

**MIXED MIGRATION  
MONTHLY SUMMARY**

**MIDDLE EAST**

**FEBRUARY  
2017**

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

February was marked by the continued displacement of thousands in Iraq and Syria, with the Iraqi Security Forces' offensive in western Mosul forcing more than 28,000 people to flee their homes in late February. In addition to internal displacement, movement from Iraq towards the Turkish border appears to be increasing, with Turkish Land Forces reporting 1,577 apprehensions, more than thirteen times the number reported in January. In Syria, ongoing fighting in Aleppo governorate displaced more than 84,000 people in February, with thousands more displaced by conflict in Al-Bab, Ar-Raqqa, and Dara'a throughout the month. Apprehensions of people arriving at Turkey's land borders with Syria increased to 25,329 in February, while construction of a wall at the Turkey-Syria border was reported to be 50% complete. February also saw the lowest number of recorded sea arrivals

in Greece since 2015, with only 1,089 people crossing amid poor weather conditions in the region. The government of Lebanon introduced a new policy waiving its annual 200 USD residency fee for some Syrian refugees, although many remain ineligible and will not benefit from the change. Camp authorities within Jordan continued to report the 'spontaneous departure' of Syrians both to Syria (180 people) and other countries (141), though in smaller numbers than January.

**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.**

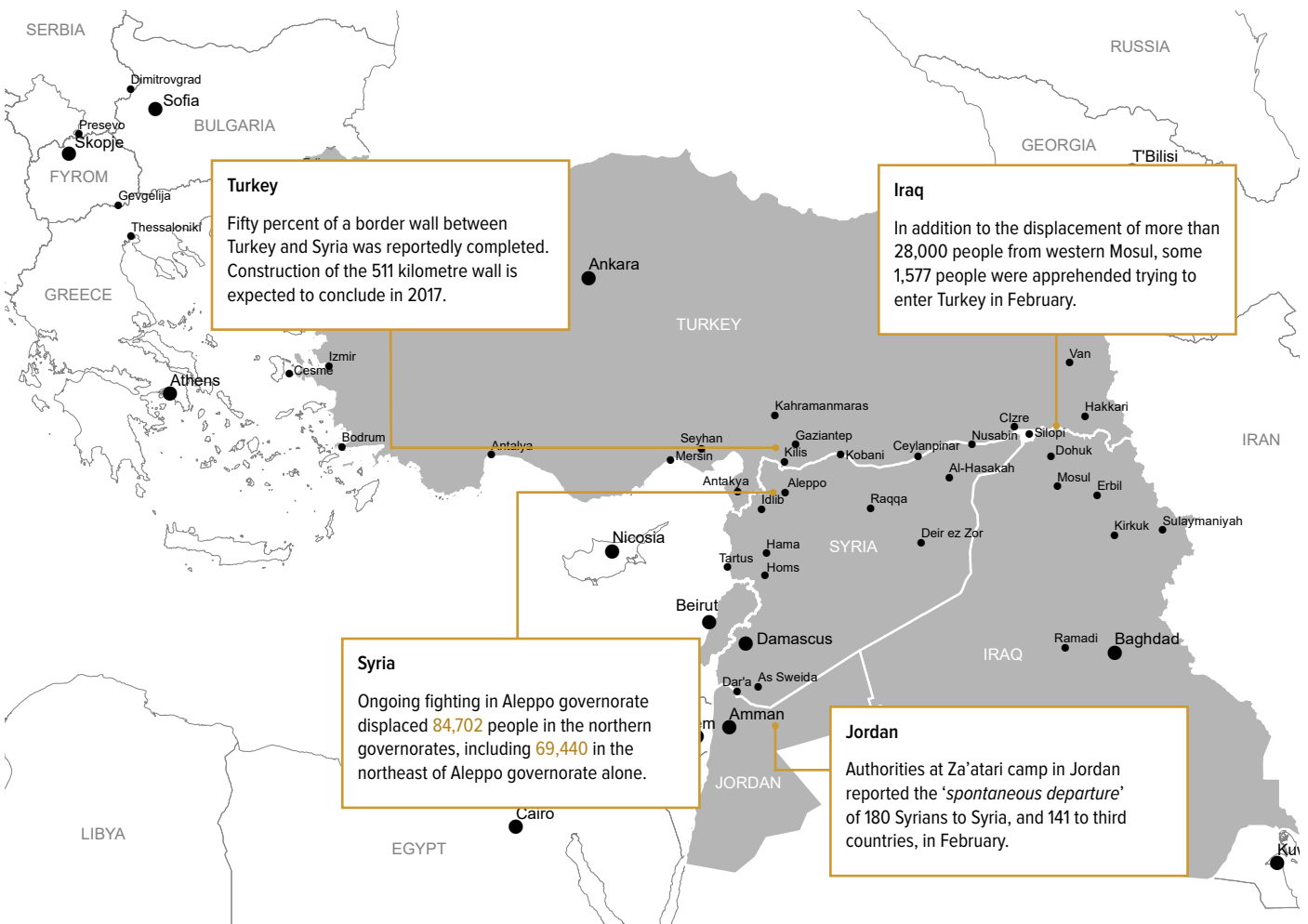


Figure 1: Overview of key developments across the Middle East (February 2017)

