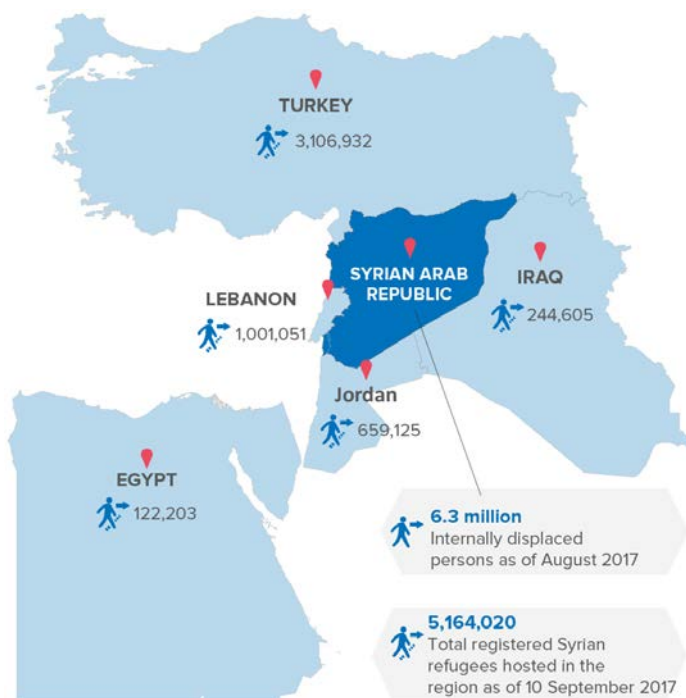


Update: Durable Solutions for Syrian Refugees

The key durable solutions for refugees from Syria are resettlement and complementary pathways of admission to a third country¹, voluntary return to Syria in safety and dignity, and protection and assistance in countries of asylum. UNHCR is pursuing policy, programmatic and strategic directions across the region to facilitate access to durable solutions while maintaining protection space in host countries.

In this regard, UNHCR is publishing a range of updates and reports on durable solutions opportunities. This update provides statistical data on Syrian refugees in the region. The demographic analysis uses UNHCR refugee registration data from Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

Introduction



Syria is the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis in the world today. In 2011, before the start of the crisis, the population in Syria was estimated at 20.5 million². The conflict is in its seventh year, with 6.15 million people internally displaced and a total of 13.5 million people in Syria in need of humanitarian assistance.

As of September, there are 5.2 million Syria refugees hosted in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Lebanon and Jordan host the largest number of registered Syrian refugees relative to their respective populations. In Lebanon, one in five people is a refugee, and in Jordan one in 15 is a refugee. Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees in the world.

Date of Arrival, place of origin and ethnicity

UNHCR does not promote or facilitate refugee returns to Syria because conditions for safe and dignified returns are not in place. Nevertheless, from the time of flight from Syria to a country of asylum, UNHCR strives to find durable solutions to international displacement. To make informed decisions for their future, information on places of origin is crucial for refugees. That information is also important for humanitarian organizations to prepare for durable solutions, which can include return to Syria. Data on places of origin can also help with the rebuilding of national civil registries in the event of return when it can be made available to local and central authorities in the country of origin.

