تمكين
TAMKEEN
للمساعدة القانونية وحقوق الانسان
For legal aid and human rights

Trends in the Return of Syrian Refugees in Jordan to Their Home Country

2025

Contents

Introduction

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Jordan has hosted approximately 1.3 million Syrian refugees, including 557,783 registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of March 31, 20251. This figure represents about a quarter of the estimated 6.2 million Syrian refugees dispersed around the world.

Following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2024, attention has turned to the future of Syrian refugees and their willingness to return to Syria, especially after years of displacement caused by the prolonged conflict, which forced many to flee their homeland. With the regime's collapse, a number of refugees began returning to Syria from the very first day.

In Jordan, according to UNHCR data, approximately 55,732 Syrian refugees voluntarily returned to their country between December 8, 2024, and April 12, 20252. The majority of returnees, 84%, had been residing in urban areas, while 16% had been living in refugee camps.

Nevertheless, many challenges still face returnees, such as the widespread destruction of infrastructure in several areas of Syria, and the fact that the security and political situation remains far from fully stable. To overcome these challenges, host countries play a crucial role by facilitating the voluntary return process and providing logistical support and necessary assistance, such as ensuring safe transportation, securing temporary housing, and offering psychosocial support to returning refugees. Additionally, the international community is called upon to provide the financial and technical support needed for reconstruction and stabilization, which would help create a conducive environment for refugee returns.

As for Syrian refugees who have not returned to Syria, they continue to face significant challenges regarding the aid they receive, which has been declining in both value and reach in recent years3. This decline is due to several factors, including shifting priorities among international donors and the economic pressures facing host countries. As a result, many Syrian refugees in Jordan remain hesitant to make the decision to return to a country that still grapples with economic, security, and political challenges; issues that may take years to resolve and return to pre-crisis conditions.

In light of the ongoing challenges faced by Syrian refugees in Jordan, a survey on "Trends in the Return of Syrian Refugees in Jordan to Their Home Country" has been conducted to understand their intentions and gather information on the extent of their willingness to return to Syria, as well as the factors influencing their decisions whether economic, social, political, or security-related. The survey also aims to assess the current living conditions of refugees in Jordan and the extent to which these conditions affect their decision to return.

1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
2 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
3 According to interviews conducted by the Tamkeen team with a number of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Methodology and Sample

Jordan is one of the main countries that has hosted a large number of Syrian refugees during the crisis in Syria. Following the fall of the regime, it became essential to understand the situation of these refugees and assess their willingness and the challenges they face regarding their return to their homeland. In this context, a field survey was conducted using a questionnaire as the primary tool for collecting data and information related to Syrians residing in Jordan.

The questionnaire is an effective method for collecting information in a systematic way. It was designed in alignment with the objectives of the research report to ensure the accuracy of results and the representativeness of the sample. Facilitators were engaged to collect responses from Syrian participants included in the survey. The questionnaire consisted of a series of questions targeting each participant and covered several main areas, including: participants' demographic characteristics, the sectors in which they work, and whether they possess work permits. It also included inquiries about their willingness to return to Syria, reasons for considering return, obstacles they face in making this decision, as well as the reasons why some groups are unwilling to return.

The study population consists of Syrian refugees residing in Jordan. A convenience random sample was selected for data collection and analysis. The survey included a sample of 1,242 Syrian men and women in Jordan, with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of the current situation of Syrians in the country and assessing their desires and challenges regarding return to Syria.

By analyzing the collected data, several important findings can be drawn that shed light on the challenges faced by Syrians in Jordan, as well as the factors influencing their decision to return to Syria. Respondent interviews were conducted both via telephone and through direct, in-person interviews with Syrian refugees.

It is important to note that telephone surveys are a valuable tool for collecting data on refugees' intentions to return to their home countries, as they provide a fast and efficient means of gathering information and deriving insights that can influence refugee-related policies and decisions. However, these surveys face several limitations that must be taken into account to ensure their accuracy and effectiveness. One such limitation is that the results reflect the refugees' intentions at a specific point in time. As the surrounding circumstances, whether political, social, or economic, continue to change over time as they may influence refugees' willingness to return. Therefore, such surveys should be viewed as a temporary snapshot of the current situation.

Survey Results Analysis

Demographic Characteristics

Understanding the demographic, social, and educational characteristics of Syrian refugees in Jordan is of great importance for several reasons related to the survey findings on refugees' willingness to return to their country. This understanding helps identify the factors influencing their decisions, such as the economic, social, and educational conditions in which they currently live in Jordan.

Based on the survey, which included (1,242) Syrian refugees in Jordan, the results showed that the number of male participants was (863), while the number of female participants was (379).

