



# **Still on the Journey Home**

Challenges and Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Jordan  
Returning to Syria

**NRC**

NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

**“We came here as little children. We got married here. We started a family here ... We will return [to Syria] a family. I don’t know what is waiting for us, honestly.” - Hanadi, now aged 27, who arrived in Jordan from Syria at age 15 and has lived in Zaatari camp for the past 12 years.**

*This report is an update to "The Journey Home: Challenges and Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Jordan Returning to Syria," published by NRC in 2021.*

**Cover photo:** Beate Simarud/NRC

*A brother and sister sit in their home in Zaatari refugee camp on November 30, 2021*

## **Acknowledgements**

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee. We work in crises across 40 countries, providing emergency and long-term assistance to millions of people every year. We stand up for people forced to flee, advocating for their rights.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Defining return.....	2
<b>2 CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Syrian refugees in Jordan and prospects for return.....	3
Return flows .....	3
Documentation required to cross the borders .....	4
<b>3 CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO RETURN PREPAREDNESS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
I need the right information.....	5
Fragmented information environment .....	6
Policy–practice gaps and partial information .....	7
Lack of verification opportunities and the emotional toll .....	7
Information inequities and at-risk groups .....	7
Conclusion .....	8
I need my documents .....	8
The foundation problem: Civil documentation barriers .....	8
Travel documentation .....	11
Education documentation .....	11
Conclusion .....	11
I need the means .....	12
Living costs and the limits of return.....	12
Income and employment barriers .....	12
Debt .....	14
The cost of returning home .....	16
Conclusion .....	16
I need a home to return to .....	17
The transformation of <i>home</i> in displacement.....	17
From temporary shelter to meaningful home .....	17
Reclaiming home in Syria: Legal and administrative barriers.....	18
Conclusion .....	19
I need a way to return.....	20
Conclusion .....	22
<b>4 RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ENDNOTES.....</b>	<b>26</b>

# 1 Introduction

As Syria enters a new political chapter, there is renewed hope that the millions of displaced Syrians may be able to return and rebuild their lives. The country they left behind, however, has been profoundly changed. Fourteen years of conflict have destroyed infrastructure, disrupted public services, weakened the economy, and left homes, neighbourhoods and entire communities in ruin.

Many of the more than 481,100 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan<sup>1</sup> have spent over a decade in displacement. They have married, raised families and seen a new generation born. While return may now feel possible for some, it remains clouded by intersecting legal, financial, psychological and administrative barriers inside both Syria and Jordan. Refugees must navigate these while making deeply personal decisions about whether, when and how to return.

Returns from Jordan are already under way. More than 144,679 registered refugees have returned from Jordan since December 2024,<sup>2</sup> even as UNHCR continues to affirm that conditions for cessation of refugee status for Syrians have not been met.<sup>3</sup> Although the risk of persecution by former authorities has diminished, other serious protection risks persist or may intensify. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), together with UNHCR and the wider humanitarian community, maintains that conditions in Syria remain unconducive to large-scale, safe, dignified return. In Jordan, some refugees are actively preparing for return, while others have adopted a cautious, wait-and-see approach. These decisions are unfolding in a context of reduced humanitarian assistance, the loss of favourable access to the labour market, under the Jordan Compact,<sup>4</sup> and growing economic and social strain.

This report looks at the barriers hindering return decisions by Syrian refugees living in Jordan, including how policies and the current context in Jordan affect the quality, safety and viability of the return journey. It provides a snapshot of the key barriers Syrian refugees in Jordan must navigate throughout the return journey. It begins with the complexity of making an informed decision to return, followed by challenges related to documentation needed to cross the border and remain legal in Syria. It then examines the feasibility of reclaiming one's home, and the financial burden of the journey itself. The final section highlights specific refugee groups who face severe, and in some cases insurmountable, obstacles to return under current circumstances. The report concludes with recommendations, serving as a call to action on key issues in Jordan that continue to prevent refugees from pursuing safe and sustainable return.

The findings are drawn from programmatic learning through the implementation of NRC's Information, Counselling and Legal Aid (ICLA) programme in Jordan, complemented by secondary data analysis, key informant interviews with NRC staff, and interviews and Focus Group Discussions with Syrian refugees who approached NRC for return-related assistance. This report builds on NRC's *The Journey Home* (2021) report, updating findings from NRC research and programming since then. The 2025 update marks a deliberate narrative shift from "If only..." to "I need...", centring refugees' perspectives and highlighting the concrete, rights-based barriers that continue to stand in the way of voluntary, safe and dignified return. This framing supports stronger accountability and aligns with NRC's broader protection and advocacy priorities.

This report focuses on barriers to return that refugees face inside Jordan. Conditions inside Syria, and Syria-specific factors influencing return decisions, are documented in previous NRC research. NRC's report, *Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery and (re)integration in Syria*, identifies critical barriers inside Syria to sustainable return, including destroyed infrastructure and basic service gaps, disrupted education, economic collapse and livelihood insecurity, housing, land and property challenges, and safety and social cohesion concerns.<sup>5</sup>

## Defining return

Return is not a single event but rather a continuous and dynamic process spanning the country of asylum and the country of origin, with a durable solution only achieved when people no longer have assistance or protection needs based on their displacement and can exercise their rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. It includes the following interconnected phases:

1. Deciding whether and when to voluntarily return
2. Preparing for a safe, dignified and protected return
3. Crossing the border - from departure to arrival
4. (Re-) integrating upon return – navigating challenges and opportunities

The return process is complex and often prolonged. Refugees must weigh family and individual needs alongside legal, administrative and practical challenges in both Jordan and their intended area of return. This balance shapes decisions about if, when and how to return. In the current context these concerns persist, compounded by shifting security conditions, changing political dynamics and increasing pressures in Jordan. Ultimately, families are not 'simply' returning to a country, but seeking to reclaim homes, restore rights and build a stable future.



# 2 Context

## Syrian refugees in Jordan and prospects for return

Fourteen years since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, Syria remains one of the world's most protracted displacement situations, even in the wake of the recent political transition. While some refugees have returned, millions remain displaced, including more than 481,100 registered in Jordan as of July 2025.<sup>6</sup> Most Syrian refugees in Jordan originate from Dara'a Governorate (38 percent), followed by Homs (15 percent) Aleppo (14 percent) and Rural Damascus (11 percent).<sup>7</sup> Many have lived in Jordan since the early years of the crisis and a significant proportion are young with little or no experience or memory of living in Syria; 35 percent are aged between 5 and 17, and a further 20 percent are between 18 and 35 years old.<sup>8</sup>

Since the change in leadership in Syria in late 2024, some refugees have begun to speak more openly about the prospect of return.<sup>9</sup> However, many describe their decisions as influenced by growing pressures in Jordan, including rising living costs, reduced humanitarian assistance and increasingly restrictive legal and administrative conditions.<sup>10</sup> An NRC survey conducted in May 2025 suggests that initial optimism around return has begun to level out. While 40 per cent of respondents hoped to return one day, only 21 per cent said they intended to return, and 37 per cent said they did not plan to return at all. Among those who said they intended to return, 44 per cent said they would do so within 12 months, but 46 per cent remained undecided about the timing. Decisions are fluid and frequently change; 17% of respondents surveyed in May 2025 had changed their intention to return since the previous survey in January 2025. These results highlight the complexity and uncertainty shaping return-related decisions in Jordan.<sup>11</sup>

## Return flows

Despite persistent insecurity inside Syria and significant protection concerns prior to December 2024, return movements from Jordan have occurred throughout the crisis, though at relatively low scale. Movements increased sharply after the leadership change in December 2024.<sup>12</sup> Return rates in the first eight months of 2025 doubled those recorded in the previous six years combined.<sup>13 14</sup> Of those who returned since December 2024, 48 per cent were women and girls and 43 percent were children. Just over half were full family returns, and nearly half came from host communities in Amman and Irbid.<sup>15</sup>

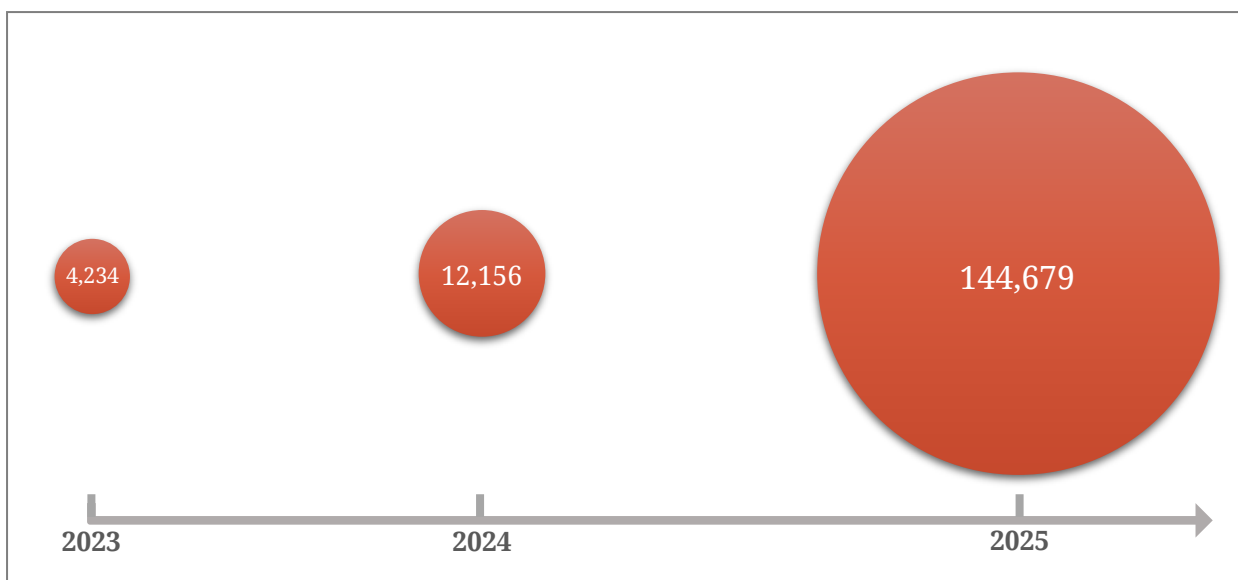


Figure 1: Annual refugee flows from Jordan to Syria

### Documentation required to cross the borders

Based on current analysis, the figure below summarises NRC's understanding of the entry–exit documentation requirements for Syrian refugees residing in Jordan. While enforcement may vary and requirements may change, this reflects the most recent information available from official sources and observed practices.<sup>16</sup>

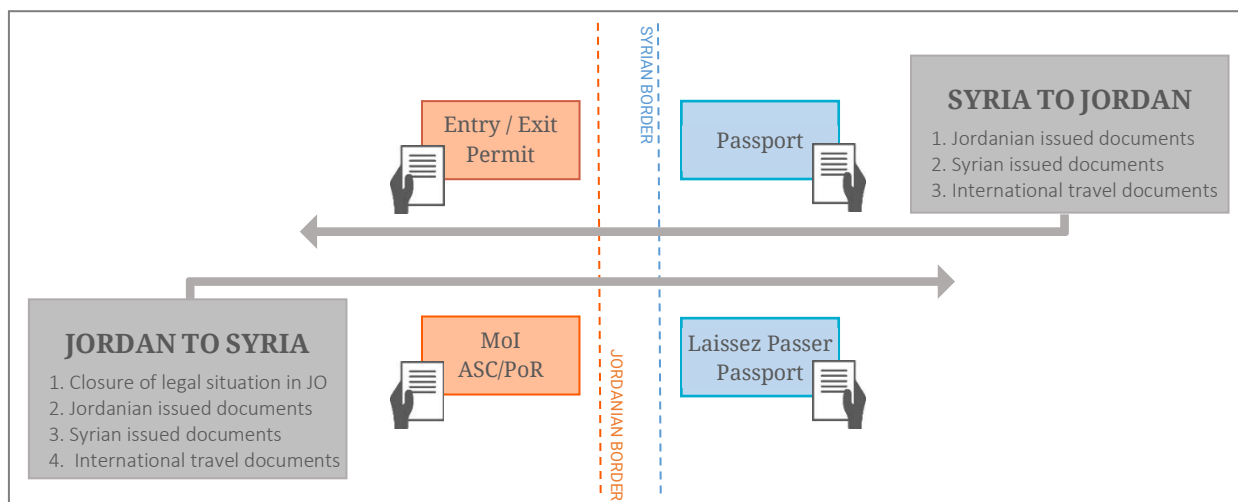


Figure 2: Documentation required to cross the Jordanian and Syrian borders

# 3 Challenges and barriers to return preparedness

While the situation in Syria remains a driving factor in refugee families' durable solution choices, the policies and experiences of refugees in host countries are also critical in shaping their ability to return and reintegrate once the return home becomes possible or, in some cases, necessary. This chapter outlines five key areas where current policies and practices fall short of providing an enabling environment for return for those actively considering or planning to return. Each sub-section includes a case study drawn from NRC's engagement with refugee families, an analysis of the barriers grounded in research, and an outline of their impact on return prospects. Though these challenges are interconnected and compounding, they also present opportunities: If there is collaboration to tackle these barriers, voluntary return can become a real possibility for increasing numbers of Syrian refugees. Recommendations aimed at addressing these are presented in Chapter 4.

