

Regional Flash Update #62

Syria situation

30 January 2026



UNHCR is supporting the voluntary return of 1,259 individuals from Areesha IDP camp in northeast Syria to Deir ez Zor, Aleppo and Damascus, which will subsequently result in the closure of the camp, established in 2017. ©UNHCR

Key Highlights

- As of 29 January, UNHCR estimates that **1,372,352 individuals** have returned to Syria from neighbouring countries since 8 December 2024 while **1,700,615 internally displaced persons (IDPs)** have returned home (IDP Taskforce and UNHCR estimates).¹
- On 28 January UNHCR commenced support for the final voluntary return convoy of IDPs from Areesha Camp, a four-day exercise that will see 248 households (1,259 individuals) departing and resulting in the closure of the camp, established in 2017.
- UNHCR has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Syria's Ministry of Justice. The MoU establishes a framework for coordination between UNHCR and the ministry to strengthen

¹ IDP return figures have been updated. According to the IDP Taskforce, 1,513,499 individuals returned before August 2025 and 187,166 returned after August 2025 (UNHCR).

the legal environment and support refugee and IDP returnees as well as other affected communities.

- The implementation of the 1,500-unit Damaged Houses Project has commenced in Hama and Dar'a Governorates, Syria, and coordination continues for the initiation of assessments for an additional 1,800 damaged houses across all governorates.
- A total of 58 families (300 individuals) returning to Syria from Lebanon received transportation and logistical assistance from Joussieh border crossing point to various areas in the country, bringing the total to 32,000 returnees supported at the key border crossing points with Türkiye and Lebanon since 2025.
- In Jordan, nearly 4,400 refugees have received cash assistance under UNHCR's voluntary return pilot launched in September 2025 while close to 10,500 refugees have used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025. UNHCR also supports movements organized by IOM by conducting voluntary repatriation interviews and counselling from the camps and referring eligible cases to IOM for arranging transportation.
- On 28 January, UNHCR, IOM, and GSO organized the first voluntary return movement of 2026 (the 14th since the programme's launch) from Beirut, Lebanon, involving 40 individuals. By the end of December 2025, a total of 54,673 Syrian individuals (11,832 cases) known to UNHCR had benefited from the facilitated voluntary repatriation programme.
- As of 27 January, UNHCR and partners had distributed CRI kits comprising winter clothing, mattresses, blankets, plastic sheets, kitchen sets, and solar lamps to 2,450 newly displaced families (approx. 11,000 individuals), mainly in collective centres in Qamishli and Al-Hassakeh.

Country Updates

Syria

As of 29 January, UNHCR estimates that **1,372,352 individuals** have returned to Syria since 8 December 2024. At the same time, **1,700,615 IDPs** have returned home.² Syria still hosts up to 5,542,227 IDPs, of whom 4,186,695 (76%) reside outside IDP sites and 1,355,532 (24%) in 1,531 IDP sites.

On 28 January, UNHCR resumed the provision of transportation assistance to support the voluntary return of IDPs from Areesha Camp, a four-day exercise that will see 248 households (1,259 individuals) departing and resulting in the closure of the camp which was established in 2017. Of these, 250 households will return to Deir-ez-Zor and the rest to Aleppo and Damascus.

A total of 58 families (300 individuals) returning to Syria from Lebanon received transportation and logistical assistance from Joussieh border crossing point to Lattakia, Rural Damascus, Ar Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Idlib, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama. Since 2025, about 32,000 returnees have been supported at the key border crossing points with Türkiye and Lebanon.

² IDP return figures have been updated. According to the IDP Taskforce, 1,513,499 individuals returned before August 2025 and 187,166 returned after August 2025 (UNHCR).

Furthermore, on 28 January, 40 refugees returned from Lebanon through the Jdeidet Yabous border crossing under the joint programme coordinated by UNHCR Syria, UNHCR and IOM Lebanon, as well as Syria's General Authority for Ports and Customs. Returnees received assistance to meet needs including transportation, psychosocial support and legal aid.

