



**MIXED MIGRATION  
MONTHLY SUMMARY**

**JANUARY  
2017**

**MIDDLE EAST**

This summary is produced by the Mixed Migration Platform (MMP) and covers inter- and intra-regional displacement and displacement-induced mobility, drawing widely from available sources.

Given the complexity of current migration trends in the Middle East, this summary gives a consolidated snapshot of mixed migration in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. Current mixed migration issues in Israel/oPt fall within the remit of the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS).

*A note on terminology: Throughout the report the term 'refugees and other migrants' is used to include all persons in mixed migration flows (this may include asylum seekers, trafficked persons, refugees, migrants, and other people on the move). Any reference to specific groups is consistent with the original source.*

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# INTRODUCTION

Throughout January cold temperatures and winter conditions put thousands of refugees and other migrants in the Middle East and Europe at risk.

At least five fatalities at Europe's borders with Turkey were reported due to temperatures as low as -14 degrees Celsius, and snowstorms throughout the region.

Only 413 Syrians arrived by sea in Greece in January, a significant decrease from the more than 30,000 who arrived in January 2016. Notably, 41.4% of sea arrivals to Greece in January were recorded as non-specified, 'other' nationalities, a trend consistent with recent months. Additionally, a reported 131 Iraqis arrived by sea in Italy in January, more than the number who arrived in Greece.

In Jordan, at least 500 Syrians reportedly 'spontaneously returned' to Syria or left for third countries, while in Iraq, ongoing fighting in and around Mosul resulted in more than 160,000 Iraqis being displaced from their homes by the end of January.

Despite ongoing displacement, in January the number of IDPs in Iraq dropped below three million for the first time since April 2015.

**The following sections of this report describe monthly developments related to mixed migration by country, including reported arrivals, departures, internal displacement relevant to cross-border movement, and discussion of relevant policy changes.**

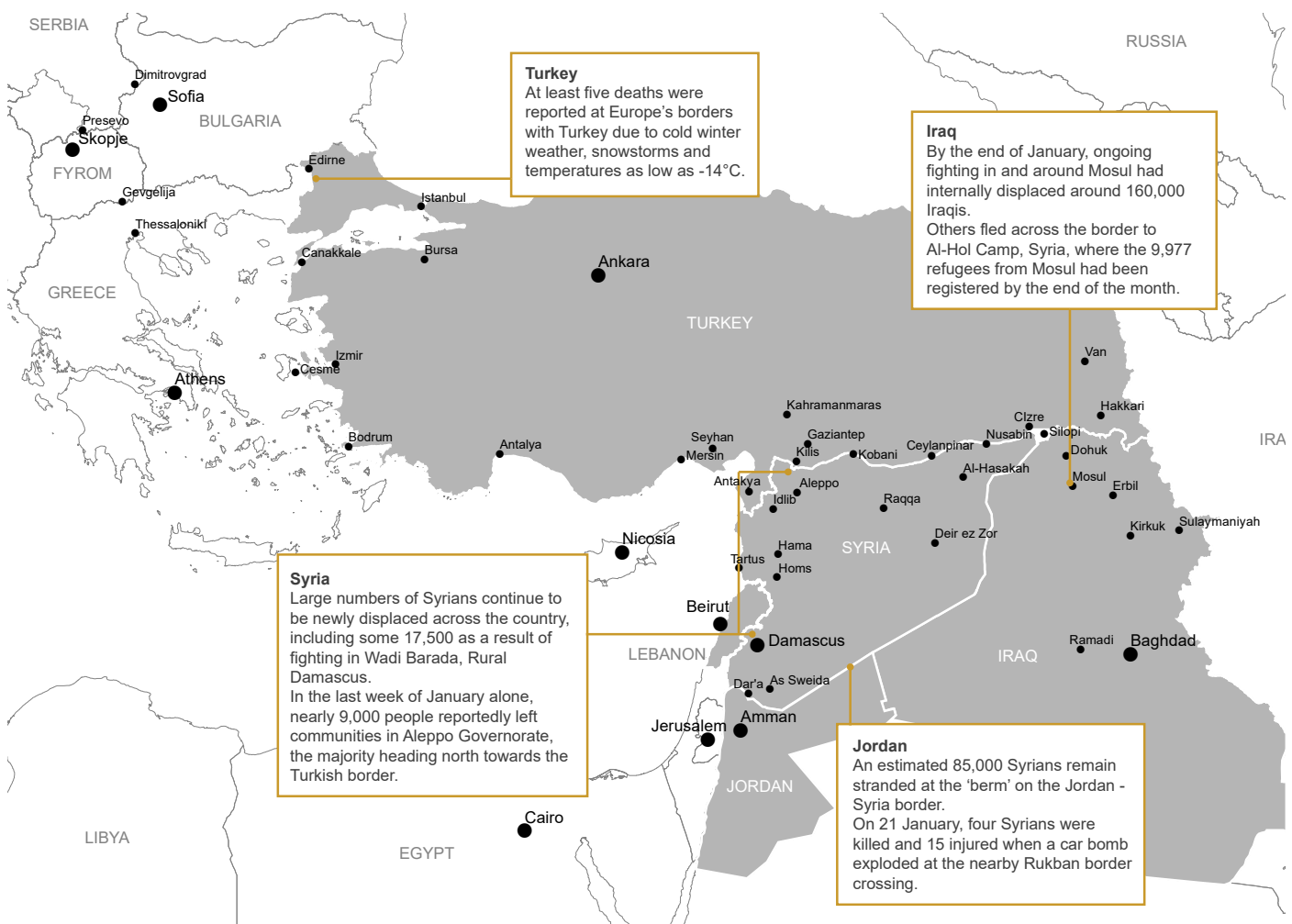


Figure 1: Overview of key developments across the Middle East (January 2017)

