

Regional Flash Update #67

Syria situation

6 March 2026



After nearly four years in Baalbek, Lebanon, Omar and his family returned to Syria when a nearby building collapsed amid nights of shelling. Now back in their village in rural Dar'a, Omar hopes for stability and a peaceful future for his three children, who have known nothing but war. ©UNHCR/Vivian Toumeh

Key Highlights

- As of 5 March, UNHCR estimates that **1,488,667 individuals** have returned to Syria from other countries since 8 December 2024. The main governorate of return remains Damascus followed by Aleppo, Idlib, Homs and Rural Damascus.
- In Syria, since the beginning of the year, 11,341 households (41,265 individuals) have benefited from return and reintegration cash grants. Additionally, 419 returnee households (2,678 individuals) have received cash grants to establish or restart small businesses.
- Following the military escalation in the region, Syria witnessed a rise in arrivals from Lebanon. UNHCR teams in Syria remain stationed at official border crossing points with Lebanon.
- In Jordan, UNHCR supported a movement organized by IOM for 27 refugees from Azraq camp, whom UNHCR had interviewed and counselled in preparation for the movement.
- In Syria, UNHCR also maintains a daily presence in the Akburhan camp (Aleppo Governorate) hosting families relocated from Al-Hol camp in north-east Syria, providing support for access to basic services.

Country Updates

Syria

On 28 February, the United States and Israel launched major joint strikes on Iran, triggering Iranian retaliation and marking a significant escalation in regional hostilities. Within one day, the confrontation expanded, drawing several countries in the region into the rapidly evolving conflict including Lebanon.

Since 2 March, Syria has witnessed a sharp rise in arrivals from Lebanon, particularly through the border crossing points of Jdaidet Yabous border (Rural Damascus) and Jousseieh (Homs Governorate). More than 65,000 individuals, mainly Syrians but also Lebanese crossed both points over the past five days.

UNHCR teams in Syria remain present every day at both official operational border points with Lebanon, working closely with border authorities and partners to monitor developments, verify arrivals, and coordinate the operational response. Authorities continued to facilitate crossings even throughout the night. To ease congestion, an additional immigration hall has been opened by the government, and medical readiness strengthened at the crossing points.

Arriving families included those choosing to return permanently to Syria as well as others seeking temporary stay until conditions in Lebanon improve. Most arrivals came from southern Lebanon and southern Beirut. Among Syrians intending to return permanently, many reported that their houses in Syria had been destroyed and planned to stay with relatives. Others noted that damage to their homes in Lebanon had forced their displacement back to Syria.

Upon arrival, UNHCR provided vulnerable families with water, winterization kits, and transportation support. Syrian returnees were assisted through a dedicated processing window managed by border authorities and received information on where to access services across the country, including UNHCR-supported community centres and shelter and livelihoods programmes. The priority needs reported by returnees included housing, education, and employment opportunities.

As part of its regular response, UNHCR continued providing return and reintegration cash grants to returnees across Syria, with each family receiving \$600. Since the beginning of the year, 11,341 households (41,265 individuals) have benefited from this support, helping them meet essential needs and reintegrate safely and with dignity. Additionally, 419 returnee households (2,678 individuals) have received cash grants to establish or restart small businesses.

The [Syria is Home](#) platform recorded 1,400 visitors during the past month, mainly from Syria, followed by Lebanon, Germany, Türkiye, and the United States. Since its launch in March 2025, the platform has received 110,000 visitors who were provided with comprehensive information on conditions in Syria and key return-related procedures. This helps Syrians make informed decisions about returning home and access available services, including those provided by UNHCR.

Akburhan camp, Akhtarín (Aleppo Governorate)

The Syrian Government has initiated security assessments to identify families relocated from Al-Hol camp (Al-Hasakeh Governorate) to Akburhan camp (Aleppo Governorate) who qualify for departure. To date, 15 families have been authorized to leave, with priority given to medical cases, older persons, individuals with disabilities, and families meeting established eligibility criteria.

UNHCR continues to scale up its presence in the camp, conducting regular protection monitoring and household outreach to identify emerging concerns. A recent rapid registration exercise conducted by UNHCR and partners provided an updated overview of the camp's population and

vulnerabilities. The camp currently hosts 731 families (2,998 individuals), including 1,336 males and 1,662 females. Families reside in 1,419 shelter units out of 3,004, representing 47% of available units.

Among Syrian households, information on areas of origin indicates that 67% come from Aleppo, 23% from Deir-ez-Zor, 3% from Homs, and 2% from Ar-Raqqa. Regarding intentions to return, 67% of families expressed willingness to go back to their areas or countries of origin, while 33% indicated they do not intend to return due to ongoing concerns over safety, stability, and access to essential services.

The registration exercise also identified a range of vulnerabilities across the population, including pregnant and lactating women, infants, older persons, persons with disabilities, individuals with chronic illnesses, orphaned children, and unaccompanied children.

