

Regional Flash Update #65

Syria situation

20 February 2026



Asaliya, 49, and her family returned to Syria after 13 years as refugees in Lebanon. She received a cash grant from UNHCR and attended a business training course at a UNHCR-supported community centre in Rural Damascus. With this support, she launched her own business that she is trying to grow into a sustainable source of income. ©UNHCR/Vivian Tou'meh

Key Highlights

- As of 19 February, UNHCR estimates that **1,464,684 individuals** have returned to Syria, mainly from neighbouring countries, since 8 December 2024.
- On 18 February, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier [visited UNHCR's registration centre in Amman](#) where he was briefed on the refugee situation in Jordan and refugee returns to Syria, recognizing Jordan's role as a major host country.
- On 12 February, [UNHCR Türkiye](#) and the [Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association \(MÜSİAD\)](#) signed a cooperation agreement in Istanbul. The partnership aims to enhance the economic resilience of refugees, facilitate their access to employment and labour market opportunities, and promote social cohesion.
- On 11 February, UNHCR convened the event "[Leveraging Business Dialogue for Inclusive Employment and Market Linkages](#)" in Istanbul, in partnership with the Syrian Businessmen Association (SURIAD) and the IFC–UNHCR Joint Initiative.

- A total of 11,033 refugee returnee households (40,262 individuals) in Syria have received return and reintegration grants since the beginning of 2026.
- In Syria, in addition to the 1,500 houses that will be repaired by UNHCR and its partners, UNHCR has broadened its assessment to include some 1,800 returnee households to be supported under the programme.
- UNHCR provided 303 individuals returning to Syria with transportation and logistical support to various destinations including Deir Ez Zor, Idlib, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Damascus.
- A total of 394 individuals have received cash support for the establishment or expansion of small enterprises this year in various governorates in Syria.

Country Updates

Syria

At Joussieh (Syria-Lebanon) border crossing point, UNHCR provided 60 families (303 individuals) with transportation and logistical support to various destinations including Deir Ez Zor, Idlib, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Damascus. Since 2025, over 33,000 returnees have been supported at the key border crossing points with Türkiye and Lebanon.

UNHCR received two organized return convoys from Jordan, consisting of 121 returnees, through Nassib border crossing point. UNHCR's partners present at the bus terminals ensured the returning families' onward transportation to destinations in Dar'a, Damascus, Rural Damascus and Homs governorates. UNHCR and partners continue monitoring families' post-return situation through home visits and referral of those in need to available services, including at the UNHCR-supported [community centres](#) in their areas of return.

The shelter programme has commenced across all governorates, addressing both emergency shelter needs and longer-term housing rehabilitation, while also advancing key infrastructure projects such as civil registry and cadastral facility repairs. The housing rehabilitation programme that will cover the repair of 1,500 houses across Syria has started, and UNHCR has broadened its assessment process to include an additional 1,800 returnee households who will be supported under the programme across all governorates.

The provision of cash assistance to Syrian refugee returnees continues, and so far in 2026, a total of 11,033 households (40,262 individuals) have been supported with return and reintegration grants. The programme facilitates the dignified reintegration of returning households by assisting them to meet essential needs upon return.

A total of 394 individuals have received cash support for the establishment or expansion of small enterprises this year in Aleppo, Dar'a, Sweida, Ar-Raqqa, Hama, Quneitra and Al-Hasakeh. The projects are expected to benefit 2,515 individuals, the majority IDP and refugee returnees.

Situation in northeast Syria and UNHCR response

Al Hol camp

Raed Al Saleh, Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management, visited Al Hol and expressed appreciation for UNHCR's support in managing the camp, while confirming that the camp would be closed soon.

Following announcements that the remaining residents of Al Hol camp would be relocated to Akburhan Camp, Ahktarin, Aleppo governorate, the Government started the relocation of Syrians on 17 February. About 247 households have been relocated so far.

Among the relocated families, UNHCR has observed a high presence of vulnerable groups, including many women, children, and female-headed households. Critical needs in the camp include water, food, health services and solid waste management. Schools in the camp are not yet functional.

UNHCR attended a meeting with the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL), Hind Kabawat, on 19 February, who welcomed UNHCR's role in leading and coordinating interventions in Akburhan Camp. To address some of the gaps, UNHCR has already provided non-food items including winterization kits and cooking utensils.

UNHCR supported the return of 191 Iraqi nationals from Al Hol camp to Iraq. UNHCR teams were on the ground to facilitate the process, from community sensitization and registration to accompanying the convoy to the border, where the returnees were received by the Iraqi authorities. UNHCR and partners also supported the return of several vulnerable Syrian families from Al Hol camp.

Türkiye

On 12 February, [UNHCR Türkiye](#) and the [Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association \(MÜSİAD\)](#) signed a cooperation agreement in Istanbul. The partnership aims to enhance the economic resilience of refugees, facilitate their access to employment and labour market opportunities, and promote social cohesion. The cooperation framework focuses on developing sustainable initiatives in the areas of employment, education and livelihoods, while strengthening engagement with the private sector in support of refugee inclusion. During the signature ceremony, MÜSİAD noted its interest in supporting employment opportunities for Syrians inside Syria as part of broader economic normalization efforts.

