

Syria Situation

Weekly Update No.14

9 – 15 August, 2012



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Iraqi – Syrian Border Points

Agencies: UNHCR | UNICEF | WFP | WHO | IOM
NGOs: IRW | Qandil | ISHO | IRC | HARIKAR | CVO

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

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1. Overview



Syrian new arrivals in Al-Qaim camp

During the reporting period, **Syrian refugees** continued to arrive in Iraq, with the total number currently standing at **15,096**. Out of this figure, 13,856 are registered with UNHCR; the remaining 1,240 are awaiting registration.

Kurdistan region again witnessed the largest number of arrivals, with 961 persons reported to have entered during the past week (110 families / 432 individuals, and 529 single men). According to UNHCR and Kurdistan Regional Displacement and Migration Department (DDM), the region now hosts **10,734** registered Syrians nationals.

The withdrawal of Syrian security forces from border areas is believed to have contributed to the large numbers of arrivals, facilitating access to the border. Further reports were received that many Syrians are preparing to leave both Qamishli and Hasaka, fearing the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Government against rebels hidden within community. Refugees also expressed fears of tension in Turkish Syrian border, as well as the spread of militant groups. Other triggering factors include loss of livelihood, shortages in water, electricity and gas supplies.

Domiz camp in Kurdistan is currently hosting some 2,305 individuals, of which 459 families (1,949 persons) are residing in phases 1 and 2 (families section) and 356 singles are residing in the singles section, with 15 singles residing in the nearby mosque.

The **Al-Qaim** border crossing point into Iraq has been closed since 13 August. Authorities have confirmed that this will be a temporary measure, and that the border will be reopened once the camp at Al-Qaim has been fully prepared to receive refugees. During the reporting period 530 persons were recorded as having crossed into Iraq via this border point, five persons arrived through Al-Waleed and one through Rabi'aa last week, bringing the total number of arrivals through Al Qaim since 18 July 2012, 4,338 persons, through Al Waleed 11 persons, through Al Rabia 8 and by air 5.

Preparations for the camp at Al-Qaim are underway. The first families (18 families / 100 individuals) moved into the camp on 11 August. As at 15 August, a total of 119 families / 630 individuals have been relocated from the schools to the new camp.



Al-Qaim Camp by Night

Within the framework of the government sponsorship programme, 448 Syrian refugees with first-kin relatives in Iraq have moved out of the schools and public centres to stay with their relatives. Some 600 other Syrians with second-kin relatives are expected to leave the reception centres to join their relatives within 72 hours, according to an Interior Ministry source in Al-Qa'im.

A joint UNHCR-UNICEF international team undertook a mission to Al-Qa'im on 13-14 August. Meetings were held with the Government-led Emergency Cell to discuss the response to the refugee influx, including the mechanism of registration, the establishment of the camp and issues relating to freedom of movement. It was agreed that the camp should be expanded to accommodate more than 3,000 refugees. The Government has already allocated a plot of land nearby. UNHCR is to prepare the site plan and provide the tents, whilst the Government will ensure the provision of services.

During the mission, the team also visited the new camp and met with refugees both inside the camp and at other locations in schools and public centres.

Another camp will be established in the Al-Kasak area of **Rabi'aa**. Local authorities will undertake construction works and provide services; UNHCR will provide/install tents, water tanks and sanitation units and provide NFIs. The camp will be jointly managed by MoMD / Governor's representative, and UNHCR.

