

2. Displacement and return movements

COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: June 2025

This section uses the terms 'return' and 'returnee' in their usual meaning in everyday language and should not be understood as a reference to Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals (Return Directive).

The information below is retrieved from the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 4.5.5, 4.5.6](#). Available information from UNHCR is also taken into account. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Since 27 November 2024, the number of people newly displaced by conflict increased significantly, peaking at 1.1 million on 12 December. According to UN sources, this number was later estimated to be 650 000 as of 5 February 2025. There were notable waves of conflict-related displacement: one in December 2024 in the northern part of the country, and another in March 2025 from the coastal area, following serious security incidents in those regions.

In total, according to UNHCR estimations, between 27 November 2024 and 26 February 2025, an estimated 885 294 IDPs had returned, while about 7.4 million remained internally displaced. Reported concerns hampering IDPs' return included destruction of property, inadequate infrastructure, insecurity, as well as access to civil documentation and judicial services, including documents regarding housing, land, and property rights.

According to UNHCR estimates, between 8 December 2024 and late February 2025, some 297 292 Syrians returned to Syria from abroad. Fifty-three percents of them returned from Lebanon, 25 % from Türkiye and 14 % from Jordan. Voluntary returns from Türkiye, amounted to 35 114 as of 30 December 2024 according to Turkish government figures.

UNHCR indicated that, from the beginning of 2024 until late February 2025, the governorates where returnees from abroad mainly returned were Aleppo and Raqqqa, followed by Dar'a, Homs, Rural Damascus and Idlib. The potential permanent character of those returns remains unclear.

As of 8 May 2025, UNHCR estimates that 481 730 Syrians have crossed back to the country from neighbouring countries since 8 December 2024. Some 1 186 147 IDPs have returned to their homes [\(8\)](#).

Please note that an assessment on returns in the context of the Return Directive falls outside the mandate of the EUAA and therefore also outside the scope of the country guidance documents.

Please also consult the UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic, still valid at the time of writing this interim guidance, stating that:

'For the time being UNHCR is not *promoting* large-scale voluntary repatriation to Syria (...)

UNHCR for the time being continues to call on States not to forcibly return Syrian nationals and former habitual residents of Syria, including Palestinians previously residing in Syria, to any part of Syria (...)

UNHCR does not consider that the requirements for cessation of refugee status for beneficiaries of international protection originating from Syria have currently been met'(9).

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UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Regional Flash Update #26- Syria Situation Crisis, May 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116242> , [accessed 23 May 2025].

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UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic, December 2024, <https://www.refworld.org/policy/countrypos/unhcr/2024/en/149254> [accessed 23 May 2025]. At the time of writing, 'UNHCR's position on Syria returns from December 2024 remains unchanged', <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/unhcr-operational-framework-voluntary-return-syrian-refugees-and-idps-2025>