

UNHCR Syria Flash Update #5

Response to Displacement from Lebanon to Syria

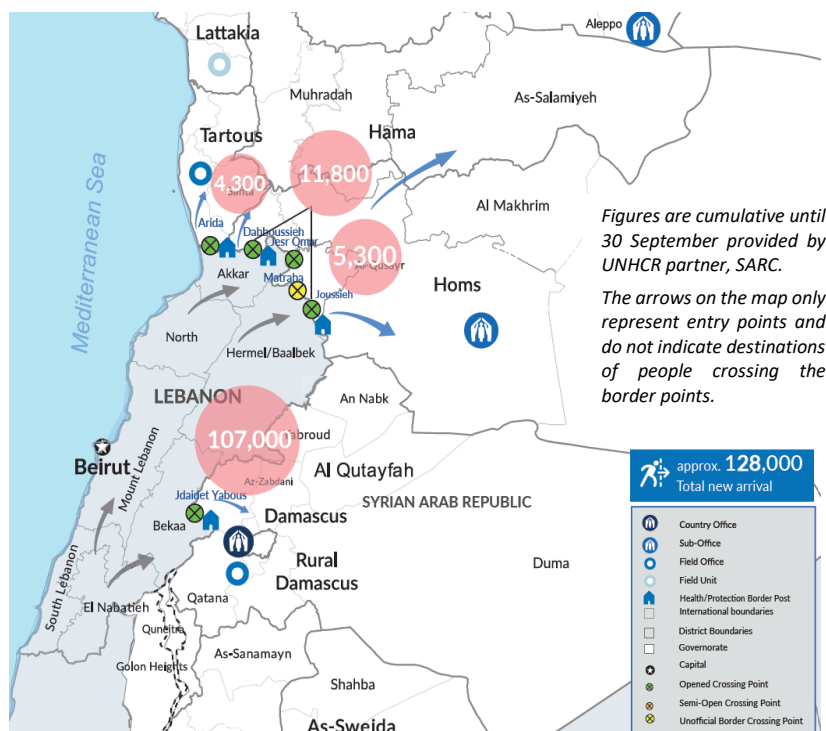
Reporting period: 24-30 September 2024



UNHCR trucks carrying core relief items and dignity kits to families waiting at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point.
©UNHCR/Munzer Ahmad

A total of approximately **128,000¹** 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.**



¹ The numbers of new arrivals in this document are from “Middle East Crisis- SARC Emergency Response: Syrian Returnees and Lebanese Refugees Influx” (30 September 2024). The numbers also include people entering through the Matraha crossing point (an unofficial border) where UNHCR is not present.

Overview of Developments

- The mass influx of Syrians and Lebanese following the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon since 27 September continued, most visibly at the Jdeidet Yabous border crossing but also at the other border crossings.
- On 1 October, the UNHCR High Commissioner declared a Level 3 (L3) Emergency for Lebanon and Syria. By declaring an L3 emergency, this signals the highest level of emergency response which requires substantial assistance. In doing so, maximum resources will be mobilized along with close coordination between UN agencies, humanitarian actors and the international community to address the needs of affected populations.
- Lebanese authorities [issued](#) a decision that facilitates the departure of Syrian nationals and Palestinian refugees originally from Syria but had stayed in Lebanon, regardless of the manner of their entry into Lebanon.
- The positive impact of the week-long waiver of mandatory USD100.00 exchange required of each Syrian for entry, announced on 29 September (Council of Minister's decision No. 12147/1), was apparent. The conditions in the border area were vastly improved, with little congestion and an orderly queue formed at the entrance to the immigration office. There were much fewer families who sat waiting on the tarmac in the parking lot area.
- Notably, UNHCR observed a higher number of adolescent Syrian males arriving at the borders with their families. Some 60 per cent of those crossing the border points were reportedly under the age of 18.
- Medical emergencies were still frequent, most of which were due to the exhaustion and dehydration suffered from the long journey. On 28 September, SARC supported some 700 medical cases at the border crossing points, with the Ministry of Health providing emergency treatment.
- To address the increased number of extremely vulnerable families arriving at the borders, UNHCR with SARC provided transportation for approximately 7,000 new arrival families (as of 30 September) to help them reach their destinations inside Syria. The majority of new arrivals indicated their intention of joining their relatives.
- Local authorities and communities are establishing hosting centres across Syria to host a small number of destitute Lebanese and provide them with support.
- UNHCR agreed to support the Embassy of Lebanon in Damascus by temporarily stationing a UNHCR staff member to directly provide information on available UNHCR services inside Syria to the crowds of Lebanese approaching the Embassy for such information.

