

Regional Flash Update #60

Syria situation

16 January 2026



UNHCR team meets Syrian refugees recently returned from Jordan at the UNHCR-supported community centre in Sheikh Miskin, Dar'a Governorate, to assess their priority needs including cash assistance, solar streetlights, shelter rehabilitation, and improved access to electricity and water. ©UNHCR/ A.Abbas

Key Highlights

- UNHCR estimates that 1,354,245 Syrians have returned to Syria from other countries since the political transition in the country on 8 December 2024.
- The Governor of Latakia and UNHCR Syria Representative inaugurated the UNHCR-rehabilitated Fish Market in Latakia city, in the Coastal areas where 40,000 Syrian refugees voluntarily returned in the past year.
- There is an increase of 17% in the number of refugees registered with UNHCR who returned to Syria from Jordan compared to the previous week. To date, over 10,300 refugees have used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025.

- By the end of December 2025, 54,673 Syrian individuals known to UNHCR benefited from the facilitated return programmes, including voluntariness assessments, issuance of repatriation forms and provision of a return cash grant of USD 100 per returning individual.
- After clashes erupted in Aleppo city between Syrian Government Forces and Syrian Democratic Forces causing displacement of thousands of families, UNHCR led protection efforts alongside essential relief, and winter assistance.

Country Updates

Syria

UNHCR completed the rehabilitation of the Fish Market in Latakia city and handed it over to authorities. On 11 January, the Governor of Latakia and the UNHCR Representative inaugurated the project. The Market is expected to create jobs and strengthen community resilience.

The installation of 500 solar streetlights across Latakia city (Latakia Governorate) and Qadmous (Tartous Governorate) has been finalized. In 2025, UNHCR installed 6,500 solar streetlights across Syria to enhance security and protection of residents including returnees.

The refurbishment of the Civil Registry Office in Ein Al-Bayda, Latakia Governorate has been completed. This is expected to enhance legal documentation services in the area.

Emergency response to the situation in Aleppo Governorate

After clashes escalated in Aleppo city between Syrian Government Forces and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) causing displacement of thousands of families, UNHCR has been actively engaged to provide humanitarian assistance on the ground, working in coordination with the authorities, UN organizations, and humanitarian organizations, to ensure a timely and protection-centred response. UNHCR focused on supporting displaced families in collective shelters and host communities. Through partners, UNHCR delivered protection services including psychosocial support, child protection, and gender-based violence risk mitigation, alongside essential relief, and winter assistance, both in Aleppo city and Afrin, which are receiving displaced families.

As Co-Chair of the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network, UNHCR reinforced safeguards by disseminating messages and reporting channels. As Camp Coordination and Camp Management lead, UNHCR also validated shelter data, consolidated displacement information, and maintained an updated overview of active sites and service coverage to inform coordination efforts. In addition, UNHCR identified winterization needs and coordinated with partners the distributions of core relief and winter items to displaced people.

Meanwhile, after the establishment of a ceasefire agreement in Aleppo city, UNHCR along with UNDSS, UNICEF, and WFP conducted a joint security assessment in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh neighbourhoods to monitor the situation. The mission found normal daily activity, no military presence inside neighbourhoods, and ongoing war remnants clearance, pending a detailed risk assessment.

In Afrin, UNHCR joined OCHA and UNFPA in an inter-agency mission to assess displacement dynamics and engage with affected families. Most families relocated from affected neighbourhoods are staying with host communities, with some residing in collective shelters. UNHCR in coordination with partners distributed on 11 January 240 kits of core relief items to 1,260 newly displaced persons currently hosted in three collective shelters.

Türkiye

On 12 January, UNHCR and the Presidency of Migration Management signed a Letter of Understanding enabling the conduct of voluntary return interviews remotely in selected provinces where voluntary return applications remain low, with the aim of increasing UNHCR's coverage in a more efficient manner. The implementation will be initiated in one province (Osmaniye) in the southeastern region, where applications have been particularly limited to date, and will be gradually expanded to additional provinces through a phased approach.

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 nearly 445,000 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 governorates in northern Syria, with Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, and Hama being 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. 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

From 4 to 10 January, approximately 2,600 refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria, representing a 17% increase compared to the previous week when some 2,200 refugees returned. Since 8 December 2024, nearly 180,000 refugees registered with UNHCR have returned from Jordan to Syria.

This week, UNHCR facilitated transportation for over 30 refugees to voluntarily return to Syria. To date, over 10,300 refugees have used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025. Additionally, UNHCR continues the cash assistance for voluntary return pilot in camps. According to the post-distribution monitoring assessment, recipients were most likely to spend assistance on basic items like clothing and food, debt repayment, or transportation expenses.

To date, UNHCR reached over 55,000 refugees with assistance for voluntary return¹. Through various digital channels, over half a million received information relating to return. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

Lebanon

Since 8 December 2024, 115,006 Syrians have been recorded arriving in Lebanon. Of these, 63,200 are residing in the Bekaa and Baalbek-EI Hermel governorates, 33,968 in the Akkar and North governorates, and 17,838 in other regions. These figures include individuals who have relocated internally from their initial arrival points.

Since January 2025, 501,603 Syrian individuals known to UNHCR have been inactivated from UNHCR's database due to both confirmed and presumed returns to Syria. By the end of December 2025, 54,673 Syrian individuals known to UNHCR benefited from the facilitated return programmes, including voluntariness assessments, issuance of repatriation forms and provision of a return cash grant of USD 100 per returning individual. ([Voluntary Repatriation Programme - Lebanon, 31 December 2025](#))

Iraq

In 2026, 43 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR have returned to Syria (adding to the 6,988 Syrian refugees who returned in 2025). Among them, 39 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another four registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Syria via Erbil airport, with border authorities sharing a copy of their registration certificate with UNHCR.

In the first week of 2026, 39 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point, compared to six individuals the week before. Most registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Al-Hasakeh; returns to Aleppo were limited due to the instability. Government holidays, extreme cold and snowstorm across border areas are thought to have contributed to low numbers of returns. Registered refugees mentioned wanting to reunite with family and a lack of employment opportunities in Iraq as the main reasons behind return.

Egypt

As of 12 January 2026, over 117,049 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 in December 2024, Syrians started approaching UNHCR in greater numbers to request the closure of their asylum cases which is a prerequisite before leaving Egypt to return to Syria. Between 8 December 2024 and 12 January 2026, 13,038 closure requests

¹ 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.

involving 29,135 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.

Useful Links

- [Regional Flash Update #59, 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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