## I need the right information

The decision to return home is both deeply personal and complex, and it is rarely a straightforward choice. It involves weighing the relative safety of displacement against the uncertainty of return, often without clear, timely and credible information and unstable and fluid conditions inside Syria, particularly with regards to safety and security. NRC data from early 2025 shows that return intentions are highly fluid, with one in six surveyed families changing their views over a four-month period.<sup>17</sup>

### **Case Study: Split Decisions - Staying in Jordan without the information to plan**

Salma (19) and her brother Ghazi (16) have lived in Jordan since 2012, when they arrived from Homs with their family. Their mother, stepfather, and younger siblings recently returned to Syria, but Salma and Ghazi stayed in Amman to complete their secondary education. The family agreed that finishing school in the stability and familiarity of Jordan's education system would offer better opportunities.

Since their mother's departure, Salma has taken on responsibility for her brother but it has not been easy. Without stable housing, they move between their aunt's and older sister's homes. Ghazi works informally to cover basic expenses, but plans to stop once school resumes, while Salma is looking for work so they can manage day-to-day needs.

Before returning, the family discussed what would happen. Their mother received advice from UNHCR, and from relatives who had already gone back to Homs, which helped her feel more



prepared. Salma and Ghazi rely on what they heard in those conversations. It was agreed that Salma would care for her brother, and their mother was told Salma could act as his legal guardian. However, Salma is still unsure if this is legally recognised. If they decide to return to Syria in the future, Salma would need to present proof of guardianship to cross the border with Ghazi, as he is under 18. Without documentation, that may not be possible.

They were told their mother could apply for a visa to visit them, but details remain unclear. In reality, current border policies make return visits from Syria extremely limited. While Salma and Ghazi hope to stay in Jordan until they complete their secondary exams, they are also exploring scholarship opportunities to remain longer. At the same time, they are considering returning to Syria after completing their education, but they lack clear information on the process, including documentation requirements and family reunification procedures.

**Salma and Ghazi's story highlights how lack of accessible information and legal recognition, especially around guardianship, can leave younger refugees in limbo and families at risk of separation.**

### **Fragmented information environment**

Refugees rely on a patchwork of sources, including relatives in Syria, humanitarian organisations, media, social media and official institutions, each offering partial and evolving information.<sup>18</sup> This reflects the complexity of the return context, shaped by differing mandates, limited access to verified data and changing conditions on the ground.<sup>19</sup>

Family and friends inside Syria remain the most consistently trusted source, valued for first-hand knowledge, though such accounts are highly individualised and may not reflect broader conditions or risks. A 2024 regional intentions report found that most refugees relied on relatives for information when considering return,<sup>20</sup> a pattern echoed in Jordan, where state media was viewed as less relevant and social media as largely unreliable.<sup>21</sup>

**“We did call and ask about the situation before returning, but didn’t expect it to be this bad, there is no work, any work.”** - Syrian man who returned from Jordan to Sheikh Saad, Dara’a, Syria.

Humanitarian communication tends to focus on Jordan-side procedures, reflecting limited access to verified information on conditions inside Syria. In this gap, informal channels and digital platforms have taken on a significant role.

### **Informal channels: The double-edged role of social media**

Without consistent formal guidance, many refugees, despite concerns around misinformation, rely on WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook groups to share updates on documentation, border procedures, return conditions and available services.<sup>22</sup> While these platforms offer quick access to information and peer-to-peer support, they are largely unmoderated and often circulate rumours and unverified claims, particularly about return procedures, school closures and policy changes. Even official posts are sometimes distorted in comments or reposted with errors.<sup>23</sup> When inaccurate, such posts can shape refugees’ understanding and prompt return decisions based on misleading or incomplete information. Humanitarian actors and volunteers try to counter false claims, but misinformation often spreads faster than corrections. With few reliable alternatives and limited opportunities to verify information, even well-intentioned posts may be misleading.

**“We heard that if we stay in Jordan, we will be asked to issue residency and pay money for that. Other people on Facebook groups are saying that we will be asked to pay school registration fees and education will no longer be free for kids.”** - Syrian woman in Amman, Jordan.

**“I heard that we will be asked to issue residency and will be treated like foreigners in Jordan”** - Syrian man in Irbid, Jordan.

In this fragmented landscape, refugees have called for clearer, consolidated guidance, particularly on practical issues such as transport costs.<sup>24</sup> Without a single trusted source, they piece together information from various channels, encountering contradictions and gaps that leave many uncertain.

### **Policy–practice gaps and partial information**

Since late 2024, more refugees have engaged with the Syrian embassy in Amman for documentation reissuance, clarification of family status and other administrative procedures,<sup>25</sup> marking a shift from earlier reluctance.<sup>26</sup> This coincided with official announcements on return processes, including fee waivers and documentation requirements.<sup>27</sup> While these indicate increased administrative activity under the new leadership, many are not legally codified, leaving their status uncertain and limiting refugees’ ability to plan.<sup>28</sup>

Conflicting information about clearance procedures for camp residents, particularly between the Jordanian Government’s Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD) and UNHCR, has added to confusion. Some refugees report being told clearance is required,<sup>29</sup> while others have returned without it.<sup>30</sup> Even when following official steps, refugees often remain unclear on which documents are needed and require prior ratification and whether these will be accepted,<sup>31</sup> undermining confidence and increasing the risk of return without complete documentation.

### **Lack of verification opportunities and the emotional toll**

The inability to verify conditions inside Syria remains a major barrier. Temporary ‘go-and-see’ visits, which allowed families to assess housing, resolve property issues, or check access to services before making a final decision, were permitted by Jordanian authorities prior to 8 December 2024 but have been highly restricted since.<sup>32</sup> Return is now treated as a final decision, with most refugees having no formal mechanisms for short-term, cross-border movement, increasing the risk of unsustainable return or renewed displacement. Limited re-entry pathways exist, but they generally require substantial financial resources, legal documentation, or institutional sponsorship, which render them inaccessible to most returning refugees.<sup>33</sup>

Many refugees would prefer to return with immediate or extended family,<sup>34</sup> but feel unable to commit without clearer insights into the conditions they will find upon return.<sup>35</sup> This has resulted in phased returns, with men returning first and women and children remaining behind. While intended to reduce risk, this can create financial strain, prolonged family separation and heighten protection concerns associated with female-headed households.

### **Information inequities and at-risk groups**

Access to return-related information varies across the refugee population. Gender, age, disability and economic status all influence who receives information, how it is interpreted and whether it can be acted upon. Women, older adults and those with limited literacy or digital skills are more dependent on informal networks, increasing their exposure to misinformation.

While camp-based refugees may benefit from peer networks and NGO outreach, reliable information remains uneven.<sup>36</sup>

High illiteracy rates among Syrian refugee women in Jordan further constrains access to legal information, service providers and credible guidance.<sup>37</sup> This reduces their ability to access and act on return-related information or protect themselves from exploitation, reinforcing dependency and vulnerability during return and reintegration.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

Gaps in reliable, accessible and coordinated information force refugees to make life-changing decisions based on partial understanding, hearsay or informal guidance. These gaps place disproportionate risk on those already facing structural barriers, leaving many to follow outdated procedures, act without full documentation, or remain unsure about what awaits them on the journey and upon return. Information is not a side issue. It shapes every aspect of the return experience, from legal status and access to services to family unity and financial security. In the absence of a central, trusted source, the burden of verification falls almost entirely on refugees themselves, shaping both the timing and safety of their return.

## I need my documents

Returning safely depends not only on the decision to leave, but also on having the necessary paperwork in place. Documentation is central to legal identity, family unity and access to essential services, including education, upon return. However, gaps in documentation, low past ratification rates,<sup>39</sup> complex legal procedures and high fees remain barriers to return. While most Syrian families in Jordan hold some documentation,<sup>40</sup> gaps can block the issuance or updating of key records such as the family booklet,<sup>41</sup> and can lead to serious consequences including denial at the border, family separation and exclusion from services, undermining what should be a safe and dignified journey home.

### The foundation problem: Civil documentation barriers

Accessing or updating civil documentation remains one of the most complex barriers to return.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>43</sup> All vital events, including birth, marriage, divorce and death, must be registered with the Jordanian authorities<sup>44</sup> and ratified by the Syrian embassy to be recognised under Syrian law.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>46</sup> These documents are often interdependent; for example, a marriage certificate is required to register a child's birth. A single missing document can block access to others, creating cascading legal and administrative challenges.<sup>47</sup>

Routine civil registration is generally accessible, and fees for timely registration are currently waived at the Syrian embassy.<sup>48</sup> However, ratification remains essential for return and costly, at 25 USD per document,<sup>49</sup> a burden for large families or camp residents who face additional transport costs to Amman. Complex cases, such as informal marriages, delayed registrations, or missing prerequisite documents, often require lengthy and expensive legal proceedings. Women navigating these processes alone may encounter social restrictions, limited economic means and lower legal awareness,<sup>50</sup> making it harder to complete documentation before return.

Marriage registration is a persistent obstacle. Some couples cannot formalise their marriage due to lack of legal stay, while others are blocked because one spouse is underage or the marriage was informal.<sup>51</sup> Resolving these cases can take months of court proceedings and fines up to 1,000 JOD (1,400 USD), which may be beyond individuals' means to pay.<sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> Without recognised

marriage documentation, couples may lack legal status, and be unable to register births or divorces, compounding their legal vulnerability.<sup>54</sup>

Birth registration for children born in Jordan is widespread but not always complete.<sup>55</sup> Parents may hold a hospital-issued birth notification but lack an official Jordanian birth certificate, which, along with a ratified marriage certificate, is required for consular registration at the Syrian embassy. If the marriage is unregistered,<sup>56</sup> or birth registration delayed,<sup>57</sup> court intervention adds time, costs and uncertainty.<sup>58</sup>

Death certificates are also often missing. Nearly one-third of families report lacking this documentation,<sup>59</sup> complicating inheritance proceedings and, for widows, restricting the ability to remarry or claim housing, land and property rights.<sup>60 61</sup> Challenges are particularly acute when the person is missing and must first be declared presumed dead.<sup>62</sup>

### **Case Study: Nidal and Bushra - One Birth Certificate Away from Home**

Nidal and Bushra, refugees from Homs, Syria, have been living in Jordan since 2013. After more than a decade in displacement, they are preparing to return to Syria with their five children. But one missing document, a birth certificate for their youngest child, is making it impossible for them to leave.

Their youngest child, Ameer, was born in Jordan just over a year ago, but because his birth was not registered before he turned one, a court decision is now required to issue the certificate. It is the final piece of paperwork needed before the family can return. The process could take several months and involves legal and court-related costs that the family cannot easily afford.

"We've come this far," Bushra says. "All our children now have their names, their papers. But without Ameer's birth certificate, we simply cannot leave."

When the family first arrived in Jordan, they had no identity documents. Their marriage was not officially registered, which meant their first four children, born in Jordan, were incorrectly registered under the names of relatives. With legal support, they were able to formalise their marriage, correct the older children's records and register the younger ones. Today, all their children are legally recognised, except Ameer.

The family is now considering a staged return. Bushra hopes to take the children to Syria to see her father, who is seriously ill, while Nidal stays behind to repay a small debt. But, without Ameer's birth certificate, even that plan is on hold. Ameer cannot cross the border, and the absence of documentation may have far-reaching consequences that extend beyond the journey itself. Without a birth certificate, Ameer could face long-term challenges proving his legal identity and family lineage. This may limit civil registration in Syria and Ameer's access to essential services such as education and health care.

**Nidal and Bushra's experience underscores how even a single missing document can block planned return, with lasting consequences for a child's identity, rights and access to essential services.**

Returning refugees have reported delays or denials at the border due to unresolved documentation issues. Despite recent guidance suggesting greater flexibility<sup>63</sup> and reports of inconsistent enforcement, some families have been turned for lacking ratified birth certificates, even when holding valid travel documents.<sup>64</sup> Pending documentation requests, or unresolved

court cases, can delay return, so some refugees are increasingly choosing to drop requests and legal proceedings to expedite return. While this may speed up departure, it exposes them to long-term protection risks.

**“I tried to return with my kids and parents last week... I was informed by Jordanian authorities that I have a pending file at the Syrian embassy for issuing a document. They didn’t allow me to cross. I had to go to the embassy to cancel and close the file first.”** – Syrian Woman in Irbid, Jordan.

Attempting to return without complete documentation carries serious risks, especially as suspended civil registration services in former regime-held areas continues to create legal uncertainty and obstruct the registration of vital life events.<sup>65</sup>

### **Box 1: Gendered barriers to documentation for return**

Under Syria’s patrilineal legal framework, where male relatives often hold presumptive rights, women - particularly widows, separated women, and female heads of households - face distinct legal challenges in securing the documentation essential for a safe and dignified return.

