

# Monthly Trends Analysis



MMC Middle East & Eastern  
Mediterranean

DECEMBER 2018

The following trends analysis is put together on the basis of available secondary data at the time of publication. It is representative of the available information and therefore indicative of mixed migratory trends in the Middle East.

The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) was established in February 2018. It brings together various existing regional initiatives – hosted or led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration issues into a new global network of mixed migration expertise.<sup>1</sup>

The Mixed Migration Centre - Middle East & Eastern Mediterranean, provides quality mixed migration-related information for policy, programming and advocacy from a regional perspective. Our core countries of focus are Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Israel/OPT and Greece.

For more information visit: [mixedmigration.org](https://mixedmigration.org)

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1 This includes RMMS East Africa & Yemen, RMMS West Africa, the Mixed Migration Platform (MMP) in the Middle East, the Global Mixed Migration Secretariat (GMMS) in Geneva and different programmes of the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi).

Cover photo:  
Mais Salman/ DRC

SUPPORTED BY:





# Background:

## Mixed Migration in the Middle East

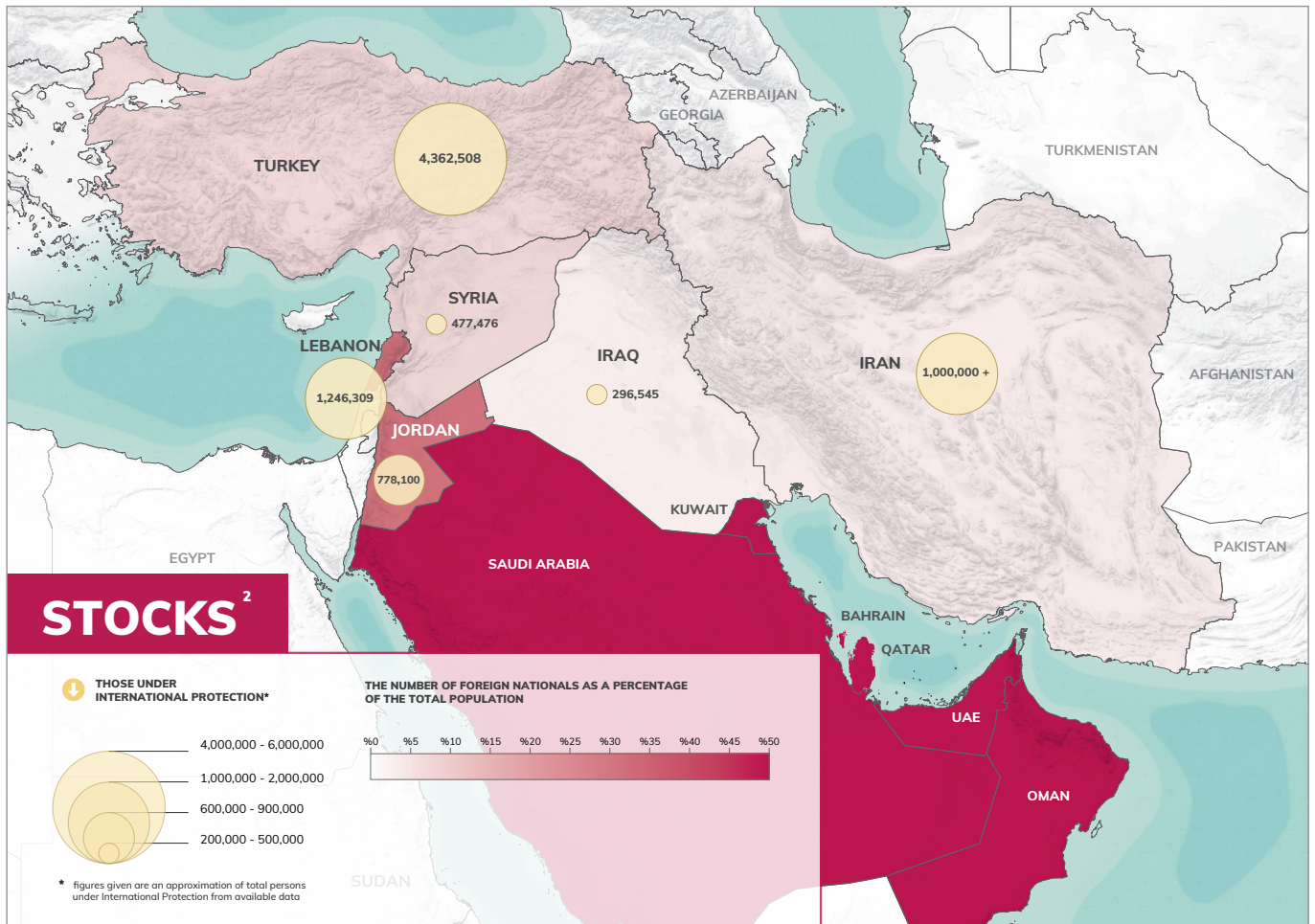
This month saw the announcement of proposed aid deliveries from Jordan to communities in need in Syria. However, residents at the berm's Rukban settlement continue to face hardship and a lack of basic supplies and services, with the deaths of another two infants reported this month. Discussions over deconstruction of the camp and political resettlement of its residents remain ongoing. Meanwhile, healthcare services for displaced communities in Jordan remain unfeasibly high for most. In Lebanon, returns of Syrians facilitated by General Security are ongoing, with many choosing to face the risk of forced conscription or political reprisals back in Syria due to mounting public pressures for refugees to leave. Irregular sea departures of Syrians and Palestinians from Lebanon to Cyprus have witnessed a spike since August, potentially as a result of these untenable conditions. Other nationalities meanwhile face the risk of detention and deportation to countries where they may face persecution in Lebanon, including two Sudanese refugees arrested for reported documentation violations.

