

UNHCR Syria Flash Update #18

Response to Displacement from Lebanon to Syria

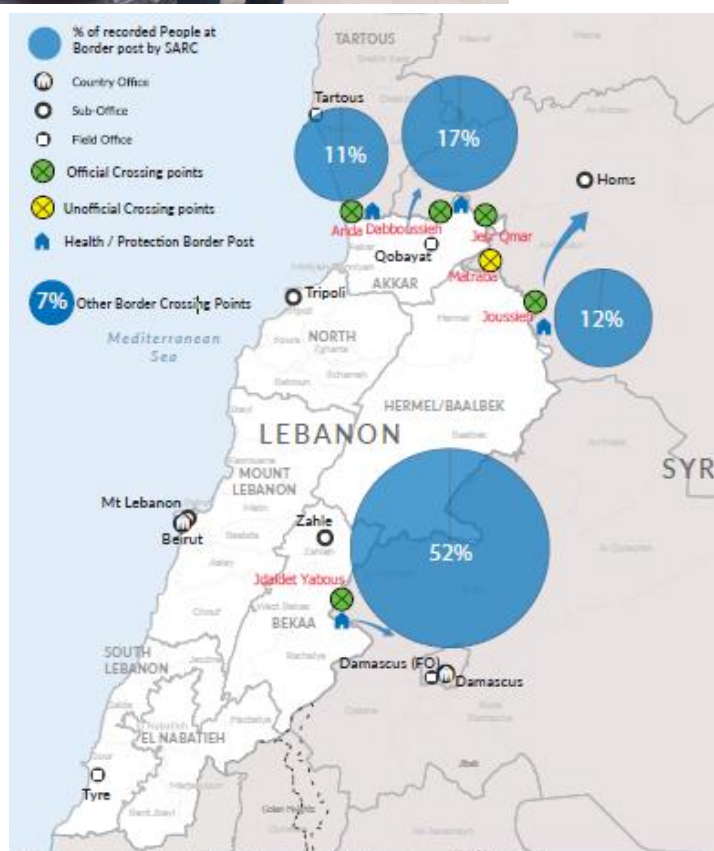
Reporting period: 24 September - 25 October 2024



Provision of core relief items in Idlib | ©SARC

A total of approximately **440,000¹** people (Lebanese, Syrians and third-country nationals) are estimated to have crossed from Lebanon to Syria since the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon.

It is estimated that **71 percent are Syrians** and **29 percent are Lebanese and other country nationals.**



¹The numbers of new arrivals in this document are based on "SARC Emergency Response For Lebanese Refugees and Syrian Returnees" (issued 21 October). Figures are undergoing verification and are subject to change. Figures are cumulative until 22 October provided.

Overview of Recent Developments

- At around 0230hrs this morning (Friday 25 October), Joussieh border crossing in Homs suffered an airstrike that hit around 30m away from the Syrian Immigration Office and UNHCR's Border Post on the Syrian side. In recent days, the crossing had seen on average 500 persons daily crossing into Syria. There are no reported casualties at the time of publication. As a result of this attack, Joussieh border crossing is closed until further notice.
- At 0330hrs this morning, the road between Al-Masnaa (Lebanon) and Jdeidet Yabous (Syria) border crossings was also struck again by an airstrike, enlarging the additional crater that had made the road almost impassable following an airstrike on 22 October. This road had already been rendered unusable to vehicles following an airstrike on 4 October that had resulted in significant reduction in the number of new arrivals to Syria from Lebanon through the Jdeidet Yabous border crossing. On 24 October, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Mr. Adam Abdelmoula, had issued a statement calling for an "immediate end to such attacks, which pose serious risks to people fleeing danger" and stressing that "civilians must be protected at all times and wherever they are."
- On 24 October, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees attended the International Conference in Support of Lebanon's People and Sovereignty held in Paris. In his statement, he made reference to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the current "disaster in Lebanon" both for Lebanon and Syria, calling for greater international support for the emergency appeals for both countries. He also restated the need for UNHCR to continue working with the Government of Syria to ensure the safety and security of all those arriving, and the greater support for the UN and other organizations carrying out early recovery activities in areas of return.
- On 23 October, the Abu al-Zandain internal crossing point located in eastern Aleppo near al-Bab was reopened to facilitate the safe passage for Syrians fleeing the worsening security situation in Lebanon into northern Syria.