This exercise covered approximately 90% of the camp's population. The residents will receive registration cards as a verification tool, which will be collected upon departure to ensure accurate tracking of families leaving the camp. A comprehensive needs assessment will be conducted following the completion of registration.

To support immediate needs, UNHCR's partner Stabilization Support Unit (SSU) remained active on-site, ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of essential services, including water trucking and bread distribution. UNHCR also dispatched 2,200 hygiene kits to the camp, with distributions starting 3 March through UNHCR's partner the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). Meanwhile, UNHCR partner Première Urgence Internationale (PUI) is preparing to undertake maintenance work within residential units, including repairs related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and electrical systems to enhance privacy, safety, and overall protection conditions.

Türkiye

The processing of voluntary returns continues in provinces and at seven border crossings: Cilvegözü/ Bab Al-Hawa, Yayladağı/Keseb, Öncüpınar/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 472,000 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 mainly to governorates in northern Syria, with Aleppo, Idlib, Hama and Damascus among the most common destinations. 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 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 22 to 28 February, over 350 refugees registered with UNHCR returned from Jordan to Syria, representing a significant decrease of some 65% when compared to the previous reporting week when 1,000 refugees returned. UNHCR has observed lower rates of returns since the start of the month of Ramadan. UNHCR is closely monitoring the recent escalations in the region and taking all necessary measures to ensure that refugees receive sufficient information to make informed decisions about return.

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 [UNHCR return dashboard](#).

UNHCR Jordan assists refugees with returns 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 more than 10,500 refugees who used UNHCR-provided buses to return to Syria since January 2025. The latest post-distribution monitoring assessment, conducted between 30 September 2025 and 25 February 2026 among recipients of cash assistance for return, revealed that they primarily spend it on food and water, clothing, transportation expenses, and debt repayment.

In addition, UNHCR continues to support movements 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 27 refugees from Azraq camp, whom UNHCR had interviewed and counselled in preparation for this movement. IOM covers the costs of the transportation for these movements and coordinates the departure.

In 2025, UNHCR reached over 55,000 refugees with assistance for voluntary return¹. Through various digital channels, over half a million received information relating to return. The return process is closely coordinated with the UNHCR Syria Operation to support refugees upon arrival at their final destination.

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.

Lebanon

Since day one of the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, UNHCR has been on the ground to deliver emergency humanitarian aid amidst the rapidly evolving crisis, while maintaining its regular programmes, which are still critically needed. More than 300 staff are on the ground, working with 13 implementing partners, to provide life-saving protection services and essential items to displaced communities, in close coordination with the Government of Lebanon and its regional and local authorities and communities. UNHCR also maintains its leadership roles in coordinating the protection and the shelter and non-food items sectors and co-leads the Cash Working Group to harmonize assistance.

The Government has activated phase II of its emergency shelter response, expanding shelters from 325 to 700. As of 6 March, 480 shelters are operational and hosting 101,021 people. Many of the shelters are public buildings that require WASH services as well as light rehabilitation before becoming habitable. Non-Lebanese, including refugees, are facing particular challenges accessing safe shelters, despite principled agreement on an inclusive response. Efforts are ongoing to address access challenges at relevant levels. UNHCR and partners have during the first four days already distributed over 64,800 core relief items to 128 shelters, assisting over 19,200 displaced persons, and distributions continued at full capacity on 6 March.

Protection monitoring and border monitoring have been reinforced. UNHCR mobilized its outreach volunteers, community networks, and national call centre to provide updated information and referrals. UNHCR's WhatsApp channels have been transmitting vital information. There are 13 operational community development centres (CDC), while the remaining eight CDCs, located in Baalbek in the South, and Beirut's Southern Suburbs, are closed due to the security situation. Emergency protection cash assistance is being provided to the most vulnerable refugees who have been displaced.

At the border with Syria, Masnaa and Al-Qaa remain the only official crossing points open. According to the Governments of Lebanon and Syria, departures have increased, with more than 65,000 Syrians crossing between 2 and 6 March. These figures represent a combination of Syrians undertaking previously planned returns and individuals leaving Lebanon due to the recent escalation of hostilities. Unofficial crossings have also been reported, alongside concerns of smuggler exploitation and possible returns under duress.

The situation is expected to deteriorate further following the latest Israeli evacuation notices, and displacement is likely to continue rising. Humanitarian needs are increasing rapidly and will surpass the capacity to respond without additional support.

Iraq

In 2026, 271 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned to Syria (adding to the 6,975 Syrian refugees who returned in 2025). Among them, 200 returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point and were processed by UNHCR and local authorities at the Derabon return centre in Zakho Administration. Another 71 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 fourth week of February 2026, 24 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR returned through Peshkhabour border crossing point, compared to 43 individuals the week before. The registered refugees returned to Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo. The situation in 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 2 March 2026, over 107,100 Syrian refugees are registered in Egypt. Syrian refugees now account for approximately 10% of the total registered refugee population in the country.

Since the fall of the former Government of 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 23 February 2026, 14,811 closure requests involving around 34,319 individuals have been 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 #66, 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](#)

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to its operations in the Middle East in 2025, including:

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