In Iraq, as many as 150,000 children internally displaced across the country are unprepared for incoming harsh winter conditions, many from the Yazidi community that faced persecution at the hands of the so-called Islamic State. The Russian government reportedly resettled 30 children of parents affiliated with the so-called Islamic State this month, while their mothers remain in detention in Baghdad, as part of a larger group of roughly 1,300 women and children with perceived affiliations. Further along the Eastern Mediterranean route towards Europe, reports of alleged collective and extrajudicial expulsions taking place along Greece's border with Turkey were published this month. Allegations include the use of violence and theft to force asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen back across the border.

This month also saw the formal adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, by 164 out of 193 States. The pact has generated controversy within national governments, with at least 14 States still debating or outright rejecting the non-binding agreement prior to the conference in Marrakech. Qatar also signed a series of initial agreements with the UNHCR this month, pledging financial support and offering asylum for 26,000 Yemenis.



An informal tented settlement in Beqaa, Lebanon. August 2017.  
Photo by: Louise Wateridge

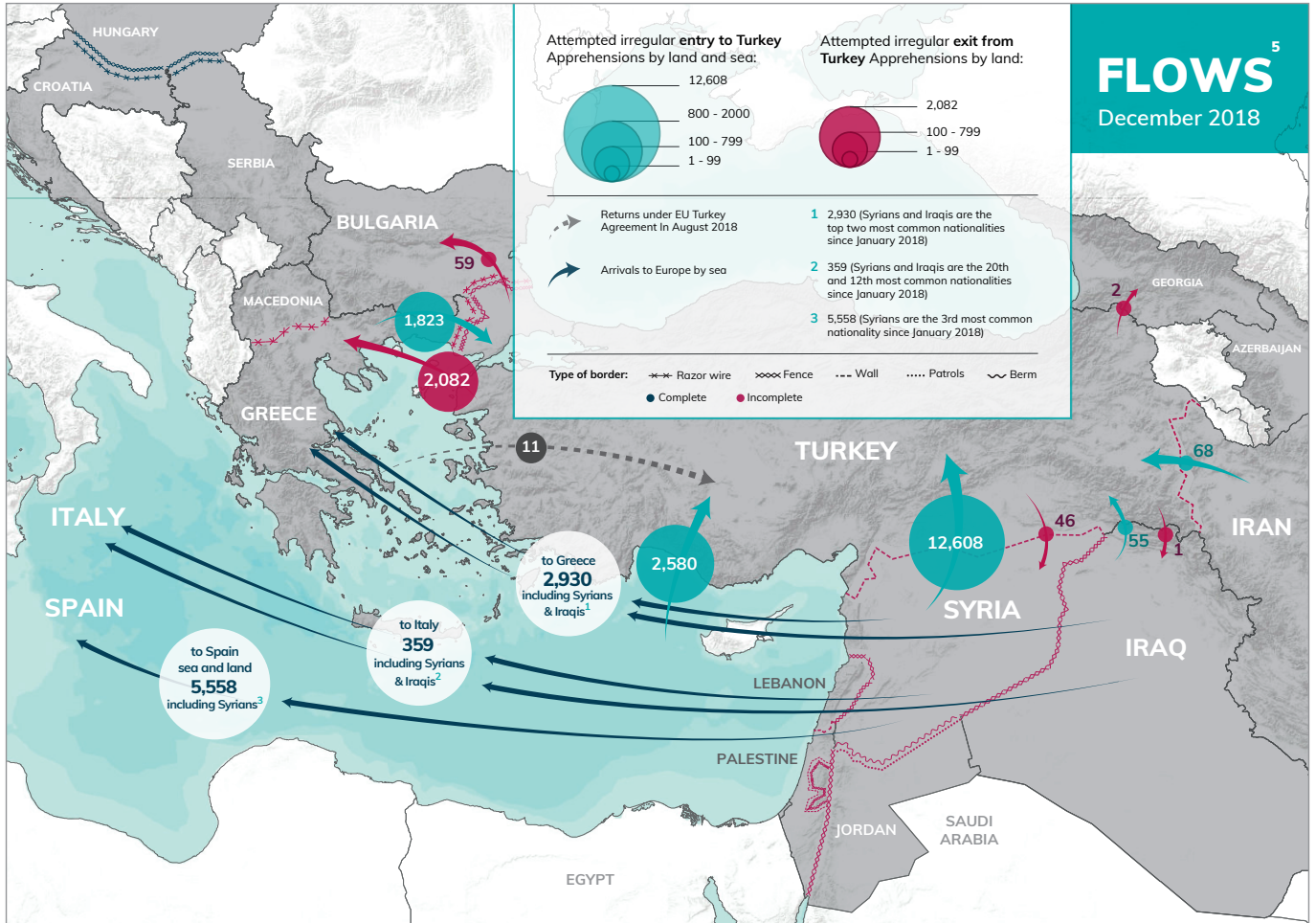


Country	Population	Foreign nationals, including those under International Protection 2017	Those under International Protection 2018
Iraq <sup>3</sup>	39,195,203	366,568	296,545
Jordan	9,875,676	3,233,553	778,100
Lebanon	6,088,952	1,938,212	1,246,309
Syria <sup>4</sup>	18,279,360	1,013,818	477,476
Turkey	81,767,519	4,881,966	4,362,508
GCC	51,467,147	25,214,080	-
Iran	81,898,349	2,699,155	1,000,000 +

