

Update 16
Iraqi Refugee Returns/Syrian Refugees
Syria Situation
5 August 2012

1. Overview:

A total of 385 Iraqis returned from Syria through the three border points of Al-Waleed, Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im on 4 August. Al-Waleed return figures almost doubled with the arrival of 289 more Iraqis while fewer returns were recorded at Rabi'aa and Al-Qa'im which both received 64 and 32 Iraqis respectively. Since 18 July 2012, a total of 21,819 Iraqis returned from Syria, including 5,222 returnees by air.

A higher number of Syrian arrivals was recorded at Al-Qa'im border crossing which witnessed the arrival of 109 Syrians, bringing the total number of Syrian refugees who entered Iraq through the three border points since 18 July to 3,556. With another 9,053 Syrian refugees, mainly Kurds, in Kurdistan, the total number of Syrian refugees across Iraq has risen up to 12,609.

UNHCR registration of Syrian arrivals in Al-Qa'im has continued for the fifth consecutive day. Eighty-five more Syrian families (383 individuals) have been registered at two school locations today. Up to this date, a total of 368 Syrian families (1,755 individuals) has been registered.

Final construction works are being undertaken at the first camp site and services are advancing at a fast pace. Two hundred and twenty tents are now installed. The Water Department is connecting the pipelines with the distribution taps. UNICEF is to provide filters and water coolers to be installed next to the tap points. Light poles, cables and wiring equipment are being installed inside the camp which will be connected to the national electricity grid.

The Emergency Cell in Al-Qa'im said in a meeting attended by UNHCR that the local authorities would provide a water tank and an air cooler to each tent in the new camp. The municipality is to cover the camp ground with a layer of gravel.

The Cell informed UNHCR team that the first camp could be extended to hold 100-150 more tents. UNHCR shelter team has, meanwhile, completed the site plan prepared for the second camp which is planned to hold some 500 tents. Ground leveling and construction works have already started on the land between the camps.

UNHCR team has obtained verbal approval from the Director of Al-Qa'im border point to allow UNHCR to have caravans for the accommodation of UNHCR staff at the border.

UNHCR team in Al-Qa'im expects the first move of Syrian refugees from schools and public centres to the new camp location to take place within the coming few days.

A committee from the refugee representatives is to visit the camp to prepare for the first movement.

2. Statistics

2.1 Iraqi returnees

Border point	Number of arrivals 4 August 2012
Al-Waleed:	289
Total Al-Waleed: 13,337	
Rabi'aa:	64
Total Rabi'aa: 1,539	
Al-Qa'im:	32
Total Al-Qa'im: 1,721	
Total returnees on 4 August 2012:	385
By air: 5,222	
Grand total (since 18 July 2012):	21,819*

2.2 Syrian refugees

Border point	Number of arrivals 4 August 2012
Al-Waleed:	0
Total Al-Waleed: 5	
Rabi'aa:	0
Total Rabi'aa: 2	
Al-Qa'im:	109
Total Al-Qa'im: 3,549	
Total arrivals since 18 July: 3,556*	
Total arrivals in Kurdistan since March 2011:	9,053
Grand total:	12,609

3. UNHCR assistance

Al-Qa'im:

- 250 tents installed at the 1st camp location.
- Another 250 tents to arrive in Al-Qa'im today. Installation at the 2nd camp to start tomorrow.
- BRC fencing is ongoing.
- 3 caravans to be transferred from Al-Waleed to Al-Qa'im; two to be used as admin unit and the third as a health clinic.
- 36,000-litre fuel tank to be moved from Al-Waleed to al-Qa'im

Al-Waleed:

- Adequate NFI stock at rub-hall ready for distribution whenever needed.
- Water, sanitation, electricity ready to be installed.

* Figures updated as at 12:00 am, Sunday, 5 August 2012
Sources of information: Border Immigration Offices/BIAP

Rabi'aa:

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

Baghdad:

- Another round of NFI distribution planned through Baghdad's six RICCs to Iraqi returnees.

Domiz camp (Duhok):

- Assistance ongoing

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, 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.

5. Interviews with new arrivals

- UNHCR Karbala team reported some difficulties facing returnees approaching MoDM branch office in the governorate for registration. Sixteen families (61 individuals) of returnees from Syria today visited MoDM branch office which turned them back, saying it was still waiting for clarification from the Ministry.
- In Hilla, seven returnee families (22 individuals) were registered with MoDM today, with no problem. Since 29 July, a total of 44 returnee families (182 individuals) have been registered.
- UNHCR Wassit staff today interviewed two of the three returnee families who visited MoDM branch office for registration.
- The first family returned from Syria on 23 July and the second on 19 July. Both were registered with UNHCR Syria. One family has been accepted for resettlement in the United States. UNHCR is following up on their case with the US embassy to facilitate their departure to the US.
- MoDM branch offices in southern Iraq today completed the registration of 3 returnee families in Basra, 45 families in Thi-Qar, 2 in Missan and 12 families in Diwaniya. All the families returned from Syria within July.

6. 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.