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REGIONAL ANALYSIS SYRIA

November 2013

This Regional Analysis of the Syria conflict (RAS) is a light version updating the [October RAS](#) and provides information on key developments during the month of November while continuing to highlight the priority concerns. The RAS seeks to bring together information from sources in the region and provide holistic analysis of the overall Syria crisis. The next full version of the RAS will be published in February.

For more information, comments or questions please email SNAP@ACAPS.org.

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Overview

- **Syria:** Fighting in Syria in November saw Government of Syria (GoS) forces regain control of areas in several regions, on the back of the momentum from last month's victories in parts of Aleppo and Rural Damascus. The battle for the strategic Qalamoun area, which lies close to the Lebanese border and has thus been a major conduit for the movement of arms and goods for opposition forces, continues. Meanwhile many fear that the conflict will accelerate across the country in the upcoming weeks as the parties to the war vie to gain ground before the Geneva II peace talks, currently scheduled for 22 January 2014.
- The battle for Qalamoun has displaced thousands of families, many of whom had previously been displaced from Qusayr during the battle in May. Areas hosting large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have repeatedly been subject to violence. In northern Aleppo, for example, areas supporting thousands of IDPs in camps have been repeatedly hit with 'barrel bombs'.
- 2 more incidents of polio have been confirmed in Syria, in Rural Damascus and Aleppo, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 17. That the disease has spread highlights the urgency for vaccinating all children in the country, a campaign that is halted in places due to conflict and to armed groups refusing access to medical staff.
- Meanwhile, humanitarian space is further decreasing, with armed groups in the north increasingly interfering with relief operations and insecurity hampering movement. Fighting along the key Homs - Damascus route impacts the availability of goods in Damascus and resulting fuel shortages have been reported in the capital.

- **Host countries:** Access to host countries for the refugees continues to be problematic. While 20,000 refugees fled to Lebanon in one week this month, access to Iraq continues to be blocked. The security situation in Lebanon has been affected by the battle in neighbouring Qalamoun as rockets have been launched across the border by GoS artillery. Fears are heightened that the conflict will decisively cross into Lebanese territory as many fighters are thought to have moved into opposition-friendly areas in Lebanon.
- Across the refugee communities in all the host communities, the longevity of the crisis is exacerbating their plight. Aid providers have highlighted the increasing incidence of severe poverty, as any savings or assets families had brought from Syria have been exhausted; all assessments covering the topic highlight an increase in the proportion of refugees in debt. Opportunities to find income have dwindled with the heavy competition that rises as the refugee population swells amid regional economic insecurity. Rising poverty is exacerbating other issues:
- **Protection of children:** In many cases children are the breadwinners in their families, losing their chance for an education and being highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.
- **Health:** Some refugees in Lebanon, for example, have stated that they are unable to afford transportation to healthcare centres, let alone pay the 25% cover of their hospital bills. Mental health issues are commonly unaddressed and many families are caring for individuals with disabilities and/or injuries.
- As the crisis approaches its third year, these issues continue to be compounded. As a result, actors increasingly advocate for a different approach to the refugee crisis. This approach should not only address the short-term needs, but also the long-term impact and underlying vulnerabilities of the host countries.

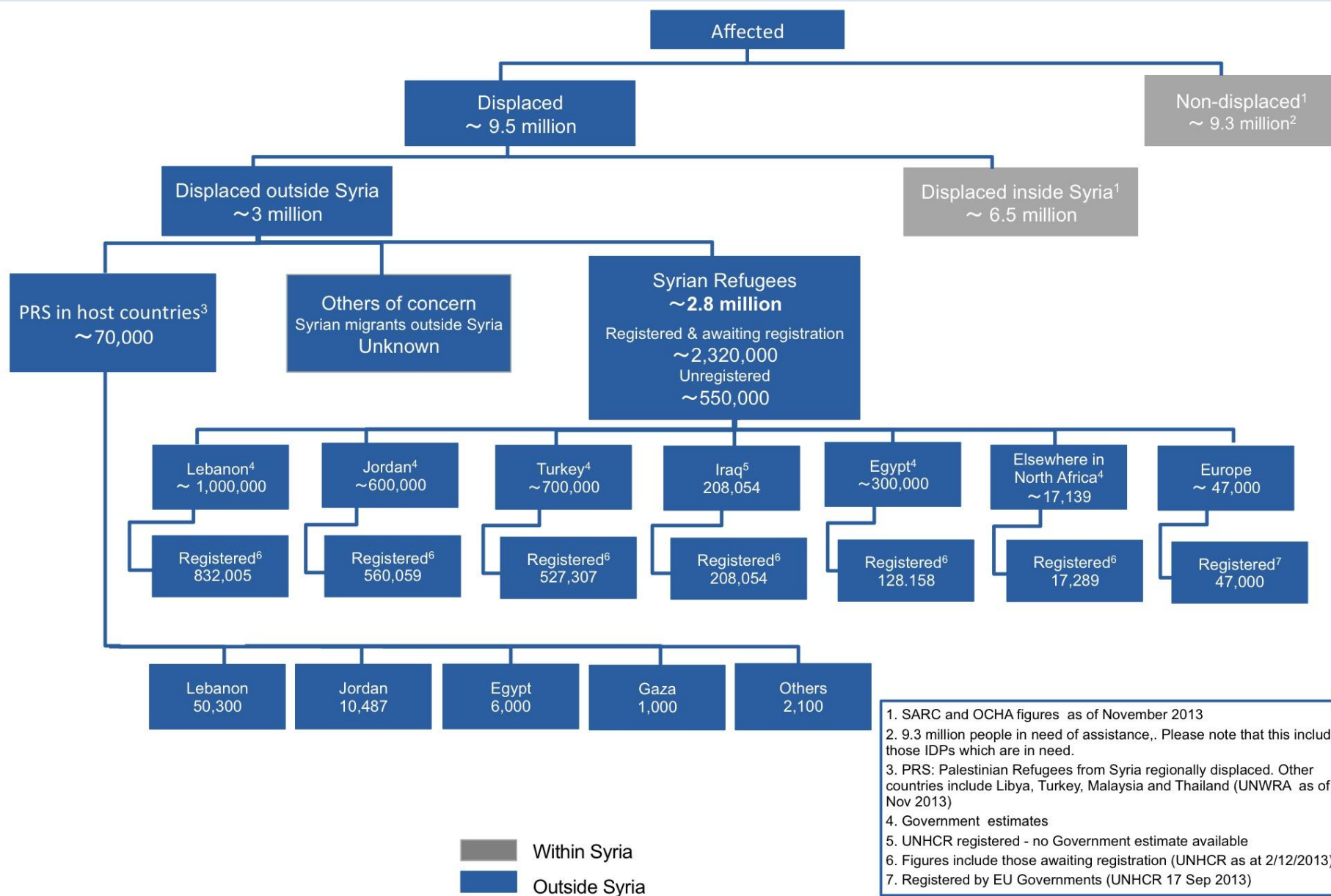
~ Displaced Syrians per country*

Syria	6,500,000
Lebanon	1,000,000
Turkey	700,000
Jordan	600,000
Egypt	300,000
Iraq**	208,000
Europe	47,000
North Africa	17,000

*As estimated by UN (for IDPs in Syria) and Host Governments.