In addition, UNHCR received two organized convoys from Jordan consisting of 100 returnees through Nassib border crossing. 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 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Syria's Ministry of Justice on 25 January. The MoU establishes a framework for coordination between UNHCR and the ministry to strengthen the legal environment and support refugee and IDP returnees as well as other affected communities in Syria to effectively enjoy their rights, protection and access to justice across the Syrian Arab Republic.

In Ar Raqqa, to tackle one of the most serious threats in the area – landmines – UNHCR is prioritizing awareness-raising sessions on the risks related to explosive ordnances for children and caregivers alongside the distribution of mine risk education printed materials. This is particularly in light of the upcoming truffle collection season when residents move into desert areas.

The implementation of the 1,500-unit Damaged Houses Project has commenced in Hama and Dar'a Governorates. Coordination continues to initiate assessments for an additional 1,800 damaged houses across all governorates.

In January, 9,471 households (34,616 individuals) returning to Syria received cash assistance (return and reintegration grants), bringing the total to 45,975 families (152,022 individuals) that have benefited from the assistance since its inception in 2025. The assistance enables returning families to meet immediate needs, maintaining their dignity and enhancing protection.

As part of its shelter rehabilitation and livelihoods support initiatives, UNHCR provides cash for livelihood assistance and in January, 200 households (308 individuals) received assistance. Up to 1,639 families (8,672 individuals) have received such livelihoods support as well as 1,031 families (6,356 individuals) who have received cash for shelter assistance since 2025.

Despite recent security developments in northeast Syria, UNHCR successfully provided small start-up cash grants of USD1,500 each to over 50 returnees in Ar-Raqqa governorate, enabling them to restart their livelihoods. The grants will support a range of professions including electronics repair, car maintenance, shoe repair, greenhouse activities, construction and tailoring. The need for livelihoods support remains high for both IDP returnees and refugee returnees. The cash-based interventions are part of UNHCR's broader effort to provide targeted, timely, and flexible assistance that addresses immediate needs while promoting long-term resilience for vulnerable households.

The post-implementation monitoring of the small start-up business grants provided by UNHCR in 2025, which has so far reached 750 respondents, reveals that over 95% of the supported businesses currently generate income ranging between SYP 500,000 and 5 million. Respondents highlighted key benefits from the support, including the ability to meet basic household needs such as food, water, and heating (88%), having a more regular source of income (73%), and improved capacity to cover educational needs of children and relatives (55%). Additional benefits include enhanced food security (43%), the ability to meet health-related expenses such as medications and surgeries (29%), and better coverage of housing needs (18%). By the end of December, 1,439 families (8,364

individuals) had received the cash-for-livelihoods assistance, in addition to 671 households that had received in-kind business support including, among others, equipment and materials.

Syria is Home: During the reporting period, the platform received 6,600 visitors, the majority from Syria followed by Jordan, Lebanon, Türkiye and Germany.

On 27 January, a team from UNHCR Jordan visited Dar'a governorate in a mission aimed at exploring support for refugees from Jordan with sustainable return pathways. The mission met with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Dar'a, the Syrian Arab Company for the Manufacture of Agricultural Materials and Veterinary Medicines as well as private sector representatives. Discussions on the gaps in the labor force faced by the private sector in Dar'a and their initiative to provide tailored training to Syrians were held. The Jordan team elaborated on UNHCR's initiative with [Bayt.com](https://www.bayt.com) to facilitate recruitment, aiming to match skilled refugees in Jordan to jobs in Syria, and talked about the potential to better tailor large training initiatives in the agricultural sector in Jordan to support activities in Dar'a. UNHCR Jordan plans to coordinate with development partners to assist with the envisaged twinning of Irbid (Jordan) and Dar'a (Syria). The team visited interventions by UNHCR and other agencies, including protection, shelter rehabilitation, health and livelihoods support, noting the extent of shelter damage in Dar'a, the local market conditions, and available livelihood opportunities. They recognized that significant challenges remain, necessitating expanded resource mobilization and collaboration with NGOs and other UN agencies to address them.

