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EMERGENCY FLASH UPDATE #9

Middle East Situation

02 April 2026



Lebanon. Collective center sheltering refugees and displaced, 11 March, 2026 © UNHCR/Houssam Hariri

Situational Overview

- Since the onset of the Middle East Situation on 28 February 2026, **68,600 Iranian nationals** have crossed into Türkiye, while **53,000** have returned between 3 March and 1 April. Movement volumes remain below pre-conflict levels, with crossings largely reflecting routine mobility, family travel, and precautionary movement rather than large-scale displacement.
- In Iran, Government sources report up to **3.2 million people** temporarily displaced internally. UNHCR and partners have assisted over **45,500 Afghan refugees** in Iran through helplines, registration, legal aid, multi-purpose cash assistance, and psychosocial support.
- **~190,000 Syrians** and **31,700 Lebanese nationals** have crossed from Lebanon into Syria since the start of the crisis; more than **54,440 individuals** indicated an intention to return permanently.
- In Lebanon, more than **1.04 million people** remain internally displaced — 35 per cent of them children — with over **136,300** staying in 669 government-designated collective shelters.
- Over **57,700 Afghans** have returned from Iran and Pakistan since the start of the crisis. Cross-border clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan (26–29 March) caused civilian casualties, displacement, and disrupted humanitarian access, including at the Landi Kotal transit centre.

- The Iran Flash Cross-Regional Refugee Preparedness Plan (Flash RRP) was launched on 26 March, requesting **USD 80 million** to support **2.8 million people in need**, including 1.65 million refugees, across six countries over March–May 2026. *(See Financial Information.)*
- *For the latest information on population movements, see the latest UNHCR CORE Update and newly launched Operational Data Portal page on the Middle East situation.*

Country Updates

Iran

- Inter-agency coordination and response activities are being implemented following the launch of the Iran Flash RRP on 26 March, in parallel with active donor and partner engagement in country. The situation reflects increasing vulnerability, urgent protection needs, and a demand for immediate financial and humanitarian support.
- UNHCR's hotline received over 2,000 calls between 29-30 March. Callers expressed severe safety concerns, damaged homes and psychosocial distress among children. Significant damage to health facilities is reducing Iran's emergency and trauma care capacity at a time of heightened civilian need. Many requested assistance to relocate to safer areas, loss of income and access to medical services, particularly for dialysis patients. Additionally, displaced individuals reported being forced to stay in public spaces due to lack of shelter.

Afghanistan-Pakistan

- Since the start of the crisis, over 57,700 individuals have returned to Afghanistan – 47,700 from Iran and some 10,000 from Pakistan. The Torkham border point - the largest crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan that accounted for some 80 per cent of all returns prior to the crisis – was partially reopened on 31 March to facilitate the returns and deportations of Afghans from Pakistan following weeks of closure due to border tensions and security incidents. Initial reports from the de facto authorities indicate that a total of 686 Afghans crossed on 31 March. UNHCR started assisting returnees on 1 April.
- Approximately 115,000 people internally displaced due to Pakistan-Afghanistan border hostilities face significant unmet humanitarian needs. This includes shelter, food assistance and health services, while protection concerns include trauma, family separation, and protection risks for women and children. Many displaced families have sought refuge in temporary settlements or with host communities in safer areas, while access and security constraints continue to limit humanitarian assistance. UNHCR and partners are planning targeted distributions of core relief items and protection interventions pending ongoing assessments.
- Continued rainfall and floods across several provinces in Afghanistan disrupted road access and constrained the delivery of assistance, particularly in border areas already affected by returns and displacement.
- In several provinces of Pakistan, law enforcement operations leading to detention, deportations and arrests of undocumented Afghans were reported. Afghan refugees in Balochistan have reportedly been directed to leave the province by 1 April, following strict instructions issued by the government. Law enforcement agencies intensified operations against undocumented Afghans in Rawalpindi, detaining multiple individuals. In Karachi, 35 Afghan nationals were arrested and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, nine Afghan refugee families were stranded in makeshift roadside tents after leaving their homes under police pressure. Inter-agency preparedness efforts, including coordination among partners and donors, are ongoing.

Turkmenistan

- All four border crossings with Iran remain open to all nationalities.

Iraq

- Most of the border crossing points between Iraq and Iran are open and operating normally for commercial and civilian traffic. There are no indications of new trends in population movements across the border.
- Together with other UN agencies and partners, UNHCR is finalising contingency planning for potential refugee movements from Iran, in support of the Government of Iraq which leads on the emergency response. UNHCR continues to monitor border movements, engage with authorities on contingency planning, and maintain outreach to Iranian refugees. UNHCR operations continue at a reduced scale, including through the helpline.

Lebanon

- In Lebanon, displacement continues following a statement that Israeli forces would retain control of a "security zone" inside southern Lebanon up to the Litani River, destroying border villages, and prevent displaced residents from returning. The country is experiencing ongoing airstrikes and Israeli evacuation orders, with recent attacks affecting collective shelters and surrounding residential areas in Beirut and the South, causing injuries, infrastructure damage, and significant psychological distress among displaced Lebanese and refugee families. As of 1 April, the Ministry of Public Health reported 1,318 fatalities and 3,935 injuries, including refugees, with 38 deaths and 81 injuries.
- Government reports indicate that over 1.04 million people have self-registered as displaced, including around 136,000 people staying in 669 government designated collective shelters, most operating at or near full capacity. Following airstrikes near shelters in Beirut, UNHCR and partners conducted immediate follow-up, including site visits, safety assessments, and referrals for injured and highly distressed individuals. Partners report heightened fear, acute stress reactions, and sleep disturbances, particularly among children. Damage to windows and shelter infrastructure in sites hosting more than 1,200 displaced people reduced safety and weatherproofing, prompting urgent repairs prioritizing older persons, children, and individuals with specific needs. Protection partners provided psychosocial support, emergency case management, and referrals to mental health and medical services, while over 4,250 individuals received emergency protection cash assistance.
- As co-lead of the Shelter Sector with the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNHCR mobilised inter agency efforts to address acute shelter safety and overcrowding concerns. To date, UNHCR has assisted over 75,600 affected individuals across 449 collective shelters with more than 202,000 essential items, while working with shelter partners to continue repairs, partitioning, and site upgrades to restore minimum safety standards, improve privacy, and mitigate protection risks for women, children, and older persons. Additional shelter capacity remains constrained by insecurity, suitable infrastructure limitations, and administrative approvals.

