



**MIXED MIGRATION
MONTHLY SUMMARY**

**DECEMBER
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.

Cover photo: A girl in an Informal Tented Settlement in Baalbek, Lebanon. Photo courtesy of The Danish Refugee Council/Mais Salman. June 2017.

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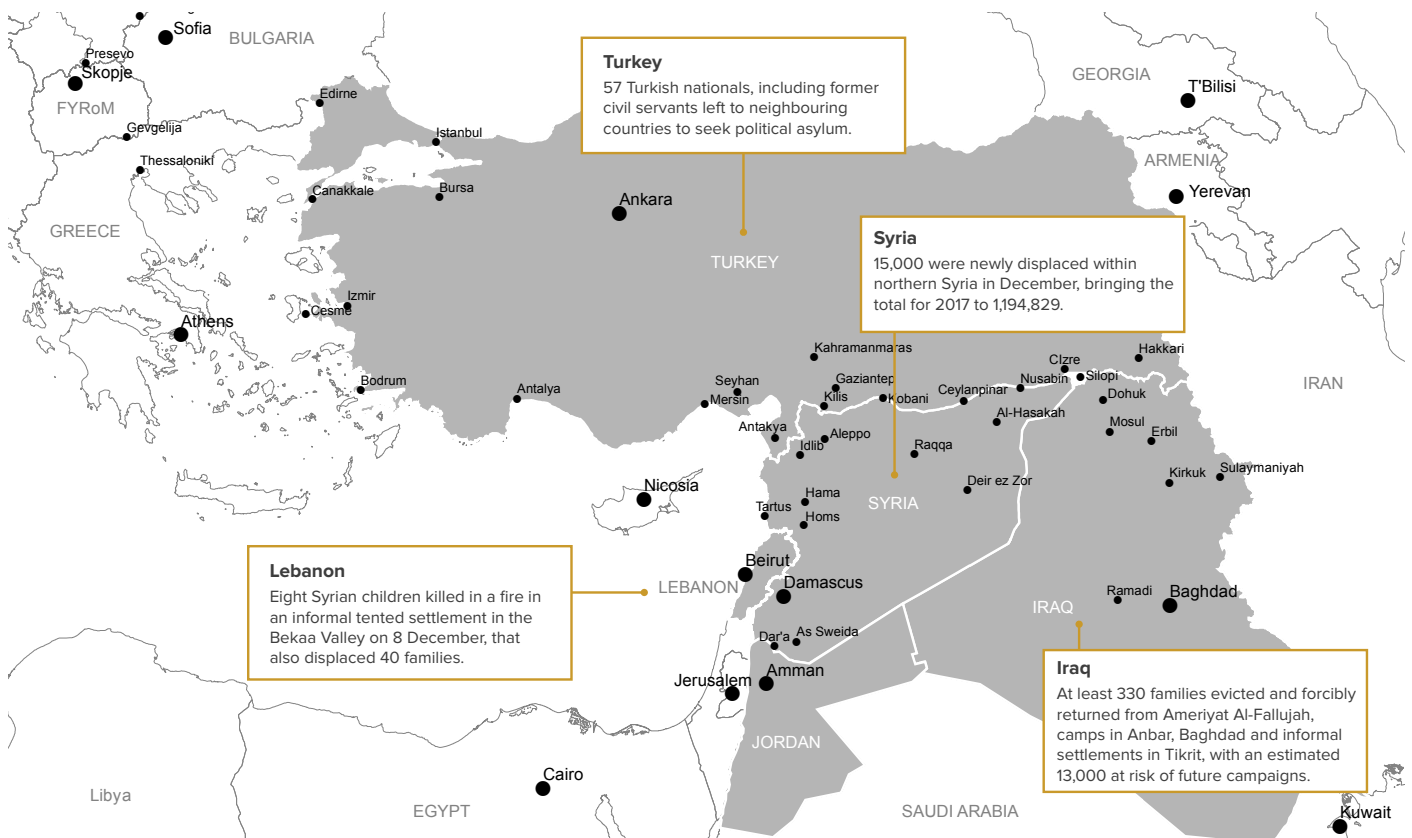
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OVERVIEW

