

## MIXED MIGRATION MONTHLY SUMMARY

MIDDLE EAST

MARCH  
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.*

Cover photo: Rural Damascus Open Day, Danish Refugee Council, Dec 2016.

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# INTRODUCTION

March 2017 marked six years since the beginning of the war in Syria as well as the first time that the number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries has surpassed 5 million. In addition to those who have fled the country, conflict in March saw some 75,000 people newly internally displaced in Aleppo governorate, with thousands more displaced by fighting in Hama governorate and Dar'a al Balad. Some Syrians fled towards the Turkish border in March, where authorities reported the apprehension of more than 18,000 people. One year has passed since the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement, a policy that together with the closure of the Western Balkans route has significantly decreased the volume of sea arrivals in Greece, while resulting in fewer returns to Turkey than expected. Improving weather conditions throughout March were marked by more than 1,500 arrivals in Greece, a 40% increase from the previous month. Increasing numbers of Turkish citizens claiming asylum in EU countries, and departures of boats from Turkey headed to Italy, were also reported in March. Ongoing fighting in Iraq, particularly around

Mosul, continued to displace thousands of people within the country and internationally throughout March. In the deadliest month for Iraqi civilians since November 2016, the number of people displaced by the Mosul offensive increased by more than 125,000. More than 14,000 Iraqis have been received in Syria's Al-Hol camp since October 2016, though recent reports indicate that some camp residents are returning to Iraq. The number of Yemenis registered with UNHCR in Jordan increased by more than 1,000 in March, to a total of 7,441 by the end of the month. Additionally, some 85,000 Syrians remain stranded at the Jordanian border in an area known as 'the berm', though aid deliveries to the area resumed in March following a prolonged closure.

