

3RP Key Messages – Brussels IX Conference on Syria

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These top-line interagency key messages have been developed by the 3RP Advocacy Working Group at regional level comprised of UN agencies, international and national NGOs and NGO fora.

Top line key messages:

- 1. The international response to recent developments in Syria must maintain a dual focus that encompasses how recent developments in Syria are reshaping the lives of millions within Syria and across the region.** While Syria has entered a new phase, the challenges are far from over: in host countries, humanitarian needs remain at record levels, with particular challenges faced by women, girls and persons with disabilities, and development priorities are numerous.
- 2. While those refugees who want to return should be supported to do so, the international community must in parallel sustain its support to neighbouring countries, which have been generously hosting millions of Syrians for well over a decade.** Many refugees do not yet have the confidence to return, and maintaining support to host countries is crucial not least to ensure that refugee returns to Syria are voluntary, dignified and at a time of their choosing. This support should focus on sustained investments in shared national systems, access to basic services, infrastructure and livelihoods, to continue strengthening resilience capacities and maintaining cohesion and stability for both refugees and host communities, while also ensuring adequate support for those who have decided to return.
- 3. All states must ensure civilians fleeing Syria have access to their territories and uphold the principle of non-refoulement, while refugees who chose to return must be supported, including in making well-informed decisions.** Host governments are encouraged to permit spontaneous returns and visits to Syria without an immediate loss of refugee status, allowing Syrians the flexibility to assess conditions upon return.
- 4. As a new phase in Syria unfolds the challenges are far from over in neighbouring countries—priority needs for refugees and host communities remain at a record high and response funding remains low. The 3RP remains the most effective multistakeholder platform for channeling such support.** The 3RP remains committed to supporting host countries in addressing both refugee returns and possible new displacement into host countries, while upholding the principle of non-refoulement and protecting refugees' rights. For those choosing to return, 3RP partners will work to ensure they have access to the necessary support, information, and assistance to return voluntarily, in safety, and dignity. At the same time, continued support for host countries is essential to avoid additional pressures that could lead to premature or unsafe returns.

Detailed key messages:

1. The international response to recent developments in Syria must maintain a dual focus that encompasses how recent developments in Syria are reshaping the lives of millions within Syria and across the region. While Syria has entered a new phase, the challenges are far from over: humanitarian needs remain at record levels, with particular challenges faced by women, girls and persons with disabilities, and development priorities are numerous.

- **The events of last December in Syria, marked by the sudden collapse of the previous regime, bring an opportunity to work - in partnership with all Syrians - towards a more inclusive, cohesive, and peaceful Syria, gradually recovering from the disastrous social and economic impact of nearly 14 years of war**, which [UNDP's Syria Socio-Economic Impact Assessment \(SEAI\)](#) assessed to have amounted to losing an equivalent of 35 years of GDP per capita and a GDP loss of around US \$800 billion. The situation in Syria today remains extremely challenging; with an estimated 90% of the population under the poverty line, 16.5 million people in Syria in need of humanitarian assistance, over 7 million internally displaced people, a fragile security situation and dysfunctional infrastructure.
- **Recognizing that support to the recovery of Syria will be a process requiring years, and careful coordination with the caretaker authorities and transitional Government, funding for early recovery, longer-term recovery and development efforts in the country will be crucial.** Medium- and longer-term support should be aligned with humanitarian assistance, ensuring that investments benefit all vulnerable populations, regardless of displacement status, maximize the positive impacts while avoiding gaps and duplications.
- **At this critical time, the 3RP recognizes that Syria requires dedicated support to recover and emerge from the challenges. It remains committed to strengthening linkages between inside Syria and support durable solutions, including voluntary returns for refugees who wish to go back, while also ensuring ongoing protection and inclusion for those who remain in neighbouring countries, especially for vulnerable groups, women, girls and persons with disabilities.** Support recovery and stability in Syria is key to long-term solutions and regional stability. This requires a concerted effort from national authorities, the UN, NGOs, development partners, IFIs, and the private sector to align resources and expertise effectively.

2. The international community must sustain its support to neighbouring countries, which have been generously hosting millions of Syrians for well over a decade, to ensure that refugee returns to Syria are voluntary, dignified and at a time of their choosing. This support should focus on sustained investments in shared national systems, access to basic services, infrastructure and livelihoods, to continue strengthening resilience capacities and maintaining cohesion and stability for both refugees and host communities, while also ensuring adequate support for those who have decided to return.

- **Recognizing the importance of both supporting host countries and enabling informed returns, the international community should ensure that return-related assistance is available for those who choose to return, while also continuing to strengthen socio-economic stability, inclusion, and institutional capacities in host countries. Ensuring adequate assistance to host communities and national systems is essential to prevent**

premature, unsustainable returns and increased humanitarian needs in Syria. Host countries can better cope with the pressures of displacement while creating opportunities for both refugees and local populations. By investing in social and basic infrastructure, services, including health, self-reliance and social cohesion in both host countries and areas of return, donors can help provide a pathway for durable solutions, whether through return, socio-economic inclusion, reintegration or resettlement.

