



RETURN OF SYRIAN REFUGEES AND IDPS AFTER THE LIBERATION

17 January 2025

Issue: 2



Following the overthrow of Al-Assad regime on December 8, 2024. The Syrian borders with neighboring countries are experiencing a significant return of Syrian refugees. Syrians are flocking to border crossings in preparation for their return to the country from which they were displaced 14 years ago.

From December 8 to January 15, the total number of refugees returning from neighboring countries reached 148,000, with the largest portion returning from Turkey.

Turkey:

The number of returnees from Turkey in the past month was significantly higher compared to those returning from other neighboring countries.

According to the Turkish Immigration Department, five crossings have been opened along the Turkish border to facilitate the voluntary return of Syrians holding temporary protection status, which affects an estimated 2.9 million Syrians. These crossings are: Bab al-Hawa, Kasab, Bab al-Salam, Jarablus, and Tal Abyad.

Additionally, there are two other crossings designated for visits: the al-Rai crossing and the al-Hamam/Afrin crossing. This brings the total number of crossings on the Syrian-Turkish border facilitating the return of Syrian refugees to seven.

As of January 15, approximately 52,000 returnees had crossed from Turkey, with the largest number heading to Aleppo Governorate (approximately 23,000), followed by Idlib Governorate (around 6,000), and approximately 5,700 to Damascus and Rural Damascus. The following figure illustrates the distribution of returnees from Turkey according to their respective governorates.

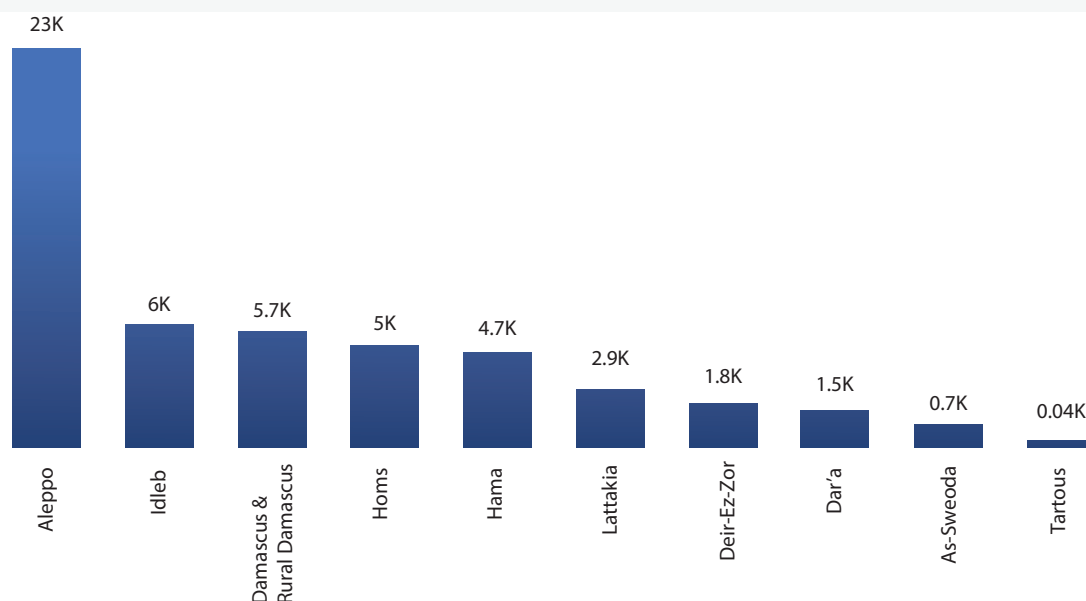
















Chart 1: Number of refugees returning from Turkey by governorate

<p>Wash Program</p>  	<p>Shelter & Non-food</p>  	<p>Health Program</p>  	<p>Education Program</p>  	<p>Nutrition Program</p>  	<p>Protection Program</p>  	<p>Food security Program</p>  
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Lebanon

While in Lebanon, the number of Syrian refugees there, according to official government estimates, is 1.5 million refugees, including 800,000 officially registered with UNHCR, from which 152,000 Syrian refugees had previously returned from November 21 to October 3. Three official border crossings were officially opened: Al-Arida crossing, Al-Qaa crossing, and Al-Masnaa border crossing.

These crossings witnessed the return of approximately 50,000 refugees since the liberation until January 15, the largest portion of whom headed to Homs Governorate with approximately 37,000 returning refugees, followed by Damascus City with the equivalent of 5,000 returning refugees, followed by Rural Damascus Governorate, which received approximately 4.4 thousand returning refugees. The following chart shows the distribution of returning refugees according to governorates.