On 11 February, UNHCR convened the event "[Leveraging Business Dialogue for Inclusive Employment and Market Linkages](#)" in Istanbul, in partnership with the Syrian Businessmen Association (SURIAD) and the IFC–UNHCR Joint Initiative. The dialogue brought together private sector actors, business associations, international financial institutions, and humanitarian and development partners to advance discussions on inclusive employment and market integration. Participants highlighted the growing recognition of displacement as a development challenge, noting that labour market inclusion can strengthen refugee self-reliance while contributing to host country economic growth. Discussions also underscored the importance of addressing barriers related to regulatory frameworks, mobility, access to finance, and formalization, as well as improving awareness of existing support mechanisms. The exchange reaffirmed the value of structured engagement with the private sector to inform livelihoods programming in 2026 and strengthen partnerships across humanitarian, development, and financial stakeholders.

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 voluntary returns.

Since 8 December 2024, UNHCR has monitored the voluntary repatriation of approximately 463,000 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 as well as İstanbul Arnavutköy Temporary Accommodation Centre (TAC).

Most interviews were conducted at border gates and PDMM offices in key border and metropolitan provinces, which were also among the main places of residence for returnees prior to departure. A small number of individuals were interviewed in TACs and at airports.

The main reasons for return have remained unchanged over time, with political developments, improved security, and family reunification or taking care of family members continuing to be the most frequently cited factors. Other reasons include economic difficulties, nostalgia or homesickness, housing challenges, property-related issues, and employment needs.

The majority of returnees continued to head to provinces in northern Syria, with Aleppo, Idleb, Hama and Damascus among the most common destinations. Regarding accommodation, some returnees reported having no accommodation available in Syria, while others planned to stay with close family members or relatives. While many indicated that their houses were intact, others reported partial damage or destruction. A significant portion confirmed they held valid documentation proving property ownership.

Civil documentation continues to pose challenges for a minority of returnees, with some lacking any Syrian-issued papers. Among those who held documentation, national identity cards and family booklets were the most common. Documentation of family events in Türkiye varied, with births and deaths more consistently recorded than marriages and divorces.

The demographic profile reflects a balanced gender distribution, with children representing a significant share of the population.

Prior to depart from Türkiye, many returnees were unemployed, while others were engaged in skilled trades or craftsmanship. Upon return to Syria, a considerable number anticipated having no immediate income and reported plans to seek employment.

Jordan

On 18 February, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier [visited UNHCR's registration centre in Amman](#) where he was briefed on the refugee situation in Jordan and refugee returns to Syria, recognizing Jordan's role as a major host country.

From 8 to 14 February, nearly 1,200 refugees registered with UNHCR returned from Jordan to Syria, a 14 per cent decrease when compared to the previous reporting week when around 1,400 refugees returned. Overall, since 8 December 2024, over 184,000 refugees have returned from Jordan to Syria. More information about the number and profile of refugees returning from Jordan to Syria is available on [UNHCR return dashboard](#).

UNHCR Jordan assists refugees with returns through counselling, information sharing, transportation and cash assistance. This includes nearly 5,000 refugees who received the cash assistance for a voluntary return pilot launched in September 2025 and more than 10,500 refugees who used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025, including 23 passengers this week.

In addition, UNHCR also continued to support return trips 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 54 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.

UNHCR observed a number of refugees delaying their return because of new Syrian regulations at the border [governing the movement](#) of foreign plated commercial trucks, as some refugees hire trucks to transport their belongings to Syria. UNHCR has reached an agreement with the Syrian

General Authority for Borders and Customs that trucks returning as part of UNHCR-facilitated convoys will be exempt from these restrictions.

In 2025, UNHCR reached over 55,000 refugees with assistance for voluntary return.¹ 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 noted arriving in Lebanon. Of these, 63,200 are residing in the Bekaa and Baalbek-El 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, 552,413 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 January 2026, a total of 57,444 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 January 2026](#))

Iraq

In 2026, 177 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR have returned to Syria (adding to the 6,988 Syrian refugees who returned in 2025). Among them 132 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 45 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 second week of February 2026, 47 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point, this compared to 10 individuals the week before. The registered refugees returned to Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo. The situation North-East Syria continues to limit 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.

Egypt

As of 16 February 2026, over 109,722 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 10% of the total refugee population in the country.

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.

The surge in arrest incidents has driven more Syrian refugees to approach UNHCR to request the closure of their files, which is a prerequisite for returning to Syria. This trend accelerated in February, with 2,559 file closures recorded by mid-month, compared to 1,241 in January. February marks the highest monthly figure since mid-2025. Meanwhile, Syrian refugees have continued to receive USD 100 in blanket cash assistance. Those with specific vulnerabilities receive an additional USD 100 on top of the blanket assistance to help mitigate financial pressures amid a deteriorating protection environment. Between 8 December 2024 and 16 February 2026, 14,427 closure requests involving around 33,188 individuals were submitted, including on-the-spot closures. Among applicants who closed their files, the majority (62%) were men and boys. 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 #64, Syria Situation](#)
- [UNHCR HELP Jordan – Voluntary Return page](#)
- [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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