** Number of Syrians registered with UNHCR (No Government estimate available)

Humanitarian profile



Key developments - Syria

November 2013

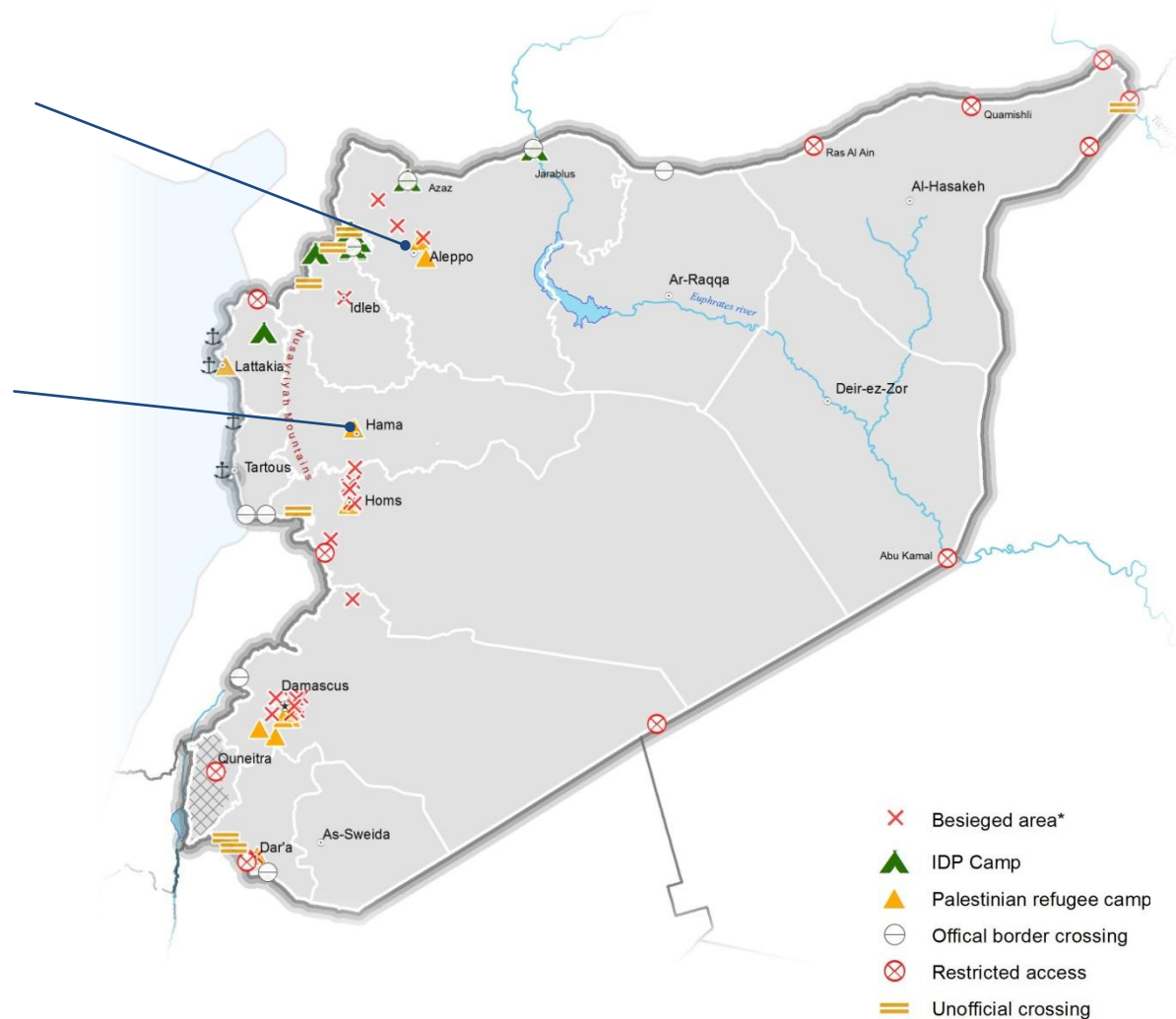
Vaccination: 17 cases of polio were confirmed, with new incidents arising in Rural Damascus and Aleppo. The actual number is likely to be much higher as many areas are no longer covered by the official reporting mechanisms. The on-going mass vaccination campaign has been interrupted by conflict and by some armed groups blocking access to areas under their control.

Detainees in Syria: the number and condition of detainees inside Syria is a concerning information gap. Torture of detainees is widespread and 43 local and international groups issued a statement expressing concern over the safety of individuals in detention.

Hama city: An assessment mission to Hama highlighted the need for winter items such as children's winter clothes, mattresses, thermal blankets and hygiene items, in addition to other basic services such as water; hygiene and sanitation; health; protection; and education.

Breakdown of government regulations: The breakdown of GoS regulations on services and goods is increasingly apparent. While before the crisis, the GoS tightly controlled a large part of the economy and public services, control is currently limited. The lack of regulation is in some areas leading to higher prices, import of low quality goods and overuse of resources.

Access: The Government of Syria recently allowed cross-border delivery of aid from Iraqi Kurdistan into northern Syria for those organisations working in Syria with Government permission. However, humanitarian access remains extremely limited countrywide. Conflict, insecurity and restrictions by the Government and armed opposition groups severely hamper movement across the country. In November, an additional 10 SARC volunteers were killed while providing humanitarian assistance, bringing the total to 32 killed since the beginning of the conflict. The northern areas become increasingly inaccessible due to restrictions posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).



*Based on publicly available information, not exhaustive

Possible developments - Syria

- **Local agreements with positive and negative effects:** Parties to the conflict continue to vie for popular support through the provision of basic goods and services and the evacuation of civilians from areas under siege. To be able to provide these services, localised negotiations between opposing armed groups and local Government officials increasingly take place. Such agreements facilitate the flow of goods (eg. the GoS obtaining crude oil from armed groups) as well as movement of people (eg. opposition groups attempting to evacuate civilians from areas under siege in Damascus). While these negotiations result in a temporary improvement of the situation for some of the population, the wider situation deteriorates, as there is a greater incentive to besiege areas or to monopolise commodities for leverage purposes during negotiations.
- **Humanitarian space in north Syria:** ISIL controls almost all areas around the border region, except the Kurdish controlled regions in Al-Hasakeh. While ISIL cedes control of the border posts to the Free Syrian Army and other brigades, so as not to anger the Government of Turkey (GoT), it establishes checkpoints along all routes further inland. Aid transported through these checkpoints is extremely limited and subject to strict restrictions posed by ISIL. International organisations are not able to operate directly in areas under ISIL's control and can only provide cross-border assistance through remote programming. All the direct aid provision is channelled through IDP camps, which will see a larger daily influx of new arrivals.
- **Fighting along supply routes:** The GoS continues to rely heavily on the import of wheat, medicines and fuel. However, fighting along the Homs – Damascus route cuts off supplies from Latakia and Tartous ports. The important supply route from Beirut to Damascus is regularly interrupted due to protests and insecurity. As a result, the GoS is increasingly using the international road to Jordan and the road to Iraq as supply routes and fighting for control over these roads intensifies.

Operational constraints

- Humanitarian space in the north is rapidly decreasing. Insecurity in Aleppo and Homs limits the movement of humanitarian convoys from Damascus to the north and northeast. At the same time, access to northern areas for international organisations operating from Turkey is increasingly hampered by ISIL checkpoints along the border region and the threat of kidnappings. ([Noria 2013/12/05](#), [WFP 2013/11/20](#), [OCHA 2013/11/20](#))
- ISIL actively hampers aid efforts in areas under their control, such as Jarablus and Ar-Raqqa. ISIL reportedly bars foreign aid workers from

entering areas under their control and prevents women from involvement in aid work. In Jarablus, ISIL has issued rules requiring aid agencies to register and regularly report to them and has taken responsibility for hiring of aid staff and beneficiary selection. ([Noria 2013/12/05](#), [Life4Syria 2013/10/25](#))

- Insecurity due to military operations in the Qalamoun region closed the key transit route between Damascus and Homs in late November. The closure of this key route cut off fuel supplies coming from Syria's northern ports to Damascus, leading to shortages and long waits at petrol stations. Prior to the closure of the Damascus-Homs highway, transport costs from Damascus had reportedly increased by 50% and goods from the capital were only being transported to Dar'a, as-Sweida, Rural Damascus and Quneitra governorates. ([Assafir 2013/11/25](#), [Al Watan 2013/11/25](#), [El Nashra 2013/11/26](#), [Al Watan 2013/11/13](#), [IFRC 2013/11/18](#))
- Countrywide, WFP aid convoys are unable to access around 250,000 people. Although communities in 8 locations that had been cut off for months received food aid in November, mainly in rural Homs and Dar'a, over 130 locations remain hard to reach. ([Reuters 2013/12/03](#))
- Over 70% of Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) branches reported that areas in their respective governorates were frequently inaccessible due to the proliferation of checkpoints, road closures, difficulty in obtaining permission and insecurity. ([IFRC 2013/11/18](#), [OCHA 2013/11/20](#), [ICRC 2013/11/19](#), [As-Safir 2013/11/12](#))

Assessments

No assessments on the humanitarian situation in Syria have become available in November. However, several assessments have been undertaken, of which the results are expected to be published in December:

- On October 21, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) and U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) jointly launched a Rapid Food and Agriculture Assessment to determine the current food security situation in Syria and update the previous WFP-FAO assessment completed in June 2013. The joint assessment commenced fieldwork on October 27 with two teams, covering all 14 governorates. Teams expect to publish results at the start of December. ([USAID 2013/11/07](#))
- UNRWA Syria is finalising a needs assessment of Palestinian refugees. Early findings suggest a significant increase in the number of Palestinians in need, with 450,000 Palestinians, out of a total population of 540,000, in need. Results of the assessment are expected at the start of December.
- Several small-scale assessments reportedly informed the revision of the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), which will be launched on 16 December. The multi-sectoral Joint Humanitarian Assessment (JHA) originally scheduled for November to support the strategic planning for 2014 will be reconvened in January 2014.

