



1.4.4. Displacement and return

IOM's first population movements assessment after the power transition in December 2024 showed that, as of February 2025, 27 % of Syria's population (around 7 million out of a total population of approximately 26.05 million) were IDPs.[425](#) In subsequent months, the share of IDPs gradually decreased[426](#) and was estimated at 22 % at the beginning of the current reference period (October 2025)[427](#) and at 21 % in April 2026 (around 5.86 million out of a total population of approximately 27.90 million).[428](#) Conversely, the population share of IDP returnees, estimated at 4 % of the country's population in February 2025 (around 1.04 million out of a total population of approximately 26.05 million),[429](#) gradually increased to reach 7 % in July 2025[430](#) and remained at this level through April 2026 (around 1.95 million out of a total population of 27.90 million).[431](#)

At the same time, safe returns to areas of origin were impeded by lack of clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance,[432](#) while several instances of new displacements occurred since December 2024 as retaliatory violence, often sectarian in nature, in governorates such as Latakia, Tartous, Homs, Hama and Sweida left entire families and villages displaced. For instance, in the context of the intense hostilities in Sweida in July 2025, almost all Bedouins were forcibly displaced from the governorate, with Druze armed militia preventing their return as of early 2026.[433](#) In the current reference period, clashes in Aleppo City's Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafieh neighbourhoods in late December 2025,[434](#) and especially their escalation in January 2026 prompted large-scale displacement.[435](#) According to UNOCHA, an estimated 148 000 residents were displaced between 6 and 10 January and predominantly relocated to Afrin district.[436](#)

As of 21 May 2026, UNHCR estimated that, since December 2024, approximately 1.91 million individuals had returned from internal displacement[437](#) and around 1.65 million had returned from abroad.[438](#) Many of the returnees from abroad headed to Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dar'a and Aleppo governorates, citing recent political developments, improved security, and family reunification as reasons for return.[439](#)

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Map 3. © UNHCR, Locations of 1 912,192 IDP returnees by governorate 21 May 2026
[440](#)

- [425](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7

- [426](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 3 – April 2025, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8;

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 6 – July 2025, 18 August 2025, [url](#), p. 8

- [427](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 9 – October 2025, 10 November 2025, [url](#), p. 8

- [428](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

- [429](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7

- [430](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 3 – April 2025, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 5 – June 2025, 7 July 2025, [url](#), p. 8

- [431](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

- [432](#)

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8; SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

- [433](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 39, 62-63

- [434](#)

Enab Baladi, Displacement from Sheikh Maqsoud and al-Ashrafiya neighborhoods in Aleppo, 23 December 2025, [url](#)

- [435](#)

STJ, Syria: Forced Displacement and Looting of Property in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah during the Aleppo Escalation (January 2026), 2 April 2026, [url](#)

- [436](#)

UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No.3 - Clashes in Aleppo (as of 10 January 2026), 10 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

- [437](#)

UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

- [438](#)

UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

- [439](#)

UNHCR, Syria situation: Regional flash update #70, 27 March 2026, [url](#), pp. 2-3

- [440](#)

UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)