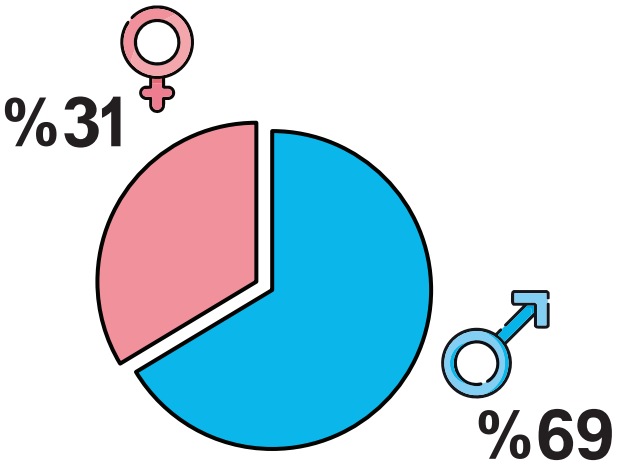

chart No. (1): Distribution of the sample individuals according to gender

With regard to the age group of the survey participants, they were classified into three main groups to facilitate data analysis and better understand the distribution of age categories. The first group includes individuals aged between 18 and 35 years, representing the largest proportion of the sample, with a total of 623 individuals, accounting for 50% of the participants. The second group comprises individuals aged between 36 and 59 years, totaling 553 individuals, which constitutes 45% of the sample. The third group includes individuals aged 60 years and above, with a total of 66 individuals, representing 5% of the total.

This data indicates that the vast majority of participants are youth and members of the active labor force. Their continued presence contributes positively to the labor market. Consequently, their return to their country of origin could lead to challenges in certain economic sectors such as agriculture and construction, which heavily rely on Syrian refugee labor.

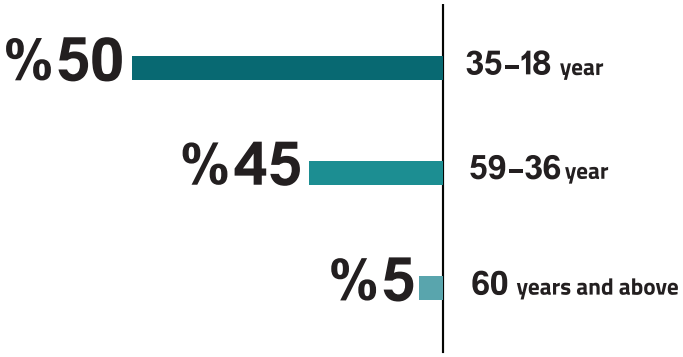

Table No. (2): Distribution of the sample individuals according to age

In terms of marital status, the results indicate that the majority of surveyed individuals are married, representing 75% of the sample, followed by single individuals at 18%. Widowed individuals make up 5% of the sample, while divorced individuals represent only 2%. This high percentage of married participants may have a direct impact on decisions related to returning to Syria, as family responsibilities could impose additional challenges that need to be considered when making such decisions. This is supported by data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which shows that 54% of returnees from Jordan to Syria were complete families, totaling 29,924, while 46% were partial family returnees, totaling 25,808, during the period from the fall of Bashar Al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2024, to April 12, 2025[4].

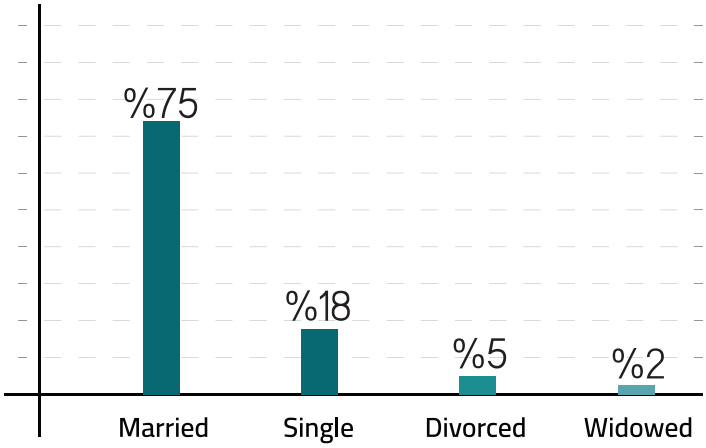

Table No. (3): Distribution of the sample individuals according to marital status

With regard to the educational level of the survey participants, the results show that the majority of the sample which amounts to 80.2%, hold a Tawjihi certificate (high school) or lower. Illiterate individuals constitute 8.1% of the sample. Those holding a bachelor's degree make up 3.9%, while individuals with a diploma or vocational training represent 7.6%. Lastly, participants with postgraduate degrees make up a very small portion, accounting for only 0.20% of the total sample. This may suggest that the low level of education has an impact on the decision to return to Syria, as it may limit employment opportunities and increase reliance on aid in the host country.

