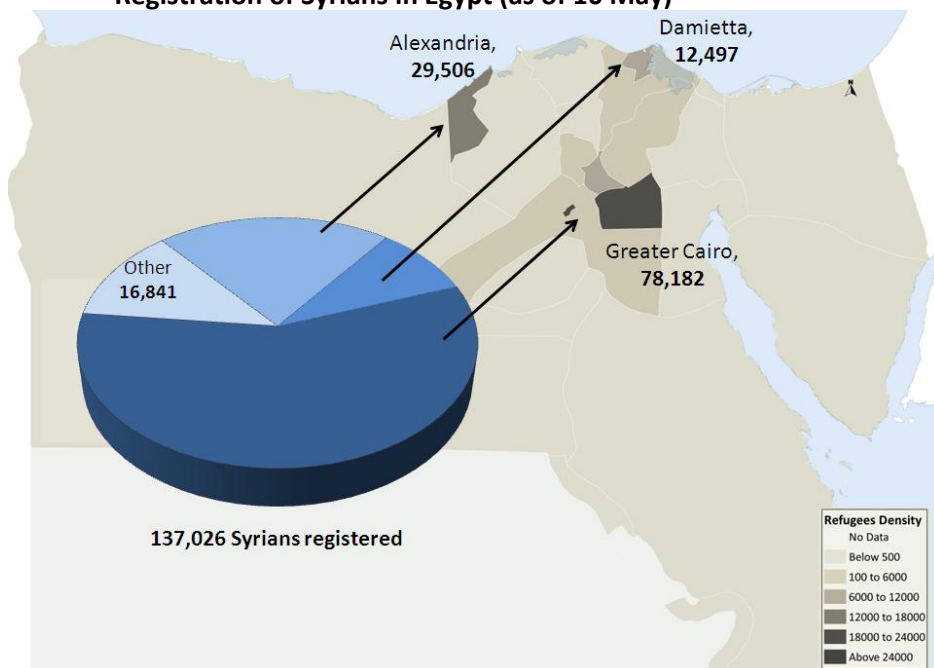


EGYPT WEEKLY UPDATE SYRIAN OPERATION 1 – 15 May 2014



As the conflict in Syria continues to escalate, the number of people fleeing into other countries in the region in search of refuge has been increasing. New arrivals of Syrians into Egypt, however, have been nominal since the introduction on 8 July 2013 of visa requirements for Syrian entering the country. UNHCR has registered 137,026 individuals as of 10 May. Most Syrians in Egypt are scattered in urban neighbourhoods, renting and sharing accommodation, and benefit from access to public education and health care. UNHCR conducts registration, provides counselling, and works with partners to provide legal assistance and address the social needs of vulnerable Syrians in Egypt. UNHCR also operates hotlines for emergencies and inquiries.

Registration of Syrians in Egypt (as of 10 May)

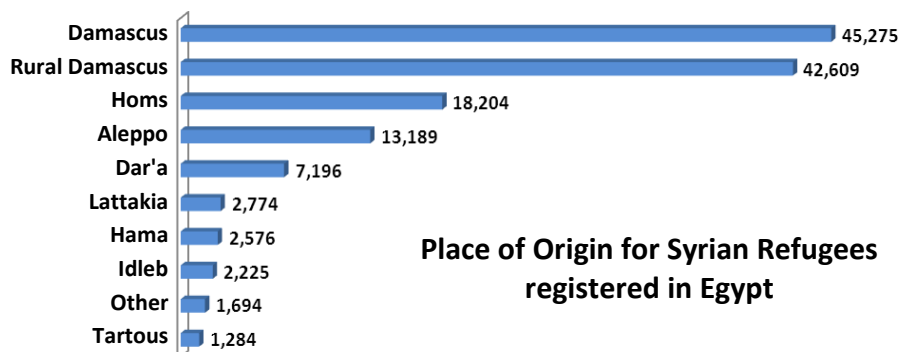
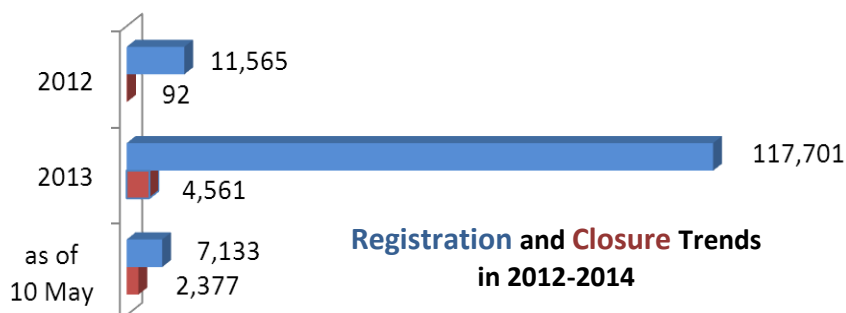


50.9% of registered Syrians arrived to Egypt through a transit country; of those, **76.2%** passed through Lebanon, **12.4%** through Jordan, and **11.4%** through others countries.