Return of refugees from Aarsal camp

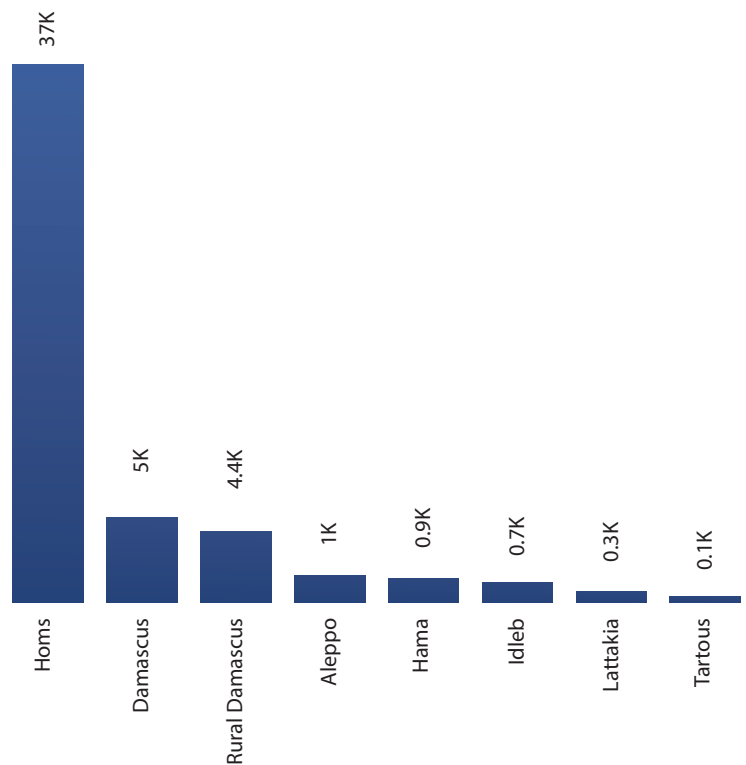


Chart 2: Number of refugees returning from Lebanon by governorate

Wash Program



Shelter & Non-food



Health Program



Education Program



Nutrition Program



Protection Program



Food security Program



Jordan,

which includes up to 1.3 million Syrian refugees, of whom 600,000 are officially registered with UNHCR, has seen a significant movement of refugees returning to Syria. Since the liberation up to January 15, approximately 43,000 refugees have returned through the Jaber border crossing. The majority of these returnees headed to Daraa Governorate, with around 22,000 individuals, while approximately 10,000 returned to Damascus. Additionally, about 4,000 people made their way to the villages in Quneitra Governorate, as illustrated in the following Chart.



Lines of cars waiting at the Nassib border crossing

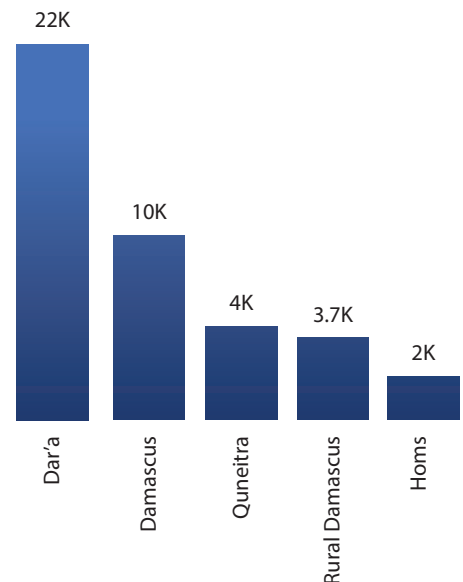
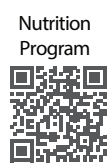
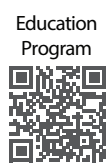


Chart 3: Number of refugees returning from Jordan by governorate

Iraq

A small return movement from Iraq was recorded within the last month, with approximately 3,300 returnees. The majority, around 2,500 people, headed to villages in Deir-Ez-Zor Governorate.



Returning IDPs:

In parallel with the return movement from neighboring countries, a significant portion of the internally displaced people has started returning to their original towns and cities, at the level of all governorates. Since the beginning of the liberation operations on November 27, 2024, which ended with the liberation of Syria from the ousted Assad regime, and until January 15, 2025, the number of IDPs returning to their original cities and villages amounted to approximately 683 thousand returnees. The largest portion of them returned to the communities of Aleppo Governorate, where their number amounted to 312 thousand, while the number of IDPs returning to the communities of Hama Governorate amounted to 147 thousand, followed by Idlib Governorate, which witnessed displacement and return movements during the previous military operations for liberation, which ultimately led to the return of 77 thousand people to it.

