

Regional Flash Update #36

Syria situation crisis

18 July 2025



Basmah Al-Sarrees, with her daughter Islam in front of the living room of their damaged house in Al Mansheya (Dar'a), upon returning back home after 12 years as refugees in Jordan. Basmah, a widowed mother of eight, lost four of her children during the conflict. She now supports 15 grandchildren, many of them orphans. Upon return to Syria, UNHCR provided the family with a one-time cash grant, which helped cover essential household needs and supplies for the small local pastry shop she opened to provide for her family. While the support offered critical relief, the family continues to face financial hardship. Basmah, praying to God for her situation to improve. © UNHCR/Vivian Toumeh

Key Highlights

- During the reporting period, **the security in Syria has deteriorated**. As of mid-July 2025, As-Sweida has experienced a sharp escalation in sectarian [violence](#); and IDF has launched several airstrikes, not only in the southern governorates, but also at the Syrian Defense Ministry and near the presidential palace in Damascus. Casualties in As-Sweida have surpassed 135, including civilians and security forces. Medical infrastructure has been severely impacted, with attacks on hospitals and humanitarian facilities, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent warehouse. According to the reports from the field, as of 15 July, the clashes caused [displacement](#) of **over 2,000 families**, mainly to As-Sweida city from surrounding affected villages. The majority of the displaced people are women, children and the elderly. The number of displaced people has continued increasing, and as of 16 July, it is **estimated over 25,000 people**, potentially rising to 60,000. Additional information can be found in [UNHCR's Flash Update on the Situation in Sweida](#).
- As of 17 July, UNHCR estimates that **698,282** Syrians have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024, bringing the total of **1,059,122** Syrian individuals who have returned since the beginning of 2024.

- As of 17 July, **1,515,556 IDPs** have returned to their homes in Syria since early December 2024, according to the latest data of the IDP Task Force.
- In Lebanon, to date, **more than 17,000 Syrian individuals** have expressed interest in returning to Syria.
- Between 9 and 15 July, UNHCR provided **transportation assistance to 418 families (1,179 individuals)** returning to Syria through key border crossing points, including Bab Al-Hawa, Bab Al-Salama and Joussieh.
- This week, the **Protection Sector's 5Ws response monitoring dashboard** was launched. For the first time, it covers all of Syria with full visibility on all partners contributing to the protection response.
- Thanks to **UNHCR's Return and Reintegration Cash Assistance**, 12,861 Syrian refugee returnees, comprising 2,948 families, have been supported upon their return as of today.
- In an effort to promote economic resilience and self-reliance for newly arrived returnees, the **Cash for Livelihoods** programme has expanded in Syria, with 588 families (3,197 individuals) who have received support up to date.

Country Updates

Syria

During the reporting period, **the security in the country has deteriorated**. As of mid-July 2025, [As-Sweida](#) has experienced a sharp escalation in sectarian [violence](#), triggered by a series of kidnappings and armed clashes between Druze factions and Bedouin tribal fighters. The Damascus-As-Sweida highway has been closed, and a curfew was imposed on 13 July. Despite ongoing negotiations and a declared ceasefire, hostilities persist, with continued Israeli airstrikes and armed confrontations. On 14 and 16 July, Israeli airstrikes targeted Syrian military positions, citing threats to the Druze community near its border. These strikes included hits near the Syrian Defense Ministry and presidential palace in Damascus. Casualties have surpassed 135, including civilians and security forces. Medical infrastructure has been severely impacted, with attacks on hospitals and humanitarian facilities, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) warehouse. The As-Sweida National Hospital is nearing full capacity amid rising trauma care needs.

According to the reports from the field, as of 15 July, the clashes caused [displacement](#) of over 2,000 families, mainly to As-Sweida city from surrounding affected villages. The majority of the displaced people are women, children and the elderly. The number of displaced people has continued increasing, and as of 16 July, it is **estimated over 25,000 people**, potentially rising to 60,000. The latest report indicated that the displaced population are secondarily displaced to Salkhad. The authorities have reportedly established seven collective centers to accommodate those in need of refuge.

UNHCR, **the only UN agency with a full-fledged presence in As-Sweida**, is closely monitoring the situation and exploring the possibility of delivering core relief items (CRIs) to the affected people in collaboration with its partners, when the security situation allows. In its role as a **lead agency of Protection Sector**, UNHCR is also coordinating with Sector partners and sharing critical updates with the wider humanitarian community.