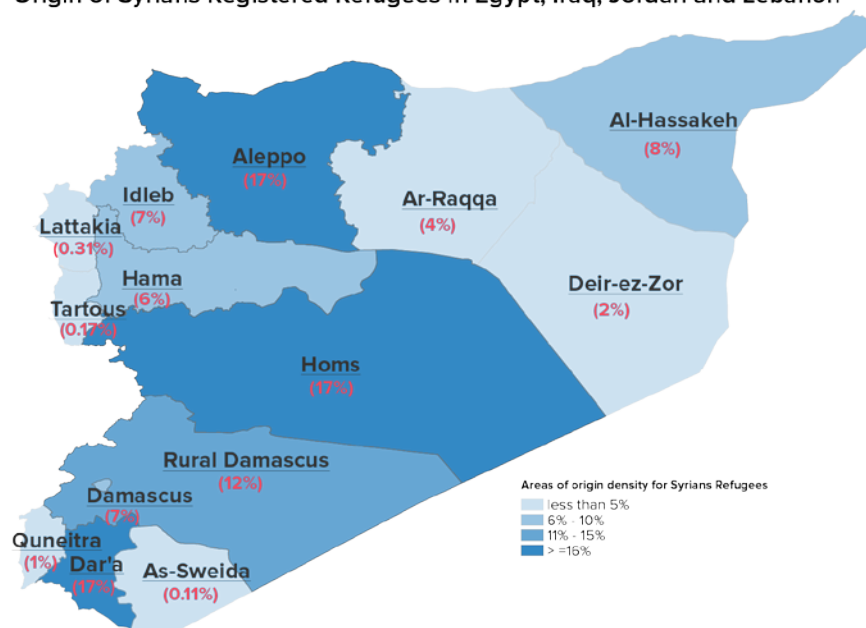
¹ Complementary pathways are legal means that provide refugees access to a third country. They can include humanitarian visas, academic scholarships, private sponsorships, and labor mobility schemes.

² Government of Syria – Central Bureau of Statistics.

UNHCR registration data from 2011 to June 2017 shows that 52 per cent of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt were registered during 2013, and UNHCR registered 86 per cent of the refugees between 2012 and 2014. These figures highlight both the high point of refugee influx across the region and the impact of managed borders across the immediate region since then. Refugees continue to need access to safety and international protection, as well as ongoing humanitarian support in countries of asylum.

Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR originate from all 14 governorates of Syria. The majority are from Homs, Aleppo, which was the most populous Governorate in Syria and the scene of a major military confrontation between 2012 and 2016, and Dara'a.

Origin of Syrians Registered Refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon



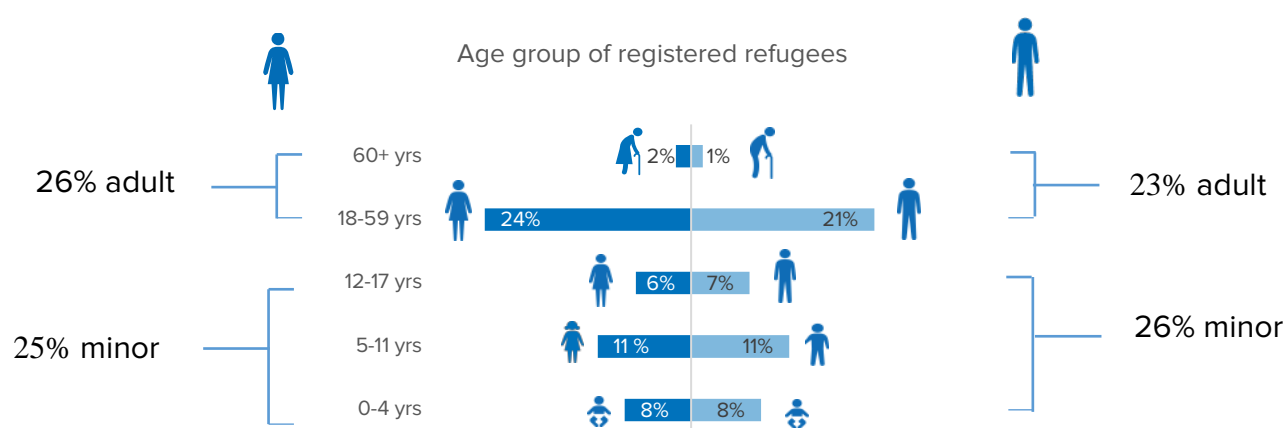
Due to geographic proximity, the largest governorate of origin for Syrian refugees in Lebanon is Homs (23 per cent), followed by Aleppo (21 per cent are from Aleppo). In Jordan, 42 per cent of the Syrians are from Dara'a and 16 per cent are from Homs. In Iraq, most refugees come from Al-Hassakeh (58 per cent) and Aleppo (25 per cent). In Egypt, the majority of the Syrians are from Damascus (32 per cent) and Rural Damascus (30 per cent).

