

# Regional Flash Update #59

## Syria situation

9 January 2026



Walaa Hilal Al-Ali, a Syrian mother of four, returns home after years in Lebanon. Filled with hope, she looks forward to reuniting with her community in Menbij (Aleppo Governorate) and enrolling her children in school. Walaa is among hundreds of Syrians who have returned from Lebanon through organized voluntary return movements coordinated by UNHCR Syria, UNHCR and IOM Lebanon, together with Syria's General Authority for Borders and Customs. ©UNHCR/ V. Toumeh

## Key Highlights

- UNHCR estimates that 1,346,485 Syrians have returned to Syria from other countries since the political transition in the country on 8 December 2024. This includes the return of over 440,000 registered refugees with UNHCR from Türkiye, 437,586 from Lebanon, 178,000 from Jordan, and 6,988 from Iraq. A total of 28,897 Syrian refugees in Egypt have also submitted closure requests.
- UNHCR has recently rehabilitated four vocational training schools and a public market in Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia, now serving an estimated 12,000 individuals.
- UNHCR has installed 3,769 solar streetlights across Deir-ez-Zor, Latakia, Tartous, Rural Damascus, and Aleppo to improve basic infrastructure in return areas.

# Country Updates

## Syria

The rehabilitation of over 1,900 partially damaged houses has been completed in Deir-ez-Zor, Latakia, Tartous, Damascus and Aleppo Governorates. Since the beginning of 2025, UNHCR with partners repaired 4,647 damaged houses benefiting about 23,235 individuals mostly returnees. The repairs include basic interventions such as fixing doors, windows, walls, roofs, electrical systems, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.

From January to December 2025, UNHCR supported 6,612 individuals with livelihoods assistance, including 2,250 small start-up projects through in-kind and cash modalities. In addition, 4,362 individuals were enabled access to business training, finance, and temporary employment through community projects or on-the-job training opportunities.

UNHCR has installed 3,769 solar streetlights across Deir-ez-Zor, Latakia, Tartous, Rural Damascus, and Aleppo Governorates to improve basic infrastructure in return areas.

An estimated 12,000 people in Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia Governorates now have access to four vocational training schools and a public market recently rehabilitated by UNHCR.

As part of UNHCR's capacity-building efforts, two training courses have been organized for newly recruited lawyers working with partners to strengthen partners' legal capacity and improve protection response. UNHCR also organized a workshop for field legal focal points and senior lawyers from partner organizations on return protection thresholds and UNHCR's 2026 legal aid strategy.

The [Syria is Home](#) platform, which was launched in April 2025 to help Syrian refugees make informed return decisions, recorded around 92,000 visits by year-end, with most new users from Syria, the US, Lebanon, Türkiye, and Jordan.

## Türkiye

In his New Year message on 31 December, the President of Türkiye noted that following Syria's political transition in December 2024, recovery and progress toward political stability have accelerated, with voluntary returns increasing over the past year.

Nuh Yılmaz, who has been appointed as Türkiye's Ambassador to Damascus, officially assumed his post on 22 December in the Syrian capital.

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

Since 8 December 2024, UNHCR has monitored the voluntary repatriation of over 440,000 Syrians. Currently, UNHCR monitors returns at 25 Provincial Directorate of Migration Management 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 Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, and Hama Governorates. 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.

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.

## **Jordan**

During the past three weeks, over 6,400 refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria, representing a 4% increase compared to the previous weeks when around 2,100 refugees returned.

Since 8 December 2024, more than 178,000 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. In 2025, the UNHCR-registered refugee population in Jordan decreased by over 30%.

Demographics of returnees remained stable throughout 2025, with an almost equal distribution between women and men. Children accounted for around 43%, and men between 18-40 years made up around 19% of overall returns. Most refugees returned from host communities, primarily from Amman (40,000) and Irbid (39,000), with 24% 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 skill levels, are available on [UNHCR Jordan return dashboard](#).

Throughout 2025, UNHCR Jordan assisted refugees with returns through counselling, information sharing and outreach, legal assistance, transportation and cash assistance. This includes over 3,200 refugees who have received cash assistance since the voluntary return pilot was launched in September 2025.

This week, UNHCR plans to facilitate transportation for some 80 refugees to voluntarily return to Syria. To date, over 10,300 refugees have used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025. The return process is closely coordinated with UNHCR Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination. In 2025, UNHCR reached over 55,000 refugees

with assistance for voluntary return<sup>1</sup>. Through various digital channels, over half a million received information relating to return.

## Lebanon

A total of 112,089 Syrians were monitored as post-December 2024 arrivals from Syria as of end of November. Of these, 65,279 are currently residing in Bekaa and Baalbek-EI 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.

UNHCR and IOM have held discussions on the 2026 organized voluntary repatriation schedule of convoys, after running 13 returns convoys from a range of departure points across Lebanon in 2025. Key considerations for the start of the year are concerns of inclement weather, road conditions, and possible crossing point closures in January and February.

## Iraq

Over the past week, only six registered Syrian refugees returned to Syria through the Peshkhabour border crossing point. Most registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa. Government holidays and extreme cold weather and snowstorm across border areas last week are thought to have contributed to low numbers of return. Registered refugees mentioned the desire to reunite with family and a lack of employment opportunities in Iraq as main reasons to return to Syria.

In total in 2025, 6,988 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, 6,660 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 328 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 5 January 2026, over 117,213 Syrian refugees were registered in Egypt. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 11% of the total refugee population in the country.

Since the political transition in Syria, Syrians started approaching UNHCR in greater numbers to request the closure of their asylum cases before leaving Egypt to return to Syria. Between 8 December 2024 and 5 January 2026, 12,932 closure requests involving around 28,897 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 governorates.

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<sup>1</sup> As part of the voluntary return support, a refugee may legitimately receive multiple types of assistance such as counselling, legal aid, and transportation to support their safe return.

# Useful Links

- [Regional Flash Update #58, 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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UNHCR Global Website – Syria Situation