During the reporting period, UNHCR continued to identify and respond to the needs of refugee and IDP returnees, IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers, and members of the host community throughout the country where security situation permits. Through its wide-ranging protection monitoring efforts, UNHCR has reached out to 479 households only this week, bringing the total to **27,215**

households who have successfully completed the questionnaires. Additionally, **2,098 Key Informant Interviews** (KIIs) have taken place nationwide so far.

As of 17 July, UNHCR estimates that **698,282** Syrians have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024, bringing the total of 1,059,122 Syrian individuals who have returned since the beginning of 2024.

Meanwhile, **1,515,556 IDPs** have returned to their homes since early December 2024. Of those, 710,956 have left IDP sites in the north of the country, according to the latest data of the IDP Task Force.

During the same period, UNHCR continued to facilitate the safe and dignified return of Syrians to their areas of origin in Syria by providing **transportation assistance** at key border crossing points (BCPs), including Bab Al-Hawa, Bab Al-Salama, and Joussieh. A total of 418 families (1,179 individuals) benefited from this assistance, in Bab Al-Salama, Bab Al-Hawa and Joussieh.

As part of the ongoing assistance to Syrian returnees, a total of 1,305 families (comprising 5,917 individuals) have received return and reintegration assistance, with each family granted \$400. To date, the cumulative number of returnee families who have benefited from the **Return and Reintegration Grant** has reached 2,948 families (12,861 individuals).

In parallel, and in order to enhance economic resilience and self-reliance of newly arrived returnees, the **Cash for Livelihood** programme is currently underway. So far, 588 families (3,197 individuals) have received support under this initiative.

This week, the Protection Sector's [5Ws response monitoring dashboard](#) was launched. For the first time, it covers all of Syria with full visibility on all partners contributing to the protection response. For January to May 2025, 184 partners (98 NNGOs, 72 INGOs, 8 UN agencies, 3 governmental institutions, 3 Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations) contributed to the 5Ws. Activities have been carried out in 241 sub-districts and 2,040 communities/neighborhoods. Approximately **1.7 million individuals** have received protection services.

Furthermore, in an interagency effort and through the Solutions Working Group, UNHCR and UNDP are advancing the Area-Based Return Support Plus (ABRS+) initiative to foster sustainable, community-driven recovery in Syria. Building on the original ABRS model—piloted in eight locations and now extended to Ma'aret An-Numan—ABRS+ adopts a phased, inter-agency approach rooted in the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus. It emphasizes local ownership and protection-centered recovery, while integrating the **“5Rs” framework**: Return, Reintegration, Resilience, Recovery, and Reconciliation. The initiative bridges humanitarian assistance with long-term development through activities such as supporting UNDP-led participatory recovery planning, identifying and implementing Quick Impact Projects, and leveraging UNHCR Community Centres as hubs for legal aid, social protection, social cohesion, and livelihoods.

Türkiye

Voluntary returns of Syrians from Türkiye continue to be processed at several border crossings, including Cilvegözü/Bab al-Hawa, Yayladağı/Kessab, Öncüpınar/Bab al-Salama, Karkamış/Jarablus, Akçakale/Tel Abyad, Zeytindalı/Jinderes, and Çobanbey/AI Rai. UNHCR actively monitors these movements through its presence at 21 Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) offices in 21 provinces and six border crossings in the southeast, as well as at major airports in İstanbul and Ankara. Monitoring also occurs on an ad hoc basis at the Adana Sarıçam Temporary Accommodation Centre when UNHCR is kindly informed and invited by PDMM.

The pace of returns has remained steady, with a slight increase observed following the closure of schools in late June. UNHCR has maintained extensive coverage during this period, interviewing most returnees. A diverse range of individuals and families continue to repatriate, including a notable number of female-headed households and women returning alone. Most returnees express a desire to return to their provinces of origin, with Aleppo being the most common destination, followed by Idleb, Damascus, and Hama.

Returnees cite improved security and political changes as their primary motivations for returning. Other common reasons include family reunification, attending family events, homesickness, and difficulties faced in Türkiye such as housing issues, limited support, and economic hardship. Decisions on where to settle are influenced by the presence of family, property conditions, temporary relocation needs, security, and access to livelihoods.

However, **many face significant barriers to returning to their original homes**. These include damaged or lost property, financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and ongoing security concerns. While many returnees report owning property or having family who do, the condition of these properties varies widely. Most have documentation such as national IDs, passports, and family booklets, although some lack civil documents issued in Syria. Documentation for life events in Türkiye, like births and deaths, is generally high, but marriage and divorce registrations are less common.