Arrivals to Greece from Turkey were 27% lower in December, with 28% fewer “irregular migrants” involved in incidents in the seas surrounding Turkey. Small numbers of migrants arriving to Cyprus were reported this month, with 38 bringing the yearly total to 1,067, compared to only 345 in 2016. At least 57 Turkish nationals sought political asylum or used irregular routes to exit Turkey in December, adding to the wave of asylum applications following the attempted coup of July 2016. Though refugee and IDP returns to and within Iraq continued this month, internal and secondary displacement remains ongoing as result of security operations against the so-called Islamic State and forced evictions, with 136 families displaced from their homes between Anbar and Salah Al-Din between 24 November and 7 December. During the same period, pro-central government armed forces occupied 130 homes reportedly belonging to Kurdish families in Kirkuk. At least 330 families were evicted from Ameriyat Al-Fallujah, camps in Anbar, Baghdad and informal settlements in Tikrit, with as many as 13,000 estimated to be at risk of future eviction campaigns. The number of Iraqis in camps in Syria’s Al-Hasakeh governorate dropped by 30% to 11,625 at the beginning of December, before tripling again to 33,412 by the end of the month, the reasons for which remain unclear. The last of Lebanon’s border crossings with Syria opened on 14 December under the management

of Syrian government forces. Meanwhile, the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon dropped below 1 million for the first time in December since 2014 to 997,905 (though new registrations have been on hold since January 2015). Results of a new census indicated the numbers of registered Palestinians residing in the country is at least 60% lower than recorded by UNRWA in 2014, at 174,422. Eight Syrian children were killed in a fire that spread through an informal tented settlement in the Bekaa Valley on 8 December, that also displaced 40 families. In 2017, spontaneous returns of Syrians from Jordan are estimated at 7,063. Nonetheless, by the end of December, Syrians represented the most common nationality of arrival to Greece by sea in 2017, at 12,395 (41.7%). 15,000 were newly displaced within northern Syria in December, a 22.3% increase from the 11,660 recorded in November. This contributed to the 1,194,829 individuals that have been displaced in northern Syria in the last 12 months, despite evidence of ongoing returns.

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.



Overview of key developments across the Middle East (December 2017)

IRAQ

Arrivals: Almost 20,000 Iraqis returned from Syria between 10 October and 4 December, in movements coordinated by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD). Families are now being directly transported to camps south of Mosul, instead of coming via the Hammam Al-Alil site. The IOM published a report stating that 1.3 million IDPs have returned to their places of origin so far in 2017, with an additional 90% of those still displaced expressing a desire to return home. It should be noted that there is a risk of secondary displacement for those who return due to many factors, for instance damage to their homes.

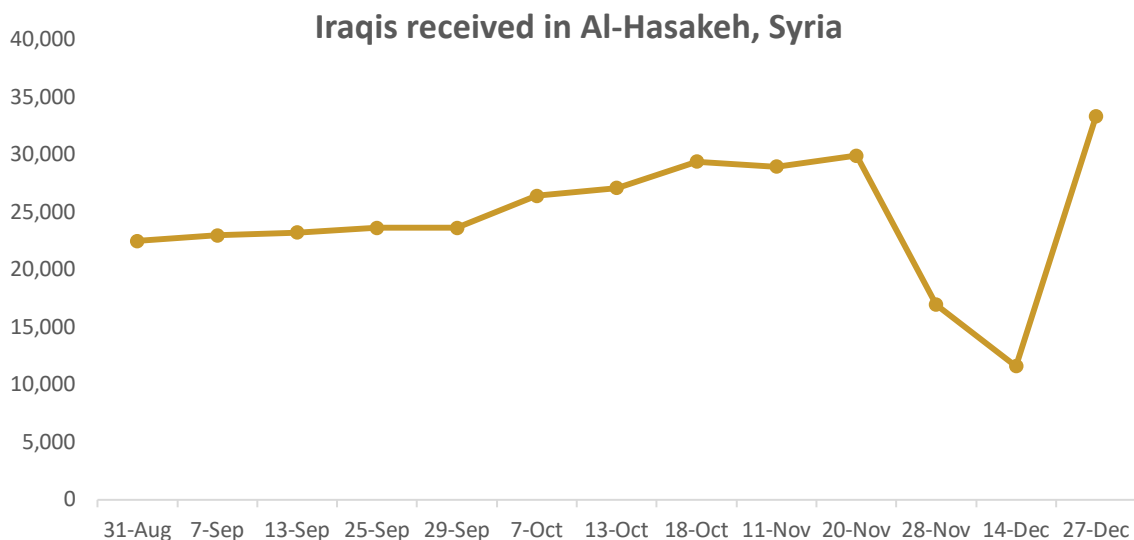
Between 3 and 7 December, 35 families reached Kilo 18 camp in Anbar, returning from Albu Kamal in Syria. The families, originating from cities in Anbar, were pushed into Syria as a result of recent military operations in the area. After two months they paid smugglers to return to Iraq. The MoMD transferred an additional 347 Iraqis home from Turkey between 12 and 18 December. On 14 December a further 192 families (1,152 individuals) returned from Syria's Al Hol refugee camp to Jeddah camp in Ninewa. Spontaneous returns of individuals also reportedly continue, despite the ongoing risk of secondary displacement upon arrival.

