

Regional Flash Update #56

Syria situation

5 December 2025



UNHCR and its partner *Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)* are rehabilitating the fish market in Lattakia governorate, which is expected to revive the livelihoods of over 2,000 fishermen and traders and their families. ©UNHCR/Emad Kabbas

Key Highlights

- As of 4 December, UNHCR estimates that **1,266,885 individuals** have returned to Syria from other countries since 8 December 2024, with the main governorates of intended return being Damascus, Aleppo, Idlib, Rural Damascus and Homs.
- UNHCR Syria supported 714 refugee returnees with logistical and transportation support from Joussieh border crossing point and at Sarmada and Sejjo bus stations after Bab Al-Hawa and Al-Salama crossing points to various destinations.
- In Aleppo, UNHCR and its partner the Syrian Development Organisation (SDO's) legal team strengthened coordination with local Mukhtars and community committees to better identify legal cases requiring Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) intervention.
- The rehabilitation of the fish market in Lattakia governorate, Syria, progresses, expected to be completed in mid-December. Once complete, it is expected to benefit 1,800 fishermen, 500 small

traders and indirectly benefit about 900,000 people in Lattakia, as well as fostering social cohesion.

- In Jordan, the cash assistance for voluntary return pilot continues, with over 2,900 refugees approved for or having received cash assistance as of 1 December. Refugees have two weeks to return to Syria after receiving the assistance.

Country Updates

Syria

UNHCR supported 714 refugee returnees with logistical and transportation support from Jousieh (Syria-Lebanon) border crossing point and at Sarmada and Sejjo bus stations after Bab Al-Hawa and Al-Salama (Syria-Türkiye) crossing points to various destinations. UNHCR and WFP distributed ready-to-eat food baskets and high-energy biscuits to 687 returnees at transit bus stations in Idleb and Aleppo, while UNFPA and UNHCR provided hygiene kits to over 100 women and girls returning home.

Furthermore, on 4 December, 185 refugees returned from Lebanon through the Jdeidet Yabous border crossing point under the joint programme coordinated by UNHCR Syria, UNHCR and IOM Lebanon, and Syria's General Authority for Ports and Customs. Humanitarian assistance was provided to meet the returnees' needs, including transportation assistance, relief items, psychosocial support, and legal aid. UNHCR and partners continue monitoring their post-return situation through home visits and referring those in need to available services, including at the UNHCR-supported [community centres](#) in their areas of return.

UNHCR has resumed the distribution of cash for transportation to support IDPs willing to return home from Areesha IDP camp in northeast Syria. While 21 households have so far received the support, the distribution plan targets 4,185 households (14,411 individuals).

The distribution of return and reintegration grants to refugee returnees continues, with a total of 36,535 households (117,518 individuals) having received the assistance of USD 600 per household.

The rehabilitation of the fish market in Lattakia governorate progresses, expected to be completed in mid-December. Fish trading, a profession Lattakia city has been famous for, is considered one of the most important occupations in the area and is a source of livelihood for many families. The fish market, located in Al-Ramel Al-Janoubi neighborhood, is the main centre for this trade, but in 2024 was affected by a rare natural weather phenomenon that not only significantly damaged it but also resulted in casualties. UNHCR and its partner *Premiere Urgence Internationale* have been rehabilitating the market and once complete, it is expected to directly benefit 1,800 fishermen, 500 small traders and indirectly benefit about 900,000 people in Lattakia. It will also foster social cohesion among the population that includes returnees, IDPs, and the host community.

Under the livelihood programme, 1,572 households (8,916 individuals) have so far received cash for livelihoods while 111 households received support through the provision of equipment, tools, and other in-kind support to launch new businesses.

On 29 November, UNHCR participated in a roundtable discussion on refugee returnees' entrepreneurship organized by Startup Syria during the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) Syria in Damascus. The session convened key stakeholders engaged in reintegration, livelihoods, and entrepreneurship to explore practical challenges faced by returnees, identify opportunities for collaboration, and strengthen support for those aiming to start or grow small businesses including

in the technology sector. UNHCR shared insights on ongoing livelihood initiatives, skills profiling, return and intention surveys, growing needs for livelihoods support among refugee returnees and collaboration among stakeholders supporting refugee returnees.

UNHCR participated in the preliminary meeting of the Technical Skills Development Working Group co-chaired by UNDP and ILO with the participation of FAO, UNRWA, UNESCO, UNICEF and the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). This newly established working group aims to strengthen coordination among UN agencies on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills development, market-relevant skills, and support policy and strategy development to reduce skills gaps in the labour market.

In Aleppo, UNHCR and its partner the Syrian Development Organisation's (SDO) legal team strengthened coordination with local Mukhtars and community committees to better identify legal cases requiring Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) intervention. Field mapping activities continued with strong community cooperation, documenting 340 occupied residential buildings (excluding closed, uninhabited, or destroyed structures). Lawyers provided legal services, including 16 legal awareness sessions reaching 442 people and 110 legal consultations on HLP-related issues.

UNHCR provided technical support to the Directorate of Civil Affairs and the Directorate of Immigration and Passports including a generator, nine camera scanners and 10 laptops. The support aims to enhance the directorates' capacity in responding to the needs of returnees and host community populations regarding documentation issuance.