Educational Level	Number	Percentage
Illiterate	101	8.1%
Bachelor's Degree	48	3.9%
Tawjihi or below	996	80.2%
Diploma / Vocational Training	94	7.6%
Postgraduate Studies	3	0.20%
Total	1242	100%

Table No. (4): Distribution of the sample individuals according to educational level

4 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Distribution of the Sample Individuals According to Method of Entry into Jordan

The Syrian crisis began in 2011, leading to a mass displacement of Syrians to neighboring countries, including Jordan, which shares a border with Syria. Jordan became one of the main destinations for refugees due to its relative stability compared to the conflict zones.

There were multiple methods of entry into Jordan: regular entry through official border crossings using visas and other documents, and irregular entry by crossing the land borders unofficially. The latter occurred for several reasons: most notably, that many refugees were forced to enter Jordan urgently without completing official procedures due to indiscriminate shelling and military operations in Syria. These circumstances led civilians to flee without prior planning, especially since the borders were close to areas of conflict.

Accordingly, when analyzing the distribution of the sample based on the method of entry during the war years, it is evident that a significant portion which amounts to 63% constituting 780 individuals, entered through irregular means. This may be attributed to the fact that they were compelled to cross the border to escape bombardment in their home areas. In contrast, 462 individuals entered through regular channels, representing 37% of the sample.

In conclusion, the vast majority of the sample entered Jordan through irregular means, reflecting the emergency nature of the displacement during the Syrian crisis. In contrast, regular entries were in the minority and typically depended on individuals' personal capacity to leave Syria and reach a host country through organized channels.

Table No. (5): Distribution of the sample individuals according to method of entry into Jordan

Distribution of the Sample Individuals According to Possession of a UNHCR Card

The data show that the vast majority of survey participants possess a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Card, with 1,207 individuals, representing 97% of the total sample. In contrast, only 35 individuals, constituting 3% do not possess a UNHCR Card.

One of the main reasons refugees are issued a UNHCR Card is to obtain legal status, which allows them access to essential services such as free healthcare and education. Without this card, a refugee is at risk of being deprived of humanitarian assistance.

Accordingly, the UNHCR works to register refugees upon their arrival in Jordan in order to provide legal protection, cash and food assistance, and the possibility of resettlement in third countries.

The cards also facilitate the distribution of aid by the Jordanian government and international organizations, as they enable better organization, coordination, and unification of humanitarian efforts provided to refugees. In addition, the cards help generate accurate statistics on the number of refugees, contributing to the availability of official and reliable figures. This mechanism also works to reduce the number of refugees who are not registered in official records.

As for the group that does not possess the card, it is possible that these individuals have recently entered Jordan and have not yet completed the registration procedures, or they may be unaware of the process altogether.

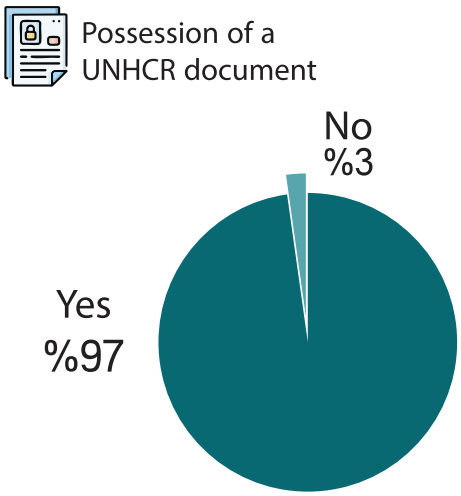

Table No. (6): Distribution of the Sample Individuals According to Possession of a UNHCR Card

Distribution of the Sample Individuals by Place of Residence: Camp vs. Non-Camp

The results indicate that the majority of individuals representing 88%, or 1,087 people; do not reside in camps. In contrast, 12% of the sample, totaling 155 individuals, live in camps.

As for the distribution of camp residents, the data show that Azraq Camp houses 23 individuals, accounting for 14% of the camp population. Zaatari Camp includes only one individual, making up 1%. The majority, however, live in informal tented settlements, with 131 individuals representing 85% of those residing in camps.

These figures suggest that living in informal settlements is the most common arrangement among camp residents. This may reflect specific challenges related to inadequate housing and poor living conditions in such areas.

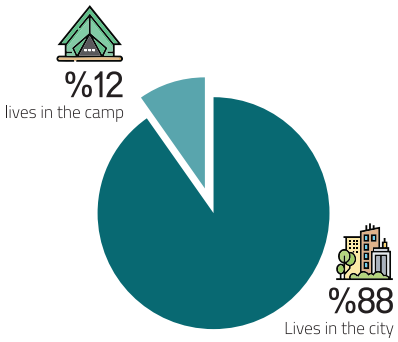

Table No. (7): Distribution of the Sample Individuals by Place of Residence: Camp vs. Non-Camp

Table No. (8): Distribution of the Sample Individuals According to Camp Name

Distribution of the Sample Individuals According to Number of Years Resided in Jordan

As for the distribution of the sample individuals based on the number of years they have resided in Jordan, the results show variation in the duration of stay among participants. The majority of the sample 93.6% consists of individuals who have lived in Jordan for 14 years or less. This reflects the settlement of the sample population in Jordan since the onset of the crisis in their home country, and their continued residence throughout the years of the conflict.