**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.**

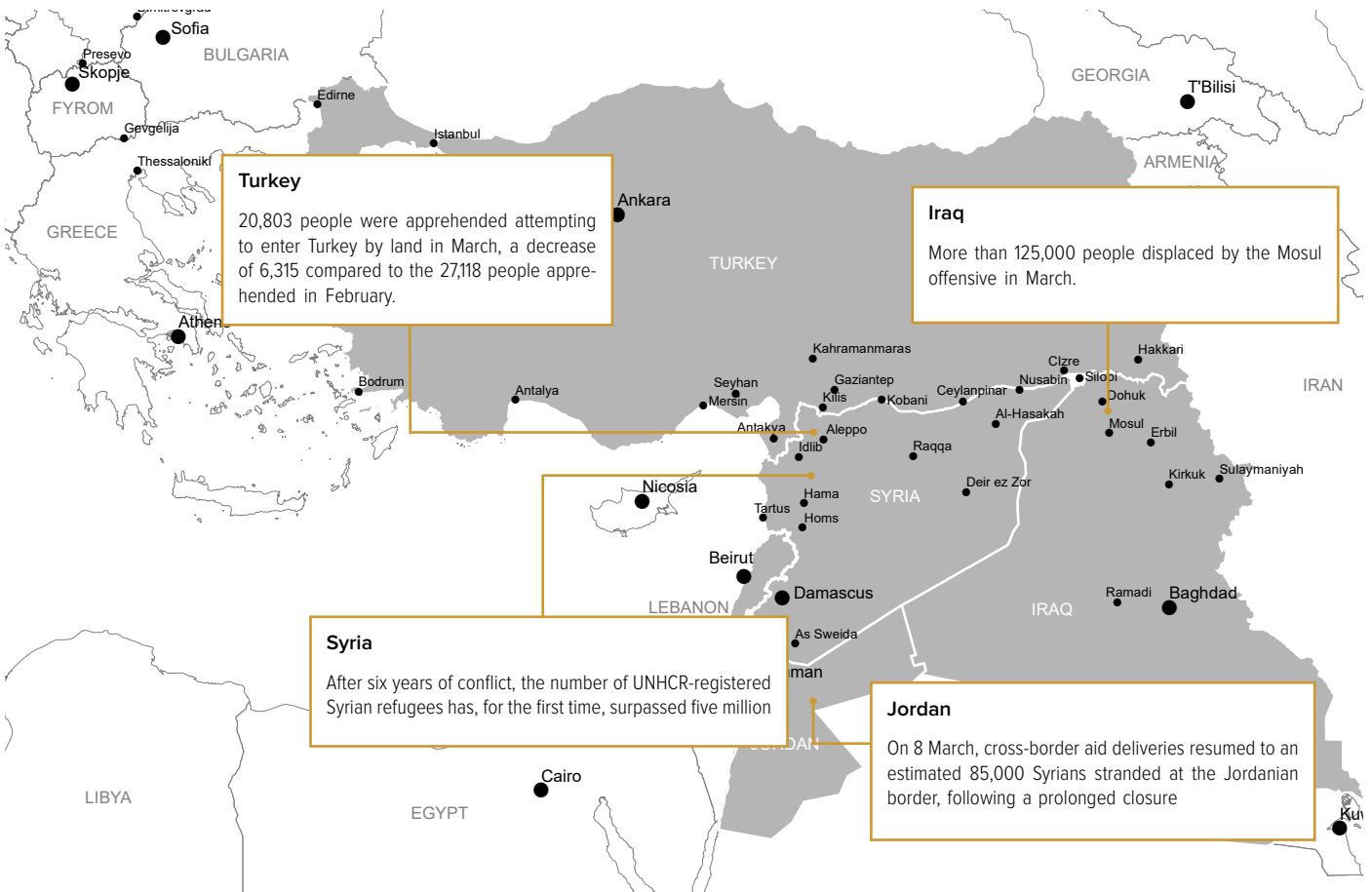


Figure 1: Overview of key developments across the Middle East (March 2017)

# IRAQ

**Arrivals:** The overall number of refugees and other migrants arriving in Iraq in March 2017 was not reported, but is understood to be low. In March, **Refugees Deeply** reported that some Iraqis are returning home after having fled to Syria’s Al-Hol camp during the Mosul offensive. The exact number of returnees is not reported, and many of those who return lack identification documents after they were confiscated by Al-Hol camp authorities.

Although updated figures are only reported periodically, the latest set released in February from IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme indicate that **12,582** Iraqis benefited from AVRR in 2016 compared to 3,607 in 2015. Iraqis constituted the second largest group of AVRR beneficiaries from Greece between June 2016 and March 2017, with **918** Iraqis returned.

**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 March. Be-

tween 17 October 2016 and 2 April 2017, **14,709** Iraqis were received at Al-Hol camp, in neighbouring Syria. Compared to the month of February, when the camp population increased by 3,791, the increase of 941 in March is relatively small, which could be correlated with **recent reports** of some camp residents returning to Iraq.

Turkish Land Forces apprehended **1,355** Iraqis at land borders in March, less than the **1,577** apprehended in February, but far more than the **114** and **234** people apprehended in December and January respectively. Though these figures do not indicate where specific apprehensions were made, **Silopi and Çukurca** are the main entry points from Iraq to Turkey.

As of 4 April, UNHCR reported that neighbouring countries in the region host **250,952** Iraqi refugees, the same number that was reported on 2 March. The number of Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers reported in Turkey continues to grow in 2017, with **133,632** Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers reported in Turkey as of 31 March.

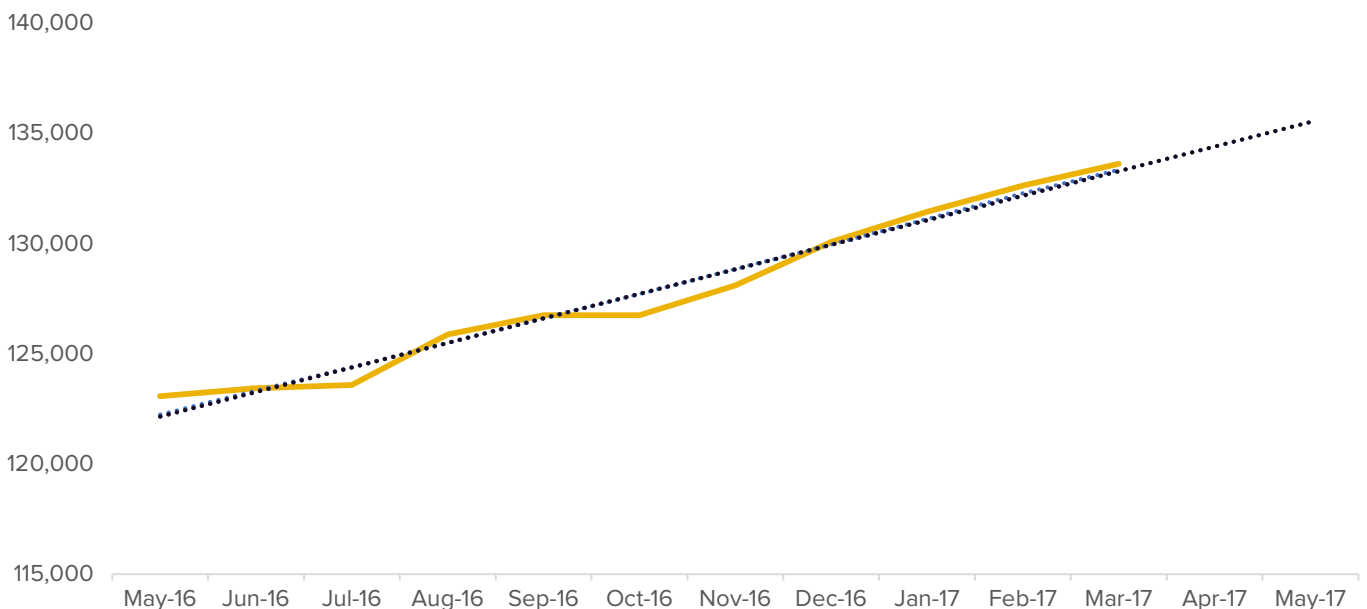


Figure 2: Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey (source IOM Migrant Presence Monitoring UNHCR)

There were **62,445** Iraqis registered in Jordan at the end of March (**450** more than 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** as displacement to Al-Hol camp continues.