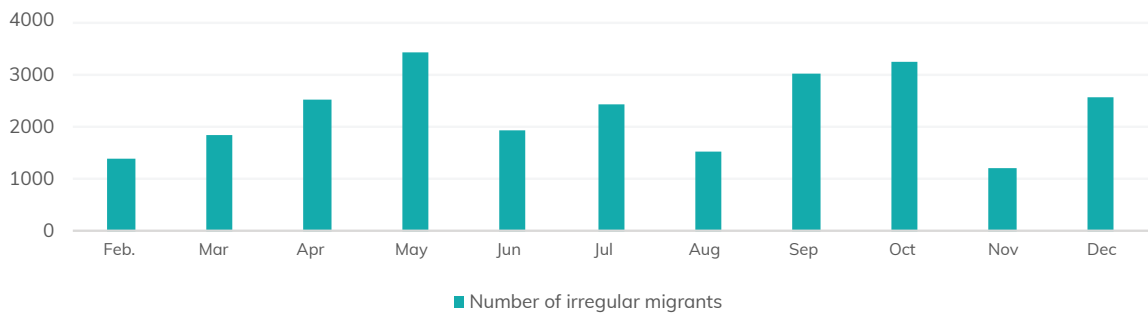
2 The sources of data for this map are as follows. Total number of foreign nationals including those under international protection: [UN desa 2017](#) and [Gulf Research Center](#). Syrians under International Protection: [UNHCR](#). Other populations with International Protection: [UNHCR](#); [Chicago Tribune](#); [UNRWA here](#) and [here](#); [USAID](#); and [World Population Review](#)

3 Internally Displaced People (IDPs): 2,300,000

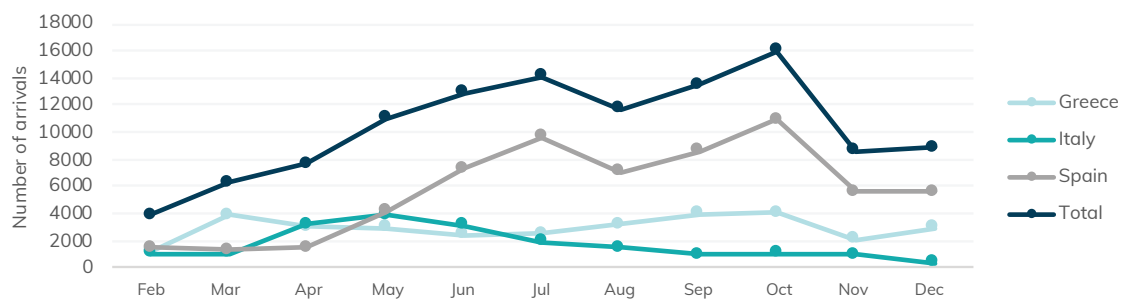
4 IDPs: 6,500,000



Sea Apprehensions "in all seas surrounding Turkey"



Arrivals by Mediterranean route



5 The sources of data for this map are as follows: [IOM](#); [UNHCR](#); [European Commission](#); [ECRE](#); [Reuters](#); and UNHCR Durable Solutions Working Group (11th June 2018)



# The Middle East Mixed Migration Context

## Jordan



**Population**  
**9.85 million**



**Number of Foreign Nationals**  
(including those under International Protection)



**Those Under International Protection**

**Between 2,918,125 - 3,233,553**  
(2015 pop. census / UN est. 2017)

Syrian 'mandate refugees'  
(Dec 2018)  
[671,074](#)

[1.3 million](#) total registered and unregistered Syrians (according to government estimates)

[2.1 million](#) Palestinians registered with UNRWA (most with full citizenship)

31,000 Yemenis  
130,000 Iraqis  
6,000+ European nationals  
3,000+ US nationals  
([2015 Census](#))

[67,425](#) Iraqis  
[14,104](#) Yemenis  
[5,885](#) Sudanese  
[799](#) Somalis  
[1,813](#) 'Others'  
(Dec 2018)

[17,000](#) Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) (March 2018)

c. [500,000-700,000](#) Syrians (living in Jordan pre-crisis 2011)



**Migrant Workers**

**1.4 million migrant workers**

(There are also [1.4 million](#) Jordanians working in Jordan)

1 million migrant workers don't have permits

Egyptians = [two thirds](#) of registered migrant workers (2015). Most common sectors for Egyptians= agriculture, manufacturing, construction and trade

South Asians = [22%](#) of registered migrant workers (2015) Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis mostly [work](#) in domestic service or manufacturing

Agriculture sector: Only [40%](#) of migrant workers with permits  
Of those with permits, 70% are working illegally in other sectors (2016)

[9,448](#) migrants deported in 2017 for labour documentation violations

## Countries of Origin of Foreign Nationals

- over 48 nationalities including from Bangladesh; Cambodia; Egypt; Eritrea; the Philippines; Iraq; Kenya; Madagascar; Myanmar; Pakistan; Palestine; Somalia; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Syria (including Palestinian Refugees from Syria); Yemen; Other

## Access to Services

### Syrian Asylum Seekers and Refugees

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** As Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, nor its 1967 Protocol, Syrians are recognised upon registration as “mandate refugees”<sup>6</sup> under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the UNHCR and the Government of Jordan in [1998](#).
- **HEALTHCARE:** Syrian refugees can access healthcare at the same cost as “foreigners”, with a 20% subsidy. Those designated as most vulnerable (according to the assessment criteria/without necessary documentation) can also access free healthcare services from UNHCR via the Jordanian Health Aid Society.
- **EDUCATION:** Syrian children can currently access primary and secondary education [without](#) providing documentation, supplemented by UNRWA [schools](#).