November conflict pattern

Key developments country-wide

In November, the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) advanced significantly in northern and southern Damascus countryside as well as in the northern governorate of Aleppo, while opposition groups gained control of several villages in Eastern Ghouta as part of an unsuccessful attempt to reach Otayba, the gateway to Ghouta, from the south and lift the siege on the area. On 15 November, the Qalamoun battle intensified, with the SAF taking control of several towns in an attempt to secure the international highway linking Damascus to Tartous and Lattakia and cut opposition supply routes from Lebanon into Syria.

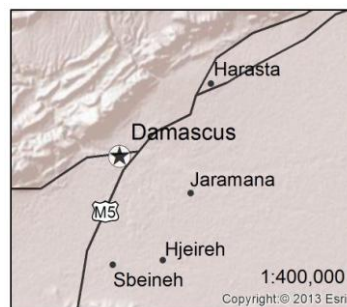
Fighting between armed opposition groups is on-going. One of the largest Al-Qaeda affiliated groups, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), is currently not involved in battles against the SAF but focuses on taking control of border areas in the north, thereby regularly clashing with the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Jabhat Al Nusra and Kurdish armed groups. On 21 November for instance, the ISIL expelled Free Syrian Army fighters out of Atma, a strategic access point from Idlib into Turkey. (Noria 2013/11/05)

At the same time, negotiations between armed groups led to local peace agreements in various areas this month, with the withdrawal of armed fighters in Qudsiya (western outskirts), and Yarmouk camp (south).

Despite increased territorial gains by the GoS and the scheduling of peace negotiations in Geneva for 22 January, the fighting in Syria is not expected to end in the near future and continues to be fierce in Dar'a, Homs, Hama, Idlib and Deir-ez-Zor. (AFP 2013/11/16, Daily Star 2013/11/18, Assafir 2013/11/25, Al-akhbar 2013/11/25, El Nashra 2013/11/26, ISW 2013/11/26)

Key events per governorate

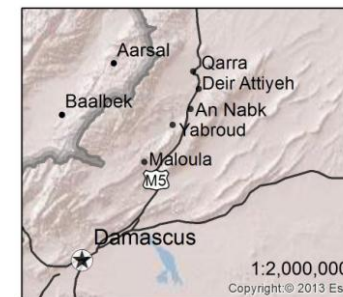
Rural Damascus: Conflict escalated in November in southern Damascus amidst new attempts by the SAF to gain control of opposition controlled areas around Damascus. The Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) recaptured Ghazal, Sbeineh and Hjeireh along a major supply route to the south. Clashes also restarted on 22 November in Western and Eastern Ghouta. (ISW 2013/11/26)



In addition, mortar shelling and suicide bombings increasingly hit the **city of Damascus** (Jaramana, Harasta, Somariyeh). (Al Jazeera 2013/11/18, AFP 2013/11/26, Assafir 2013/11/27)

On 15 November, the battle for Qalamoun has become the site of fierce clashes as the SAF took control of Qarra, Deir Attiyeh and An Nabk in their attempt to cut off key supply routes between opposition strongholds in the mountainous area

that connects Damascus to Tartous and Lattakia and to Aarsal in Lebanon. Conflict is currently centred on Maaloula, the town which was briefly taken over by opposition fighters fleeing SAF victories along the Damascus-Homs highway. (ISW 2013/11/26, Daily Star 2013/12/03)



On 6 November, a car bomb killed security personnel in a rare attack on a military intelligence headquarters in **As-Sweida** governorate. Since the start of the crisis, As-Sweida succeeded in isolating themselves from the continuing conflict. In **Quneitra**, armed fighters have succeeded in taking over army posts in some villages which could indicate an expansion of violence to the relatively calm governorate in the near future. (Daily Star 2013/12/03)

In Aleppo, the SAF, after gaining control of the strategic city of As Safira in the southeast, have gradually gained momentum in the southeast of the governorate. The SAF has taken control of southeastern villages and military bases such as Tal Aran, and the military base 80 securing the area around the international airport while ensuring a major supply route to the city. On 12 November, SAF started an offensive to retake opposition neighbourhoods from brigades weakened by fighting amongst opposition groups.

Extremist fighters continue to clash with Popular Protection Units (YPG) in besieged rural Afrin.

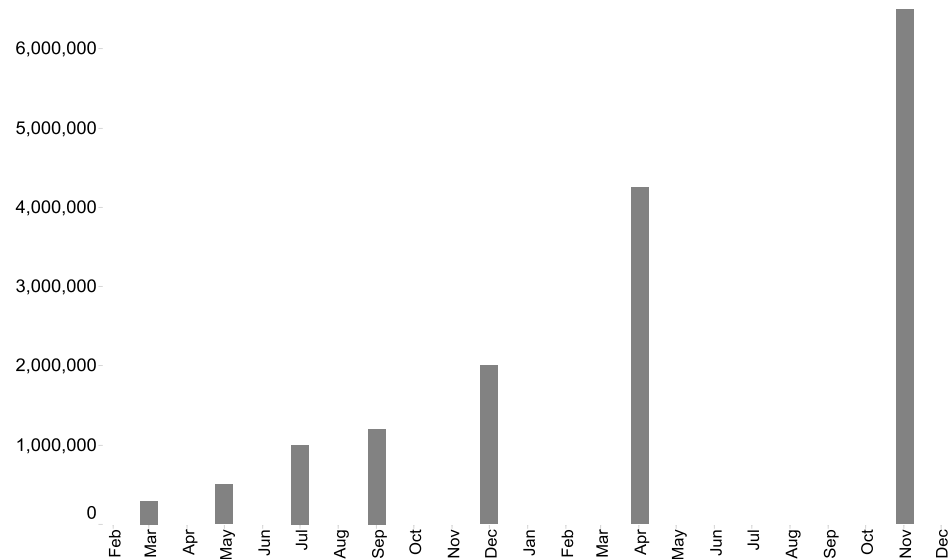
In **Al-Hasakeh**, the YPG, the military wing of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), controls most of the governorate, except the city of Al-Hasakeh and a few other areas such as Tal Hamees (Qamishli) and Shaddadah. Days after gaining control of Ya'robiyah border crossing with Iraq at the end of October, the YPG took over several villages previously controlled by ISIL around Ras Al-Ain and rural Qamishli. The conflict is currently centred around Tell Abiad. Kurdish groups have been successful in establishing an administrative authority similar to a municipal structure. (Assafir 2013/11/11, Daily Star 2013/11/12, Al-Jazeera 2013/11/13, AFP 2013/11/15, Assafir 2013/11/16, Al-akhbar 2013/11/26, Daily Star 2013/11/27)

On 22 November, shelling targeted the GoS-controlled military base 17 in **Ar-Raqqa** with severe aerial bombardment on the city. In addition, clashes between ISIL and Jabhat Al Nusra have been reported from the governorate. In **Deir-ez-Zor**, Al-Qaeda-linked groups seized Syria's largest oil field (al-Omar) on 23 November, cutting off the GoS's access to all Deir-ez-Zor's oilfields. (Assafir 2013/11/09, Daily Star 2013/11/23, AFP 2013/11/23, Al-Jazeera 2013/11/06, AFP 2013/11/13, AFP 2013/11/16, AFP 2013/11/19, El Nashra 2013/11/25)