Iraqi arrivals by sea to Greece increased in March, from **104** to **163**, making up 6.8% of the total arrivals of

all nationalities in March. While Iraqi arrivals to Greece have remained steady at approximately 100 per month in recent months, increasing numbers are arriving in Italy by sea. Data on Iraqi arrivals by sea to Italy in March was not available at the time of reporting, but at least **275 Iraqis** had arrived to Italy by sea in the first two months of 2017. 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 March, 236,772 Syrian refugees were registered in Iraq, mostly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). This represents an increase of 3,548 (1.5%) since 31 January, in line with a steadily increasing trend since September 2016 that has seen the total number of registered Syrian refugees in Iraq increase by over 10,000. Reported numbers of non-Syrian refugees in Iraq also remained unchanged in March at **42,000**. The number of stateless people in Iraq reported in January was **48,500**, but there are growing concerns that children born in areas under the control of the so-called Islamic State have not been registered and therefore risk becoming stateless. According to the NGO **Qandil**, there are at least 3,000 unresolved cases of insufficient birth documentation in displacement camps near Mosul, as well as an unknown number of cases in areas outside camps beyond the reach of humanitarian actors.

**Internal Displacement:** Conflict and insecurity continues to endanger civilians and be a major driver of large-scale internal displacement in Iraq. March was the deadliest month for civilians in Iraq since November 2016, according to UN figures, with **548** reported killed and 567 injured; **65%** of civilian deaths were reported to have occurred in Ninewa province. In line with the increased incidence of violence, the number of people displaced due to the Mosul offensive increased by over 125,000 in March. As of 2 April, **304,152** people remained displaced, having been uprooted since the offensive began on 17 October 2016.

A new camp at **Chamakor**, east of Mosul, opened on 7 March. As of mid-March, it was rapidly filling up, and two further camps were under construction. As of early April, camp capacity for the Mosul operation was increasingly strained by the pace of arrivals, but the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster still reported having almost **6,000** serviced plots ready for emergency shelter.

Since October 2016, a total of **436,000** people have been displaced from both the western and eastern parts of Mosul, but as of 3 April over **91,000** had been able to return to their areas of origin. In western Mosul alone, **235,700** people have been displaced since 17 February, when the offensive there was launched.

As of 4 April, around **400,000** people were still estimated to be trapped inside western Mosul, with growing needs for food, water, medicine, fuel and protection from the escalating inner-city fighting. While a significant reduction on the **750,000** people estimated to have been trapped in February, the large number of people exposed to the conflict without access to humanitarian assistance remains a significant issue, particularly with reports that **chemical mortar** rounds had been fired into some neighbourhoods of western Mosul in March.

Violence and displacement **slowed** in March in **Hawiga and Shirqat**, but still continues, with hundreds of people displaced daily to and within Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates. Families living in inaccessible locations in **Telafar**, cut off from access to humanitarian relief due to conflict, continued to be a cause for concern in March.

Overall, the number of IDPs across Iraq decreased slightly last month, from **3,062,808** in February to **3,058,626** in March. The overall number of returnees, however, increased by 4% to **1,639,584** individuals. Anbar and Salah al-Din remain the predominant areas of return in Iraq, accounting for approximately 70% of all returnees, although returns to Ninewa grew significantly in March.

## JORDAN

**Arrivals:** Jordan's northwestern border was re-opened for **cross-border** aid deliveries on 8 March following a prolonged closure due to an escalation of conflict in southern Syria in February. However, access to protection in Jordan for newly displaced Syri-

ans, both at the northwestern (Ramtha) and northeastern (Rukban and Hadalat) crossing points, **remains extremely limited**, with the borders effectively closed. Limited aid provision continues at 'the berm' despite restricted access, but conditions remain dire.

Estimates of the total stranded Syrian population remain at **85,000**. A **car bomb attack** was reported at a checkpoint in Rukban camp in early April. With continued attacks such as these, it is unlikely humanitarian access to areas which have been classified as **closed militarised zones** since 21 June 2016, will improve in the near future.

**Departures:** Sporadic returns continued in March, albeit in limited numbers. According to Za’atari camp authorities, between **7 March** and **4 April** 104 individuals ‘*spontaneously departed*’ to Syria, 39 of whom were living in Za’atari camp. Each month, around 100 Syrians spontaneously depart Jordan, mostly for Dara’a, where they aim to reunify with family members. In March, only **80** Syrians left Jordan for a third country, compared to 141 in the February reporting period, and again, re-joining family members was the main reason reported.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Jordan:** The total number of ‘*people of concern*’ registered with UNHCR in Jordan grew by 4,255 to **733,210** between January and March. As of 31 March, UNHCR reported

**657,621** registered Syrians in Jordan, an increase of 1,390 compared to **28 February**. In total, **1.3 million** Syrians are estimated to live in the country, according to the government’s 2015 Population **Census**, with large numbers of Syrian refugees thought to be **un-registered**, and others already living in Jordan before the conflict in Syria began. 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.

