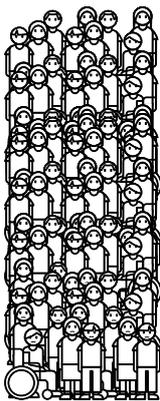


INTRODUCTION

# Situation Overview

TRENDS

Syrians remain the largest refugee population globally in need of resettlement in 2020



Estimated 579,031 Syrian refugees are currently in need of resettlement

With the Syria crisis entering the eleventh year, the conflict continues to drive the largest refugees' crisis in the world. Over 5.5 million Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt which remains broadly in line with last year's figures. To contain the spread of COVID-19, several countries in the region decided to close borders and impose movement restrictions, which led to a considerable decrease in the overall return movement. By the third quarter of 2020, over 31,000 refugees in the region had spontaneously returned to Syria, a reduction of around 70 per cent compared to the same time last year. Resettlement submissions and departures were also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, there was no major influx recorded in 2020 as borders and admissions procedures remained closely managed, even before the COVID-19 restrictions. The modest net increase in registered refugees across the region is primarily linked to the registration of new-borns. In addition to registered Syrian refugees, additional Syrians are present in host countries, along with refugees of other nationalities, asylum seekers, and stateless persons.

During 2020, COVID-19 exacerbated socio-economic and other challenges in the host countries including early signs of a significant increase in poverty levels among their populations as well as inadequate access to information, public services, internet and so forth. Across the region, many countries confronted economic recession, and slow economic recovery is projected in 2021. At the same time, this has also put fiscal pressure on the host governments with limited financial and human resources while meeting the increased demand for basic services (particularly health services). While host countries continue to demonstrate generosity in hosting large numbers of refugees, the pressures are clearly growing at national, community and household levels.

Return trend



For the first time since its inception, the 3RP prepared a Regional Needs Overview (RNO) to consolidate needs assessments conducted in 2020 particularly in the wake of COVID-19, to identify the key underlying drivers of needs, as well as the primary needs at the regional and country levels. These key drivers were: 1) large-scale protracted displacement; 2) socio-economic conditions; 3) COVID-19; and 4) demographic drivers. Altogether these factors have pushed more refugee and host community members into poverty and in need of assistance than at any other time during the Syria crisis. The RNO finds that some 10 million people – over 5.5 million registered refugees, as well as some 4.8 million host community members – are in need of some form of assistance across 3RP countries. Moreover, national and local institutions also require additional support to deliver essential services to refugees and host communities.

According to the RNO, in nearly all host countries, refugee households reported that loss of livelihoods caused increased needs for social assistance to cover basic needs, hygiene materials, medicines and rent, which led to refugees moving from residential shelters into informal settlements. The negative impacts were reported among vulnerable host community members such that for those who were working as daily casual labour lost their jobs and numbers of micro and small businesses were also in danger of closure. The loss of livelihoods also meant that both refugees and vulnerable host community members suffered from a worsened food security situation, with a majority reporting use of negative coping strategies, such as cutting down the number and quantity of meals per day, with adults prioritizing their children's food needs over their own. Even though there were gains made on enhancing food security across the region, they have been lost due to the pandemic, affecting both refugees and host communities. In Lebanon, a consistent decline in food insecurity rates since 2016 has skyrocketed from 29% in 2019 to afflict half of all Syrian refugees in 2020. In Jordan, the food security level of Syrian refugees in camps has returned to crisis levels noted in 2014, after years of steady decline (5% in 2019 to 19% in 2020). The deterioration of food security has an impact on other sectors, such as health, education,



protection, and more, since hunger impedes growth and development. In addition, because of the movement restrictions and confinement measures, women are involved in more domestic work, in addition to caring for children. Incidents of GBV were reported to be on the rise for both refugee and host community women.

Syrian refugees and host community members will continue to require support in terms of income and livelihoods, noting that these needs have exacerbated competition over scarcer employment opportunities and raised social tensions. In Turkey, an inter-agency assessment<sup>1</sup> showed worrying signs that the social segregation between refugees and host communities is deepening. In Lebanon, perceived aid bias is also increasing with perceptions that vulnerable Lebanese have been neglected in international aid. In all countries, school closure led to an education gap that is likely to affect thousands of refugee students until in-person classes resume. Access to learning will continue to depend on sufficient, predictable and affordable internet and or telephone-based technology audio, which many refugee households do not have.

Funding in 2021 will be a crucial lifeline to meet the growing needs due to COVID-19, the economic crises and the humanitarian and development challenges affecting the region. However, the global financial situation is projected to be challenging for 2021 and is likely to impact the 3RP as well. Traditional donors will be confronted with multiple and multi-layered crises that require their support, with greater attention likely to be paid to domestic recovery efforts and internal stimulus packages. Nevertheless, as of 30 September 2020, the 3RP appeal was 42 percent funded, which was the same funding level as the same period last year, with over US\$2.49 billion received. Outside the 3RP pledges, donors have also provided substantial financial aid through loans and grants to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt and other specific appeals. In the context of the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, donors allocated over US\$ 128 million to the 3RP, the largest amount of all Regional Refugee Plans (RRP) worldwide.

**A SNAPSHOT OF THE 3RP COUNTRIES**

**TURKEY**



Assessments indicate an increase in community members as a source of information, suggesting that communities should be used more by partners to disseminate timely and accurate information.



More than 460,000 school-aged children were still out-of-school and did not have any access to education opportunities.

**LEBANON**



The GBVIMS reported increases of several forms of Gender-Based Violence during the first quarter of 2020. 99% of GBV victims were female.



Nutrition has been a growing need in Lebanon with the percentage of households with poor or borderline consumption doubling in 2020.

**JORDAN**



54% of the 24,000 shelters in the Za'atari camp had leaking roof and damaged structure.



69% of survey respondents felt that GBV has increased since the beginning of the pandemic.

Over 50% of adolescent girls reported that they are doing more household chores as a result of the pandemic and the lockdown measures.<sup>3</sup>

**IRAQ**



Since COVID-19 started in Iraq, 60% of Syrian refugee households reported needing access to health services and hospitals.



Roughly three out of four Syrian refugee households reported COVID-19 increased the level of stress in their household.

**EGYPT**



Unemployment reportedly reached 9.6% in the second quarter of 2020, compared to 7.5% in the same period last year.



More than half of refugees reduced the number and portions of meals per day, while 55 percent had to reduce their adults' food consumption to allow for children to eat.

