UNHCR - Supported Voluntary Repatriation of Syrian refugees - Lebanon | January 2026

Refugee expresses interest in the return programme and receives counselling

Repatriation interview and assessment conducted, including referral to partners, if needed

Refugee approaches Return Space* to confirm voluntariness and receive Repatriation Form. Case is closed and data is shared with UNHCR Syria

Refugee redeems return cash grant through OMT

Refugee self-organizes his/her return or IOM provides transportation to Syria

HIGHLIGHTS

552,413
Syrians inactivated since January 2025 from UNHCR's records in Lebanon due to confirmed or presumed return

494,969
Syrians spontaneously returned to Syria (confirmed or presumed)

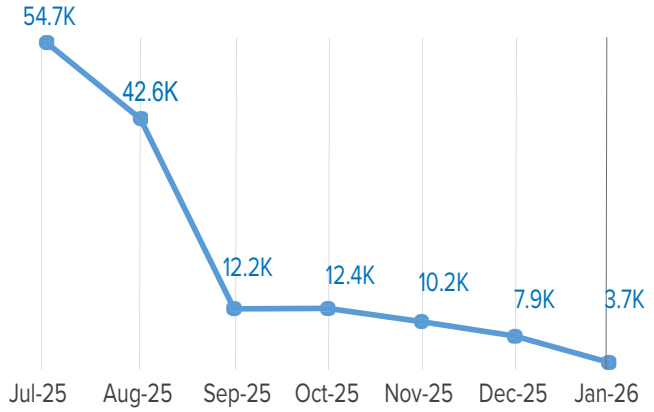
57,444
Syrians directly supported by UNHCR to voluntarily repatriate

Since January 2025, 552,413 Syrians known to UNHCR have been inactivated from UNHCR's database due to confirmed or presumed returns to Syria. Among these, 90% spontaneously returned to Syria (494,969 individuals) – including 13% who had returned under duress in late 2024 and remained in Syria, and 20% who were identified by the General Security Office (GSO) when passing through official border crossing points without Repatriation Forms, while benefiting from administrative waivers for return introduced by the GSO. 10% of the inactivated households were facilitated to return by UNHCR under its voluntary return programmes - 95% opted to self-organize their return, while 5% returned through the UNHCR and IOM return movement.

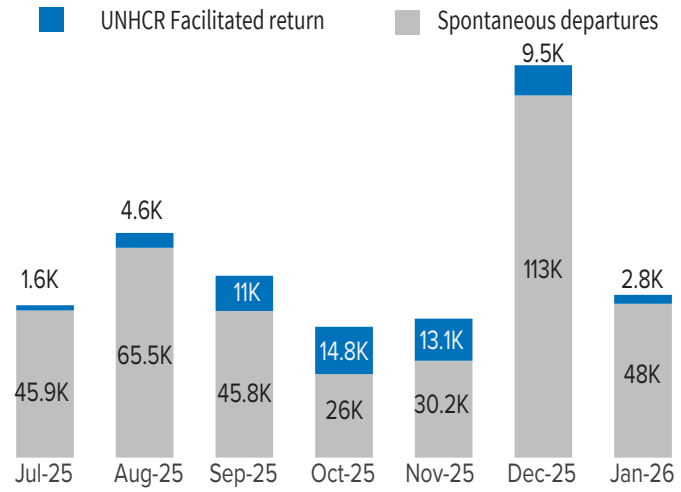
Since its launch on 1 July 2025, a total of 143,800 individuals have expressed interest in UNHCR's facilitated return progrramme. Among these, 60% registered interest during July and August 2025. In January 2026, interest declined to 3,800 new expressions of interest, accounting for 2% of all expressions of interest recorded since the programme's launch. This reduction reflects seasonal and contextual factors, including winter weather conditions affecting mobility. As of the end of January 2026, only 100 individuals who had expressed interest in UNHCR-facilitated return remain in the pipeline and are currently being processed for return.

While UNHCR's presence verification exercise was completed in December 2025, inactivation due to spontaneous departure continued in January 2026, with over 48,000 individuals inactivated due to presumed return as a result of loss of contact due to prolonged absence. Inactivation due to spontaneous departures identified during the presence verification exercise will be complete by the end of February 2026.

Expressed Interest in Facilitated Return Programme



Facilitated Return vs Spontaneous Departure**



*Interview areas in UNHCRs Case Processing Center or one of the UNHCR-supported Community Development Centers in Lebanon

**An additional 120,000 individuals were also inactivated prior to 1 July 2025 before the launch of the facilitated voluntary return programme.