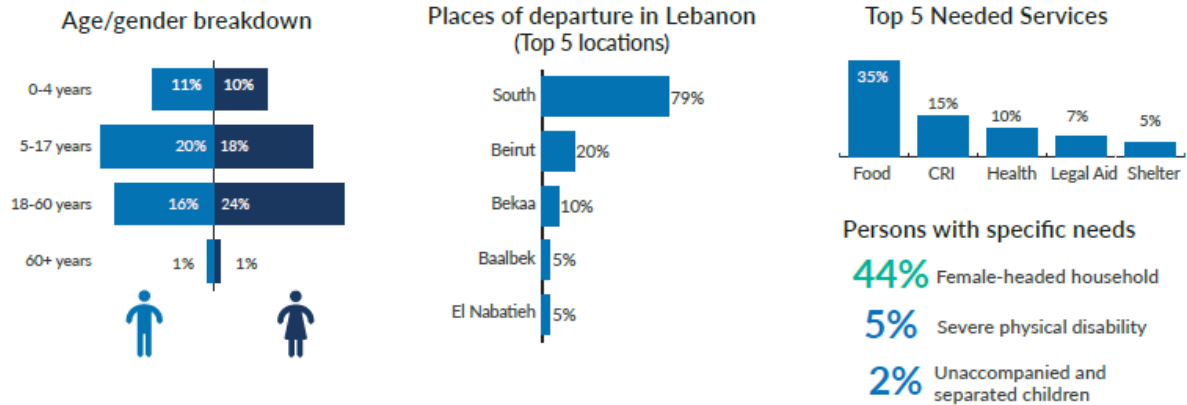
Damage at Joussieh border crossing | ©SARC

Overview of New Arrivals

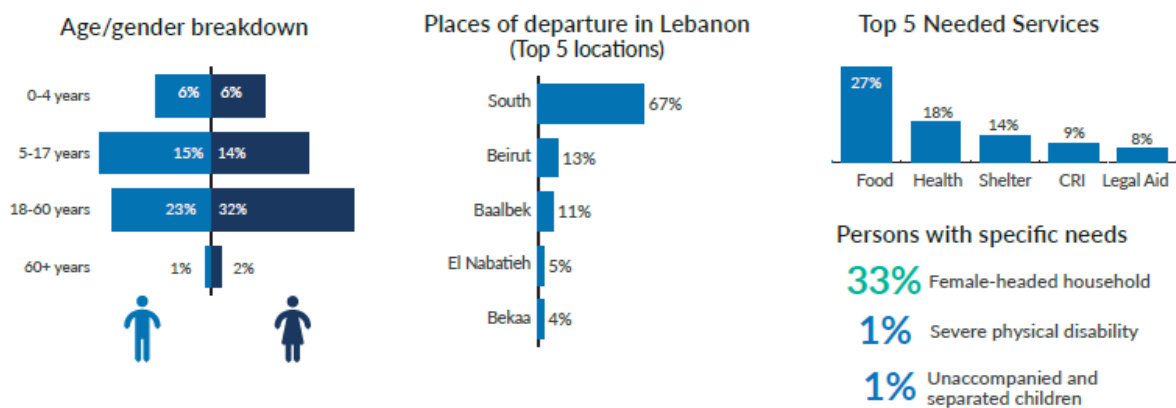
- Since the start of the week, the flow of arrivals at the three border crossings in Homs – Joussieh, Dabbousieh and Jesr Al Kamar – experienced a 30% increase in new arrivals for three days before reducing slightly. It was observed that those who crossed Jesr Al Kamar were mainly Lebanese families, while those crossing Dabboussieh predominantly Syrians.
- Since 24 September, 9,985 families (50,779 individuals) have arrived in north-east Syria, with the highest number of families heading to Ar-Raqqa Governorate, followed by Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh Governorates.

The following is a breakdown based on indicative information collected by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent at the UNHCR Border Posts:

Syrian New Arrivals



Lebanese New Arrivals



Response at the Borders

On 22 October, UNHCR began an evening presence at the Arida border crossing point to support monitoring and support activities together with its partner the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). This is in response to the observed trend of more inbound movements into Syria through the border crossing in the late afternoon and evenings.

- The UNHCR team observed the arrival of Lebanese families in rented buses consisting of mostly women and children. Many Syrian returnee families also arrived in rented vehicles.
- The Department of Health actively provided essential medical support to the new arrivals and provided polio vaccinations for children.
- The SARC lawyers present also provided necessary legal counselling to the Syrian and Lebanese arrivals seeking such assistance.

At the Tabqa crossing point (Ar-Raqqa Governorate), two families – one involving a 50-year-old man from Tibni (Deir Ezzor Governorate) with his wife and children in Mahmoudli camp; and the other involving a couple their child from Kaskana (Aleppo) who used to live in Tabqa – were finally permitted to cross following advocacy by UNHCR despite the decision of local authorities in north-east Syria not to permit the entry of returnees not originally from the area. UNHCR continues to advocate for similar cases, especially those with first-degree relatives currently residing in north-east Syria.

