

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	2223
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	UNHCR
Titel:	Year-End Analysis on Returns to Syria from Jordan – December 2024 – December 2025
Udgivet:	15. februar 2026
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	15. juni 2026

YEAR-END ANALYSIS ON RETURNS TO SYRIA FROM JORDAN

December 2024 - December 2025



Introduction

This report provides an overview of UNHCR Jordan's engagement with refugee returns to Syria following the change in Government in December 2024. UNHCR's engagement in voluntary repatriation for Syrian refugees is guided by its [position on returns to Syria](#):

To ensure that return is voluntary, and refugees have access to reliable, up-to-date information on conditions in areas of return, rights, and available assistance, thereby supporting informed decision-making; *and*

To support refugees, who opt to return to Syria, to return in safety and dignity, with access to practical assistance, to the extent possible.

UNHCR's mandate reflects its continued commitment to safeguarding international protection principles, including the voluntary, informed, and dignified nature of returns, while maintaining access to support and services for refugees who choose to remain in Jordan. UNHCR's internal Operational Guidelines on Voluntary Returns covers engagement in voluntary returns for refugees residing in both camps and those residing within host communities and span from information sharing and counselling, through facilitated movements and border monitoring, to cross-border coordination and post-return protection monitoring in Syria.

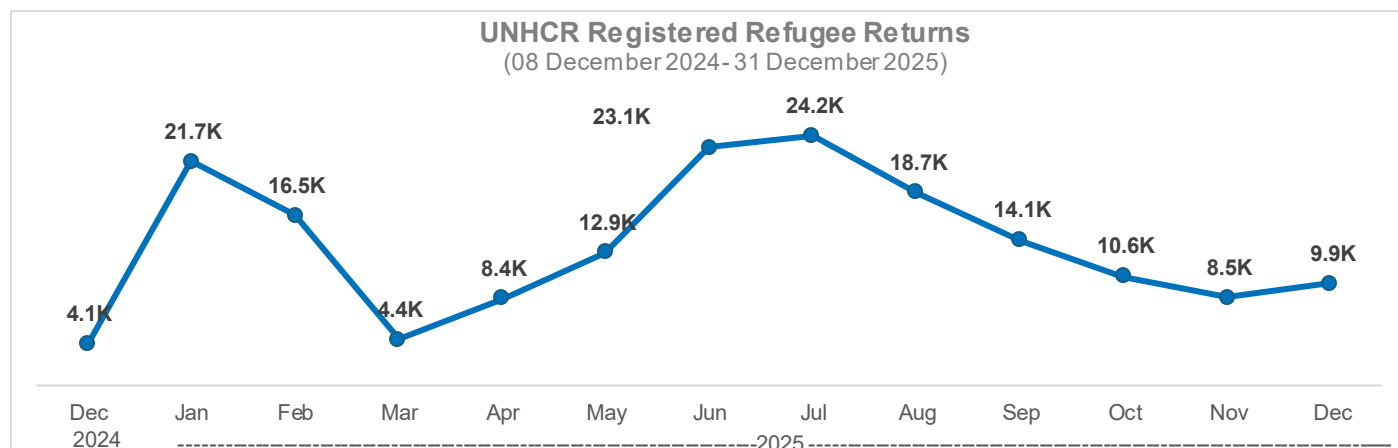
Through these efforts, UNHCR, together with the Government of Jordan and key partners, have supported tens of thousands of Syrians, who chose to return home, to do so in a manner that is voluntary, informed, safe, and dignified, while mitigating risks to safety, well-being, and rights and addressing practical barriers to return ahead of time.

By supporting both refugees who choose to return home and those who decide to stay in Jordan, UNHCR's work in 2025 respected refugees' right to decide freely on return to Syria while adapting to changing refugee needs and regional dynamics

Returns Trends and Monitoring

After the fall of the Assad government on 8 December 2024, UNHCR observed a significant increase in both actual refugee returns to Syria and expressed intentions to return – a pattern that continued throughout 2025. A [Flash Regional Perception and Intention Survey](#) conducted in January 2025 found that 40 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan planned to return within the following year. A [follow-up survey in June 2025](#) indicated a shift in intentions, with the proportion planning to return within the next year declining to 22 per cent. The drop in return intentions (from 40 per cent to 22 per cent) reflects that many refugees who previously intended to return had already done so, rather than a significant decline in willingness to return. Across both surveys, refugees consistently cited ongoing security concerns, availability of shelter and housing, and limited livelihood opportunities in Syria as key factors influencing their decisions.

