

Regional Flash Update #58

Syria situation

19 December 2025



In partnership with the authorities and other agencies, on 18 December UNHCR provided transportation and logistical support to internally displaced families wishing to leave Abu Khashab camp in Deir ez Zor, northeast Syria, to villages in the same governorate. A total of 155 families are departing the camp over the course of several days in the first facilitated voluntary return movement. ©UNHCR/Deir-ez Zor

Key Highlights

- As of 18 December, UNHCR estimates that **1,281,933 Syrians** have returned to the country since 8 December 2024 from other countries. Up to 48% of the returnees are male and 52% female, with children taking up the largest proportion at 57%, adults 41% and the elderly 2%.
- In partnership with the authorities in Deir ez Zor governorate and other agencies, on 18 December UNHCR began supporting the first organized return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abu Khashab Camp, which will see 155 households (835 individuals) returning to their areas of origin.
- UNHCR Syria and its partner Première Urgence Internationale have completed the first stage of rehabilitation works on the Daboussieh border bridge (Syria-Lebanon), which is aimed at facilitating safe and dignified refugee return.
- The UNHCR offices in Qamishli and Aleppo conducted training on *Psychosocial Interventions for Returnees* aimed at equipping participants with essential skills in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support interventions tailored for individuals returning to their home areas from Al Hol Camp.
- On 17 December in Lebanon, UNHCR, IOM, and the General Security Office (GSO) organized the 13th and final voluntary return movement of the year from the Bekaa, involving 196 individuals.

- Since 8 December 2024, UNHCR in Türkiye has monitored the voluntary repatriation of nearly 430,000 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.

Country Updates

Syria

UNHCR and its partner Première Urgence Internationale have completed the first stage of rehabilitation works on the Daboussieh border bridge (Syria-Lebanon), which suffered significant structural damage during the November 2024 Israel-Lebanon conflict. Besides rehabilitation of the bridge, UNHCR is also repairing two immigration buildings at Daboussieh which were damaged and looted during the fall of the former Syrian government, developments aimed at reducing congestion at Joussieh border crossing point and facilitating safe and dignified refugee return.

In partnership with the authorities in Deir ez Zor governorate and other agencies, on 18 December UNHCR began supporting the first organized return of IDPs from Abu Khashab Camp to various villages in the governorate through the provision of transportation and other services, with a total of 155 households (835 individuals) departing the camp over several days.

UNHCR provided logistical and transportation support to 656 refugee returnees from Joussieh border crossing point and at Sarmada and Sejjo bus stations to destinations including Homs, Hama, Idlib, Aleppo and Rural Damascus. Since the year began, UNHCR Syria has assisted over 28,000 refugee returnees at the key border crossing points with Türkiye and Lebanon.

Furthermore, on 17 December, 200 refugees who 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 received assistance from UNHCR and partners to meet their immediate needs, including relief items and transportation assistance, as well as psychosocial support and legal assistance.

Between 1 and 11 December, UNHCR, in its capacity as co-chair of the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Inter-Agency In-country Network, supported the organization of two workshops in Damascus in collaboration with WHO for participants including government representatives. Recommendations from the workshops will advance the roll out of the UN-Government PSEA framework.

Between 10 and 16 December, UNHCR's protection monitoring exercise reached out to 418 households, bringing the total number of households who have responded to the protection monitoring questionnaires to 35,424 (primarily IDP and refugee returnees and host community members). The exercise supports UNHCR's generation of a comprehensive understanding of the protection environment, thus informing its response.

From 13 to 17 December, the UNHCR offices in Qamishli and Aleppo conducted a training for 22 participants from key partner organizations on *Psychosocial Interventions for Returnees*, facilitated by the International Medical Corps. The training focused on equipping participants with essential skills in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support interventions tailored for individuals returning to their areas of origin from Al Hol Camp.

As part of activities marking the commemoration of the *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence*, UNHCR and its partners in Homs organized 12 digital safety and anti-cyber violence awareness sessions in various community centres, with the participation of over 690 adolescents, women, and men. The events were crowned by a community event and awareness march promoting digital protection, rejection of violence, and the safe use of technology.

Türkiye

Speaking during the Ministry's budget session at the plenary of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) on 15 December, [the Minister of Interior reported that since 8 December 2024, approximately 590,000 Syrians have returned to Syria voluntarily, safely, and with dignity, bringing the total number of voluntary returns since 2016 to around 1.33 million.](#)

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 nearly 430,000 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

During the last week, over 2,400 refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria, representing a 13 per cent decrease compared to the previous week when around 3,000 refugees returned.

Since 8 December 2024, more than 175,000 refugees registered with UNHCR have returned from Jordan to Syria. Throughout the year, monthly return rates varied, with the peak of 28,000 returnees recorded in July.

Demographics of returnees remained stable throughout the year, with an almost equal distribution between women and men. Children accounted for around 43 per cent, and men 18-40 years old made up around 19 per cent of overall returns. Most refugees returned from host communities, primarily from Amman (40,000) and Irbid (39,000), with smaller number of returns from Zaatari camp (26,000) and Azraq camp (11,000). 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](#).

Throughout the year, UNHCR Jordan has assisted refugee return through counselling, information sharing, transportation and cash assistance. This includes over 3,000 refugees included in the cash assistance for voluntary return pilot launched in September 2025. This week, UNHCR facilitated transportation for some 30 refugees to voluntarily return to Syria. IOM, in coordination with UNHCR, facilitated a movement for 90 refugees from Azraq camp. To date, nearly 10,200 refugees have used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR Operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

Lebanon

As of 30 November, a total of 112,089 Syrians have been monitored as post-December 2024 arrivals from Syria. Of these, 65,279 are currently residing in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel, 31,072 in the Akkar and North governorates, and 15,738 in other regions.

Since 8 December 2024, UNHCR estimates that some 437,586 Syrians have returned from or via Lebanon. Returns are taking place through official and unofficial border crossing points, which complicates tracking. Since January 2025, a total of 379,103 Syrians known to UNHCR have been inactivated by either confirmation or presumed return to Syria.

On 17 December, UNHCR, IOM, and the General Security Office (GSO) organized the 13th and final voluntary return movement of the year from the Bekaa, involving 196 individuals. By the end of November, a total of 45,195 Syrian individuals (9,504 cases) known to UNHCR had undergone the facilitated VolRep programmes. 94% of those who were facilitated with VolRep self-organized their transport back to Syria, while 6% were provided with organized transportation by IOM and UNHCR.

Iraq

Over the past week, only 32 registered Syrian refugees returned to Syria through the Peshkhabour border crossing point. Most registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Aleppo (24 individuals) and Al-Hasakeh (7 individuals). Heavy rains and bad weather across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq last week are thought to have contributed to low numbers of return. Registered refugees mentioned the improved security situation in their areas of origin as main reasons to return to Syria, as well as wanting to reunite with family.

In total, in 2025, 6,900 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 6,603 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 315 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.

Egypt

As of 15 December 2025, over 118,470 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 15 December 2025, 12,642 closure requests involving around 28,268 individuals were submitted, including on-the-spot closures. Among applicants who closed their files, 62% 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 #57, 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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