In contrast, 6.1% of the sample have spent 15 years or more in Jordan, indicating a small segment of individuals who were already residing in Jordan before the start of the crisis but later applied for refugee status through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Additionally, a very small percentage 0.3%, comprises individuals who have been in Jordan for less than 5 years, which may indicate recent arrivals or short-term stay.

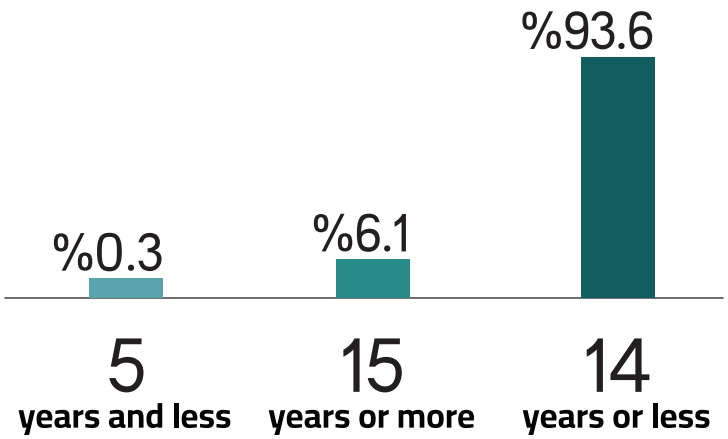

Table No. (9): Distribution of the Sample Individuals According to Number of Years Resided in Jordan

Distribution of the Sample Individuals by Governorate

According to the distribution of the sample across governorates, the results show that Zarqa Governorate accounted for the largest portion of the sample at 26%, with (323 individuals). It is followed by Amman Governorate with 24% (298 individuals), then Mafraq at 23.8% (296 individuals). Irbid Governorate ranked next with 12% (149 individuals).

On the other hand, the governorates of Tafileh and Aqaba recorded the lowest percentages 0.2% and 0.4%, with 3 and 5 individuals, respectively. Additionally, Karak Governorate included 4% of the sample (50 individuals), while the remaining percentages were distributed in smaller proportions across the governorates of Balqa, Jerash, Ajloun, Madaba, and Ma'an.

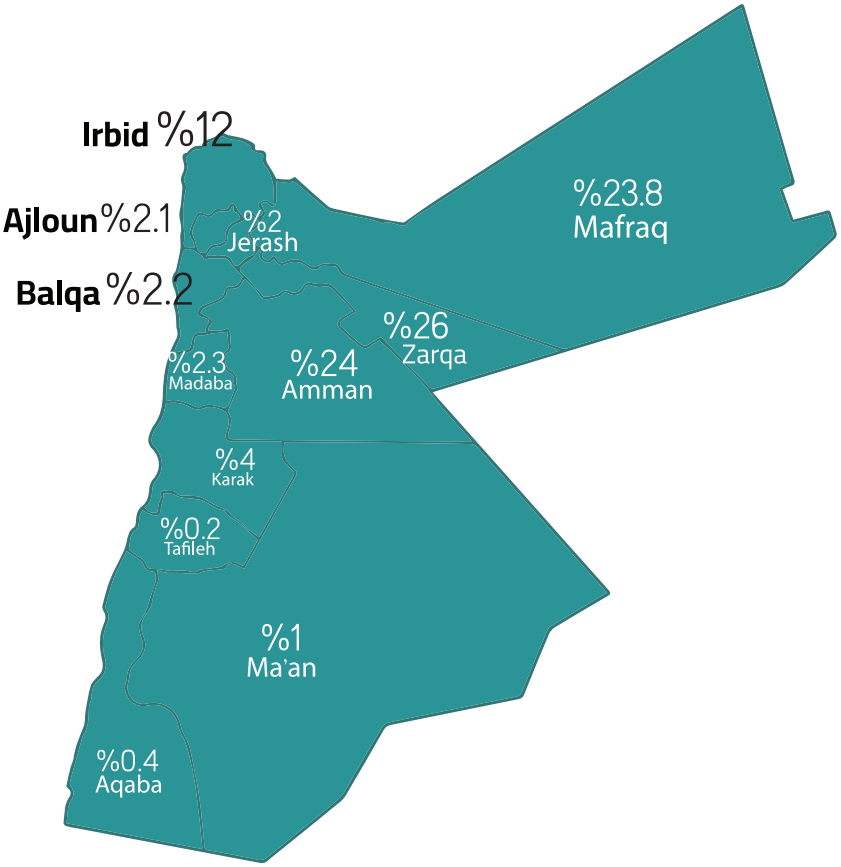

Table No. (10): Distribution of the Sample Individuals by Governorate

Return to Syria (Willingness to Return, Reasons, Timing)

Although Jordan has allowed Syrian refugees the option of voluntary return throughout the years of the Syrian crisis, the data indicates that 896 individuals, representing 72% of the survey participants, do not wish to return at the present time. In contrast, 346 individuals, or 28%, expressed a desire to return.