Feedback collected in May 2025 highlighted unresolved documentation concerns as a key factor shaping return decisions. Women pointed to persistent gender-specific barriers, affecting their ability to prepare for return.<sup>66</sup>

These challenges include difficulties in obtaining legal custody of their children, formal proof of divorce, or the no-objection letters often needed from former spouses to travel or relocate with children. Women also struggle to register marriages or births, especially when the marriage was informal or unregistered, making it difficult to establish legal parentage or guardianship and increasing the risk of exclusion from the family booklet, inheritance, or property rights in Syria.

Women returning without full documentation face barriers to accessing basic services and legal entitlements, exposing them and their children to heightened protection risks. These barriers are compounded by a lack of legal awareness, limited access to legal aid and weak community support—particularly among divorced or widowed women. Many are unfamiliar with documentation procedures or do not know where to seek assistance.

For many women, these gaps make return not only legally complex but potentially unsafe for them and their children, underscoring the need for sustained legal assistance and gender-responsive programming that addresses the specific documentation needs of women and girls.

NRC and UNHCR’s report, *Legal Identity and Housing, Land and Property Rights of Syrian Refugees from a Durable Solutions Perspective* (2021), highlights the critical barriers refugees face in accessing legal identity, with specific challenges for women.<sup>67</sup>

## Travel documentation

Access to recognised travel documents remains essential for return, but possession rates remain low, particularly for larger households. It remains a risk that families may return with incomplete or non-recognised documents, particularly those with complex legal or administrative profiles.<sup>68</sup> Syrian nationals may return using a valid or expired Syrian passport,<sup>69</sup> a laissez-passer issued by the Syrian embassy in Amman,<sup>70</sup> or a Jordanian Ministry of Interior (MoI) card. Jordanian authorities permit exit with a MoI card,<sup>71 72</sup> but Syrian authorities are unlikely to recognise the card as valid ID. This flexibility may ease border crossing but it creates uncertainty for refugees without Syrian-issued ID, who lack clarity on processes to acquire recognised IDs, and possible legal or administrative barriers to do so, inside Syria.<sup>73</sup> Birth notifications from medical institutions may exceptionally be accepted for unregistered children entering Syria,<sup>74</sup> but again, this raises legal uncertainty and potential risks if their civil status remains unregistered.<sup>75</sup>

The laissez-passer remains the most accessible official travel document.<sup>76</sup> While exact application requirements are not public, the process has been simplified and relies primarily on proof of Syrian nationality.<sup>77</sup> Issued by the Syrian embassy in Amman, it is valid for one month and permits a single entry into Syria. Refugees report it is currently issued without charge, though accounts vary, with some refugees reporting being charged for issuance. If fees are reinstated the cost could again become a barrier.<sup>78</sup> With Syria's political transition ongoing, it is unclear if documentation requirements will change, adding further uncertainty for those preparing to return as to what will be required in the future, and how financially and practically accessible it will be to acquire these documents.

## Education documentation

For Syrian families, education is a central concern to return planning and to rebuilding children's futures,<sup>79</sup> yet obtaining the necessary documentation remains difficult. It is still unclear what academic records may be needed to secure enrolment and ensure continuity of learning upon arrival in Syria, particularly for adolescents pursuing secondary school, vocational training, or university.<sup>80</sup>

Most Syrian children in Jordan attend school,<sup>81</sup> but few families intending to return have completed the three-step process to fully ratify documents:<sup>82</sup> endorsement by the Jordanian Ministry of Education, validation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and authentication by the Syrian embassy. The process can be costly and difficult to navigate,<sup>83</sup> with shifting requirements and inconsistent information about fees.<sup>84</sup>

Although the Syrian embassy has recently waived ratification fees for education documents,<sup>85</sup> indirect costs remain a burden, particularly for camp-based families and those with multiple school-aged children. If fees are reinstated this burden would increase.<sup>86</sup> Families also face unresolved issues with partially or unendorsed academic transcripts or certificates, particularly when students changed schools or lost documents during displacement.<sup>87</sup> Without ratified and recognised education records, children may risk losing access to formal education in Syria, undermining their right to learn and limiting future opportunities.

## Conclusion

Documentation gaps are more than bureaucratic obstacles; they determine refugees' ability to make informed choices and rebuild their lives with dignity. Civil, travel and education records are interlinked and a missing or unrecognised document in one area can block access to basic rights in another.



Despite some procedural improvements, significant legal, financial, and administrative barriers remain, particularly for women, camp residents, and those with complex or irregular cases. Navigating these systems often requires managing processes across two countries with limited guidance, leaving some at risk of being unable to return, or returning without the documents needed to access services, assert rights or protect their families. Ensuring safe, voluntary and dignified return requires more than permission to cross a border, it demands the documentation to start again on the other side.

## I need the means

The decision to return is never made in isolation from economic realities. Without the means to earn an income, repay debts, secure documentation, or fund the journey and costs on arrival, return becomes a distant prospect. Economic constraints are among the most frequently cited barriers, cutting across household profiles and return intentions.<sup>88</sup>

Refugees face a double bind. Remaining in Jordan means confronting rising living costs, declining aid and restricted access to work. Returning to Syria brings uncertainty, insecurity and the often-unaffordable cost of starting over. In this context, economic means have become a defining factor in decision-making and the ability - or not - to work in Jordan precludes effective returns planning even when a family or individual prefers to return.

### Living costs and the limits of return

Daily expenses erode financial stability, straining both survival and long-term planning.<sup>89</sup> Two-thirds of refugee families live below the national poverty line,<sup>90</sup> and most cannot meet essential needs, let alone save for return.<sup>91</sup>

**“I leave the house and work, but it is only enough for rent and basic cover. I do not have the ability, for example, to send my son to ninth grade. There are no other means.”** - Syrian man in Amman, Jordan.

Since mid-2023, significant cuts to humanitarian funding and restrictions on the ability of Syrians to legally work have deepened financial strain,<sup>92</sup> driving debt, eviction risk and food insecurity.<sup>93</sup> Humanitarian cuts include a 30 per cent reduction in World Food Programme cash transfers and declines in shelter assistance.<sup>94</sup> Among those intending to return, most say they require cash assistance and three-quarters must repay debts before leaving.<sup>95</sup>

### Income and employment barriers

Access to stable income is central to any future planning, whether to remain in Jordan or return to Syria, but legal employment remains largely inaccessible. Ninety-three per cent of working refugees lack valid work permits, and few are registered with the Social Security Corporation.<sup>96</sup> Looking ahead, many expect to rely on irregular or informal work, or have no plan at all,<sup>97</sup> underscoring the deep systemic issues shaping return decisions and in some cases precluding people from being able to make any decision.

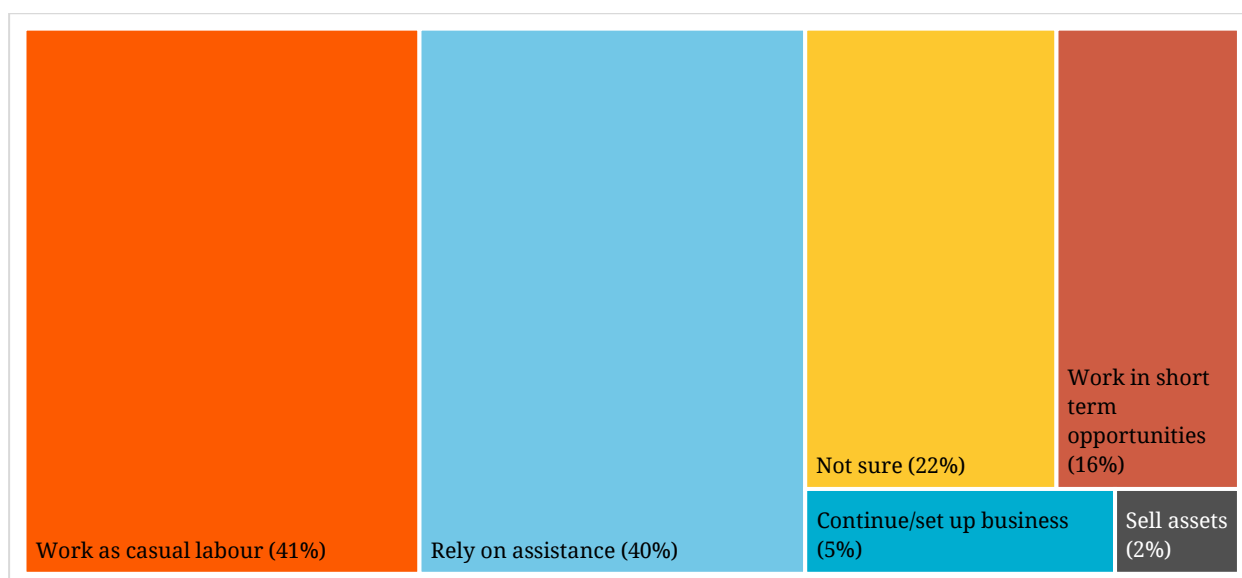


Figure 3: Syrian refugee household plans to earn income in the next 12 months – NRC Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025)

Recent policy changes have deepened these challenges. The removal of fee exemptions means work permits now cost up to JOD 700 (USD 985) annually- well beyond the means of most refugees.<sup>98</sup> Sectoral restrictions and administrative hurdles further limit access to formal work.<sup>99</sup> In camps, residents face additional procedural barriers that limit both employment and mobility.<sup>100</sup>

Since 2024, the Ministry of Labour has required refugees to pay retroactive fees for any gaps in their work permit history since they arrived in Jordan or turned 18. A short-lived exemption expired in June 2025, leaving many with unexpected debts that now prevent renewal or cancellation of permits.<sup>101</sup> As these debts accumulate, refugees are left in administrative limbo, with no pathway back to formal work.

Some, seeing no alternative, turn to informal work,<sup>102</sup> a path that is also narrowing due to increased labour inspections, tighter enforcement and reduced demand in key sectors such as construction and agriculture, as employers avoid the risk of hiring non-Jordanians without permits.<sup>103 104</sup>

**"As long as the permit is active, the debts keep increasing. We ask for the permits to be stopped so we can pay off the accumulated debts."** – Syrian woman in Amman, Jordan.

Further liabilities were introduced by amendments to the Social Security law in April 2023.<sup>105</sup> Monthly contributions for flexible permits rose from JOD 18 (USD 25) to JOD 56.55 (USD 80), applied retroactively to January 2023.<sup>106</sup> Many refugees only learned of these debts ranging between JOD 180 (USD 250) and JOD 600 (USD 850) when attempting to renew documents.<sup>107</sup> These obligations often block access to legal work and prevent permit cancellation, compounding financial and legal pressure.<sup>108</sup> Employers are also affected; a business owner in Irbid, for example, was asked to pay JOD 13,000 (18,330 USD) to regularise five Syrian workers.<sup>109</sup>

**"We face so many restrictions here. For example, my husband and son cannot work freely in any sector without expensive permits. If we stay in Jordan, we will just keep living in poverty, and no one wants that."** – Syrian woman in Amman, Jordan.

Without lawful, affordable work, many refugees remain trapped in cycles of debt, and legal uncertainty. These dynamics erode daily well-being and block the financial means needed for return - and may also compel premature or unsafe return by some.

### **Case Study: Mahmoud - No future without a permit**

Mahmoud, a Syrian refugee from Dara'a, has been living in Irbid since 2012 with his mother and two brothers. Returning home has not been part of their plans, but the pressure of living without an income or legal work has made day-to-day life increasingly complex, and has begun to narrow future options.

Mahmoud has never held a work permit. Despite knowing the process, the cost, now around 700 JOD (USD 985) is beyond his reach. He has repeatedly lost opportunities because employers are unwilling to hire him without a valid permit. One offered to cover part of the cost, but Mahmoud could not raise the rest, even after seeking loans from family and friends.

Without a permit, Mahmoud has no legal path to earn an income. He is three months behind on rent and has sold household items to meet basic needs. His mother requires long-term medication they cannot afford. Fears of fines and penalties deter him from informal work. Although he has received legal advice, the core issue - the unaffordable cost - remains unresolved.

Mahmoud has considered returning to Syria, but still views it as unsafe and unviable for his family. More immediately, his lack of income means he cannot begin to plan for return-related costs, such as transportation, housing, or re-establishing a life in Syria.

**Mahmoud's experience reflects a broader reality. For many refugees in Jordan, legal and financial barriers are not only limiting daily survival but also closing off the possibility of return.**

## **Debt**

Debt is a near-universal feature of displacement. Ninety-five per cent of Syrian refugee households report owing money,<sup>110</sup> most borrowed informally from shopkeepers, landlords, friends or relatives to cover essentials such as food, rent and medical care.<sup>111</sup> Although informal, these debts can carry serious consequences. As repayment becomes unmanageable, financial strain affects household decisions, legal status and freedom of movement. Creditors may pursue repayment through the courts.