# IRAQ

**Arrivals:** The overall number of refugees and other migrants arriving in Iraq in February 2017 was not reported. **New data** from IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme shows a significant increase in the number of Iraqis returning home in 2016 compared to 2015, many of them from Europe. **12,582** Iraqis benefited from AVRR in 2016 compared to 3,607 in 2015. However, although **European governments** continue to push for accelerated returns, the rate of **AVRR** returns to Iraq actually slowed in the second half of 2016, with only 44% of returns occurring between July and December, compared to 56% from January to June.

**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 February. Between 17 October 2016 and 5 March 2017, 13,768 Iraqis had been received at the Al-Hol camp in Syria’s Hasakeh governorate. This marks an increase of 3,791 people compared to the end of January, when **9,977** Iraqis were in Al-Hol camp.

Turkish Land Forces apprehended **1,577** people trying cross by land from Iraq to Turkey in February. This marks a significant increase compared to the **114** and **234** people apprehended in December and January respectively. Though figures do not indicate where specific apprehensions were made, **Silopi and Çukurca** are known to be the main entry points from Iraq to Turkey.


As of 2 March, UNHCR reported that neighbouring countries in the region host some **250,952** Iraqi

refugees, an increase of 5,952 on **January** figures. The number of Iraqi asylum applicants reported in Turkey increased by 1,202 to **132,642**. At least **7,546** Iraqis were registered in Egypt as of January. There were also **61,995** Iraqis registered in Jordan in January (a 590 person increase from the previous month). **28,260** Iraqi refugees were registered in Iran as of early 2016, but updates are infrequently reported. The total number of Iraqi refugees in Syria is estimated to be above **24,970**, and displacement to Al-Hol camp continues to increase.

In February, some **1,089** refugees and other migrants arrived by sea in Greece, 304 less than in **January**. **104** were Iraqi (9.6%). While Iraqi arrivals to Greece have remained static at approximately 100 per month in recent months, increasing numbers are arriving in Italy by sea. IOM reports that **275 Iraqis** arrived to Italy by sea in the first two months of 2017 (2.2% of the total), more than double the **131 Iraqi arrivals** in Italy reported in January. Throughout 2016, Iraqis made up only **1%** of sea arrivals to 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:** The number of registered Syrian refugees in Iraq remained static in February at **233,224**, with figures last updated on 31 January. Reported numbers of non-Syrian refugees in Iraq also remained unchanged at **42,548**, as did the reported numbers of stateless people at **48,500**.

## Refugees and other migrants in Iraq

	Syrians	Others	Stateless
 <b>Population of concern</b> (as of 31 January)	233,224	42,548*	48,500*
% change since Dec.	▲ 1.1%	-	-

\*figures as of Dec. 2016

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

**Internal Displacement:** Conflict and insecurity continue to endanger civilians and drive largescale internal displacement in Iraq. According to UN figures, **385**

**civilians** were killed by violence, armed conflict, and acts of terrorism in Iraq in February, compared to **403** in January. The major conflict event in February

was the Iraqi security forces' resumption of combat operations in Mosul, which involved launching a **major offensive** on the western part of the city, having gained control of eastern Mosul in January. Between 19 February and the end of the month, **28,400** people had been **displaced** from western Mosul, an average of **4,000** per day. The Hammam al-Alil and Qayara airstrip sites have reported **rapid influxes**. By early March, a **reception centre** was under construction at Hamman al-Alil to facilitate the transfer of the growing displaced population to camps east of Mosul.

In February, the number of people who remained displaced due to the Mosul offensive, which began in October 2016, increased from **163,224** to **191,800**. An additional **63,800** people had been displaced from Mosul since October 2016, but have subsequently been able to return to their areas of origin, mostly to eastern parts of the city and nearby villages. In contrast to overall displacement trends in Iraq, where **21%** of IDPs live in camps, access to host communities and other governorates has been limited for Mosul's displaced. **85%** are living in camps and emergency sites, where capacities are increasingly stretched. There are **major concerns** for the estimated **750,000** people who were still trapped in western Mosul at the end of February. If they flee, they could overwhelm

camp facilities, but if they stay, they face protection risks and increasingly urgent humanitarian needs for food, water and medicine.

Violence and displacement continue in the **Hawiga** district of Kirkuk governorate, with more than **90,000** people displaced since August 2016 both within Kirkuk governorate and to neighbouring **Salah al-Din**. In western Ninewa, government forces have encircled Telafar, with between **6,000 and 15,000** civilians estimated to be stranded in the city.