These figures reflect the preference of the majority of the sample to remain in Jordan for now, despite any challenges they may face. The high percentage of those wishing to stay is attributed to the fact that many participants have experienced improved living conditions compared to Syria. Contributing factors include access to employment opportunities, political and security stability, as Jordan being safer than conflict-affected areas in Syria and better access to education and healthcare, especially for children. Additionally, some individuals are not convinced that the situation in Syria has improved, and others fear losing the benefits they have acquired in Jordan.

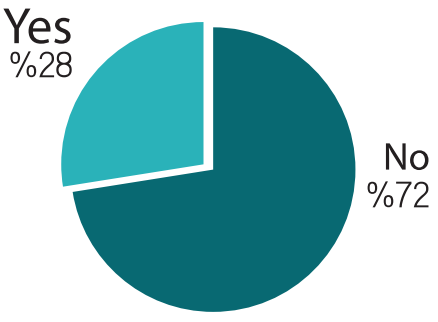

Table No. (11) Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Their Willingness to Return to Syria

Regarding the expected timeframe for return among those willing to return. The data indicates that the majority of individuals who wish to return prefer to do so within a relatively short period. Specifically, 54% of respondents expressed a desire to return within six months. Meanwhile, 22% are willing to return within three years, and 21% prefer to return within three months.

It is important to note that those who prefer to return within a short timeframe, either within three or six months, often have specific reasons for doing so. Some wish to return after the end of the academic year, highlighting the importance of education in influencing their decision. Others are waiting for their work permits to expire, or aim to return after settling their financial obligations.

Within the next 6 months

%54

Within the next 5 years

%3

Within the next 3 years

%22

Within the next 3 months

%21

Table No. (12) Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Their Expected Timeframe for Returning to Syria

The data reveals several reasons contributing to the delay in returning to Syria among respondents. The primary reason, cited by 18% of participants, is the need for sufficient financial resources to start a new life in Syria. This underscores the importance of financial stability in the decision to return. The second most cited reason (15%) is the need to pay off existing financial obligations is a prerequisite for returning, reflecting the financial burden many individuals face while abroad. Economic and social conditions in Syria come in third, mentioned by 13% of respondents. Additionally, 10% indicated that security and stability in Syria is a crucial factor influencing their return, highlighting safety concerns. 8% noted that the end of the academic year affects the timing of their return, while 2% said that expiration of work permits is a reason for delaying their return. These findings reflect the multiple and complex challenges individuals face when considering returning to Syria.

Reasons for delaying return to Syria

%13
Economic and social conditions in Syria

%15
Completion of outstanding financial obligations

%18
Availability of sufficient funds to start over in Syria

%2
Expiry of work permits

%8
End of the academic year

%10
Stability of security onditions in Syria

Table No. (13) Distribution of Respondents by Reasons for Delaying Return to Syria

There is a wide range of factors influencing respondents' decisions to return to Syria. Family ties appear to play a key role, with 15.7% of participants citing the return of relatives to Syria as the primary reason, highlighting the familial connections behind such decisions. Additionally, 13.61% of respondents indicated that the high cost of obtaining work permits in Jordan is a major factor driving them toward return, reflecting the financial burden associated with legal employment. Limited job opportunities in Jordan were cited by 8.78% as another push factor. Furthermore, 8.37% of respondents stated that owning a home in Syria influences their decision to return. 7.57% believe that security threats have ended, making return more viable. The cessation of humanitarian aid was also noted by 6.76% as a reason for return. Other reasons include having a profession or job in Syria (3.86%), and for 2.9%, an irregular legal status in Jordan specifically, 31 individuals reported not holding a valid work permit. Additionally, 2.74% believe that security conditions have improved in Syria, while 1.77% consider the economic and social conditions in Syria to be better than in Jordan. In conclusion, the decision to return is influenced by a combination of financial, security, social, and legal factors. While a minority expresses readiness to return, the majority prefers to remain in Jordan due to tangible gains and a sense of relative stability they are unwilling to forfeit.

Reason for Wanting to Return to Syria	Number	Percentage
Return of relatives to Syria	195	15.7%
High cost of obtaining work permits	169	13.61%
Lack of job opportunities in Jordan	109	8.78%
I own a house in Syria	104	8.37%
All security threats have ended (e.g., evasion of public service, military service)	94	7.57%
Cessation of aid	84	6.76%
I have a profession or job in Syria	48	3.86%
My legal status in Jordan is irregular	36	2.9%
Syria is now safe	34	2.74%
Better economic and social conditions in Syria	22	1.77%

Table No. (14) Distribution of Respondents According to Reasons for Wanting to Return to Syria

Reasons for Not Returning to Syria

There are many reasons that lead Syrian refugees, both inside and outside the camps, to hesitate in returning to their country, despite the Jordanian government's assurances that the return will be voluntary and safe.

