

UNHCR Syria Flash Update #3

Response to Displacement from Lebanon to Syria

Reporting period: 24-28 September 2024

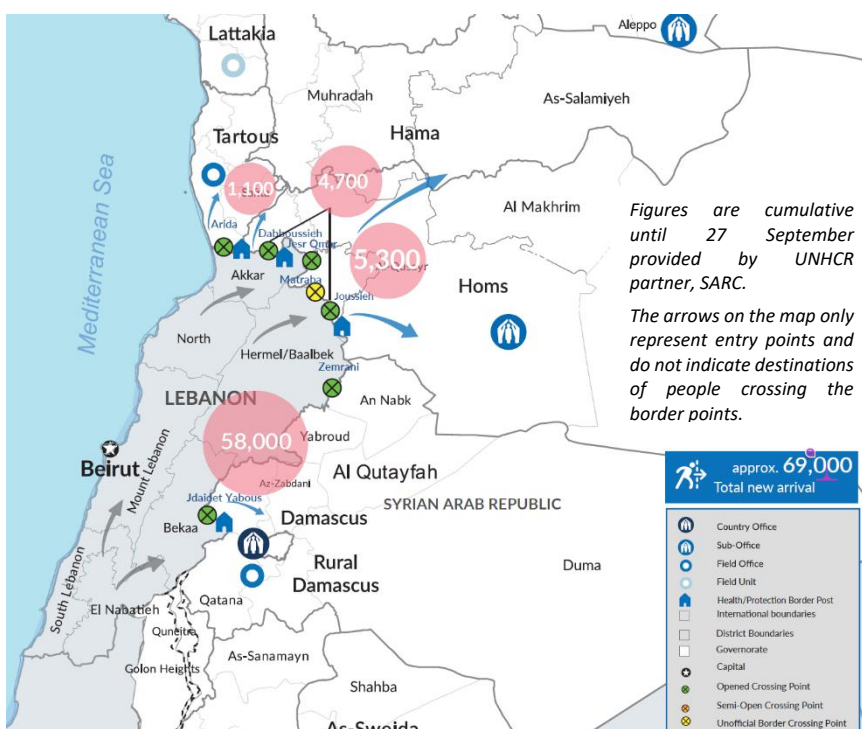


On the evening of September 28th, a large number of individuals are crossing the Jdaidet Yabous border into Syria.

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A total of approximately **69,000¹** people (both Lebanese and Syrians) are estimated to have crossed from Lebanon to Syria since the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon.

On 28 September, UNHCR witnessed a significant increase in the proportion of **Lebanese** in the new arrivals at the border crossings.



¹ The numbers of new arrivals in this document are from "Middle East Crisis- SARC Emergency Response: Syrian Returnees and Lebanese Refugees Influx" (27 September 2024). The numbers also include people entering through the Matraba crossing point (an unofficial border)

Overview of Developments

- On 27 and 28 September, a major escalation of hostilities in Lebanon has led to a mass increase in the number of Syrian returnees and Lebanese refugees crossing from the Lebanese border into Syria, where UNHCR is present. This resulted in particularly dramatic scenes at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point throughout the day.
- Many of those crossing to Syria were women and children as well as persons with disabilities in dire condition. About 50 per cent of those crossing the border points were under the age of 18.
- A crowd-control system is being established at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point. UNHCR is supporting the authorities to urgently strengthen their capacity to process entries. UNHCR is erecting Rub-halls to provide additional resting space for new arrivals.
- UNHCR and its partners are scaling up assistance for the new arrivals and continue to distribute relief items, food, and water, among others, to those crossing the border points.
- UNHCR arranges transportation for extremely vulnerable families from the border to their destinations in Syria.
- In Homs, Hama, Tartous, Aleppo, Damascus, and Rural Damascus Governorates, new arrivals are primarily being hosted by relatives and communities. Some Syrian local communities are also offering shelter and other support to Lebanese refugees.
- Collective shelters are being established by Government at the locations to allow a small number of destitute Lebanese to stay. UNHCR is currently conducting assessments on these collective shelters sites to ensure that protection risks are addressed and minimum conditions are met.
- At the destinations of new arrivals, UNHCR and its partners are now accelerating provision of support to both the new arrivals and host communities to pre-empt the resulting additional strain.