# IRAQ

**Arrivals:** As in recent months, no figures were available regarding new arrivals to Iraq in January, though an increase in the number of Syrian refugees in the country, recorded by UNHCR in January, may indicate that Syrians are continuing to enter Iraq (see Refugees and Other Migrants in Iraq below).

Reports have indicated a growing number of Iraqis voluntarily returning from Europe. Between January 2015 and June 2016, IOM assisted 10,694 Iraqis to return home, with an unknown number returning to Iraq unassisted. Data on the number of returns from June-December 2016 is expected soon, but was unavailable in January. For more information on voluntary and forced returns of Iraqis from Europe please see MMP’s second briefing note.

**Departures:** Ongoing fighting in Mosul and other regions of Iraq continued to displace thousands of people both within Iraq (see Internal Displacement below) and internationally throughout January. UNHCR reports that as of 30 January 9,977 Iraqis have fled to the Al-Hol camp, in Hasakeh governorate, Syria following intensified violence in the Mosul area beginning on 17 October, 2016. This marks an increase of 3,773 people (60.8%) from 28 December figures. Additionally, Turkish Land Forces apprehended some 114 people trying to enter Turkey by land from Iraq in January. Though figures do not indicate where specific apprehensions were made, Silopi and Çukurca are the main entry points from Iraq to Turkey.

As of 30 January, UNHCR reported that neighbouring countries in the region host some 245,000 Iraqi refugees, an increase of 5,923 from December figures. 131,440 Iraqi ‘persons of concern’ (including refugees and asylum seekers) were registered by UNHCR in Turkey as of 31 January (an increase of


1,364 from 31 December), while 7,546 were registered in Egypt on the same date. There were also 61,405 Iraqis registered in Jordan in January (a 400 person increase from the previous month), and as of 1 December, 24,970 Iraqi refugees were present in Syria. 28,260 Iraqi refugees were registered in Iran as of early 2016.

In January, some 1,393 refugees and other migrants arrived by sea in Greece, 109 of whom were Iraqi (7.8%) - one fewer than Iraqi arrivals in December. IOM reports that 131 Iraqis arrived to Italy by sea in January (2.9% of the total), notably more than the number who arrived in Greece, a more commonly used route for Iraqis. Throughout 2016 Iraqis made up only 1% of sea arrivals in Italy. Key drivers for refugees leaving Iraq include security concerns, lack of social justice, political and economic instability, the threat of the so-called Islamic State, and the risk of kidnapping by both state and non-state actors.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Iraq:** As of 31 January, UNHCR had registered 233,224 Syrian refugees in Iraq, an increase of 2,388 people from the 230,836 recorded as of 31 December. The number of non-Syrian refugees in Iraq was at least 42,000 in December, although nationalities were not disclosed, while 48,500 stateless people were also reported.

**Internal Displacement:** Military operations in Mosul continued throughout January, with Iraqi Security Forces gaining control of the eastern part of the city from the so-called Islamic state, some 100 days after the fighting began, according to the Iraqi prime minister. At the end of the month 163,224 Iraqis remained displaced by the offensive, 42,066 more than 31 December figures. Despite this increase in total displacement, by the end of January some 57,000 people had returned to Mosul

## Refugees and other migrants in Iraq

	Syrians	Others	Stateless
 <b>Population of concern</b> (as of 31 January)	233,224	47,431*	48,500*
% change since Dec.	▲ 1.1%	-	-

\*figures as of Dec. 2016

Figure 2: Refugees and other migrants in Iraq (source: UNHCR)

and neighbouring villages amid improved security conditions. Nearly 100,000 people returned home country-wide in January, with significant returns to Anbar governorate. Violence in the Hawiga district of Kirkuk governorate displaced nearly 18,000 people in January alone, and more than 85,000 since August 2016. Some 37,000 of those displaced from Hawiga have fled in dangerous conditions to nearby Salah al-Din, amid the presence of improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance, often undertaking the journey at night. More than 40,000 of those displaced have remained in Kirkuk governorate. According to UN figures, 403 Iraqi civilians were killed by violence, armed conflict, and acts of terrorism in January.

In Iraq as a whole, 2,996,004 people have been internally displaced between January 2014 and January 2017 as a result of ongoing violence. This marks a decrease of 68,142 people from December figures. Notably this is the first time the number of internally displaced persons has dropped below 3,000,000 in Iraq since April 2015. Cold temperatures and snow have continued to negatively affect the newly internally displaced across Iraq in January, as well as people who have been displaced for long periods.