Returns largely occurred in two distinct waves during the year. The first wave took place shortly after the political changes, with high return rates recorded in January and February 2025. This period was characterized by optimism and sentimentalism, as many refugees pursued the possibility of return for the first time in more than a decade. Returns declined sharply in March 2025, largely due to the month of Ramadan, as well as concurrent security incidents in the coastal areas and in Southern Syria later in the summer, that contributed to a slowdown in return movements. The second wave of returns occurred during the summer months, with June, July, and August recording the highest return rates of the year. This trend had been anticipated by refugee communities, many of whom delayed their return until the conclusion of the academic year to minimize disruption to their children's education.¹



¹ Returns figures are regularly updated to reflect current movement patterns and may change from earlier reports as some Syrians are allowed to re-enter Jordan as per approval from the Government of Jordan. The reported number reflects those who have departed Jordan and remain inactive as of the most recently updated data. Returns data from Jordan is regularly updated on [UNHCR's Returns Analysis Dashboard](#).

Cross Border Movement and Re-Entries to Jordan

Since the reopening of the Jaber border crossing in 2018, Syrian refugees in Jordan have frequently traveled between Jordan and Syria, as per the Government of Jordan's approval. These trips have commonly been for personal and practical reasons, such as obtaining or renewing documentation, checking on property, or attending significant family events. Travel was typically enabled through re-entry permits issued by Jordan's Ministry of Interior (MOI), which allowed Syrian refugees to enter Syria for a limited period (generally up to three months) and then legally return to Jordan. Following the fall of the Assad government, the issuance of re-entry permits initially became more restrictive. However, in 2025, the Government of Jordan gradually expanded the categories of Syrians permitted to travel between Jordan and Syria who were exempt from the requirement to obtain a re-entry permit. These categories included individuals with Jordanian relatives, investors, students, property owners, Syrians holding residency in third countries, and other specified groups. UNHCR has observed an increase during the second half of 2025 both in the number of refugees accessing re-entry permits and in those re-entering Jordan under the expanded exemption criteria.

In 2025, an estimated 17,000 Syrians previously registered with UNHCR in Jordan returned to Syria and later re-entered Jordan, accounting for roughly 10 per cent of all recorded Syrian return movements during that year. Of these, around 1,800 individuals were reactivated in UNHCR Jordan's registration database after approaching UNHCR and presenting valid MOI re-entry permits, allowing their refugee status in Jordan to be formally restored.

Returnee Profiles and Specific Needs

Between 8 December 2024 and 31 December 2025, over 177,000 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees in Jordan returned to Syria. Returns were broadly gender-balanced, with women and girls comprising 49 per cent of returnees and men and boys 51 per cent. In contrast, women and girls make up 51 per cent of the overall registered Syrian refugee population, while men and boys account for 49 per cent. Children under the age of 18 accounted for 42 per cent of returnees, compared with 49.5 per cent of children in the registered refugee population overall.

Approximately 24 per cent of returnees departed from refugee camps (Azraq, Zaatari, and the Emirati Jordanian Camp²) while 76 per cent returned from outside refugee camps, primarily from Amman, Irbid, and Mafraq governorates. This distribution closely mirrors UNHCR's overall registration data and does not indicate a significantly higher propensity to return among either camp-based or host community refugees.



49%

Women and Girls



51%

Men and Boys



42%

Children



58%

Adults



24%

Camp Residents



76%

Host Communities



Specific Needs

Just over one quarter of returnees were registered with UNHCR as having specific needs, a proportion consistent with the overall registered refugee population in Jordan. This suggests that refugees with specific needs were neither more nor less likely to return to Syria than those who remained in Jordan.

