

Regional Flash Update #29

Syria situation crisis

30 May 2025



Iman Al Jasem came at a distribution point organized by UNHCR and its partner SARC and received core relief items including mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets and other essentials. Iman was displaced from Deir-ez-Zor Governorate and till now she is staying in Homs, as, like many other Syrians, she found her house completely destroyed. ©UNHCR Syria/ Vivian Toumeh

Key Highlights

- As of 29 May 2025, UNHCR estimates that **513,190 Syrians** have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. This brings up the total of **874,030 Syrian individuals** that have returned to Syria since the beginning of 2024.
- As of 29 May, **1,265,320 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their homes in Syria** since early December 2024, according to the latest data of the IDP Task Force. This week, the sixth, seventh and eighth voluntary return movements that took place on 22, 26 and 29 May, bringing the total up to 282 families (1,424 individuals) leaving Areesha camp through UNHCR-facilitated transportation to go back to their areas of origin in Deir-Ez-Zor.
- On 28 May, the Council of the EU **announced** the lifting of all economic restrictive measures on Syria, with the exception of those based on security grounds.
- Between 22 and 27 May, UNHCR provided vital support to both returnees and IDPs inside Syria, distributing Core Relief Item (CRI) kits to **4,203 households (20,455 individuals)**.

Country updates

Syria

As of 29 May 2025, UNHCR estimates that **some 513,190 Syrians** have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. This brings up the total of **874,030 Syrians** that have returned since the beginning of 2024. This figure is calculated based on a triangulation of data from Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and beyond.

In terms of internal displacement, as of 29 May, **1,265,320 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their homes** since early December 2024, according to the latest data of the IDP Task Force.

This week, **approximately 300 families (800 individuals) were supported through UNHCR's Facilitated Voluntary Return and Transport Assistance programme**. UNHCR continued to provide transportation for returnee families at key border crossing points—including Bab Al-Hawa, Bab Al-Salama, Joussieh, and Nassib—as well as for those arriving at Homs bus station who required assistance to reach their final destinations.

As of today, including the sixth, seventh and eight voluntary return movements that took place on 22, 26 and 29 May, a total of **318 families (1,661 individuals)** have departed Areesha Camp through either UNHCR-facilitated or self-organized returns. Of these, **282 families (1,424 individuals)** were supported through UNHCR-facilitated transportation to go back to their areas of origin in Deir-Ez-Zor.

The notable increase in refugee and IDP returns since 8 December suggests that a growing number of displaced Syrians perceive the security situation as improving, and more returns are expected in the coming period. However, persistent hostilities in certain regions – such as Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) operations in Sweida, Quneitra, and Dar'a Governorates, along with incidents in Latakia and Tartous – underscore that **risks and instability still exist in some parts of the country at certain moments**.

Meanwhile, on 28 May, **the Council of the European Union officially lifted all economic sanctions on Syria**, except those related to security concerns. This move formalizes the political decision made on 20 May and is intended to support the Syrian people “in rebuilding a new, inclusive, pluralistic and peaceful Syria.” Additionally, **24 entities have been removed from the EU sanctions list**. These include banks—such as the Central Bank of Syria—and companies in vital sectors like oil, cotton, telecommunications, as well as media and television outlets, all considered important for Syria's economic recovery.

In the past two weeks, as part of **UNHCR's protection monitoring efforts**, UNHCR has reached out to 4,194 households, bringing the total to **23,498 households** who have successfully completed the questionnaires. Additionally, 235 Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted adding up to a total of 1,906 KII which have taken place nationwide so far. In parallel, the [Syria is Home](#) platform continued to record visitors and to receive positive feedback, with the highest traffic being from Lebanon, followed by Türkiye, Jordan, Egypt and Syria.

Based on the identified needs, between 22 and 27 May, UNHCR provided vital support to both returnees and IDPs, distributing Core Relief Item (CRI) kits to **4,203 households (20,455 individuals)**. Notably, 3,299 households – comprising 17,494 returnees – received assistance as they began rebuilding their lives in their areas of origin. In parallel, UNHCR continued its critical work in IDP camps, replacing damaged relief items for **904 households (2,961 individuals)**. These efforts reflect UNHCR's dual commitment to facilitating safe, dignified returns while also addressing the ongoing needs of displaced families still residing in camps.

Türkiye

On May 24, U.S. envoy Thomas Barrack **met** Syrian interim President Al-Sharaa in Istanbul to advance ties after U.S. sanctions were lifted, aiming to boost aid and investment. The same day, Turkish President Erdoğan **met** Al-Sharaa, supporting Syria's unity and stronger bilateral cooperation, while condemning Israeli occupation.