# JORDAN

**Arrivals:** Restricted border access makes arrivals in Jordan difficult to verify, though military officials report that attempts to 'infiltrate' Jordan continue. In January, the Jordan Times reported the apprehensions of at least five people trying to enter the country irregularly. Some of those apprehended were attempting to enter from Syria and some were accused of drug smuggling, though their nationality and location were not always reported. Jordan's northern and northeastern borders with Syria and Iraq have remained closed militarized zones since 21 June, following a suicide bombing at the border near Rukban.

As of January an estimated 85,000 Syrians remained stranded at the Jordanian border with Syria in a remote desert location, known as 'the berm'. Satellite imagery from 17 February shows some 6,460 makeshift shelters near the Rukban border crossing (an increase of 19 from 3 December images), while

1,535 were identified at the Hadalat crossing as of 24 January (an increase of 177 from 12 November). The small size and irregularity of the shelters make accurate figures difficult to obtain.

On 21 January, four Syrians were killed and 15 injured when a car bomb exploded near the Rukban border crossing. In late December a senior Jordanian military official indicated that authorities suspect a so-called Islamic State presence at the berm, resulting in moves to relocate the camps further from the border. Conditions at the berm are notably dire for those stranded there, and have been exacerbated by cold winter weather. With limited food, water, and shelter available to people, reports of disease, malnutrition, starvation, and death have been common.

While humanitarian assistance, absent in the area since August, resumed in November it has been severely restricted and only intermittently available.

## Refugees and other migrants in Jordan


	Syrians	Iraqis	Sudanese	Yemenis	Others
 <b>Population of concern</b> (as of 31 January)	655,732	61,405	3,322	6,360	2,136
% change since Dec.	▲ 0.1%	▲ 0.7%	▲ 1.7%	▲ 10.4%	▲ 0.5%

Figure 3: Refugees and other migrants in Jordan (source: UNHCR)

**Departures:** Though data on departures from Jordan is limited, sporadic **returns** to Syria have been reported throughout 2016. According to Za’atari camp authorities, between **27 December** and **7 February** at least 283 individuals ‘spontaneously departed’ to Syria, 57 of whom were living in Za’atari. The majority returned to Dar’a governorate and were reportedly motivated by reunification with family in Syria, and the high living costs outside camps in Jordan. Additionally, camp authorities reported that 246 people left Jordan for a third country during the same period, with 28 departing from Za’atari. The main **destinations** of those who departed were Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, though no information was presented regarding means of departure. Similar data from Azraq camp was not publicly available at the time of reporting. The **Thomson Reuters Foundation** reports that Syrians who have left camps or are unregistered with UNHCR, are at risk of deportation to Syria. Human Rights Watch has reported on alleged deportations since **2014**, and confirms that reports of deportations continue into 2017, though the government has not confirmed this.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Jordan:** As of January UNHCR had registered some **728,955** ‘people of concern’ in Jordan, an increase of 1,516 individuals from **December** figures. Of this number **655,732** are Syrian, an increase of 388 people from 31 December. UNHCR has **no estimates** for the number of unregistered Syrians in Jordan, though **Jordanian leadership** and the 2015 Population **Census** indicate that roughly **1.3 million** Syrians reside in the country.

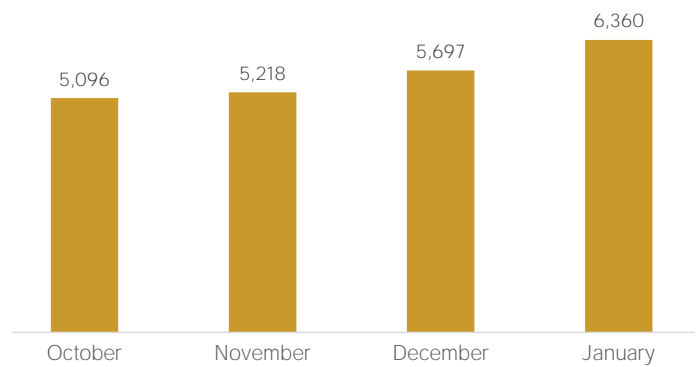


Figure 4: Number of Yemeni Refugees in Jordan (source: UNHCR)

Additionally there are more than **2.1 million** Palestinian refugees registered by UNRWA in Jordan, at least **16,779** of whom were displaced to Jordan by the Syrian conflict.

**61,405** Iraqi refugees were registered by UNHCR in Jordan as of 31 January, an increase of 400 people from **December** figures. The number of Yemeni refugees in Jordan has also been growing in recent months, with UNHCR reporting **6,360 registered Yemenis** on 31 January, an increase of 663 people since **December**, and an overall increase of more than **80%** since the start of 2016.

Some **3,322** Sudanese ‘persons of concern’ were also reported in January, an increase of 56 individuals from December. Some 636,000 Egyptians, 22,700 Libyans and 197,000 other nationalities are **reported to be living** in Jordan.