Among the UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees in the region, 86 per cent are Arabs, 13 per cent are Kurds (primarily in Iraq) and the rest are of other ethnic groups such as Assyrian, Armenian, Circassian, Chaldean and Turkman.

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Age and Gender

Nearly 45 per cent of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt are aged between zero and 14, and fifty-three per cent are aged between 15 and 64 years, and approximately two per cent are



aged 65 years and above. There are slightly more females than males (nearly 51 per cent females), and this is higher than the official census done by the Government of Syria in 2011, where females represented just over 49 per cent of the population. This slight disproportion of females over males, especially in the age groups of 18-59 years, could be due to many male family members already being abroad in other countries or still in Syria.

The conflict in Syria has had a significant impact on Syrian children; some 2.5 million Syrian children - below the age of 18 - live as refugees, comprising of 48 per cent of the Syrian refugee population. While the majority of these children are Syrian nationals, it is notable that Syrian nationality can only be acquired through the father. Children, including refugee children, are therefore at risk of statelessness if they are left without legal documentation. This is a significant challenge, as the conflict has left one out of four Syrian refugee families without father to attest to the children's nationality. Adults displaced by conflict and whose documentation is lost, destroyed or confiscated may also face a certain risk of statelessness if unable to replace such documentation. The conflict in Syria has also led to forced displacement of groups that were already stateless in Syria. Programming and advocacy for the right to a nationality as well as ensuring that all Syrian refugee children are documented and registered at birth are therefore a key priority.

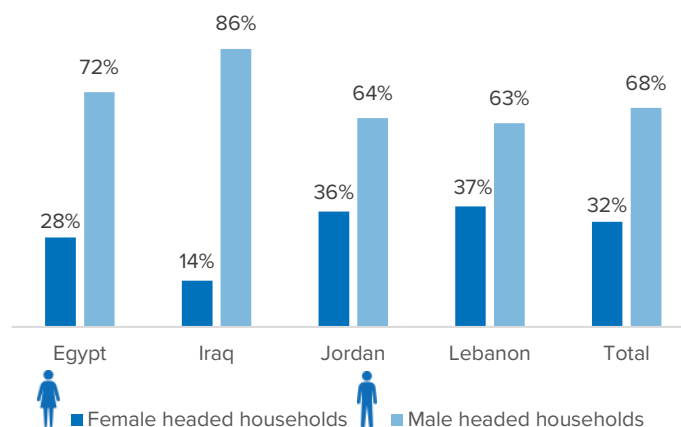
Family composition

Approximately 68 per cent of UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees belong to families with children under the age of 18. The average family size is four. Throughout their time in displacement, many Syrian refugee women have assumed roles and responsibilities which they may not have previously had, such as participating in decision making on income and expenses, engaging in responsibilities outside the home and taking on the role of head of household.

While pre-crisis statistics suggest that only eight per cent of households were headed by a woman³, a female heads over 30 per cent of Syrian refugee families. Prior to the crisis many of these women managed their households but depended on the financial security and protection provided by the men in their families.

Current and future social support and livelihoods programmes for Syrian refugee women are and will continue to be important to help women avoid having to resort to negative coping mechanisms to provide for their families both while in exile and when they eventually return to Syria. Safe, dignified livelihood options are essential to sustainable returns.

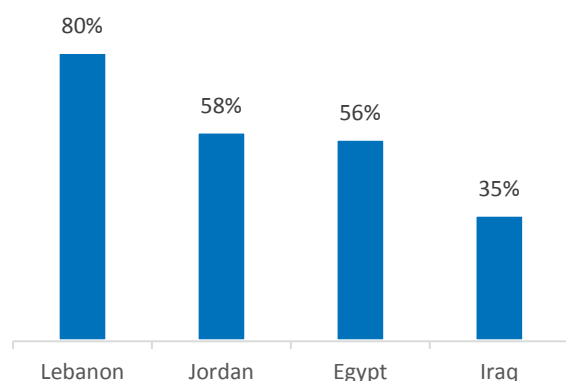
% of female and male headed households by country of asylum



³ Government of Syria – Central Bureau of Statistics.