For more information on the UNHCR-supported voluntary programme, please visit UNHCRHelp – Voluntary Return page

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By the end of January 2026, a total of 57,444 Syrian individuals (12,535 households) known to UNHCR had benefited from the facilitated return programme, including voluntariness assessments, issuance of Repatriation Forms, and provision of a USD 100 return cash grant per returning individual. Among those assisted, 34% resided in Bekaa, Baalbek and Hermel, 31% in North and Akkar, 25% in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, and 8% in South and Nabatiyeh. Among those assessed for facilitated return, 84% returned to their areas of origin in Syria - 34% to Homs, 19% to Idleb, 13% to Damascus and Rural Damascus, 14% to Aleppo, 11% to Hama, and the remaining 9% to other locations. 42% self-organized their return through Arida border crossing point, 33% through Qaa, and 25% through Masnaa. Between July 2025 and January 2026, UNHCR and IOM facilitated 14 organized voluntary return movements of 2,920 Syrian through Arida and Masnaa border crossing points - 42% returned to Homs, 37% to Idlib, 8% to Hama, 8% to Damascus and Rural Damascus, and 5% to Aleppo. The first organized return movement in 2026 took place on 28 January involving 40 refugees departing from a staging point in Beirut, returning to Syria through the Masnaa boder crossing point.

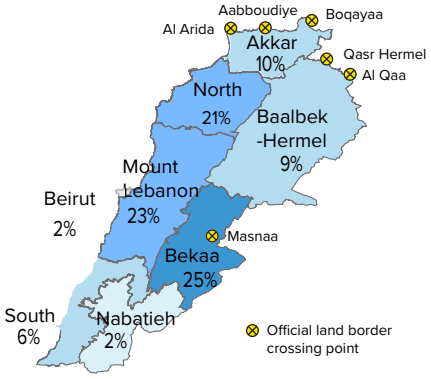
Furthermore, 19% of those assisted with facilitated return were women and 58% were children – 77% of returnees being women and children. 25% have a protection need, notably 11% serious medical condition and 4% are living with disabilities. Importantly, 85% returned in complete families. Among the 15% remaining behind, 76% are adult men staying for livelihood purposes. While 96% of the adults who returned have Syrian identification documents, 33% of returning children born in Lebanon only had birth certificates issued by a Mukhtar, 30% had birth certificates issued by the nofous* and 25% were in possession of an updated Syrian family booklet or civil extract. Of the adults who returned, 65% cited factors in Syria as their primary motivator for return, including improved security and access to education and healthcare in Syria. The remaining 35% cited conditions in Lebanon as the primary motivator for return, including poor living conditions and lack of employment.

Returns: Demographic

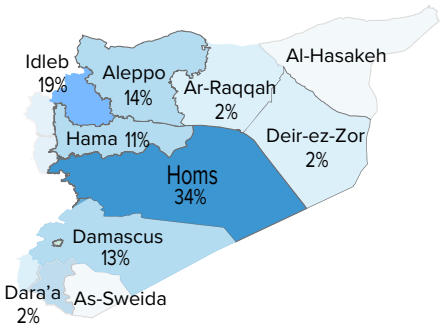
UNHCR - Facilitated Return

Complete families	85%
Women	19%
Children	58%
Specific needs	25%

Area of residence in Lebanon



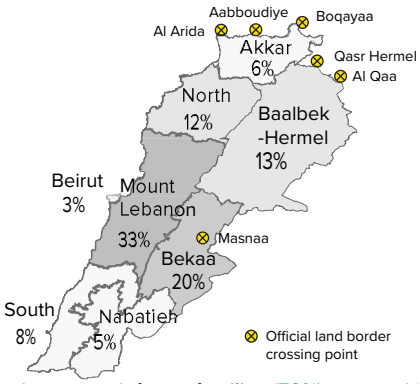
Intended area of return in Syria



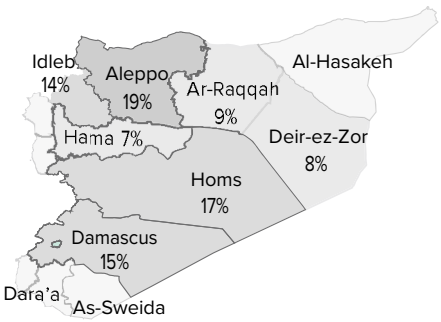
Spontaneous Departure

Complete families	78%
Women	28%
Children	43%
Specific needs	23%

Area of residence in Lebanon



Presumed area of return in Syria



Among the 494,969 Syrian individuals who spontaneously returned, fewer families (78%) returned in complete families compared to the households who returned under the facilitated return programme. Prior to spontaneous return, 36% resided in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, 33% in Bekaa, Baalbek and Hermel, 18% in North and Akkar, and 13% in South and Nabatiyeh. Those who returned spontaneously are presumed to have returned to their areas of origin - 19% to Aleppo, 17% to Homs, 15% to Damascus and Rural Damascus and 14% to Idleb. Furthermore, 28% of those who returned spontaneously are women and 43% are children – 71% of spontaneous returnees being women and children. 28% of individuals who returned spontaneously have identified specific protection needs.

*As part of the five-step birth registration process in Lebanon, the mukhtar at the local/community level records the birth and prepares an initial birth certificate based on the hospital notification, which is not yet legally valid. The certificate only becomes official once it is registered with the nofous (Personal Status Department), to be followed by certification by the Foreigners Registry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support provided by donors who contributed to the Lebanon operation and specifically, the facilitated return programme.

For more information on the UNHCR-supported voluntary programme, please visit UNHCRHelp – Voluntary Return page