Specific Needs of Returnees



26% of returnees had specific needs as noted in UNHCR's registration database, including:

13% medical condition

8% disability

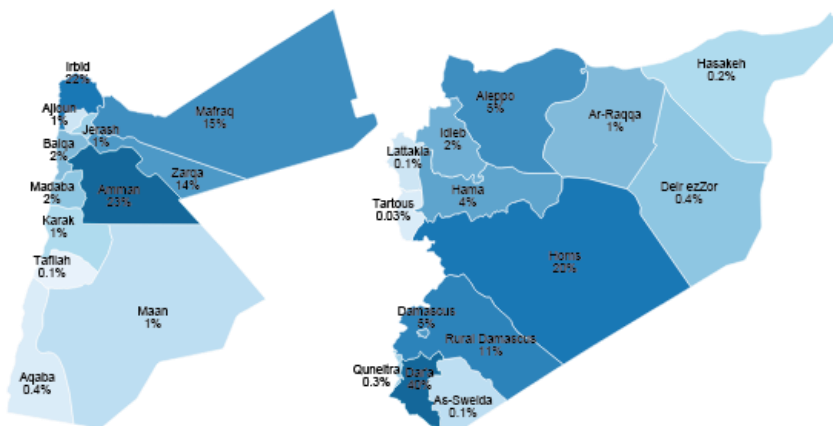
3% legal/physical protection need.

² Returns from the Emirati Jordanian Camp (EJC) followed the end of funding by the Emirati Red Crescent and the camp's closure in July 2025. Refugees previously residing in EJC were relocated to Azraq Camp, while more than 5,000 individuals opted to return to Syria.

Areas of Departure and Return

Based on intention surveys, most refugees intend to return to their governorate of origin. The place of origin of most returnees was Dara'a, followed by Homs and Rural Damascus.

23 per cent of returnees were residing in Amman, and 22 per cent were living in Irbid – with smaller numbers from Zaatar Camp (15 per cent), Mafrq (14 percent), Zarqa (7 per cent), and Azraq Camp (6 per cent).



Family Return Patterns

Of those refugees who returned to Syria in 2025, 57 per cent returned as entire family units, while 43 per cent returned through staggered or partial family movements. Such returns are often planned to allow some family members to travel later with larger luggage shipments or leave adult members behind for schooling, employment, or other obligations. Families generally reported feeling confident about these temporary separations, as those remaining in Jordan would be supported by relatives or quickly joining the families in Syria. While UNHCR hopes that families can return together, it recognizes that phased returns may, in some cases, support reintegration depending on individual circumstances. For those receiving UNHCR return assistance, the organization takes care to ensure that children and other dependent household members are not left behind or placed in vulnerable situations as a result of the return process.



Skills and Employment

In 2025, over 92,000 working-age refugees (aged 18 - 64) returned to Syria, comprising 54 per cent of the total returnee population during this period. Of these, approximately 78 per cent had participated in a WFP-UNHCR Skills Survey (collected in 2023). The findings below are based on this subset of returnees and should not be interpreted as representative of the entire returnee population.

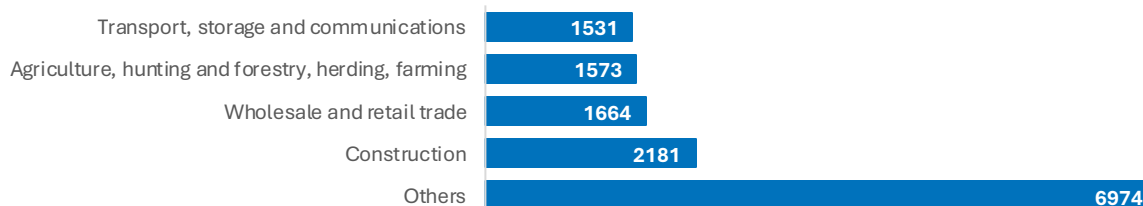
UNHCR/WFP Skills Survey

In late 2022, UNHCR and WFP launched a large-scale skills mapping exercise in Jordan as part of their joint sustainability agenda. This initiative aimed at collecting detailed information on the education, work experience, skills, and livelihood aspirations of Syrian refugees residing in host communities. The goal was to better understand refugees' employability potential and support data-driven referrals to livelihood opportunities, self-reliance programming, and evidence-based advocacy.

Over 140,000 working-age³ individuals were interviewed between December 2022 and February 2023. The data includes information on formal and informal education, past employment (in Syria and Jordan), transferable skills, employment barriers, and work preferences.

Sectors of Paid Work of Returnees

Based on WFP-UNHCR Skills Mapping Data (collected in 2023)



³ Additional insights on working-age Syrian refugees who participated in the UNHCR-WFP skills mapping exercise and later returned to Syria can be found on the [Refugee Skills & Return to Syria Dashboard](#).



EDUCATION

Among returnees surveyed, **18.1 per cent** had reported having completed secondary education. This largely matches the secondary education attainment of the registered refugee population in Jordan.



