

## UNHCR Syria Flash Update #9

### Response to Displacement from Lebanon to Syria

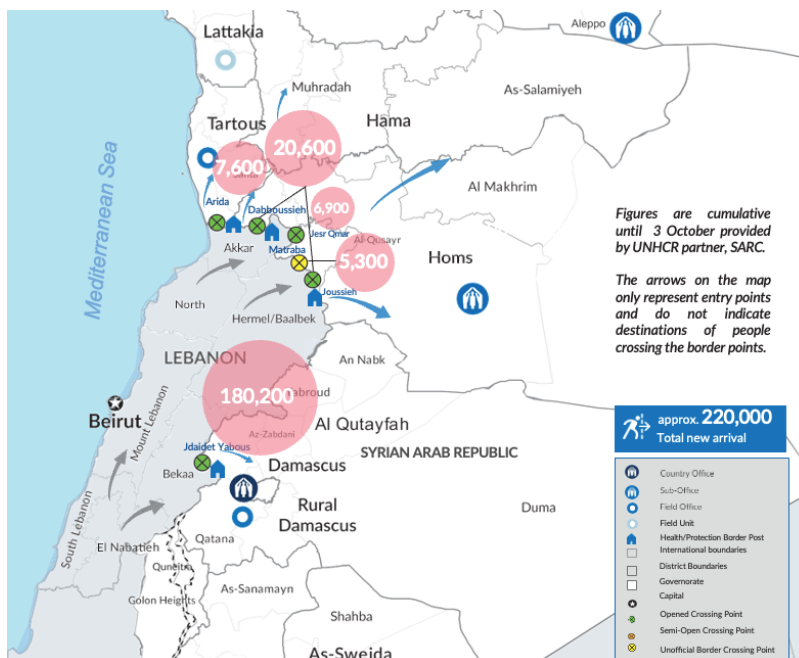
Reporting period: 24 September - 5 October 2024



UNHCR and SARC providing transportation for new arrivals | © UNHCR Syria

A total of approximately **220,000<sup>1</sup>** 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**.



<sup>1</sup> The numbers of new arrivals in this document are from "SARC Emergency Response For Lebanese Refugees and Syrian Returnees" (issued 5 October 2024). The numbers also include people entering through the Matraba crossing point (an unofficial border) where UNHCR is not present.

## Overview of Developments

- On 7 October, the “SYRIA: *Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria*” will be launched at an event in Damascus.
- Since 23 September, more than 220,000 Syrian and Lebanese nationals, as well as a small number of other nationalities affected, have crossed the border into Syria, fleeing the hostilities in Lebanon.
- UNHCR expanded its presence at a fifth border crossing, Jesr Al Qmar, with Lebanon.
- Following the airstrikes close to the Masnaa border point (Lebanon) in the morning of 4 October, the rate of new arrivals through Jdaidet Yabous - which is the primary entry point for people crossing from Lebanon - reduced by an estimated 75 per cent on that day (from a daily average of around 13,000 persons to some 3,000 persons).
- The rate of arrivals through Jdaidet Yabous remained low throughout 5 October.
- On 5 October, the rate of new arrivals through the other border crossing points, in Homs and Tartous, reverted to earlier levels, with many arrivals the previous day (4 October) having indicated that they had diverted their travel routes away from Jdaidet Yabous following the airstrikes.
- Bus services provided to the extremely vulnerable new arrivals by UNHCR and SARC continued to operate from the crater caused by the airstrikes (Masnaa area) to the border crossing point on the Syria side. This is in addition to the ongoing transportation support to extremely vulnerable people from the border points to their destination inside Syria.
- On 5 October, the Government of Syria announced a ten-day extension of the waiver for the mandatory exchange of US\$ 100, required for each Syrian entering the country. Initially introduced for a seven-day period on 29 September, the waiver resulted in a significant decongestion at the immigration offices. UNHCR welcomes this decision by the Syrian Government, which will continue to facilitate timelier entries for Syrians fleeing Lebanon.

## Overview of New Arrivals

- While Jdaidet Yabous saw a continued reduction in traffic, there was a steady stream of arrivals at the other border crossing points with Lebanon.
- At the Al Arida border point (Tartous), SARC continued to provide relief items, including hygiene kits, food and water, as well as psychosocial support to newly arrived families.
- At the crossing points into Homs (Joussieh, Daboussieh and Jesr Al Qmar), an estimated 1,400 persons crossed into Syria from Lebanon, with the majority of new arrivals indicating their intention to reside in Damascus, Homs and rural Homs.



