

Regional Flash Update #49

Syria situation

17 October 2025



UNHCR Reintegration and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) teams conducting post return home visit to newly returning family in the first UNHCR organized convoy from Idleb camps to Hass village. © UNHCR/Hameed Maarouf

Key Highlights

- As of 16 October, and since 8 December 2024, a total of **1,099,768 Syrian individuals** have returned to Syria from other countries, while **1,880,432 internally displaced persons (IDPs)** have returned to areas of origin or selected locations in the country.
- UNHCR continued to support the return of Syrian refugees to their areas of origin. On 9 October, the **first organized return movement through the Al-Arida border crossing point from Lebanon to Syria** was successfully launched. On 15 October, around 400 refugees returned from Lebanon through Al-Arida under the joint programme coordinated by UNHCR Syria, UNHCR and IOM Lebanon, and Syria's General Authority for Land and Sea Ports.
- Since the year began, around **22,000 returnees** have been supported at the key border crossing points with Türkiye and Lebanon.

- To date, 9,861 returnee households (35,873 individuals) have benefited from **UNHCR Return and Reintegration Financial Assistance** inside Syria, facilitating their transition toward sustainable reintegration.
- With winter approaching, UNHCR is currently scaling up its **winterization campaign**. In the northeast of Syria, UNHCR started winter distribution in Newroz and Areesha camps, reaching 2,416 households (12,304 individuals) so far.

Country Updates

Syria

UNHCR continued to support the return of Syrian refugees to their areas of origin. On 9 October, the **first organized return movement through the Al-Arida border crossing point from Lebanon to Syria** was successfully launched. A total of 34 Syrian refugee families – comprising 163 individuals – returned to their areas of origin in Homs and Idleb. On 15 October, around 400 refugees returned from Lebanon through the Al-Arida border crossing under the joint programme coordinated by UNHCR Syria, UNHCR and IOM Lebanon, and Syria's General Authority for Land and Sea Ports. Returnees received transportation support, core relief items, psychosocial assistance, and legal aid. UNHCR and partners continue following up on their post-return situation through monitoring and home visits and referring those in need to available services, including at the UNHCR-supported community centres in their areas of return.

At Joussieh border crossing point, 191 families (1,052 individuals) received **transportation and logistical support** from Joussieh to various destinations including Hama, Homs, Idlib, Aleppo and Rural Damascus. Furthermore, UNHCR and WFP distributed ready-to-eat food baskets and high-energy biscuits to 1,249 returnees at transit bus stations in Idleb and Aleppo, while UNFPA and UNHCR provided hygiene kits to over 364 women and girls returning to their homes. Since the year began, around **22,000 returnees** have been supported at the key border crossing points with Türkiye and Lebanon.

The provision of **UNHCR Return and Reintegration Financial Assistance** to Syrian refugee returnees remains ongoing. To date, a cumulative total of 9,861 returnee households (35,873 individuals) have benefited from this critical support, facilitating their transition toward sustainable reintegration.

During the reporting period and as part of its **protection monitoring** efforts, UNHCR reached 253 households, bringing the cumulative total to 31,773 households – primarily IDP returnees and refugee returnees – who have completed the protection questionnaire. In addition, a total of 1,894 key informant interviews have been carried out across the country to date.

In addition, last week, UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners, conducted its **2025 Participatory Assessment** across 13 of Syria's 14 governorates. The exercise engaged 6,726 individuals through 628 focus group discussions (FGDs) held in 58 UNHCR-supported community centres. Each centre hosted between 8 and 12 FGDs, with each session lasting approximately 45 minutes and involving 7-10 participants. The discussions included diverse representation across age, gender, nationality, and specific needs groups and serve to ensure accountability and to inform UNHCR's response to the challenges faced by different population groups in the country.

During the reporting week, the **Syria is Home** platform recorded 1,400 visitors, with a gender distribution of 53.2% male and 46.8% female. The majority of visitors accessed the platform from Syria, followed by Lebanon, Jordan, Bulgaria, and Germany.

