

## Key figures

Estimated planning figures for potential refugee influx from North East Syria  
**50,000** individuals

**3,122** individuals crossed into Iraq as of 19 October 2019

## Existing Population of Concern in Iraq

**270,844** Refugees and Asylum-Seekers  
*(as of 30 September 2019)*

**229,285** Syrian refugees  
*(as of 30 September)*

**1,55 million** Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)  
*(as of 31 August 2019)*

**4,35 million** Returnees  
*(as of 31 August 2019)*

Contingency stock  
CRIs and tents for **10,000 families** in country

## Funding

To Be Announced

## Highlights

- 3,122 refugees crossed into Iraq since the commencement of hostilities.
- 2,942 refugees accommodated in Bardarash camp
- Kurdish authorities confirmed that formal and informal borders will remain open for Syrians to seek safety
- Reportedly the Kurdish authorities in control of the Syrian side of the border at Peshkabour are preventing Syrians from crossing into Iraq
- Yaarbeih/Rabeiah official border crossing between Syria and Iraq (Ninewa) has been handed over to the Syrian Army by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

## Background developments in Syria

Since the start of military action in north-east Syria (NES), an estimated 166,000 civilians are reported to have been displaced. Many have been displaced multiple times. There are reports of 3,340 families (approx. 16,700 people) having been displaced from seven communities in northern Aleppo towards Menbij town and its surrounding areas.

Following negotiations between Turkey and the USA in Ankara, a pause for five days (until 22 October) of Operation Peace Spring was announced on 17 October. The SDF backed forces are expected to withdraw 20 miles (30 km) south of the border. Nevertheless, there have been reports of continuing shelling and small arms fire in Ras Al Ain.

UNHCR, with 54 staff, continues to operate out of Qamishli, responding to the needs of the affected population through the provision of emergency items and community-based protection in camps, collective shelters and host communities, in close cooperation with partners. International staff are expected to return to Qamishli in the coming days. There are reports of people returning from Qamishli town to their villages in the surrounding areas. Some families displaced from Darbasiyah are also reported to have started returning.

UNHCR continues to maintain eight operational community centres in Al-Hasakeh, including two in Al-Hol camp, as well as three satellite centres in Al-Hasakeh. These static facilities are also supported by four mobile units in Al-Hasakeh as well as 248 outreach volunteers in Al-Hasakeh and 25 outreach volunteers in Ar-Raqqa and nine in Deir-ez-Zor.

The protection situation of IDPs and the civilian population inside Syria remains a critical concern given the evolving situation and continued displacement. There are immediate concerns for the civilian population remaining in Tel Abyad, Ain Eissa, Tal Tamer, Ras al Ein and Malikiyah. It is imperative that civilians are protected from direct attacks and the effects of hostilities and allowed to move in safety and voluntarily to safe places, with special protection afforded to children and other persons with specific needs. UNHCR is particularly concerned that civilians have the right to seek safety and the right to seek asylum in third countries such as Iraq.

In Mabrouka Camp the remaining 14 families (83 individuals) are still awaiting evacuation to Areesha. In Raqqa, advocacy for unimpeded access and solutions is ongoing for the 27 unaccompanied children in an interim centre managed by local authorities. Protection partners continue to advocate for the return of confiscated personal identification documentation and freedom of movement out of camps to locations of choice. This includes the 58 families in Mahmoudli (displaced from Ein Issa Camp) wanting to leave. Protection assessments, advocacy and response are ongoing, including assistance, referrals and case management for the most vulnerable identified so far following the initial rapid assessments including women at risk, unaccompanied elderly in need of support, persons with disabilities, persons with serious medical conditions and children at risk. Protection partners are planning to commence more comprehensive protection assessments in the coming days, starting with the 34 collective shelters in Hassakeh.

As of 20 October, the delivery of assistance via the M4 highway remains difficult.

## Situation update Iraq

UNHCR Iraq is currently updating the preparedness plan jointly prepared with Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) and partners in January 2019 in case a large influx of Syrian refugees reaches the borders. The response strategy will be integrated into the existing refugee response coordination mechanisms at national and governorate levels to ensure continued support and assistance to new arrivals.

UNHCR Iraq initially estimates around **50,000 individuals** may cross into Iraq. These are only initial estimates for planning purposes and will be updated as needed as the situation evolves.

## Preparedness in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I)

UNHCR Iraq coordinates closely with authorities and humanitarian partners to respond to possible needs as quickly and efficiently as possible in cases of refugee influxes.

Duhok authorities confirmed that all border crossings, both formal and informal, will remain open. The three crossing points include Sahela and Al Walid, in Ninewa Governorate, and Peshkabour, in Duhok Governorate, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). On the other hand, there are reports that Kurdish authorities in control of the Syrian side of the border at Peshkabour are preventing Syrians from crossing into Iraq. On the basis of protection interviews with new arrivals, the only way to access Iraq at present appears to be through smugglers at Sahela and Al Walid crossings.

Duhok Governor and Assayesh, Kurdish security, confirmed that Syrians seeking safety would be able to access the territory after an initial screening by Assayesh. Individuals identified as being members of ISIL during the Assayesh screening would not be admitted to Iraq given national legislation regarding the civilian character of asylum.

As of 19 October 2019, a total of 2,942 refugees have crossed through informal crossing points. Most of the refugees are crossing through Al Walid informal border crossing between Syria and Iraq, located in Ninewa Governorate and under the control of the KRI. Most of the refugees arriving are from northern Syria- Kobani, Amoda and Qamishly and surrounding villages. Approximately 37% of those arriving since 14 October have previously been registered by UNHCR as refugees in Iraq.

Upon arrival to the Iraqi borders, refugees are first hosted in a mosque at Al Walid, where local communities are providing assistance. UNHCR is providing NFI and is installing rub halls as temporary shelter and for use of authorities at Al Walid and Sahela informal border crossings. Refugees are being transported by IOM from the border crossing points to Bardarash camp.

## Situation in Bardarash Camp

The Governorate of Duhok's Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs (BRHA), the camp management agency, started daily coordination meetings with all agencies intending to provide services in the camp on 18 October.

Upon arrival to the camp, Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF) provides hot meals and water, while UNHCR provides basic relief items including mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, jerrycans and other items. UNHCR is working with partners to provide the services needed including psychosocial support and protection services. Medical teams with ambulances and a mobile medical unit are present to provide medical assistance when needed, using the Public Health Centre (PHC) facilities previously constructed in Bardarash.

On 18 October, in collaboration with authorities, UNHCR began registration of refugees using biometric iris-scanning. Specific needs are identified, including unaccompanied children, in order to refer them to specialized assistance.

To date, 15 unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs) have been identified through registration and protection interviews, family tracing is ongoing. Many of them are adolescents and have crossed with neighbours or extended family members.

On 19 October, protection and site planning actors identified a space for a Child Friendly Space (CFS); additional protection spaces will be identified during the coming days.

As of 19 October, UNHCR's partner has installed a total of 663 tents, of which 549 are occupied.

There are several gaps remaining in the response in the camp including a need to rapidly improve water and waste management systems and health services