Community based protection: During the past week, UNHCR approved 11 Community-Led Initiatives designed to address local needs and enhance community resilience. Two of the initiatives will rehabilitate water cycles in several schools in rural areas (Daraya and Nashabia), benefiting over 750 students. Other projects include the installation of solar-powered lighting in remote villages in Eastern Ghouta, enhancing safety and access to education.

UNHCR supports 71 community centres across the 14 governorates, whose reach is supported by 81 mobile units and a network of 1,438 outreach volunteers. Through the centres, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, legal assistance and GBV services continue to be provided. On the occasion of the *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence*, events were held in community centres across the country, including awareness raising and lifeskills sessions as well as skills development and empowerment activities. In Rural Damascus, vocational training courses in sewing, household detergent production, and candle making were launched, targeting women.

Syria is Home: During the reporting period, the platform was visited by 1,900 visitors (62.3% male and 37.7% female) with the highest number from Syria followed by Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, and Germany. Since the website's launch on 24 March 2025 and up to 30 November 2025, the total visitor count has reached 84,000.

Protection monitoring: UNHCR reached out to 336 households, bringing the total to 34,787 households (mainly IDP returnees and refugee returnees) who have completed the questionnaires in the protection monitoring exercise. Furthermore, 2,034 key informant interviews have been conducted nationwide.

The UNHCR Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) team visited Aleppo governorate, on a mission that involved meetings with the authorities and capacity strengthening. In the meeting with Mahmoud Shehadi, the Deputy Governor of Aleppo and head of the International Cooperation and Planning Directorate in the governorate, discussions focused on the interim government's strategic direction regarding IDP camps. A significant outcome of the meeting was the proposal for a workshop involving all stakeholders in the CCCM sector to develop a clear strategy, including the facilitation of voluntary returns. The team also met with the deputy head of Idlib's Department of

Social Affairs and Labour (DoSAL) to discuss priority areas for intervention within the camps, with the discussions focusing on the identification of areas for operational improvement, addressing needs for collaboration with other sectors, and consolidating efforts in camp management. In Aleppo, with representatives from DoSAL, the delegation met with 20 camp managers in the Atma area. The discussion focused on challenges hindering return, infrastructure deficiencies, shelter damage, and the threats posed by unexploded ordinances, and the insights gathered are considered vital for formulating effective return support plans. On 27 November, the CCCM team conducted training for 25 CCCM sector members, covering key CCCM topics, including site planning, management and improvement, best practices in site management, stakeholder engagement, community integration, and the role of CCCM in supporting IDP returns. The session provided a valuable platform for participants from across Syria to exchange experiences and collaboratively propose practical solutions to sector challenges.

Türkiye

An [amendment to the Temporary Protection Regulation](#) was published in the Official Journal on 28 November, activating the implementation of the previously unused 2019 provision on “contribution fees” for health services received by temporary protection beneficiaries. As of 1 January 2026, Syrians under temporary protection will be required to pay a contribution fee for the health services they receive, similar to international protection applicants. The amendment introduces safeguards for those identified, through a process coordinated by MoFSS and PMM, as unable to afford the fee; such individuals will be reimbursed by the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASFs), with related costs covered from the Social Assistance and Solidarity Incentive Fund.

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 418,000 Syrians. Currently, UNHCR monitors returns at 25 Provincial Directorate 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. Ad hoc monitoring of voluntary returns from Adana Sarıçam and İstanbul Arnavutköy Temporary Accommodation Centres (TAC) continues.

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, wish to reclaim property and the need to work. A smaller portion also cited economic difficulties and challenges in accessing housing in country of asylum.

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

In November, around 10,000 refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria. Overall, as of 29 November, nearly 173,000 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. More details about the numbers and profile of returnees, including a section with insights on their skills levels, are available on [UNHCR Jordan's returns dashboard](#).

This week, UNHCR provided voluntary repatriation assistance, including counselling and transportation, for nearly 50 refugees to voluntarily return to Syria. Since 20 January 2025, over 10,100 refugees have used buses provided by UNHCR to return to Syria. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR Operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

The cash assistance for voluntary return pilot continues, with over 2,900 refugees approved for or received cash assistance as of 1 December. Refugees have two weeks to return to Syria after receiving the assistance. The latest post-distribution monitoring assessment, conducted between 30 September and 30 November among recipients of cash assistance for return, revealed that they primarily spend it on food and water, debt repayment, transportation, and clothing.

Lebanon

As of 31 October, a total of 106,491 Syrians have been monitored as post-December 2024 arrivals from Syria. Of these, 66,015 are currently residing in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel, and 29,700 are in Akkar and the North. In addition, around 10,776 arrivals have been reported in other areas.

Iraq

Between 8 December 2024 and 27 November 2025, over 6,800 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR have returned from Iraq to Syria. Men represent 37% of the total of returnees, followed by women (24%), boys (20%) and girls (19%). Among them, over 6,500 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 283 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, only 60 registered Syrian refugees returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point. Most registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Aleppo, followed by Al-Hasakeh and Damascus. Registered refugees mentioned family reunification and improved security situation in their areas of origin as main reasons to return to Syria.

Egypt

As of 1 December 2025, approximately 119,169 Syrian refugees were registered in Egypt. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 11% 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 1 December 2025, a total of 12,350 closure requests involving around 27,566 individuals were submitted, including on-the-spot closures.

Useful Links

- [Regional Flash Update #55, 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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