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 22 October, 68 individuals received legal counselling at Jdaidet Yabous through SARC and the Syria Trust for Development. Cases resolved included issues relating to entry facilitation and civil documentation. The lawyers were also providing legal counselling to new arrivals at the help desk at the Border Post.
- **WFP** provided 900 individuals with fresh meals at Jdaidet Yabous crossing point, Rural Damascus Governorate.
- 130 families (337 individuals) were transported from Jdaidet Yabous crossing point to Damascus Governorate.
- 201 families (540 individuals) were assisted with transportation arrangements from the location of the crater in Al-Masnaa to Jdaidet Yabous crossing point. So far 33,647 individuals have benefited from transportation support to their destination governorates.
- At Arida border crossing point, the SARC legal team provided 26 legal consultations on marriage and lineage, external military desertion, housing and personal documentation. The team also referred the families to the legal team in their end destination for further follow up and intervention.
- **UNICEF** provided 36 families with counselling health services at Taqqa crossing point, Ar-Raqqa Governorate.
- **UNFPA** provided 37 families were provided with health services at Taqqa crossing point, Ar-Raqqa Governorate. UNFPA, through GOPA and Al -Yamama mobile teams, also provided psychosocial support, conducted Reproductive Health medical examinations to **57** Women and girls and distributed **171** sanitary napkins. The women informed the team that they faced extreme exhaustion after up to 35 hours of travel.

Hosting Centres for Lebanese Families

- In **Rural Damascus**, the Herjelleh hosting centre is accommodating 262 families (950 individuals).
- In **Tartous and Latakia**, 1,069 Lebanese families (1,558 individuals) are residing in 10 hosting centres and a reception centre. At the Basel Hosting Centre, UNFPA, in cooperation with SYC, provided sexual and reproductive health and family planning consultations, psychosocial support sessions, psychological first aid (PFA) to 54 women and adolescent girls and distributed 22 female dignity kits.
- In **Homs and Hama**, 142 Lebanese families (553 individuals) are currently residing in 6 hosting centres.

Community Outreach Efforts

- Since 24 September, 11,730 families (53,980 individuals) who fled to Syria approached UNHCR-supported community centres across the country, out of whom 10,986 families (51,256 individuals) are Syrians, and 744 families (2,724 individuals) are Lebanese.
- On 22 October, 4,586 individuals received core relief items across Syria.

Rural Damascus:

New 10 Syrian families returning from Lebanon hosted in Harasta, consisting only of women and children. Around 20 women received services at the Women and Girls' Space from UNFPA's partner Al-Tamayoz, including psychosocial support, Gender Based Violence services and case management.

Northeast Syria:

- The number of people visiting the community centres seeking information about protection services or requesting assistance continues to increase. On 22 October, 441 families (2,340 individuals) approached the community centres in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa Governorates.
- In Deir-ez-Zor, outreach volunteers made home visits to 347 returnees to monitor and assess their needs, with the primary identified needs being non-food items, legal services, and livelihood support.
- In Deir-ez-Zor, referrals to the general and medical in-kind distribution programmes continued, with 69 individuals identified in need of urgent medical in-kind assistance and 48 individuals requiring general in-kind assistance. These individuals were assessed and placed on a waiting list. The partners have requested that UNHCR expedite the delivery of these items to facilitate urgent distributions and address the immediate needs.
- 85 individuals participated in awareness-raising sessions in the community centres and during outreach activities in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. The topics focused on mine risk education, personal hygiene, and child rights.

Homs:

- In Homs, it is estimated that 8,900 Lebanese families (44,081 individuals) are residing within the host community of Homs, with the majority in Qusair, Homs city and in several villages in western rural Homs.
- In Al-Abbasiah neighbourhood, UNFPA, through partner Nour Foundation for Relief and Development mobile team, provided Sexual Reproductive Health and Gender Based Violence services to 46 women and girls in addition to 40 hygiene kits were distributed and a breast cancer awareness session was conducted for 36 beneficiaries.

Tartous & Latakia

- Al-Batoul and SARC provided psychological first aid (PFA) to 153 persons and psychosocial support to 45 persons in Tartous. Since 24 September, 5,179 people have been supported with PFA and 424 with psychosocial support through community centres and mobile teams in both Latakia and Tartous Governorates.
- On 20 October, an Inter-Agency Mission visited Dweir Al-Shiekh Saad and Basira. Focus Group Discussions were held, and services included sexual and reproductive health and psychosocial support and referrals to antenatal care services for 31 women and girls: SFPA sexual and reproductive health clinic in Dweir Al-Shiekh Saad provided services to women and girls, in addition to distributing dignity kits. In Basira, the SARC primary health care clinic offered sexual and reproductive healthcare, paediatric care, general health services, and laboratory tests to Lebanese and Syrian individuals. Crowded conditions prevail for Syrian and Lebanese families, with urgent needs for shelter, baby milk, non-food items, and medical services. A gender-based violence safety audit and rapid assessment were conducted by UNFPA during the mission.

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