According to the survey results, there are several main reasons preventing Syrians from returning to their homeland. The most common reason is the lack of adequate housing in Syria. About 59.26% of the respondents indicated that this issue poses a major obstacle to return, reflecting the destruction of Syria's infrastructure, particularly in major cities such as Aleppo, Damascus, and Raqqa. Many homes are either completely destroyed or require costly rehabilitation, and these refugees do not have the financial means to rebuild. In addition, there are no clear and effective government policies in Syria for reconstruction or the provision of temporary housing.

Furthermore, the lack of security in Syria is another significant reason. About 56.44% of participants expressed concerns about the security situation, as local conflicts continue in some areas. It is important to note that the absence of safety is a serious indicator, showing that more than half of the refugees do not trust the current security conditions, making return an uncalculated risk.

Moreover, the unstable economic conditions present a major challenge, as 55.07% of individuals indicated that the current economic situation in Syria makes returning impossible for them. There are also social and economic factors that influence the decision not to return. Some individuals prefer to remain in Jordan due to their social and economic stability. For example, 16.26% have all their family members in Jordan, and 11.92% feel economically and socially stable in Jordan. In terms of social stability, this means having all family members in one place. Additionally, some families have children who were born or raised in Jordan. Economic stability, on the other hand, is reflected in the availability of job opportunities, even if limited compared to Syria and access to basic services such as education and healthcare.

Furthermore, a small percentage of individuals (3.14%) are waiting for immigration procedures to be completed in order to move to another country and obtain citizenship or a better legal status. This indicates that some Syrians are seeking new opportunities elsewhere for the time being rather than returning to Syria. These findings make it clear that returning is not the primary or only option. Rather, it is tied to conditions that are currently difficult to meet. Many do not have homes to return to; especially with the destruction of infrastructure and the economy in many cities while Jordan still offers a minimal level of stability despite its challenges.

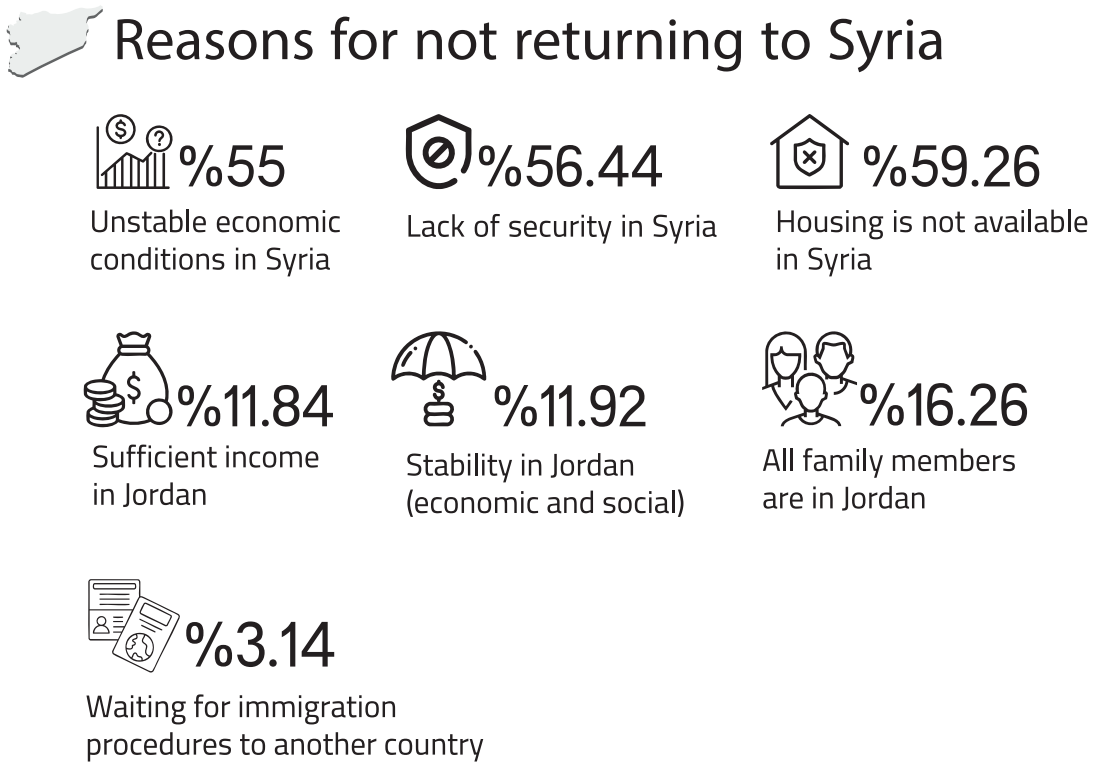

Table No. (15): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Reasons for Not Returning to Syria