Before returning, many Syrians relied on informal work, spousal support, or social assistance. Upon return, they expect to continue depending on similar sources of income, including informal employment, family or community support, or small-scale self-employment. Access to basic services in areas of return is inconsistent. While some report adequate or partial access, others face limited or no access or lack information about available services. These challenges underscore the **need for continued support to improve infrastructure and service delivery, ensuring safe and dignified reintegration for those choosing to return**.

Lebanon

UNHCR has formally launched its Self-Organized Voluntary Return Programme, which establishes clear procedures and protection measures for individuals choosing to return through official crossings. As of 14 July, **more than 17,000 individuals have expressed interest for return**. This follows an exchange of letters between UNHCR and the Inter-Ministerial Committee, outlining the roles and responsibilities as well as the operational process for the return programme.

New arrivals of 108,032 Syrians have been monitored since 8 December 2024 including 67,167 still residing in Bekaa and Baalbek-EI Hermel and 29,430 still residing in Akkar and North since March 2025. In addition, some 11,435 new arrivals are reported in other areas, chiefly due to onward internal movements from place of first arrival in Lebanon.

Jordan

As of 12 July, **nearly 115,000 refugees registered with UNHCR have returned** from Jordan to Syria since 8 December 2024. The average daily number of refugee returnees during the reporting period slightly decreased to around 1,200 refugees per day compared to nearly 1,250 the previous week. Demographics of returnees remained similar to previous weeks, with women and girls representing around 48 per cent of the total refugee returnees. Children accounted for around 42 per cent, and men of military age (18-40 years old) made up around 20 per cent of overall returns. The 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](#).

From 8 December 2024 and until the end of the first semester of 2025 (30 June 2025), more than 100,000 UNHCR registered Syrian refugees returned home, with returns peaking in January and February and again in June. While initial optimism drove many to consider returning, ongoing security concerns, economic hardship, and uncertainty about Syria's future tempered initial enthusiasm. The downward trend observed in April and May could be attributed to families waiting for the end of the school year. Family reunification emerged as a key motivator, though women and youth showed more reluctance to return. Women cited concerns about security, limited economic opportunities, and shifting gender roles. Some young people, particularly those born or raised in Jordan, expressed preference to stay, citing their stronger connection to life in Jordan.

During information sessions throughout the first six months of 2025, as well as focus group discussions and other outreach activities, refugees consistently requested support from UNHCR and humanitarian partners to facilitate return. Key areas of requested assistance included cash grants, transportation arrangements, help to manage debt, and support for livelihoods and reintegration inside Syria. From 15 to 17 July, UNHCR facilitated transportation for approximately 700 refugees returning from Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, and Azraq camp to Syria. Following recent events in Sweida and Damascus, some refugees decided to postpone their planned returns this week due to security concerns.

Overall, since the start of the transportation initiative on 20 January 2025, **UNHCR has been able to support about 5,800 refugees to return to Syria**. Many more refugees have requested assistance, but UNHCR's ability to respond has been limited by availability of funding. 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.

Iraq

Between 8 December 2024 and 10 July 2025, **over 3,400 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR** have returned from Iraq to Syria. From among the registered refugees and asylum-seekers, 3,269 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 139 registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Syria via Erbil airport, with border authorities sharing a copy of their registration certificate with UNHCR. Over the past week, the return of registered Syrian refugees through Peshkhabour border crossing point slightly increased compared to the previous week (from 376 individuals to 392 individuals). Most of the registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Aleppo, followed by Al-Hasakeh and Damascus.

Egypt

As of 14 July 2025, approximately **129,130 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt**, representing approximately 13% of the total refugee population in the country.

Since 8 December 2024, there has been a significant increase in Syrians approaching UNHCR in Cairo and Alexandria to request the closure of their asylum cases. As of 14 July 2025, around **9,330 cases, involving some 19,700 individuals** have been closed as spontaneous departures, reflecting a growing perception among many Syrians that return may now be viable. Since May 2025, UNHCR instituted an on-the-spot closure procedure, which has improved responsiveness to the increase in requests. This new system allows for immediate processing when all family members are present at the UNHCR Registration-Reception Centre, eliminating the need for prior appointments.

Useful Links

- [Regional Flash Update #35, 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](#)
- [Syria is Home platform](#)
- [UNHCR Help Site](#)
- [UNHCR HELP Lebanon – Voluntary Return page](#)
- [UNHCR HELP Türkiye – Voluntary Repatriation page](#)

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CONTACTS

UNHCR Syria

SYRIAreporting@unhcr.org

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