Displacement

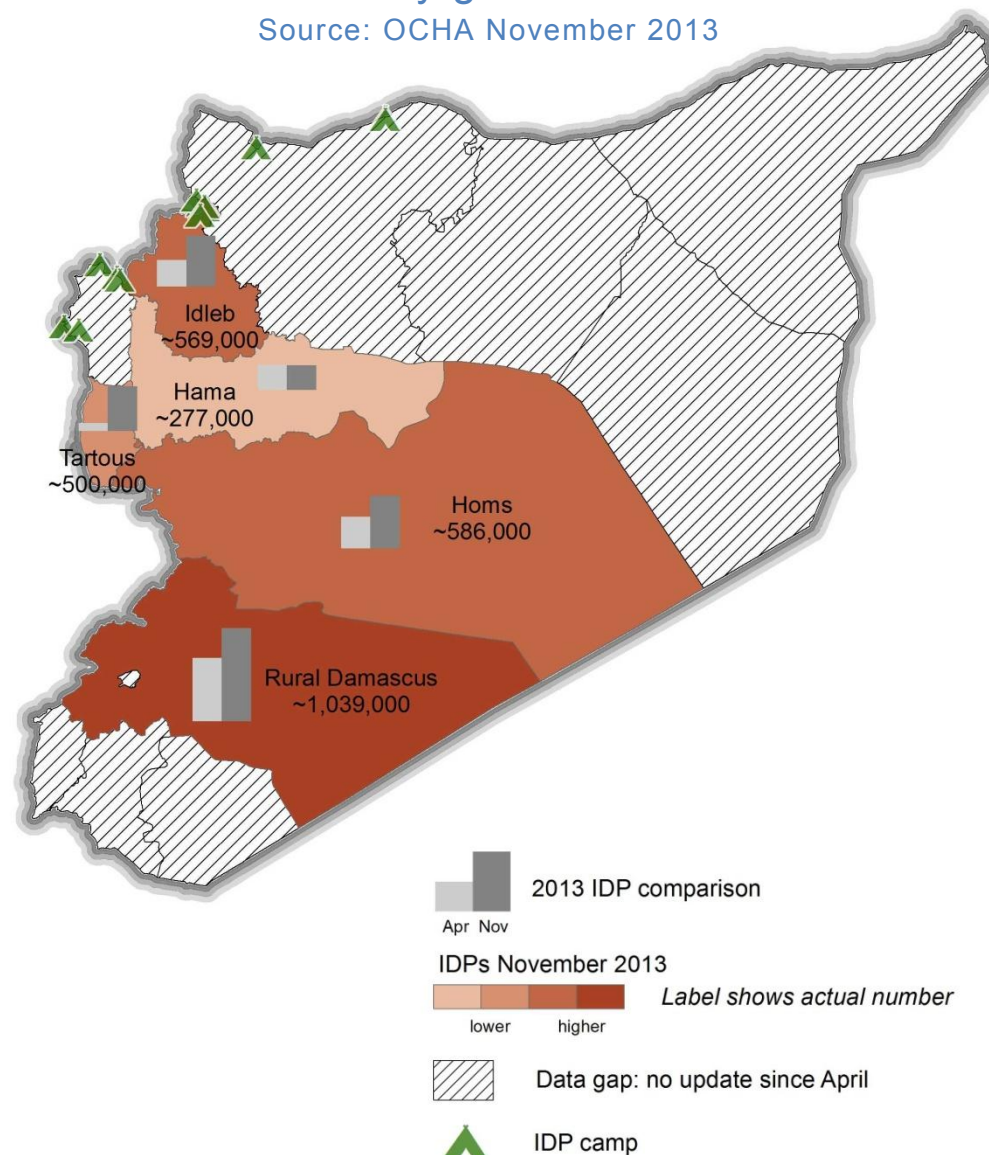
- Revised estimates indicate that the number of IDPs has increased to 6.5 million from April estimates of 4.25 million. As no displacement tracking system has yet been established, the basis for these estimates is unclear.
- The Governorates of Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idlib, Tartous, Hama and Deir-ez-Zor reportedly have the highest concentrations of IDPs. A large number of IDPs are residing along borders with Turkey, Jordan and Iraq, partly due to entry restrictions. The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) identified 28 IDP camps, where people reside either awaiting access to Turkey or to access services and protection. The number of IDPs in these identified camps totals 75,000, up from 63,000 in July. (IFRC 2013/11/19, ACU 2013/07, ACU 2013/10, [Jordan Times 2013/10/28](#))
- November saw instances of sudden large-scale displacement in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Quneitra and Homs. In Qarra for instance, a large part of the population has reportedly fled fighting in the city, with over 20,000 people reaching Lebanon. ([Daily Star 2013/11/16](#), [OCHA 2013/12/02](#))

Estimated Number of IDPs as reported by OCHA
(March 2012 - November 2013)



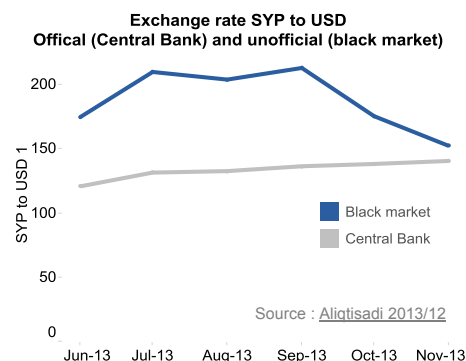
IDPs by governorate

Source: OCHA November 2013



Livelihoods and Food Security

- Prices:** Commodity prices continue to fluctuate on a daily basis, with high discrepancies between areas. Prices are mainly affected by levels of conflict, access to supply routes and local production. For instance, in Al-Hasakeh, where armed groups controlling the main entry points have been preventing access of market supplies, the price of dairy and vegetables is far above pre-crisis levels. In Hama, however, the price of locally produced fruits such as apples is below pre-crisis levels because farmers are no longer able to transport the produce to other governorates. Prices for vegetable oil increased sharply in September and October in Damascus and Rural Damascus, while in Homs, an opposite trend was observed, due to better market functioning in Tartous and Idleb. (WFP 2013/09/30, WFP 2013/11/20, Tishreen 2013/11/06, SANA 2013/10/29, USAID 2013/11/07)
- Wheat availability:** Due to the crisis, households are forced to reduce dietary diversity and the most vulnerable groups are consuming almost exclusively carbohydrates. As a result, the demand for bread has increased. GoS sources report that there is a sufficient amount of wheat available, with the loss in domestic production balanced by imports and wheat stocks (currently estimated at 50% of national consumption). While imports were for a long time severely hampered by sanctions, an increase in deliveries of wheat has been reported since several European governments unfroze bank accounts to allow for trade on humanitarian grounds. These GoS statements are confirmed by the fact that no widespread shortages of wheat have been reported. The exception is within areas under siege, where the GoS or opposition groups actively obstruct the transport of wheat. (WFP 2013/09/30, HGCA 2013, WFP 2013/11/20, Reuters 2013/10/11, Al Watan 2013/11/16, Al Jazeera 2013/10/30, Tishreen 2013/11/06)
- Coping mechanisms:** The use of negative coping strategies to cover food needs is widely reported, including borrowing food, reducing the number of meals consumed per day and cutting on essential non-food expenses (including education and health). (WFP 2013/09/30)



Protection

- War crimes and crimes against humanity:** For the first time since the start of the conflict, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that an inquiry produced evidence that war crimes were authorised by President al-Assad. Responsibility was also ascribed to other senior Government officials. The inquiry previously reported it has evidence that opposition groups have been guilty of human rights abuses as well. (Guardian 2013/12/02, Al Jazeera 2013/12/02, BBC 2013/12/03)
- Besieged areas:** A large number of civilians continue to be trapped in areas under siege. The most recent areas to be placed under siege are villages in the Qalamoun region, where SAF is reportedly holding contested towns under siege. These sieges are usually lifted once the SAF takes full control of an area, as happened in Qarra. A limited number of civilians were reportedly allowed to leave the besieged neighbourhoods of Al Wa'er in Homs city and Beit Sahem in the Damascus suburbs. It is unclear why the civilians were allowed to leave, although it is possible that civil society groups negotiated their departure as seen in other recent releases. Repeated requests and attempts to negotiate access to Yarmouk camp and Madamiyet Elsham by UN and civil society groups have been unsuccessful. (ISW 2013/11/26, Jafra Foundation 2013/11/13, OCHA 2013/11/20, UNRWA 2013/11/25, Reuters 2013/11/18, WFP 2013/11/20)
- Freedom of press:** At least 6 media activists were killed during late November: 5 in Eastern Ghouta and 1 in Aleppo. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 52 have been killed since the beginning of the conflict and 30 are currently kidnapped, making Syria the most dangerous place to be a journalist. (Daily Star 2013/11/11, Daily Star 2013/11/27)
- Unlawful killings:** A recent report by the Oxford Research Group analysing child casualties in Syria's conflict found that over 11,000 children have been killed. 71% were killed by explosive weapons and about one-quarter by small arms fire. Twice as many boys were killed compared to girls, with teenage boys at particular risk of being killed. (Oxford Research Group 2013/11/24)