The total number of IDPs in Iraq as a whole increased by 1% to **3,062,808** in February, after falling below 3,000,000 in January for the first time since **April 2015**. The reversed trend is largely associated with the escalation of conflict in Mosul, which has contributed to an **8%** increase in internal displacement in Ninewa governorate in February.

While overall displacement increased, so too did the number of IDPs returning to their areas of origin. Between 2 February and 2 March, the overall returnee population in Iraq increased by 6% to **1,579,362**. Anbar and Salah al-Din remain the predominant areas of return in Iraq, accounting for approximately 70% of all returnees. 93% of returnees in Iraq have returned to their habitual residence.

## JORDAN

**Arrivals:** A **spike in conflict** in southern Syria in February has placed additional pressure on the Jordanian border. Humanitarian **access** to border areas, however, remains extremely limited, making it difficult to verify the size and needs of an estimated **85,000** Syrians stranded at the Jordanian border with Syria in a remote desert location, known as '**the berm**'. Military officials continued to report attempts to '**infiltrate**' Jordan, and claim part of the population are affiliated with the so-called Islamic State. Jordan's northern and northeastern borders with Syria and **Iraq** have remained **closed militarized zones** since 21 June 2016, following a **suicide bombing** at the border near Rukban.

The latest 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 **1,553** were identified at the Hadalat crossing as of 4 March (an increase of 18 from **24 January**). The small size and irregularity of the shelters make accurate figures difficult to obtain. Analysis

of consumption rates of water pumped across the border has also been used to strengthen **estimates** of the size of the stranded population.

**Conditions** at the berm remain dire, although some aid is being provided by NGOs and UN agencies at the Jordanian border. Between December and March, **785** patients were treated at a medical clinic established on the Jordanian side of the border, while UN agencies provided food and winterisation assistance for **15,000** households between November and January. The outcomes of a planned second round of distributions in early 2017 are yet to be reported.

**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 **7 February** and **7 March** at least 180 individuals '**spontaneously departed**' to Syria, 63 of whom were living in Za'atari camp. As per previous months, the majority returned to Dar'aa governorate and were reportedly motivated by reunification with family in Syria, and the high living costs in Jordan.

Additionally, camp authorities reported that 141 people left Jordan for a third country during the same period, with 23 departing from Za’atari camp. Destinations included Germany, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Netherlands, Kuwait, and Canada. 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 says they continue in 2017, although 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 (February figures were not available at the time of publication). As of 28 February, UNHCR reported **656,231** registered Syrians in Jordan, 499 more than on 31 January. The latest estimate of the total number of Syrians living in Jordan comes from the government’s 2015 Population **Census**, which indicates that roughly **1.3 million** Syrians reside in the country. Large numbers of Syrian refugees are thought to be **unregistered**, while others were already living in Jordan before the war. 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.

**61,995** Iraqi refugees were registered by UNHCR in Jordan as of 28 February, an increase of 590 people from **January** figures. Although February figures are not yet available, the number of Yemeni refugees in Jordan has 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.

According to the latest available data from UNHCR, some **3,322** Sudanese ‘persons of concern’ were reported in Jordan in January, an increase of 56 individuals from December. Some 636,000 Egyptians, 22,700 Libyans and 197,000 other nationalities are also **reported to be living** in Jordan. Discrepancies in the access to aid between refugees of different nationalities continue to be **highlighted** as a flaw of the humanitarian response in Jordan.

## Refugees and other migrants in Jordan


	Syrians	Iraqis	Yemenis	Sudanese	Others
 <b>Population of concern</b> (as of 31 January)	656,231	61,995	6,360	3,322	2,136

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



Za’atari school child, Jordan. Credit: REACH

# LEBANON

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**Arrivals:** Data on arrivals in Lebanon has not been widely available since the imposition of visa restrictions and residency renewal fees for Syrians in January 2015. Though the country is effectively no longer receiving refugees, humanitarian exceptions apply to unaccompanied children with a parent already registered in the country, or persons in need of medical treatment. Despite the restrictions, reports indicate that Syrians continue to enter the country irregularly.

**Departures:** As in recent months, information on departures from Lebanon continues to be unavailable. In the first week of February, however, the Lebanese President called for the international implementation of 'safe zones' in Syria for the eventual repatriation of Syrians currently in Lebanon. UNHCR responded by emphasising the infeasibility of such 'safe zones' in Syria.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Lebanon:** Around 4.4 million people live in Lebanon, with refugees accounting for more than 25% of this population.

As of 6 May 2015, UNHCR Lebanon has suspended new registrations of Syrian refugees as per the Government of Lebanon's instructions. As of 31 December 2016 (the most recently available data) some 1,011,366 Syrian persons of concern were registered by UNHCR in Lebanon.