The number of registered Iraqis in Jordan grew by 450 to **62,445** in March, according to UNHCR updates. A significant increase in the number of Yemenis registered with UNHCR in Jordan was also reported in March. There are now over **7,441** Yemenis registered with UNHCR, compared to **6,360** in January. Sudanese registered refugee and asylum seeker figures also grew in the same period, from **3,322** to **3,466**. **787** Somalis are registered, as are 1,450 people of other nationalities. More information on the migration trends and experiences of displaced Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis can be found in MMP’s latest **feature article**.

## Refugees and other migrants in Jordan

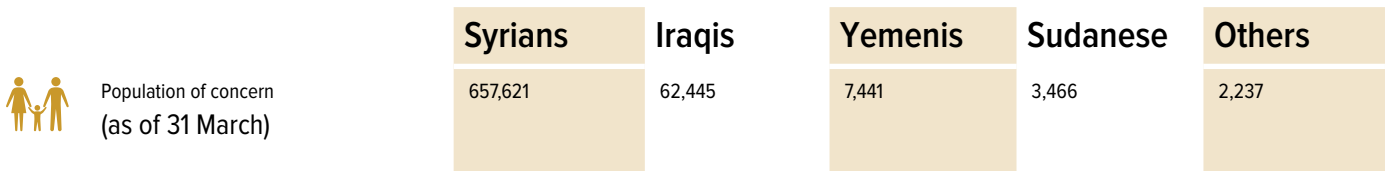


Figure 3: Refugees and other migrants in Jordan (source: UNHCR)

# LEBANON

**Arrivals:** Up-to-date data on arrivals in Lebanon remains unavailable since January 2015, when the Lebanese government imposed visa restrictions for Syrians entering the country. **Reports from Lebanon**, however, indicate that Syrians continued to cross the Lebanese borders in the last two weeks of March.

**Departures:** Information on departures from Lebanon continued to be unavailable in March. Reports indicate that 838 Syrians and 100 people of other nationalities had arrived in Italy from Lebanon between January 2015 and March 2017 under a **humanitarian corridor scheme** that grants beneficiaries a one-year humanitarian visa.

In recent months, Lebanese politicians have continued to **encourage repatriation** of Syrians in Lebanon in combination with the creation of ‘*safe zones*’, although these continue to be **rejected by UNHCR**.

**Refugees and Other Migrants in Lebanon:** A **recent Oxfam report** showed that together, Jordan and Lebanon host around 20% of the world’s refugee population. In Lebanon **around a quarter** of its population is made up of refugees, making it the country with the **highest** per-capita concentration of refugees worldwide.

As of 31 December 2017 (the most recently available data), some **1,011,366** Syrian persons of concern were

registered with UNHCR in Lebanon. This indicates a decrease of 36,909 over the last nine months, when compared to the 1,048,275 registered individuals in March 2016. However, February figures from UNHCR's Lebanon Information Hub, which include those not registered with UNHCR, account for some **1.5 million** displaced Syrians currently in Lebanon. For Iraqis, the **most recently available figures** indicate that as of February 2017, 6,000 persons were registered with UNHCR in Lebanon.

On 10 February, the Lebanese General Security Office (GSO) **announced** that Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR before 1 January 2015 are eligible for a free six months residency permit, which can be renewed several times and is not subject to late fees. A residency permit allows individuals to move freely inside Lebanon, undertake regular work, as well as to turn to authorities for protection in case of labour or sexual exploitation. According to local media, however, a number of **setbacks** have slowed the full implementation of the policy. This includes uncertain application procedures, as well as recurrent suspensions of the registration process. All **277,985** Palestine refugees from Lebanon (PRL), and 30,675 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) living in Lebanon, are excluded from the fee waiver policy. In addition, almost **500,000** unregistered Syrians (out of the 1.5 million estimated to be displaced in Lebanon) will not benefit

from the new policy. Refugees who **entered the country irregularly** or renewed their residency permit on the basis of sponsorship, pledge of responsibility, title deed or rental contract are also not eligible.

**Vulnerability and Protection:** The government of Lebanon does not permit the establishment of formal refugee camps in the country. As a result, most refugees and other migrants in Lebanon live in informal settlements, and struggle to access appropriate shelter. **Reports** indicate that 41% of displaced Syrians in Lebanon live in inadequate shelter, with 12% ranked as being in dangerous conditions. As of January 2017, according to the **Government of Lebanon and the UN**, more than 70% of displaced Syrians in Lebanon are living below the poverty line, along with 65% of PRL and 90% of PRS.