### Iraqis/Sudanese/Yemeni/Somali Asylum Seekers and Refugees

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** As for Syrians, other asylum seekers are officially eligible for mandate refugee assistance upon registration with UNHCR, according to the 1998 MoU with the Government of Jordan.
- **HEALTHCARE:** Upon registration with UNHCR, mandate refugees of other nationalities access [healthcare](#) at foreigner rates, with no other blanket subsidies.
- **EDUCATION:** According to the latest data, a child can enrol at a Jordanian school for [40 JOD](#), the cost of which is provided for Somali and Sudanese refugees in part by UNHCR and International Relief and Development (IRD).

### Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS)

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** UNRWA is responsible for the registration of [PRS in Jordan](#). Individuals already registered in Syria will only be recorded, not re-registered in Jordan in order to protect their right to return.
- **HEALTHCARE:** UNRWA are the primary healthcare [provider](#) for PRS in Jordan. They provide reimbursements for selected treatments at private

clinics. This is supplemented by 25 UNRWA [centres](#), and four mobile clinics, for other services including immunisation, family planning and antenatal care.

- **EDUCATION:** PRS [reportedly](#) still face some issues in enrolling children in government schools without certificates, alongside the fact that the Syrian curriculum did not offer English classes prior to the conflict, placing PRS students at a disadvantage next to their Jordanian classmates.

## Other Migrants

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** The entry and residency of all other foreign nationals is regulated by [1973 Law No. 24 on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs](#).
- **HEALTHCARE:** [Iraqis](#) with residency permits can access healthcare at the rate of uninsured Jordanians.

## Protection and Vulnerability

The UN announced plans this month to commence aid [deliveries](#) from Jordan to Syria via the Al-Nassib border crossing, a process which is expected to last four months with 369 trucks carrying more than 11,200 tonnes of aid, including food stuff and medical supplies.

Nonetheless, the Rukban border settlement at the Jordanian-Syrian berm continues to present [acute humanitarian challenges](#) for its estimated 40,000 residents, with the [deaths](#) of a further two infants reported this month. Both children, under 6 months old, reportedly died of illness, a result of scarce medical supplies, services and basic goods for camp residents, alongside harsh desert conditions. The Jordanian foreign minister has publicly renounced responsibility for the thousands at the border, with entry only facilitated for a small number of acute medical cases. The camp has been largely cut off from aid deliveries, with only a small number conducted by Jordanian authorities, totalling two deliveries in 2018 alone, one of which was conducted by crane over the border. Last month, aid workers entered the camp for the first time since its formation three years ago. [Discussions](#) over a settlement agreement spearheaded by the Russian government are ongoing with Jordanian authorities, the Assad regime and rebel factions governing the Rukban area, one of the only remaining swathes of territory yet to fall to Assad forces.

Syrians and other displaced communities in Jordan continue to face [unfeasible healthcare costs](#) and dwindling funding for subsidised basic services, particularly since previously lower rates for healthcare ceased in April 2018.

6 Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) Online Research and Teaching Tools (ORTT) (2017) [Glossary of Terms - Mandate Refugees](#)

# Lebanon



**Population**  
**6.08 million**



## Number of Foreign Nationals

(including those under International Protection)

**1,939,212** (UN est. 2017)<sup>7</sup>

300,000-400,000 Syrians (mostly migrant workers) pre-2011,  
6,000 Iraqis (May 2017)



## Those Under International Protection

**948,849 Registered Syrian 'mandate refugees' (Dec 2018)**

174,422  
Palestinian refugees  
(December 2017)

32,000  
Palestine Refugees  
from Syria (PRS)  
(December 2016)



## Migrant Workers

209,674 labour permits issued to migrant workers (2015):

73,419 = to Ethiopians (mostly domestic work)

50,000 = to Bangladeshis (mostly construction)

23,606 = to Filipina women

8,867 = to Sri Lankan women

75% of total for "housekeeping services"

300,000 female housekeepers

Syrians, Palestinians, Africans and Asians mainly work irregularly in agriculture, construction and domestic work. 65% of labour force not paying social security

Over half a million Asian and African migrant workers in Beirut

## Countries of Origin of Foreign Nationals

Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Cameroon; Egypt; Ethiopia; Eritrea; The Philippines; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq; Jordan; Kenya; Liberia; Nepal; Palestine; South Sudan; Sudan; Syria; Yemen; Other

<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that the last overall census in Lebanon was held in 1932 due to the complex political situation.



## Access To Services

### Syrian Asylum Seekers and Refugees

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, nor its 1967 Protocol but provides for temporary status for asylum seekers via an [MoU](#) signed with UNHCR in 2003. In January 2015, the Government of Lebanon (GoL) restricted entry [requirements](#) for Syrians, introducing a narrow 'humanitarian exception' [category](#) that permits entry for unaccompanied and separated children with legal guardians displaced in Lebanon and individuals with disabilities dependent on others displaced in Lebanon, amongst others.
- **HEALTHCARE:** Subsidised [healthcare](#) is provided by UNHCR through 50 contracted public and private hospitals.
- **EDUCATION:** A limited number of spaces ([200,000](#)) were funded by international donors for Syrian children to go to school from 2015 to 2016, however not all were filled and an estimated [60%](#) of school age Syrians within the country were still [out of school](#) by the end of 2017.