This indicates that since the suspension of registrations there has been a decrease of some 431,464 registered Syrian persons of concern, compared to the 1,442,830 registered with UNHCR in May 2015. However, UN estimates, including persons not registered with UNHCR Lebanon, show that up to 1.5 million Syrian refugees live in the country.

As of February, Lebanese General Security announced a new policy that waives the annual 200 USD residency fee for some Syrian refugees in Lebanon who were registered with UNHCR before 2015. The decision excludes around 483,000 Syrians and some 30,675 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) who are not registered with UNHCR, as well as anyone who has acquired legal residency through a Lebanese sponsor.

ECHO figures indicate some 277,985 Palestine refugees from Lebanon (PRL), as well as 30,675 PRS, are living in Lebanon. In the first week of February a new census aimed at surveying the number of Palestinians in Lebanon was launched. The project is an initiative of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee in

partnership with the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The survey's aim is to produce a comprehensive database on the economic, social, and demographic aspects of the lives of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Results are expected within 15 months.

ECHO's most recent figures indicate that at least 6,000 Iraqi refugees are living in Lebanon. On 13 February some 200 Christian Iraqis took part in a protest in Beirut demanding a faster resettlement process.

**Vulnerability and Protection:** The latest vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon conducted by WFP indicated that 93% are food insecure. Furthermore, some 90% of PRS and some 65% of PRL live in poverty, with 9% of PRS and 3% of PRL living in extreme poverty.

In February, Syrian refugee families continued to face harsh winter conditions in Lebanon, including several snowstorms. Particularly vulnerable families living in informal tented settlements were identified in at least five different villages near the Lebanese-Syrian borders in the Wadi Khaled region. Refugees and other migrants living in this region have also experienced frequent power cuts and difficulties in accessing appropriate clothing.

In late February several clashes involving gunmen took place in Ein El-Hilweh camp in southern Lebanon. A total of nine persons were injured, including one child and one humanitarian worker, while one person was reportedly killed as a result of the violence. Following these clashes UNRWA has temporarily suspended all its operations in the camp including refuse collection, leading to a public health risk.

# SYRIA

**Arrivals:** As in January, the largest recorded number of new arrivals to Syria in February came from neighbouring Iraq, where ongoing fighting in **Mosul** and other regions continued to displace people both internally and internationally. As of 5 March, **13,768** Iraqis had arrived at the Al-Hol camp in Syria’s Hasakeh governorate since the intensification of violence in the Mosul area which began on **17 October** (see Iraq section for more details). Reports also indicate that small numbers of Syrians are returning from the region.

In Za’atari camp, Jordan, authorities indicated at least 180 individuals ‘*spontaneously departed*’ to Syria between **7 February** and **7 March**. Formal returns from Turkey to northern Syria (mainly Jarablus) have also been reported. As of early January an estimated **23,926** Syrians had reportedly returned from Syria.

**Departures:** Millions remain displaced, both internally and internationally, as a result of ongoing conflict in Syria. UNHCR figures indicate that as of 28 February, **4,960,470** Syrian refugees were registered in neighbouring and North African countries. This marks an increase of 58,550 (1.2%) compared to the 4,901,920 people registered as of 31 January.

As of 2 March, Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) reported that **2,941,102** Syrians had been granted temporary protection in the country. In Lebanon, the most recent available figures indicate that as of 31 December, some **1,011,366** Syrians were registered by UNHCR, while Jordan was hosting **656,231** registered Syrians by the end of

February. As of 31 January **233,224** Syrians were registered by UNHCR in Iraq. In February, some **145,013** Syrians were registered in North Africa (Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia).

Restrictions on movement across Syria’s **borders** 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 with an estimated **85,000** Syrians stranded at ‘*the berm*’, visa requirements for entry to **Turkey** by sea or air, and the progressive **completion** 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 (see Jordan and Turkey sections).

Of the 1,089 sea arrivals to Greece in February, some **433** (39.8%) were Syrian. This represents an increase of only 20 individuals compared to the number arriving in Greece in January, but a significant decrease from the thousands of Syrians who arrived by sea in Greece in 2016 (**80,749**) and 2015 (**475,902**), prior to the introduction of the EU-Turkey Agreement and the closure of borders along the Western Balkans route. Syrians, among other refugees and other migrants, also enter Europe by land via **Greece** and **Bulgaria**, as well as smaller numbers arriving to **Italy** by sea (see Turkey section for more detail). Despite the large numbers of Syrian arrivals in Europe throughout 2016, a UNHCR official reports that many prefer to stay closer to home, as evidenced by ‘*high numbers*’ of Syrians in **Jordan** and Lebanon turning down resettlement opportunities in Europe.

