



DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS:

Clowns without borders toured the KR-I, playing shows for children in camps and urban areas. Further, **“16 days of activism for the eradication of gender-based violence against women”** was rolled out across the region: in Sulaymaniyah the focus of attention was on safe learning environment as per global theme *“Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All”*.

Syrians continue to arrive to Iraq: in December 2015, 4,773 Syrians entered KR-I through the Peshkhabour border post and 169 persons were admitted as asylum-seekers. UNHCR registered during the reporting period 2,377 Syrian asylum seekers. UNHCR recorded the **spontaneous return** of 1,050 individuals to Syria through the Peshkhabour border. Most of the individuals returned this month to Al Hassaka (60%) and to Aleppo (38.5 %). The returnees mainly resided in Erbil Governorate’s out of camp areas.

Focus Group Discussions in camps and urban areas suggests that refugees are well aware of the risks **illegal migration** entails. Refugees also point out the seasonal risks, and many are awaiting legal migration opportunities either through family reunification with close relatives, or through resettlement or other forms of humanitarian admission. UNHCR has observed a significant reduction in departures of Syrians in December 2015.

UNHCR’s new **protection monitoring tool** for refugees (PMT) was field-tested by QANDIL, who operates in Erbil Governorate. It is expected that the use of this electronic monitoring tool will improve the analysis of the protection situation and timely responses across the KR-I. Across the region, **legal assistance** was provided to ensure that refugees are accurately documented and thus access civil status documents, residency documents, and other documentation of relevance to their realization of refugee rights.

Child protection interventions and wide-ranging activities for refugee children continued in December. UNICEF conducted a training on the “Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism” for grave violations of child rights in Sulaymaniyah. The workshop was attended by various child protection workers. Further, training and capacity building events on the best interest determination, parenting skills, and support to families hosting unaccompanied or separated children have taken place across the region.

Partners working in the area of **SGBV** focused on the “16 days of activism” and especially on advocacy for an enabling environment for girls at school. The GBV-IMS report for the end of December 2015 was also issued, GBV-IMS partners are working on an external version of the report and at the same time, plans for expansion of partners and subsequent training is under preparation.

In December 2015, UNHCR referred 39 persons for **resettlement** to various countries. The month also saw record departures, with 32 refugees departing to the UK. Further, 12 individuals were additionally accepted for resettlement to the UK.

Also, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) conducted their first circuit ride to Erbil. During the mission, USCIS interviewed 201 individuals and issued preliminary acceptance notices for 92 individuals. The Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection conducted a successful pilot video conference for the interview of 22 persons.



Focus Group discussion during 16 days of activism campaign Qushhapa Camp, Erbil, December 2015/UNHCR/ M. Prendergast

NEEDS ANALYSIS:

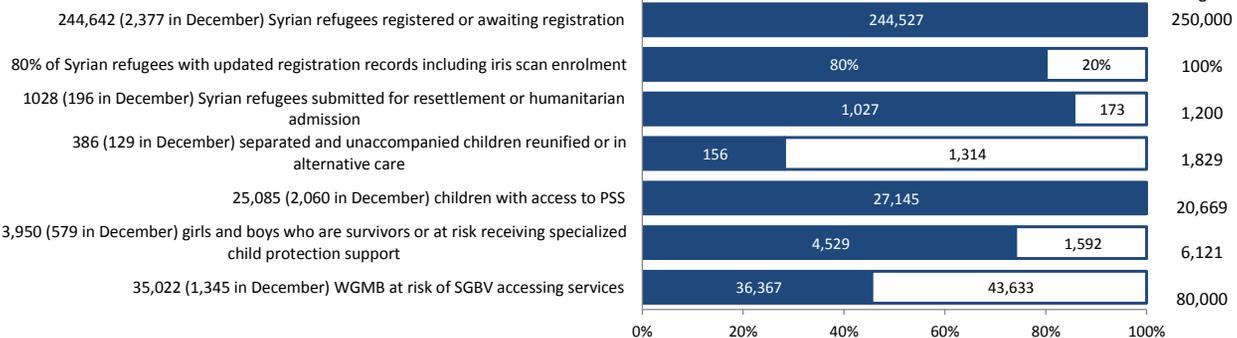
UNHCR remains concerned about the admission procedures for new arrivals to the KR-I and in particularly the issuance of the 15 days entry visa which restricts access to asylum systems. Discussions are under way with the KR-I authorities to clarify and harmonize admission and re-admission procedures, as well as the implementation of a regularization procedure and work plan. The delay in the issuance of valid residency documents is a concern in the KR-I and especially affecting refugees who are living in out of camp areas. It is estimated that only 27% of these refugees in Erbil hold valid documentation. The regularization exercise, now under discussion with the KR authorities, should also have a positive impact on timely documentation of all refugees in the region.

School drop-out is a serious child protection concern. Child protection and education partners are working on an in-depth analysis of the situation, as the lack of access to education, amongst others, impacts on early marriage and child labour for instance. Early marriage, despite on-going campaigns by partners such as UPP, remains a prominent negative coping mechanism amongst refugees.

Although in 2015 the Child Protection over-exceeded its targeted, providing over 32,189 refugee children with child protection services out of the 28,646 initially planned it is still noted that an estimated 102,000 refugee children, 41.7% of the total refugee population still remain in need of continued support. As the conflict finishes its fifth year and economic opportunities are limited, children are likely becoming more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and will thus require sustained support to mitigate the protection risks.

The reporting against targets for SGBV still suggest that the community awareness raising activities and the development of the community based protection mechanisms around SGBV need further support and development. Individuals in the community still struggle to report and define sexual and gender based violence, and fear community or family repercussions. Further, the partners providing the SGBV response would benefit from further training and capacity building in order to improve the quality response as well as the reporting on activities to remedy and/or prevent SGBV. Although community based protection initiatives are well under way, there is a need for mainstreaming these activities in all refugee responses. This is the same for protection and SGBV mainstreaming across sectors.

IRAQ RESPONSE INDICATORS: DECEMBER 2015



Planned response based on full funding of 3RP for an expected direct beneficiary population of 250,000 Syrian refugees and 1.5 million members of impacted local communities by end-2015. There are currently 245,134 Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR (39% in camps and 61% out of camps).

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