Syria

- According to Syrian authorities, over 221,910 persons have crossed the border from Lebanon into Syria including over 190,160 Syrians (of whom more than 54,440 indicated an intention to return permanently) and over 31,740 Lebanese.
- UNHCR supported operations at the three official border crossings by providing legal assistance to over 468 families, supplying water to 30,000 people, delivering relief items to more than 600 vulnerable individuals, and arranging onward transportation for over 3,550 people. Infrastructure improvements included installation of solar streetlights.
- Humanitarian partners complemented the response with food, water, healthcare, dignity kits, and support for children.
- UNHCR Community Centres have identified and supported more than 20,000 returnees across eight governorates, carrying out needs assessments, registering families for assistance, offering psychological first aid and mental health support, referring vulnerable individuals to specialized services. Outreach into host communities was extended through trained volunteers.

Türkiye

Türkiye

- UNHCR continues to monitor the situation along the border in close coordination with authorities and partners, with the Kapıköy (Van), Gürbulak (Ağrı), and Esendere (Hakkari) border crossings remaining generally operational. Following the Eid and Nowruz periods, cross-border movements have begun to stabilize, with arrivals gradually tapering and departures to Iran increasing. Movements continue to be largely routine and seasonal, driven primarily by tourism, business, and family visits, with most journeys pre-planned and border processing smooth and efficient.
- An increasing number of Iranian nationals are returning to Iran within a week of entering Türkiye, underscoring the temporary nature of current mobility trends. Returns are primarily linked to family obligations and the completion of short visits, with the general intention to remain in Iran and no indications of a shift toward displacement currently.
- National preparation plans are being coordinated by the Ministry of Interior's Presidency of Migration Management, while UNHCR is reinforcing coordination with UN agencies and partners in both Ankara and the border regions to enhance preparedness and strengthen information management. Response capacities are being systematically mapped and data coordination consolidated to ensure readiness for a potential activation of the contingency plan should Turkish authorities request support in the event of increased movements.

Armenia

- From 28 February–30 March 2026, over 140 Iranian nationals approached UNHCR seeking information, legal counselling and assistance. An estimated 65 per cent arrived recently through the Agarak border crossing, while around 40 per cent were already present in Armenia prior to the current crisis. The population is predominantly individual adults — approximately 80–85 males and 50–55 females — with a smaller proportion of families. The main

needs identified include information on asylum procedures (45 per cent), legal counselling (25 per cent), accommodation, financial assistance (20 per cent) and other needs.

- UNHCR and UN are engaged in ongoing inter-agency preparedness, including contingency planning, coordination mechanisms, interpreter capacity, and scalable assistance arrangements in line with risk monitoring. UNHCR and partners have provided information, counselling, and legal assistance to individuals requiring support, referring them to national asylum procedures, legal aid services and relevant assistance programmes. Partners continued to work with relevant Government authorities to strengthen reception and assistance arrangements in anticipation of a potential increase in arrival.

Coordination

Inter-agency coordination efforts are continuing across the region through existing structures with governments, UN agencies, partners and communities to respond to the needs of refugees and host communities exacerbated by the conflict, ensure protection monitoring and services and strengthen preparedness efforts in support of national governments.

Financial Information

The Iran Flash Refugee Response Plan (Flash RRP), launched on 26 March 2026, requests **USD 80 million** to support **2.8 million people in need, including 1.65 million refugees and 1 million host community** in need in Iran. Nine inter-agency partners are participating in the coordinated response, with UNHCR as the lead agency (USD 36.2 million), alongside IOM, UNDP, WFP, NRC, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, and INTERSOS.

The Lebanon Flash Appeal, issued on 13 March 2026, calls for **USD 308.3 million** for partners to deliver lifesaving assistance and protection to **1 million people** — including vulnerable Lebanese, displaced Syrians, Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, Palestinian Refugees from Syria, and migrants — over the same three-month period.

UNHCR operations across the affected regions remain critically underfunded at a time when humanitarian needs and operational risks are increasing. In South-West Asia, UNHCR requires USD 454 million in 2026 to support forcibly displaced populations under the Afghanistan situation; as of end-February, only **15 per cent** had been received. In the Middle East, significant funding gaps persist: Lebanon stands at only **14 per cent funded** against a UNHCR requirement of USD 472 million, while Iraq is at **28 per cent** against USD 61 million. In Europe, funding levels currently stand at **42 per cent** for both Türkiye (USD 210 million requirement) and Armenia (USD 9 million requirement).

Severe funding shortfalls risk creating a 'crisis within a crisis' at a time when needs across the affected regions are rapidly increasing. Without additional resources, UNHCR's ability to scale up preparedness, protection and response will be critically constrained.

Contact

For further information on the situation or UNHCR's response across affected countries, please contact the Regional Bureaux: rbapext@unhcr.org (Asia and the Pacific) and menareporting@unhcr.org (Middle East and North Africa). For more information on UNHCR and partners' response across affected countries, please visit the Operational Data Portal and UNHCR website.