

UNHCR Syria Flash Update #16

Response to Displacement from Lebanon to Syria

Reporting period: 24 September - 18 October 2024

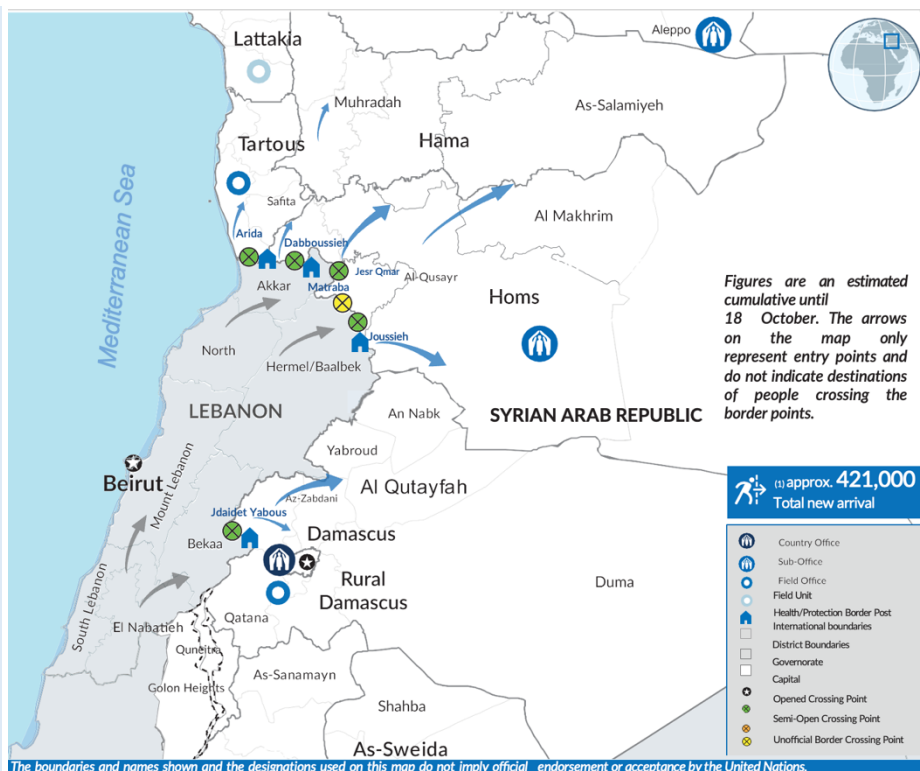


UNHCR's partner, SARC, distributing core relief items in Deir-ez-Zor | © SARC

A total of approximately
421,000¹
people (both Lebanese and Syrians) are estimated to have crossed from Lebanon to Syria since the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon.

It is estimated that around **70 per cent** are **Syrians** and **30 per cent** are **Lebanese** nationals.

Figures now encompass those identified by the relevant authorities as having left Lebanon and entered Syria. The new arrivals figure therefore goes beyond the initial estimations at official crossing points, which was the basis of earlier reports by SARC.



¹ Figures are undergoing verification and are subject to change.

Overview of Developments

- On 18 October, the Syrian Ministry of Health, UNICEF, WHO, the Global Nutrition Cluster, the Infant Feeding Emergency Core Group, and their partners issued a joint statement urging all humanitarian actors involved in the emergency response from Lebanon to Syria to “protect, promote, and support the feeding and care of infants and young children, their caregivers, especially pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women”. The statement underscored that this is crucial to support maternal and child survival, growth and development, and to prevent malnutrition, illness and death. It also called for immediate, coordinated, multi-sectoral action on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) to provide care for infants and their caregivers during this emergency.
- The rate of new arrivals at the Syrian borders remains steady, but has decreased compared to the initial phase of the influx from Lebanon. With over 400,000 persons having crossed into Syria since 23 October, the decline is predicted as many now have already made the journey and are being hosted within the communities. This however does not rule out an increase in entry rates, subject to the ongoing level of hostilities in Lebanon.
- As of 18 October, over 5,000 new arrivals – primarily women and children – are being accommodated at the locally-established hosting centres in Rural Damascus, Tartous, Latakia, Homs and Hama. UNHCR, UN agencies and partners are providing critical assistance to help families meet their immediate needs. Humanitarian actors also work on mitigating risks that could affect women and children being hosted at the centres.
- More than 18,000 persons have so far been reached through the community centres, outreach volunteers and mobile teams. Information sharing continues to be conducted through the teams on the ground to ensure that new arrivals are aware of the services they could benefit from at the community level.
- On 18 October, in response to recent trends showing higher levels of crossing from late afternoon onwards, UNHCR began having night presence at the Jdaidet Yabous crossing post (i.e. after 7pm), working with SARC to deliver assistance to new arrivals, including legal support and blankets in the face of dropping temperatures.

Overview of New Arrivals

- At Jdaidet Yabous (Rural Damascus), a total of 1,400 persons including 850 Lebanese, 500 Syrians and 50 persons from other nationalities arrived from Lebanon on 17 October.
- At the Homs crossing points – Joussieh, Daboussieh and Jesr Al Qmar – over 1,000 Lebanese and Syrians arrived into Syria. UNHCR observed a higher rate of Syrians arriving in Daboussieh while more Lebanese nationals in Jesr Al Qmar. This may be attributed to relatives residing near these crossing points in rural Homs.
- At Al Arida, over 240 individuals including 200 Syrians, 42 Lebanese and 4 Palestine refugees arrived on 18 October.



UNHCR at the Al Arida crossing point | © UNHCR Syria

Response at the Borders

UN agencies and humanitarian partners - including **DRC, ICRC, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, Première Urgence Internationale (PUI), SARC, and Syria Trust**, continue to have a presence and provide support to new arrivals at the Syrian crossing points.