During the week, **216** individuals registered in the Zamalek Registration Centre; **17** persons were identified with specific needs.

Gender and Age Breakdown

Age Group	F	M	Total
0 - 4	8,839	9,330	18,169
5 - 11	12,052	12,882	24,934
12 - 17	7,738	8,678	16,416
18 - 39	25,076	26,417	51,493
40 - 59	10,118	10,009	20,127
60+	2,968	2,919	5,887
Total	66,791	70,235	137,026



Partners:

Arab Medical Union (AMU) • Care Int/USA • Caritas • Catholic Relief Services (CRS) • Mahmoud Mosque society • Refuge Egypt • Resala Association • Terre Des Hommes - Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC) • Save the Children • Tadamon • UNFPA • UNHABITAT • UNICEF • WFP • WHO

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Syria Regional Refugee Response
Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

Protection

Since January 2014, UNHCR Egypt is aware of the arrest of 421 individuals in Egypt, mostly from Syria, for attempting to depart the country by sea in an irregular manner. UNHCR is aware of 116 individuals detained at five police stations in Alexandria and El Beheira Governorates (Edko, Dekheila, Montazah II, Shabrakheet and Rasheed police stations), who have been arrested for having attempted irregular departure by sea. On a positive note, Egyptian authorities have been conducting regular releases of groups of individuals from detention shortly after their arrest. Those released consist mostly of families, children and the elderly and those with immediate relatives in Egypt. Egyptian authorities are reportedly issuing 3 month residency permits to Syrians who are being released. UNHCR's implementing partners Caritas and Resala have been providing emergency assistance to detainees in the form of food, blankets and medical care.

On 4 May, UNHCR conducted an awareness session for 35 Syrian refugees and community leaders residing in Ismailia. The session focused on the dangers of irregular migration as well as the importance of respecting Egyptian laws and regulations, particularly obtaining the residency permits on UNHCR Asylum Cards. The participants were also briefed on the services that UNHCR provides to Syrian refugees in Egypt and how to access them. The session also addressed resettlement as a protection tool to minimize expectations around the topic.

On 6-8 May, in collaboration with the Human Rights Sector of the Egyptian Ministry of Justice, UNHCR conducted a 3-day workshop in Cairo on international refugee law for 22 Egyptian judges and prosecution assistants. The workshop focused on the need to adopt national legislation for asylum in Egypt. At the end of the workshop, the participants recommended that future Egyptian asylum laws (or executive regulations) include clear procedures for adjudicating asylum claims, legal aid, access rights, naturalization, and the role of UNHCR in the census of refugees, facilitation of repatriation and resettlement of refugees to third countries.

Field

On 4-6 May, UNHCR conducted a mission in Ismailia Governorate to establish contact and mechanisms for ongoing information exchange with local authorities, meet with the local community, identify vulnerable cases, assess needs, raise awareness about the importance of registration/verification and services available to the Syrian community, and conduct a refresher training for members of community based protection network in Ismailia. The refugee families in Ismailia expressed frustration with the visa restrictions for Syrians to enter Egypt. A number of women in particular expressed pain over having become separated from their husbands and other immediate family members.

On 5 May, UNHCR visited Tadamon community centre to follow up with updated information about and concerns of the Syrian community and counsel staff members on recent updates, as well as residency and general protection issues.



On 7 and 8 May, Save the Children and Tadamon held two community events for over 600 participants in the community centres in Faysal and Ard El-Lewa as part of the Forsa Project, a programme funded by the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration which provide equal opportunities in the areas of education, health and child protection for refugee and vulnerable Egyptian communities. Children took part in sports and art activities, while parents were given the opportunity to meet other members of their community and listen to Save the Children and Tadamon Council staff members speak about the available services. *(Save the Children/Meg Pruce)*

On 7 May, UNHCR met with 18 Syrian refugees in the house of a community leader in Bet el Eila, which is in an area with a high concentration of Syrian refugees. UNHCR counselled the participants, who are all registered with UNHCR and receive WFP food vouchers, on protection issues. Many conceded that they did not have residency permits, and attributed this to the complicated process of acquiring the permits (in terms of distance from residence, finances, and long waiting periods). They also expressed concern over the distance to the nearest health partner with UNHCR, Mahmoud hospital, and that it is still difficult to cover the costs even with the discounted rates.