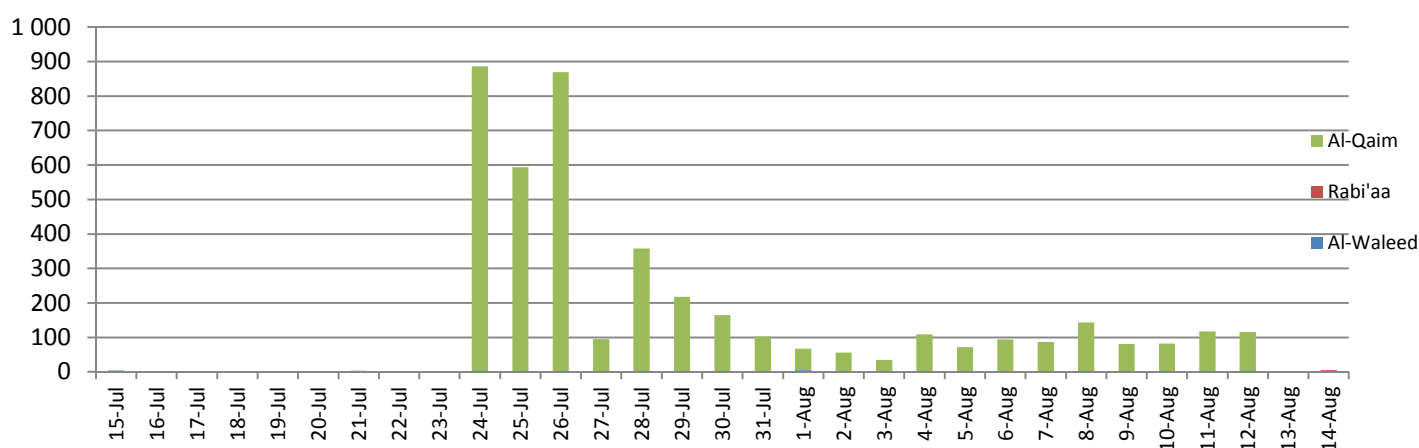
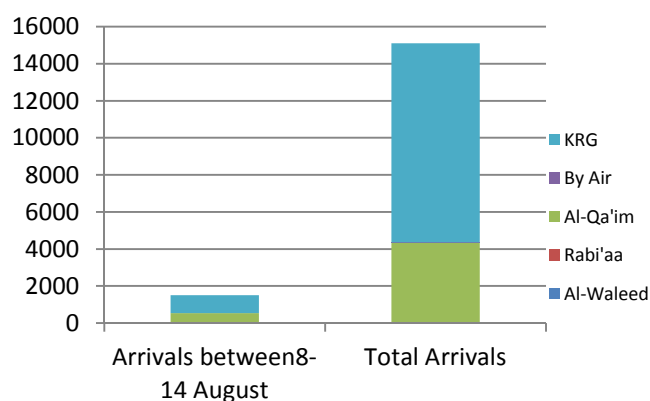
Iraqi returnees are continuing to arrive from Syria, the majority entering through the Al Waleed border point. During the past week, a total of 2,346 returnees were reported, 1,819 of whom were at Al Waleed, 446 at Rabi'aa and 81 at Al Qa'im. Including the 5,997 persons who have returned by air, the total number of Iraqi returnees since 18 July is 26,821 persons.

Iraqi returnees are approaching UNHCR RICCs for assistance with MoMD registration. Since 29 July a total of 1,154 returnees have been registered with MoMD throughout Iraq. Persons with legal / protection needs are referred to the PARCs for advice and assistance. UNHCR is continuing to counsel returnees who have active resettlement cases in Syria, explaining that their forced departure for Iraq due to the security situation will not affect their cases with UNHCR. Their cases will remain active for resettlement and the process will resume once they are back in Syria, situation permitting. A total of 46 cases have been reported to UNHCR, 28 of which were during the past week.

2. Statistics

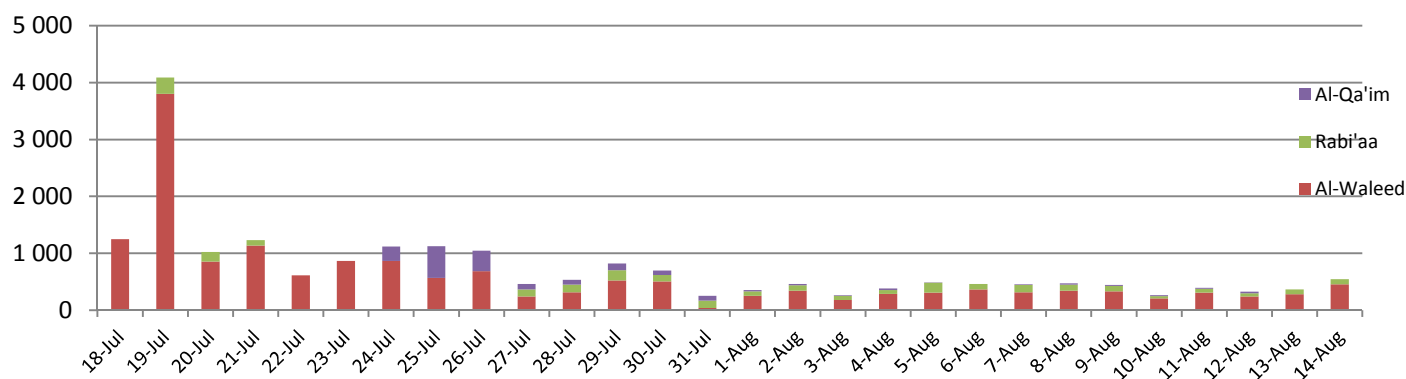
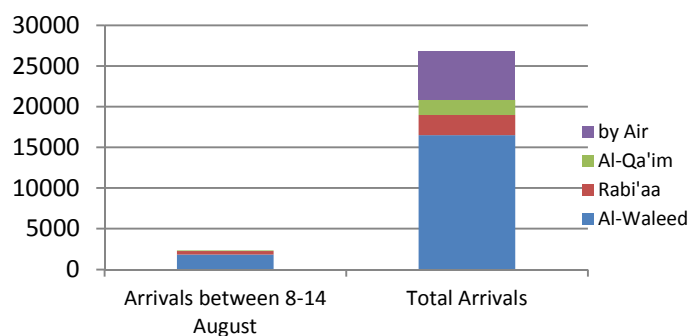
2.1 Syrian Refugees