Protection challenges and hardships faced by Syrians in Lebanon include the **shutdown of Syrian-owned businesses** by local authorities, **child labour and early marriage** as a coping mechanism, difficulties in finding **space for burials** in formal cemeteries, as well as vulnerability to **sexual abuse and exploitation** as a result of sex work. According to a **short film by The Scott Sisters** released in March, the main concern for Syrians living in Lebanon continues to be the acquisition and retention of regular status and the right to remain in the country.



Figure 4: Informal Tented Settlement in Zahle, Lebanon, Jan 2017. Credit: Dara Al-Masri/DRC

# SYRIA

**Anniversary of the Conflict:** 15 March 2017 marked **six years** since the beginning of the war in Syria: the number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries has for the first time surpassed **5 million**. 13.5 million people remain in need of humanitarian aid; 6.3 million people are internally displaced.

**Arrivals:** Ongoing conflict in and around Mosul continues to drive displacement into Syria. Throughout March nearly **1,000 Iraqis** were estimated to have arrived at al-Hol refugee camp in al-Hasakah governorate. This represents a slower rate of arrivals when compared to at least **2,700 Iraqis** who arrived in al-Hol in February. As of March, roughly **14,700** people had arrived at the camp since 17 October 2016.

Syrian **returns** from Turkey to Jarablus in Northern Syria were again reported in March. In late March the Turkish government stated that since September 2016, some 50,000 Syrians had returned.

**Departures:** At the end of March the total number of registered Syrian refugees in the region surpassed five million, with **5,024,236** registered by UNHCR on 31 March. This is an increase of **61,464** people (1.2%) since the end of February, in line with the rate of departures from the country since the start of 2017.

In 2017 more Syrians arrived in Turkey than elsewhere: **155,038** Syrian arrivals have been registered in the country since the start of the year. As of 6 April, the total number of Syrian refugees registered in Turkey stands at 2,973,980. In Lebanon the most recent available figures are from 31 December 2016, and indicate that **1,011,366** Syrians have been registered

by UNHCR. As of 31 March, a total of **657,621** Syrian refugees were registered in Jordan and 236,772 were registered in Iraq. In North Africa (Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia), the most recent available figures are from 9 February and show that there were **145,013** refugees registered in the region: at the end of February some **120,000** of these people were in Egypt.

Reports from March indicated that an unconfirmed number of Iraqis who fled across the Syrian border ahead of the Mosul offensive, recently **returned to Iraq**. Should the government continue to regain territory around Mosul from the so-called Islamic State, the number of returns from Syria will likely increase.

Since the beginning of 2016 increased movement restrictions have been put in place both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries: land borders are tightly controlled and there are strict visa requirements to enter Lebanon and Turkey. The construction of a **border fence** with Turkey is also ongoing. The border with Jordan is closed, which has resulted in around **85,000** Syrians stranded at 'the berm.' An unknown number of Syrians continue to attempt to leave the country via irregular means.

In the first three months of 2017 just over 4,000 sea arrivals were recorded in Greece: **1,517** (38%) were Syrian. In February, Syrians comprised **433** people out of a total of 1,089 sea arrivals to Greece. In March there were **1,526** sea arrivals to Greece, **671** of who were Syrian. Of the total number of arrivals in February and March, Syrians comprised 42%.

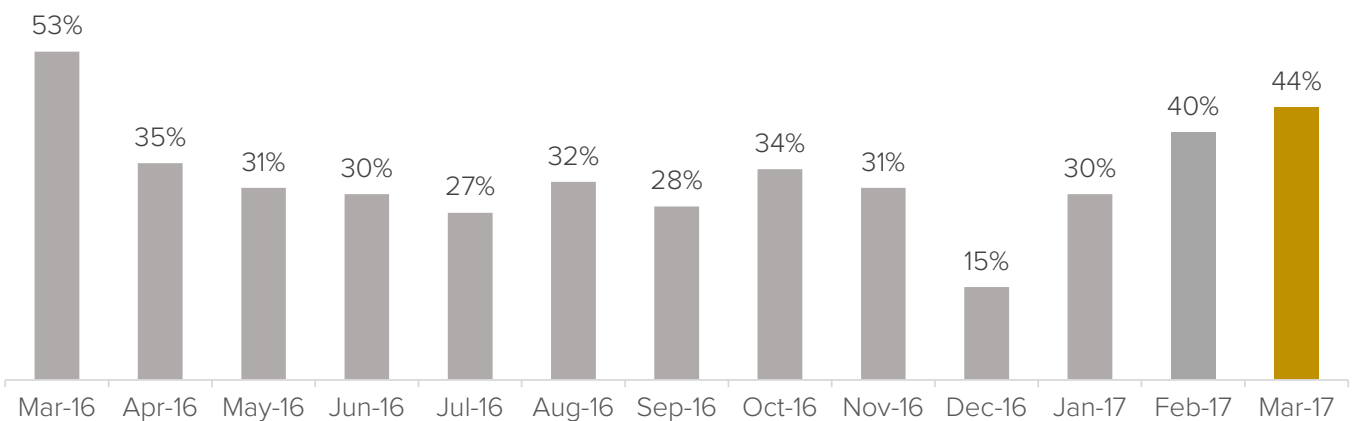


Figure 5: Proportion of Syrians among monthly sea arrivals to Greece from Mar 2016 to Mar 2017 (source: UNHCR)



