

**Update 11**  
**Iraqi Refugee Returns/Syrian Refugees**  
**Syria Situation**  
31 July 2012

**1. Overview:**

A total of 699 Iraqis returned from Syria through the three Iraqi border points of Al-Waleed, Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im on 30 July, with Al-Waleed recording the highest number of 505 returnees, according to the statistics released by Iraqi border authorities at 12:00 am, Tuesday, 31 July. Both Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im received 114 and 80 returnees respectively. This brings the total number of Iraqi returnees since 18 July up to 20,102, including 5,222 returnees by air, mostly on government-assisted flights.

However, some reverse trend could be observed in Al-Waleed where 977 departures to Syria were recorded over the past five days.

Al-Qa'im, the main border crossing for Syrians fleeing into Iraq, received 165 more Syrian nationals, driving the total number of Syrians who entered Iraq since 24 July up to 3,185. No Syrian arrivals have been reported through Al-Waleed or Rabi'aa so far.

With another 9,053 Syrian refugees, mainly Kurds, hosted by Kurdistan Region of Iraq since March 2011, the total number of Syrians seeking safety and protection in Iraq rises to 12,238.

A UNHCR Protection team has started the registration and counselling of Syrian refugees in Al-Qa'im today, assisted by a team from UNHCR IP "IRC".

The installation of tents is ongoing at the camp location which can hold 250 tents, enough to house 1,000 individuals. Works on installation of water network started together with UNICEF. Electric wiring is also going on..

UNHCR needs assessment of the Syrian refugees in schools and public centers in Al-Qa'im has found out that 29% of the refugees are women heads of household and widows while 2% are singles. Some 10% of the families have elderly members and 2% have members with injuries. Most of the families surveyed seek health care and education. Many have complained of the limited space, overcrowding and lack of privacy at the present locations. Detailed survey will be carried out during the registration exercise, which started today..

UNHCR Al-Qa'im team has observed some lack of coordination in terms of the assistance and services provided by different actors to refugees, with some activities duplicated.

Refugees in Al-Qa'im have been receiving NFIs, FIs and sometimes cash assistance donated by the government, tribes or the local community.

In a swift response from the local authorities to the emerging situation, Al-Qa'im Department of Health has assigned a doctor with ambulance and medical supplies for each school accommodating Syrian refugees. The health centre in Um Rumana area is also functioning 24 hours. A district council member has assured UNHCR that the concerned departments are well prepared, confirming that that 24 ambulances are on stand-by for any emergency.

**2. Meetings:**

- UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im made a presentation on the camp layout to the Deputy Minister of Displacement and Migration who heads the emergency cell in Al-Qa'im and members of the provincial and local councils and security committee.

The site plan was later approved by the head of the emergency cell and Al-Qa'im mayor and the go-ahead was given to start work.

The local authorities expressed readiness to connect the camp with the emergency electricity network and to supply a monthly share of fuel to the generators.

UNHCT met today. Among other agenda items, situation at the border crossing points and preparedness for Syrian influx and mass return have been discussed. UN CT expressed readiness to support efforts with available means.

### 3. Statistics

#### 3.1 Iraqi returnees

Border point	Number of arrivals 30 July 2012
Al-Waleed:	505
Total Al-Waleed: 12,229	
Rabi'aa:	114
Total Rabi'aa: 1,099	
Al-Qa'im:	80
Total Al-Qa'im: 1,552	
Total returnees on 30 July 2012:	699
By air: 5,222	
<b>Grand total (since 18 July 2012):</b>	<b>20,102</b>

#### 3.2 Syrian refugees

Border point	Number of arrivals 30 July 2012
Al-Waleed:	0
Rabi'aa:	0
Al-Qa'im:	165
Total arrivals since 24 July: 3,185*	
Total arrivals in Kurdistan since March 2011:	9,053
<b>Grand total:</b>	<b>12,238</b>

### 4. UNHCR arrangements

Al-Qa'im:

- 400 tents sent to Al-Qa'im. Another 50 tents delivered today.
- A second batch of 200 NFI packages to be distributed to Syrian families. The kits include rechargeable fans, water jerry cans, mattresses, quilts, kitchen sets, stoves and hygiene kits.

Al-Waleed:

- 300 NFI kits delivered to Al Waleed camp.

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\* Figures updated as at 12:00 am, Tuesday, 31 July 2012  
Source of information: Border Immigration Offices/BIAP

- NFI items stored in Al-Waleed rub-hall: 1,800 mattresses, 1,800 blankets, 208 heaters, 204 plastic sheets, 138 water tanks, 296 kitchen sets, 300 fans and 300 hygiene kits.
- 120 tents installed.
- Water, sanitation, electricity ready to be connected.

Rabi'aa:

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

Baghdad:

- 60 emergency NFI kits to be delivered to Baghdad's six RICCs, 10 kits each for distribution to the Iraqi returnees, who have been registered by MoDM RACs. Distribution will be carried out tomorrow.

Governorates:

UNHCR field staff started to receive information about registered returnees and making preparations for assessment and distribution of Non-Food items

Domiz camp (Duhok):

- A total of 432 tents have been erected in the family section and 144 in the single section.
- Work in progress to build individual sanitation units and closed sewerage for families in sectors 1 and 2 and in single the singles.
- Work is under way to construct tent foundations, walls, cooking areas and sanitation units for 214 family plots in sector 2.
- Working has started to establish 100 tents, cooking areas and sanitation units for singles.
- For the transit area, work has started to establish 48 tents with 24 sanitation units for newly arrived families. The work includes fixing water tanks for each family.
- UNHCR distributed 44 NFI packages and 43 tents for 176 singles. UNHCR staff unloaded 50 NFI packages and 100 pallets in the Domiz Rub-hall and 100 NFI packages and 100 canvas tents in the DDM/UNHCR warehouse.

## **5. 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 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**

- Most of the returnees interviewed by UNHCR team at Al-Waleed border said they could not receive the vol-rep cash assistance from UNHCR Syria because of the deteriorating security situation. They complained of the high transportation fees.
- Baghdad, Basrah, Hilla, Diwaniya and Salah-al-Din were the final destination of the majority of the arrivals.
- In Diyala, one returnee from Syria approached UNHCR Return, Integration and Community Center (RICC) today for registration and assistance, guided by UNHCR leaflet received at the border.
- UNHCR field team visited the transportation companies in Diyala/ Baqubah centre, reporting the arrival of 7 returnees from Syria a week ago, mostly heading for Baqubah and Muqadadiya districts.

- Six more returnee families approached MoDM branch office in Karbala for registration, half of them returned before 20 June 2012, which could disqualify them from MoDM registration. MoDM legal section has postponed the registration of new returnees from Syria pending clarification from the legal department of MoDM centre regarding the new MoDM instruction.
- Two families returning from Syria were registered with MoDM branch office in Hilla today. UNHCR Hilla team was informed about the arrival of a total of 32 families from Syria between 29-31 July.
- Four Iraqi returnees from Syria were registered with in MoMD branch in Kut. One returnee interviewed by UNHCR Wassit team said he served as lieutenant colonel with intelligence service and left Iraq in January 2007 for Damascus where he settled in a camp run by UNRWA. His sons were accepted for resettlement in Canada but he refused to allow them to go without accompanying them. He now wants to settle in his place of origin in Al-Zubaidiya sub-district.
- UNHCR south team reported the arrival of 4 returnee families from Syria in Basra, 3 families in Thi-Qar, 5 families in Muthanna and 2 families in Diwaniyah.

## **7. Coordination**

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