On 6 December, 154 families returned from Al-Shirqat district to camps in Ninewa and Salah Al-Din. These governorates are already hosting over 1 million IDPs, and 16,500 individuals were displaced locally or to camps in these governorates and Anbar following military operations against the so-called Islamic State in late October.

Departures: The number of Iraqis in camps in Syria's Al-Hasakeh governorate decreased significantly between 28 November and 14 December, dropping from 17,000 to 11,625 (31.6%). This continues the ongoing trend of return, with numbers of Iraqis in Al-Hasakeh having dropped for the first time in November since the end of 2016. Numbers, however, tripled again by the end of the month to 33,412. The reasons for this sudden influx of Iraqi refugees to Syria remains unclear.

As of 27 December, 262,758 Iraqis were hosted in countries in the region, unchanged from the previous month's figures, which marked a decrease of 2,215 (0.8%) from October. The number of Iraqis registered in Jordan rose from 65,623 to 65,922 (0.5%) this month. The number of Iraqis in Turkey was not updated since November, when the total was 151,654, representing 44% of the population under 'temporary protection' other than Syrians. This marked an increase of 5,790 (4%) from October to November.

7,567 Iraqis have arrived by sea to Europe in 2017, 661 of which arrived in December. This represents 4.6% of the total arrivals by sea to Europe this year, placing Iraq in eighth place out of the top ten nationalities. It also marks a decrease of 85 (11.4%) from the previous month. The total number of Iraqis to arrive by sea to Greece in 2017 increased to 5,824 by December, up by 11.2% from the 5,238 reported in November. 1,742 Iraqis have arrived by sea to Italy this year, according to figures from 31 December. This represents an increase of 335 (23.8%) from the last available figures in October.



Refugees and Other Migrants in Iraq: The number of Syrians in Iraq rose marginally from 246,974 in November to 247,057 (0.03%) in December, following the slight increase of 382 individuals from October (0.2%). The numbers of those recorded as ‘other’ or stateless were not updated since November when the figures were at 44,488 and 48,500 respectively.

Internal Displacement: The total number of IDPs in Iraq was measured at 2,615,988 by 31 December, down by 267,750 (9.3%) from the previous month. Almost 800,000 (30%) of these have been displaced within Ninewa governorate itself. The number of returnees, as defined by the IOM Displacement Matrix Methodology, was at 3,220,262 by end of December, marking an increase of 460,604 (16.7%) from November.

As of 18 October, the Emergency Tracking System of the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix – a tool used to track displacement resulting from government military operations in Mosul – has not been updated, following the one year anniversary of their commencement. As of this date, 793,422 were internally displaced as a result of military activity in the area, alongside reports of 300,576 IDP returnees.

Central government forces reportedly recaptured the last areas along the Syrian border previously under control of the so-called Islamic State on 9 December, alongside the western desert. Nonetheless, the security situation across the country remains volatile.

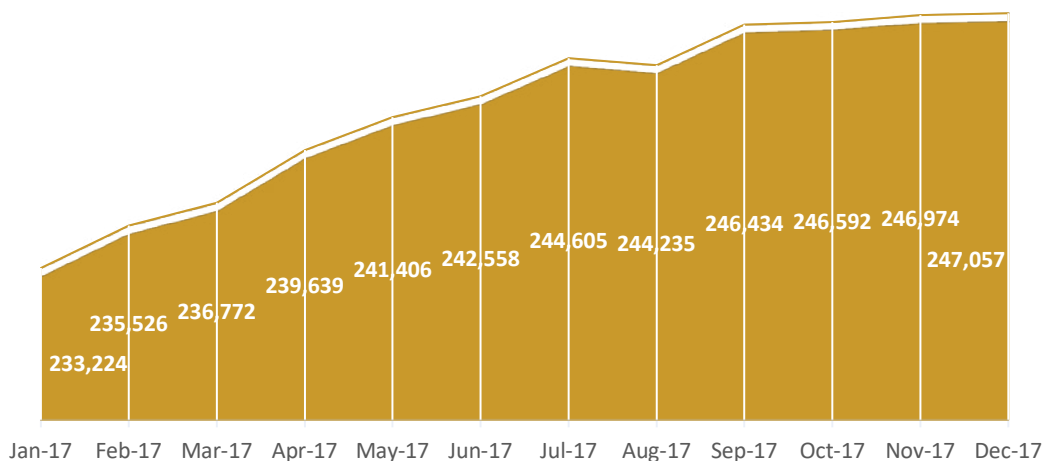
As of November, a total of 65,000 had been displaced to camps in Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Ninewa, following military operations in West Anbar in 2017, including 19,000 since 20 September alone. Between 24 November and 7 December, 136 families

were displaced from their homes between Anbar and Salah Al-Din to other villages in the area, due to a security sweep of the border and are awaiting the opportunity to return.