Health

- Morbidity:** In November, WHO confirmed a total of 17 cases of wild poliovirus type 1, with 15 cases confirmed in Deir-ez-Zor and 1 case each in Aleppo and Rural Damascus. An estimated 500,000 children have not been immunised and 100,000 are at risk of polio. (Guardian 2013/10/29, Daily Star 2013/11/03, USAID 2013/11/07, UNHCR 2013/11/13, OCHA 2013/11/19, WHO 2013/11/26)
- There are concerns over possible shortages of oral polio vaccine dosages as the global supply was already limited before the Syrian outbreak. The regional campaign is the largest of its kind in the Middle East and is targeting 22 million children in 7 countries and territories. (WHO 2013/11/08)

- **Access to health care:** Populations in contested areas of Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs and Rural Damascus are reportedly particularly at risk due to the lack of functional health facilities and staff. ([IFRC 2013/11/19](#))
- Heavy shelling in Al Wa'er neighbourhood in Homs city damaged the only functioning hospital (Al Walid), killing and injuring civilians, including health staff. ([OCHA 2013/11/19](#))
- Costs of medical supplies continue to increase with SARC pharmacies in Rural Damascus reporting a doubling of costs of basic medicines, such as aspirin. ([IFRC 2013/11/01](#))
- Private insurance companies reportedly increased their premium rates, some by 200%, due to the devaluation of the Syrian pound and the challenges in security medical supplies. ([Tishreen 2013/11/06](#))
- **Medicines:** The breakdown of public services is leading to a lack of inspection of imported goods and increased reliance on smuggled goods. An Iraqi produced medicinal drink was reportedly found to be toxic. ([Tishreen 2013/11/01](#))
- **Nutrition:** There are continued reports of malnutrition with one reported death from malnutrition of a child in Yarmouk camp. In Tartous, a MUAC (mid-upper arm circumference) assessment of almost 3,000 children identified 18 children with symptoms of moderate acute malnutrition. ([WFP 2013/09/30](#), [Jafra Foundation 2013/11/13](#), [OCHA 2013/11/20](#), [UNRWA 2013/11/25](#))

Shelter and NFI

- **Electricity cuts:** Fighting over control of power plants continues in several parts of the country and power cuts as a result of damage to infrastructure are a regular occurrence. At the start of November, fighting around the main power plant serving Aleppo city led to a days-long electricity cut. Damascus continues to be hit by hour-long power outages, due to fighting around plants and electricity cables. In addition, widespread electricity cuts have been reported from Ar-Raqqa, Homs, Quneitra and as-Sweida. While fighting in the latter 2 governorates is limited, a lack of maintenance of the infrastructure and inputs such as spare parts causes regular cuts. ([Daily Star 2013/11/18](#), [Daily Star 2013/11/06](#), [Al-Akhbar 2013/11/08](#), [Jordan Times 2013/11/17](#), [Al-Akhbar 2013/11/27](#))
- **Fuel:** The prices of fuel in north-eastern governorates continue to increase, reportedly due to the absence of any form of regulation. Prices not only vary significantly per area, they can differ depending on the customer: in Qamishli city, in al-Hasakeh governorate, it was reported that traders refused to sell fuel to IDPs from Deir-ez-Zor, or are demanding higher prices. The lack of fuel is affecting households' ability to cook, with 45% of WFP beneficiaries assessed in September indicating that they faced difficulties cooking due to a lack of fuel. ([WFP 2013/11/20](#), [WFP 2013/11/20](#))

- There is no updated information available on the shelter situation. However, with the fighting spreading to new areas in rural Damascus and Aleppo, more damage to infrastructure and displacement is to be expected. Although temperatures rarely drop below 0°C, rain and wind is leading to a deterioration of the situation for those residing in inadequate shelter.

WASH

- Before the conflict, the GoS tightly regulated the provision of water through the local water boards. In several areas, this regulatory framework is no longer upheld and the lack of control results in the establishment of unofficial water sources. In one district for instance, the number of wells increased from around 6,500 before the crisis to over 20,000 currently. Although this remedies the current water shortages, it negatively affects the water table and can have long-term implications.
- The conflict has caused widespread damage to infrastructure and the lack of security results in substantial indirect damage due to looting and vandalism. The General Company for Water Projects estimated its total direct and indirect losses at 26 billion SYP (173 million USD). The GoS reports that it is continuously constructing and rehabilitating the infrastructure. In Hama city for instance, SARC and the Hama water board completed construction of 12 new wells, bringing the total number of wells to 64. The new wells allow for back-up supplies in case of cuts from the Orontes river supply. ([Al Iqtissadi 2013/11/12](#), [Al Watan 2013/11/12](#), [Tishreen 2013/11/05](#))
- There is only limited updated information available on the WASH situation:
 - Water shortages in southeast Dar'a persist due to lack of electricity and disruption at the two main water plants. ([Tishreen 2013/11/13](#))
 - In Ashrafieh and Sehnaya in the southern Damascus suburbs, residents are relying on water-trucking due to water shortages and electricity cuts. The cost of 5 water barrels is estimated at 500 SYP (3.3 USD). ([Tishreen 2013/11/25](#))
 These shortages appear to be illustrative of a national shortage in potable water, particularly in areas where heavy fighting has caused damage to water infrastructure.

Education

- UNICEF reports that around 4,000 schools are not functional due to damage, destruction or because they are hosting IDPs, up from an estimated 3,600 in July. Schools continue to be looted, vandalised and are directly targeted by attacks. ([UN 2013/11/12](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/30](#), [UNRWA 2013/07/22](#))
- A large proportion of children in IDP camps along the border with Turkey are not in school. Reasons for not sending children to school include a lack of awareness on the side of the parents, a lack of capacity of schools, and a lack of stationery. ([ACU 2013/10](#))

Key developments – host countries

November 2013

Lebanon



Within 10 days, over 20,000 Syrians arrived in Aarsal from the contested area Qalamoun in Syria. It is feared that this influx is just the first of multiple large scale influxes which will follow the on-going battles in Qalamoun. In addition, the battle is expected to increase security incidents in Lebanon. The widespread shortage of adequate shelter is a concern for the new arrivals as is their legal status as all of them entered Lebanon through unofficial crossings.

Egypt



Despite the state of emergency coming to an end, hundreds of refugees continue to be detained without having been charged. Several groups of detainees have embarked on hunger strikes in protest of their treatment.

Jordan



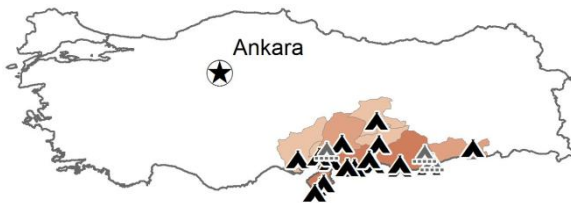
Despite on-going restrictions to entry, the number of new arrivals in November increased slightly to over 7,000 or about 260 arrivals per day. The increase in new arrivals is likely due to intensive military operations in Rural Damascus and Homs, rather than an easing of Jordan's border restrictions, as the vast majority of new arrivals entered through the more porous eastern crossings.

Iraq



Efforts are underway to finalise permanent camps for the August influx of 60,000 refugees. The winter weather has made the transit camps exceedingly inhospitable, with rains washing away hundreds of tents in one incident.