Border Point	Arrivals on 09-15/08/2012	Total arrivals
Al-Waleed	1	11
Rabi'aa	6	8
Al-Qa'im	536	4,338
By Air	0	5
Arrivals to KRG	961	10,734
Total:	1,504	15,096



2.2 Iraqi Returnees

Border Point	Arrivals on 09-15/08/20	Total arrivals
Al-Waleed	1,819	16,489
Rabi'aa	446	2,491
Al-Qa'im	81	1,844
By Air	0	5,997
Total	2,346	26,821



3. UNHCR Assistance Update – Syrian nationals

3. Protection

3.1. Administrative institutions and practice

In **Kurdistan region**, residency permits continue to be issued only to new arrivals who are residing in Domiz camp, as per instructions from the Ministry of Interior (MoI). Application forms in the camp are kept by the Assayish who initiates the process and pass it to DDM and UNHCR to confirm the registration of the applicant. Syrian nationals living outside of the camp are denied the permits.

DDM continues to conduct screening interviews for the single deserters. Out of 1,300 singles screened and interviewed, 370 are army deserters who had renounced military activities and sought protection in Domiz camp. The majority of the singles interviewed were found to be young men who were subjected to military conscription.

For refugees in **Al-Qaim**, strict criteria have been applied for persons wishing to live with relatives in the Al-Qaim area: i. Families with the head of the household over 60 years; ii. female headed households; iii. Single female; iv. families with at least one Iraqi national.

The Emergency Cell is still examining the possibility of relocating a group of Syrian refugees to the 7-kilo housing compound in Ramadi early next week. It was initially agreed with Anbar Governorate to move families to the 150 fully constructed apartments within the 700-unit compound. The arrangement will allow a family of 8 or more members or smaller families with some relation to share one apartment.

3.2. Quality of Registration and Profiling

As of 13 August, UNHCR in **Erbil**, and DDM in **Dohuk** and **Suleimaniya** have registered an accumulative total of 9,773 Syrians of Kurdish origin. Among these are 1,057 families (4, 434 individuals), and 6,300 singles. In Erbil, a total of 147 families (596 individuals) and 1,248 singles are registered. In Suleimaniya, a total of 25 families comprising of 85 individuals and 407 singles are registered. In Dohuk Governorate, 885 families (3,753 individuals) and 4,645 singles are registered. Dohuk remains host to the largest number of Syrian new arrivals with 8,398 individuals followed by Erbil with 1,844 individuals and Suleimaniya with 492 individuals.

Up to present a total of 912 families (4,103 individuals) have been registered in **Anbar** Governorate. This includes 884 families / 3980 individuals in Al-Qaim, and 28 families / 123 individuals who are residing in Rawa District, Ramadi. In Al-Qaim, Syrian refugees are located also in Al-Amali, Malik Bin Rabi'ah schools and medical centre in **Karbala**. New Syrian arrivals crossing through Al-Waleed are also transferred to Al-Qaim.

3.3. Assistance by Sectors



NFI distribution at Domiz camp

3.3.1. Health Status and psycho-social support

The health sector working group (UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, MSF, IRC and DoH) met during the reporting period. The rate of diarrhoea in **Domiz camp** among children under 5 years and other health concerns were raised. DoH and MSF confirmed that water is safe to consume following five consecutive tests. A campaign on hygiene promotion is being organised by UNICEF and DoH, focusing on water, food handling and storing, personal hygiene and garbage collection.

DoH with support of MSF has established a medical record system for families and singles in the camp. The system will help to follow up on medical conditions and track the medical history of patients.

Clinic in **Al Qaim** has been established and functional. MoH will provide personnel and medication, as well as ambulances for the clinic.

3.3.2. Water

In **Domiz**, the Fayda water department continued the provision of clean water by tankers to the residents of the camp in a rate of 250,000 litres per day. DoH continues providing chlorinate tabs to families and singles once every three days. UNHCR, through Qandil and local NGO Kurds has completed 7kms of water network.

UNICEF through IP IRW established water network in **Al Qaim** camp. Installation of two 45 m3 Oxfam tanks in the camp, which will provide camp population separately with drinking water and water for washing, shower, etc..

3.3.3. Sanitation

In **Domiz**, Fayda Municipality continued irregular garbage collection within both Families and singles sections. Follow up with DDM on its earlier proposal submitted to the Governor's office for funds approval for regular garbage collection is ongoing.