During the week, voluntary return processing continued across provinces and five main border crossings: Cilvegözü / Bab al-Hawa, Yayladağı / Kessab, Öncüpınar / Bab al-Salama, Karkamış Jarablus, and Akçakale / Tel Abyad. As of 29 May, Çobanbey / Al Rai, Zeytindalı / Jinderes, and Yayladağı / Kessab are also open for go-and-see visit processing. Since December 8, **over 200,000 returns have been recorded**, with UNHCR interviewing most returnees to confirm the voluntary nature of their decisions. UNHCR currently monitors returns at 20 Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) offices across 18 provinces, four southeastern border crossings, and Istanbul Airport. It is also prepared to monitor at Sabiha Gökçen and Ankara Esenboğa airports once flights resume.

Returnees include a **wide range of profiles**, such as women returning alone and female-headed households. Most are working-age adults, followed by children, adolescents, and older adults, with men slightly outnumbering women. Key motivations include political changes, improved security, family reunification, homesickness, and economic hardship in Türkiye. Nearly half of returnees travel alone, often due to the absence of dependents in Türkiye or to assess conditions before bringing family.

Challenges to returning home include displaced family members, damaged or confiscated property, instability, poor infrastructure, and security concerns. Some returnees have property or access to relatives' homes, with many able to present deeds. However, many lack Syrian civil documentation. Upon return, most expect to seek work or depend on family or community support, with few planning to be self-employed or use savings. **Access to services remains inconsistent** – some report availability, others face gaps or complete lack of access – highlighting the need for expanded infrastructure and support for reintegration.

Lebanon

The hostilities in the Tartous, Lattakia, Homs and Hama Governorates of Syria in early March continue to displace people into the North and Akkar Governorates of North Lebanon. Newly arrived refugees are now located predominantly in Akkar, **reaching 39,762 people** as of 26 May. Joint distributions by UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP have begun in Akkar, targeting 30 villages in total. So far, distributions have been completed in Rihaniye and Hissa. Newly arrived families received Dignity Kits, Hygiene Kits, Baby Kits, and Ready-to-Eat Meals.

As of 19 May, the Baalbek Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Bekaa is reporting **78,625 new arrivals** (an increase of 500 from 16 May), including approximately 21,644 arrivals in Baalbek Governorate, North Bekaa, residing in 165 informal collective shelters (CS), and approximately 56,981 residing in the community. No new numbers have been reported since last week.

Jordan

On 25 May, the Ministry of Interior **announced** that Jordanian citizens are allowed to travel via public transportation through the Jaber border crossing to the Syrian Arab Republic without the need for

prior approval, effective immediately. Jordanian private vehicles still need permission to enter Syria.

As of 24 May, **more than 70,000 refugees registered with UNHCR** have returned from Jordan to Syria since 8 December 2024. The average daily number of refugee returnees remained stable during the reporting period, with an average of 430 refugees crossing the border each day, similar to the previous week. This past week over 1,000 refugees returned to Syria (Dar'a and Homs Governorates) from the Emirati-Jordanian camp.

On 28 and 29 May, **UNHCR facilitated transportation for nearly 170 refugees from Amman and Azraq camp**. UNHCR observed increased demand for transportation assistance this week, particularly from Amman. Similar to previous weeks, the majority of refugees accessing UNHCR transportation assistance intended to return to Homs.

Overall, since the start of the transportation process on 20 January 2025, **UNHCR has supported nearly 2,500 refugees to return to Syria**. Before departure, in-person interviews are conducted to ensure that returns are voluntary and well-informed, with counselling and information provided on available services inside Syria. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR operation in Syria to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

Demographics of returnees remained largely unchanged from previous weeks, with women and girls representing around 46 per cent of the total refugee returnees. Children accounted for around 41 per cent, and men of military age (18-40 years old) made up around 22 per cent of overall returns. The majority of refugees continue to return from host communities, primarily from Amman and Irbid. More details about the numbers and profile of returnees are available on [UNHCR Jordan's returns dashboard](#).

Iraq

Between 8 December and 25 May 2025, **over 16,000 Syrians** have crossed the border from Iraq to Syria, including some **1,800 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR**. From among the registered refugees and asylum-seekers, over 1,400 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. In addition, 110 registered refugees and asylum-seekers returned via Erbil airport while another 220 returned through Al-Qaim border crossing point.

Egypt

As of 26 May 2025, **approximately 134,500 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt**, around 900 fewer than the previous week. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 13.8% of the total refugee population in the country.

Since the regime change in Syria, there has been a significant increase in Syrians approaching UNHCR in Cairo and Alexandria to request the closure of their asylum cases. As of 26 May 2025, **almost 9,947 closure requests involving over 21,618 individuals** were submitted since 8 December 2024, averaging 94 requests per day – compared to just seven per day in November 2024. In addition, 14,092 individuals have been closed as spontaneous departures, reflecting a growing perception among many Syrians that return may now be viable.

Useful links

- [Regional Flash Update #28, Syria Situation Crisis](#)
- [UNHCR Operational Framework for Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs](#)
- [January 2025 Refugee Perceptions and Intentions Survey \(RPIS\)](#)
- [UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic \(16 December\)](#)
- [Syria Situation Data Portal](#)
- [UNHCR Help Site](#)

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