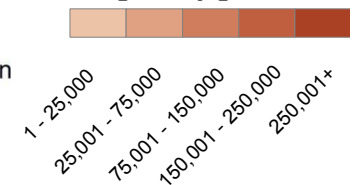
Turkey



An estimated 500,000 Syrians reside outside of camps, of which around 320,000 are registered with the GoT. Refugees living outside camps are increasingly vulnerable and support to the urban refugees is limited.

- Refugee camp
- Camp under construction

Refugees by governorate



Country maps are represented at different scales. Data source: UNHCR.

Possible developments - Host countries

- **Lebanon:** Fighting in the Qalamoun area continues into 2014 as GoS forces seek to cut the main opposition supply routes to the area. The Aarsal region, both a base for opposition fighters as well as an important route for weapons and supplies, thus becomes a target for the SAF and the conflict spills over into the Lebanese border region, with frequent shelling and security incidents on Lebanese territory. Tensions between supporters and opponents of the GoS in Lebanon increase. The fighting in areas of Qalamoun causes large-scale displacement into Lebanon, putting further pressure on public services. Secondary displacement from these areas is common, particularly to the north of Lebanon. The lack of adequate shelter is of high concern and calls for the establishment of camps increase. Humanitarian access to the border region is jeopardised by the on-going security incidents.
- **Coordination of humanitarian and development activities:** Donors increasingly seek to fund projects which aim to address some of the underlying development needs together with a more sustainable approach to meeting the refugee needs. However, coordination of longer-term development activities with the on-going humanitarian response is ineffective, resulting in redundancy and gaps. Coordination is further hindered by increasing competition for funding, with humanitarian and developmental requirements increasing on a daily basis.
- **Iraq:** Tensions between Turkey and the authorities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) and the Kurdish groups in Northern Syria continue to rise, affecting the Kurdish Syrian population in KR-I. The hospitality previously enjoyed by Syrian refugees decreases, as the host community blames them for the increased tensions while increasing competition for jobs and pushing down wages. The refugees are encouraged to leave the host communities and stay in refugee camps.

Assessments published in November

- **Lebanon:** Two assessments on livelihoods of Syrians in Lebanon were published in November:
 - An Oxfam survey among 260 households in Akkar, Aarsal, Beirut, Bar Elias, Majdal Anjar, Saida, Tyre and Tripoli ([Oxfam 2013/11/21](#))
 - A Handicap International assessment among 390 households in Bekaa and the northern region ([HI 2013/11/07](#))

There are similarities between the findings of the 2 assessments: around 75% of households are in debt and the main expenditures for households are rent, food and health costs. However, the average levels of income and expenditure differ significantly between the 2 assessments, most likely due to the different geographic regions assessed. For instance, average expenditure on food is USD 227 according to the Handicap International study and USD 275 according to Oxfam results.
- Other assessments published in November include an IOM profiling study of 17,000 identified Lebanese returnees, highlighting food, shelter, health and employment as the major needs. ([IOM 2013/11/07](#))
- Updates on the Aarsal influx are published on an almost daily basis, including the needs, figures and response. This is the first example of a regularly updated, event-specific information product. A multi-sectoral inter-agency assessment was undertaken by NRC, ACF, WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF to assess the needs of the new-comers. Results of this assessment are due by mid-December. ([IA 2013/11/27](#))
- In **Jordan**, NRC conducted an assessment of refugees' use of various NFIs provided in Za'atari camp. In addition, REACH conducted assessments on winterisation needs in Za'atari camp and in host communities and IMC published a mental health assessment of adolescents in Za'atari camp.
- IOM have conducted vulnerability assessments in urban areas in which refugees are hosted in **Iraq**. Their findings are discussed in bi-weekly reports but the assessments have not been made public. ACTED undertakes assessments in many of the refugee camps and publishes the findings in its reports. ([ACTED 2013/11/29](#))
- **Egypt:** HRW published a report on protection issues surrounding detentions entitled "Egypt: Syria Refugees Detained, Coerced to Return". In addition, UNHCR publishes weekly updates on its operations in Egypt; one provided details of a joint exploratory mission to Damietta conducted by UNHCR and UNICEF on 30-31 October in order to develop an understanding of protection needs for children in the governorate. ([UNHCR 2013/11/11](#), [HRW 2013/11/11](#))
- **Turkey:** No assessments have become available on the situation in Turkey. The GoT, supported by UNHCR, undertook a profiling exercise of non-camp refugees. The results are expected to become available in December.

Lebanon

Individuals affected

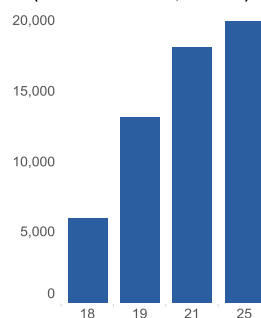
Syrian registered refugees and awaiting registration	832,000
Unregistered Syrians	Unknown
Palestinian refugees from Syria	50,300
Lebanese returnees	17,000

Source: [UNHCR 2013/11/25](#), [IOM 2013/11/07](#)

Key developments November

- Aarsal influx:** The latter half of November saw the largest single influx into the Bekaa valley to date, with over 20,000 people arriving to the area of Aarsal within 10 days. Most of the new arrivals had been residing in the Qalamoun mountains, before intensive fighting caused large-scale displacement. Access to WASH facilities and shelter are key priorities. The lack of available shelter options for new-comers in the saturated border areas often forces the newly arrived to stay in inadequate shelters. The widespread shelter shortage is compounded by the harsh weather, with current night temperatures as low as 4°C. As most arrivals entered Lebanon through unofficial crossings, the lack of proof of legal stay is of concern. ([AFP 2013/11/16](#), [PI 2013/12/02](#))
- Insecurity:** The response for new arrivals in Aarsal is hampered by insecurity, including security incidents during relief distributions. In addition, the Aarsal area is regularly targeted by air raids and shelling. At the start of November, Syrian helicopters fired rockets at a residential area on the outskirts of Aarsal. On 19 November, 29 people were killed in a twin suicide bombings targeting the Iranian embassy in Beirut, further illustrating the heightened security risks in Lebanon as a result of the conflict in Syria.
- Measures to prevent security incidents are hampering access to people in need in Tripoli and Wadi-Khaled. After the latest escalation of fighting in Tripoli, the city was placed under army control resulting in an increasing number of checkpoints. ([WFP 2013/11/28](#), [Daily Star 2013/11/14](#))
- Arrivals and returns:** Cross-border movement between Lebanon and Syria is common - an estimated 10 to 12,000 people cross into Lebanon each day, while an estimated 7 to 8,000 individuals return to Syria, supposedly to check on property, work or to join an armed group. During an assessment among 260 households, 80% of households indicated that they would only resettle in Syria if peace was achieved across the country. ([Oxfam 2013/11/21](#), [PI 2013/11/10](#))
- Restrictions to entry:** Although the Lebanese border crossings remain open, restrictions to entry remain in place, particularly for Palestinians and for Syrians with damaged or no identity papers. ([Amnesty 2013/10/30](#))

Cumulative refugee influx Aarsal
(18 - 25 November, UNHCR)