Through its network of 71 community centres, mobile units and community outreach volunteers (ORVs), UNHCR continued to provide protection services to affected populations, including **Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response, Mine Risk Education (MRE), mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and Legal Aid.**

With winter approaching, UNHCR is currently scaling up its **winterization campaign**. In the northeast of Syria, UNHCR started winter distribution in Newroz and Areesha camps, reaching 2,416 households (12,304 individuals). Similar distributions are taking place across the country, with kits distributed to 610 households (3,050 individuals) of newly returned families in Al Hisn city, Al Kaldiya and Ein Altanour villages (Homs).

Furthermore, in order to enhance self-reliance and long-term empowerment of returnees, UNHCR continued to foster **Livelihoods**, including through skills training and provision of equipment and cash grants. In Tabqa (Ar-Raqqa) last week, UNHCR conducted initial interviews for seven refugee returnees who applied for livelihood cash grant. Similarly, in Abu Kamal and Al-Tabni (Deir ez-Zor), the small start-up business programme is under implementation in partnership with EPDC, with 60 beneficiaries interviewed so far. In Homs city, the selection process for 155 households planned to receive in-kind assistance to establish their livelihood enterprises has been completed. Implementation has commenced, with the first two beneficiaries receiving equipment and materials to launch their small enterprises: a barber shop and a *manaqiesh* shop. In Aleppo, 20 projects were approved last week, reflecting a diverse range of vocational skills, such as electric motor winding, blacksmithing, car bodywork, aluminum carpentry, wood carving, ironing and packaging, and shoemaking.

Türkiye

Processing of voluntary returns continues in provinces and at seven border crossings: Cilvegözü / Bab al Hawa, Yayladağı / Keseb, Öncüpınar / Bab al Salama, Karkamış / Jarablus and Akçakale / Tel Abyad as well as Zeytindalı / Jinderes and Çobanbey / Al Rai, which have been reopened for VolRep.

Since 8 December 2024, UNHCR has monitored the voluntary repatriation of **over 380,000 Syrians**. Currently, UNHCR monitors returns at 23 Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMM) offices in 22 provinces and at six border crossings in the south-east. UNHCR is also present at İstanbul and Sabiha Gökçen Airports in İstanbul and at Esenboğa Airport in Ankara. Voluntary returns from Adana Sarıçam Temporary Accommodation Centre (TAC) are also being monitored on an ad hoc basis.

Most interviews were conducted in certain border and metropolitan provinces, which were also among the key places of residence for returnees prior to departure. A small number of individuals were interviewed in TACs and at the airports.

The main reasons for return have remained unchanged over time, with political developments, improved security, and family reunification or the need to attend family events being the most frequently mentioned. Other reasons include nostalgia or homesickness, challenges in accessing housing, economic difficulties, reclaiming property and the need to work.

The majority of returnees were heading to provinces in northern Syria, with Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, and Hama among the most common destinations. Regarding accommodation, some returnees owned their homes or had property belonging to close relatives. While many reported that their houses were in good condition, others indicated partial damage or destruction. A significant portion confirmed they had valid documentation proving ownership.

A small portion of returnees lacked any Syrian-issued papers. Among those who did have documents, national identity cards, family booklets, and passports were the most common. Births and deaths in Türkiye were generally well-documented, but documentation rates for marriages and divorces were lower.

The demographic profile reflects a balanced gender distribution, with a significant share of children, nearly half being adults of working age, and only a small fraction aged 60 and above.

Before leaving Türkiye, many returnees were unemployed, while others worked in skilled trades, construction, agriculture, or trade. In Syria, a considerable number were expected to be without income initially and planned to look for work, including informal daily labour. Other anticipated sources of income included family or community support, assistance from spouses, or self-employment. Finally, almost one-third of returnees reported that at least one family member had attended school in Türkiye, with most obtaining official proof of the education received.

Jordan

As of 11 October, **over 162,000 refugees registered with UNHCR** have returned from Jordan to Syria since 8 December 2024. Demographics of returnees remained similar to previous weeks, with women and girls representing around 49 per cent of the total refugee returnees. Children accounted for around 43 per cent, and men 18-40 years old made up around 19 per cent of overall returns. The majority of refugees continue to return from host communities, primarily from Amman and Irbid.