### Other Migrants

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** According to the January 2015 [amendments](#) to entry requirements, Syrians not seeking asylum can now enter the country for the purposes of tourism or transit travel, or by demonstrating property ownership or tenancy, arranged medical care or work. Other nationalities may enter the country via a tourism or work visa, according to differing [requirements](#) outlined by bilateral agreements of states with Lebanon.
- **HEALTHCARE:** Migrant domestic workers can access subsidised treatment through a [range](#) of organisations covering maternal and child health, dental and psychosocial support, however the live-in situations of many individuals in the houses of their employers complicates their access.
- **EDUCATION:** Obligations to provide documentation for children in school enrolment mean many migrant children are out of school in Lebanon. Lower-income migrant children can attend fee-paying public or semi-private school, rendering education [unaffordable](#) for many due to transportation, textbook, stationery and uniform costs.

### Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS)

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** New [restrictions](#) were imposed on the entry of PRS into Lebanon in August 2013 including additional screening

measures and exceptional requirements for visa issuance at the border. UNRWA are responsible for their registration and protection.

- **HEALTHCARE:** According to 2017 data, [99%](#) of PRS are reliant on UNRWA health coverage, provided through 27 centres and a number of mobile health clinics across the country.
- **EDUCATION:** UNRWA provides [schooling](#) for PRS children in Lebanon, with 5,251 enrolled by 30 June 2017.

## Protection and Vulnerability

Figures detailing total returns of Syrians to Lebanon in December remain unclear, with one source citing that [1,000](#) returned on 6 December alone. The UN, however, puts the total for 2018 at [37,000](#), while forecasting the return of a further 250,000 in 2019. The returns are taking place to government-controlled areas in Syria under the auspices of Lebanese General Security. Despite this, considerable barriers remain to safe and sustainable return for displaced Syrians in the region, including the threat of forced conscription, [killings](#) or political [reprisals](#) by the Assad regime, missing documentation, a lack of livelihood opportunities and infrastructure and property destruction.

Nonetheless, [conditions](#) in Lebanon are [compelling](#) families and individuals to take on these risks, as political and public rhetoric to return Syrians grows more acute. Public eviction campaigns across Lebanon reportedly evicted almost [4,000](#) Syrians from their homes across 13 municipalities by April 2018, while the remainder of the estimated 1.5 million face issues in regularising their legal status due to complex documentation requirements. The number of attempted irregular sea crossings (and resulting deaths) from Lebanon to Cyprus has also reportedly risen since August, a result of increasingly untenable conditions for displaced Syrians in the country.

[Deportation](#) remains a threat for other nationalities, with pleas made by local and international lawyers last month to release two Sudanese men with approved refugee status from UNHCR reportedly detained for documentation violations.

# Iraq



**Population**  
**39.09 million**



**Those Under  
International  
Protection**



**Number of Foreign  
Nationals**

(including those under  
International Protection)

**366,568** (UN est. 2017)

252,526 Registered  
Syrian 'mandate  
refugees'  
(Dec 2018)

11,544  
Palestinians

44,019 Non-Syrians  
(as of Dec 2018)

47,630  
Stateless



**Migrant  
Workers**

18,009 migrant workers in the Kurdistan  
Region of Iraq (KR-I) (2014-15):  
Bangladeshis (19%)  
Nepalese (17.08%)  
Iranians (11.45%)  
Indonesians (10.41%)  
Indians (9.37%)

Georgians (8.33%)  
Turkish (5.62%)  
Philippine (5.20%)  
Syrians, Sri Lankans,  
Somalis and Pakistanis  
(under 4%)

140,000 migrant workers  
without permits (January  
2016)

## Countries of Origin of Foreign Nationals

Egypt; The Philippines; Georgia; [India](#); Indonesia; Iran; Jordan; Nepal; Pakistan; Palestine; Sri Lanka; Somalia; Syria; [Turkey](#); Uganda; [Ukraine](#), [Thailand](#); [Turkmenistan](#), Other

## Access to Services

### Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

- **HEALTHCARE:** Healthcare access varies across camp versus informal site locations and geographically across Iraq. In the KR-I, IDPs in camps can [reportedly](#) access public hospitals for treatment, for 3000 Iraqi Dinar (roughly EUR 2). This is supplemented by some specialised treatments in camps, and financial support for individual cases deemed eligible.
- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** In the KR-I, some access to social services grants from the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) are [available](#) for certain groups, with reported financial incentives for those who return to their area of origin. Yazidis are exempt from providing documentation when registering due to the nature of their displacement.
- **EDUCATION:** IDP children in the KR-I can attend free public school (however face challenges due to transport, location, overcrowding and language, given education is largely in Kurdish). IDPs are prohibited from entering Kurdish public university. This contrasts with [83%](#) of residents in informal sites across Iraq who indicated children generally had access to formal education (Anbar-56%; Ninewa-60%; Salah Al-Din-67%).

### Syrian Asylum Seekers and Refugees

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** Iraq is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention, nor its 1967 Protocol. Syrian refugees (like all refugees in Iraq) are regulated under the MoMD.
- **HEALTHCARE:** [In camps](#), the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the WHO, provide free primary healthcare to Syrians through four [clinics](#) in Dohuk and Anbar. Assistance is otherwise provided in camps by NGO actors. Syrians outside of camps are also entitled to [access](#) to public healthcare.
- **EDUCATION:** A number of [policies](#) have been adopted by the KR-I Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, to facilitate the entry of Syrians into the higher education system in Iraq, however barriers remain around documentation and administrative requirements.