HIGHER EDUCATION

Among returnees surveyed, **18.1 per cent** had reported having completed secondary education. This aligns with the proportion of tertiary-educated individuals in the overall registered refugee population.



FIELDS INCLUDE

Among returnees who completed tertiary education, the most commonly reported fields of study included education, agriculture, information and communication technology, social sciences, journalism, and information.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Nearly **9.6 per cent** of respondents had reported receiving vocational training while in Jordan. Training was concentrated in sectors such as mechanics, sewing, health education, beauty, nursing, and commerce. Given Syria's current labor market needs, especially in health and education, these skills may offer meaningful livelihood opportunities and support returnees' reintegration



WORK EXPERIENCE

Approximately **20 per cent** of respondents reported participating in paid work or income-generating activities at the time of the survey. The most common sectors of paid work included construction, wholesale and retail trade, agriculture, and transportation.

UNHCR Returns Assistance and Information

In 2025, more than 55,000 individuals received some form of return assistance, ranging from information and counselling to direct support such as in-kind transportation, cash assistance, or legal aid.

Community Outreach and Focus Group Discussions

UNHCR considers access to reliable information a critical component in helping refugees make informed decisions about return, and directly reached nearly 30,000 people through outreach sessions, individual counselling, and helpline support. While many of these information and counselling interventions targeted a single individual within a household, UNHCR recognizes that the benefits often extend far beyond the person reached, as the knowledge and guidance provided are frequently shared with family members and the wider community.

Since December 2024, UNHCR has enhanced its outreach in the community, increasing the number of information sessions and focus group discussions (FGDs) to keep up with the rapidly evolving situation and information needs. Issues related to return were also systematically addressed within broader community outreach activities, ensuring that refugees could access up-to-date, practical information in parallel with discussions on protection, assistance, and access to services to support them to make informed decisions about their futures.

During 2025, UNHCR conducted 75 information sessions across Jordan, reaching 1,750 participants, including in both refugee camps and among host communities. While refugees continue to rely primarily on family members and friends inside Syria as their preferred source of information, UNHCR has consistently received feedback that information on return procedures, requirements, and conditions has been useful and enables refugees to take more informed and voluntary decisions. The sustained demand reflected through digital media engagement and Helpline calls indicates that a significant number of refugees continue to actively seek reliable information on returns through UNHCR services, underscoring the continued relevance of this outreach.

Many other humanitarian partners also engaged in community-based outreach activities related to returns during this period, including through intention surveys and community consultations. While refugees generally value opportunities to express their views, refugees also emphasized that they remain deeply concerned about continued access to humanitarian assistance, protection, livelihoods, education, and other essential services in Jordan. In this context, UNHCR Jordan is using a multi-functional team (MFT) approach to community outreach, integrating durable solutions discussions within broader engagements that reflect refugees' full range of priorities and concerns.

Helpline

In addition to direct outreach, UNHCR utilizes its Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Helpline as a key communication tool with refugees throughout Jordan. Throughout 2025, UNHCR has received and handled over 17,000 calls to the IVR helpline inquiring about returns or returns assistance. 3,800 of the calls were related to general return inquiries, including procedures, documentation requirements, outstanding debts, and refugees' status with UNHCR following return to Syria. These callers received direct counselling and information to answer their questions from helpline attendants. The remaining 13,200 calls were refugees seeking to apply for returns assistance (including cash and transportation.)

Digital Engagement

UNHCR maintains active digital engagement channels to provide refugees with timely and accurate information. These include the [UNHCR Help Site](#), which has received over 50,000 views across the Arabic-language pages. UNHCR's help site provides a range of products, including general 'frequently asked questions' on return to Syria - updated eleven times throughout 2026, and detailed information on UNHCR's assistance programs for returnees. These resources are developed through a multi-functional team (MFT) approach, drawing on inputs from legal, protection, solutions, cash-based interventions (CBI), and field teams to ensure comprehensive and accurate guidance.

In addition, [UNHCR's Facebook page](#) has hosted information campaigns addressing key considerations and general guidance for refugees contemplating return, reaching more than half a million users. UNHCR's communications team regularly monitors comments, discussions, and concerns raised by refugees through its social media channels. Through this monitoring, UNHCR observes that refugees frequently share information with one another and help counter rumours by directing peers to accurate and reliable resources.

