

# Regional Flash Update #66

## Syria situation

27 February 2026



*The Government of Syria recently inaugurated the Civil Registry Office in Ein El-Bayda, rural Latakia, following its rehabilitation and equipping by UNHCR. The facility is expected to serve approximately 100,000 individuals, improving access to civil documentation services. ©UNHCR/Emad Kabbas*

## Key Highlights

- As of 26 February, UNHCR estimates that **1,470,609 individuals** have returned to Syria from other countries since 8 December 2024. The main governorate of return remains Damascus followed by Aleppo, Idleb, Homs and Rural Damascus.
- Following the Government of Syria's relocation of families from Al Hol to Akburhan camp in Aleppo, UNHCR maintains a daily presence in Akburhan and continues to scale up its response. The Directorate of Social Affairs and Labour has requested UNHCR's support in conducting the population registration exercise in the camp.
- On 25 January, 70 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. The returnees were supported with transportation and legal assistance.

- UNHCR's monitoring of the situation of returnees across various governorates in Syria reveals needs for shelter, protection, cash assistance, food and legal aid, particularly for families that found their homes occupied.
- The Civil Registry Office in Ein El-Bayda, rural Latakia, Syria, was inaugurated following its rehabilitation and equipping by UNHCR. The facility is expected to serve about 100,000 individuals from returnee and host communities, improving access to civil documentation services and supporting reintegration efforts in the coastal area.
- On 22 February, UNHCR Syria handed over to the Ministry of Education a new vocational training centre in Murek, Hama Governorate, funded by the Government of Japan. The centre will provide learning opportunities to hundreds of women and girls. Murek is a town that has been receiving refugee returnees from as far as Europe, as well as people previously displaced within Syria.
- By the end of January 2026, a total of 57,444 Syrian individuals known to UNHCR in Lebanon had benefited from the facilitated return programmes, including voluntariness assessments, issuance of repatriation forms and provision of return cash grants.

## Country Updates

### Syria

On 25 January, 70 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 transportation and legal assistance as well as psychosocial support.

At Joussieh border crossing point, 35 families (187 individuals) received transportation and logistical support to destinations including Raqqa, Idlib, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Rural Damascus. Since 2025, over 33,000 returnees have been supported at the key border crossing points with Türkiye and Lebanon.

UNHCR continues monitoring the situation of returnees in a bid to understand their needs and provide the necessary support. In Aleppo, field visits to Afrin to monitor about 500 households earlier displaced to northeast Syria in January revealed the need for shelter, cash assistance, non-food items, food, and legal documentation support, particularly for families that found their homes occupied – a committee has subsequently been formed to address Housing, Land and Property (HLP) disputes. Home visits to returnees from Al Hol camp also revealed protection concerns, including the need for civil documentation, shelter support, livelihood opportunities, and psychosocial support, particularly among children who experience stress, fear of adult men (with whom they had minimal interaction in the camp), and difficulty adapting to enclosed living spaces after years in tented conditions. In Sweida, UNHCR and its partners followed up refugee returnees from Libya and Sudan, verifying their information and identifying needs. In Homs, similar needs were identified, with recent returnees to South Arman, Baba Amro, and Al Bayada found residing in tents, schools, or overcrowded and unsafe shelters due to extensive housing destruction. Significant civil documentation needs were identified, too. UNHCR is offering assistance through its existing programmes while making referrals to the Government and other agencies for further support.

In Deir ez-Zor, the UNHCR-supported legal clinic conducted six legal awareness sessions for 120 returnees, including 40 from Al-Hol camp. The clinic provided 48 individual legal counselling sessions, offering one-on-one support to people facing specific legal challenges.

The legal clinics in Hassakeh and Raqqa operate normally, and during the reporting period, UNHCR and its legal partner conducted 15 awareness sessions on civil documentation, marriage and child affiliation, and HLP. In addition, 49 individuals benefited from legal counseling.

On 22 February, the Deputy Minister of Interior for Civil Affairs, Colonel Ziad Fawaz Al-Aish, and the Governor of Lattakia, Muhammad Othman, inaugurated the Civil Registry Office in Ein El-Bayda, rural Lattakia, following its rehabilitation and equipping by UNHCR in partnership with Première Urgence Internationale. The upgraded facility is expected to serve approximately 100,000 individuals from returnee and host communities, improving access to civil documentation services and supporting reintegration efforts in the coastal area.

The provision of return and reintegration grants to vulnerable refugee returnee households continued. So far, assistance has reached 11,292 households (41,070 individuals), aimed at supporting returnees' safe and dignified reintegration by assisting them to meet essential needs upon return.

UNHCR has supported 418 households (2,672 individuals) with cash grants under the small business start-up support programme.

**Syria is Home:** During the reporting period, the platform received 1,400 visitors, the majority from Syria followed by Lebanon, Türkiye, the US and the UK. Since the launch of the website on 24 March 2025, it has received 109,000 visitors. The platform provides comprehensive information about the conditions in Syria and on key procedures, enabling Syrians to make informed decisions about the return home as well as get information on UNHCR's and other available services.