### Palestinian Refugees

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** Palestinians who have been in Iraq since the 1948 Nakba remain effectively [stateless](#) in Iraq, never formally [recognised](#). Despite no formal route to citizenship, Palestinians could claim access to food vouchers,

free public/subsidised private housing, education, work and travel documents under Resolution 202 from 2001 which had placed Palestinians on par with Iraqi nationals (excluding citizenship). In December 2017, the government ratified a new [law](#), abolishing Resolution 202.

- **HEALTHCARE:** Under this resolution, Palestinians previously had the right to healthcare access, though treatment and medicine are largely [unaffordable](#).
- **EDUCATION:** Under the same former resolution, supplemented by UNRWA programming, Palestinians were provided access to public education, however the aforementioned recent [developments](#) risk undermining this right.

### Other Migrants

- **LEGAL STATUS/ENTRY:** Other migrants in Iraq can seek residency/labour permits via the Law on Foreigners Residence No. 118 (1978).

## Protection and Vulnerability

UNICEF has warned that an estimated [150,000 children](#) internally displaced across Iraq are unprepared for the impending winter conditions this month. Many of these are members of the Yazidi ethnic minority who faced violence and displacement at the hands of the so-called Islamic State beginning in 2014. Extreme [flooding](#) last month added to the already deteriorating conditions, killing seven and affecting tens of thousands of other IDPs.

Russian authorities reportedly resettled [30 children](#) of parents affiliated with the so-called Islamic State from Iraq this month, whose mothers remain in detention in Baghdad prison and fathers were killed in fighting. The last available figures indicate these women and children are part of an estimated [1,300](#) individuals (509 women and 813 children) still in custody in Iraq for alleged affiliation. It remains to be seen whether countries of origin of the parents will resettle those detained before their sentencing by the Iraqi government.



# Turkey



**Population**  
**81.66 million**



**Those Under International Protection**



**Number of Foreign Nationals**  
(including those under International Protection)

**4,881,966** (UN est. 2017)

Most common nationalities with [residence permits](#) (in descending order): Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Russia, Iran, Georgia and Ukraine

**3.9 million** foreign nationals seeking International Protection (July 2018)

**3,622,366** Syrians with Temporary Protection (Dec 2018)

Non-Syrian population seeking International Protection:

Iraq [143,610](#)

Afghanistan [169,386](#)

Iran [40,505](#)

Somalia [7,365](#)

Others [11,047](#) (Oct 2018)



**Migrant Workers**

Most common [work permit holders](#) by nationality (in descending order): Syria, Georgia, Turkmenistan, China, Ukraine, India, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Iran

[87,000](#) / 100,000 work permits applications by foreign nationals approved (2017)

## Countries of Origin of Foreign Nationals

Afghanistan; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Great Britain; Bulgaria; China; The Netherlands; France; Georgia; Greece; India; Iran; Iraq; Kazakhstan; Libya; Macedonia (FYRM); Morocco; Pakistan; Russia; Saudi Arabia; Somalia; Sri Lanka; Syria; Turkmenistan; Uzbekistan; [Other](#)

## Access To Services

### Syrian Asylum Seekers and Refugees/PRS/ Stateless Persons

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** As Turkey maintains a geographic [limitation](#) to the 1951 Refugee Convention, reserving protection for those arriving from Europe, it does not recognise Syrians/ PRS/stateless persons as Convention refugees. They are entitled to [Temporary Protection \(TP\) status](#) and according legal residence, access to healthcare, education and other public services.
- **HEALTHCARE:** TP-status holders are [entitled](#) to free public healthcare within their province of registration. Pre-registration, individuals are also entitled to emergency assistance and treatment at primary healthcare institutions.
- **WORK PERMITS:** TP status-holders are [entitled](#) to a six-month work permit post-registration. Exemptions for access to closed sectors are also available within particular provinces, for positions in the seasonal agricultural and husbandry sectors. Applications for work in education, healthcare or research first require "preliminary permission" from respective ministries.
- **EDUCATION:** TP status-holders are [entitled](#) to primary, secondary and higher education in Turkish, alongside Turkish language and vocational courses. Pending registration, children can still access public schooling.

### Other Asylum Seekers and Refugees

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** Non-Syrians may apply for [International Protection \(IP\) status](#), which grants the right to remain in the country and access to healthcare and education. The three categories of IP are "refugee" (valid for three years), "conditional refugee" and "subsidiary protection" (valid for one year), with differing levels of entitlements. Any individual registered and receiving assistance from UN agencies is [excluded](#) from IP eligibility.
- **HEALTHCARE:** IP status-holders who do not have the means or insurance to finance their own medical treatment are eligible for free public healthcare within their province of registration. As with TP status, IP status-holders can also access emergency care pre-registration.
- **WORK PERMITS:** The work permit [procedure](#) is contingent upon the type of IP status granted to the applicant. "Refugees" and "subsidiary protection" holders can work independently or dependently (linked to a specific position/sector),

as soon as they are granted status, whereas "conditional refugees" must wait six months before commencing work. Like TP status-holders, IP status-holders are prohibited from working in [certain sectors](#) and must also seek additional "preliminary permission" for specialised sectors.

- **EDUCATION:** Like TP status-holders, recipients of IP status can [access](#) primary, secondary and higher education in Turkish, alongside Turkish language and vocational courses. Pre-registration, children can still access public schooling as a "guest student".

