

UNHCR Syria Emergency Response Brief

5 December 2024



UNHCR and its partners supporting those crossing the recently reopened Al-Arida border crossing, still visibly damaged on 3 December | ©UNHCR Syria

Population Movement

Movement into Lebanon



34,000

Estimated Lebanese refugees

who crossed into Lebanon from Syria through the Jdaidet Yabous and Joussieh border crossing points since the ceasefire on 27 November, as of 4 December

Reverse population movements from Syria to Lebanon continued following the ceasefire announcement between Israel and Hezbollah on 27 November 2024, mainly through the Jdaidet Yabous (Rural Damascus) and Joussieh (Homs) border crossings. The Al Arida border crossing (Tartous) reopened on 2 December but with limited capacity due to a technical issue, with only Lebanese nationals are currently being processed to cross.

Rural Damascus Governorate

Between 27 November and 1 December, some 24,000 individuals crossed back into Lebanon through the **Jdaidet Yabous** border crossing alone – the majority being Lebanese families returning home. Some degree of overcrowding remained at the departure side of the border crossing and the Immigration Centre.

Homs Governorate

Around 16,000 individuals crossed back into Lebanon through the **Joussieh border** crossing between 27 November and 3 December. Despite the damage caused to the road and surrounding immigration buildings by the missile attack on 30 November, both vehicles and pedestrians are passing through this crossing point.

Since the ceasefire, thousands of Lebanese families have vacated the hosting centres in Homs and Hama, leaving all hosting centres in Hama Governorate now empty of Lebanese families. Instead, some are being used to host the displaced from the active fighting currently happening in Aleppo.

Tartous Governorate

The **Al-Arida border** crossing point has been reopened as of 2 December with limited functionality as the immigration system on the Lebanese side is damaged. At present, the authorities have decided to facilitate only the Lebanese returns to Lebanon by processing their cases manually. It is unclear when full functionality will be restored.



Status of the Al-Arida border crossing on 3 December | ©UNHCR Syria

Movement into Syria



12,000

Estimated Individuals

who arrived in **Syria from Lebanon** since the 27 November ceasefire (including non-Lebanese third-country nationals) as of 4 December



4,200

Estimated Lebanese

individuals who crossed into **Syria from Lebanon** since the ceasefire

6,800

Estimated Syrians

individuals who crossed into **Syria from Lebanon** since the ceasefire



4,530

Estimated Lebanese

individuals who crossed into **Syria from Iraq** since the ceasefire



300

Estimated Lebanese

individuals who crossed into **Syria from Jordan** since the ceasefire

Arrivals into Syria – both Syrian and Lebanese nationals – have continued but at much reduced rates following the ceasefire, with the primary reason - reported to UNHCR - being to reach and accompany their families who had previously fled to Syria back into to Lebanon.

The waiver for the exchange of US\$ 100 or its equivalent in foreign currencies required of Syrian nationals for entry into Syria expired on 30 November and has not been extended. UNHCR notes, however, that this does not appear to have negatively impacted the post-ceasefire rate of arrivals into Syria thus far.

UNHCR has observed a general drop in the traffic from **Jordan** into Syria at the Nassib border crossing, with suggestions that the Lebanese who had fled are now opting to return to Lebanon by air directly.

As a result of the temporary closure of the Abu Kamal-Al Qaim border crossing to civilians, no updates to the number of arrivals from **Iraq** is available for this update.



The Syrian Multi-Sector Rapid Assessment

In response to the sudden influx of **557,000** individuals from Lebanon that followed the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon on 23 September, the Syria Humanitarian Country Team launched the **Syrian Multi-sector Rapid Assessment (SYNAT)** in November 2024 to collect crucial and updated data to address the immediate humanitarian needs of affected populations inside Syria.

SYNAT's primary objectives include to capture the number of people in need with high level of accuracy, assess the severity of needs across different groups and regions, and compile perspectives from diverse populations to establish key priorities to inform and enhance the current response.

This assessment is **coordinated by the UNHCR Country Office and its Sub-Offices**, with the support of some 500 outreach volunteers from various UN agencies, including UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA. Data collection is being conducted in more than 1,300 locations across all 14 governorates to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the needs and gaps of those who recently crossed into Syria and their host communities.

This ongoing collaborative effort is vital to effectively identify and address the urgent needs of all those impacted by the recent influx into Syria.

Movement within Syria

Following the latest escalation of hostilities in Aleppo, Idlib and Hama, UNHCR and its partners have rapidly started to provide assistance to the tens of thousands of displaced families that are reaching all parts of Syria. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is estimated to have reached **150,000** in less than a week.