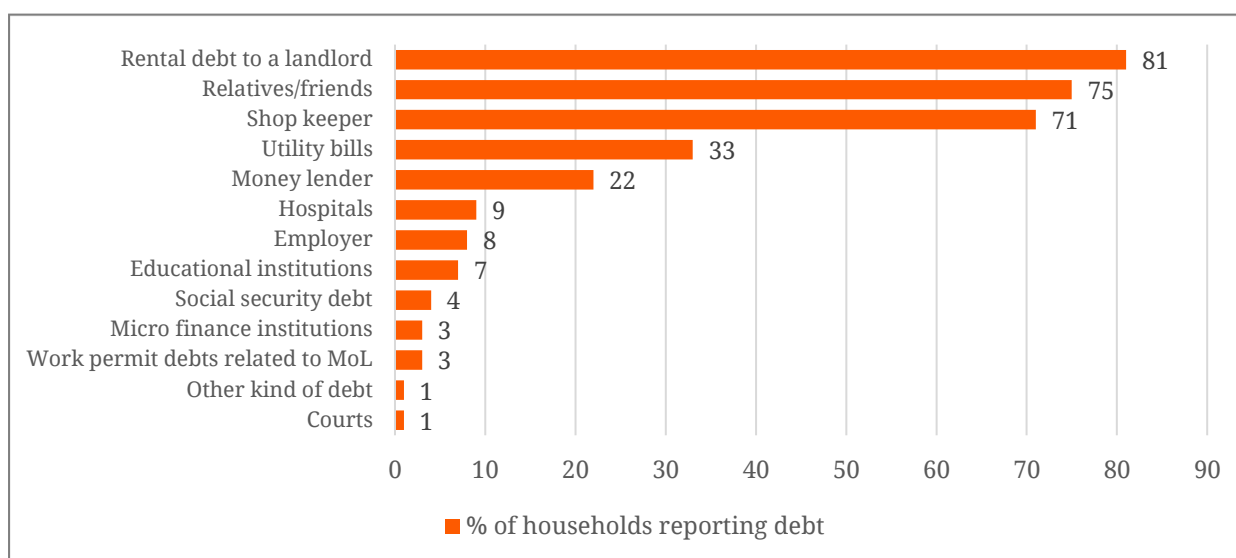


Figure 4: Syrian refugee household sources of report debt – NRC Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025)  
 NOTE: Rental debt to a landlord represents households in host communities only.

Rental debt is particularly widespread, with 81% of households in host communities reporting owing rent.<sup>112</sup> As returns increase, landlords have become more assertive, demanding early payment, monitoring utilities, and in some cases initiating legal action to pre-empt non-payment.<sup>113</sup>

**"I have been renting this house for five years; I never fell short with rent payment. Since December, my landlord started knocking on the 25th of the month instead of the first to collect rent. I understand him, he also has commitments."** – Syrian man in Amman, Jordan.

In addition, 22 per cent of refugees report they owe money to formal institutions, including hospitals, the Social Security Corporation, the Ministry of Labour, courts, banks, educational institutions and microfinance providers. Under Jordanian law, unresolved civil liabilities can trigger legal enforcement measures, including travel bans. Refugees often only become aware of these restrictions when trying to renew documents or exit the country.<sup>114</sup>

For many considering return, settling debts is necessary,<sup>115</sup> but without formal mechanisms for resolution, they remain a quiet but potent constraint. Even when not enforced through formal legal channels, debts shape landlord behaviour, legal status and the practical feasibility of return.

## The cost of returning home

Even when the decision to return is made and legal issues resolved, the journey home remains financially out of reach for many households. Transport alone can cost between JOD 500 (USD 705) and JOD 1,000 (USD 1,410), depending on location, household size, and volume of belongings.<sup>116</sup>

**“Travel costs are based on the governorate you are travelling from in Jordan. For example, I am from Dara’a and I live in Amman. The driver asked for 800 – 1,000 JODs to take all our things to Daraa. My neighbours are from Homs which is further than Dara’a, so this means extra money.”** – Syrian man in Amman, Jordan.

**“We needed 200–250 JOD just to move our things. Then we had to rent another car in Syria.”** - Syrian man who returned from Jordan to Sheikh Saad, Daraa, Syria.

Customs procedures add further uncertainty. Under Syrian law, returnees may bring personal belongings and household goods free of customs charges, provided they are used and proportionate to household size.<sup>117</sup> Enforcement, however, is inconsistent.<sup>118</sup> Families perceived to be carrying excess goods or new items may be redirected to a ‘shipping’ lane, where private handlers can charge upwards of JOD 100 (USD 140) per family.<sup>119</sup>

Some waivers offer limited relief. Those presenting a valid Asylum Seeker Certificate (ASC) or Proof of registration (PoR) are currently exempt from exchanging USD 100 into Syrian currency at the border.<sup>120</sup> Laissez-passer fees are also reported as waived, though accounts vary and continuation is uncertain.<sup>121</sup>

Return costs are often increased by administrative and documentation expenses. Fees for issuing, regularising or ratifying civil status and education documents can be substantial and compounded by indirect expenses such as travel to official institutions, long wait times and lost income from missed work.<sup>122</sup>

Taken together, these costs and procedures present often overwhelming financial and logistical challenges. While some relief measures exist, inconsistent implementation and unclear guidance mean that without external support or predictable processes, the journey itself remains a major barrier to return.

## Conclusion

Economic barriers do not just delay return; they define whether it is possible at all. Without the means to meet daily needs, settle debts or cover travel costs, Syrian refugees face constrained and often untenable choices. These constraints intersect with legal and administrative systems that immobilise, where debt becomes a legal barrier, informal work the only - yet risk laden - option and the journey itself unaffordable. Such conditions are not short-term hardships, but structural conditions that define the limits of a voluntary, safe and dignified return. Unless the economic dimensions of return, including income insecurity, permit debt, and travel cost are addressed, many refugees will continue to struggle.

## I need a home to return to

### The transformation of *home* in displacement

The meaning of *home* holds deep emotional significance for refugees, embodying identity, belonging and security. Many maintain a continued attachment to Syria despite years of displacement, destruction and loss.

**“Even if it’s destroyed and uninhabitable, it is still ours, and we are citizens there, not refugees without rights.”** - Syrian woman in Amman, Jordan.

This attachment runs deep and exists alongside challenges shaped by the realities of displacement. Generational distance poses a significant barrier; since the conflict began, more than 214,000 Syrian children have been born in Jordan, many consider it their home and have little connection to Syria - a country they have never known.<sup>123</sup> Younger generations may resist leaving, creating tensions with older relatives who feel a strong pull to return.<sup>124</sup> Parents worry their children would struggle to adapt to unfamiliar conditions in Syria, including an under-resourced education system.

Gender also influences return decisions. Women may face family pressure to return despite safety concerns and are often unable to return independently.<sup>125</sup> Surveys show that men are more likely to plan to return, often for financial or property-related motives, while women highlight safety risks, early marriage and the loss of support systems built in Jordan.<sup>126</sup> For some, life in Jordan has brought greater autonomy that challenges traditional roles and complicates family decisions.<sup>127</sup> Widows and women heads of households are especially affected, often unable to envision a viable or dignified return.<sup>128</sup>

The political context has further changed the Syria to which many would return. Without an inclusive political transition or reconciliation, refugees fear returning to a country that no longer feels safe or familiar and may not be stable. For many, *home* has changed in ways that make return uncertain or unviable.

### From temporary shelter to meaningful home

The loss of shelter and assets accumulated during displacement adds another layer of difficulty. In camps, families have invested heavily in transforming caravans into safe and comfortable homes. Although these remain the property of UNHCR, they carry significant emotional and material value. On return, families must leave them behind, with no compensation or option to reclaim materials. Border restrictions on items like zinc panels and steel tubes prevent families from repurposing these investments to support temporary shelter or reconstruction upon return.<sup>129 130</sup>

**“We bought another caravan with the money we saved over the years. I wanted my kids to have a little more space... If they would allow us to take it with us, just temporarily until we settle down, it would help. Had we known it could happen, we would have kept the money and used it to return to Syria instead.”** - Syrian woman in Zaatari Camp, Jordan.

Such losses, while not legal barriers, add to the trade-offs of return and reflect a broader housing insecurity, where displaced people have little control over their living conditions, during displacement and after return.



## Reclaiming home in Syria: Legal and administrative barriers

For those ready to return, reclaiming homes in Syria is far from simple. Access to housing, land and property (HLP) is often cited as both a barrier to return<sup>131</sup> and a key enabler.<sup>132</sup> Many who currently do not intend to return say they would reconsider if they could secure housing in Syria. Documentation is a core obstacle. Some refugees held title deeds (*tabou*) or irrevocable powers of attorney but many lost ownership papers when fleeing, or never held them, relying instead on informal or customary arrangements.<sup>133</sup> NRC data from May 2025 found that while one-third of surveyed households reported owning land or property in Syria, only 38 per cent held formal documents to prove it.<sup>134</sup> A 2019 survey found that only one in five refugee families in Jordan had property documentation, with more than half of those who owned property in Dara'a lacking ownership papers.<sup>135</sup> Female-headed households are particularly affected, with around 10 per cent fewer having documentation compared to male-headed households.<sup>136</sup> In addition to property papers, basic civil documents, such as national ID cards, family books or marriage and death certificates are required to validate HLP claims; without them legal processes can be blocked entirely.

Even those with legal claims face difficulties. Syria's property records are physical and decentralised,<sup>137</sup> and damage to land registries and court archives has made official records unreliable or outdated.<sup>138</sup> Replacing documents depends on whether the originals still exist, are accurate, and accessible - circumstances now uncommon after years of conflict. As a result, many displaced owners are unable to reclaim homes or pursue legal claims.

Powers of Attorney (PoAs), once vital for managing assets from abroad, have long been difficult to obtain<sup>139</sup> and property-related PoAs are now inaccessible.<sup>140</sup> Although security clearance requirements, once a major barrier, were lifted,<sup>141</sup> Syrian authorities suspended PoA issuance for property-related issues in December 2024, in Syria and at embassies. Without a PoA, refugees cannot authorise others to retrieve documents, transfer ownership, manage inheritance, or prevent unauthorised property sales. When available, PoAs cost more than USD 200, adding a financial burden.<sup>142 143</sup> The suspension has removed one of the few viable legal routes for displaced Syrians to manage property claims from outside the country.<sup>144</sup>

Destruction and occupation further complicate return. An estimated 210,000 housing units have been affected, with around 30,000 destroyed and 180,000 partially damaged.<sup>145</sup> One study found that 41 per cent of refugees believed their homes were destroyed or uninhabitable, while 27 per cent were unsure of their condition.<sup>146</sup> Even intact homes are often occupied or reassigned without the original owners' consent, leaving few legal remedies. Many also lack the financial means to cover the repairs or pursue legal action.

**“Some people's homes are demolished, which means they can't return. They will remain displaced for years to come until their situation improves.”** – Syrian man in Amman, Jordan.

Legal reforms introduced since 2011 have further obstructed return, allowing the state to confiscate property under the redevelopment laws and requiring displaced owners to prove their claims within tight deadlines, often in person.<sup>147</sup> For refugees unable to return or lacking documents, this fuels fear of permanent loss and deters attempts to reclaim property.<sup>148</sup> The absence of legal safeguards, restitution mechanisms and an independent judiciary continues to undermine confidence,<sup>149</sup> with many viewing these reforms as tools of dispossession.

### **Case Study: Khalil – Holding On to Home Through Documentation**

Khalil, a 73-year-old refugee from Kherbet Ghazaleh in southern Syria, has been living in Irbid, Jordan, since January 2013. His wife and children had fled six months earlier, in mid-2012, but Khalil stayed behind to search for his son, who had been forcibly disappeared. “I could not leave without knowing what happened to him,” he says.

Before the conflict, Khalil, a father of nine, worked as a teacher and school principal and lived with his extended family in a home he built on land inherited from his father. He recalls a simple but fulfilling life, with relatives gathering daily and strong family ties.

After Khalil left Syria and reunited with his family in Irbid, his village was emptied and his home was bombed, burned, and looted.

Determined not to lose his connection to his home and land, he began the process of replacing the green *tabou*, the official land deed, which had been lost years earlier. Following an NRC information session on HLP rights, he issued a Power of Attorney to his sister through the Syrian embassy in Amman. Several months later, in late 2024, a new deed was issued.

“I just wanted to prove it is still mine,” he says. “My house may be in ruins, but that land is part of who I am.”

Khalil now lives in a modest third-floor apartment in Irbid with his wife and two youngest children. Although he now holds official documents confirming ownership, the financial cost of rebuilding his home to provide even basic protection from the elements, and therefore being able to return, remains beyond his reach.

**Khalil’s experience shows that recovering legal documentation is an important step, but without the economic resources, or ability to acquire them, to rebuild, it does not remove the barriers to return.**

### **Conclusion**

For many Syrian refugees in Jordan, the prospect of return is bound up with uncertainty, not only about the future, but also about what remains of the homes they once knew. Years of displacement have reshaped the meaning of home; it now carries emotional connection to Syria, but also the hard-earned stability of life built in displacement, alongside legal claims complicated by lost documents and contested rights. Legal and material barriers, from destroyed property and missing documentation to restrictive regulations, make return to previous homes difficult to realise, particularly for women and those without formal proof of ownership. For return to be a sustainable prospect it requires more than improved conditions; it depends on restoring the foundations that allow returnees to reclaim and rebuild their homes and lives.