**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, mostly in Rural Damascus and al-Hasakah governorates. At least **24,970** of these are Iraqi. The others are primarily from Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia and Pakistan. An estimated **430,000** Palestinian refugees also remain in need in Syria, 280,000 of whom have been internally displaced by conflict.

**Internal Displacement:** Over **84,000** people were displaced from the northern governorates of Syria in March. This does not represent a significant change in the overall rate of internal displacement from February to March. However 75,000 people were displaced in the Aleppo Governorate alone, representing an increase from the previous month when **69,440** people were displaced. These numbers likely include secondary displacement.

The high level of displacement in Aleppo Governorate is largely due to ongoing fighting around the city of **Manbij**, as various parties to the conflict struggle

for control of strategic areas. Internally displaced people are reportedly **trying to reach the city of Manbij**, however it is alleged that the Syrian Defence Force is only allowing people into the city if they are able to prove they have no affiliation to the so-called Islamic State.

In late March, increased clashes in northern and western Hama governorate displaced up to **40,000** people. Most people fled to cities in Hama and Homs, while some arrived in Tartous and Lattakia governorates. As frontlines shift, people will likely face further displacement.

The situation in southern Syria remains insecure and fighting between government and opposition groups is ongoing **around Dar'a al Balad** and continues to drive displacement. In March, over **15,200** people were displaced from the governorates of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Sweida and Dar'a, similar to February displacement trends. The vast majority of the newly displaced are reported to have moved **southwards**.

# TURKEY

**Arrivals:** In March, Turkish Land Forces reported the apprehension of **20,803** people irregularly crossing the land border into Turkey, a decrease of 6,315 compared to the **27,118** people apprehended in February. Of the reported apprehensions, 18,876 (90.7%) occurred at the Syrian border, 1,355 at the

Iraqi border, 407 at the Iranian border, and 165 at the Greek border. While the number of apprehensions at the Syrian border decreased by 6,453 compared to the previous month, apprehensions at the Iranian and Greek border increased by 267 and 112 individuals, respectively.



Figure 6: Apprehensions at Turkey's land borders, by country

No figures on informal returns to Turkey, particularly across the Evros River, were available for March, though the apprehension of 165 people trying to enter Turkey at the Greek border indicate that refugees and other migrants continue to use this return route.

At the end of February a border wall along Turkey's Syrian border was reportedly 50% completed with final construction expected in the first half of 2017. Turkish officials claim that the country intends to maintain its 'open door' policy for emergency situations, however border closures in March 2015, and the introduction of strict visa requirements for Syrians entering by air or sea, have made it very difficult, if not impossible, to legally cross the border.

According to DGMM, as of 4 April 943 refugees and other migrants had been returned to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Agreement, with 28 returned since the previous figures from 7 March. According to UNICEF, 59 accompanied children have been returned since that start of the Agreement in March 2016. Between 7 March and 3 April, returns to Turkey include people from Syria (11), Bangladesh (8), Algeria (3), Pakistan (3), Iraq (1), and two others of unspecified nationality. 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. Due to inaction on the issue of visa liberalisation, Turkish officials have again threatened to cancel the readmission agreement with the EU and have reportedly halted readmission procedures. The Turkish Foreign Minister claimed that as of March 16, Turkey was "no longer applying the readmission agreement" as they re-evaluate the policy.

March marked the one year anniversary of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement; this is largely thought to have resulted in fewer returns than expected while playing a significant role in the decrease in arrivals by sea to Greece since late 2015. Despite European leaders heralding the 'positive results' of the agreement, organisations like ECRE, NRC, IRC, Oxfam, MSF, and Amnesty International used the occasion of the anniversary to highlight the negative effects of the agreement on refugees and other migrants, the questions surrounding Turkey's status as a safe country for returns, and the ongoing protection concerns of people left stranded as a result of the policy.



