



## Note on Syrians in Egypt

### General Information

Since the debut of the conflict in Syria in 2011, the majority of Syrians arriving in Egypt are believed to be residing in 6 October, Al Haram, Faysal, Al Obour, Nasr city and Al Rehab; another big group resides in Alexandria; UNHCR received information that other groups are living in other cities like New Damietta, Mansoura, Hurghada, Suez, and Ismailia. In addition, there are 100-150 Syrians in Salloum city near the Western borders.

However, Syrians registered with UNHCR Cairo were few and haven't exceeded 1000 individuals until the end of June 2012. However, UNHCR has been receiving an increase in number of asylum requests from the Syrian nationals in Egypt recently because of the efforts exerted by the office to communicate with the Syrian community.

The office has registered so far 6,097 individuals as of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012, including 623 individuals registered in a two-day mobile registration in Alexandria on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October, and 784 individuals registered in another two-day mobile registration that took place in Shaikh Zayed Islamic Complex, 6th October City, on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September.

It is expected that numbers of registered Syrians will increase to reach 10,000 - 12,000 people by the end of the year if the rate of registering Syrians continued in the same pattern.

The majority of Syrians registered with UNHCR are coming from Homs. Other main cities include Damascus and Aleppo.

All flights departing from Damascus and Aleppo are fully booked. Moreover, some Syrians are leaving by road to Lebanon and eventually reach Cairo by air. Many travel to Egypt by road from Jordan eventually seeking to cross into Libya. The Libyan authorities have imposed entry visa on Syrians as of 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012, leaving hundreds of Syrians stranded on a weekly basis in Salloum near Egypt/Libya border.

Total Registered Syrians: **6097**  
individuals

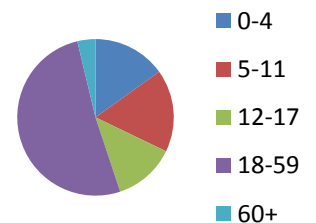
### Gender



Males: **51.17%** - Females: **48.83%**

### Age Groups

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0-4 years: **15.1%**

5-11 years: **17.03%**

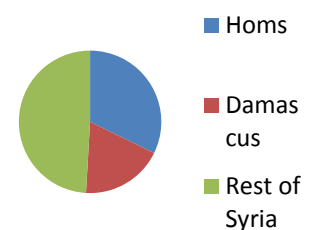
12-17 years: **12.76%**

18-59 years: **51.36%**

60-above years: **3.74%**

### Cities of Origin

### Origin



Homs: **32.21%**

Damascus: **18.71%**

Rest of Syria: **49.09%**

The Government of Egypt does not require entry visas for Syrians. They are able to enter Egypt freely for three months as visitors. Afterwards, they need to regularize their stay in the country through the Department of Immigration of the Interior Ministry. At this stage, renewal of residence is granted only for 3 months.

## UNHCR Strategies on Influx of Syrians

### Registration

UNHCR Cairo has started exceptionally, since March 2012, to conduct mobile registration in different areas of Cairo and Alexandria in weekends. These exercises are applied to facilitate the registration of Syrians near their areas of concentration and to hand them the yellow cards of asylum seeker identification on the same day rather than extending the regular registration waiting period, which is 6-8 weeks for other nationalities.

In addition, UNHCR has started, since 21<sup>st</sup> of October, permanent registration presence at All Saints Cathedral in Zamalek for the registration of Syrians. The team is expected to register 100-120 persons on daily basis.

A three-day mobile registration will take place, 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of November in Alexandria, and another three-day mobile registration is planned to take place in New Damietta in November.

### Palestinians

62 Palestinian families/180 individuals with Syrian travel documents requested to be registered with UNHCR Cairo. To date, UNHCR Cairo has not registered these individuals yet, awaiting a permission to register Palestinians with Syrian travel documents so that they are treated on equal footing as other Syrians entering Egypt.

UNHCR welcome the decision taken by the Egyptian government taken lately to treat Palestinians with Syrian travel document similar to their fellow Syrians.

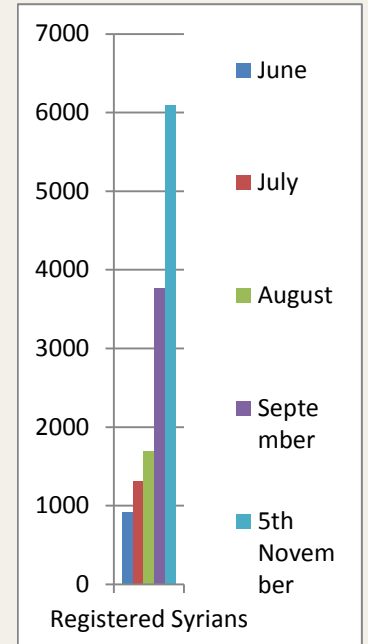
### Community Outreach

UNHCR is meeting and coordinating with Syrian community leaders to facilitate registration of Syrians, assess the needs of the Syrian community in Egypt, and work on providing the needed assistance.

