

Regional Flash Update #25

Syria situation crisis

1 May 2025



Abdulkareem recently returned to Syria after living for years as a refugee in Jordan. This week, he welcomed his daughter Hala and her mother at Homs' bus station. They were among 62 Syrian refugees who returned from Jordan, thanks to the transportation provided by UNHCR. ©UNHCR Syria/Vivian Toumeh

Key Highlights

- As of 1 May 2025, UNHCR estimates that **some 472,963 Syrians** have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. This brings up the total of **over 833,800 Syrian individuals** that have returned to Syria since the beginning of 2024.
- As of 1 May, **1.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their homes in Syria**, including **313,132 returning from IDP sites** since early December 2024, according to the [latest data](#) of the IDP Task Force.
- On 28 April, **High Commissioner Filippo Grandi met with the Syrian Interim Foreign Minister Al-Shaibani in New York**. The High Commissioner [thanked](#) the Interim Foreign Minister for the constructive cooperation with UNHCR in Syria and suggested to organize technical meetings between Syria, neighbouring countries and UNHCR to discuss how better to organize returns, which was welcomed by the Interim Minister.
- On 29 April and 1 May, UNHCR facilitated transportation for nearly 50 refugees from Amman, Mafrq, and Azraq camp. Overall, since the start of the transportation pilot project on 20 January 2025, **UNHCR has supported more than 1,800 refugees to return from Jordan to Syria**.

Country updates

Syria

As of 1 May 2025, UNHCR estimates that **472,963 Syrians** have crossed back into Syria from neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. This brings up the total of **over 833,800 Syrian individuals** that have returned to Syria since the beginning of 2024. This figure is calculated based on a triangulation of data from Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and beyond.

In terms of internal displacement, as of 1 May, **1.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their homes**, including **313,132 returning from IDP sites** since early December 2024, according to the [latest data](#) of the IDP Task Force.

At border crossings points, **UNHCR maintained a presence at Joussieh, Jdaidet Yabous, Nassib, Bab Al-Hawa, and Bab Al-Salama**, monitoring return trends and providing information, water, and Internet access. Daboussieh, Jesr Kamar, and Matraba border crossings are still closed due to extensive damage, with efforts underway for rehabilitation.

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As per the response to return movements, **UNHCR continued to deliver comprehensive support across Syria, reaching thousands of returnee families with essential assistance**. Over 1,550 families in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Ar-Raqqa received core relief items, including 100 indoor solar devices to help meet basic energy needs, while two children with special needs in Dar'a benefitted from the distribution of wheelchairs. In Deir-ez-Zor, 242 water tanks were delivered to 219 families to improve access to safe water in areas where infrastructure remains limited. Efforts to strengthen public services also advanced, with the final delivery of ICT equipment to the cadastral office in Tartous and the completion of a solar energy system installation in a civil registry in Lattakia. Meanwhile, nearly 1,000 children and caregivers in Lattakia took part in child protection activities, including awareness sessions on the dangers of explosive remnants of war. Across Aleppo, Homs, and Hama, 48 sessions on gender-based violence reached over 500 returnees, alongside the distribution of 121 dignity kits to vulnerable women in Aleppo. Legal awareness efforts remained strong, with 50 sessions across Homs, Hama, and Rural Damascus informing over 650 participants on critical issues such as early marriage, cybercrimes, and women's rights. Between 24 and 29 April, UNHCR also dispatched 750 core relief item kits to newly returned families in Dar'a and Quneitra. In Abu Kamal (Deir-ez-Zor), on 30 April, four awareness sessions focused on anemia and brucellosis were conducted in the medical point targeting 80 IDP returnee women. In the area of livelihoods, 12 small business start-ups were approved in Aleppo, spanning diverse trades such as tailoring, shoe manufacturing, and mobile maintenance. Among the many inspiring stories is that of Mohammed, a refugee and artisan who, after fleeing war twice, rebuilt his life through UNHCR's support—reviving his ancestral craft of stone carving and forging a dignified, self-reliant future for his family.

Türkiye

On 28 April, President Erdoğan spoke at an event unveiling "[Türkiye's Migration Management Model in the Century of Türkiye](#)" in Istanbul, attended by UNHCR Representative. In his speech, President Erdoğan highlighted that, since 9 December 2024, **about 200,000 Syrians have voluntarily returned to Syria**, bringing the total number of voluntary returns to 931,450.

