

Northwest Syria Flash Update #7

Response to Displacement from Lebanon to Syria

8 November 2024

As of 6 November, some **7,800 individuals** have reportedly arrived from Lebanon to north-west Syria following the escalation of hostilities.

Situation Overview

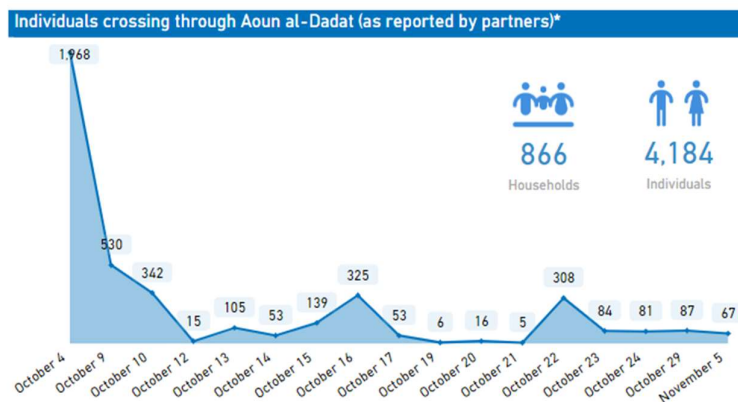
Since the escalation of hostilities on 23 September, north-west Syria has experienced a relatively small but steady arrival of Syrians fleeing the conflict in Lebanon.

Data collected by the IDP Task Force indicates that approximately 7,800 Syrians returned under adverse circumstances from Lebanon to 30 sub-districts in north-west Syria as of 6 November, including around 300 reported returns since 30 October. The highest numbers of returnees are reported in Jarablus, Idlib, Sharan, Maaret Tamsrin, and Dana sub-districts.

The Aoun al-Dadat internal crossing point has remained closed to Syrian returnees from Lebanon since 1 November. However, a family of four returning from Lebanon, who had received approval from local authorities prior to 1 November, was permitted to cross on 5 November. **To date,**

approximately 4,184 individuals (866 households) arrived through the Aoun al-Dadat internal crossing point, with an estimated 70-80 per cent returning from Lebanon.

The Abu Zandin internal crossing point remains inactive, with no returnees received to date. Since its announced opening on 22 October, ongoing demonstrations have persisted. On 4 November, shelling hit the crossing's 'zero point', injuring a humanitarian worker. Consequently, humanitarian organizations have withdrawn, and assistance for Syrian returnees will now be provided beyond the 'zero point' when they arrive.



*This does not include individuals who have crossed by bypassing the official crossing or entry procedures.

Source: UNHCR
© UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

Response

The Aoun al-Dadat and Abu Zending internal crossing points have remained closed since the beginning of November, with no refugee returnees arriving during the reporting period. Despite the closure, UNHCR and partners stand ready to assist new arrivals once either crossing point opens to returnees from Lebanon. (Aoun al-Dadat received some arrivals of Syrians to north-west Syria (63 individuals of 22 HHs), originating from other Syrian provinces for visitation purposes during the reporting period.)

UNHCR and partners, working closely with local authorities, continue to actively prepare the Abu Zending internal crossing point for its anticipated opening. Preparations include the installation of ten 10 shaded areas, the setting up of emergency WASH facilities, and the provision of medical assistance.

Partners maintain around-the-clock communication with local authorities to ensure swift mobilization of personnel and resources when either crossing point opens for refugee returnees from Lebanon, enabling prompt provision of essential services.