Tensions between the central government and Kurdish forces are ongoing, contributing to continuous displacement within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), with many affected families having left Tooz district, Salah Al-Din governorate from mid-October onwards. Pro-central government armed forces reportedly occupied 130 homes allegedly belonging to 170 Kurdish families in Kirkuk between 24 November and 7 December. The families were displaced elsewhere in Kirkuk at the time. Following the referendum and the takeover of Kirkuk by central government forces, 180,000 people were temporarily displaced within the disputed territories. This is further to the already 350,000 IDPs already hosted in the area by the end of November. An additional 100 arrivals were recorded to camps in Nazrawa, Daquq and Laylan in December, mostly originating from Salah Al-Din. Some of these individuals were displaced having attempted to return to their places of origin and found them to be unsafe and lacking in necessary services.

Reports of forcible evictions and returns from central and southern Iraq to Salah Al-Din and Anbar governorates continue to emerge, further to the 433 forced returns during the second half of November. Between 3 and 10 December, 230 families were evicted from Ameriyat Al-Fallujah, camps in Anbar, Baghdad and informal settlements in Tikrit. An additional 101 families were reportedly forced to return by the Anbar Operations Command and East Anbar Command from Ameriyat Al-Fallujah and Kilo 18 camps on 21 December. Aid workers from the

Total Registered Syrians In Iraq (2017)



area similarly estimate that as many as 5,000 may have been subject to such campaigns between 21 November and the end of December. UNHCR report that at least a further 13,000 remain at risk of eviction and forced returns in these governorates.

Vulnerability and Protection: Confiscation of or loss of documentation as a result of displacement continues to present challenges for Iraqi IDPs in accessing

public services, freedom of movement and livelihood opportunities. Displaced families from Salah Al-Din governorate reported fear of returning to their area of origin, even to retrieve their belongings, due to a lack of safety, destruction to their homes and looting. Premature forced return poses myriad protection challenges to IDPs including tribal conflict, a lack of shelter, infrastructure or adequate services, unexploded ordnance and limited freedom of movement.

JORDAN

Arrivals: At least 50,000 individuals remain trapped at the Rukban border settlement located at 'the berm'¹, on Jordan's northern border with Syria. Estimates have ranged from 50,000 up to 100,000 in recent months, following the displacement of IDPs from Hadalat camp as fighting between Syrian regime and opposition forces came within 12 kilometres of the settlement in September. Humanitarian access to Rukban remains limited and arrivals into Jordan are only received in the case of acute medical conditions. This is following the official closure of Jordan's borders after a security incident in June 2016.

No updated satellite images of either Hadalat or Rukban camps along the Syrian-Jordanian border area have been available since September.

Departures: In December, UNHCR reported 7,063 spontaneous returns of Syrians in 2017, with 421 in November alone, alongside an estimated 40 deportations in November. Figures reportedly remained similar in December. Other sources vary, indicating that an average of 1,000 Syrians returned to southern Syria per month from July to November.

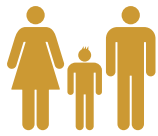
Refugees and Other Migrants in Jordan: The overall number of registered Syrians in Jordan increased by 36 to 655,624 in December. The Jordanian government places estimates of total registered and unregistered Syrians closer to 1.3 million. The registered Iraqi population rose from 65,623 to 65,922 (0.5%) by the end of December. Earlier data released by UNHCR states that at least 7,000 of these were registered in 2017, a 12% increase when compared with last year. By 21 December, 9,447 Yemenis were registered in the country, an increase

of 415 (4.6%) from November figures. This brings the total number of Yemenis registered in 2017 to 3,829, a 40% increase from registrations in 2016. The number of registered Sudanese did not change from November to December, remaining at 3,966, of which 818 arrived in 2017 alone. This represents a 20% increase in the number of Sudanese registered this year, compared to 2016. Similarly, the number of registered Somalis did not change by 21 December, from a total of 806, with 49 registered in 2017. The number of individuals registered as 'Other' increased marginally (4%) from 1,545 in November to 1,606 in December.

Vulnerability and Protection: Reports of abuse and exploitation of foreign domestic workers under the Kefala sponsorship system in Jordan remain commonplace. A shelter run by the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) reported receiving 45 cases of domestic workers suffering from psychological abuse in the first 11 months of 2017, 71 in 2016 and 121 in 2015. Though numbers are higher in previous years, the majority of the shelter's residents still report some form of psychological abuse, leading to severe mental health issues and in several cases, suicide attempts. A lack of awareness of contract terms and rights, alongside poor knowledge of available support services further increases the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers in such situations.