### Other Migrants

- **LEGAL ENTRY/STATUS:** Foreigners may [apply](#) for residency permits to Turkey on the basis of family reunification via a "[family residence permit](#)", education, [property ownership](#), [work](#) or healthcare.
- **HEALTHCARE:** Residence permit holders that can prove a lack of financial means or health insurance coverage in other states can [access](#) universal healthcare coverage after one year of residency. Registrants must pay a monthly premium to access services on par with Turkish nationals.
- **EDUCATION:** Students can apply for a short-term residency permit as stipulated by Article 31 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) (No.6458). Students with a residence permit can also apply for a work permit, following completion of their first year of study.

## Protection and Vulnerability

Human Rights Watch released a [report](#) this month on summary pushbacks taking place at the Greek border with Turkey. The Evros region has seen an increased number of irregular arrivals (a reported four-fold increase compared to the same 9-month period last year), with almost 14,000 having made the crossing by September. Allegations indicate "collective and extrajudicial expulsions" of asylum seekers from countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. Individual reports detail the use of violent behaviour including being stripped of money and personal identification and clothes, and beatings before being forced back over the border by "unidentified forces wearing uniforms and masks". The report calls for an investigation into the alleged abuses by Greek authorities.

# Syria



## Population

**18.27 million** (estimate)  
pre-war population 22 million



## Number of Foreign Nationals

(including those under International Protection)

**1,013,818** (UN est. 2017)



## Those Under International Protection

Pre-civil war, 526,744 registered Palestinians (2011). 438,000 Palestinians remain (2018)

12,276 Iraqis in camps in Al-Hassakeh governorate (as of May 2018)

24,000 other Iraqis (May 2018)

3,200 'Persons of Concern' of other nationalities

Analysis of trends within Syria falls outside of the scope of this monthly summary. We recommend to refer to partner initiatives including [REACH Syria](#) assessments, [ACAPS Country analysis](#) and the Durable Solutions Platform [mailing list](#) for relevant resources.



# The Mixed Migration Policy Landscape And Updates

## National Migration Governance Frameworks

<p><b>Iraq</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Law on Foreigners Residence No. 118 (1978):</b> Establishes who is considered to be a foreigner as well as regulations for obtaining visas and entering and exiting the <a href="#">country</a>. The law refers to “refugees” in Article 6 but does not define them as a separate category.</li> <li>• <b>National Policy on Displacement (2008):</b> Defines the rights of IDPs and returnees in Iraq. Never passed into law.</li> <li>• <b>Political Refugee Law (1971):</b> Establishes <a href="#">benefits</a> including the right to work as well as the same health and educational benefits as received by Iraqi citizens, however this law does not apply to refugees who have fled for any other reason.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Jordan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Law No. 24 of 1973 on Residence and Foreigners’ Affairs:</b> <a href="#">Defines</a> entry, registration, residence, and penalties and violations for foreigners. Stipulates that anyone entering the country in cases of force majeure (including those intending to claim asylum) should report to relevant authorities within 48 hours.</li> <li>• <b>Memorandum of Understanding between the H. K. of Jordan and the UNHCR (1998):</b> As Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, nor its 1967 Protocol, asylum seekers are recognised upon registration as “mandate refugees” under a <a href="#">Memorandum of Understanding</a> (MoU) signed in 1998.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lebanon</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Order No. 319 Regulating the Status of Foreign Nationals in Lebanon:</b> <a href="#">Defines</a> who is considered a foreign national and the five categories of status available to them.</li> <li>• <b>Memorandum of Understanding: Lebanon and UNHCR (2003):</b> Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, nor its 1967 Protocol but provides for Temporary Status for asylum seekers via an <a href="#">MoU</a> signed with UNHCR in 2003. (Restrictions were applied in 2015).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Turkey</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Law on Foreigners and International Protection (April 2014):</b> A legal <a href="#">framework</a> outlining obligations towards those in need of International Protection laid out in binding domestic law. Three types of International Protection provided: refugee, conditional refugee and subsidiary protection. This <a href="#">law</a> also determines rules pertaining to foreigners, including those for residence permits. The following categories of residency permits for foreign nationals staying over 90 days are issued: short-term; family; student; long-term; humanitarian and victim of human trafficking (and valid working permissions are treated as residence permits). In addition, this law constitutes the legal basis for the Temporary Protection Regulation.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Turkey</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Temporary Protection Regulation (October 2014):</b> For those seeking International Protection from Syria, including Stateless Palestinians originating from Syria (and potentially other 'large influx' situations in the future). <a href="#">Grants</a> right to legal stay and some access to basic rights and services.</li> <li>• <b>The 1951 Refugee Convention:</b> This is applied with a geographical limitation, which restricts the granting of refugee status to those fleeing as a consequence of events in Europe. A separate reservation determines that it cannot be construed as providing more rights to refugees than Turkish citizens.</li> <li>• <b>Open door policy between Syria and Turkey (2011-2015):</b> Syrians who crossed Turkish border from Syria were granted Temporary Protection.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Syria</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Law No. 2 -2014 Entry, Exit and Residence of Foreigners in Syria:</b> This law provides the relevant procedures to enter and exit Syria and obtain residence documents for those seeking International Protection and other foreigners. It also defines fines and other penalties in case of irregular entry, exit and irregular residence.</li> <li>• <b>Memorandum of Understanding:</b> Syria and UNHCR (1991 and 2008): Syria is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, nor its 1967 Protocol but provides for temporary status for asylum seekers via two MoUs signed with UNHCR in 1991.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional</b> (applies to GCC countries, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The <a href="#">Kefala</a> system:</b> dictates the entry and ongoing legal residency of migrant workers in Jordan (based on the bylaws/regulations issued according to Labour Law no. 8 of 1996), Lebanon, Iraq and the GCC countries. The legal status of labour migrants in these states is linked to an employer-sponsor who maintains effective legal responsibility for the individual they are sponsoring while they are in the country's territory.</li> </ul>

**A note on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (2003).** Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran and the countries of the GCC - are all non-signatories. Turkey signed in 1999 and ratified in 2004 and Syria ratified in 2005.