Situation in northeast Syria and UNHCR response

As of 25 January, the IDP Task Force recorded the displacement of over 173,100 individuals from Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, and Ar-Raqqa governorates. Of these, 146,000 arrived in Al-Hassakeh governorate, with 100,000 hosted in Qamishli and 32,000 in Al-Malakiyeh. Women and children account for 91% of the total displaced population. The majority of IDPs are being accommodated by the host community, placing additional pressure on already limited local resources and services.

The number of new collective shelters across Al-Hassakeh Governorate has increased to 283, accommodating 7,602 households (36,766 individuals), the majority in Qamishli. About 300 families have arrived in Newroz camp, while 50 families have departed to stay with relatives in the host community.

UNHCR response

UNHCR's assistance and response focus on sustaining protection and life-saving support amid rapidly shifting security conditions. As of 27 January, UNHCR and partners had distributed CRI kits comprising winter clothing, mattresses, blankets, plastic sheets, kitchen sets, and solar lamps to 2,450 newly displaced families (approx. 11,000 individuals), mainly in collective centres in Qamishli and Al-Hassakeh.

Protection sector response: The Protection sub-national sector in northeast Syria reports that 22 partners have reached 13,550 IDPs with protection services in January. Services provided include psychosocial support, recreational activities, child protection, individual case management, counselling sessions for women and girls at risk of gender-based violence, tailored mental health support, and distribution of dignity kits.

Türkiye

Processing of voluntary returns continues in provinces and at seven border crossings: Cilvegözü / Bab al Hawa, Yayladağı / Kesenb, 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 453,000 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. 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

UNHCR Jordan continues assisting refugees with returns through counselling, information sharing, transportation and cash assistance. This includes nearly 4,400 refugees who received the cash assistance for voluntary return pilot launched in September 2025 and nearly 10,500 refugees who used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025, including around 60 passengers this week.

In addition, UNHCR also continued to support movements organized by IOM, by conducting in-depth voluntary repatriation interviews and counselling from the camps and referring eligible cases to IOM for arranging transportation. This week, IOM supported a movement for some 40 refugees from Azraq camp, whom UNHCR had interviewed and counselled in preparation for these movements. IOM covers the costs of the transportation for these movements and coordinates the departure.

In 2025, UNHCR reached over 55,000 refugees with assistance for voluntary return.³ Through various digital channels, over half a million received information relating to return. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR Operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

Lebanon

Since 8 December 2024, a total of 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, a total of 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](#))

On 28 January, UNHCR, IOM, and GSO organized the first voluntary return movement of 2026 (the 14th since the programme's launch) from Beirut, involving 40 individuals. The numbers are relatively low due to school calendars, weather conditions, safety and security concerns, luggage allowances, and risk of last-minute cancellation. UNHCR, IOM, and the Technical Inter-Ministerial Committee (TIMC) have finalized the schedule for the organized voluntary return movement for 2026, which will be shared in February. By the end of December 2025, a total of 54,673 Syrian individuals (11,832 cases) known to UNHCR underwent the facilitated VolRep programmes. 95% of those who were facilitated with VolRep self-organized their transport back to Syria, while 5% were provided organized transportation by IOM and UNHCR.

Iraq

In 2026, 89 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR have returned to Syria (adding to the 6,988 Syrian refugees who returned in 2025). Among them 85 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 4 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 third week of January 2026, 21 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point, this compared to 25 individuals the week before. Most registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Al-Hasakeh (13) and Aleppo (6). The situation North-East Syria has resulted in limited returns from Iraq to Syria as individuals fear the unstable security situation and escalations between Government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Registered refugees mentioned wanting to reunite with family and a lack of employment opportunities in Iraq as the main reasons behind return.

³ 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.

Egypt

As of 26 January 2026, over 114,285 Syrian refugees were registered in Egypt. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 10% 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 which is a prerequisite before leaving Egypt to return to Syria. Between 8 December 2024 and 26 January 2026, 13,240 closure requests involving around 29,583 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 #61, 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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