- **While 55% of surveyed refugees are not yet ready to return in the next 12 months, a notable 27% have indicated an intention to return within this timeframe,** according to [UNHCR's Flash Regional Intention Survey](#). This represents a sharp increase from 1.7% in 2024. These individuals require targeted assistance to facilitate a safe, voluntary, and dignified return, including reliable information, pre-departure counselling, transportation support, legal aid, and access to housing and basic services upon arrival in Syria.

3. All states must ensure civilians fleeing Syria have access to their territories and uphold the principle of non-refoulement, while refugees who chose to return must be supported in making well-informed decisions.

- **It remains critical for all stakeholders to uphold the principle of non-refoulement, ensuring that no refugee is forcibly returned and that their fundamental rights are respected.** While temporary suspensions of asylum claims may be used to assess conditions and ensure informed decision-making, all asylum claims must continue to be assessed on an individual basis, in line with international protection principles. Any prolonged or blanket suspensions must not undermine refugees' right to seek asylum. Syrian asylum-seekers awaiting decisions on their claims must be granted the same rights as other asylum-seekers, including adequate reception conditions.
- **Syrians have the right to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, and to (re-)integrate into their communities. Host governments are encouraged to permit spontaneous returns and visits to Syria without an immediate loss of refugee status, allowing Syrians the flexibility to assess conditions upon return.** Despite the challenges, between 8 December 2024 and 26 February 2025, an estimated 297,292 Syrians have crossed back into Syria. However, without sufficient support or information, returns are at risk of stalling, failing, or driving additional needs. Premature or unsupported returns could also undermine stability, peace, and social cohesion at an extremely fragile moment.
- **Refugees must be supported with reliable and impartial information, including through refugee-led organizations, to make well-informed decisions about their future** and return-related assistance particularly transportation support, cash assistance, housing repair, access to land and property rights, and livelihood opportunities, with special attention to unaccompanied and separated children and persons with disabilities.
- **Reductions in assistance, particularly cash assistance, are placing many vulnerable refugees in a precarious situation, raising concerns about the voluntariness of return decisions.** While donors have committed to supporting cash assistance, cuts are still occurring, creating a disconnect that must be urgently addressed. Transparent communication with refugees on available support and predictable, sustained assistance are essential to ensure that returns remain truly voluntary and that the most at-risk individuals are not left without a safety net.
- **In addition to maintaining asylum space and supporting voluntary returns, resettlement and complementary pathways remain critical for the most vulnerable refugees who cannot return or locally integrate.** Strengthening these pathways, including family reunification, labor mobility schemes, and educational scholarships, and more, provides much-needed protection and ensures a more comprehensive response to displacement.

4. As a new phase in Syria unfolds the challenges are far from over in neighbouring countries hosting refugees from Syria—priority needs for refugees and host communities remain at a record high and response funding remains low. The 3RP remains the most effective multistakeholder platform for channeling such support. The 3RP remains committed to supporting host countries in addressing both refugee returns and possible new displacement into host countries, while upholding the principle of non-refoulement and protecting refugees' rights. For those choosing to return, 3RP partners will work to ensure they have access to the necessary support, information, and assistance to return voluntarily, in safety, and dignity. At the same time, continued support for host countries is essential to avoid additional pressures that could lead to premature or unsafe returns.

- **Through sustained contributions to solid coordination mechanisms like the 3RP, donors can help ensure that host countries receive the necessary resources to provide critical support for refugees and affected host communities over the medium-term. Shift in donor priorities, particularly from major contributors like the US government, is deeply concerning and already impacting humanitarian and development response strategies across the region.** The reduction in funding for host countries risks creating additional push factors for return. While international support remains essential, investments in the 3RP also ensure strengthening host country systems, including protection systems, and more sustainable delivery of services, especially as most host countries face fragile economic situations coupled with steep inflation. In responding to funding constraints, it is critical to ensure that the most vulnerable are not disproportionately affected and that assistance remains needs-driven and principled.
- **In this dynamic and historic moment for Syria and Syrians, it is vital to rely on proven and flexible planning frameworks like the Regional Refugees and Resilience Plan (3RP), which remains the most effective multistakeholder platform and solid coordination mechanism for channeling support.** Sustained contributions to the 3RP can help ensure that host countries receive critical resources to support refugees and affected host communities over the medium-term. The 3RP effectively monitors population movements, conducts protection assessments and intention surveys, and ensures an evidence-based response in a well-oiled mechanism. Strengthening data collection in host countries is essential to ensure that responses remain needs-driven, efficient, and inclusive of both refugees and host communities. A key finding from the recent interagency preparedness workshop highlighted the importance of leveraging available data from inside Syria, where possible, to help 3RP partners anticipate and adapt to evolving displacement trends and return conditions. At the same time, support to host countries remains critical to mitigate the impact of displacement on host communities and ensure stability across the region.
- **The 3RP partners, including civil society, will continue monitoring the situation inside and outside Syria and advocate for the protection of asylum space while supporting refugees and host communities.** Advocating for rights-based asylum processes remains central to ensuring safety and dignity for displaced populations.