The **processing of voluntary returns** continued in provinces and at five border crossings: Cilvegözü/Bab al-Hawa, Yayladağı/Kessab, Öncüpınar/Bab al-Salama, Karkamış/Jarablus and Akçakale/Tel Abyad. As of 30 April, Çobanbey/AI Rai, Zeytindalı/Jinderes and Yayladağı/Kessab are open for processing go-and-see visits.

Currently, UNHCR monitors returns in 16 provinces and at Cilvegözü/Bab al-Hawa, Yayladağı/Kessab, Öncüpınar/Bab al-Salama, Karkamış/Jarablus border crossings in the southeast, as well as at Istanbul Airport. This week, **Adıyaman has been added to the monitoring locations** and Malatya, Nevşehir, Niğde, Osmaniye, Kocaeli and Tekirdağ are also planned for regular physical monitoring of voluntary returns in the coming weeks, while preparations are ongoing for remote interviewing in all the provinces as needed.

The profile of returnees remains diverse, with half of the returning individuals returning alone, including women, and many households headed by women. Most returnees are adults of working age, but children and older people are also represented.

The **reasons for returning remain consistent**, primarily involving political and security developments and the desire for family reunification. Most return to their province of origin, especially Aleppo, influenced by factors such as family presence and the condition or accessibility of their former homes. Barriers to returning to original homes include family relocation, property damage or loss, and poor infrastructure. Property ownership is still common among returnees, often supported by documentation.

Economically, most relied on informal employment or aid in Türkiye and anticipate similar conditions upon return. Access to basic services in Syria remains uneven, underscoring ongoing needs for support. Meanwhile, **increased interest in go-and-see visits has been observed**, though some families express concern about losing social assistance benefits if they participate.

Lebanon

As of 24 April, the hostilities in the Tartous, Latakia, Homs, and Hama governorates of Syria in early March continued to displace people into the North and Akkar governorates of north Lebanon **now reaching 32,002 people**, according to Disaster Risk Management (DRM). Newly arrived refugees are now located across 35 distinct locations, predominantly in Akkar in 30 villages near to the border with Syria. With families continuing to flee Syria's coastal areas following recent hostilities, UNHCR and partners provided core relief items including blankets, mattresses and winter clothes.

As of 28 April, the Baalbek Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Bekaa reports **approximately 81,124 arrivals from Syria since 8 December** (a slight decrease from 25 April), including some 24,143 arrivals in Baalbek Governorate, North Bekaa, residing in 176 informal collective shelters (CS), and approximately 56,981 residing in the community. Discussions are ongoing with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) to understand if the trend is related to return or relocation.

Following the release of UNHCR's Regional Operational Framework for Voluntary Return, UNHCR in Lebanon and humanitarian partners have developed **the Inter-Agency Voluntary Return Action Plan to assist an estimated 400,000 Syrian refugees**, including 5,000 Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) with voluntary return to Syria from Lebanon as a best-case scenario. UNHCR continues to coordinate return related preparation and implementation through the Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG) and is engaging with the Government of Lebanon on creating pathways for voluntary return, anchored in protection principles and guided by the voices of refugees, to ensure that Syrian refugees who, fully informed, voluntarily choose to return home are supported to do so; and that international protection is secured for those Syrian refugees who choose to remain in Lebanon.

Jordan

On 29 April, the Ministry of Interior [announced new entry regulations](#), allowing certain categories to enter Jordan without prior approval, provided they meet specific conditions and face no security restrictions. These categories include university professors and students currently enrolled in Jordanian universities, businesspeople holding Jordanian investment cards, owners of real estate in Jordan, and Syrians receiving pension from Jordan's Social Security Corporation. Syrians currently residing in Syria and who have not previously entered Jordan are generally still required to obtain prior approval.

As of 26 April, **nearly 60,500 refugees registered with UNHCR have returned from Jordan to Syria since 8 December 2024**. The average daily number of refugee returnees slightly decreased to 390 refugees per day, compared to 420 in the previous week.