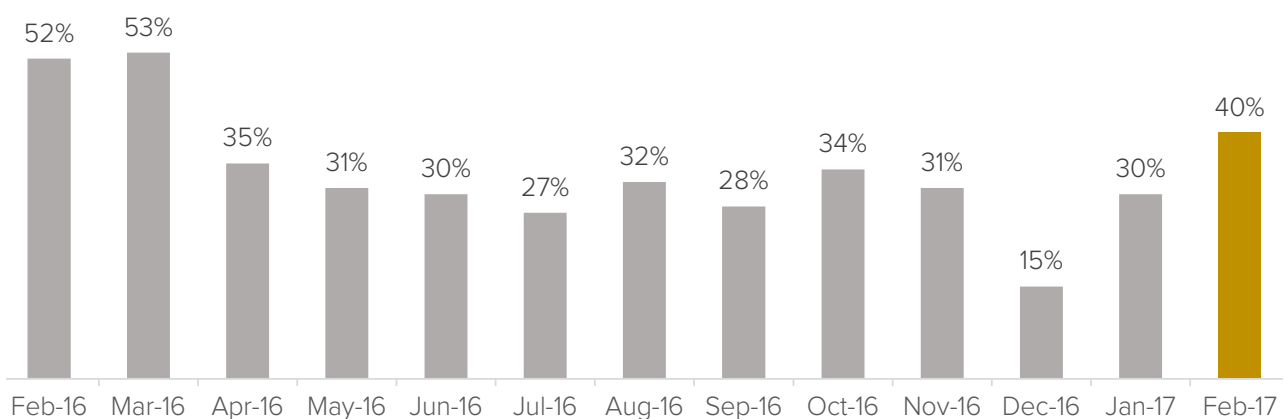


Figure 4: Proportion of Syrians among monthly sea arrivals to Greece from Feb 2016 to Feb 2017 (source: UNHCR)



**Refugees and Other Migrants in Syria:** The most recent available figures indicate that as of December, UNHCR had registered **46,118** refugees and asylum seekers in Syria. At least **24,970** of these are Iraqi, with significant numbers of Afghans, Sudanese, Somalis, Pakistanis, and other **nationalities** among them. An estimated **450,000** Palestine refugees also remain in Syria, 280,000 of whom have been internally displaced by conflict.

**Internal Displacement:** Ongoing fighting in Syria, particularly Aleppo governorate, continued in February, with **84,702** people displaced in the northern governorates as a result, including **69,440** in the northeast of Aleppo governorate alone. Between **20 February** and **5 March** nearly 10,000 people were newly displaced within Aleppo governorate; ongoing fighting in **Al-Bab** and Ar-Raqqa has also led to large dis-

placements into the governorate. The second phase of the Syrian Defence Forces' offensive in **Ar-Raqqa**, from December to February, has displaced between 18,000 and 25,000 people, though many were able to return to their communities after a short period. While fighting to take Al-Bab ended on 23 February, hostilities to the east of the city intensified two days later, displacing some **26,000** people. In the second week of February, **9,000** people were displaced in Dara'a governorate following *'the most intense bombardment'* since 2015. The most recent available figures indicate that more than **6.3 million** Syrians were displaced within Syria as of 31 January.

**Peace talks**, led by the UN in Geneva at the end of February and beginning of March concluded **without** significant breakthroughs.

# TURKEY

**Arrivals:** While statistics for arrivals to Turkey are unavailable, in February, Turkish Land Forces reported the apprehension of some **27,118** people irregularly crossing the land border into Turkey, an increase of some 2,831 people compared to January figures (**24,287**). Of the reported apprehensions, 25,329 (93.4%) occurred at the Syrian border, 140 at the

Iranian border, 53 at the Greek border, and 19 at the Nahcivan border (an autonomous region in Azerbaijan). Notably, some **1,577** people were apprehended attempting to enter Turkey at the Iraqi border in February, an increase of 1,463 people compared to the 114 people apprehended at this border in January.