## Box 2: Gendered barriers to HLP Rights

Women navigating a return to Syria face a complex web of legal social, and practical challenges in reclaiming HLP rights. These barriers not only hinder their ability to re-establish a home but also affect their safety, stability and long-term recovery.

Many were not formally listed as property owners before displacement. Their claims rely instead on proving family ties through marriage or birth certificates – records that are frequently lost, incomplete or not officially recognised. Without these, asserting ownership or inheritance becomes a near-impossible task.

Legal systems, both in host countries and in Syria, often present further obstacles for women without access to civil documents or the ability to issue a Power of Attorney. Navigating legal processes remotely is particularly challenging for widows, divorced women and those separated from their families, who must prove claims independently, without the support of male relatives or legal proxies.

Social and cultural norms compound these difficulties. In many communities, men are expected to manage legal and property affairs, leaving women without the authority or opportunity to initiate claims, attend proceedings or contest competing interests.

As a result, many women return, if at all, to housing that is legally insecure or contested, increasing their risk of further displacement and economic hardship.

NRC's report, *Facing an Impossible Choice* (2024) details the barriers that hinder Syrian women's ability to reclaim property safely and with dignity.<sup>150</sup>

## I need a way to return

There are various categories of Syrian refugees in Jordan who face specific risks in relation to return from a legal safety perspective. These groups, whilst broad in nature, face common constraints which, at the time of writing, include the inability to cross borders legally, difficulties in approaching authorities and threats to family unity. In short, many are in limbo, and unable to resolve their status and safely navigate a return home.

### Case study: Layla – Navigating Nationalities, Documentation and a Palestinian-Syrian Identity

Layla and her family fled Dara'a, Syria, in 2012. They now live in Zarqa, Jordan, with their five children, two born in Syria and three in Jordan. Layla holds Syrian nationality and her husband is a Palestine Refugee from Syria (PRS). Their mixed-status background has added legal complexity to their displacement.

When they first arrived, the family registered as Syrian. At the time, this seemed the simplest path, and they assumed any necessary corrections could be made later. Over a decade on, their three youngest children - Hady, Ziad, and Miriam - remain undocumented. Born in Jordan, they have no birth certificates, are not listed in the family booklet, and cannot obtain travel documents. Without proof of identity, they are unable to enrol in school. The family must also pay out of pocket for

medical care and even their eldest child, now preparing for final exams, faces barriers due to missing documents.

Lacking identity documents or travel papers, the family faces not only daily challenges but serious obstacles to return. While the family is not currently planning to do so, they know that resolving their legal status is essential. However, doing so would reveal the husband's PRS status, which carries serious risks. Their UNHCR registration could be cancelled, cutting off assistance and protection, and their legal stay in Jordan could be jeopardised.

Layla has approached the Syrian Refugee Affairs Department (SRAD) and UNHCR and is receiving legal support from NRC. Her priority is enrolling her children in school, hoping that provisional access can be granted while legal procedures are ongoing. In the meantime, the family remains in limbo, unable to access key rights in Jordan or plan for the future.

Layla's experience points to a wider problem for many Palestine Refugees from Syria and mixed-status families. Unclear legal identity, gaps in documentation, and complex administrative systems create overlapping barriers - limiting access to rights, disrupting daily life, and closing off future options, including return.

**Unregistered refugees in Jordan:** For various reasons, thousands of Syrian refugees are not registered with UNHCR or/and with the Government of Jordan.<sup>151</sup> As a result, they have been unable to obtain refugee and/or asylum seeker status. This prevents them from documenting life events that occurred in Jordan and creates risks at formal border crossings, as they may be unable to close their legal file in Jordan before departure. Once they leave, they may also be barred from returning due to their irregular stay.

**Refugees excluded from registration:** A small cohort of Syrians who entered Jordan between April-June 2016 were mistakenly issued Asylum Seeker Certificates or MoI cards, which were later withdrawn, leaving them ineligible for regular registration. Others who entered after January 2017 have also been unable to register. Without recognised documentation, they face legal insecurity, limited mobility and risks of detention or forced relocation to Azraq Camp. Their irregular status prevents them from resolving legal issues in Jordan, such as registering vital events, posing significant barriers to a safe and legal return to Syria.

**Completely undocumented refugees:**<sup>152</sup> Approximately 7 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan lack civil documentation entirely.<sup>153</sup> This group is unable to establish their identity, Syrian nationality or family lineage, making it impossible to issue a laissez-passer for return and limiting access to other durable solutions.

**Refugees in possession of fraudulent documents:** Some Syrian refugees possess fraudulent Syrian or host country documents, issued under false identities or from borrowed papers.<sup>154</sup> Use of such documents can lead to criminal penalties, prevent legal border crossings, and complicate efforts to regularise status. To return safely and legally to Syria, these individuals must first rectify their status through the Special Committee, or risk facing long-term challenges to registration and documentation.

**Perceived or actual affiliation with former regime:** Refugees with real or perceived ties to former Syrian government institutions, such as the police, military or civil service, may face heightened risks of arrest, detention, or retaliation upon return. The lack of legal guarantees and ongoing fear of targeting make return unsafe or unviable for some in this group.

**Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS):** PRS face distinct and enduring barriers to return that are legal, structural, and political in nature. Unlike Syrian refugees, PRS fall outside Jordan's asylum framework and are excluded from UNHCR protection mechanisms. Many lack valid documentation - such as travel documents, birth or marriage certificates, or proof of legal guardianship - making lawful cross-border movement difficult. Even those with Jordanian nationality or GAPAR-issued documents may face challenges re-entering Syria, where recognition is inconsistent and return procedures remain unclear.<sup>155</sup> Mixed-status families face particularly acute obstacles, as members often hold different legal statuses, risking family separation. A small group - those with no recognised legal status in either Jordan or Syria - remains effectively trapped, with no viable return pathway, resettlement option or legal remedy. For some PRS, return is not only procedurally difficult but structurally blocked.

**Widows or women with missing husbands:** Women whose husbands have died or are missing may face legal and social obstacles. They may be unable to remarry, settle inheritance claims or prove guardianship. If their children cannot demonstrate a legal connection with their fathers, they face an increased risk of statelessness.<sup>156</sup>

**Unaccompanied or separated children:** According to UNHCR data, 1,018 Syrian refugee children in Jordan are separated from both parents and lack a caregiver with legal or customary responsibility.<sup>157</sup> They face heightened risks of trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse, military recruitment and child labour if returned to Syria without safeguards.

## Conclusion

For certain groups of Syrian refugees in Jordan, return is not just difficult, it is structurally out of reach. Legal status issues, documentation gaps, and protection concerns create overlapping barriers that leave many in prolonged limbo.

These are not marginal cases. Thousands face unclear legal identity, the inability to cross borders lawfully, or risks such as arrest, family separation or statelessness. For those with unresolved legal files or fraudulent documents, and others, the risks extend beyond the return journey itself and will persist long after.

Without safe channels to regularise status, obtain clearance from Syrian authorities, or resolve documentation issues, return cannot be meaningfully exercised. Without trusted support to navigate official processes, whether in Jordan or Syria, refugees face high-stakes decisions. Safe and voluntary return requires more than permission to leave. It depends on a clear and lawful pathway home to (re-)integration and crucially for any discrimination related to displacement status to end. This cannot occur in such cases. For those who cannot return, legal solutions and alternatives must be made available to ensure dignity, safety and long-term protection.

# 4 Recommendations

As the case studies and evidence throughout this report make clear, investing in return preparedness and tackling barriers inside Jordan are essential to ensure that Syrians who wish to return, now or in the future, do not face additional risks and barriers that prevent them from exercising their choice. This must go hand in hand with sustained support for those refugees in Jordan and other host countries who are likely to remain for years to come, and need continued access to protection, services and livelihoods. While these dynamics are occurring inside Jordan, they are not Jordan's responsibility to address and resolve alone. The broader international community must support Jordan to address the complex reality of return and displacement. The following recommendations are key in reducing the barriers faced by Syrian refugees in Jordan who wish to return to Syria.

## **To the Government of Jordan:**

- Continue to uphold the principle of non-refoulement in line with the government's commitment that returns must be safe and voluntary, and ensure that Syrian refugees who cannot or will not return are able to remain in Jordan.
- Allow for safe and monitored 'go-and-see' visits to allow refugees to assess conditions in Syria before deciding to return. This may require reforms to protect temporary mobility rights, prevent loss of legal status or deregistration from assistance, introduce re-entry permits, and ensure status restoration upon re-entry.
- Simplify procedures and waive penalties for late registration of vital events to ensure recognition in Syria. In addition, create legal pathways for those with irregular status to register marriages and births, which will enable refugees to resolve documentation gaps before return.
- Maintain legal avenues and issue an amnesty to facilitate regularisation of status before departure for refugees who entered Jordan illegally, are undocumented or unregistered, or possess fraudulent documents, in order to protect family unity.
- Facilitate lawful and safe return for members of mixed-status families to ensure recognition of identity or travel documentation and protect them from separation.
- Engage in dialogue to find a solution that enables refugees to access work in open sectors without fines that are applied to economic migrants.
- Alongside donors including International Financial Institutions (IFIs), identify sustainable solutions for debt resolution, mediation and financial recovery programmes. This includes landlord engagement and legal protections to prevent eviction or legal action prior to return, to help refugees settle liabilities such as rental and health debt.



- Clearly communicate and fairly enforce customs procedures for personal and household belongings that are transparent and consistently applied.
- Allow camp-based refugees to transport their shelter with them back to Syria if they wish to do so.

**To the Government of Syria:**

- Instate legal reforms that remove barriers to HLP restitution for Syrians inside and outside Syria, including laws enabling property confiscation, and simplify claims processes with adequate timeframes, remote filing options, and the reinstatement/expansion of property-related PoAs so refugees can authorise trusted representatives to act on their behalf, with reasonable fees and accessible procedures in host countries and Syria.
- Provide legal pathways for those who left Syria informally or illegally to regularise status.
- Simplify procedures for documenting missing persons and ensure these processes are accessible through Syrian embassies.

**To the Syrian embassy in Jordan:**

- Prioritize the dissemination of accurate, timely and reliable information, including strengthening awareness among refugees on legal updates through official platforms, information sessions and other communication channels.
- Streamline and reduce the cost of ratifying Jordan-issued documents. Adopt flexible procedures for recognising host-country court decisions, transferring civil records into the Syrian system, and issuing, renewing or replacing documentation lost or damaged during the conflict, supporting refugees in securing complete documentation ahead of return.
- Maintain the waiver on ratification fees for primary and secondary education records and reduce the cost of ratifying records for tertiary education.

**To UNHCR:**

- Prioritize the dissemination of sufficiently detailed, accurate, timely and reliable information.
- Ensure the timely dissemination of protection monitoring and legal analysis in Syria to ensure access to up-to-date and verified information on laws, services and procedures, and guide dialogue on returns with governments.
- Strengthen meaningful cross-regional coordination through effective data-sharing and research on returns patterns, intentions and outcomes.
- Negotiate permission for camp-based refugees to transport their shelter to Syria if they wish to do so.

**To Donors:**

- Ensure that the asylum space in Jordan is protected.
- Safeguard pathways to durable solutions for those who cannot or will not return to Syria and continue to reaffirm the commitment to burden-sharing with Jordan. Donors and the broader international community must also re-double efforts to ensure third country resettlement and complementary pathways.
- Alongside the government of Jordan and IFIs, identify sustainable solutions for debt resolution, mediation and financial recovery programmes. This includes landlord engagement and legal protections to prevent eviction or legal action prior to return, to help refugees settle liabilities such as rental and health debt.
- Fund return preparedness programmes that enable informed decision-making and equip those choosing to return with the knowledge and support needed for a safe, dignified, informed and sustainable return, including:
  - Targeted legal assistance and outreach to help refugees complete, correct or replace civil, travel and education documentation, alongside advocacy for clear and consistent guidance on travel requirements and legal pathways for those without Syrian-issued ID.
  - Targeted legal aid and case management services to help undocumented refugees, mixed-status families, widows, separated children and other vulnerable groups navigate administrative procedures in Jordan and Syria, ensuring cross-border coordination and safeguarding against statelessness.
  - Cross-border HLP legal assistance, including documentation awareness programmes and impartial dispute resolution mechanisms so refugees can prove ownership, replace lost deeds and validate HLP-related civil documents issued in Jordan before departure. Services should allow for the resolution of cases of secondary occupation or competing claims through rights-based processes that allow cross-border or remote participation and result in enforceable decisions.

**To IFIs:**

- Work with the Government of Jordan to identify sustainable solutions for debt resolution, mediation and financial recovery programmes. This includes landlord engagement and legal protections to prevent eviction or legal action prior to return, to help refugees settle liabilities such as rental and health debt.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> According to UNHCR, as of 31 July 2025, 481,116 Syrian refugees were registered in Jordan. UNHCR (2025) *Operational Data Portal: Syrian Refugees in Jordan*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36> (Accessed: 8 August 2025).

