



MAY HIGHLIGHTS:

Syrian refugees from Aleppo sub-districts (Kobane, Tel-hasil, Tel-aran) and other areas continue to arrive through the Peshkhabour border which is open to new arrivals on Monday's only. The total of new arrivals since January 2015 stands at 28,615 individuals, with 5,177 new arrivals in May 2015. Since January 2015, UNHCR has recorded **9,538 new asylum applications** from those new arrivals. Refugees are transported to Gawilan with the help of IOM, where they are registered by UNHCR following which an application for residency is filed with the residency department.

Refugees **spontaneously departing** for Syria (1,361 individuals) claim family reunification, access to medical care, attending family events, and the high cost of living in the KR as their main reason for departure. Refugees are all counseled on the policy of the authorities who do not allow for readmission unless compelling humanitarian reasons are presented.

Biometric registration and verification is progressing: in Sulaymaniyah mobile registration and verification was conducted in Rania in conjunction with the residency department who issued 114 residency permits. The regularization of refugees with 15-days passes, readmission cases and illegal entries in Duhok was suspended by security for unknown reasons.

Partners Harikar, Qandil and CDO continued to provide legal support to refugees in need of civil status documents (birth, marriage, death and divorce certificates). Refugees continue to encounter challenges to obtain marriage certificates. UNHCR has recorded in proGres a total of **1142 early marriages** (121 early marriages for children below 15 years of age, 1021 concern children between 15-17 years. The phenomena of early marriage affect mostly but not uniquely girls, and are predominantly recorded (some 75%) amongst refugees living out of camps.

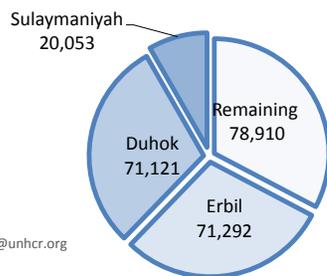
UNHCR has held **FGD with refugees from Kobane** living in and outside of camps across the KR-I. Refugees express a general interest to return to Kobane in the future; however, they express concern about the large scale destruction and security and would need assurances of support for their return travel through Turkey and upon arrival.

UNHCR has held **FGD with urban refugees and are now registered in camps**. Most of the refugees lived for 2-3 years out of camps, but the economic challenges (unemployment, cost of living and access to affordable shelter) as well as the difficulties in accessing health and education services influenced the decision to register in camps.

SGBV partners in the KR-I have focused on further capacity building, awareness raising and specifically improved implementation of referral pathways. In Duhok the authorities have been notified of confirmed reports of abuse of children in the camps and discussions are under way to prevent and address these protection risks.

Protection activities in Al-Qaim refugee camp remain suspended.

Iris-Scan in KR-I
67% enrolled
33% remaining



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- **249,266** Syrians are registered by UNHCR:
96.8% live in KR-I (in 9 camps) and in urban areas.
3.2% live in Anbar (1 Camp) and rest of Iraq urban areas.
- **67%** (162,466) of the Syrians are with updated registration records including iris scan enrolment in KR-I.



Duhok KR-Iraq. UNHCR/ R. Rasheed

NEEDS ANALYSIS:

Following further revision of the verification and biometric registration work plan, it appears that challenges the slow processing of security clearances and the need for additional registration and verification capacity in Duhok affect the ability to complete the exercise within the set time frame. UNHCR plans to reinforce the capacity of the partner to conduct mobile verification and registration missions and has appealed to security to increase their capacity to speed up the process upon a further in-debt analysis of the impact of these constraints on the processing time.

Responses to refugees in out of camp areas and the further analysis of the challenges are planned for in conjunction with the inter-sector coordination group in June 2015.

Access to safety, and access to asylum remains a concern with the intermittent border opening to the KR-I. The authorities have sought advice and guidance on the application of humanitarian admission criteria in case of re-admission; however, further advocacy is required to consider similar considerations for individuals with international protection needs who are holders of (expired) 15 days visas and those who entered illegally during the period the border was officially closed. In the meantime, the regularization exercise of some 40,000 Syrians has been halted by security for unknown reasons in Duhok.

The situation in Al-Qaim refugee camp remains of great concern, with the protection partner having withdrawn all staff due to security concerns, and the inability to deliver food assistance to refugees.

Due to current laws and policies in Iraq, Syrian refugee children are unable to benefit from alternative care arrangements put in place for IDP children. UNICEF is currently exploring how to support the development of the alternative care together with partners.

IRAQ RESPONSE INDICATORS: MAY 2015