### Humanitarian Assistance

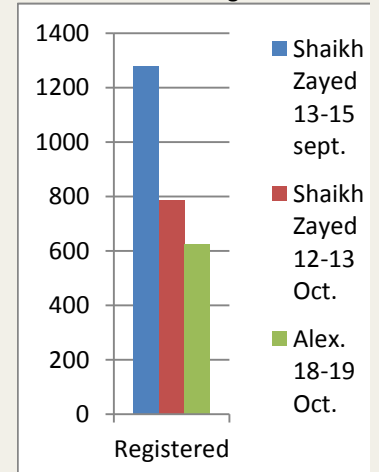
At this stage, vulnerable cases among Syrians are assisted by UNHCR partners; Caritas Egypt, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Refuge Egypt and are absorbed under the existing programs.

**Increase in Registered Syrians since June 2012**



Syrians registered until End of June 2012: **924 individuals**  
 End July: **1313 individuals**  
 End August: **1695 individuals**  
 End September: **3767 individuals**  
 5th November: **6097 individuals**

**Last Three Mobile Registrations**



Shaikh Zayed Mobile Registration 20-22 September: **1278 individuals**

Shaikh Zayed Mobile Registration 12-13 October: **784 individuals**

Alexandria Mobile Registration 18-19 October: **623 individuals**

UNHCR is developing a needs assessment analysis for Syrians during the registration process to facilitate the design of programs to provide financial and financial assistance as well as psycho-social support, health care and education grants.

The majority of those already registered or pending registration are families composed of 5 to 8 individuals.

Different actors for the Syrians in Egypt have established a strong and active social support network to assist Syrians in Egypt. Egyptian NGOs and religious charity groups provide different types of assistance ranging from monthly financial assistance to food items. However, the increase in arrivals makes the capacity of these networks to cater for all the Syrian families more limited. The rents Syrians are paying for a furnished apartment in Cairo and Alexandria range from EGP 1000 to EGP 1500.

Some of the Syrian men work in the informal market like restaurants, house painting and decorating. However and due to the cultural proximity, feeling of solidarity, hospitality and common language, Syrians have stronger chances in securing jobs in the informal labor market.

## **Education**

Education is one of the basic human rights that cannot be overstated. UNHCR Cairo was informed that some Syrian families started to return back to Syria, despite the generalized violence there, in order not to miss the current educational year. The office was apprised that at least 3 cases returned back to Syria.

Further to a presidential instruction to the Ministry of Education to facilitate the enrolment of Syrian nationals in the public system, a meeting took place between the Deputy Minister for Education and UNHCR Regional Representative to follow up on the presidential decision and work with the Ministry on possible support to implement this decision.

Some 30% of the Syrians present in Egypt are children of school age, and some 15% are youth of university age. Despite the Presidential decision to provide access for Syrians to the public education system and universities at the same cost of nationals, so far a small portion of both groups has been able to enroll in the public schools. UNHCR and CRS have worked with the Syrian community and the Ministry of Education in Alexandria and have succeeded in getting places for 200 children so far and in developing a mechanism for enrolling Syrian children in public schools. This exercise will be replicated in Cairo and 6<sup>th</sup> October City in the coming weeks.

Several Syrian students were able to obtain scholarships to study at Al Azhar schools, and others have enrolled in private schools. Most of the Syrian families have 3 to 5 children, and do not have the financial resources to enroll all their children in private schools.

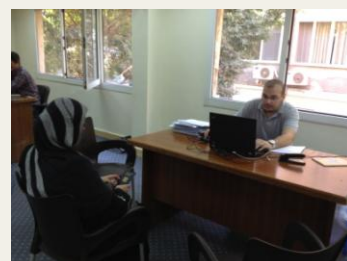
### **Pictures of Last Mobile Registrations in Shaikh Zayed, 6<sup>th</sup> October city, 12-13 October 2012 and Permanent Registration in Zamalek**



*Mobile Registration, Islamic Complex, Shaikh Zayed, 6<sup>th</sup> October city, 12-13 October 2012*



*Permanent Registration, All Saints Church, Zamalek, 7 November, 2012*



*Permanent Registration, All Saints Church, Zamalek, 7 November, 2012*

Furthermore, UNHCR welcome the decision taken by the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU) in Egypt, headed by Minister of Higher Education Dr. Mostafa Mosaad, of facilitating Syrian students' admission to Egyptian universities. SCU decided to extend the time limit for the Syrians to allow them to finish all the formalities needed for the current educational year.

## **Health**

A decision by the Egyptian government was taken to treat Syrians in Egypt's public hospitals like their Egyptian counterparts. UNHCR is currently subsidizing tertiary health care for Syrians through Caritas and Refuge Egypt.

## **Psycho-social support**

Psycho-social support has been flagged as a major need by the Syrian community. UNHCR Cairo is working with its partner Psycho-Social Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC) to train a group of Syrian psycho-social workers. Cases are also referred to specialized centers for psycho-social support. UNHCR is looking into the possibility of setting up a community centre in 6<sup>th</sup> October city to serve the Syrian community.

## **New partners for the Syrian Refugee programs**

If the number of registered Syrians increases to reach 10,000 - 12,000, UNHCR will not be able to absorb this big number in its on-going programs. Therefore, UNHCR Cairo is in the process of exploring expansion of programs and the possibility of having new partners to assist the increasing number of Syrians.



*Permanent Registration, All Saints Church, Zamalek, 7 November, 2012*

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**UNHCR Cairo**  
**November 8th, 2012**