Overview of New Arrivals

- A sharp increase of entry at border crossings has been observed on 28 September, with a much higher proportion of Lebanese seeking entry. The majority of new arrivals enter Syria through the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point (Rural Damascus).
- At this border crossing point, UNHCR observed a queue of cars that extended for at least 1km before reaching Syrian immigration. The line reportedly continued for another 3km inside Lebanon beyond the Lebanese immigration office at the border. UNHCR also witnessed many people walking over a hilly mountain to reach the border crossing point in Syria.



People reaching at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point on foot. ©UNHCR Syria/Akihito Okuda

Response by UNHCR and Partners

- UNHCR and its partner SARC continue to be present at four official border crossings that Syria shares with Lebanon, offering support to new arrivals through the Border Health-Protection Support Points that UNHCR, together with WHO and SARC, established at each of these crossings over the past year.
- Humanitarian partners continued to provide essential assistance and services at the border points, including blankets, mattresses, water, food, hygiene kits and others, scaling up in response to the increase in new arrivals.

where UNHCR is not present. UNHCR notes that some **25,000 people** (estimate) also reportedly crossed the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point on 28 September that is not included in this figure pending further verification.

- On 28 September, UNHCR distributed food items, water bottles, and blankets at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point. Blankets were also distributed at the Joussieh and Daboussieh border crossing points.
- ICRC and UNICEF are arranging the installation of latrines to improve the sanitation conditions at the border crossing points.
- WFP has prepositioned some 85,000 units of dried-food in the country, to be mobilized as required.
- Health Sector/WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health, which deploys medical personnel at each border crossing point, providing health supplies to sustain essential services, reinforcing disease surveillance, outbreak prevention and immunization targeting children under 5-years old.
- Besides the provision of dignity and sanitary kits, UNFPA together with a local NGO, gives support to pregnant women and women-in-reproductive-age at the border crossing points.



UNHCR distributes water bottles to new arrivals at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing. ©UNHCR Syria

- UNHCR also shared with new arrivals – both Syrians and Lebanese – information on available services at 114 UNHCR-supported community centres in all 14 governorates.
- UNHCR and its partners SARC and Syria Trust continue to provide legal assistance to facilitate the provision of civil documentation to Syrians crossing back.
- In the destinations of new arrivals, UNHCR provides relief items for both Syrian and Lebanese families. On 28 September, the UNHCR Syria Representative offered the Governor of Rural Damascus relief items (4,000 mattresses, 4,000 blankets, 4,000 kitchen kits, and over 10,000 adult diapers) to ease the burdens on the local Syrian communities who are hosting the new arrivals. These relief items have now been mobilized.
 - As of 28 September, in Tartous Governorate, 1 collective shelter (Al-Karnak collective shelter) and 2 temporary centres are operational, mainly to house Lebanese refugees (some 30 families/140 persons). In Lattakia Governorate, 2 collective shelters (Sports City Collective Shelter and Al-Nakheel Beach Shelter) are being set up to host new arrivals.
 - In Homs, 2 collective shelters have been opened by the authorities, accommodating 30 Lebanese families (150 persons). UNHCR provided them non-food item (NFI) kits, containing blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, plastic sheets, sleeping mats, solar lamps, jerry cans, and winter clothing. UNHCR also distributed NFI kits for 480 families (both Lebanese and Syrians) who are hosted by the communities.



Distribution of core-relief items to Lebanese families who recently arrived in Homs. ©UNHCR Syria/Nesrin Al Khalil

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