bushehr (5%) and Khuzestan (3%) provinces.

In Afghanistan, an estimated **100,900 people** have been newly displaced across six provinces, mostly in **Khost, Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, with about 27% in each province**, followed by 18% in Paktia.



[9]'Returnees' includes people returning under adverse circumstances due to the situation in countries of asylum; for Syrians, return dynamics vary and some returns may be temporary (including households where some family members remain in Lebanon).
[10]Afghan returns is an umbrella term that includes all returns including deportations, assisted repatriation, and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as PoR, ACC, Amayesh cardholders, headcounted slip holders and undocumented, excluding passport holders.

Afghans in Iran - Movement intentions

Iran continues to host **1.65M** refugees and others in need of international protection. Refugee focal points, UNHCR-hired lawyers and psychosocial counsellors, interact regularly with Afghan refugees and other Afghans in need of international protection, across 17 provinces to understand their protection situation and movement intentions. Refer to Protection Overview for further information.

No large-scale, self-organized population movements reported. Despite increasing insecurity and hardship, **remaining in Iran is consistently identified as the preferred option.** Most Afghans, particularly families with children, older persons and those needing medical care, emphasize that their lives, livelihoods and social networks are firmly rooted in Iran.

Return to Afghanistan and onward movement are widely seen as unfeasible, dangerous and costly. Perceptions of return and onward movement are shaped by secondary information and community reports of harm to returnees (including incidents linked to Pakistan–Afghanistan hostilities), reinforcing fear and discouraging consideration of going back.

Mobility within Iran is limited to short-term, precautionary internal displacement and small-scale intra-city relocations driven by security and economic constraints, with many households self-restricting movement due to fear, checkpoints and the financial and social burden on host relatives.

Profiles

51% Iranians crossing to Türkiye are **families.** Based on some 3,600 interviews conducted by UNHCR with arriving Iranian nationals between 4 March and 2 May, the age and gender breakdown was as follows: **62% adult men, 28% adult women, 5% girls, and 5% boys.**

In **Lebanon, 35%** of IDPs are estimated to be **children**[11] where as in Iran **60% are women and children**.

In **Afghanistan, an estimated 73% of the IDPs are women and children**. Protection concerns have arisen in displacement sites including involuntary returns of vulnerable IDP families. [12]

In **Pakistan**, IDPs moved to safer areas, where the district administration has established two IDP centers, one in Drosh and another in Akroye. **57% are children, and 28% are women.**

Returns to Afghanistan

Among the Afghan returnees assisted by UNHCR in Afghanistan since the start of the crisis, **women and children constitute 82% of those returning from Pakistan and 56% of those returning from Iran.**

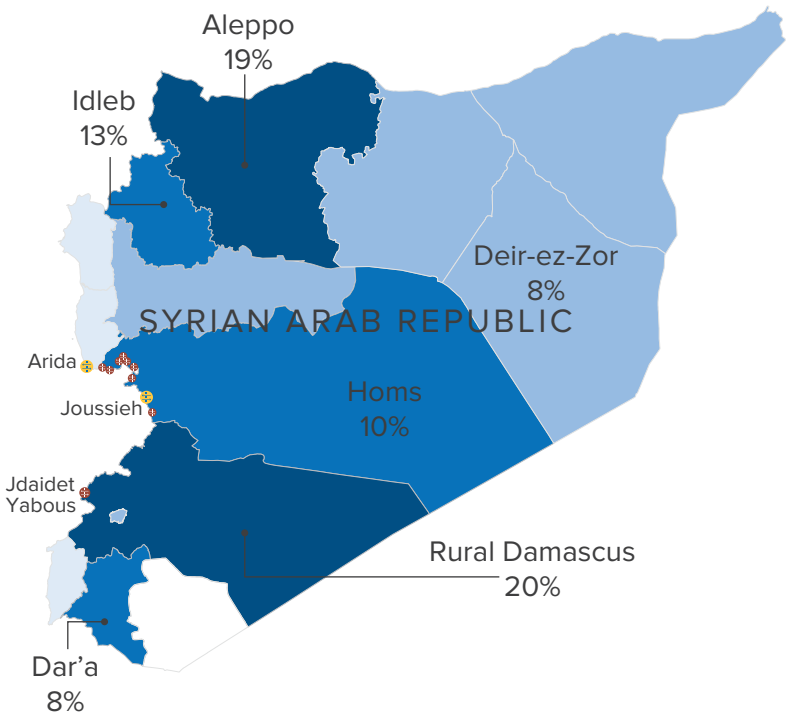
Top Provinces of intended returns

[11]Source: UNICEF. [12]Source: OCHA Afghanistan.

Returns to Syria

Crossings into Syria are primarily **family-based**, with Syrians comprising the majority of those returning. Among the Syrian families interviewed, **females account for approximately 53%**.

Top Provinces of intended returns



Intended returns per province
- 0
- 0.1 - 2%
- 3 - 8%
- 9 - 15%
- >15%

Top 3 needs of returnees in Syria

83% Housing/Shelter

80% Food or nutrition

50% Employment or income opportunities

UNHCR Preparedness and Coordination

UNHCR is leading cross-regional preparedness and response coordination for potential cross-border refugee movements, working with authorities, UN agencies and humanitarian partners. The Regional Bureaux for Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, and Europe are working closely with country operations to monitor developments and advance preparedness and response planning.

Should a response be required, emergency financial aid would be the primary assistance modality, supported by systems already in place in Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Türkiye and through our global stockpiles and UNHCR's mechanism to reinforce staffing capacity.

Operational Presence

Forcibly displaced persons & returnees in neighbouring & impacted countries in the sub-region in 2025. For more information on Forcibly Displaced definition and methodologies, click here.