Assistance Received by Syrian Refugees in Jordan

When discussing the assistance received by Syrian refugees in Jordan, the data indicates that a significant portion of refugees are not currently receiving any support. Specifically, 70% of the sample reported receiving no form of assistance, while only 30% of refugees stated that they do receive aid. As for the source of this assistance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the primary provider, offering support to 89% of those receiving aid. Whereas, a small percentage amounting to 2% reported receiving assistance from UNHCR in addition to other organizations or entities, while 9% receive support exclusively from other organizations or sources.

In terms of the type of assistance provided, cash assistance is the most common, accounting for 79% of all aid received. In-kind assistance makes up 20%, while a very small proportion representing 1% reported receiving a combination of both cash and in-kind support.

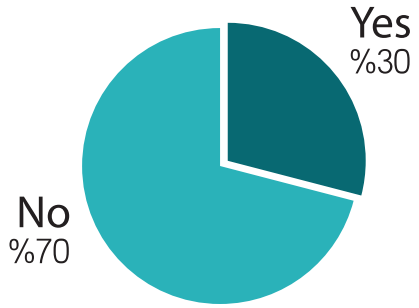

Table No. (16): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Whether They Receive Assistance

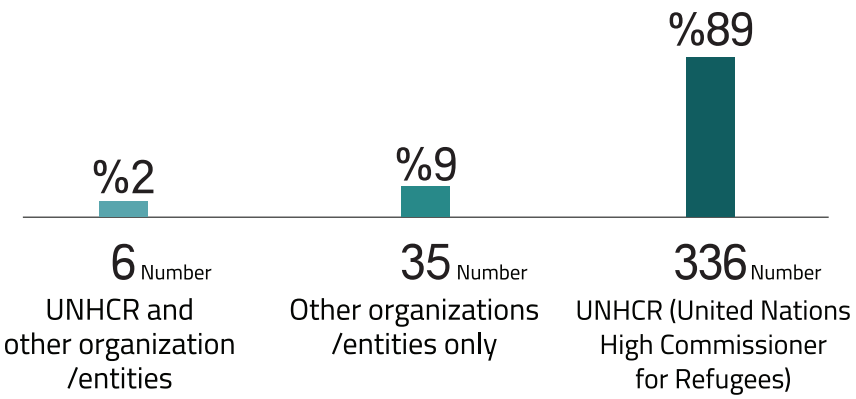

Table No. (17): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Source of Assistance

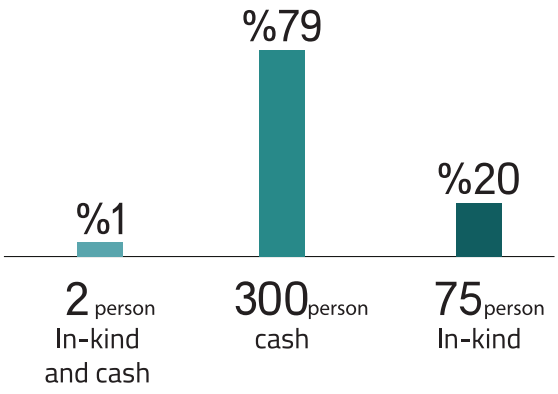

Table No. (18): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Type of Assistance

Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Income Compared to Needs

The results reveal that Syrian refugees in Jordan are experiencing difficult economic conditions. About 69% of the sample suffer from a shortfall in meeting their basic needs such as food, housing, healthcare, and education. This indicates widespread poverty among Syrian refugees in Jordan and a limited ability to achieve even a minimum level of living stability. This, in turn, negatively affects their choices and their ability to make a voluntary return decision.

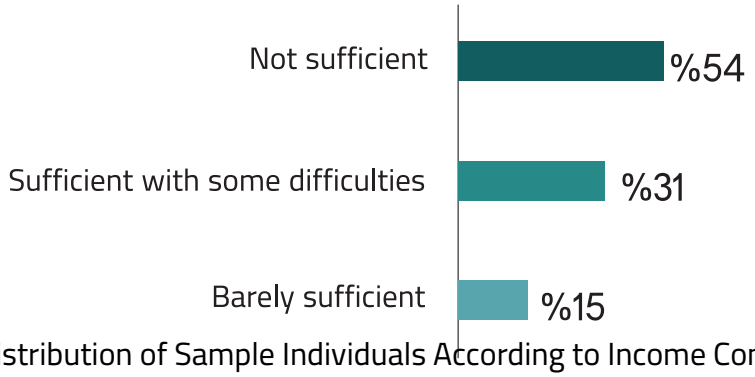

Table No. (19): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Income Compared to Needs

Impact of the Fall of the Bashar al-Assad Regime on Receiving Assistance

It was important to ask all surveyed individuals about the impact of the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime on the assistance they receive. The results show that a significant portion accounting for 61% of the sample, representing 754 individuals, reported that all aid stopped following the fall of the regime. This may indicate a shift in priorities among donors and organizations operating in the region. Meanwhile, 21% (257 individuals) indicated that the assistance remained unchanged.