Tarpaulins are used to seal the windows of an unfinished building home to Syrian refugees in Mafraq, Jordan, Credit: REACH

# LEBANON

**Arrivals:** Since the introduction of **restrictive visa entry requirements** in January 2015, data on arrivals in the country has been limited. While the country is, in effect, **no longer** receiving refugees, some **humanitarian exceptions** exist for unaccompanied or separated children with parents in Lebanon, those with severe medical needs, those with disabilities who are dependent on displaced relatives in Lebanon, and refugees travelling to a third country outside of Lebanon with proof of travel. Despite these restrictions, **reports** indicate that the number of **Syrians** crossing the border **irregularly**, often in dangerous conditions, had **increased** in 2016 compared to 2015. People typically arrive with the help of **smugglers**, paying up to 1000 USD per person.

**Departures:** As in recent months, information on departures from Lebanon in January is unavailable. The **transit route** that once ran through Lebanon (and in many cases onward to **Europe**) was effectively **closed** by the January 2016 implementation of visa requirements for Syrians entering Turkey from a third country by air or sea. In a **vulnerability assessment** conducted in May and June 2016 with more than 4,500 Syrian households in Lebanon, only 2.4% indicated that a member of the household had returned to Syria or moved onward to a third country. Despite a reportedly low interest in moving onward or returning to Syria, **aid groups** report that lack of access to services and high cost of living have pushed a small number of people to return permanently to Syria.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Lebanon:** As of 31 December, a total of **1,011,366** Syrians were registered by UNHCR in Lebanon, **24.1%** of the country's total population. This marks a 6,067 person decrease (%0.6) since the last available figures of September 2016. The number of Syrians registered in Lebanon has been in decline since May 2015, a result of the ongoing **deactivation** of refugee registration in Lebanon's national refugee database and the government ordered **suspension** of new registrations on **6 May 2015**. Prohibitive **residency renewal fees** (**200 USD** for each person over 15 years) have driven many Syrians into becoming undocumented. In December, **UNHCR** estimated that 60% of Syrians in Lebanon lacked legal residency.

The **government** of Lebanon does not recognise people fleeing Syria as refugees, but **estimates** that the total number of Syrians in the country is closer to **1.5 million**, giving Lebanon the highest concentration of refugees in proportion to a country's population in the world.

As of 31 December, some 277,985 **Palestinian refugees** were reportedly in Lebanon (PRL), while **31,141** Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) were registered by UNRWA as of 17 January. The arrival of Palestinians from Syria has **reportedly** caused tension over resources and services among the pre-existing PRL population in recent years. An estimated **35,000** Lebanese citizens have returned from Syria since the beginning of the conflict.

**Vulnerability and Protection:** Harsh **winter conditions** continued to affect refugees and other migrants in Lebanon throughout January, with **fresh snow** and cold temperatures reported in high altitude towns in the Bekaa valley where many Syrians live in tents. With average winter temperatures ranging between **-5 and 10 degrees Celsius**, the typically coldest regions in Lebanon have the highest concentration of refugees, an estimated **41%** of whom were living in **substandard shelters** susceptible to rain and cold temperatures. In December, **IOM** reported that two Syrian refugees died entering Lebanon via snowy mountain passes.

Conditions for refugees in Lebanon continue to worsen, with UNHCR describing Syrians as 'barely coping'. **Food insecurity, child labour, and early marriages** were all reported on in January, amid a mounting '**anti-refugee discourse**' directed towards **Syrians**. Lebanese President, Michael Aoun, has called for Syrians to **return** to their country of origin, as well as the creation of '**safe zones**' for them to return to.

# SYRIA

**Arrivals:** As in December, the largest recorded number of new arrivals to Syria in January came from neighbouring Iraq where ongoing fighting in Mosul continued to displace people both internally and internationally. As of 30 January, UNHCR reported that 9,977 Iraqis had fled to the Al-Hol camp in Hasakeh governorate, Syria, since the intensification of violence in the Mosul area beginning on 17 October, 2016. This marks an increase of 3,773 people at the camp (60.8%) compared to 28 December figures.

**Departures:** As the Syrian conflict approaches its seventh year, millions of Syrians continue to be displaced both within Syria and internationally. As of 31 January, UNHCR figures indicate that 4,901,920 Syrian refugees were registered in countries neighbouring Syria and North Africa. This marks an increase of 46,989 compared to the 4,854,931 people reported by the same source on 31 December.

As of 1 January 233,224 Syrian refugees were registered by UNHCR in Iraq, 655,732 in Jordan, and 117,591 in Egypt where the arrival of 195 Syrians was reported in January. Additionally, Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) reported that as of 26 January, some 2,880,325 Syrians were being granted temporary protection in the country, while the most recent figures (to 31 December) from Lebanon indicate that 1,011,366 Syrians were registered by UNHCR. Estimates for the number of Syrian refugees in Sudan, one of only two countries where Syrians can still fly without a visa, range from 5,515 registered as of August, to unofficial estimates of up to 250,000.

Growing restrictions on borders surrounding Syria have resulted in limited legal routes for people to exit the country. Tightly controlled land borders, strict visa

requirements to enter Lebanon, a closed Jordanian border, visa requirements for entry to Turkey by sea or air, and the construction of a border fence along the Turkey-Syria border, have narrowed the options for Syrians leaving the country, though an unknown number still attempt to leave via irregular means.