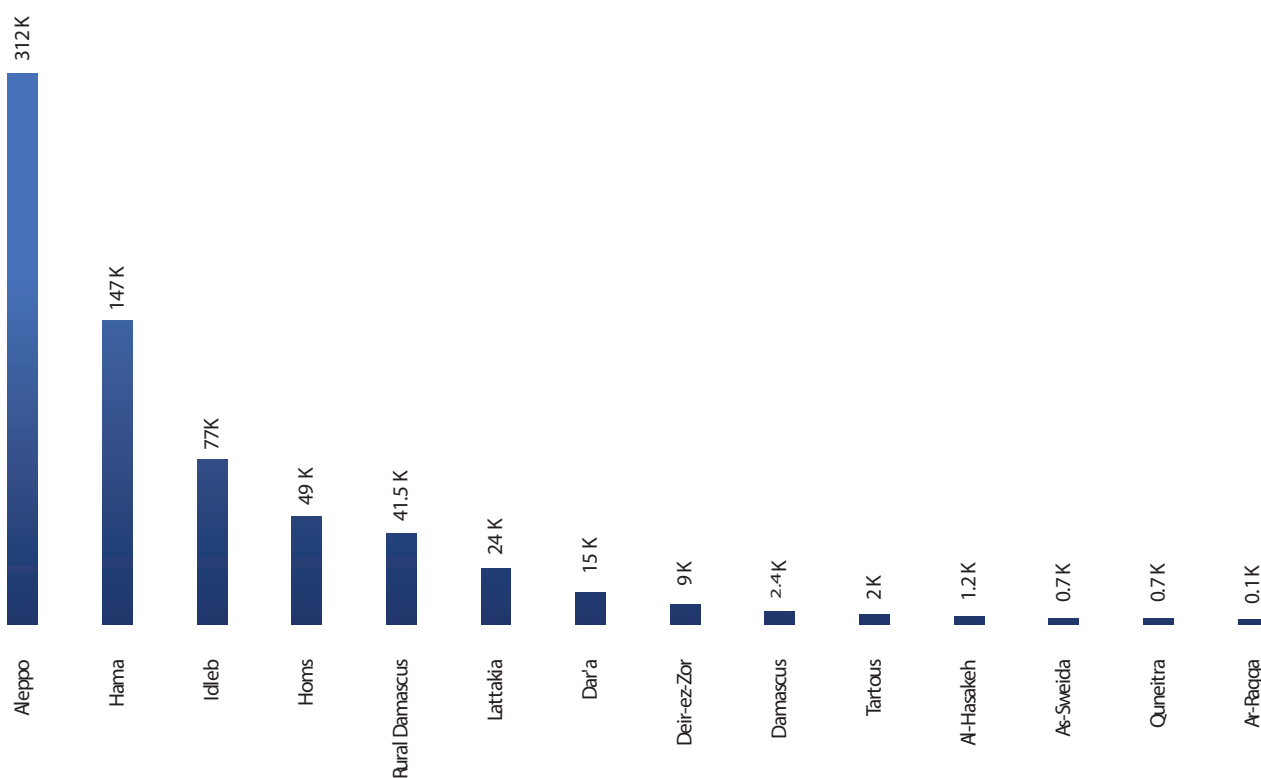


Chart 4: Number of returning IDPs by governorate

Wash Program



Shelter & Non-food



Health Program



Education Program



Nutrition Program



Protection Program



Food security Program



Despite the return movements of IDPs after the spread of a general state of security and stability in most of the liberated areas, most of the IDPs, mainly those who lived in the camps, preferred to remain in their camps due to the massive destruction that affected their homes and the inability to cover the costs of rehabilitating these homes by them, which made it impossible for them to return directly, especially during the harsh winter conditions. Whereas the villages of the southern and eastern countryside of Idlib, such as the villages of the Maarat al-Numan area (the city of Maarat al-Numan, Tal Mans, Jarjanaz, al-Ghadfa, Maar Shamsh, etc.) and the communities of Saraqib district, were destroyed by approximately 60 to 80%, as well as a large part of the communities of the western and northern countryside of Aleppo and the northern countryside of Hama, as well as some of Rural Damascus communities.

IDPs in camps currently suffer from the lack of sufficient and safe heating methods, which exposes them to the risk of fires in tents, which occur annually. Due to the lack of heating or the use of inappropriate heating methods, coupled with poor health conditions, the risk of respiratory diseases increases for children and adults. IDPs also suffer the lack of food. According to WFP, 90% of IDPs suffer from food insecurity.

Needs:

Syria is currently emerging from a 14-year-long conflict that has been exhausting all sectors, most notably the health, food and shelter sectors, in addition to the deteriorating economic conditions of most of the population without exception, whether residents or displaced persons inside and outside the displacement sites, due to high prices coupled with low income. Currently, with the return of displaced persons and refugees and the stabilization of conditions, the main urgent needs are still

- Ensuring adequate heating fuel, including diesel and coal, for needed population, and heating schools during the winter months.
- Providing flour and fuel to bakeries to meet the bread needs of the needed population.
- Providing emergency food packages.