Specific needs

% of refugee households with a specific need



Nearly 63 per cent of refugee families across the region have at least one member with a specific need⁴, with the most common need related to medical reasons. Refugees in Lebanon appear to have higher levels of specific needs with 80 per cent of families having at least one specific need. However, there are some significant differences in the prevalence of specific needs. The highest levels of women at risk and single parents are in Jordan, while Lebanon has high rates of family separation and children at risk as well as torture survivors and medical cases, and Iraq has high numbers of unaccompanied and separated children.

Planning for the specific needs of refugee children and others will remain extremely important for durable solutions, including identifying and developing community-based mechanisms to monitor assistance and protection needs, and integrating the needs of people with specific needs in all programming activities.

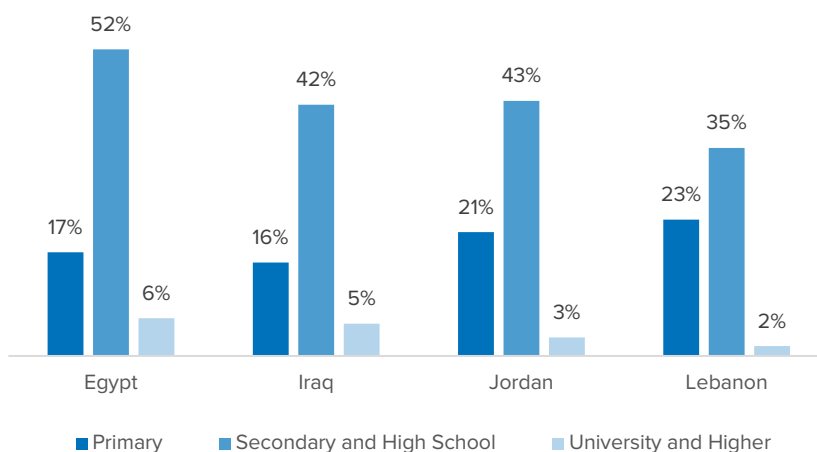
Education

Of the registered Syrian refugees who were above 5 years of age at the time of registration and who reported their educational background to UNHCR, some 66 per cent have secondary or higher secondary education as their highest level of educational attainment. Some 27 per cent have primary school as their highest level of attainment, while just 7 per cent have university education.

As of June 2017, there were nearly 1.7 million registered school-age (5-17 years) refugee children in the five host countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Of these, 56.5 per cent were enrolled in either formal (54 per cent) or non-formal/informal education (2.5 per cent) opportunities, while some 43.5 per cent remained out of school.

Although enrolment in formal education has remained relatively stable between December 2016

Highest level of education for Syrian refugees, by country of asylum



⁴ Specific needs registered by UNHCR are: child at risk; disability; older person at risk; family separation; specific legal and physical protection needs; unaccompanied or separated child; serious medical condition; single parent; SGBV; torture survivors; woman at risk.

and June 2017, enrolment in non-formal/informal education programmes has declined. Taking into account the reduction in non-formal/informal education enrollment, there are now some 740,000 Syrian refugee children out of school in the region.

Access to upper secondary, vocational and tertiary education also remains low, with only between 1-8 per cent of refugee youth accessing higher education.

A consequence of the crisis is that a large number of Syrian refugees are growing up without a formal education and children and youth remain vulnerable to negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and early marriage.

Inside Syria, the economic and social collapse has reversed decades of educational achievements and infrastructure. Therefore, infrastructure to support the increase in number of school children (1 in 5 schools in Syria has been destroyed, damaged or used for other purposes) and accelerated learning programmes will be needed.

Conclusion

UNHCR continues to register Syrian refugees and review registration data for trends that can support and inform protection and assistance programming in host countries and inside Syria. The more that is known about refugees in host countries and those returning home, the more informed and effective are the interventions in support of durable solutions, including for the limited number of refugee returnees who have already gone back to Syria. While the vast majority of Syrian refugees will most likely, in time, return to Syria, asylum space throughout the region must be preserved until it is safe from them to do so.