1 This area covers the entirety of the northern Jordanian border with Syria, occupying the space between the Jordanian border and Syrian territory, dubbed by Amnesty International as 'no man's land' in 2016.

Refugees and other migrants in Jordan



Population of concern (as of December)

Syrians	Iraqis	Yemenis	Sudanese	Somali	Other
655,624	65,922	9,447	3,966	806	1,606

LEBANON

Arrivals: The borders of Lebanon have been officially closed to Syrian refugees and asylum seekers, bar the small number that qualify under the **humanitarian exception criteria**, since the introduction of new entry criteria and halt in registrations that followed, in **January 2015**. Though government-led registration remains on hold, the last of the country’s five border crossings with Syria opened on **14 December**, all under the management of Syrian government forces.

Departures: Since reports of mass returns of Syrians from Arsal and the surrounding area at the Lebanese border in **September**, no further information has been available on the number departing for Syria.

Refugees and Other Migrants in Lebanon: Though figures were not updated during the month of December, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon dropped below 1 million for the first time since **2014**, decrease to **997,905** by 30 November. This follows a decrease of over **3,000** (0.3%) from June.

The results of a national census recently published by the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics indicate that the number of Palestinians in Lebanon is significantly lower than the **450,000** registered with UNRWA. The census reports that **174,422** reside in the country currently, a reduction of 61.2% from UNRWA figures of July 2014. This figure has been **attributed** by some to the emigration of Palestinians abroad in search of better livelihoods and educational opportunities since the last registration exercise. This figure would also represent a decrease from the **277,985** (37.3%) Palestinian refugees, not to mention the 31,502 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS), reported in January this year. No new figures on the number of Iraqi nationals have been published since May, when the presence of **6,000** was reported. Estimates indicate that there are upwards of **250,000**

migrant domestic workers in the country, however the number of unregistered workers is most likely higher.

Vulnerability and Protection: A lack of civil legal documentation continues to leave Syrians vulnerable to limited freedom of movement and service access, reduced livelihood opportunities and unregistered births and marriages, with only **19%** of households reporting legal residency in a survey published this month.

Eight Syrian children from the same family were killed in a fire that spread through an informal tented settlement (ITS) in the Bekaa Valley on 8 December. The fire also further displaced 40 families due to the destruction and marks the deadliest fire to have affected an ITS in Lebanon so far. The fire is thought to have been started by a gas cylinder **explosion** in an empty tent before spreading across the settlement.

Campaigns to evict Syrian families from the area continued across northern Lebanon this month, following on from **November**. Local authorities are reportedly enforcing curfews and routine checks on residency and work documentation of Syrians, the violation of which is punishable by arrest and detention. The town of Miziara, where the rape and murder of a Lebanese woman by a Syrian man has led to a surge in recriminations against Syrians across the region, has issued a deadline for Syrians to leave the area. Other towns have enforced similar actions, with reports of physical intimidation commonplace.

SYRIA

Arrivals: Overall figures on returns of Syrians to their areas of origin were reported at **721,100** (of which approximately 66,000 are refugees) in the first nine months of 2017. This number marks a 30% increase from the previous year at **560,000**, indicating rising rates of return. Humanitarian actors estimate a further **1 million** will return in 2018. Until now, Aleppo has experienced the highest number of returns at 455,000. IDP returns continued on a small scale last month at **4,690** across 26 villages in the governorates of Dara'a and Quneitra according to a report published in December. This marks a decrease from the **5,911** (20.7%) reported in October. Returns continued to ar-Raqqa governorate after it came back under the control of Syrian government forces from the so-called Islamic State, with as many as 15,000 to **20,000** families now residing in its eastern and western neighbourhoods.

Arrivals of Iraqis to camps in Syria's Al-Hasakeh governorate decreased significantly from 17,000 in November to **11,625** (31.6%) by 14 December, but had tripled again by the end of the month to **33,412**. The reasons for this sudden surge in Iraqi arrivals remains unclear.

The Turkish Prime Minister was quoted this month stating that **75,000** Syrians have returned from Turkey following Turkish army operations. The Head of the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) similarly said that **30,000** had returned from Turkey since the conclusion of the **Euphrates Shield** operation alone.

Up-to-date figures on returns of Syrians from other neighbouring countries are lacking for December, aside from Jordan, where UNHCR indicate 300 to 400 spontaneous returns this month.