**A note on the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol.** Of the countries of focus in the Middle East region, Turkey and Iran are the only signatories to the Convention and Protocol, however Turkey applies a geographical restriction as detailed under the Middle East Mixed Migration country section, and Iran also maintains reservations to the Convention.

# Updates this month

## Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) adopted in Marrakech

Governments attended the Global Forum for Migration and Development where the GCM was formally adopted by 164 out of 193 States on 10th December. The non-binding pact, which collates all existing international human rights obligations with practical guidelines for its implementation, has served as a divisive topic for many national governments, with a number rejecting its legitimacy prior to the conference (some of which are pending a parliamentary vote). These include Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland and the United States. States have cited perceived threats to their ability to maintain sovereignty in law-making concerning migration, despite the pact's non-binding nature and clear references throughout to the compatibility of State sovereignty whilst upholding international obligations to human rights.

Read more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

## Jordanian government eases restrictions on Gazan refugees

The Government of Jordan announced the easing of restrictions on Gazans in relation to property and car ownership this month. Unlike the majority of Palestinians residing in the country, Gazans do not have access to citizenship, but instead to two-year renewable temporary passports, rendering them a particularly vulnerable group. Attempted moves to improve the civil rights of Gazans have been received sensitively by more conservative segments in the past, due to the perception of facilitating their permanent settlement in the Kingdom.

Read more [here](#).

## UNHCR signs agreements with Qatari government for refugee response

UNHCR signed a series of agreements with the Government of Qatar this month, with plans to establish an office in its capital, Doha. Qatar has also pledged to provide asylum to 26,000 Yemeni refugees, alongside a reported \$3 billion to support UNHCR's operations in the war-torn country, provided through an agreement with the Qatar Development Fund and the Qatar Charity.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

# Other News

## Greek authorities release aid workers accused of criminal activity before trial

Four aid workers, including Sara Mardini and Sean Binder, arrested by the Greek government on charges of espionage, membership of a criminal organisation and money laundering in August were [released](#) on 5th December, prior to their trial. Both were previously working in Lesbos (a key entry point for mixed migration flows along the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe) for NGO, Emergency Response Centre International before they were detained for accusations of aiding illegal entry of irregular migrants and refugees to Greece "for profit", however have denied all charges.

## Croatian police pushing back people in mixed flows to Bosnia

[Reports](#) of Croatian police employing violent methods to push asylum seekers and migrants back over the border to Bosnia were published by Human Rights Watch this month. Individuals moving in mixed migration flows, that include individuals from the Middle East such as Iraqis and Afghans, cited experiencing detention, physical violence including beatings with batons, punching and kicking, theft of money and damage to or theft of their mobile phones. The Croatian government have so far denied any wrongdoing, alleging that the accusations are insufficient to require criminal investigation.



### Cyprus sees growth in arrivals through Turkish North

Cyprus has reportedly witnessed an increasing number of asylum seeker and migrant [arrivals](#) to its northern territories, only currently internationally recognised by Turkey. Individuals are then reportedly crossing into the Republic of Cyprus through irregular channels, alongside a number of boats still arriving on Cyprus' southern coast. Government statistics cite an existing 5,000 asylum applications in 2018 so far, with the number expected to rise to 8,000 by the end of the month. The majority of claimants are from Syria but also include nationals from Somalia, Pakistan, India, Iraq, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Cameroon.

### Greece continues transfer of asylum seekers from islands to mainland

UNHCR reported the [transfer](#) of another 200 asylum seekers from Lesbos this month, further to the 11,000 moved from camps on the Aegean islands to mainland Greece since September. The move is being conducted in an effort to ease overcrowding and improve accommodation and living conditions for those awaiting their asylum decisions, after an outcry from humanitarian organisations working on the islands and residents, themselves, earlier this year.

## New Research and Reports

The **UNHCR** and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** released a [report](#) this month on complementary pathways for asylum seekers. The report details the number of individuals that migrated via channels other than resettlement such as family reunification, education and labour pathways. According to the report, more than 560,000 individuals from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Eritrea entered OECD countries through these channels over an eight-year period, compared with 350,400 who arrived via resettlement programmes.

The **Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** published the [Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview](#) for 2019 in December. The report outlines a comprehensive overview of the current humanitarian

context across Iraq, including a demographic breakdown of the population according to needs and vulnerability factors; ongoing security, socioeconomic and political developments; data on conditions of return; key protection themes and operational barriers.

**Refugees International** released a [study](#) on legal registration barriers faced by non-Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey this month. The report details the marginalisation and relative difficulty with which Afghans regularise their status through the asylum process, creating barriers to housing, education and employment. Single men reportedly faced particular difficulties in registering their claims, facing outright denial of eligibility if applying independently.

For more information visit:  
[mixedmigration.org](https://mixedmigration.org)