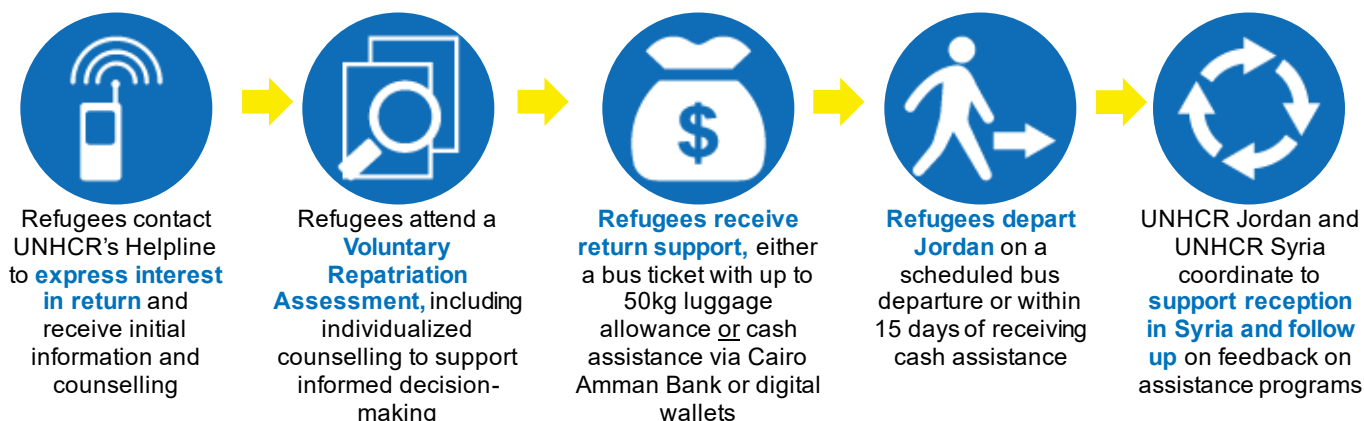
Through the community-based protection team, UNHCR also engages with refugee communities through several WhatsApp channels established with community leadership structures and volunteer networks. These channels have been used to disseminate information on voluntary return and are estimated to have reached over 5,000 refugees.

Returns Facilitation and Direct Support

In 2025, UNHCR directly supported over 25,000 refugees with assistance to facilitate their return journeys. This support included both in-kind transportation support and cash assistance for return. In addition, UNHCR and partners provided direct assistance to refugees in the form of legal interventions.



I. Returns Assistance Processes: Refugees seeking UNHCR's assistance to return must follow these steps:



II. Transportation Assistance

Starting in January 2025, UNHCR partnered with JETT bus company to provide transportation for refugees returning to Syria. The assistance includes a bus ticket and 50 kg of accompanied luggage per traveler. Between January and December 2025, this partnership facilitated the return of 10,300 refugees.

Refugees generally described the assistance as safe and reliable, expressing appreciation for the support provided. At the same time, many noted that the assistance did not fully meet all their needs, with common requests including increased luggage allowances and additional cash support to better facilitate their return. UNHCR Jordan coordinated these transportation arrangements closely with UNHCR Syria teams, who were often present at both the Nasib border and destination points to assist returnees. In addition, during the first half of 2025, returning refugees received pre-departure medical screenings, supported by the International Medical Corps (IMC), to ensure they were fit to travel home⁴.

For Azraq Camp, UNHCR referred eligible cases to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which subsequently managed their transportation. UNHCR remained responsible for counseling, conducting comprehensive voluntary repatriation assessments, and providing technical follow-up, while IOM handled transportation logistics,

⁴ The pre-departure medical check services were discontinued at mid-year due to a lack in funding.

including medical screening. In 2025, UNHCR supported IOM in facilitating the return of an additional 1,100 refugees from Azraq Camp.

III. Cash Assistance for Returns

In September 2025, UNHCR launched a pilot cash assistance program for voluntary return, targeting refugees living in Zaatari and Azraq camps in coordination with the Government of Jordan. This program was designed in response to refugee feedback requesting additional and more flexible support for their return, and in alignment with [UNHCR's Operational Framework for the Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs \(2025\)](#). Under the program, eligible refugees receive a cash grant of 70 JOD per returning individual to support their journey back to Syria. Between the program's inception and December 2025, over 3,200 individuals received this assistance. Once cash assistance is provided, refugees are advised to complete their return within 15 days, with 95 per cent of those who received the assistance completing their return within the designated departure period. Refugees may change their decision to return at any time, including at the last stage of existing Jordan, and reimburse the assistance received. In 2025, 36 refugees reversed their decision to return after having received the cash assistance for return.