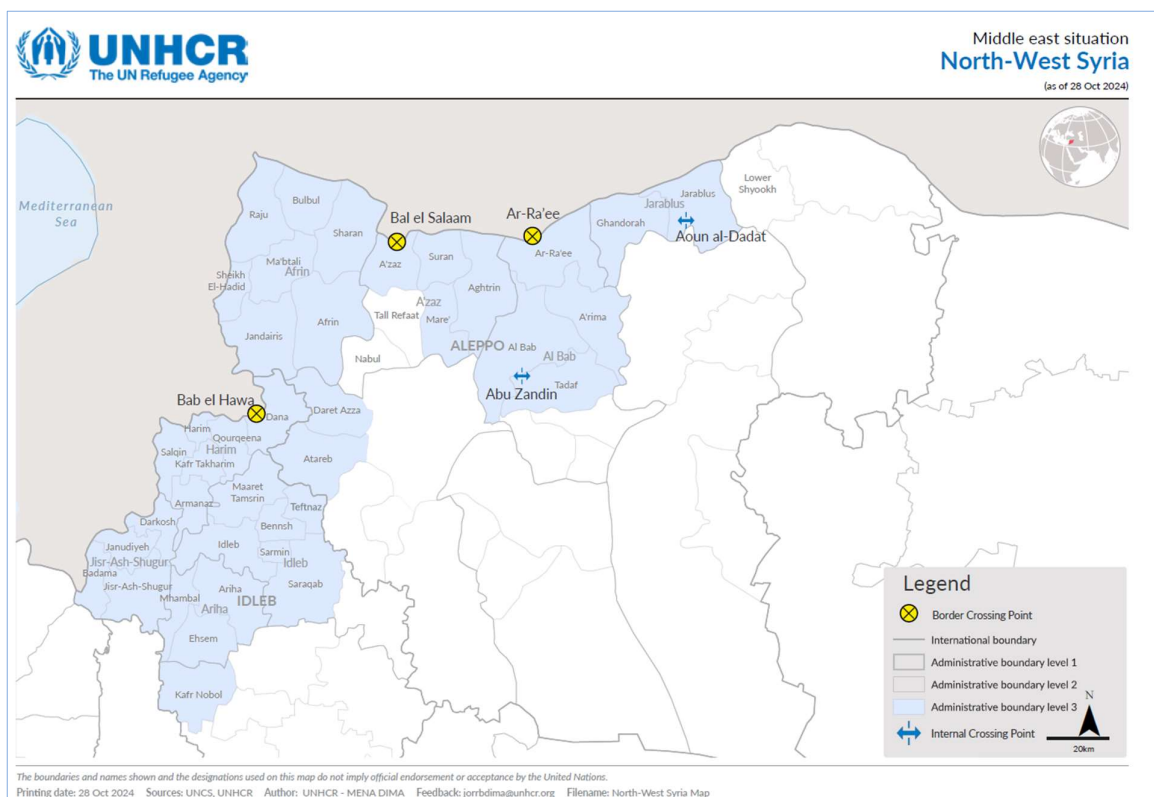
Meanwhile, UNHCR and partners are responding to the emergency needs of the returnees at their final destinations in Aleppo and Idlib. To date, UNHCR partner WATAN has provided shelter materials and core relief items to 1,951 individuals (422 households) to returnees in need of shelter and basic items. Verification and needs assessments are underway for an additional 385 households that were identified by partners and local authorities.

Protection Monitoring

The movement of people fleeing the conflict in Lebanon remains a protection crisis, with individuals desperately seeking security and safety. UNHCR's monitoring of a sample of households indicates that more than half of these households arriving from Lebanon are headed by women, with an average household size of five individuals. Over 80% of the households consist of women and children.

UNHCR's monitoring reveals alarming rates of family separation, affecting one-third of households, with absent family members predominantly reported by women. Most absent family members remain in Lebanon, while others reside in various areas in Syria.

Prior to fleeing, approximately two-thirds of households resided in north-west Syria, yet only about half have returned to their original sub-districts. Currently, around 80% of households are hosted by relatives, while others occupy their own homes or rent. Shelter arrangements vary significantly, with half staying in houses or apartments, and around a third in tents. The highest priority needs, as indicated by households, are sustainable housing solutions, cash, core-relief items, employment/livelihood opportunities, and food.



Donors as of November 2024: Special thanks to our donors: United States | France | Germany

CONTACT: Oliver Smith, Senior Operations Coordinator, UNHCR Cross-border Operation Northern Syria, Email: Smithol@unhcr.org