Demographics of returnees remained largely unchanged from previous weeks, with women and girls representing around 46 per cent of the total refugee returnees. Children accounted for around 41 per cent, and men of military age (18-40 years old) made up around 23 per cent of overall returns. The vast majority of refugees continue to return from host communities, primarily from Amman and Irbid. More details about the numbers and profile of returnees are available on [UNHCR Jordan's returns dashboard](#).

On 29 April and 1 May, **UNHCR facilitated transportation for nearly 50 refugees from Amman, Mafraq, and Azraq camp**. Overall, since the start of the transportation pilot project on 20 January 2025, **UNHCR has supported more than 1,800 refugees** to return to Syria. Before departure, in-person interviews are conducted to ensure that returns are voluntary and well-informed, with counselling and information provided on available services inside Syria. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination. Some families mentioned that they would delay their departure by a week or two due to their children's school exams schedule, with many noting that exams were taking place during the current week.

During the reporting period, UNHCR conducted focus group discussions with youth living in communities. Similarly to previous sessions with different groups of refugees, participants expressed concerns about the continuity of refugees' access to humanitarian assistance and basic services, particularly education, in Jordan. They mentioned numerous rumors circulating in their communities about reductions in assistance and services, which heighten refugees' anxiety about their future in Jordan.

Refugees expressed that security and safety inside Syria remain key factors in decision-making about returns. High living costs and lack of livelihood opportunities in Syria are also significant barriers influencing refugees' intention to return. Feedback from relatives who have recently returned to Syria reinforced these concerns, as those who returned find living in Syria too expensive and struggle to find employment. Some participants shared that their relatives had mostly positive experience about return to Syria, though they still highlighted lack of livelihood opportunities. Although there is general acknowledgment that conditions in Syria are gradually improving, progress is seen as too slow and fragile to support immediate return. Young people noted generational and familial differences in views on return, which was also mentioned in previous focus groups discussions. Younger refugees highlighted a strong sense of familiarity and attachment to Jordan where they have spent most, if not all their lives. At the same time, some participants expressed excitement about the idea of reconnecting with their homeland.

Participants indicated that the decision to return is typically made collectively at the family level. While men may often lead or influence the decision-making process, input from all family members is generally considered.

Refugees reiterated their request to support “go-and-see” visits to explore conditions in Syria before returning permanently and to provide assistance for returns, including cash assistance, which will help them manage expenses upon arrival in Syria. They also suggested that increased collaboration between UNHCR and civil society organizations is needed to improve housing, documentation support, and livelihood opportunities in Syria.

Iraq

Between 8 December 2024 and 24 April 2025, **14,776 Syrians returned from Iraq to Syria, including 1,397 registered refugees**, through both the Peshkhabour border crossing point and Al-Qaim border crossing.

Over the past week 75 registered Syrian refugees returned through Peshkhabour, a slight increase from 66 individuals the week before. Currently UNHCR is observing an average of 15 registered Syrian refugees returning daily. Most refugees are returning to Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh and Damascus.

Egypt

As of 28 April 2025, approximately **136,730 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt, around 520 fewer than the previous week**. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 14.3% of the total refugee population in the country.

Since the regime change in Syria, there has been a significant increase in Syrians approaching UNHCR in Cairo and Alexandria to request the closure of their asylum cases. As of 28 April 2025, **almost 9,021 closure requests involving over 18,849 individuals were submitted** since 8 December 2024, averaging 94 requests per day – compared to just seven per day in November 2024. In addition, **11,542 individuals** have been closed as spontaneous departures, reflecting a growing perception among many Syrians that return may now be viable.

On 30 April, due to the funding shortages, UNHCR Egypt had to close its **registration centre in Zamalek (Cairo)**, where UNHCR used to register Syrian asylum-seekers. Starting on 1 May, Syrian refugees seeking registration services have to approach the UNHCR Reception Centre in 6th of October City instead. UNHCR [announced](#) the closure of the Zamalek centre on social media.

Useful links

- [Regional Flash Update #24, Syria Situation Crisis](#)
- [UNHCR Operational Framework for Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs](#)
- [January 2025 Refugee Perceptions and Intentions Survey \(RPIS\)](#)
- [UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic \(16 December\)](#)
- [Syria Situation Data Portal](#)
- [UNHCR Help Site](#)

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