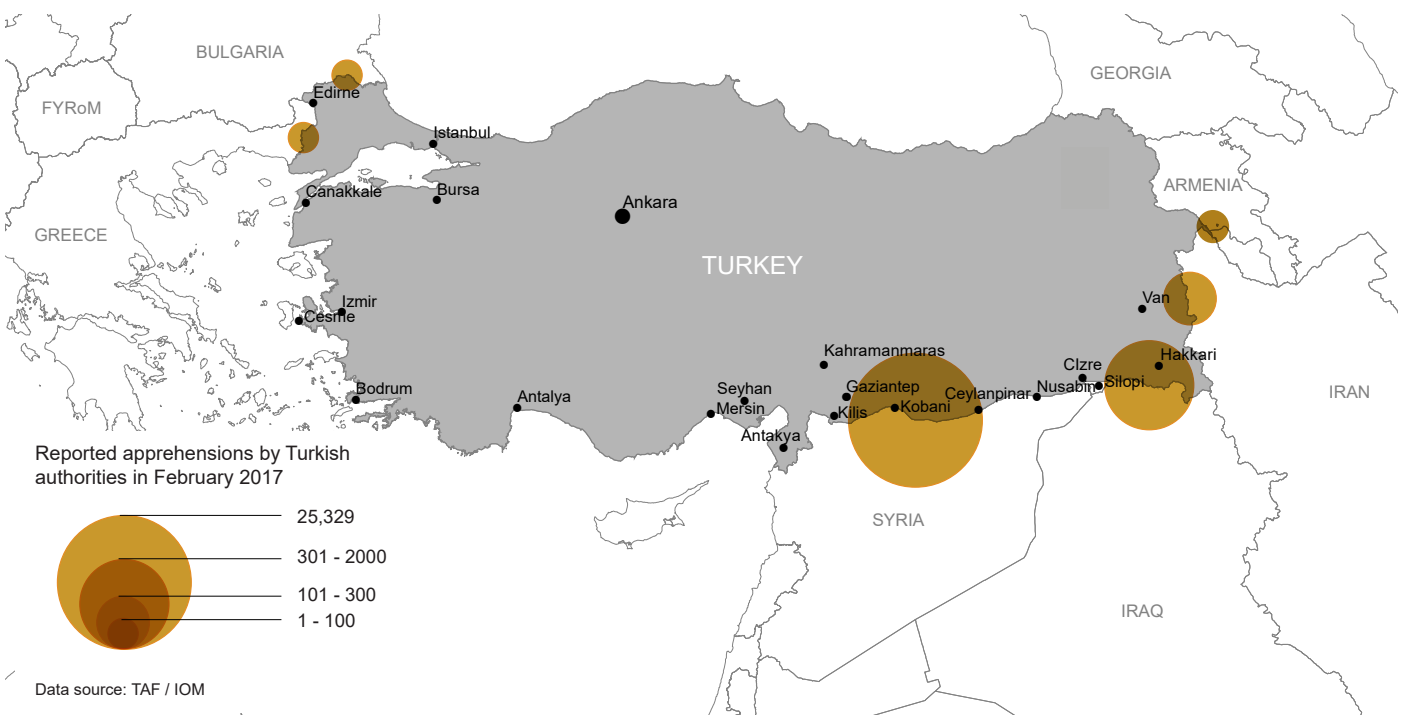


Figure 5: Apprehensions at Turkey's land borders, by country

As of 26 February, Turkish authorities had completed 50% of a border wall planned to extend 511 kilometres along the Syrian border, according to Turkey's Public Administration of Social Housing. Construction of the wall, which is four metres high, began in 2014 with completion expected in the first half of 2017, despite ongoing criticism. Turkish officials claim that the country intends to maintain its 'open door' policy for emergency situations, though 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. NGO reports indicate that only critical medical cases are being legally allowed into Turkey.

While no figures on informal returns to Turkey, particularly across the Evros River, were available in February, the apprehension of 53 people trying to enter Turkey at the land border with Greece (36 more than in January) indicates that refugees and other migrants are continuing to use this return route. Additionally, in early February a Syrian man and an Egyptian man reportedly stole a small boat on the Greek island of Chios and tried to return to Turkey before being arrested by a FRONTEX patrol vessel en route. The two men had applied for asylum in Greece two months prior.

According to the *Hurriyet* newspaper, officials from Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Manage-

ment (DGMM) claim that Greece has 'forcefully' sent back more than 3,000 refugees and other migrants to Turkey, via the Evros river (also known as the Maritza) in the past four months. The sources claimed that Greece was using a 'push-back manoeuvre,' though the reports were made anonymously and have not been verified.

According to DGMM, as of 7 March a total of 915 refugees and other migrants had been returned to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Agreement, with 51 returned since 31 January. While these returns are attributed to the Agreement, the majority have returned as a result of a negative asylum decision, withdrawal of an asylum application, or a lack of any asylum application at all. These figures are significantly lower than expectations under the 1:1 return-to-resettlement ratio, as some 3,594 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey to European countries in the same time period. The total returned population includes people from Pakistan (390), Syria (166), Algeria (89), Afghanistan (75), Bangladesh (59), Iran (30), Morocco (26), Iraq (22), Sri Lanka (16), Myanmar (9), Nigeria (6), Congo (5), Nepal (4), and 18 others from various countries. Greece is reportedly building pre-removal detention facilities on the Greek islands in order to accelerate the number of returns to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Agreement, despite concerns about the conditions faced by refugees and other migrants upon return.