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2025) *Voluntary Returns of Syrian Refugees from Jordan to Syria* [Power BI dashboard]. Available at: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzViMjJkNmItMzhkOC00ZDBhLTlkYzItZWQ0ODQzZGY1NzVkIiwidCI6ImU1Yz> [M3OTgxLTY2NjQ0NDZNC04YTBjLTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOj9](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzViMjJkNmItMzhkOC00ZDBhLTlkYzItZWQ0ODQzZGY1NzVkIiwidCI6ImU1Yz) (Accessed: 8 August 2025).

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR (2024) *UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic: December 2024*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/113771> (Accessed: 26 July 2025).

<sup>4</sup> The Jordan Compact, launched in 2016, was an agreement between the Jordanian government and international donors to improve Syrian refugees' access to legal work and education, in return for financial and trade support. Its gradual phase-out since 2021 has contributed to shrinking legal employment opportunities and rising precarity for refugees. ReliefWeb (2025) *Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and...* Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-compact-new-holistic-approach-between-hashemite-kingdom-jordan-and> (Accessed: 10 July 2025).

<sup>5</sup> NRC (2025) *Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery and (re)integration in Syria*. <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/beyond-return-ensuring-sustainable-recovery--re-integration-in-syria>

<sup>6</sup> According to UNHCR, as of 31 July 2025, 481,116 Syrian refugees were registered in Jordan. UNHCR (2025) *Operational Data Portal: Syrian Refugees in Jordan*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36> (Accessed: 8 August 2025).

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR (2025) *Syrian Refugees in Jordan by Origin – 31 May 2025*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116856> (Accessed: 8 August 2025).

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR (2025) *Jordan: UNHCR Operational Data Portal*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor> (Accessed: 8 July 2025).

<sup>9</sup> FGD participants expressed mixed views on the lifting of US sanctions, with some hopeful it signalled economic recovery, while others remained cautious, doubting tangible benefits for ordinary Syrians and warning that positive change would take time. NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025.

<sup>10</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025.

<sup>11</sup> NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025) was based on a survey of 1,070 respondents conducted between 14 May and 4 June 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Returns were suspended on 10 March 2020 due to travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and restarted in November 2020.

<sup>13</sup> UNHCR figures on returns to Syria since December 2024 reflect the number of individuals crossing back from neighbouring countries. They do not account for re-displacement to host countries or new displacement from Syria, and may not fully represent net movement trends.

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR (2025) *Voluntary Returns of Syrian Refugees from Jordan to Syria* [Power BI dashboard]. Available at: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzViMjJkNmItMzhkOC00ZDBhLTlkYzItZWQ0ODQzZGY1NzVkIiwidCI6ImU1Yz> [M3OTgxLTY2NjQ0NDZNC04YTBjLTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOj9](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzViMjJkNmItMzhkOC00ZDBhLTlkYzItZWQ0ODQzZGY1NzVkIiwidCI6ImU1Yz) (Accessed: 8 August 2025).

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR (2025) *Voluntary Returns of Syrian Refugees from Jordan to Syria* [Power BI dashboard]. Available at: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzViMjJkNmItMzhkOC00ZDBhLTlkYzItZWQ0ODQzZGY1NzVkIiwidCI6ImU1Yz> [M3OTgxLTY2NjQ0NDZNC04YTBjLTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOj9](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzViMjJkNmItMzhkOC00ZDBhLTlkYzItZWQ0ODQzZGY1NzVkIiwidCI6ImU1Yz) (Accessed: 8 August 2025).

<sup>16</sup> As of May 2025, Syrian nationals seeking to enter Jordan must hold a valid Syrian passport and either an entry permit or an exit-entry permit, issued by the Jordanian Ministry of Interior or the Jordanian embassy in Syria. In exceptional cases, individuals may enter by presenting documents that prove their legal status, particularly in cases where they are the child or spouse of a Jordanian national. The Government of Jordan may impose re-entry bans on non-Jordanian nationals who have been deported, particularly for violations of security regulations, health or safety concerns under Article 37 of Law No. 24 of 1973, or labour law violations under Article 12 of Law No. 8 of 1996. These bans typically last five years but can range from one to fifteen years, depending on the offence. Syrians returning to Syria from Jordan must close their legal file in Jordan and possess proof of registration, such as an Asylum Seeker Certificate (ASC), Proof of Registration in camps (PoR), or a Ministry of Interior Service Card (MoI card). These documents, issued during registration and urban verification exercises, may be retained by Jordanian authorities at

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the border. Possession of an ASC or a copy of it may exempt the individual from the requirement to exchange 100 USD into Syrian currency at the border. Refugees residing in camps must also obtain clearance from both SRAD and UNHCR before departure. To cross the border into Syria, returnees must hold a Syrian passport; current reports indicate that individuals have been able to return using expired passports. Alternatively, returnees may obtain a Laissez Passer (LP) from the Syrian embassy in Jordan. The LP is valid only for one-way travel to Syria and is retained by Syrian authorities at the border; it cannot be used for re-entry into Jordan. Upon departure, UNHCR deactivates the individual's asylum seeker status. Refugees who return to Jordan may request reactivation of their ASC. Additional documentation or procedures may apply for individuals in specific protection categories. See Section *I need a way to return* in this report.

<sup>17</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (January and May 2025), 17% of surveyed families changed their return intention.

<sup>18</sup> Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) (2025) *The Return of Syrian Refugees: Considerations and Determinants*. Available at: <https://ardd-jo.org/blogs/the-return-of-syrian-refugees-considerations-and-determinants/> (Accessed: 14 July 2025).

<sup>19</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan; KII 4 NRC Jordan

<sup>20</sup> UNHCR (2024) *Regional Perceptions and Intentions Survey (RPIS) on Return to Syria: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon – July 2024*. Available at: [https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Intention\\_Survey\\_RPIS\\_2024.pdf](https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Intention_Survey_RPIS_2024.pdf) (Accessed: 15 July 2025).

<sup>21</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025.

<sup>22</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.; KII 2 NRC Jordan.

<sup>23</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan. KII 2 NRC Jordan.

<sup>24</sup> KII 4 NRC Jordan

<sup>25</sup> KII 2 NRC Jordan.NRC; KII 2 NRC Jordan.

<sup>26</sup> NRC Jordan (2021) *The Journey Home: Challenges and Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Jordan Returning to Syria – June 2021*.

<sup>27</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>28</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>29</sup> According to UNHCR guidance for refugees based in refugee camps: You are required to obtain official clearance to leave the camp from the relevant authorities prior to your departure to Syria. Should you not have the proper clearance in place; the authorities will not allow you to depart Jordan. UNHCR Jordan (2025) *Frequently Asked Questions on Return to Syria: Update #9– 17 July 2025*.

<sup>30</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan; KII 3 NRC Jordan.

<sup>31</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>32</sup> At the time of writing, the Jordanian border is not open for the entry of most Syrian nationals and the issuing of exit-entry permits has been suspended. Refugees, including those with the re-entry permissions from MOI, will likely not be able to re-enter Jordan in the immediate future. It is not clear how long this measure will be in place. The Laissez-Passer issued by the Syrian embassy does not confer permission to reenter Jordan. UNHCR Jordan (2025) *Frequently Asked Questions on Return to Syria: Update #9– 17 July 2025*; KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>33</sup> A number of restricted re-entry pathways exist for Syrians, including investment-based residency, property-linked visas, and academic enrolment. Jordan Times (2025) 'New entry rules for Syrians with investments, property or academic ties to Jordan – Ministry', 1 May. Available at: <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/new-entry-rules-syrians-investments-property-academic-ties-jordan-ministry> (Accessed: 4 August 2025); Lexis Middle East (2025) 'Jordan: Syrian Entry Rule Amendments', 1 May. Available at: [https://www.lexismiddleeast.com/news/2025-05-01\\_27](https://www.lexismiddleeast.com/news/2025-05-01_27) (Accessed: 4 August 2025); NRC Jordan (2025) *Returns Overview Document*, May 2025. Internal report.

<sup>34</sup> Based on findings from the UNHCR 2024 regional flash intention survey, 69% of respondents indicated they would return with their entire family, 18% with extended family, 11% alone, 1% undecided, and 1% with some family members remaining behind.

<sup>35</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), 47% of Syrian refugees in Jordan would prefer to assess conditions firsthand before committing to return.

<sup>36</sup> KII 4 NRC Jordan

<sup>37</sup> According to the Operational Durable Solutions Working Group, 18.1 per cent of Syrian refugee women in Jordan are illiterate. Jordan Operational Durable Solutions Working Group (Ops-DSWG) (2025) *Refugee Community Pulse: Gendered Perspectives on Syrian Refugee Returns from Jordan*, Issue No. 3, 16 July 2025.

<sup>38</sup> UN Women (2023) *Gender Analysis of Returns to Syria: Policy Brief*. UN Women Regional Office for Arab States. Available at: <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/07/gender-matters-in-returns-to-syria-discussions> (Accessed: 24 July 2025).

<sup>39</sup> At the time of writing, ICLA services indicates an upward trend in the ratification of civil documentation. In 2021, ratification rates were relatively low—only 35% of Jordanian-issued birth certificates had been validated by the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and just 12% had been authenticated at the Syrian embassy. For marriage certificates, 31% had MOFA validation, with none authenticated at the Syrian embassy. Refugees also reported obtaining Jordanian death certificates, but these remained unratified; NRC Jordan (2021) *ICLA Legal Safety for Return Preparedness: Learning Exercise*. Internal document.

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<sup>40</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), 89% of households report possessing some basic civil documents.

<sup>41</sup> According to the Syria Civil Status Law No.13 of 2021, article 56 every Syrian family must issue a family booklet from civil registry department. The family booklet is the primary civil record for Syrians and serves as the basis for issuing a number of other civil documents. The booklet remains one of the few legal proofs of family relationships accepted across all Syrian state institutions. The family booklet is "an extract of the civil registry record confirming the existence of a recognised marriage and the filiation of children." It contains the husband's name and personal data along with the names and personal data of his wife and any children. It is also required to access education and health services in Syria.

<sup>42</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), 16% of refugees reporting legal hurdles in Jordan identified a lack of civil legal documentation.

<sup>43</sup> UNHCR & NRC Jordan (2020) *Legal Safety for Return Preparedness: Legal and civil documentation challenges for Syrian refugees in Jordan in view of return*.

<sup>44</sup> According to Jordanian Civil Status Law No. 9 of 2001, birth registration must occur within 30 days for children born in Jordan (Art. 13(a)) or 90 days if born abroad (Art. 13(b)). A 10 JOD fine applies for late registration. Marriage and divorce must be registered within 30 days (Art. 23(a)), and death within seven days (Art. 26(a)).

<sup>45</sup> Syrian Civil Status Law No. 13 of 2021 requires that all life events occurring abroad be documented in the country of occurrence and then ratified by the Syrian diplomatic mission before registration in Syria.

<sup>46</sup> Under Syrian Law No. 19 of 2023, events must also be ratified by the host country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Syrian embassy. This replaced the previous practice, which allowed direct registration in Syria without embassy validation or associated fees.

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR & NRC Jordan (2020) *Legal Safety for Return Preparedness: Legal and civil documentation challenges for Syrian refugees in Jordan in view of return*.

<sup>48</sup> At the time of writing, the fees registration of vital events have been waived following a Syrian embassy announcement. However, the waiver is not formally codified and may be withdrawn. If reinstated, the previous fee of USD 25 per event could be prohibitive for many families.

<sup>49</sup> The total cost to ratify a birth certificate typically includes a 5 JOD (approximately 7 USD) fee to the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and 75 USD (around 54 JOD) in standard fees at the Syrian embassy. These embassy charges include 25 USD for ratification of the birth, 25 USD for a certified copy of the birth statement (e.g. for passport issuance), and 25 USD for registering the birth in Syria. An additional 50 USD (approximately 36 JOD) may be charged as a delay fine if the birth is registered after two months. As of May 2025, the Syrian embassy in Amman has communicated that registration of life events is free of charge.

<sup>50</sup> 'Women's legal empowerment (original in Arabic: (التمكين القانوني للمرأة)', JCLA Blog. Available at: <https://jcla-org.com/womens-legal-empowerment-ar/> (Accessed: 18 July 2025); UNHCR & NRC Jordan (2020) *Legal safety for return preparedness: Legal and civil documentation challenges for Syrian refugees in Jordan in view of return*.

<sup>51</sup> Informal (so-called sheikh, 'urfi or kath al-kitab) marriages are generally contracted without the involvement Justice Center for Legal Aid (n.d.) of state institutions (e.g., a Shari'a Court or authorised Sheikh). Generally, these marriages can only be recognised as a legally valid marriage after ratification before a personal status court. UNHCR & NRC Jordan (2020) *Legal Safety for Return Preparedness: Legal and civil documentation challenges for Syrian refugees in Jordan in view of return*.

<sup>52</sup> All USD equivalents in this report are approximate, based on a typical exchange rate of 1 JOD = 1.41 USD. Figures are rounded for clarity.