- Legal status:** An increasing number of Syrians have no proof of legal status in Lebanon, either because they crossed through unofficial border crossings or because they cannot afford to renew their permit (USD 200). Although the Lebanese authorities have pledged not to arrest or return anyone from Syria due to the expiry of their visas, the lack of legal status remains a concern. A recent survey of around 800 new-borns indicated that over 70% did not have registered birth certificates. ([Amnesty 2013/10/30](#), [UNHCR 2013/10/31](#))
- Misinformation:** As refugees are scattered across the country, ensuring that Syrians are informed about their rights and access to services remains complicated. Despite mass information campaigns, refugees indicate that there is a lack of reliable information on critical issues such as the targeting of aid, UNHCR registration and access to assistance. As the primary source of information for Syrian refugees is 'word-of-mouth' - either in person or through mobile phones - false or incomplete information rapidly spreads across the community. For instance, during an Oxfam assessment in different geographical areas, the main reason for not registering with UNHCR was an unfounded fear that after registration they would not be allowed to return to Syria. ([Oxfam 2013/11/21](#), [InterNews 2013/11](#))
- Lebanese returnees:** Lebanese returnees represent an 'invisible' and often under-assisted group. A recent IOM profiling exercise identified over 17,000 Lebanese returnees. These returnees are facing problems similar to Syrian refugees, with 70% of individuals of working age (18-64) unemployed. Their main priority, as indicated by the returnees, is food, followed by access to health, shelter and employment. ([IOM 2013/11/07](#))
- Impact of the crisis on host-communities:** The Syrian influx is increasing demand on public services, with an estimated 20% increase in population making use of already weak and insufficient services. According to municipalities, the impact is primarily visible in the increased need for garbage collection, water and sewage facilities and electrical grids. To address the impact, the Lebanese Government established a 'Roadmap of priority interventions for stabilisation from the Syrian conflict', requesting almost USD 3 billion over 5 years to address the impact of the crisis. However, it is unclear to what extent donors will be willing to fund this appeal as there are concerns over the capacity of the Government of Lebanon as well as over instances of corruption. ([Oxfam 2013/11/21](#), [Daily Star 2013/11/07](#), [PI 2013/11/04](#))
- Tensions between host communities and refugees:** In general, Lebanese communities are generously hosting Syrian refugees. However, localised tensions have been reported in several areas. In the most serious incident since the start of the refugee crisis, residents of Qsarnaba, a village in Bekaa, set fire to 15 tents in an informal tented settlement and destroyed others in response to the alleged harassment of a resident by Syrians. ([AFP 2013/12/02](#))

Jordan

Individuals affected

Syrian registered refugees and awaiting registration	560,000
Unregistered Syrians	
Palestinian refugees from Syria	10,500
Syrian migrants	Unknown
Syrian returnees	>85,000

Sources: [UNHCR 2013/12/05](#), [UNHCR 2013/10/31](#), [UNRWA 2013/10/25](#)

Key developments November

- **New arrivals:** The number of new arrivals increased slightly in November to over 7,000 or about 260 arrivals per day. This is the highest monthly total of new arrivals since June. The increase in new arrivals is likely due to intensive military operations in Rural Damascus and Homs, rather than an easing of Jordan's border restrictions, as the vast majority of new arrivals entered through the more porous eastern crossings. October witnessed a decrease in returns organised from Za'atari camp, but returns have reportedly increased in November at an average rate of 200 per day. ([UNHCR 2013/11/12](#), [UNHCR 2013/12/01](#), [Dar'a Provincial Council 2013/11/27](#))
- **Restrictions to entry:** Recent human rights reports highlighted the continued restrictions faced by Syrians and Palestinians attempting to enter Jordan. While Jordanian authorities have acknowledged restrictions against Palestinians and Iraqi refugees from Syria and unaccompanied males, Human Rights First and Amnesty International documented numerous cases of women, children and elderly being blocked from entering the Kingdom. It was reported that in August, Jordanian authorities at the Naseeb/Jaber border were only allowing in those who held identity documents and paid a fee. ([Amnesty 2013/10/31](#), [Human Rights First 2013/11/22](#))
- **Za'atari population figures:** A REACH exercise in Za'atari camp confirmed that there are less than 75,000 refugees living in the camp, although the official population figures at the time of the assessment was about 110,000. A verification exercise conducted by UNHCR is expected to confirm the official figures in early 2014. Food and WASH assistance has been provided on the basis of the inflated official figures. In addition, disease surveillance reports and school attendance figures have also used official figures, which have led to misleading conclusions. ([REACH 2013/11/19](#), [UNHCR 2013/11/11](#), [UNHCR 2013/10/09](#), [UNHCR 2013/10/08](#), [UNHCR 2013/11/06](#))
- **Azraq camp:** Azraq camp is considered a contingency site and will be opened in case of a mass influx or a trigger of 600 or more arrivals a day. Aid agencies working in the site were advised to stop further investment in camp infrastructure, except for maintenance activities. ([UNHCR 2013/11/06](#))
- **Shelter:** NGOs are concerned with the growing number of informal tented settlements in northern Jordan. A REACH assessment found a high

percentage of refugees in Balqa and Mafraq governorates are residing in tented settlements. ([REACH 2013/10/30](#))

- **Winterisation:** A number of NGO winterisation projects have not been approved by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), which is delaying the distribution of heaters, blankets, mattresses, clothing, and fuel. An estimated 190,000 Syrians and Jordanians in non-camp settings will be affected by the delay. ([PI 2013/11/27](#))
- Based on last winter's experiences, official refugee camps and informal settlements face increased risk of fires, burns and flooding during the winter season. In early November, rainfall damaged dozens of tents in Za'atari camp. Last winter, flooding and dire living conditions in tents led to a number of protests but UNHCR is aiming to provide the remaining 4,000 families in tents with caravans by the end of the year. ([IRIN 2013/11/04](#), [CPWG 2013/11/14](#))
- **Mental health:** A July mental health assessment of 12-18 year olds in Za'atari found that fear and grief were the most common mental health symptoms and that withdrawal/hiding was the most common coping mechanism. Adolescents and parents strongly highlighted camp conditions, including the climate, WASH conditions and lack of security, as the most significant challenge they face. ([IMC 2013/11/19](#))
- **Access to services in host communities:** A REACH assessment of Syrian refugees in host communities in northern Jordan found that:
 - The main obstacles to accessing shelter are high costs and limited supply;
 - The vast majority of refugees in Ajloun governorate were perceived to have significant challenges in accessing food, followed by Jerash, parts of Irbid and eastern Mafraq;
 - The vast majority of refugees in assessed areas have access to primary healthcare but face challenges such as the lack of valid UNHCR registration documents, distance and other associated costs;
 - Approximately 45% of primary school aged and 32% of secondary school aged children are not attending school;
 - The largest monthly household expenditure reported is food (140 JD or 200 USD), followed by rent (130 JD or 180 USD). ([REACH 2013/10/30](#))

Turkey

Individuals affected

Syrian registered refugees and awaiting registration	527,000
Unregistered Syrians	~280,000

Sources: [UNHCR 2013/11/28](#)

Key developments November

- Camps:** Around 200,000 Syrian refugees, 40% of the registered population, reside in camps. Although the services provided within these camps are reportedly of high quality, overcrowding is an issue: of the 23 camps, 21 are operating at capacity. The Government of Turkey (GoT) is expanding current camps and constructing new ones to improve the total camp capacity to 250,000 people by the end of 2013. ([UNHCR 2013/11/25](#), [IFRC 2013/11/18](#), [ECHO 2013/10/15](#))
- Registration of non-camp refugees:** An estimated 500,000 Syrians reside outside of camps, of which around 320,000 are registered with the GoT. Since October, registration of non-camp refugees has slowed due to technical issues related to the transfer of the registration process from AFAD to the Turkish police. ([ECHO 2013/10/15](#), [DRC 2013/11/01](#), [UNHCR 2013/11/19](#))
- Needs:** Refugees living outside camps are increasingly vulnerable and support to the urban refugees is limited due to tight GoT restrictions on relief delivery and assessments. In addition to access to shelter and food, health care is of concern. Similar to camp residents, refugees living outside camps are granted free access to medical care provided by state-run Turkish medical facilities. However this access is seriously constrained due to the cost of medicines; non-basic medical services; transportation; and translation services. Unconfirmed reports indicate an increase in communicable diseases among Syrians and Turkish communities residing in border regions, including measles and dysentery. ([ECHO 2013/10/15](#), [Guardian 2013/11/01](#))
- Arrivals and returns:** A large number of Syrians returned to Syria: in October, the number of voluntary returns almost equalled the number of arrivals (15,000). Since April 2011, over 400,000 people registered in the camps, 50% of whom subsequently left to reside outside the camps or return to Syria. ([UNHCR 2013/11/12](#), [UNHCR 2013/11/05](#))
- Restrictions to entry:** The GoT is cracking down heavily on unofficial entry to Turkey from Syria. On 16 November, the Turkish army reportedly killed 3 Syrians crossing the border illegally between Qamishli and Nussaybeen. To prevent illegal movement of goods and people, the GoT is constructing a wall along part of the south-eastern border with Syria. There have been widespread demonstrations against the wall, with those opposing its construction stating that the wall is designed to prevent closer relations between areas with large Kurdish populations in Syria and Turkey. ([Assafir 2013/11/13](#), [Daily Star 2013/11/05](#), [AFP 2013/11/07](#), [Al-Akhbar 2013/11/18](#), [AFP 2013/11/17](#))