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

**Departures:** In February the Turkish Coast Guard reported 19 'irregular migration incidents' in the seas surrounding Turkey involving 719 'irregular migrants'. This marks a slight increase from the 17 incidents reported in January, though a smaller number of people were involved (756 'irregular migrants'

were recorded in January). The Coast Guard also reported the top ten countries of origin for those 'apprehended/rescued' in February as: Syria, Congo, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Cameroon, Eritrea, Mali, Turkey, Iran and Iraq, though specific numbers were not available. Arrivals by sea in Greece continued to

decrease in February with UNHCR reporting only **1,089** arrivals compared to 1,393 in January. This is likely related to the persistence of **cold temperatures** and poor weather conditions. Of these arrivals, 433 were from Syria, 104 from Iraq, 77 from Afghanistan, 72 from Pakistan, and 39 from Algeria, with some 364 people (33.4%) arriving from unspecified 'other' countries. The number of **Algerians** arriving in Greece dropped 80.3% compared to the 198 arrivals reported in January. Some **57,066** people arrived to Greece by sea in February 2016. As in January, February marked the **lowest** number of arrivals by sea to Greece since the beginning of UN reporting in 2015.

Reports indicate that following an **attempted coup** in July 2016, the number of Turkish nationals claiming asylum in Greece has been on the rise. Some **236 Turkish nationals** reportedly claimed asylum in Greece between July and February, with 98 of these claims registered in January and February alone.

Refugees and other migrants also exit Turkey, in smaller numbers, via its land borders with Greece and Bulgaria. In the last six months an average of **eight** people have entered **Greece** via the land border at the **Evros river** each day, with some 1,877 people apprehended at this border in February (394 more than January). Additionally, the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior reported that as of 2 March some **119** refugees and other migrants have been apprehended trying to irregularly enter Bulgaria in 2017 (55 in January), the majority along the Turkish border. The European Commission reports that an average of **five** people are recorded irregularly entering Bulgaria each day. Additionally, Turkish Land Forces apprehended some **44** people attempting to exit Turkey at the Bulgarian border in February. In 2016, Bulgarian police apprehended **18,802** people attempting to enter, exit, or reside in the country 'irregularly', the majority of

whom where Afghan, Syrian, Iraqi, and Pakistani. Most irregular entries to Bulgaria happen on foot through the country's '**green border**' with Turkey. **Apprehensions** of people trying to exit Turkey irregularly through the land border with Syria (91) and Iran (eight people) were also reported in February.

Between 8 December and 2 March the **European Commission** reports that seven boats with 580 refugees and other migrants on board arrived in Italy from Turkey. Additionally, three boats carrying 123 people arrived in Cyprus from Turkey in the same reporting period.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Turkey:** On 15 February Turkey's **Minister of Interior** announced that the country is hosting more than 3.5 million refugees, the **highest number** in the world. As of 2 March Turkey's DGMM reported that **2,941,102** Syrians have been granted temporary protection in the country, an increase of 60,777 people (2.1%) from 26 January figures. At the end of February, there were also **299,589** foreign nationals requiring international protection registered in Turkey, an increase of 4,188 (1.4%) from January. Of this number **132,642** were Iraqi (an increase of 1,202 from January), 122,937 were Afghan (an increase of 2,408), 32,149 were Iranian (an increase of 301), 3,581 were Somalian (an increase of 55), and 8,280 were from various other countries.

Following an early January announcement from **President Erdogan** that some Iraqi and Syrian refugees will be granted Turkish citizenship, the **government** has said that no plans are in place for this to happen prior to the country's referendum on **16 April**. Officials have said the processing of candidates is already underway and that thousands of Syrians may be granted citizenship following the referendum.

## Refugees and other migrants in Turkey


	Syrians	Iraqis	Afghans	Iranians	Somalis	Others
 <b>Population of concern</b> (as of 28 February)	2,941,102	132,642	122,937	32,149	3,581	8,280
% change since Jan.	▲ 2.1%	▲ 0.9%	▲ 1.9%	▲ 0.9%	▲ 1.5%	▲ 2.7%

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

**Vulnerability and Protection:** While **winter weather** and **cold temperatures** persisted throughout February in Turkey, no related fatalities were reported. IOM, however, reported the death of **one person** along the Eastern Mediterranean Route in February, an

**Ethiopian woman** who perished off the Greek coast in early February. Some **46** people lost their lives on this route in February 2016. Additionally, **three people** of Pakistani origin died on 22 February when a boat carrying at least eight people sank on the Evros river

between Turkey and Greece. IOM data also indicates that **eight people** were reported dead or missing along migratory routes in the Middle East in February, compared to two in January. The nationalities and locations of these individuals are unspecified.

Recent **media reports** indicate that Syrians in Egypt and Turkey are attempting to **sell their organs** to pay smuggling fees to Europe. Experts indicate that a kidney may sell for up to **100,000 USD** on the black market, and that people are using social media to facilitate such transactions.