UNHCR Jordan has interviewed more than 300 families as part of a post-distribution monitoring, which indicates that the program is well-received, with 90 per cent of respondents reporting satisfaction with the cash assistance process. Beneficiaries most commonly used the funds for personal items such as clothing and shoes, debt repayment, and transportation costs. While 89 per cent of respondents indicated that the assistance did not significantly influence their decision to return (since most had already planned to do so), it helped ease financial constraints and, in many cases, enabled families to return sooner.

IV. Legal Assistance

In addition, UNHCR and partners have witnessed an increased demand for legal assistance related to civil documentation, the lifting of travel bans, and the resolution of pending legal cases. Refugees increasingly sought legal counselling to navigate return-related procedures under both Jordanian and Syrian legal frameworks and to verify accurate information amid widespread rumours. In 2025, UNHCR and its legal partner (the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, ARDD) provided legal aid in over 16,000 instances, reflecting the growing complexity of administrative and legal requirements associated with return. This legal assistance remains critical to enabling informed and voluntary decision-making and to safeguard refugees' rights. Such legal services helped refugees obtain or ratify civil and legal documentation and manage other legal matters essential for a safe and informed return.



For example, legal aid from UNHCR and ARDD has played a critical role in supporting sustainable reintegration by facilitating the recognition of education and training certificates, enabling Syrian youth to ratify their academic and vocational qualifications so they are officially recognized in Syria and can access employment and further education opportunities upon return. In parallel, ARDD has maintained regular coordination with the Syrian Embassy in Jordan to address legal and procedural questions related to return, clarify requirements, counter misinformation, and respond to refugees' concerns in a timely manner, contributing to greater trust, transparency, and informed decision-making. Where relevant, legal representation before Sharia courts has also supported the establishment of temporary custody arrangements, allowing children to remain in Jordan under the care of close relatives to continue their education or meet other essential needs.

Border Monitoring

UNHCR Jordan has maintained a continuous presence at the Jaber border crossing since 2018 with a rotating team of 5 staff, supporting coordination with border authorities and strengthening border monitoring mechanisms. In 2025, this presence was scaled up from twice per week to daily missions in response to the increased number of refugee returnees.

Working in close collaboration with the relevant authorities, UNHCR provided assistance to individuals at the border en-route to Syria, including support with customs procedures, documentation-related challenges, and cases involving unaccompanied or separated children seeking to cross the border. In line with UNHCR and IOM's facilitation of cross-border transportation movements, the team supported efforts to streamline border procedures, including expedited processing at immigration and customs for participants in facilitated movements. This involved UNHCR coordinating with authorities to establish a dedicated processing line for returning refugees and asylum seekers, ensuring smoother and faster immigration clearances.

Throughout the reporting period, UNHCR followed up on nearly 700 cases including those referred by border authorities. These interventions included the provision of information, counselling, and targeted support, with a focus on identifying and addressing risks to safety and well-being and ensuring access to appropriate assistance, including referrals and follow-up with relevant units and partners. These cases include follow-up and rapid assessments for unaccompanied and separated children seeking to cross the border, counselling and support for refugees identified by border authorities as having circulations or debts, and coordination with authorities to confirm UNHCR registration for customs exemptions, and documentation related challenges.

In addition to operational support, UNHCR contributed to physical improvements at the border center. This included the installation of a covered waiting area for passengers, providing protection from the rain and sun for refugees and other travelers transiting through the border.

Cross Border Coordination and Protection Monitoring of Returnees in Syria

Following departure from Jordan, individual registration records from Jordan are shared with UNHCR and partners in Syria to support the assessment of eligibility for assistance and access to additional support delivered through a nationwide network of [community centers](#). Information on available services for returnees is regularly updated on the [Syria is Home](#) platform. In parallel, UNHCR Syria conducts ongoing monitoring of refugee returnees, internally displaced persons, and host communities to track trends and identify emerging needs. Findings from the October protection monitoring report indicate that more than 70 per cent of refugee returnees report feeling safe during both the day and night, and 81 per cent plan to remain in their current location of return over the next six months. At the same time, the monitoring highlights persistent challenges, with food and nutrition, access to employment or income opportunities, and shelter and housing consistently reported as the most significant unmet basic needs.