But the urgent need remains, first and foremost, the reconstruction of the destroyed neighborhoods in a way that ensures the honorable return of the displaced from the camps to their home villages and cities hopefully in the near future.

Wash
Program



Shelter &
Non-food



Health
Program



Education
Program



Nutrition
Program

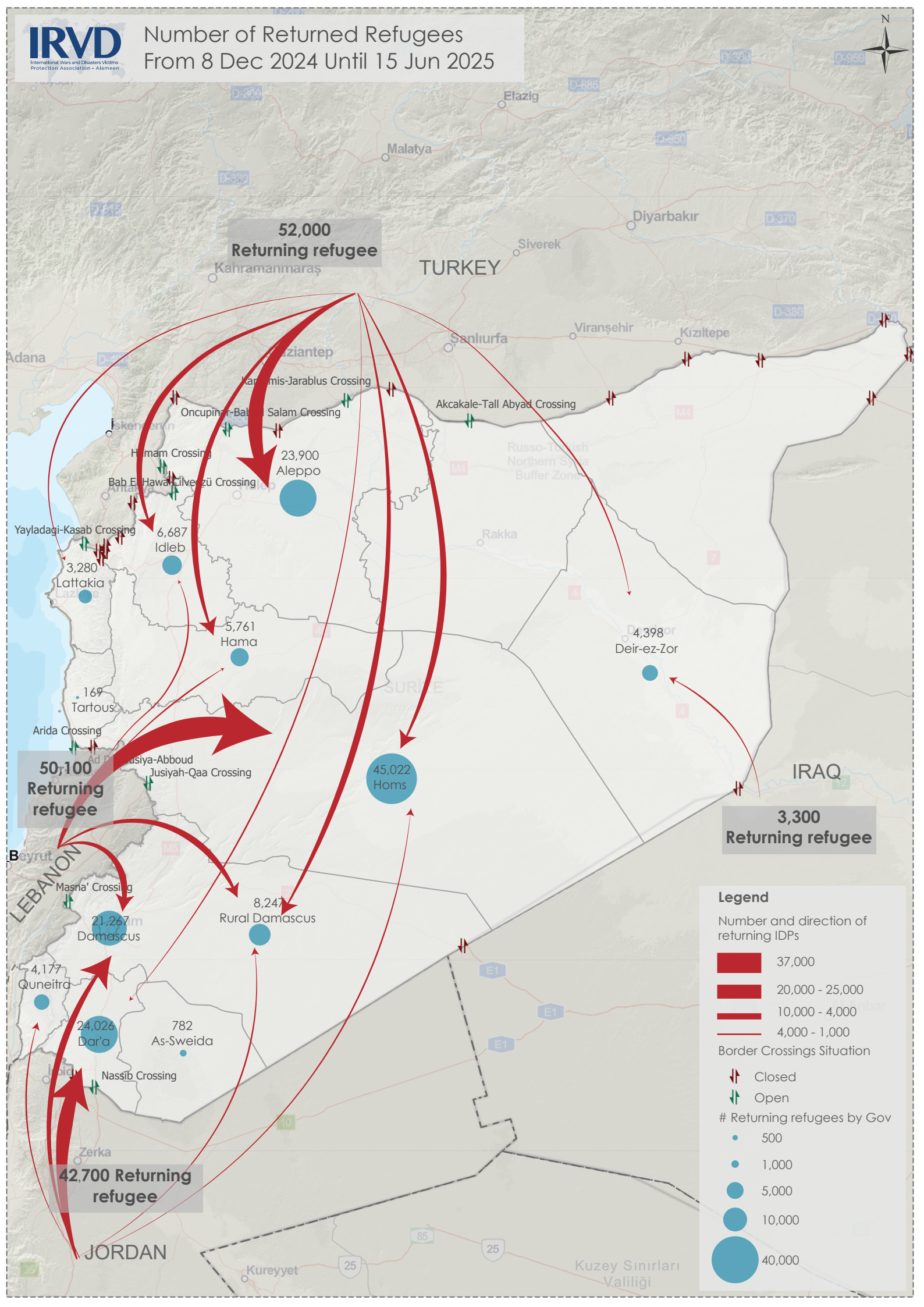


Protection
Program



Food security
Program





52,000
Returning refugee

23,900
Aleppo

50,100
Returning refugee

45,022
Homs

3,300
Returning refugee

42,700 Returning refugee

Legend

Number and direction of returning IDPs

- 37,000
- 20,000 - 25,000
- 10,000 - 4,000
- 4,000 - 1,000

Border Crossings Situation

- Closed
- Open

Returning refugees by Gov

- 500
- 1,000
- 5,000
- 10,000
- 40,000