*A Lebanese family arriving at a Syrian border point | © UNHCR Syria*

## Response by UNHCR and Partners

Since 23 September, UN agencies and humanitarian partners, including **DRC**, **ICRC**, **UNFPA**, **UNICEF**, **WFP**, **WHO**, **Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)**, **SARC**, and **Syria Trust**, continue to work closely to support new arrivals at all Syrian border points.

- On 5 October, **SARC** deployed 200 additional volunteers, bringing the total to 500 volunteers at the borders supporting families crossing into Syria.
- Since 23 September, the **SARC** medical teams have assisted more than 10,000 individuals with emergency health services, while 47,000 benefitted from psychosocial support.
- Since the onset of the influx to Syria, **UNHCR**, in coordination with **SARC**, has provided transportation support to a total of some 13,000 extremely vulnerable people to help them reach their destination inside Syria. This support alleviated some financial burdens faced by many newly arrived families with limited means.
- To maintain hygiene conditions, **PUI** continues to provide cleaning services at the Jdaidet Yabous border point. **UNICEF** also provided sanitary items such as hygiene kits and diapers.
- On 4 October, over 5,000 food parcels and dry goods were provided by **WFP**, **DRC**, and **UNHCR** through **SARC**.
- In an effort to enhance safety measures against potential airstrikes, **UNHCR** is installing aerial UN markers at the three Rub-halls and medical points at the Jdaidet Yabous border point. The same approach is also being implemented at the recently established Rub-hall at the Al Arida border point (Tartous).



*SARC teams are supporting Syrians and Lebanese to cross the site of the airstrike near the Masnaa/Jdaidet Yabous border point to enter Syria. SARC with funding from UNHCR is now providing bus services to transport vulnerable people to the Syrian immigration office (about a 4 km ride) | © SARC*

## Hosting Centres for Lebanese Families

- Hosting centres established by local authorities continued to provide shelter options for vulnerable Lebanese families who recently arrived in Syria and do not have alternative accommodation.
- At present, there are more than 40 hosting centres located throughout Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Idleb, Tartous and Latakia governorates. As of 5 October, 1,997 vulnerable Lebanese families (9,983 people) are being accommodated in hosting centres. UNHCR and its partners are closely engaged in mitigating protection risks, especially to women and girls, and are distributing core relief items to support these families in need.



*Arrivals at Jesr Al Qmar (Homs) border point | © UNHCR Syria*

- In **Rural Damascus**, the Hujelleh hosting centre is currently accommodating 65 Lebanese families (approximately 300 individuals) who crossed into Syria following the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon.

Considerable efforts by the local authorities to support vulnerable Lebanese families are evident. On 3 October, the municipality of Rural Damascus deployed a water truck to fill the Hujelleh's water tanks ensuring uninterrupted water supply to families staying at the centre, while the Ministry of Health continues to provide essential medical services through its on-site mobile clinic.

In addition, **DRC**, **NRC**, **PUI**, and **UNHCR**, through **SARC**, are providing rehabilitation and maintenance work, including cleaning services and sewage network improvements.

- In **Tartous**, over 100 Lebanese families (520 individuals) are staying at the Pioneer Camp, Al Karnak and Blue Bay hosting centres. The Pioneer Camp now functions as a dual-purpose facility, its reception centre continues to serve as a transit facility for families newly arriving in Syria, while also hosting families for extended periods.
- In **Latakia**, the five hosting centres (Palm Beach, Ras Al Basit-Labour Union, Ras Al Basit-Chalets, Al Sheer, and Blue Beach) as well as the Sports City reception centre currently host more than 450 Lebanese families (1,215 individuals).

The main needs in both the Tartous and Latakia hosting centres include legal counselling, core relief and winter items, and baby formula.



*Distribution of core relief items to new arrivals residing in the local communities | © SARC*

## Community Outreach Efforts

- In **Damascus** and **Rural Damascus**, an estimated 25,000 Lebanese nationals are being hosted within the local communities.
- In **Tartous**, more than 3,700 Lebanese nationals are being hosted by Syrians. So far, UNHCR, through SARC distributed over 4,000 relief items, including hygiene kits, adult diapers, blankets, sleeping mats, and food parcels to support new arrivals in Tartous, Latakia and Idlib.
- In **Homs**, more than 7,000 families (32,000 individuals) – primarily Lebanese – are being hosted by their relatives and the local community.
- In **Hama**, some 1,000 Syrian and Lebanese families (approximately 5,000 individuals) reside in the city and its rural areas, including Masyaf, As-Salamiyeh, and Muhradah districts.
- UNHCR, through its partners, SARC, Al Batoul, and GOPA, continue identifying new arrivals at the governorate level to ensure that they receive humanitarian assistance, including relief items (such as mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, plastic sheets, sleeping mats, solar lamps, jerrycans, winter clothing and food), and health services (including consultations, psychosocial support and the provision of mobility aids).

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