Due to the deteriorating security situation in Aleppo, humanitarian access has been severely curtailed. However, UNHCR's warehouse in Aleppo contains sufficient non-food items (NFIs) to cover thousands of families and is ready for distribution as soon as the situation allows.

In other locations where people seek refuge, UNHCR and its partners have been providing life-saving assistance to the people fleeing these hostilities.

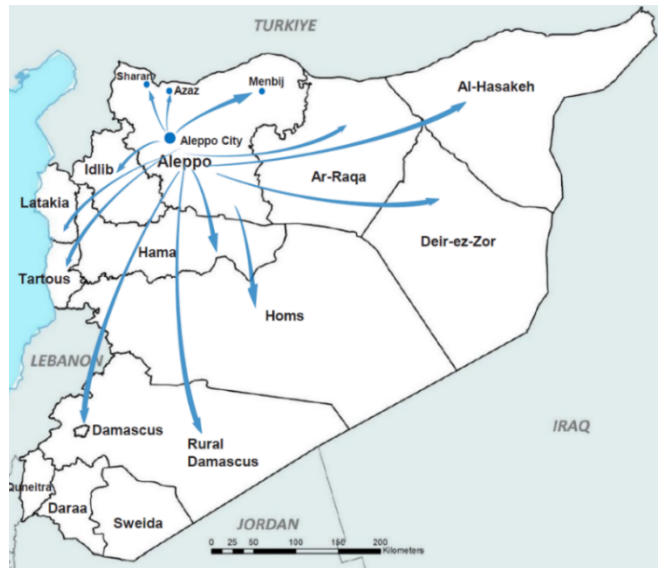
Most IDPs are carrying with them minimal belongings as they flee. Many are being hosted by their relatives and communities while hosting centres, which were originally established by the local authorities to support Lebanese refugees, are also being used to provide temporary accommodation.

UNHCR teams are on the ground in **Tartous**, where over 2,000 families (around 11,500 individuals) have arrived to date. Of those, more than 500 families (around 3,000 individuals) are being hosted in the “Pioneer camp” hosting centre, which until very recently had provided shelter to thousands of Lebanese refugees, and where UNHCR and partners are now assessing the needs and providing assistance.



blankets and other NFIs to displaced families in Tartous on 3 December | ©UNHCR Syria

Movement of internally displaced people from Aleppo to other parts of the country



In **Latakia**, over 1,500 families (around 6,500 individuals) have arrived fleeing the hostilities in Aleppo. Some are being housed in 10 hosting centres (more than 2,000 individuals), where UNHCR and its partners are providing them with NFIs including blankets and mattresses, as well as food and water.

In the coastal area, as of 3 December 2024, UNHCR has already dispatched over 2,600 NFI kits and hundreds of winter kits, and distribution is ongoing. The needs are growing, but resources are limited.

Thousands of IDP families – around 40,000 individuals – have also fled to the central region of Syria. They have arrived in northern rural **Hama** Governorate, including Masyaf sub-district, Maar Shohur area, and Hama City. **Homs** continues to receive IDPs from Aleppo and Idleb, who have been accommodated in several collective shelters in Homs city. Notably, 90% of them were received by the host community, although some families with no alternative shelters were forced to stay on the streets and public gardens. Rapid establishment of hosting centres is taking place where multiple centres have been opening since 29 November. UNHCR and its partners have distributed core relief items and winter clothing to those in need in both Hama and Homs.

In **Ar-Raqqa**, where over 25,000 individuals have just arrived, UNHCR and its partners have set up temporary shelters inside stadiums (Tabqa stadium and Al-Raqqa stadium). A campaign to collect mattresses and blankets has been launched immediately after their arrival in order to properly equip these shelters.



Tents installed in Al Raqqa stadium, where UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF partners are providing assistance. | ©UNHCR Syria

In **Damascus and Rural Damascus**, an estimated 40,000 IDPs have arrived as of 4 December. The Hurjelleh hosting centre has already reached full capacity with more than 1,500 individuals, while the number of families arriving from Nubul and Zahraa (rural Aleppo) and Kafraya and Foah (Idleb) reaching Sayyeda Zeinab (Rural Damascus), has risen to some 36,000 individuals. OCHA anticipates that the total number of people that will arrive to Damascus may reach up to 60,000 individuals. UNHCR and its partners have distributed blankets, canned food baskets, and hygiene kits to these new arrivals. However, there remains an urgent need for kitchen sets, food baskets, and heating devices, particularly during the harsh winter season, as most of the water heaters at the hosting centres are not functioning.