

Regional Flash Update #70

Syria situation

27 March 2026



Families gather at Lebanon's Masnaa border crossing with Syria amid escalating hostilities that continue to drive large-scale population movements. ©UNHCR Lebanon

Key Highlights

- As of 26 March 2026, UNHCR estimates that 1,563,898 Syrians have returned from other countries since the political transition in the country in December 2024.
- Lebanon is facing massive, ongoing displacement, with over 1 million people self-registered as displaced and more than 134,900 sheltering in overcrowded collective sites due to intensified hostilities.
- Over 202,000 people crossed into Syria from Lebanon between 2 and 27 March, the majority Syrians, most intending to stay permanently. Humanitarian partners across official Lebanon–Syria border crossings continue to provide comprehensive, life-saving assistance.
- Voluntary returns from Türkiye to Syria continue at scale, with returnees citing political developments, improved security, and family reunification as the main drivers of return.
- Refugee returns from Jordan to Syria increased by 125% from the previous period, likely due to many people wishing to return home to spend Eid with their families.
- Heavy rains and flooding severely disrupted cross-border returns between Iraq and north-east Syria by partially damaging the Peshkhabour–Semalka bridge.
- UNHCR Egypt's latest monitoring shows that cash assistance significantly improves living conditions for vulnerable households; however, rising prices continue to drive widespread negative coping strategies.

Country Updates

Syria

UNHCR and humanitarian partners continued to provide essential assistance to new arrivals across all three border crossing points with Lebanon: Jdaidet Yabous (Rural Damascus), Joussieh (Homs) and Arida (Tartous). Between 2 and 27 March, 202,477 people crossed into Syria, including 27,343 Lebanese and 175,134 Syrians, with a significant proportion of Syrians expressing an intention to stay permanently. Most arrivals headed toward Rural Damascus, Damascus, Dar'a, and Aleppo Governorates.

At **Jdaidet Yabous** crossing point, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, Food Security, Agriculture and Livelihoods sector partners, and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) continue to provide water, date bars, dignity kits, legal support, medical care, and ready-to-eat food, alongside gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response services. A mobile medical clinic is operational 24/7, and service mapping for destination areas has been updated.

At **Arida** crossing point, some interviewed Syrian families mentioned they returned earlier than planned due to deteriorating conditions in Lebanon. Partners, including Al-Batoul and SARC, are providing transportation, psychosocial support, awareness messages on sexual exploitation and abuse, legal referrals, and planning broader needs assessments.

At **Joussieh** crossing point, most arriving families consisted of women and children, as many men remained in Lebanon for work or pending formal return processes. Humanitarian partners continue to distribute water, blankets, plastic sheets, and information materials, while WFP and UNICEF provide food, nutrition screening, vaccinations, hygiene kits, and child-focused materials. A mobile clinic run by the Independent Doctors' Association continues to operate at the border.

Response in Akburhan camp

Since mid-March, UNHCR and partners have expanded support in Akburhan camp, where household level registration led by UNHCR's partner Ihsan has been completed, covering 972 households (3,864 individuals). This will be followed by individual level registration and issuance of ID cards.

UNHCR and partners continue service monitoring, community engagement, and preparations for the new Complaints and Feedback Mechanism. Community feedback is being collected and shared with relevant actors to inform the response to evolving needs.

Essential services remain ongoing, including daily bread and hot meal distributions, strengthened solid waste removal, UNICEF water trucking, and on-site health services. On 25 March, UNHCR's partner the Stabilization Support Unit (SSU) completed eight waste collection rounds. Protection partners continue recreational and mental health and psychosocial support activities, including anxiety management sessions by the partner Shafak for adults and children's activities.

The Directorate of Social Affairs and Labour (DoSAL) allocated two caravans—one each to the Syrian Development Organization (SDO) and Shafak—for daily activities.

UNHCR continues addressing resident concerns on service quality, support for different nationalities, and family visits, and has facilitated health referrals for vulnerable cases.

Türkiye

The processing of voluntary returns continues in provinces and at six border crossings: Cilvegözü/Bab Al-Hawa, Yayladağı/Keseb, Öncüpınar/Al-Salama, Karkamış/Jarablus, and Akçakale/Tel Abyad and Çobanbey/Al-Rai, as Zeytindalı border crossing was closed on 18 March.

Since 8 December 2024, UNHCR has monitored the voluntary repatriation of over 479,000 Syrians. Currently, UNHCR monitors returns at 25 Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) offices in 22 provinces and at five border crossings in the south-east (with the closure of Zeytindalı border crossing). 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 Aleppo, Idlib, 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 most 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 departure 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 March, nearly 1,400 refugees registered with UNHCR returned from Jordan to Syria, representing a 125% increase from the previous reporting week when some 620 refugees returned. The increase is likely due to many people wishing to return home to celebrate Eid in Syria with their families and aligns with the average weekly return figures typically seen outside the Ramadan period. Overall, since 8 December 2024, nearly 187,600 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 wishing to return through counselling, information sharing, transportation and cash assistance. This includes over 5,000 refugees who received cash assistance for a voluntary return pilot launched in September 2025 and nearly 10,600 refugees who 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.