<sup>53</sup> Advocacy efforts have emphasised that legalising marriages should not be conditional on paying fines; such penalties should be treated separately, assigned only to those responsible (e.g. officiants or witnesses), and not imposed on spouses—an approach affirmed by the Amman Sharia Court of Appeal in 2018, which upheld the principle of personal punishment and limited fines accordingly. NRC Jordan (2025) *Protection context updates: January–March 2025*. Internal document.

<sup>54</sup> To rectify this and obtain legal recognition, couples must initiate a court process to validate the marriage. This involves submitting evidence of the informal marriage, such as testimonies or religious documents, at a personal status court. The legal validation process can be complex, lengthy, and costly, with fees potentially reaching up to JOD 1,000 depending on case complexity.

<sup>55</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), 99% of children born in Jordan have birth registration and only 6% of Syrian born children are not included on their family booklet.

<sup>56</sup> In the Shari'a Court, the marriage ratification and ratification of parentage can be addressed as a single case. The length of the case is dependent on a number of factors, including (i) if there is an attorney or not; (ii) the caseload at the court; (iii) the timeline between court sessions; and (iv) the capacity of the parties/attorney to bring a witness and any other supporting documents. UNHCR & NRC Jordan (2020) *Legal safety for return preparedness: Legal and civil documentation challenges for Syrian refugees in Jordan in view of return*.

<sup>57</sup> To rectify this and obtain legal recognition, a couple must apply for Proof of birth; a judicial decision issued by the civil magistrate court in Jordan for births that occurred in Jordan, but were registered more than one year after the birth occurred. This document should be presented to the Civil Status and Passports Department along with the birth notification, proof of marriage, and applicant's personal ID document, to issue a birth certificate. Note that it is not



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recognised as an official birth document by Government of Jordan for ratification through validation or by Government of Syria ratification through authentication. UNHCR & NRC Jordan (2020) *Legal safety for return preparedness: Legal and civil documentation challenges for Syrian refugees in Jordan in view of return*.

<sup>58</sup> Couples who were informally married in Syria first need to obtain a marriage ratification from a Jordanian Shari'a Court, followed by ratification of parentage. The process can take up to 12 months, and incur significant financial costs especially in cases where the husband/father is absent.

<sup>59</sup> 28% of families report a lack of death certification. NRC Jordan (2024) *Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) assessment: January–November 2024*. Internal document. KII 2 NRC Jordan.

<sup>60</sup> These issues become even more complex when more than one year has passed since the death, requiring a court case. To rectify this and obtain legal recognition, a family must apply for Proof of Death—a judicial decision issued by the Jordanian Civil Magistrate Court for deaths that occurred in Jordan but were not registered within one year. Once the court decision is final, it must be submitted along with supporting documents to the Civil Status and Passports Department (CSPD) to obtain an official death certificate. Note that the Magistrate's Court Decision is not recognised as an official death document by the Government of Jordan for ratification through validation, nor by the Government of Syria for authentication. UNHCR & NRC Jordan (2020) *Legal safety for return preparedness: Legal and civil documentation challenges for Syrian refugees in Jordan in view of return*.

<sup>61</sup> See Section *I need a home to return to*

<sup>62</sup> In Jordan, missing persons' issues are regulated by the laws of personal status (and/or similar related laws), civil (procedural) laws and criminal procedural laws. NRC Jordan (2020) *Briefing note: Legal pathways for death registration — Analysis of legal pathways to register death in Jordan*. Internal document.

<sup>63</sup> Syria is Home (2025) 'Frequently asked questions'. Available at: <https://syriaishome.org/en/faq/> (Accessed: 1 July 2025). The interim authorities in Syria require that all children entering the country possess a birth certificate and be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Birth notifications from medical institutions, such as hospitals, may exceptionally be accepted for unregistered children when entering Syria. <sup>63</sup> Syria is Home (2025) 'Frequently asked questions'. Available at: <https://syriaishome.org/en/faq/> (Accessed: 1 July 2025).

<sup>64</sup> KII 2 NRC Jordan.

<sup>65</sup> The Syria Report (2025) 'Civil registry suspensions lead to administrative paralysis and legal ambiguity', 12 February. Available at: <https://syria-report.com/civil-registry-suspensions-lead-to-administrative-paralysis-and-legal-ambiguity/> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

<sup>66</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Refugee community feedback on return to Syria*. Internal document.

<sup>67</sup> Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/legal-identity-and-hlp-rights-of-syrian-refugees/legal-identity-and-hlp-rights-of-syrian-refugees-from-a-durable-solutions-perspective---english.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> These risks are particularly acute for specific groups with complex legal or administrative profiles, such as refugees who entered Jordan irregularly, individuals without formal registration, those holding fraudulent documents, or those unable or unwilling to reconcile their status with Syrian authorities. See Section *I need a way in this report*.

<sup>69</sup> At the time of writing, the Syrian embassy in Amman is offering six-month passport extensions free of charge. However, the waiver is not formally codified and may be withdrawn. While return on an expired passport is permitted, it is reportedly not preferred by Syrian authorities.

<sup>70</sup> According to the Passport Law no. 18/2014, additionally issues travel documents (also known as a *Laissez-passer*) to foreigners, who cannot obtain travel documents from their countries' embassies, stateless persons, or are currently recognised as refugees. This document is only issued to persons' resident in Syria. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2025. *Standard Operating Procedures for Syrians in Jordan who wish to travel to third countries, return to Syria or visit Syria temporarily*. Internal document, May 2025.

<sup>71</sup> The Jordanian Government considers the MoI card a travel document that allows Syrians to return to Syria and cross the border. This carries some risk to participants if they do not possess any other type of identifying document, as it is unlikely that the MoI card is recognised in Syria as an identity document. NRC Jordan (2025) *SOP on international travel and crossing borders for Syrians in Jordan*. Internal document, May 2025.

<sup>72</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan; UNHCR Jordan (2025) *Frequently asked questions on return to Syria: Update #9– 17 July 2025*;

<sup>73</sup> Amid this uncertainty, UNHCR and NRC are advising refugees to obtain official Syrian-issued travel documents—such as passports or *Laissez-Passers*—prior to return.

<sup>74</sup> Syria is Home (2025) 'Frequently asked questions'. Available at: <https://syriaishome.org/en/faq/> (Accessed: 1 July 2025).

<sup>75</sup> A birth notification alone does not carry the same legal weight as a birth certificate and is not sufficient for official registration processes in Syria. A birth certificate is a foundational legal document that confirms a person's identity, nationality, and parentage. Without it, individuals—particularly children—may face serious barriers upon return to Syria, including, obtaining identity documents, accessing health services, or being added to the family booklet and difficulties registering in school.

<sup>76</sup> Although there have also been anecdotal reports that some individuals may be refused a *laissez-passer* by the Syrian embassy if they disclose possession of a Jordanian-issued MoI card, though this has not been officially confirmed.

<sup>77</sup> At the time of writing, applicants need only present proof of Syrian nationality, either through existing documents (e.g., national ID, family booklet) or by requesting that the embassy verify their status through the civil registry in



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Syria. Workarounds such as submitting an individual or family extract are now accepted in lieu of original IDs or booklets.

<sup>78</sup> At the time of writing, the fees for issuing a laissez-passer have been waived following a Syrian embassy announcement. However, the waiver is not formally codified and may be withdrawn. If reinstated, the previous fee of USD 25 per person could be prohibitive for some families. The document can be issued for an individual or a family.

<sup>79</sup> NRC and UNHCR (2020) *Pathways to Education: Documentation requirements and processes for accessing the formal education system in Syria upon return from Jordan*. The Briefing Note, maps the regulations, processes, documentation and costs required from Syrian refugee students to access formal basic, secondary, higher education and TVET upon return to Syria. In addition to outlining the education-related challenges that Syrian refugee students may face when preparing for departure from Jordan and upon their return to Syria.

<sup>80</sup> NRC Jordan & UNHCR (2020) *Pathways to education: Documentation requirements and processes for accessing the formal education system in Syria upon return from Jordan*; KII 5 NRC Jordan

<sup>81</sup> According to the 2024 UNHCR Vulnerability Assessment Framework, 78% of Syrian children aged 5–18 were enrolled in school during the 2023/24 academic year, up from 75% in 2021.

<sup>82</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), only 15% of return-intending households with school-aged children have completed ratification, while 81% have not started, and 4% do not plan to apply.

<sup>83</sup> NRC Jordan Council & UNHCR (2020) *Pathways to education: Documentation requirements and processes for accessing the formal education system in Syria upon return from Jordan*; NRC Jordan (2025) *SOP on international travel and crossing borders for Syrians in Jordan*. Internal document, May 2025.

<sup>84</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), Assessment 41 % reported having no challenges, 36% cost of ratification, 21% not aware of the process, 15% cost of transportation, 5% process too long.

<sup>85</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>86</sup> According to available information, the cost for ratifying education certificates up to high school includes 0.6 JOD for validation by the Ministry of Education, 5 JOD for authentication at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and 17.7 JOD (25 USD) ratification fee at the Syrian embassy in Amman. The total cost, including administrative fees in Jordan, typically amounts to approximately 32 USD per certificate. At the time of writing, the fees for ratification of education documents have been waived following a Syrian embassy announcement. However, the waiver is not formally codified and may be withdrawn.

<sup>87</sup> NRC Jordan & UNHCR (2020) *Pathways to education: Documentation requirements and processes for accessing the formal education system in Syria upon return from Jordan*; KII 5 NRC Jordan.

<sup>88</sup> UNHCR (2025) *Mid-year analysis on returns to Syria from Jordan: January–June 2025*. Jordan: UNHCR. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/117692> (Accessed: 25 July 2025); NRC Jordan (2025) *Multi-Sectoral Rapid Needs Assessment: Syrian Refugees in Jordan – January and May 2025*.

<sup>89</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>90</sup> The refugee population remains particularly vulnerable, with the latest estimates from the World Bank and UNHCR indicating that the poverty rate among refugees has increased from 57 percent in 2021 to 67 percent in 2023. UNHCR (2024) *Vulnerability Assessment Framework: Socio-Economic Survey on Refugees in Host Communities*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109075>; UNHCR (2024) *Vulnerability Assessment Framework: Socio-Economic Survey of Refugees in Camps*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109074>; World Bank (2025) *Jordan Poverty and Equity Brief: April 2025*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099643504212539299> (Accessed: 25 July 2025).

<sup>91</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025; UNHCR (2024) *Refugee Financial Inclusion and Financial Health in Jordan 2024 – Baseline Survey Report, Volume I*. Available at: [https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNHCR-Jordan\\_Refugee-FI-FH-BLS-Report-2024.pdf](https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNHCR-Jordan_Refugee-FI-FH-BLS-Report-2024.pdf) (Accessed: July 2025)

<sup>92</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), the most commonly reported immediate needs among respondents were: 72% paying off debt, 54% needing cash assistance to meet basic needs in Jordan, 38% seeking employment in Jordan, and 35% requiring cash assistance to return to Syria.

<sup>93</sup> KII 3 NRC Jordan; KII 4 NRC Jordan.

<sup>94</sup> In May 2024, monthly entitlements decreased from JOD 23 (approx. USD 32) to JOD 15 (approx. USD 23) per person. World Food Programme (2024) *WFP Jordan Country Brief, May 2024*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/wfp-jordan-country-brief-may-2024> (Accessed: 16 July 2025).

<sup>95</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), among refugees intending to return to Syria, the top immediate needs were: 83% requiring cash assistance to return, 75% paying off debt, 41% citing the return itself as a priority, and 31% needing both cash assistance to meet basic needs in Jordan and document renewal to enable return.

<sup>96</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Analysis of Assessment in Northern and Central Jordan, January–November 2024*. Internal document, February 2025; Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2021) *National Social Protection Strategy 2019–2025*, Ministry of Social Development, endorsed by ILO & UNICEF. Available at: <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowResource.action?id=57201> (Accessed: 6 August 2025); Tamkeen Centre for Legal Aid & Human Rights (2021) *Syrian Refugees and Social Security in Jordan*. Available at:

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<https://tamkeenjo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/Syrian-refugees-and-Social-Security-in-Jordan.pdf> (Accessed: 6 August 2025).

<sup>97</sup> According to NRC's *Rapid Needs Assessment* (May 2025), 41 per cent of households expect to rely on casual labour, 40 per cent on humanitarian assistance, and 22 per cent reported having no clear income strategy.

<sup>98</sup> KII 6 NRC Jordan; NRC Jordan (2023) *Syrian Refugees' Access to Formal Work: An Uncertain Future*. Internal briefing note. Work permit fees are sector dependent and for example can include JOD 425 for issuance or renewal and JOD 85 for medical checks. Flexible work permits attract an additional JOD 50 for union fees and JOD 113 as an upfront payment of two months social security contribution.

<sup>99</sup> NRC Jordan (2023) *Syrian Refugees' Access to Formal Work: An Uncertain Future*. Internal briefing note.

<sup>100</sup> KII 6 NRC Jordan.