Overview of New Arrivals

- On 30 September, airstrikes hit areas proximate to border crossing points at Jdeidet Yabous and in Homs, which *may* have had an impact on the reduced rate of arrivals in the early morning. Note that arrivals did pick-up as the day progressed.

UNHCR staff with newly arrived families at a border crossing ©UNHCR Syria/Ayham Al Kadi



Response by UNHCR and Partners

- UNHCR and 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 over the past year.
- Humanitarian partners including **ICRC, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO** are stepping up their response and continue to provide essential assistance and services at the border crossing points. On 30 September, UNHCR provided 20,000 food items through SARC. As of 30 September, **UNHCR** has distributed some 150,000 food, water and relief items.
- At the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point and surrounding areas, UNHCR installed lighting, including solar streetlights in collaboration with Première Urgence Internationale (PUI) to improve visibility and safety.
- UNHCR established a dedicated help desk at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point for UNHCR and SARC lawyers. This served to organise the way legal assistance was provided to new arrivals. More than 1,500 newly arrived families received legal support.
- UNHCR and its partners are introducing new measures, such as identification wristbands, to avoid lost children if they become separated from their families.
- At the destinations of new arrivals, UNHCR is providing relief items and assistance for both Syrian and Lebanese families.
 - In Tartous Governorate, as of 30 September, one hosting centre (Al-Karnak hosting centre) and two temporary centres are operational, mainly for Lebanese refugees. 50 Lebanese families (236 persons) are staying at the Pioneer Reception Centre (temporary centre). UNHCR provided hygiene kits, adult and baby diapers, and psychosocial support. Other Lebanese refugees are reportedly staying at hotels. Assessments with these new arrivals are ongoing to identify their needs.
 - In Latakia Governorate, Al-Sheer hosting centre is currently hosting 100 individuals. UNFPA distributed hygiene kits to all women, and UNHCR partner is assessing the situation of families. Two additional hosting centres (Sports City and Al-Nakheel Beach) are being set up. 1,250 Lebanese are reportedly being hosted in different places in the governorate. Through its partners, UNHCR began the distribution of core relief items to them.
 - In Homs, UNHCR conducted visits to the border points, hosting centres, and families hosting Lebanese refugees. In Tal Kalbath (rural Homs), 15 families (75 individuals) received UNHCR's core relief items as well as hygiene kits from UNFPA.
 - As of 28 September, UNHCR partner registered 217 Syrian families (1,099 individuals) who arrived in Ar-Raqqa Governorate. In Deir-ez-Zor Governorate, SARC and Takatof



UNHCR in Homs conducted a visit to a Lebanese family that recently crossed the border to Syria ©UNHCR Syria

Shababi Association reported that the number of Syrian families fleeing from Lebanon reached 305 (1,236 individuals) as of 29 September. Most of families are being hosted by relatives, as their houses were destroyed during the crisis.

The voices of people affected on the ground

Nancy is a Lebanese national who crossed the border to Syria amidst the escalating hostilities in Lebanon.

“We have not found peace since birth. Every two decades, we had to flee and worry about our families. We always live in fear without any long-term solutions”, says Nancy while she stands at the immigration office waiting to get her passport stamped.



Nancy, a Lebanese young woman crossing to Syria through Jdaidet Yabous border point. @UNHCR Syria/Hameed Maarouf.

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