Education

UNHCR conducted a mission to schools in Ismailia and met with the Ministry of Education officials and Syrian community to address issues of access to education in the area. UNHCR also reviewed the latest statistics regarding the number of Syrian refugee students registered in public schools in the governorate. The education officials provided a briefing on the recent month-long closure of schools due to safety and security. This affected Egyptian and Syrian children alike; the authorities will be taking the closure into consideration during the final exams and in the overall results. The community noted that the closure pushed some families to seek private tutoring which increased the financial burden. The officials also stated that during enrolment of students they try to match the age to the grade whenever possible in order to avoid placing older children with the younger ones as per the ministry guidelines, and review each case on an individual basis.

Food

WFP provided food voucher assistance to 96,290 Syrian refugees in April, including 3,612 Palestinians from Syria (PRS), reaching 86 % of the targeted beneficiaries. WFP has opened a fifth distribution site in Egypt following the results of the rapid assessment in Tanta city, in Gharbia Governorate. As a result, approximately 410 new households (1,200 people) will be included in the May distribution cycle. For the April distribution, WFP changed the location of the distribution site in Damietta to resolve overcrowding issues and provide increased security.

In Greater Cairo the majority of beneficiaries were assisted through e-vouchers while paper vouchers are still used for new registered beneficiaries due to the printing lead time of the e-voucher. In the rest of the country (Alexandria and Damietta) WFP is continuing to assist people through paper vouchers. Paper vouchers will also be used for the newly identified beneficiaries in Tanta.

Health

UNHCR's regional health strategy for the Syria operation promotes the strengthening of community level systems in order to link the refugee community to primary health care services in urban context. UNHCR in Egypt has established a community based health outreach programme and is training around 150 Syrian community health volunteers (CHV) in areas with high concentrations of Syrians refugees in Egypt. The CHV will focus on raising awareness on main causes of morbidity and mortality, as well as promoting the importance of immunization for children, antenatal, and post natal care. On 11 May UNHCR Regional Representative in Egypt Mr. Mohamed Dayri met with the first group of CHVs, composed of 27 women who have finished their training and have started conducting home visits to Syrian families in 6th of October (Greater Cairo). Mr. Dayri emphasized the importance of the community outreach programme for Syrian refugees in Egypt and commended the role of CHVs in strengthening the linkages between refugees and public primary health care facilities. UNHCR has begun training the next group of CHVs in Elobur district in Greater Cairo.

WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA have supported more than 80 public Primary Health Care (PHC) clinics with staff training and equipment in areas with a high concentration of Syrians. To capitalize on this support as part of the aim of integrating refugees in the national public health services and minimize reliance on a parallel system for providing health services to refugees, UNHCR visited a number of Ministry of Health (MoH) facilities and met with officials in Damietta, Alexandria and Burg El Arab, to discuss the opportunities and challenges of mainstreaming Syrian refugees in the public PHC services. UNHCR held a meeting on 12 May with WHO, UNICEF and senior staff from the MoH to discuss a plan of action for mainstreaming process at the governorate level. UNHCR will work closely with MOH to ensure the availability of medication and consumables in the targeted PHC clinics, and also set up a referral system for access to higher levels of care.

Basic Needs

UNHCR's valued partner Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) discontinued its service in Egypt at the end of April. UNHCR has since directly taken over implementation of the cash transfer activity to ensure that vulnerable Syrian refugees continue to receive their assistance in order to meet their basic needs. UNHCR has transferred cash assistance for April and May to some 28,000 Syrian refugees through the Egyptian Post Office. Beneficiaries will be able to collect their assistance throughout the month.

Community Support Projects

On 6 May, the British Council in cooperation with the Ministry of Sports and Youth, UNHCR and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) conducted sports festival and ceremony in the Olympic Stadium in Maadi (Cairo) marking the completion of a Premier Skills training Project which uses sports as a tool for community leadership, empowerment and social integration. The project included an integrated skills development programme for community grassroots coaches which incorporates soft skills such as team-building, inter-personal skills, communication etc. Coaches are gender balanced and between the ages of 18-45. The trained coaches (21 Syrian and 25 Egyptian) will disseminate and cascade their new skills to their communities over the following 6 months. *(UNHCR/Clelia Watt)*