Iraq

Individuals affected

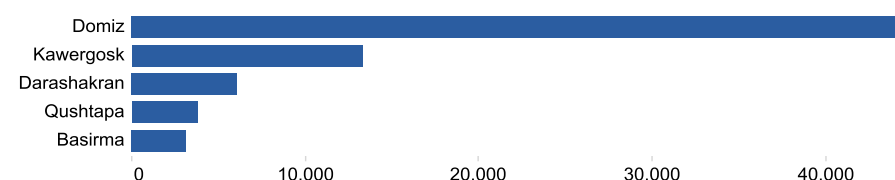
Syrian registered refugees and awaiting registration	208,000
Unregistered Syrians	Unknown
Syrian returnees	25,023
Iraqi returnees from Syria	85,000
Host communities	Unknown

Sources: [UNHCR 2013/08/13](#), [UNHCR 2013/08/26](#)

Key developments November

- Entry:** The border between Syria and Iraq has been closed since mid-September and only entries into Iraq for family reunifications and medical emergencies are allowed. On 24 October, 600 Syrians were permitted to enter the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), 50% of whom were visitors. ([UNHCR 2013/11/04](#))
- Camps:** About 40% of the refugees are being housed in 13 transit and established camps. Aid agencies have noted that the large distances between the numerous camps and the limited resources and capacity of staff makes it difficult to carry out field visits and monitoring activities. The rest of the refugee population are living with the host community. UNHCR estimates over 40% of the non-camp refugees to be vulnerable. ([UNHCR 2013/11/21](#))
- The Gawilan camp, hosting 2,800 refugees, has reportedly been established on territory in Ninewa governorate in an area where control is disputed between the central Government and the Kurdish authorities. ([PI 2013/11/28](#))

5 largest camps in Iraq (by current population)
UNHCR



- Key priorities:** Winter weather in Iraq is notoriously harsh, and as many refugees crossed into the country with no possessions, they are ill equipped to withstand the cold temperatures. On 9 November, the season's first rainstorm destroyed 235 tents in Kawergosk camp, forcing families to relocate to another camp. The temporary camps were not designed to withstand winter conditions and many refugees do not have money for warm clothes or fuel for heating. ([ACTED 2012/11/21](#), [Christian Aid 2013/11/07](#))
- The large influx of over 60,000 refugees that entered KR-I between August and September has put severe pressure on the existing infrastructure. Although the borders are still closed, planning figures anticipate a further 50,000 more refugees entering the southern and central governorates of Iraq

before the end of the year, though this seems unlikely unless the borders are re-opened. The WASH sector particularly has been over-stretched by August's rapid increase in refugee numbers as local water and hygiene services are under strain. ([UNHCR 2013/11/11](#))

- Refugees have stated that their primary concern is a reliable source of income. Their savings are running low and job opportunities are scarce. Also, while the host community was initially very welcoming, slight tensions are starting to rise, as the refugees are considered to have pushed up rent prices and brought down wages for the limited employment opportunities available. One assessment carried out indicated that many refugees came from an impoverished background in Syria, with some having little or no education. The majority had worked in Syria as day labourers. A Mercy Corps assessment found that 90% of refugees in the KR-I lack the savings or assets needed to withstand the pressures of indefinite displacement. (PI 2013/11/15, [Mercy Corps 2013/11/26](#))
- A small-scale assessment in Erbil highlighted protection issues faced by refugees, including arbitrary arrests, verbal harassment on the streets and violation of rental agreements. (PI 2013/11/28)
- **Security incidents:** Security forces announced the arrest of 2 members of the Al Qaeda-affiliated Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the KR-I who allegedly had planned to carry out suicide bomb attacks in the area. This incident comes after a bomb attack in Erbil in September and highlights the growing security risks as the violence in Syria and Iraq appears to be increasingly linked. ([As Safir 2013/11/05](#))

Egypt

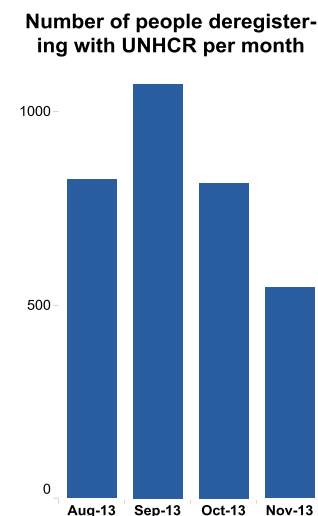
Individuals affected

Syrian registered refugees and awaiting registration	128,000
Palestinian refugees from Syria	8,000-12,000

Source: [UNHCR 2013/07/27](#), [Daily News Egypt 2013/05/19](#)

Key Developments November

- **Registration:** Numbers of refugees registering have recently slowed, with roughly 200 individuals registering each day at the end of November. Deregistering with UNHCR continues, with 550 file closures between 1 and 23 November. ([UNHCR 2013/12/02](#), [WFP 2013/11/17](#), [UNHCR 2013/11/25](#))
- **State of emergency:** On 14 November, Egypt lifted the state of emergency and curfew that had been in place since 14 August and permitted the authorities to make arrests without warrants. As yet, the impact of this on the freedom of movement of refugees is unclear. ([Al Jazeera 2013/11/13](#))
- **Protection concerns:** During the state of emergency, Egyptian authorities detained over 1,500 refugees from Syria, including Palestinians, women and children. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), many were held for weeks or months and most were deported. The majority had been detained while trying to exit Egypt irregularly, often trying to migrate to Europe. ([Daily Star 2013/11/11](#))
- UNHCR stated that as of 27 November, an estimated 90 Syrian and Palestinian children were being held in detention, 5 of whom were unaccompanied and 3 of whom were seriously ill. The children have been in detention without charge for weeks. Refugees being held have been told to leave Egypt or face indefinite detention. ([UNHCR 2013/11/29](#))
- On 22 November, refugees in a detention centre started a hunger strike, appealing to Western countries to resettle them. The next day refugees detained in 2 other centres joined the strike. ([UNHCR 2013/11/25](#))
- An assessment mission in Damietta governorate revealed that refugee children are subject to harassment and verbal abuse, highlighting the still-present hostilities towards the Syrian population. ([UNHCR 2013/11/11](#))



Previous SNAP reports

- **Regional Analysis for Syria** January – October 2013
- **Thematic reports**
 - Aleppo Governorate Profile April 2013
 - Legal Status of Individuals Fleeing Syria June 2013
 - Impact of the conflict on Syrian economy and livelihoods July 2013
 - Syrian border crossings September 2013
 - Assessment Lessons Learned September 2013
 - Lebanon baseline data October 2013
 - Cross-border movements of goods December 2013
- **Scenarios** February/September 2013

All reports can be found on: <http://www.acaps.org/en/pages/syria-snap-project>

Forthcoming SNAP reports

- **RAS** Start February 2014
- **Thematic reports:**
 - Governorate profile: Al-Hasakeh December 2013
 - Relief Actors in Syria December 2013
 - Palestinian refugees in Syria January 2014

Map data sources

Besieged areas: Media sources **Infrastructure:** Global Energy Observatory, OCHA. **Administration:** OCHA Common Operational Datasets. **Displacement:** UNRWA, IOM, UNHCR. **Refugee camp locations:** US Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit. **IDPs:** OCHA.

Methodology – This desk study presents estimations of scale, severity and likely impact of a disaster. It aims to inform decision making for preparedness and emergency response and intends to complement and integrate assessment-related data from other agencies. Feedback to improve the RAS is welcome (snap@acaps.org).

Disclaimer – Information provided is provisional as it has not been possible to independently verify field reports. As this report covers highly dynamic subject, utility of the information may decrease with time.

References – ACAPS and MapAction would like to thank all organisations that have provided input to this report. Please note that all sources which are available online are hyperlinked (underlined, in brackets). Information sourced as 'PI' refers to personal interviews with persons unknown to the SNAP project. Information sourced as a 'Trusted Source' refers to information received from an actor known and trusted by the project.