Departures: By the end of December, **5,480,871** Syrians were registered as living in neighbouring countries and North Africa, marking an increase of 61,744 (1.1%) from the previous month. In Lebanon, the number of Syrians dropped below 1 million to **997,905** for the first time since 2014, following a decrease of over **3,000** (0.3%) from June. The number of Syrians in Iraq marginally increased from **246,974** in November to **247,057** (0.03%) in December. The total number of Syrians in Jordan increased by 36 to **655,624** in December.

By 31 December, **17,411** Syrians had arrived by sea to Europe, an increase of 2,939 (20.3%) from October figures, making Syrians the second most common nationality of arrivals by sea to Europe in 2017. At the end of December, Syrians represented the most common nationality of arrivals by sea to Greece in 2017, at **12,395** (41.7%) of the total arrivals, an increase of 843 (7.3%) from November. This represents a more incremental level of increase when compared with the **1,565** recorded in October, and 1,827 in September. **2,357** Syrians arrived by sea to Italy by 31 December, an increase of 173 (7.9%) from the **2,184** reported in October. Figures on Syrian arrivals by sea to Spain were not updated in December. By 30 October, this figure was at **1,743**, an increase of **234** (15.5%) from the previous month.

Refugees and Other Migrants in Syria: The number of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Syria has not been updated since 27 November, when **60,484** were present, an increase of 1,692 (2.88%) from the last available figures in **September**. Approximately **438,000** Palestinians in protracted refugee situations also remain in the country.

Internal Displacement: **1,194,829** individuals have been displaced in northern Syria in the last 12 months, 15,000 of which were newly displaced in December alone, an increase of 22.3% from the **11,660** recorded in November. The majority of this month's internal movement occurred in Hama governorate, from where IDPs **moved** to Sanjar district in Idlib governorate. UNHCR also reported the **evacuation** of 19 informal IDP sites (6,000 IDPs) in Hama governorate due to fighting. Secondary displacement is likely due to the fact that Idlib already plays host to an estimated one million IDPs and the fighting which has **intensified** between Syrian government and opposition forces in northern Hama, southern Idlib and southern Aleppo governorates since November.

30,784 have been displaced from Syria's southern governorates (including Damascus, Sweida, Dara'a) in 2017, decreasing by 2,673 (8%) from the previous month's total.

Evacuation agreements brokered between opposition and Syrian government forces contributed to ongoing internal displacement this month, under which **108** people (40 armed males, 18 civilian males, 21 women, 29 children) were transferred from rural Damascus



A displaced family from Idlib who are also beneficiaries of the shelter programme of the Danish Refugee Council in Syria. Photo courtesy of Danish Refugee Council/Ahmad Allows. July 2017.

to northern rural Hama on 30 December. Overall, estimates of displaced persons in Syria this year amount to **2.6 million**.

Vulnerability and Protection: Displacement of large numbers of IDPs to northwestern Syria in recent months is placing humanitarian operations under **strain**, leading new arrivals to establish informal settlements in rural areas in **harsh** winter conditions. Of 2.65 million people reported in the area, 1.16 million are IDPs and a further 1.73 million are classified as in need. A lack of funding for infrastructure and safe hosting space exacerbate the existing tensions between IDPs and the host population.

The siege of eastern Ghouta, an area cut off from critical aid by pro-government forces since 2013, continues to pose **serious** protection challenges to those trapped in the enclave. People with chronic medical conditions including cancer, kidney failure and diabetes have no access to medicine or necessary treatment. The lack of food and fuel throughout the winter months similarly remains urgent, causing prices to skyrocket to unaffordable levels, not to mention ongoing fighting in recent months. Child malnutrition in eastern Ghouta was reported at its highest across Syria since the start of the civil war last month, with **11.9%** of under-5-year-olds suffering from acute malnutrition.

TURKEY

Arrivals: The numbers of apprehensions at Turkey's land border were not updated since the **52,948** recorded in November, the majority of which occurred at the Syrian border (47,664). This figure marks the lowest number of apprehensions recorded since July this year, a decrease of 11,675 (19.7%).

Between 7 and 15 December, **16** people were returned from Greece to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement, bringing the total to 1,485 since 4 April 2016. The

majority of people returned under the EU-Turkey Agreement so far have been from Pakistan (42%), Syria (15%), Algeria (12%), Bangladesh (6%), Afghanistan (6%), Morocco (3%), Iraq (3%), Iran (3%), Sri Lanka (1%), Nigeria (1%) and those classified as 'Other' (8%).

Turkish authorities have made attempts to limit cross-border movement along its periphery with Syria since **2015**, investing in the construction of a 900-kilometre border-wall in **September 2016**.



A girl in an Informal Tented Settlement in Baalbek, Lebanon. Photo courtesy of The Danish Refugee Council/Mais Salman. June 2017.