Lebanon

Displacement continues amid intensified hostilities and large-scale evacuation orders. Over 1 million individuals have self-registered as displaced on the government's online platform. As of 24 March, there are over 134,900 people currently sheltering in 660 collective sites nationwide, many of which are overcrowded and operating at or near full capacity. The humanitarian situation remains critical, with over 1,070 fatalities and nearly 3,000 injuries reported, including at least 83 refugee casualties (23 fatalities and 60 injuries), while ongoing airstrikes and access constraints continue to drive repeated displacement and heightened protection risks.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs and within the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP), UNHCR continues to scale its emergency response, while adapting its refugee protection programming to include appropriate support to displaced refugees. As of 25 March, UNHCR had assisted 73,757 affected individuals (16,867 households) across 442 collective shelters with 197,435 essential items. Essential items included blankets, mattresses, solar lamps, and other essential household items. Shelter partners are coordinating site-level interventions, including accessibility assessments for persons with disabilities and GBV safety audits across more than 100 sites, to improve living conditions and mitigate protection risks.

Displaced people, including displaced refugees, continue to reach out to UNHCR through helplines and other feedback channels to seek information on shelter, cash, and protection support. Since the start of the escalation, UNHCR has delivered Emergency Protection Cash Assistance to over 3,100 displaced refugees and provided case management, referrals, and psychosocial support, prioritizing highly vulnerable groups including children, persons with disabilities, and single caregivers. Of the 21 community development centres (CDC), five are closed due to the insecurity in their areas. The open CDCs continue to receive and reach out to displaced refugees and Lebanese.

At the inter-agency level, partners continue to deliver services at scale across collective sites and host communities. Since the start of the escalation, over 25,500 displaced individuals have received protection services, including psychosocial support, awareness sessions, and case management, while over 5,000 women and girls have received dignity kits. Child protection actors have reached over 10,200 children and caregivers across 187 locations. Across 660 mapped collective sites, 79% now have at least one protection, child protection or GBV partner present. In addition, with UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM, UNHCR is supporting more than 600 Ministry of Social Affairs field workers involved in the management of displaced collective shelters.

Three official border crossings are currently open: Arida (pedestrians only), Al-Qaa and Masnaa.

Iraq

Heavy rains and flooding have partially damaged the bridge connecting the Peshkhabour and Semalka border crossings between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and north-east Syria, disrupting cross-border movement. Border authorities reported that returns will continue to be processed at Peshkhabour; however, individuals will have to be transported to the Al-Walid border crossing, 20 km away, for both entry into and return to Syria. Repairs to the bridge are expected to take up to two months. Individuals traveling to Peshkhabour have expressed concerns regarding the Al-Walid route, citing its long distance and poor road conditions. They reported that the damaged roads make the journey uncomfortable and physically demanding, particularly for vulnerable individuals such as older people and those with health conditions.

In 2026, 450 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria (adding to the 6,975 Syrian refugees who returned in 2025). Among them, 348 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 102 registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned to Syria via Erbil

Airport, with border authorities sharing a copy of their registration certificate with UNHCR. Due to the closure of Erbil Airport, no departures via air have happened since 28 February.

In the third week of March, 49 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point, compared to 41 individuals the week before. Public holidays for Eid and Newroz and the resulting closure of the border crossing are behind the low numbers. The registered refugees returned to Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo Governorates. The situation in the Middle East, and its impact on instability on Iraq, is thought to be behind the slight increase of returns.

Egypt

As of 24 March, over 104,900 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 9.5% of the total registered refugee population in the country.

Since the political transition in Syria, Syrians have approached UNHCR to request the closure of their asylum cases, a prerequisite before leaving Egypt to return to Syria. Between 8 December 2024 and 24 March 2026, 15,854 closure requests involving around 37,784 individuals have been submitted, including on-the-spot closures. Among applicants who closed their files, the majority (60%) were men and boys. In terms of origin, 41% came from Damascus, 27% from Rural Damascus, 12% from Homs, 8% from Aleppo, and 12% from other Syrian governorates.

UNHCR's year-end Post-Distribution Monitoring Report for 2025, issued last week, assesses the impact of multi-purpose cash assistance provided to some 24,600 refugee and asylum-seeker households. The findings show that while only 4% of respondents reported being able to cover all or most priority needs, 62% reported meeting at least half. All respondents indicated that the cash assistance improved their living conditions and reduced stress, with spending primarily directed toward food (88%) and rent (84%), followed by healthcare and education. However, 80% reported significant recent price increases across essential goods. Negative coping strategies remained widespread – 82% reduced household expenditure; 19% withdrew a child from school, 11% skipped rent or debt payments, and 10% borrowed money or took new loans. Despite these challenges, satisfaction with the programme remained high: 98% felt safe receiving and using the assistance, and nearly all beneficiaries reported being well-informed about the programme and aware of available feedback and complaint channels.

Useful Links

- [Regional Flash Update #69, 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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