Of the 1,393 sea arrivals to Greece reported by UNHCR in January, some 413 were Syrian. This marks an increase of 155 individuals compared to the number of Syrians arriving in Greece in December. This number represents a significant decrease from the thousands of Syrians who arrived by sea in Greece in 2016 and 2015. Reports also indicate that Syrians are attempting to enter Greece by land over Turkey’s Evros river in recent months. While figures were unavailable for the number of people who successfully entered Greece via this route in January, the apprehension of some 1,483 people by Turkish Land Forces near the border indicates that it is still being attempted. The nationalities of those apprehended were not given. Similarly, the Bulgarian-Turkish border has been used by Syrians as an entry-point to Europe in recent months, though data on the number of arrivals along this route was unavailable in January. The Bulgarian Ministry of Interior reports that 64 people were apprehended on entry to Bulgaria between 1 January and 2 February.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Syria:** The figures for refugees and asylum seekers in Syria had not been updated for January at the time of writing, but December figures show that UNHCR reported 46,118 refugees and asylum seekers in Syria at the end of 2016. Roughly 24,970 of these were Iraqi, with significant numbers of Afghans, Sudanese, Somalis, Pakistanis, and other nationalities among them. An estimated 450,000 Palestinian refugees also remain

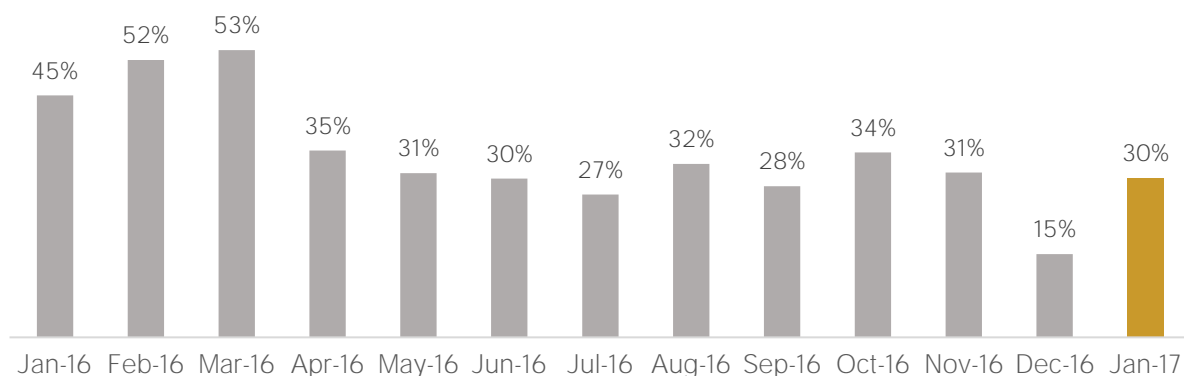


Figure 5: Proportion of Syrians among monthly sea arrivals to Greece in from Jan 2016 to Jan 2017 (source: UNHCR)



in Syria, 280,000 of whom have been internally displaced by conflict.

**Internal Displacement:** The most recent available figures indicate that more than **6.3 million Syrians** were displaced within Syria as of 31 December.

Despite the holding of a **30 December ceasefire**, military activities have still been reported in Syria throughout January. Between early December and late January some **35,000 to 40,000** people were displaced by a second offensive to take Ar-Raqqa from the so-called Islamic State.

Most people were displaced for an average of **four days** before returning to their places of origin. Ongoing fighting in **Wadi Barada**, Rural Damascus, has displaced an estimated 17,500 people, though a ceasefire reached on 28 January came with permission for the displaced to return to their homes or join evacuations to Idleb. Despite **returns** to East Aleppo increasing in January, displacement from Aleppo governorate continued in January with some **8,957** IDP departures reported in the last week of the month alone. **Snowstorms** and harsh weather conditions in January have continued to have negative effects on the **newly displaced**.

# TURKEY

**Arrivals:** In January, Turkish Land Forces reported the apprehension of some **24,287** people irregularly crossing the land border into Turkey, a decrease of some 2,492 people compared to December figures (**26,779**). Of the reported apprehensions 24,074 occurred at the Syrian border, 114 at the Iraqi border, 80 at the Iranian border, 17 at the Greek border and two at the Bulgarian border. In December, **Der Spiegel** reported that refugees and other migrants pay smugglers roughly 1,000€ to cross the Turkish border from Syria, and that an estimated one in every thousand attempts is successful.

Turkey is in the process of **erecting a border wall** along its 911 kilometre border with Syria, expected to be completed by the end of 2017. Despite this, **Turkish officials** claim that the country maintains an ‘open door’ policy for **emergency situations**. Border closures in **March 2015**, and the introduction of strict **visa requirements** for Syrians entering by air or sea, have made the border very difficult, if not impossible, to legally cross. NGOs working along the border have reported that only **critical medical cases** are being

legally **allowed** into Turkey, with at most only **200** people entering per day.

