

**Update 8**  
**Iraqi Refugee Returns/Syrian Refugees**  
**Syria Situation**  
28 July 2012

**1. Overview:**

A decrease in the number of returnee arrivals was observed at Al-Waleed and Al-Qa'im border points which received 244 and 98 Iraqis respectively. One hundred and twenty more returnees entered through Rabi'aa.

However, Iraqi return figures have still recorded a sharp rise with the new statistics obtained from Baghdad International Airport authority, sending the total returnee numbers up to 18,046. According to BIAP figures, 5,036 Iraqis were assisted with free flights from 19 to 24 July, making up a total of 5,222 returnees by air up to this date.

For Syrian refugees, Al-Qa'im remains the only crossing point which recorded the arrival of 95 refugees on Friday, bringing the number of Syrian arrivals at this border point since 24 July to 2,444. No refugee movement was observed in Al-Waleed or Rabi'aa. Media reports speak of Syrian army deployment preventing Syrians from crossing the border into Iraq through Rabi'aa. With the 8,445 Syrian Kurdish refugees already in Kurdistan, the total number of Syrian refugees in Iraq hits 10,889.

In Al-Qa'im, the ground levelling and compacting have started today at the site selected for establishing a camp for the Syrian arrivals and then stopped, due to the disagreement among government authorities. Official approval has been obtained from Anbar Provincial Council/Al-Qa'im Local Council to allocate a camp site with an area of 1000m x 1000m in the College of Education to accommodate Syrian refugees, but still discussions are ongoing. UNHCR teams, meanwhile, distributed 200 NFI packages to Syrian families in Al-Qa'im with the support of MoDM. Two hundred more packages have been delivered to Al Qaim and will be distributed tomorrow.

UNHCR has also obtained an official letter from the Ministry of Displacement (MoDM) confirming the formation of the Emergency Committee under the chairmanship of MoDM and with the membership of the concerned ministries, security departments, international organisations, Iraqi Red Crescent Society and UNHCR to manage the dossiers of Iraqi returnees from Syria and Syrian refugees entering Iraq.

MoDM today headed an emergency committee delegation for an assessment mission to Rabi'aa border crossing.

Complaints by Syrian refugees accommodated in schools in Al-Qa'im were carried by broadcast and print media which quoted some refugees as claiming that there were being detained and denied free movement or access to relatives in the town.

Syrians entering Iraq with passports and official travel documents can move inside Iraq. Those with no travel documents are still allowed into the country and escorted upon entry to schools or public centres where they can receive health care, NFIs and other assistance, pending their relocation to the new camp once established.

UNHCR teams are counseling the refugees in cooperation with the local authorities to clarify the situation.

In this regard, the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA) quoted an Iraqi Member of Parliament as saying that the Government had decided to grant conditional residency to Syrian refugees in Iraq to allow them free movement, provided that they should have a local sponsor. This is yet to be verified.

## 2. Statistics

### 2.1 Iraqi returnees

Border point / Date	Number of returnees
<b>Al-Waleed</b>	
18/07/2012	1,250
19/07/2012	3,800
20/07/2012	857
21/07/2012	1,135
22/07/2012	613
23/07/2012	866
24/07/2012	867
25/07/2012	569
26/07/2012	686
27/07/2012	244
	<b>10,887</b>
<b>Rabi'aa</b>	0
19/07/2012	290
20/07/2012	165
21/07/2012	95
22/07/2012	0
23/07/2012	0
24/07/2012	0
25/07/2012	0
26/07/2012	0
27/07/2012	120
	<b>670</b>
<b>Al-Qaim</b>	
24/07/2012	250
25/07/2012	557
26/07/2012	362
27/07/2012	98
	<b>1,267</b>
<b>By air (~)</b>	5,036
26/07/2012	186
	<b>5,222</b>
<b>Grant Total</b>	<b>18,046*</b>

\*Figures updated as at 01:00 PM, Saturday, 28 July 2012  
Source of information: Border Immigration Offices/BIAP

### 2.2 Syrian refugees

Crossing point / Date	Number of refugees
<b>Al-Waleed</b>	
24/07/2012	
25/07/2012	

	<b>0</b>
<b>Rabi'aa</b>	
24/07/2012	
25/07/2012	
	<b>0</b>
<b>Al-Qaim</b>	
24/07/2012	886
25/07/2012	594
26/07/2012	869
27/07/2012	95
	<b>2,444*</b>
<b>Kurdistan Region</b>	<b>8,445</b>
	<b>8,445</b>
<b>By air (~)</b>	
	<b>0</b>
<b>Grant Total</b>	<b>10,889</b>

\*Figures updated as at 12:00 am, Saturday, 28 July 2012  
Source of information: Border Immigration Offices

### 3. UNHCR arrangements

Al-Qa'im:

- 200 tents arrived in Al-Qa'im today.
- 200 more NFI packages delivered to Al Qaim today..The distribution of 200 packages to Syrian families accommodated in Al-Rummana school completed yesterday. The kits include rechargeable fans and water jerry cans.
- UNHCR IP IRW standing ready to start works on the site as soon as government decision announced
- Three senior national staff members travelling to Al Qaim tonight to support the staff on the ground

Al-Waleed:

- 300 NFI kits delivered to Al Waleed camp.

Rabi'aa:

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

### 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, Jenziya (national ID) document, to shelter (for some), food, health care and cash, based on a rapid assessment conducted by UNHCR staff both at the border and at the disembarkation point.

### 5. Interviews with new arrivals

Most of the returnees interviewed by UNHCR teams at the border were coming from Aleppo and Damascus. Many of them said they planned to return whenever the security situation permits. They were mostly worried about their resettlement cases. The final destination of majority of returnees was Baghdad.

### 6. Coordination

UNHCR is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDM), MoL-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.