- On 17 October, **UNHCR**, through its partner **SARC**, transported 700 persons from the crater – between Masnaa (Lebanon) and Jdaidet Yabous where airstrikes hit on 4 October – into Syria. Onward transportation was also provided to 400 extremely vulnerable individuals from Jdaidet Yabous to their intended destination in Damascus.
- Provision of vital legal assistance continues at the Syrian borders. **UNHCR** and its legal partners, **SARC** and **Syria Trust**, supported over 190 persons at Jdaidet Yabous and Al Arida with civil documentation, civil event registration and border entry facilitation, between 17 and 18 October.

WFP in coordination with **SARC** distributed over 2,000 food items - including sandwiches, date bars and beverages - to newly arrived families in Jdaidet Yabous who endured long journeys to cross into Syria.

- Core relief items were distributed to some 700 persons in Jdaidet Yabous and Al Arida by **UNHCR** and **SARC**. Many of these families, having crossed carrying only a few of their belongings from Lebanon, benefit from these essential items.
- Mobile clinics managed by **SARC, Shabab Al Khaireyah**, and the **Syrian Family Planning Association** – a **UNFPA** partner – in Jdaidet Yabous assisted over 400 individuals with nutritional support and medical counselling. The **Syrian Ministry of Health** continues to provide vaccination against Polio to children to prevent its spread and protect their health. At Al Arida, a total of 260 new arrivals also benefitted from medical assistance.

Hosting Centres for Lebanese Families

Out of the 35 locally-established hosting centres across Syria, 17 centres are currently providing shelter to new arrivals with no alternative means. These are primarily accommodating Lebanese, the majority of whom are female headed households and children.

- In **Rural Damascus**, the Hujelleh hosting centre currently accommodates some 260 families (approximately 1,015 individuals).

Living conditions remain challenging due to limited access to water and electricity, a consequence of the broader socioeconomic crisis affecting the country. The **Syrian Department of Health** as well as the **Inter-agency Health Sector** are working to minimize risks, including the spread of scabies and lice.

- In **Tartous** and **Latakia**, a total of 950 Lebanese families (3,261 individuals) are receiving shelter at 11 hosting centres and 2 reception centres.

To enhance the quality of response provided by humanitarian actors, **UNFPA** conducted gender-based violence safety audits in three hosting centers in Latakia. The main findings indicated that the absence of external lighting around the centre raised safety concerns for women and children, while overcrowding in units housing multiple families led to privacy issues. Additionally, looting incidents were reported.



New arrivals receiving core relief items in Rural Damascus | © SARC

UNFPA is working closely with humanitarian partners to address these concerns in order to enhance the safety and privacy of women and girls being hosted.

- In **Homs** and **Hama**, a total of 161 Lebanese families (841 individuals) are being hosted at five² hosting centres.

Recreational activities continue to be delivered to ensure the wellbeing of newly arrived children. In addition, counseling sessions for caregivers were also implemented to help parents cope with the trauma and psychological distress they are experiencing.

Community Outreach Efforts

- In **Damascus** and **Rural Damascus**, UNHCR's partner, **GOPA**, enrolled over 800 new arrivals – Lebanese and Syrians – at the community centres. The main critical needs identified include healthcare, legal assistance, and livelihood support.

Core relief kits³ were also distributed to 130 newly arrived families in three districts in Rural Damascus being hosted within the community.

UNFPA, in coordination with its partner, the **Syrian Family Planning Association**, supported some 280 Syrian and Lebanese families with psychosocial support and distributed female hygiene kits.

- In **Tartous** and **Latakia**, more than 1,500 Lebanese and Syrians were reached so far through the community centres, outreach volunteers and mobile teams.

Partner, **SARC**, has provided psychological first aid to some 400 individuals hosted in the community.

In **Idleb**, more than 1,000 families (4,340 individuals) arrived from Lebanon since 23 September.

As of 18 October, over 10,000 persons being hosted in the community received core relief kits from UNHCR and its partners in Tartous, Latakia and Idleb.

- In **Aleppo**, over 2,000 families (9,000 individuals including 8,921 Syrians and 167 Lebanese) enrolled at the community centres – 58 per cent of whom are children. So far, UNHCR and its partners supported some 1,200 persons with protection services including legal assistance, gender-based violence case management, medical assistance, child protection, educational services and livelihood support.
- In **Homs** and **Hama**, UNFPA's partners, **Al Nour Foundation** and **GOPA**, continue to conduct reproductive health awareness sessions for women and girls, as well as distribute female hygiene kits.

Since the influx began, **UNHCR** and its **partners** distributed some 6,000 core relief and winter kits to new arrivals in Homs and Hama.



A community centre in Ar-Raqqa processing new arrivals | © UNHCR Syria

² Mar Elias, Al Saida Al Athraa, and Al Ard churches in rural Homs; the Deaf and Mute Centre in Hama; and Tal Al Ghazali school in rural Hama.

³ Core relief *kits* include a range of essentials such as hygiene kits, blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, solar lamps, among other items.

- In **northeast Syria**, over 37,500 persons arrived in Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates.

On 18 October, 320 individuals approached the community centres in Ar-Raqqa to receive essential services. UNHCR and its partners continue their efforts in identifying new arrivals to ensure that they are informed on services available to them.

So far, **UNHCR** and its partners, **SARC** and **GOPA**, distributed an estimated 31,000 core relief and winter items – including mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheets, jerrycans, kitchen sets, solar lamps, winter clothes - to new arrivals at the three governorates.



Legal awareness sessions provided at the community centres in northeast Syria | © UNHCR Syria

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