Figure 7: Child at a Syrian refugee camp in Turkey. Credit: Ariel Rubin/UNDP

**Departures:** In March, the Turkish Coast Guard reported 34 'irregular migration incidents' in the seas surrounding Turkey, involving 1,501 'irregular migrants'. This marks an increase from the 19 incidents reported in February, with more than double the number

of people involved, likely due to improving weather conditions in the Mediterranean. The top ten countries of origin 'apprehended/rescued' by the Coast Guard in March again included Syria, Pakistan, Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Cameroon, while

people from South Africa, Kenya, and Sri Lanka were new to the list in March. In line with this, arrivals by sea in March also increased: **1,526 arrivals** were reported by UNHCR, an increase of 437 compared to February figures. An average of **49 people** arrived in Greece each day in March. Of these arrivals, 671 were from Syria, 163 from Iraq, 56 from Afghanistan, 51 from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and 41 from Algeria, with some 544 people (35.6%) arriving from unspecified ‘other’ countries. Notably, UNHCR included arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo in its ‘Greece Data Snapshots’ for the first time in March, replacing statistics previously available for Pakistanis.

Reports indicate that following an **attempted coup** in July 2016, there has been a surge in **Turkish diplomats and military officials** claiming asylum in EU countries. At the end of March **292 people** with Turkish diplomatic passports had applied for asylum in Germany, an increase of 156 from February. Additionally, some **236 Turkish nationals** have claimed asylum in Greece between July and February. Those fleeing Turkey are reportedly using the **same smuggling routes** as Syrian refugees and other migrants, including boats across the Mediterranean or at the land border with Greece, marked by the Evros river.

Refugees and other migrants also exit Turkey, in smaller numbers, via its land borders with Greece and Bulgaria. In March, **Turkish Land Forces** apprehended 1,816 people trying to depart to **Greece** via the land border at the **Evros river**. According to IOM data, **158** refugees and other migrants arrived in Turkey in March, more than triple the figure reported in February, while the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior reported the apprehension of **143** people attempting to enter ‘irregularly’ at the Turkish border in March. **Turkish Land Forces** report 83 apprehensions along this border. The majority of irregular entries to Bulgaria enter on foot through the country’s ‘**green border**’ with Turkey. Most are of Afghan, Iraqi, Pakistani, or Syrian

nationality.

**Apprehensions** of 104 people trying to exit at the Syrian border, ten at the Iranian border, eight at the Iraqi border, and one at the Armenian border were all reported in March.

Between 13 and 19 March, **21** Iranian, Somali, and Sri Lankan nationals arrived in Italy after departing from Turkey. Additionally, 27 Iraqi and Afghan nationals were intercepted en route to Italy from **Turkey**. These arrivals follow reports from the **European Commission** that between 8 December and 2 March seven boats with 580 refugees and other migrants on board arrived in Italy from Turkey.

**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. More recently, Turkey’s DGMM reported that **2,969,669** Syrians had been granted temporary protection in the country, as of 30 March. This marks an increase of 28,567 (1%) from 2 March figures. A UNHCR spokesperson reported that more than **47,000** Syrians arrived in Turkey since February. DGMM also reported **306,791** foreign nationals requiring international protection are in Turkey, including **133,632** Iraqis, 128,931 Afghans, 32,080 Iranians, 3,598 Somalis, and 8,550 people of other nationalities. Notably, the number of Afghans in Turkey in March marked an increase of 5,994 individuals compared to **February** figures.

Recent IOM and DGMM **surveys** among refugees and other migrants in Turkey indicate that the majority of surveyed Afghan, Iraqi, Iranian, and Somali respondents do not want to remain in Turkey and almost none would consider returning to their country of origin. A recent **New York Times** article points out that many refugees and migrants feel ‘stuck’ in Turkey with smuggling fees too high to get to Europe, and conflict at home preventing return.

## Refugees and other migrants in Turkey

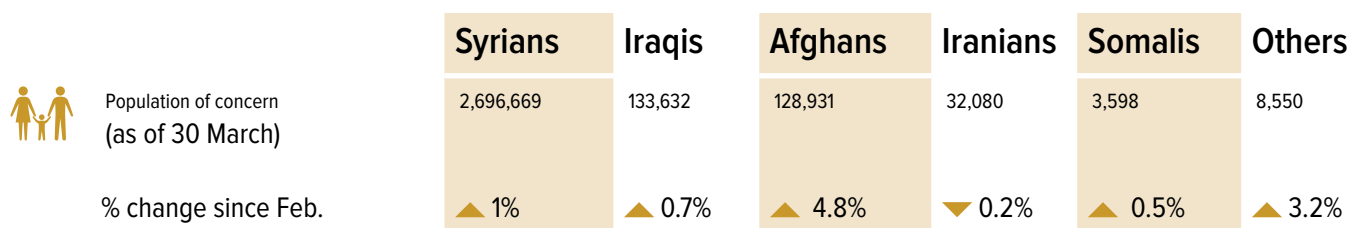


Figure 8: Refugees and other migrants in Turkey (source: DGMM / IOM)

**Vulnerability and Protection:** IOM reported the deaths of **11 people** at sea along the Eastern Mediter-

anean Route to Greece on **24 March** off the **Turkish coast**. This marks an increase from the single death

reported in **February**, but a decrease from the 45 deaths recorded in March of the previous year. The nationalities of the deceased were not available. Also in March, two **Algerians** were reportedly rescued after attempting to swim from the town of Cesme in Turkey to the island of Chios. The two were found with signs of hypothermia and fatigue, and reportedly made the attempted crossing as they were unable to afford the cost of a boat to Greece.