<sup>101</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Protection Context Updates – January to March 2025*. Internal document. The July 2024 Ministry of Labour directive requires Syrian applicants to cover any unpaid work permit periods dating back to the start of adulthood or entry into Jordan. Although a temporary exemption was announced in November 2024 for debts accrued before June 30, implementation has been inconsistent. Refugees report being charged significant amounts without itemised explanations.

<sup>102</sup> NRC Jordan (2023) *Syrian Refugees' Access to Formal Work: An Uncertain Future*. Internal briefing note.

<sup>103</sup> KII 6 NRC Jordan.

<sup>104</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Protection Context Updates – January to March 2025*. Internal document.

<sup>105</sup> NRC Jordan (2024) *Refugee Perspectives on Access to Work and Social Protection in Jordan*. Policy note, April 2024; Fawaz, A. et al. (2024) *Sky High Fees with Few Benefits: What's Wrong with Social Security for Syrians in Jordan*. The New Humanitarian, 5 September. Available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2024/09/05/sky-high-fees-few-benefits-whats-wrong-social-security-syrians-jordan> (Accessed: 6 August 2025)

<sup>106</sup> In April 2023, Jordan amended the Social Security Law and removed the tiered system, so flexible work permit holders were required to pay full social security contributions of 21.75% of their monthly salary. This raised their mandatory monthly payments from 18 JOD (USD 25) to 56.55 JOD (USD 80). NRC Jordan (2023) *Syrian Refugees' Access to Formal Work: An Uncertain Future*. Internal briefing note.

<sup>107</sup> NRC Jordan (2024) *Refugee Perspectives on Access to Work and Social Protection in Jordan*. Policy note, April 2024..

<sup>108</sup> Once a permit expires, the individual loses the right to work legally. If it is not cancelled or renewed within 90 days, a late penalty of 50 per cent of the original cost is applied.

<sup>109</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Protection Context Updates – January to March 2025*.

<sup>110</sup> According to NRC's *Rapid Needs Assessment* (May 2025), 95% of households reported debt. UNHCR reports 9 out of 10 households in camps and host communities report being in debt. UNHCR (2024) *Vulnerability Assessment Framework: Socio-Economic Survey on Refugees in Host Communities*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109075>; UNHCR (2024) *Vulnerability Assessment Framework: Socio-Economic Survey of Refugees in Camps*. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109074>.

<sup>111</sup> According to NRC's *Rapid Needs Assessment* (May 2025), 75% of respondents reported debt to relatives or friends, 71% to shopkeepers, 41% to landlords, 33% to utility providers, 22% to money lenders, 9% to hospitals, 8% to employers, 7% to educational institutions, 4% to social security, 3% to the Ministry of Labour for work permits, 3% to microfinance institutions, and 1% each to courts and other sources.

<sup>112</sup> Since mid-2023, the proportion of Syrian refugee households facing eviction threats has risen steadily from 23% to 30%, highlighting growing housing insecurity amid worsening economic conditions. UNHCR Jordan (2025) *Socio-Economic Update on Refugees in Jordan – Q4 2024*. Amman: UNHCR Jordan. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116404> (Accessed: 25 July 2025).

<sup>113</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>114</sup> Fawaz, A. et al. (2024) *Sky High Fees with Few Benefits: What's Wrong with Social Security for Syrians in Jordan*. The New Humanitarian, 5 September. Available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2024/09/05/sky-high-fees-few-benefits-whats-wrong-social-security-syrians-jordan> (Accessed: 6 August 2025)

<sup>115</sup> According to NRC's *Rapid Needs Assessment* (May 2025), 71% of respondents reported paying off debt as an immediate priority.

<sup>116</sup> NRC Syria (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Returnees in Sheikh Saad, Dara'a Governorate*. Internal report; KII 4 NRC Jordan.

<sup>117</sup> According to Syrian Law No. 38 of 2006, returnees are entitled to bring back personal possessions, tools, and household furniture for permanent residence without customs fees. However, implementation is inconsistent. UNHCR guidance notes that exemptions generally apply only to used items in quantities appropriate to family size. Excess or new goods, as well as certain restricted items—including fuel canisters, e-bikes, certain electronics, and live animals—may still be taxed or denied at departure from Jordan.

<sup>118</sup> KII 3 NRC Jordan; KII 1 NRC Jordan.

<sup>119</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Returns Overview Document, May 2025*. Internal report. According to internal meeting notes, common practice in February 2025 indicates that individuals carrying more than two suitcases per person must use the shipping lane, which involves a 52 JOD manifest fee paid to a private company and a shipping fee that can total up to 120 JOD. As these charges are administered by private entities, refugees are not exempt.

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- <sup>120</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *SOP on international travel and crossing borders for Syrians in Jordan*. Internal document, May 2025.
- <sup>121</sup> See Section *I need my documents* in this report.
- <sup>122</sup> See Section *I need my documents* in this report.
- <sup>123</sup> Jamal Shalabi (2025) *Why Aren't Syrian Refugees in Jordan Returning to the "New Syria"?* Inside GAPS, 16 June. Available at: <https://www.returnmigration.eu/gaps-news/why-arent-syrian-refugees-in-jordan-returning-to-the-new-syria> (Accessed: 30 June 2025).
- <sup>124</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025; KII 6 NRC Jordan; KII 2 NRC Jordan.
- <sup>125</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025.
- <sup>126</sup> Jordan Operational Durable Solutions Working Group (2025) *Refugee Community Pulse: Gendered Perspectives on Syrian Refugee Returns from Jordan*, Issue No. 3, 16 July 2025.
- <sup>127</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025.
- <sup>128</sup> NRC Jordan (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Syrian Refugees in Amman and Irbid*. Internal report, May 2025.
- <sup>129</sup> Al Khalili, C. & Gatter, M. (2025) *Syria After Assad: Why Many Syrian Refugees Aren't Returning Home*. The Conversation. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/syria-after-assad-why-many-syrian-refugees-arent-returning-home-251654> (Accessed: 30 June 2025).
- <sup>130</sup> NRC Jordan (2024) *Protection Context Updates – October to December 2024*; NRC Syria (2025) *Focus Group Discussions with Returnees in Sheikh Saad, Dara'a Governorate*. Internal report;
- <sup>131</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (January 2025), 88% of surveyed households identified housing and land as their primary anticipated challenge to return, compared to 71% for employment and 59% for access to services
- <sup>132</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), 63% of respondents who do not currently intend to return cited access to housing in Syria as the main factor that would enable reconsideration. Similarly, UNHCR (2025). *Flash Intention Survey* found that housing was the most commonly cited need among those planning to return within the next 12 months. UNHCR (2025) *Flash Intention Survey: Syrian Refugees in Jordan – January 2025*. Available at: [https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/UNHCR\\_Flash\\_Intention\\_Survey2025.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/UNHCR_Flash_Intention_Survey2025.pdf) (Accessed: 8 July 2025).
- <sup>133</sup> Refugees frequently stated they had owned property in Syria and had once held formal documents (e.g. tabou, POA), but many no longer had them. NRC (2023) *We Want to Know More: Cross-Border Housing, Land and Property Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq*. Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/we-want-to-know-more/> (Accessed 6 August 2025)
- <sup>134</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), of surveyed households, 33 per cent reported owning property in Syria; of those, only 38 per cent possessed documentation proving ownership.
- <sup>135</sup> Over half of participants from Dara'a did not have HLP documentation, often due to loss or destruction during conflict. NRC & UNHCR (2020). *Reclaiming Home – HLP Rights of Syrian Refugees from Dar'a Governorate Living in Jordan*. Over half of participants from Dara'a did not have HLP documentation, often due to loss or destruction during conflict. NRC & UNHCR (2020). *Reclaiming Home – HLP Rights of Syrian Refugees from Dar'a Governorate Living in Jordan*. Over half of participants from Dara'a did not have HLP documentation, often due to loss or destruction during conflict.
- <sup>136</sup> NRC & UNHCR (2020). *Reclaiming Home – HLP Rights of Syrian Refugees from Dar'a Governorate Living in Jordan*.
- <sup>137</sup> NRC & UNHCR, 2020, *Reclaiming Home – HLP rights of Syrian refugees from Dar'a Governorate living in Jordan*.
- <sup>138</sup> NRC Jordan (2021). *The Journey Home: Challenges and Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Jordan Returning to Syria*. KII for joint UNHCR/NRC regional research, 2020.
- <sup>139</sup> Between December 2021 and June 2024, only 12 HLP-related POAs were successfully completed through NRC's regional cross-border legal aid programme, with many refugees citing the complexity, cost, and procedural delays as key barriers.
- <sup>140</sup> Many refugees also lack someone they trust in Syria, with some even facing legal disputes from relatives claiming ownership through informal or verbal agreements. NRC (2023) *We Want to Know More: Cross-Border Housing, Land and Property Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq*. Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/we-want-to-know-more/> (Accessed 6 August 2025)
- <sup>141</sup> As of July 2025, the security approval has been replaced by a same-day non-objection letter—still officially required but largely procedural. Syrian Ministry of Finance (2025) *Decision No. 135/1*, 20 July. Damascus: Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.[original in Arabic]
- <sup>142</sup> The consular fees for issuing a POA are 200USD representing the cost of official actions/processes. Other incidental costs may include transport, gathering documentation, notary publics, etc. NRC (2023). *We Want to Know More: Cross-Border Housing, Land and Property Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq*.
- <sup>143</sup> NRC (2023). *We Want to Know More: Cross-Border Housing, Land and Property Assistance for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq*.
- <sup>144</sup> KII 1 NRC Jordan.
- <sup>145</sup> World Bank (2022) *Syria joint damage assessment of selected cities*. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099173502272397116> (Accessed: 23 July 2025).
- <sup>146</sup> NRC & UNHCR (2020). *Reclaiming Home – HLP Rights of Syrian Refugees from Dar'a Governorate Living in Jordan*.

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<sup>147</sup> Legislative Decree No. 66 of 2012 Introduced provisions for urban redevelopment in designated areas of Damascus, enabling the expropriation and redevelopment of informal housing zones under government supervision. Law No. 23 of 2015 Enabled local administrative units to undertake urban planning and redevelopment projects, including the power to appropriate a percentage of private land for projects deemed to be in the public interest. Law No. 10 of 2018 Established legal mechanisms for the creation of redevelopment zones across Syria, requiring property owners to present ownership documentation within specific timeframes to claim compensation or retain rights. Legislative Decree No. 140 of 2023 Provided additional legal grounds for formalising state control over private property for reconstruction purposes, expanding on earlier legislation governing land and property in conflict-affected areas.

<sup>148</sup> Abdulghany, F. (2025) *No Home to Return To: How Assad's Property Seizures in Daraa Blocked Refugee Return*. SNHR (Accessed: 14 July 2025); IEMed (2025) *Refugee Return and the Future of Syria Post-Assad*. Available at: <https://www.iemed.org/publication/refugee-return-and-the-future-of-syria-post-assad/> (Accessed: 30 June 2025); Istaitieh, R., Al Malalha, M. & Jaber, R. (2025) *Jordan's Governance of Syrian Refugee Returns: Policies and Challenges*. GAPs WP4 Country Dossier. Available at: <https://www.returnmigration.eu/wp-series/jordans-governance-of-syrian-refugee-returns> (Accessed: 27 June 2025).

<sup>149</sup> IEMed (2025) *Refugee Return and the Future of Syria Post-Assad*. Available at: <https://www.iemed.org/publication/refugee-return-and-the-future-of-syria-post-assad/> (Accessed: 30 June 2025)

<sup>150</sup> Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/facing-an-impossible-choice-refugee-womens-hlp-rights-in-syria/facing-an-impossible-choice.pdf>

<sup>151</sup> According to NRC's Rapid Needs Assessment (May 2025), 6.9% of Syrian respondents reported that only some household members had the required Jordanian residency documents (ASC or MoI card), while 0.5% said that no one in their household had them.

<sup>152</sup> Completely undocumented is defined as lacking a valid Syrian passport, Syrian identification card, Syrian family booklet or birth certificate.

<sup>153</sup> NRC & UNHCR (2019) *Uncertain Futures: Legal and Civil Documentation, Housing, Land and Property and Challenges to Return for Syrian Refugees*. NRC collected data from nearly 850 households, with responses from more than 3,300 individuals.

<sup>154</sup> NRC & UNHCR (2020) *Regional Policy Brief – Fraudulent Documents and Syrian Refugees in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon*. Internal document Based on data collected there are strong indications that many refugees from Syria living in host countries have obtained, currently possess and use fraudulent documents.

<sup>155</sup> GAPAR, the General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees in Syria, is a governmental body established to manage the affairs of Palestinian refugees in Syria.

<sup>156</sup> NRC & UNHCR (2021) *Regional Policy Brief – The Challenges of Death Registration for Syrian Refugees in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon*. Internal document.

<sup>157</sup> UNHCR (2025) *External Statistical Report on UNHCR Registered Refugees and Asylum-Seekers: Jordan as of 30 June 2025*. UNHCR Operational Data Portal. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/117261> (Accessed: 27 July 2025).