On 19 February, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, and the Inter-Agency PSEA Coordinator met to discuss ways of advancing a unified "One UN" approach to engagement with the Government of Syria on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). The discussion resulted in agreement on key principles, including harmonized messaging, coordinated planning and leveraging each agency's comparative advantage under a sector-aligned engagement model.

### **Akburhan camp, Akhtarín, Aleppo**

Following the Government's relocation of families from Al Hol to Akburhan camp in Aleppo, UNHCR continues to scale up its response and maintains a daily presence in the camp, carrying out regular monitoring and household outreach to identify protection concerns.

Most families arrived without belongings, and following a rapid needs assessment, UNHCR and its partner SARC distributed Core Relief Item kits and winter kits. Further distribution is planned.

In coordination with partners, work is ongoing to address existing gaps in water supply, sanitation, and distribution systems, while support for civil documentation and essential household needs remains a priority. Medical referrals are made to WHO.

In coordination with its partner the Stabilization Support Unit (SSU), UNHCR distributed 1,000 food baskets on 25 February and will maintain the daily provision of 1,000 hot meals in coordination with the Directorate of Social Affairs and Labour (DoSAL) and Camp Management. To strengthen water availability, SSU will increase trucking capacity from 150,000 to 200,000 litres per day.

DoSAL has formally requested UNHCR's support to conduct the population survey. The proposed one-day exercise will deploy 52 mixed-gender teams (104 staff) mobilized by partners, with DoSAL coordinating with the authorities to ensure security, while camp management will support community awareness.

UNHCR has finalized the rapid registration survey tool and trained partner staff who subsequently trained Outreach Volunteers and mobile teams. The training was aimed at building partner capacity, standardizing data-gathering practices, and ensuring that enumerators are fully prepared to begin data collection.

DoSAL has shared plans for the establishment of a formal complaints and feedback mechanism. UNHCR's planned interventions in the camp include minor shelter rehabilitation, provision of prefabricated structures to reinforce camp management capacity, comprehensive protection interventions, hygiene kit distribution, setting up of information desks, and the establishment of case management services once safeguarding standards and approvals are finalized.

Longer-term support under consideration includes livelihoods initiatives such as the rehabilitation of selected marketplaces/shops, establishment of a bakery and vocational workshop, and small business start-up grants for vulnerable families. Additional plans include induction training for camp management on registration and data protection, strengthening community-based complaints and feedback mechanisms, and training for security personnel on protection mainstreaming and accountability.

Some Shelter/NFI partners have initiated assessments in the camp, and all will report their interventions through the Emergency Tracking Tool to enhance coordination.

## **Türkiye**

The 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 over 470,000 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

From 15 to 21 February, over 1,000 refugees registered with UNHCR returned from Jordan to Syria, marking a 17 per cent decrease compared to the previous reporting week during which around 1,200 refugees returned. [UNHCR's analysis of 2025 returns](#) (also available in [a short version](#)) indicates that many refugees prefer to delay return during the cold season and the month of Ramadan. Overall, since 8 December 2024, over 185,000 refugees have returned from Jordan to Syria. More information about the number and profile of refugees returning from Jordan to Syria is available on the [UNHCR return dashboard](#).

UNHCR Jordan assists refugees who wish to return through counselling, information sharing, transportation and cash assistance. This includes nearly 5,000 refugees who received 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.

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. 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, an estimated 115,000 Syrians have been noted arriving in Lebanon. Of these, 63,200 reside 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, a total of 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 had 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](#))

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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.

## Iraq

In 2026, a total of 237 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR have returned to Syria (adding to the 6,975<sup>2</sup> Syrian refugees who returned in 2025). Among them, 175 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 62 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 February 2026, 60 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point, compared to 45 individuals the week before. The registered refugees returned to Al-Hassakeh and Aleppo. The situation in northeast Syria continues to limit returns from Iraq to Syria as individuals worry about the unstable security situation. Registered refugees mentioned the desire to reunite with family and a lack of employment opportunities in Iraq as the main reasons behind return.

## Egypt

As of 23 February 2026, over 108,547 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 10% of the total refugee population in the country.

Since the political transition in Syria, Syrians have approached UNHCR to request the closure of their asylum cases, which is a prerequisite before leaving Egypt to return to Syria. Between 8 December 2024 and 23 February 2026, 14,811 closure requests involving around 34,319 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.

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<sup>2</sup> Number updated after UNHCR Iraq data verification.

## Useful Links

- [Regional Flash Update #65, 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 Egypt](#)
- [UNHCR HELP Jordan – Voluntary Return page](#)
- [UNHCR HELP Lebanon – Voluntary Return page](#)
- [UNHCR HELP Türkiye – Voluntary Repatriation page](#)

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