Deaths were also reported at Turkey's other borders in March: **two people** drowned in a river near Erbil, KR-I attempting to enter Turkey, while a soldier fleeing

Turkey for Greece via the Evros river was also found dead.

**Internal Displacement:** Government security operations have displaced between **355,000** and **500,000** people in Turkey's **predominantly Kurdish southeast** since December 2015. A February **OHCHR** report details the '*massive destruction and serious rights violations*' that have occurred in southeast Turkey since July 2015. April's constitutional referendum in Turkey, has raised fears about the eligibility of displaced Kurds to **vote** without a fixed address.

## OTHER NEWS

**Rescues and Fatalities on the Central Mediterranean Route:** According to IOM, in the days preceding **21 March** more than **6,000 people** were rescued on the Mediterranean route between Libya and Italy. Warmer weather and better conditions have been met with the arrival of **10,802** people by sea in Italy in March, as well as **288 deaths** along this route.

**Returns to Greece:** In March, the EU **reinstated returns** of asylum seekers to Greece under the **Dublin Regulation**. Return transfers of asylum seekers who had entered Europe via Greece had been suspended since 2011 due to 'systemic deficiencies' in the country's asylum practices. Under the regulation asylum applications must be processed in the EU country through which an individual first arrived to Europe.

**UK Returns:** The **Guardian** reports that the UK is using the Dublin Regulation to return Syrians to countries in which they were beaten and abused. The article cites the accounts of refugees and other migrants who reported assault, abuse, and beatings in Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

**Hunger Strike in Hungary:** Refugees and other migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria participated in a hunger strike at the **Bekscsaba** camp in Hungary, where they were being detained under Dublin Regulations. The hunger strikers were demanding their release from **detention**.

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

## NEW RESEARCH AND REPORTS

**REACH** in collaboration with MMP has produced a new **research report** entitled 'Separated Families: who stays, who goes, and why?'. The report, based on primary data collected from Iraqis, Afghans, and Syrians in five countries, looks at decision making and its consequences for families separated by mixed migration.

A new two-part feature article published by **MMP** addresses the displacement trends and protection needs of Somali, Sudanese, and Yemeni refugees and other migrants in Jordan. Drawing from available literature and interviews with local NGOs, the report highlights the challenges for underserved communi-

ties in the country (click here to access Parts **I** and **II**).

**UNHCR** has mapped the spread of border fences and internal border controls in European countries, pointing out border fences in six European countries including Bulgaria, FYROM, Greece, Hungary, France, and Spain.

In a March **report** entitled 'A Tide of Self-Harm and Depression', **Save the Children** details the repercussions of the EU-Turkey Agreement on the more than 5,000 children living in 'detention-like facilities' in Greece. The report details incidents of self-harm, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health issues among refugee and migrant children.

**IOM** has released the results of its **global research project, MECLEP** (Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy), in a report entitled 'Making Mobility Work for Adaptation to Environmental Changes'. The research focuses on six key countries (Dominican Republic, Haiti, Kenya, Republic of Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam) and argues that migration related to environmental change can be a positive adaptation strategy.

In a recent **photo series**, **The Washington Post** documents the lives and experiences of Syrians in Turkey. The photos span four years and were captured by photographer Emin Ozmen.

In early March, **Refugees Deeply** published an in-depth **article** about the failures of 'the most expensive humanitarian response in history'. Later picked-up by the **Guardian**, the article details the sequence of events in Greece that culminated in thousands of refugees and other migrants being stranded in dire conditions in the country, as the borders to Europe continue to close.

**ODI's Humanitarian Policy Group** has released a new **working paper** addressing the lack of humanitarian access in Syria. As the conflict enters its seventh year, the paper looks at strategies and operational dilemmas that local organisations face in addressing access challenges.

A **joint brief** from **IRC, Save the Children**, and nine other organisations focuses on the situation of unaccompanied and separated children in Bulgaria, FYROM, Serbia, and Croatia. The publication points to unreliable data, exposure to violence and exploitation, lack of services, and limited legal pathways as issues surrounding the experiences of refugee and migrant children in these European countries.

**The Project on Middle East Political Science** has compiled and published a **collection of workshop reports** addressing the effects of migration and dis-

placement in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as analysis with a focus on Europe.

**IOM and DGMM** have released the findings of **surveys** conducted between November 2016 and January 2017 with more than 2,000 refugees and other migrants in Turkey. The results provide information on the demographics and journeys of Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians, and Somalis in Turkey

**The New Arrivals Project** brings together four major European **newspapers** (the Guardian, Le Monde, El País, and Spiegel) to tell the **integration stories** of newly arrived communities in their respective countries over a period of 18 months.

**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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