Informal **returns** from Greece to **Turkey**, particularly across the **Evros River**, have been reported in recent months, though no figures were available for January. The **17 people** apprehended by Turkish Land Forces entering Turkey at the Greek land border in January, however, indicate that refugees and other migrants are continuing to use this return route, though at a lower rate than December when **83 people** were apprehended. This may be due to the **extreme weather conditions** reported in the area in January.

According to Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), as of 31 January a total of **864** refugees and other migrants had been returned to Turkey under the **EU-Turkey Agreement** of 20 March. **64** of these returns occurred in January. The total returned population includes people from Pakistan (382), Syria (154), Algeria (81), Afghanistan (75), Bangladesh (46), Iran (30), Morocco (25), Iraq (22), Sri Lanka (16), Myanmar (9), Congo (5), India (3), and 16 others from various countries. In January, 42 people

## Refugees and other migrants in Turkey


	Syrians	Iraqis	Afghans	Iranians	Somalis	Others
 <b>Population of concern</b> (as of 31 January)	2,880,325	131,440	120,529	31,848	3,526	8,058
% change since Dec.	▲ 2.0%	▲ 1.0%	▲ 2.0%	▲ 0.8%	▼ 1.8%	▲ 1.9%

Figure 6: Refugees and other migrants in Turkey (source: DGMM / IOM)

from Syria were returned under the agreement, 15 from Pakistan, 3 from Iran, 2 from Algeria, 1 from Morocco, and 1 from Iraq.

With the total number of returns lower than expected (in January alone 1,393 arrived by sea in Greece while only 64 people were returned), and thousands of people trapped in Greece, European officials are reportedly pressuring Greece to expedite returns to Turkey, despite the inability of UNHCR to monitor the protection status of those who are returned. Meanwhile at the end of January, Turkey threatened to end the EU-Turkey Agreement after Greece refused to return eight military staff allegedly linked to an attempted coup.

**Departures:** In January the Turkish Coast Guard reported 17 ‘irregular migration incidents’ in the seas surrounding Turkey involving 756 ‘irregular migrants’, a slight decrease from the 19 incidents involving 781 people reported in December. The top ten countries of origin for those ‘apprehended/rescued’ by the Coast Guard in January include Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and Myanmar. January also saw a decrease in the total number of sea arrivals to Greece, with UNHCR reporting 1,393 arrivals in Greece compared to 1,665 in December. January marked the lowest number of arrivals by sea to Greece since the beginning of UN reporting in 2015, likely due to cold winter weather and rough seas. In January 2016, some 67,415 refugees and migrants arrived by boat in Greece.

Of the January 2017 arrivals in Greece, 413 were Syrian, 109 Algerian, 109 Iraqi, 51 Afghan, and 45 Pakistani. This means that 577 or 41.4% of the refugees and other migrants who arrived to Greece in January were of various other non-specified nationalities. This figure aligns with recent months wherein the ‘other’ category comprised 50.2% and 38.6% of sea arrivals in Greece in December and November, respectively. Reports indicate that people arriving in Greece in January may have originated from Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Palestine, Iran, Somalia, Myanmar (based on Coast Guard apprehensions), and, notably, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Syrians made up 47% of sea arrivals in Greece throughout 2016.

Refugees and other migrants are also exiting Turkey via its land border with Greece, marked by the Evros river. Though figures are unavailable for the number of people who successfully enter Greece via this route, the apprehension of some 1,483 people by Turkish Land Forces at this border in January (947 less than December) indicates that it is still in use. The cost to be smuggled across the river and driven to Thessaloniki or Athens is estimated to be roughly €2,000 to €2,200 per person, but cold temperatures and winter conditions have made the journey increasingly dangerous in January (see Vulnerability and Protection below).

The Bulgarian-Turkish border has also been used by refugees and other migrants (mainly Afghan, Syrian, Iraqi, and Pakistani) as an entry-point to Europe, with