In addition, UNHCR Syria provides a reintegration cash grant of USD 600 for eligible refugee returnees. A [recent monitoring report](#) of this program highlights the outcomes for returnees formerly residing in Jordan, who made up 86 per cent of the survey sample. The reintegration cash grant was primarily used to cover food (72 per cent of households) and shelter costs (48 per cent), including rent, repairs, utilities, and other urgent household needs. Most beneficiaries reported tangible benefits: 96 per cent noted improved living conditions, 94 per cent reported reduced stress, and 92 per cent expressed overall satisfaction with cash assistance. Markets were generally accessible, with 90 per cent finding the goods and services they needed in their places of return in Syria.

Despite these positive outcomes, vulnerability among the respondents remained high. Seventy-one per cent of households could cover less than half of their basic needs even after receiving the grant. Common coping strategies included reducing essential expenditures (81 per cent), borrowing (58 per cent), using savings (50 per cent), skipping rent (41 per cent), selling assets (34 per cent), relocating to poorer shelters (33 per cent), withdrawing children from school (20 per cent), and sending children under 16 to work (11 per cent).

Coordination with the authorities and partners

Through engagement with government counterparts, humanitarian and development actors, and regional coordination mechanisms, UNHCR provides platforms for dialogue, information-sharing, and planning. This coordination has been instrumental in fostering a predictable and enabling operational environment and ensuring that return-related policies and practices remain anchored in voluntariness, informed decision-making, and key protection considerations.

Coordination with the Government of Jordan: UNHCR works closely with the authorities, through the newly established Government Task Force, whose cooperation has been instrumental in upholding the voluntary nature of returns, coordinating border movements, and enabling flexible documentation arrangements. Engagement has extended beyond border authorities to a range of line ministries and government entities, including those responsible for labour, health, civil documentation, and social protection systems. While not all coordination efforts have resulted in immediate changes, regular technical engagements have nonetheless fostered a constructive environment for dialogue throughout the launching of UNHCR's assistance packages and built mutual understanding which supported pragmatic solutions to emerging operational challenges. This sustained engagement has helped ensure that returns are managed in orderly, predictable, and with respect to people's rights and safety.

Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG): UNHCR leads the bi-monthly Durable Solutions Working Group as a key coordination forum bringing together more than 120 participants from 50 organizations including 29 NGOs, 9 UN agencies, and 12 embassies to exchange information and build a shared understanding of return trends, challenges, and policy developments. Six DSWG meetings were convened in 2025, complemented by regular e-mail updates, the sharing of frequently asked questions, and community pulse reports. The DSWG has played an important role in strengthening collective awareness, sharing updates from UNHCR and partners, aligning messaging, and promoting coherence across actors engaging in durable solutions, particularly in a rapidly evolving operational context.

Operational Durable Solutions Working Group (Ops-DSWG): To complement the strategic focus of the Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG), UNHCR established and chaired the Operational Durable Solutions Working Group (Ops-DSWG) as a dedicated technical forum for organizations directly implementing durable solutions programming in Jordan. Comprising 17 partner organizations (including NGOs and UN Agencies), the Ops-DSWG met 10 times in 2025 and fostered closer collaboration across distinct but interlinked workstreams, including health, gender, legal assistance, cash programming, education, livelihoods, and other sectoral areas. The forum strengthened operational alignment, supported the identification of key programmatic gaps, and enabled practical coordination among partners, including the joint development of outreach materials, community pulse reports, service mappings, and frequently asked questions. The Ops-DSWG played a key role in advising on and developing the Returns Chapter for Jordan within the 3RP, while also contributing to critical planning activities.

Regional Coordination: Beyond the Jordan context, UNHCR actively contributes to regional coordination through the Regional Durable Solutions Working Group (RDSWG), led by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for MENA. This platform supports regional coherence on voluntary repatriation and return preparedness under the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). UNHCR's engagement is further guided by the Operational Framework for the Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs (2025), ensuring that country-level actions in Jordan are aligned with regional approaches, and standards. In addition to broader regional coordination forums, UNHCR Jordan actively participated in bi-weekly regional meetings as well as a regional workshop in Damascus to discuss common challenges and coordinate with UNHCR's regional bureau and field operations to ensure overall alignment in programming and priorities for returns.