As most returns are spontaneous, UNHCR does not have definitive data on the intended destination of return. However, based on intention surveys, most refugees intend to return to their governorate of origin. The governorate of origin of returnees from Jordan has remained stable throughout the year: 41 per cent originate from Dar'a, 20 per cent from Homs, and 11 per cent from rural Damascus. More details about the numbers and profile of returnees, including a section with insights on the skills level, are available on [UNHCR Jordan's returns dashboard](#).

The cash assistance for voluntary return initiative is progressing. As of 13 October, 1,450 refugees have been approved or received cash assistance as part of the pilot. Since the start of the initiative in September, implemented in Zaatari and Azraq camps, UNHCR has received over 1,200 calls to the helpline inquiring about the cash assistance programme. In total, 41 per cent of callers were deemed eligible. Refugees have two weeks to return to Syria after having received the assistance.

Transportation assistance is also continuing. On 15-16 October, UNHCR facilitated transportation for around 140 refugees from Jordan to Syria. Overall, since the start of the transportation initiative on 20 January 2025, UNHCR has supported over 9,800 refugees to return to Syria.

Additionally, on 14-15 October, IOM in coordination with UNHCR facilitated a movement for around 110 refugees from Azraq camp. UNHCR conducts interviews and counselling, and IOM covers the costs of transportation and coordinates departures. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR Operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

Lebanon

As of today, **25,660 Syrians** have been monitored as still remaining in Akkar and North, having arrived since March 2025. Some new arrivals are reported in other areas, including due to onward internal movements from places of first arrival in Lebanon, where limited infrastructure, shelter, and livelihood options in overcrowded villages make long-term stay increasingly difficult.

In the Bekaa, figures from Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) remain unchanged from last week as data verification by local authorities is still ongoing. Thus, as of the last update on 20 September, the

reported numbers remain unchanged with the arrival of 78,095 individuals, including smaller numbers of Lebanese, to account for the discrepancy from 30 September Syrian Returns & Movements Snapshot (65,396 individuals for Bekaa and Baalbek-EI Hermel).

Since July, UNHCR and IOM have processed the **organized return of 861 Syrian individuals** through the Masnaa and Arida borders to Rural Damascus, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Idlib and Aleppo. Two further organized return movements are planned in the North for 22 and 23 October, covering approximately 340 individuals.

Iraq

Between 8 December 2024 and 9 October 2025, **over 6,400 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR** have returned from Iraq to Syria. Men represent around 37% of the total of returnees, followed by women (23%), boys (20%) and girls (19%). Among them, over 6,200 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 230 registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Syria via Erbil airport, with border authorities sharing a copy of their registration certificate with UNHCR. Most registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Aleppo, followed by Al-Hasakeh and Damascus.

Over the past week, the return of registered Syrian refugees through Peshkhabour border crossing point increased slightly compared to the previous week (from 44 to 103 individuals). Most registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Aleppo, followed by Al-Hasakeh and Damascus. Registered refugees mentioned the Kurdistan Region's Ministry of Interior instruction on the waiver for overstay fines, improved security situation in their areas of origin and family reunification as main reasons to return to Syria.

Egypt

As of 13 October 2025, approximately **122,866 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt**. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 12% of the total refugee population in the country.

Since the fall of the former Government of Syria, Syrians started approaching UNHCR in greater numbers to request the closure of their asylum cases. Between 8 December 2024 and 13 October 2025, 11,331 closure requests involving around **25,179 individuals** were submitted, including on-the-spot closures. Among applicants who closed their files, 63% were male. In terms of origin, 40% came from Damascus, 27% from Rural Damascus, 13% from Homs, 8% from Aleppo, and 12% from other Syrian locations.

Useful Links

- [Regional Flash Update #48, Syria Situation](#)
- [UNHCR Operational Framework for Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs](#)
- [Enhanced Refugee Perceptions and Intentions Survey \(eRPIS\)](#)
- [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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