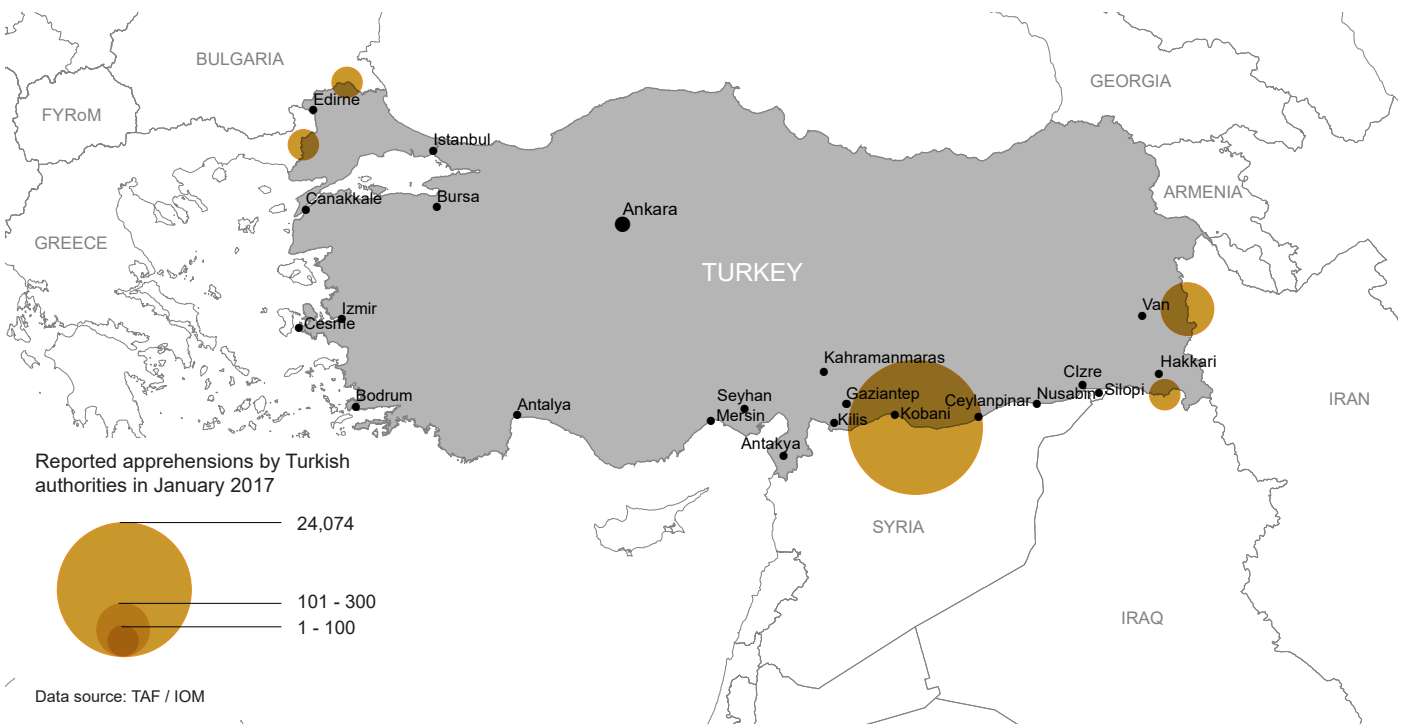


Figure 7: Apprehensions at Turkey’s land borders, by country



Syrian refugees at a camp in Turkey. Credit: Ariel Rubin/UNDP

some 18,802 people apprehended by Bulgarian police while attempting to enter, exit or reside in the country ‘irregularly’ in 2016. Though data on the number of arrivals along this route is unavailable, the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior reports that 64 people were apprehended on entry to Bulgaria between 1 January and 2 February. Additionally the Turkish Land Forces reported the apprehension of some 37 people attempting to exit Turkey at the Bulgarian border in January. Most irregular entries to Bulgaria happen on foot through the country’s ‘green border’ with Turkey, though some cross at regular checkpoints by hiding in vehicles. Apprehensions of people trying to exit Turkey irregularly through the land border with Syria (151 people) and Iran (2 people) were also reported in January.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Turkey:** With nearly 3.2 million ‘people of concern’ in the country, Turkey is host to the largest number of refugees in the world. As of 26 January, Turkey’s DGMM reported 2,880,325 Syrians granted temporary protection in the country, an increase of 56,338 people (%2.0) from 29 December figures. As of 31 January, there were also 295,401 foreign nationals requiring international protection registered in Turkey, an increase of 4,192 from December. At the end of January there were 131,440 Iraqi asylum seekers and refugees (a term used by UNHCR but not DGMM) in Turkey, an increase of 1,364 from December. There were additionally 120,529 Afghans, 31,848 Iranians, 3,256 Somalis, and 8,058 people from various other countries in Turkey as of 31 January.

In early January, President Erdogan announced that some Iraqi and Syrian refugees who pass screenings will be granted Turkish citizenship. No details were given regarding how or when such policies would be implemented.

**Vulnerability and Protection:** In January, winter weather and temperatures below freezing resulted in multiple fatalities of refugees and migrants attempting to exit Turkey via its European borders. On 3 January an Afghan man died of hypothermia near Greece’s border with Turkey as overnight temperatures reached -14 degrees Celsius. Additionally, two Iraqi men and a Somali woman died of hypothermia later that week and were found near Bulgaria’s border with Turkey. Another person perished on 15 January after exposure to adverse weather conditions in Evros near the Turkish border.

According to IOM, one person died along the Eastern Mediterranean Route from Turkey to Greece in January compared to five in December. Some 275 people lost their lives on this route in January 2016. IOM data also indicates that two people were reported dead or missing along migratory routes in the Middle East in January, compared to 23 in January 2016. The nationalities and locations of these individuals are unspecified.

In 2016, claims of violence and physical force at the Turkish border were common, as detailed in a December article from Der Spiegel and a recent IOM report highlighting ‘reports of consistent abuse and violence towards people who have approached the border’. The Turkish government maintains that the claims ‘do not reflect the reality.’ No reports of this nature were available in January. Similarly, violent ‘pushbacks’ and corruption at the Turkish-Bulgarian border, as well as the use of dogs and violent beatings against refugees and migrants, have been reported in recent months.