Departures: In December, the Turkish Coast Guard reported that 1,485 “irregular migrants” were involved in 34 “irregular migration incidents” in the seas surrounding Turkey. This marks a decrease of 567 (27.6%) from the 2,052 “irregular migrants” involved in incidents in November, and 8 fewer incidents (19%) than the previous month. 33 out of 34 incidents took place in the Aegean Sea.

According to UNHCR, 2,364 people arrived to Greece from Turkey in December, a decrease of 851 (26.5%) from the previous month. As of 31 December, the most common nationalities arriving by sea to Greece in 2017 have been from Syria (41.7%), Iraq (19.6%), Afghanistan (11.6%), those registered as ‘Other’ (10.9%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (3.3%), Algeria (2.9%), Palestine (2.6%), Iran (2.4%), stateless individuals (1.8%), Pakistan (1.8%) and Kuwait (1.4%). This brings the total for 2017 to 29,718.

No further reports of people using the Black Sea route were available since November, when at least 60 individuals were rescued while attempting to reach Romania by boat. This is further to nearly 500 asylum seekers who arrived to Romania via this route in August and September, with an additional 800 apprehended while attempting to make the crossing. IOM reported the arrival of 38 Syrian migrants by sea to Cyprus on 5 December (33 men, one woman, four children). This figure brings the total of migrant arrivals to Cyprus in 2017 to 1,067, compared to only 345 during the same period last year.

On 5 December, local media reported that a group of 11 Turkish folk dancers sought asylum in Hungary after attending a dance competition. A further four children and eight adults were detained near Turkey’s Greek border on 15 December, five of whom were former Turkish public servants and three Pakistani nationals. On 16 December, a former police officer, his wife and two children were apprehended attempting to cross into Greece. An additional 32 Turkish nationals arrived on the Greek island of Chios on 20 December to seek political asylum. Since the attempted coup of July 2016, more than 8,700 Turks have claimed asylum in Germany in 2016 and 2017. Despite this, Germany has rejected more than 5,000 asylum claims in 2017. These figures also include at least 600 high-ranking Turkish officials who have applied for asylum in Germany since last year. In the first eight months of 2017, Bulgaria rejected the applications of 12 Turkish asylum seekers.

Local media reported the attempted crossing of 83 people (38 men, 18 women and 27 children) from Turkey to Italy by sea on 25 December, who were subsequently detained. Their nationalities were not identified. A further 67 people were apprehended during attempted crossings to Greece and Bulgaria on 30 December. The individuals involved were from Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, Morocco, India and Bangladesh.

Figures on people attempting to exit Turkey’s borders were not updated in December, since the 3,826 reported in November. The majority of these cases

(3,116) occurred at the Greek border where people typically swim or use boats to cross the **Evros river** that separates Greece and Turkey. This report from November also included the number of refugees and other migrants **apprehended** at Turkey's border with Syria (579), Bulgaria (127), Georgia (2), Iran (1) and Iraq (1).

Refugees and Other Migrants: As of 28 December, **3,424,237** Syrian refugees were registered in Turkey. Figures from the IOM Migrants Presence Monitoring situation **report** were not updated since November, when the Turkish Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) increased its estimates of 'foreign nationals' in the country to **3.7 million**, up from **3.6 million** in October and 3.5 million in previous months.

Internal Displacement: No updated figures were available on internal displacement during December. Estimates for the number of displaced since December 2015 due to security operations in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast remain between **355,000** and **500,000**.

Vulnerability and Protection: According to IOM's Missing Migrants project, **one** person died along the eastern Mediterranean route from November to December, bringing the total to 62 for 2017. This marks a decrease of 14 from the previous month. The Turkish Coast Guard similarly reported the death of **one** "irregular migrant" in the seas surrounding Turkey in December.



Kids posing for a photo in Beqaa, Lebanon. Photo courtesy of Danish Refugee Council/Louise Wateridge. January 2017.

OTHER NEWS

Financial incentives for migrants and asylum seekers to return home: An [article](#) published by the BBC this month looks at financial incentives for return given to migrants and asylum seekers. However, regardless of unstable conditions in countries of origin, Chatham House note that «The pressure on people to return is definitely being ramped up, and return is being seen as the key to the whole migration situation in Europe at the moment». The ‘voluntariness’ of return movements remains under question and the extent to which such operations offer safe or sustainable solutions, against the backdrop of hardened public sentiment and tightening restrictions on refugees and other migrants in Europe.

Humanitarian operations on Greek islands stretched beyond capacity: In December, residents from several Greek islands protested in Athens concerning government policies that have led to overcrowding. Humanitarian aid groups have warned about a [looming emergency](#) for those stranded on the islands. The EU-Turkey deal dictates that arrivals must remain until their requests have been approved,

yet the more than 15,000 people registered in state-run camps on the isles meanwhile face increasingly deteriorating conditions. To illustrate, Lesbos is now hosting 7,000 people in facilities with a capacity of only 2,300.

