

Update 13
Iraqi Refugee Returns/Syrian Refugees
Syria Situation
2 August 2012

1. Overview:

A total of 354 Iraqis returned from Syria on 1 August, all through the three border points of Al-Waleed, Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im, according to the latest statistics received from the border authorities. Returnee arrival numbers in Al-Waleed were the highest, recording 254 returns but with an equally high figure of 284 Iraqis making the reverse trip back to Syria. Both Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im received 78 and 22 returnees respectively, figures which are relatively low compared to the returns observed over the past ten days. In total, Iraqi returnee numbers have reached 20,707, including 5,222 by air.

Al-Waleed border point saw the first Syrian refugees with the arrival of two families comprising five individuals. The first family fled Aleppo fighting and the second was reportedly threatened by an armed gang in Yalda district of Damascus. Both families have now settled in Al-Waleed camp. One family informed UNHCR team at Al-Waleed that the Syrian border authorities in Al-Tanaf were allowing Syrian families to cross the border into Iraq without requesting an Iraqi entry visa. Rabi'aa border crossing observed no refugee movement while Al-Qa'im received only 62 Syrians, bringing the number of Syrian refugees who entered Iraq since 24 July to 3,356. With another 9,053 Syrians in Kurdistan, the total number of Syrian refugees across Iraq rises up to 12,409.

The registration of Syrian refugees in Al-Qa'im is continuing at their present locations in schools and public centres. UNHCR Protection team today registered 55 more Syrian families (275 individuals) at a health centre in Karabla district, bringing the total number of registered asylum seekers to 489.

An information campaign and focus group meetings are planned for the coming days to raise awareness about registration through community leaders, MoDM, local authorities and implementing partners.

UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im today joined the Head of the Emergency Cell, the Mayor of Al-Qa'im and Provincial Council members for a tour of Al-Qa'im to identify a location for a second refugee camp to be established for Syrian refugees. Officials are expecting a refugee influx triggered by the worsening violence across Syrian towns and cities.

The team earlier conducted site visits to the camp location to follow up the construction works and activities carried by the local authorities and IP. Similar visits were paid by the local authorities and teams from the concerned government departments to observe the progress of work on the site and to express their readiness to support.

At the camp site, 100 tents have been erected. Installation of electricity pylons and transformers has also started. The ground leveling is still ongoing, now at the stage of spreading the sub-base for the main roads of the camp.

A visit was also made by Iraqi security forces commander expressed readiness to continue providing the site with water tankers and gravels to cover the sidewalks around the tents.

UNHCR sent a videographer/photographer on mission to Al-Qa'im to cover and document the ongoing operational and protection activities.

A planned UNHCR international mission has been postponed today due to weather conditions in Anbar which was hit by a sand storm.

3. Statistics

3.1 Iraqi returnees

Border point	Number of arrivals 1 August 2012
Al-Waleed:	254
Total Al-Waleed: 12,525	
Rabi'aa:	78
Total Rabi'aa: 1,304	
Al-Qa'im:	22
Total Al-Qa'im: 1,656	
Total returnees on 1 August 2012:	354
By air: 5,222	
Grand total (since 18 July 2012):	20,707*

3.2 Syrian refugees

Border point	Number of arrivals 1 August 2012
Al-Waleed:	5
Rabi'aa:	0
Al-Qa'im:	62
Total refugees on 1 August 2012: 67	
Total arrivals since 21 July: 3,356*	
Total arrivals in Kurdistan since March 2011:	9,053
Grand total:	12,409

4. UNHCR arrangements

Al-Qa'im:

- 450 tents delivered to Al-Qa'im.
- 100 tents installed at the new camp location which holds 254 tents.
- A second batch of 200 NFI packages to be distributed to Syrian families. The kits include rechargeable fans and water jerry cans.
- Registration forms, laminating machine, refugee cards provided.

Al-Waleed:

- 300 NFI kits delivered to Al Waleed camp.
- NFI items stored in Al-Waleed rub-hall: 1,800 mattress, 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 installed.

Rabi'aa:

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

* Figures updated as at 12:00 am, Thursday, 2 August 2012
Source of information: Border Immigration Offices/BIAP

Baghdad:

- 60 emergency NFI kits to be delivered to Baghdad's six RICCs, 10 kits each.

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, Jensiya (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

UNHCR team at Al-Waleed border reported a high number of Iraqis travelling back to Syria, mostly intending to sell their assets and property to return permanently to Iraq.

The team interviewed two Syrian refugee families, the first to enter through this border crossing. The first family, a mother with two children, fled Aleppo which has been scene of fierce fighting between the Syrian regular army and the Free Army. The mother said the border authorities rejected the sponsorship request submitted by her brother who cam from Baghdad who has Iraqi nationality.

The second family which consists of a mother with a child fled Damascus for fear of their lives after receving threats from an armed gang in Damascus. She said her husband would leave Syria to join them the next day.

7. Coordination

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