**Internal Displacement:** A February **OHCHR** report details the ‘*massive destruction and serious rights violations*’ that have occurred in southeast Turkey since July 2015. Government security operations have displaced between **355,000** and **500,000** people in Turkey’s **predominantly Kurdish southeast** since December 2015.

For a synthesis of recent migration trends in and around Turkey please see this report from **DRC Turkey**.

## OTHER NEWS

**Germany Plans Deportations:** In Germany, the government **approved a new law** in February which, if passed by parliament, would allow it to better track some 300,000 failed asylum seekers to ensure they can be **deported** on time. In 2016, Germany deported a record 80,000 failed asylum seekers.

**Fatalities on the Central Mediterranean Route:** IOM figures indicate that at least **145** refugees and other migrants died at sea on the Central Mediterranean Route between North Africa and Italy in February. On 21 February alone, the bodies of **74 people** washed ashore in Libya. Some of the bodies were discovered inside a nearby boat leading to speculation about the cause of death.

**Court Rules Syrians Not Automatically Refugees:** On 21 February, a **German administrative court** in North Rhine Westphalia ruled that Syrians are not automatically entitled to refugee status under the Geneva convention. The ruling followed an appeal by a Syrian man, after which judges declared that it **cannot be assumed** that all Syrians will be politically perse-

cuted upon return to their country simply because they applied for asylum in Germany. This case sets a new precedent.

**Hunger Strikes in Greece:** Reports emerged, in early February, of **hunger strikes** staged in refugee camps on the Greek islands and near Athens to protest **poor living conditions** in the country. The Greek **Immigration Minister** claimed that there was no hunger strike and that some of the protesters had tried to punch him.

**Violence and Abuse of Children in Libya:** A new UNICEF report has exposed **Libya** as an ‘*epicentre for migrant child abuse*’. The report highlights the violence and sexual abuse that many children face at the hands of smugglers, abuse that was rarely reported and often accompanied by a lack of food, water, and healthcare.

See also **MHub Monthly Trend Bulletins** (accessible [here](#)).



People crossing the Syrian border via land. Credit: REACH

# NEW RESEARCH AND REPORTS

The **Danish Refugee Council** in Turkey has released a new synthesis of migration trends in and around Turkey in 2016 and 2017. The **report** highlights key mixed migration trends in Turkey, including border controls, apprehensions, returns, trafficking, smuggling, and protection concerns.

In a new **report** entitled ‘The Lives and Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees’, the **Overseas Development Institute** presents the perspectives of refugees in Turkey and Jordan, as well as their institutional environment, to better understand the lives of Syrians living outside of camps in these two countries. The report details not only the livelihood strategies of those interviewed, but also examines their experiences with camps and their host community, and thoughts about onward migration and return.

**Refugees International** has released a new **study** examining the challenges faced by non-Syrian refugees in Turkey particularly around lack of assistance, housing, health, livelihoods and durable solutions. The report focuses primarily on refugees and other migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran.

New **research** from the **Refugee Rights Data Project** seeks to fill the data gaps relating to refugees and other migrants in Greece. The research, conducted in November 2016, is used to discuss the legal rights of refugees and other displaced people in Greece and the extent to which they are not being upheld. The report also highlights living conditions in camps in Greece.

A recent **Amnesty International publication** critically examines the human rights impact of the EU-Turkey Agreement. The report highlights cases of arbitrary detention, conditions in Greece, access to asylum, and returns to Turkey, culminating in recommendations for the Greek government and the EU. Also

in February, **Amnesty International** published its 2016/2017 **International Report** on the state of the world’s human rights. The report covers 159 countries to assess the state of human rights globally.

In a February **mini-feature**, **Forced Migration Review** presents four new articles highlighting the risks of deportation and the need for independent post-deportation monitoring. The final article focuses specifically on returns under the EU-Turkey Agreement.

A recent **article** in **The Conversation** describes a global hierarchy in which Afghans have become ‘*second-class asylum seekers*’ compared to Syrians, Iraqis, and other groups. The article highlights European migration agencies’ tendency to produce legally authoritative guidance reports claiming that all or some provinces in Afghanistan are ‘*safe*’, and thus facilitate the denial of asylum claims.

A February **report** from **Refugees Deeply** outlines the difficulties that come with trying to estimate the number of deaths that have occurred on the Mediterranean, particularly due to the lack of official records by European authorities at the continent’s borders.

**AIDA**, the Asylum Information Database, published its 2016 **country reports** for Bulgaria and Belgium in February. These reports, along with those for twenty other European countries, document asylum procedures, detention, conditions, and current protection situations. AIDA is currently in the process of publishing all its 2016 updates.

**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 (Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative) reports from the **Central Asia and Southwest Asia** region are available **here**.

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)



To be added to MMP's monthly migration summary mailing list, please contact [admin@mixedmigrationplatform.org](mailto:admin@mixedmigrationplatform.org)  
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