Debate over mandatory EU refugee resettlement quotas continues:

In December the European Council President called for mandatory quotas on relocating asylum seekers across the EU to be scrapped, calling them “divisive” and “ineffective”. Despite the EU Commission’s original agreement to relocate 160,000 refugees (Syrians, Iraqis and Eritreans) from Italy and Greece to other European countries, only about 32,000 refugees have been transferred to date. [Bitter division remains](#) among EU leaders on the issue. Italy and Germany, among others, are still in favour of maintaining quotas to deal with surges in irregular migration.

See also **mHub Monthly Trend Bulletins** available [here](#).

NEW RESEARCH AND REPORTS

MMP and its partners published a variety of research and reports in December. Using a series of surveys conducted between March and August 2017, two **Ground Truth Solutions**-led perception studies were published. The first, [Information Provision – Perceptions of People on the Migration Trail](#), looks at access to information and the extent to which those on the move trust what they are told. The second report, [Refugee, asylum-seeker, and migrant perceptions on cash assistance](#), examines whether cash support influences decisions to leave or remain in Turkey, and what recipients and how non-recipients perceive the available support and its impact.

UNHCR, UNICEF and **WFP** published their 2017 [Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon \(VASyR\) in December](#), the fifth annual survey examining situational updates and concurring protection trends for registered Syrian refugee households in the country. According to the report, this year has seen increasing numbers of Syrians living below the poverty line, worsening food security and shelter conditions, contrasted by increasing levels of school enrolment.

MPI (The Migration Policy Institute) published a [report](#) this month on partnership building and migration management, [EU Migration Partnerships: A Work in progress](#). The report examines whether or not, and to what extent, partnerships have fulfilled the stated aims of the EU Migration Partnership Framework, namely “strengthening” border control, returning “unauthorised migrants” and “addressing the root causes of migration”.

The Policy Press published [Unravelling Europe’s ‘Migration Crisis’ this month](#). The book draws on first-hand accounts from 500 people who arrived on the shores of Europe in 2015 and examines their journeys, experiences and motivations. In doing so, it seeks to engage politicians, policy makers and the media, challenging them to revisit and reshape their understanding of why and how people move.

The IZA Institute of Labour Economics published a policy paper, [Deterring Emigration with Foreign Aid: An Overview of Evidence from Low-Income Countries, in December](#). The paper reviews the attempts of high-income countries to deter future immigration from low-income countries by addressing the “root causes”

of migration through development aid programming. The paper presents that development aid has, at best, a minimal impact on deterring migration from low-income countries, and has conversely led to increased emigration. Instead, it recommends that foreign aid should harness the mutual benefits of migration for all.

The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and **Solidar** published a report in December entitled [‘Story of a Journey Across Europe: From First Reception to Integration of Migrants’](#). Aware of both the difficulties facing migrants arriving in Europe, and the challenges host countries face in providing adequate support, it examines the journey across Europe, from first reception to integration. The report takes an in-depth look at reception services in Italy and Greece and the integration approach in Germany.

Oxfam published a blog in December looking at the protection challenges faced at an EU ‘hotspot’ in Moria, [“We just want a life” – Protecting the rights of refugees in Greece](#). The article presents that this asylum processing model places the return of migrants over their protection needs, in an approach that leads to the systematic violation of the human rights of those on the move.

AMMODI published an article in December entitled [Researching \(with\) refugees? Ethical considerations on participatory approaches](#). The article examines how to conduct research with refugees as opposed to about them, looks at the ethical considerations involved and promoting a stronger participatory approach.

International Medical Corps (IMC) produced a [report](#) in December looking at mental health, psychosocial needs and service utilisation, among Syrian refugees and Jordanian nationals. The report looks into help-seeking behaviours, coping skills, barriers to receiving services and perceived needed services. Findings include challenges in accessing healthcare and stigma around mental health issues, among others.

Frontiers in Psychiatry have published a [case report article](#) on post-traumatic stress and other related disorders in Yazidi women refugees following attacks by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. The

research presents the findings of discussions with women from a group of 1,000 who were brought to Germany to receive integrated care. The report highlights that, although suffering from trauma, these women suffer primarily from adjustment disorders in their new environments. The lack of adequate “transcultural psychiatric”, or culturally sensitive, services in Germany, and in Europe more broadly, exacerbates such conditions.

RMMS monthly summaries of mixed migration issues and news in East Africa and Yemen are available [here](#). Summaries from **West Africa** are accessible [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