# NEW RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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A new **Mixed Migration Platform Briefing Paper**, released in January, outlines the legal and policy frameworks governing the return of refugees and other migrants from Europe, with a particular focus on Iraqis. The paper draws from existing literature and data to examine policies related to return, and conditions upon arrival, ultimately offering policy recommendations to ensure the safety of Iraqi returnees.

**ACAPS** and the **Mixed Migration Platform** have produced a new set of Middle East-EU **migration scenarios**, outlining possible developments in migration via Turkey and Greece over the next six months. Scenario building workshops in Brussels and Antakya identified five potential scenarios, which were then evaluated on the basis of their likelihood, impact, and consequences.

One year after the London Conference, the **Danish Refugee Council**, along with **27 other NGOs**, has produced a **report** highlighting the need for urgent action on commitments made at the conference in February 2016. The report highlights changes in legal status, jobs, and education for Syrians in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan.

A new **guidebook** entitled *Europa: An Illustrated Introduction to Europe for Migrants and Refugees* aims to provide practical information in four languages for newcomers to the continent. Created by a group of journalists and photographers, the online book offers information on European politics, geography, and culture, as well as what to expect on the journey through Europe.

In a new **briefing note** the **Norwegian Refugee Council** presents the findings of interviews with nearly 600 Syrian households in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, to highlight the number of children lacking identity and civil documents. Without these documents children will be unable to claim basic rights and protections, or gain access to education, should they return to Syria.

*Desperate Journeys* is a new **UNHCR report** offering a detailed overview of major migration flows to Europe in 2016 in comparison with those of 2015. The report divides its focus between the Western, Central, and Eastern Mediterranean Routes, and offers predictions for the continuation of movement along these routes in 2017, regardless of restrictions.

A new **report** from the **TENT Foundation** presents the findings of interviews conducted with more than 1,500 refugees in Germany, Greece, and Jordan in 2016 looking at drivers of migration, the journey, and experiences of resettlement. The report uses a variety of useful graphs, charts, and other imagery to highlight the various experiences of people on the move in different phases of their journeys.

*Don't Forget Us: Voices of Young Refugees and Migrants in Greece* is a new **report** published by **Mercy Corps** and the **Norwegian Refugee Council** based on focus groups conducted with young refugees and migrants of various nationalities in Greece. The report shows that within the sample group there was an overwhelming interest in continuing education, a desire for employment and willingness to learn new skills, as well as concern over lack of healthcare, profound stress and psychological concerns, and general disillusionment with human rights principles.

In a new **report**, **Human Rights Watch** argues that refugees with disabilities are overlooked and underserved in Greece. Using research conducted in Greece through October 2016 and January 2017, the organisation found that rushed registration processes mean that people with disabilities are not properly identified and as such aid agencies cannot respond effectively to their needs.

**The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion** has released its *World's Stateless: 2017 report* with a focus on childhood statelessness, an issue that, the institute says, is entirely preventable. The publication offers a general overview of statelessness by region in 2017, as well as collected contributions by more than fifty experts and organisations concerning different dimensions of childhood statelessness.

**RMMS** monthly summaries of mixed migration issues and news in the Horn of Africa and Yemen region are accessible [here](#). Summaries from **West Africa** are available [here](#), and 4mi reports from the **Central Asia and Southwest Asia** region are available [here](#).

# OTHER NEWS

**Winter Weather in Europe:** As in the Middle East, heavy snowfall and cold temperatures affected Europe in January, putting refugees and other migrants at risk of freezing to death as temperatures dropped as low as -20 degrees Celsius. Some 19 refugees and other migrants were found suffering from hypothermia after being abandoned by smugglers in the back of a truck in Germany, while more than 7,500 people were left stranded in freezing conditions in Serbia, with hundreds falling sick due to the cold.

**Dire Conditions on Greek Islands:** On the Greek islands, the tents of refugees and other migrants were reportedly blanketed in snow, amid reports of three deaths in Moria camp on Lesbos, the result of overcrowding and poor conditions. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch report that people are struggling to survive in the heavy snow, rain, and winds that have hit the Greek islands in January.

**Germany to Return Asylum Seekers:** In January, Germany announced that it would begin returning newly-arrived asylum seekers, who first arrived in Europe through Greece, back to Greece starting in March. This comes after a five-year suspension of returns. The announcement was met by criticism by humanitarian organisations, the Greek government, and refugees themselves.

**Afghans Deported:** In the first week of January more than 9,400 undocumented Afghans were deported from Pakistan and Iran. This brings the total number of deportations and spontaneous returns to Afghanistan to 701,556 since 1 January 2016 due to the 'deteriorating protection space' in Pakistan.

See also: [MHub Monthly Trend Bulletins](#).

The Mixed Migration Platform (MMP) is a joint-NGO initiative providing quality mixed migration-related information for policy, programming and advocacy work, as well as critical information for people on the move. The platform was established by seven partners - ACAPS, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Ground Truth Solutions, Internews, INTERSOS, REACH & Translators Without Borders (TWB) - and acts as an information hub on mixed migration in the region. For more information visit: [mixedmigrationplatform.org](http://mixedmigrationplatform.org)