Sanitation and Hygiene issues are also provided for **Al-Qaim**. Garbage collection will be carried out by Al Qaim municipality on a daily basis.

In **Al-Waleed**, Water, sanitation, electricity are ready to be operational upon arrival of Syrian nationals.

3.3.4. Food

In **Dohuk**, DDM continues the provision of two hot meals a day during the holy month of Ramadan to the single males and distributed dry food rations to 750 families residing inside and outside Domiz camp.

In **Al-Qaim**, refugees receive food donated by local people and authorities. ICRC is ready to provide one month food parcel upon the request of the authorities. WFP has got request from MoDM to assist Syrian nationals in the camp and public buildings with food.

3.3.5. Education.

UNICEF Classroom tents were installed in **Al Qaim** and also will develop a Child friendly space for children

3.3.6. NFIs assistance

During the reporting week in **KRG**, UNHCR distributed two packages of NFIs for two families, 12 singles received NFIs assistance among new arrivals to the camp.

In **Al Qaim** camp 119 newly arrived Syrian families received NFI packages, including hygiene kits. Adequate NFI stock remains at the rub-hall ready for distribution whenever needed in **Al-Waleed**.

3.b. UNHCR Assistance Update - Returnees

UNHCR protection and field staff in the governorates continue to receive lists of recently arrived Iraqi returnees from MoMD RACs in Baghdad and branches in the governorates, contacting returnees and assisting them with legal issues, documentation, and other support requested.

In Centre/South Governorates, NFI kits continued to be distributed to returnees through UNHCR's six RICCs in Baghdad. Total kits distributed as at 15 August: 353.

400 NFI kits have been sent for distribution to returnees in the southern governorates of Basra, Muthanna, Missan, Diwaniya and Thi-Qar.

4. Syrian Refugee / Iraqi Returnee Needs

Syrian refugees' needs include documentation, employment, sponsorship programmes and family tracing. In addition, needs for NFIs, water tanks, Water pipelines network, Fuel, generators and tents have been highlighted at the locations set to receive refugees in Al-Qa'im and Al-Waleed. Soon there will be need for food, which provided by local community and authorities currently..

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 (incl. Iraqi returnees)

The UNHCR team at the Al-Waleed border interviewed returnees who gave accounts of targeted attacks against relatives in Damascus. They reported that large numbers of Iraqi refugees had moved to safer areas in Damascus. Despite this, many of the returnees interviewed by UNHCR Al-Waleed border team said they planned to return to Syria once the situation improved. Some seemed hesitant to register with MoDM, fearful they might lose their resettlement cases in Syria. As noted above, these returnees were advised accordingly regarding the possibility of continuing their cases.

UNHCR team in Al-Waleed interviewed Iraqi returnees who own houses in Syria that were destroyed by shelling and gunfire. Those coming from Aleppo and Homs said they were forced out of their homes by the Syrian army.

A Syrian woman approached one of UNHCR's Return, Integration and Community Centre (RICC)s, seeking asylum. The woman, who is married to Iraqi, entered Iraq four months ago after fleeing her home in Homs where she claimed to have been threatened by the opposition Free Army. She is suffering from cancer and has requested medical assistance.

In Najaf, Returnee families visited MoDM branch offices for registration. The RICC team interviewed a returnee who was among 2000 Iraqis flown from Syria on government-assisted flight. The returnee claimed to have spent four days without food or water because of the military operations. Another returnee said he was kidnapped and tortured by the Free Army but was later released after being stripped of his passport and UNHCR document. He gave an eyewitness account of army killing of a number of Iraqis originating from Basra.

UNHCR Karbala staff interviewed a Pakistani family of Afghani origin (comprising 9 individuals) who requested asylum. They claimed to have fled Damascus after having been targeted by sectarian violence.

Thirteen returnee families (40 individuals) visited MoDM branch office in Wassit for registration. One of the returnees interviewed by UNHCR team said she was forcibly displaced from her home in Baghdad and moved to Kut during 2006 violence. She then left for Syria with her 2 daughters.

Returnee families approached MoDM branch offices in Basra, Muthann, Diwaniya and Thi-Qar. The branch offices are still waiting to receive further instructions from the Ministry in Baghdad.

In Rabi'aa, UNHCR team said most returnees who were coming from Damascus, Aleppo and Hasaka, headed for Nineveh. Returnees were seeking to obtain cash assistance for rent or for living, having left their belongings in Syria.

6. Coordination

UNHCR is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoDM), MoI-PC, and Governorate Offices. In the meantime, UNHCR 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. To strengthen cooperation, UNHCR is regularly organising inter-agency meetings to involve more institutions and organisations to provide assistance to the camps.