The results highlight that political decisions play a critical role in shaping the course of humanitarian assistance. The fall of the Syrian regime led to the cessation of support for the majority of refugees, which further exacerbates their living challenges and weakens their ability to make future decisions, such as voluntary return. Additionally, this reality underscores the instability of funding mechanisms in the face of sudden political changes, which undermines the ability to provide sustainable and consistent support to the most vulnerable groups.

Table No. (19): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to the Impact of the Fall of the Regime on Receiving Assistance

Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan

The survey results show a relative balance between those who are employed and those who are not. About 52% of the respondents (649 individuals) reported that they are working, while 48% (593 individuals) said they are not. This distribution indicates that the sample is nearly evenly split between those who are able to engage in the labor market and those who are not.

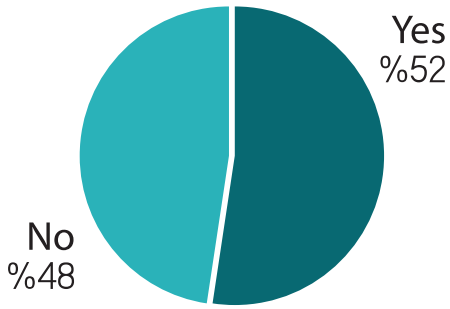

Table No. (20): Distribution of Sample Individuals by Employment Status

Regarding the nature of employment, the vast majority of the 649 working individuals are employed without stable or regular income, indicating involvement in the informal sector, which lacks labor rights such as fair wages, annual and sick leave, social security coverage, and other protections guaranteed by labor laws. The results show that 61% (398 individuals) rely on daily wage labor, which reflects their vulnerable economic situation, as they depend on irregular job opportunities that offer neither steady income nor social protection.

Additionally, 35% (228 individuals) of the sample work without a formal contract. In contrast, only 4% (23 individuals) are employed under an official contract.

%61	%35	%4
Irregular daily wage labor	Without a contract	With a contract

Table No. (21): Distribution of Sample Individuals by Nature of Employment

Regarding the distribution of individuals by employment sector, the results show that the construction and utilities sector ranks highest, employing 28% of the sample. This may suggest that many Syrian refugees work in construction due to their skills in this field or because the sector often does not require advanced skills or fluency in a second language. The agriculture sector comes next, employing 22%. Work in this sector is often seasonal, characterized by low wages and difficult conditions, although it sometimes provides accommodation for the worker and their family.

Commercial stores sector ranks third at 16%, where many refugees work in sales, which offers a source of income but lacks job stability. The Bakery Worker/ restaurant sector accounts for 8%, while self-employment makes up 7%, including small businesses such as tailoring or home-based sales. This reflects a trend among some refugees to pursue entrepreneurship and establish independent income sources. Approximately 5% are employed in the manufacturing sector. Other occupations, such as tailoring, beauty services (salons), mechanical repair, and cleaning, each account for between 1% and 3%. Sectors like education, security, and administrative professions are scarcely represented, each comprising less than 1% of refugee employment.

It is important to note that the majority of Syrian refugees who are employed tend to be concentrated in physically demanding and low-paying jobs. These sectors typically lack decent working conditions and formal labor protections.

Employment Sector	Number	Percentage
Self-employment	47	7%
Construction and utilities	182	28%
Loading and unloading	8	1%
Education	7	1%
Security	2	0%
Tailoring	21	3%
Agriculture	146	22%
Beauty salons	14	2%
Commercial shops	104	16%
Factories and companies	31	5%
Restaurants/Bakeries	55	8%
Administrative jobs	6	1%
Mechanics	16	2%
Cleaning	10	2%
Total	649	100%

Table No. (22): Distribution of Sample Individuals by Employment Sector

The results related to possession of a work permit reveal that the overwhelming majority of respondents approximately 90% (1,122 individuals) do not have a work permit, while only 10% (120 individuals) reported having one.

This high percentage of individuals without a work permit may reflect several factors, including the high cost of obtaining a permit and the lack of stable employment opportunities, among others.

It is important to note that prior to 2016, Jordan did not allow Syrian refugees to obtain work permits, which led them to rely entirely on informal employment. However, following the London Conference in 2016, Syrian refugees were granted permission to apply for work permits, and were exempted from issuance fees. This policy remained in effect until mid-June 2024, after which Syrian workers became subject to the same conditions as other non-Jordanian laborers in order to obtain a permit.

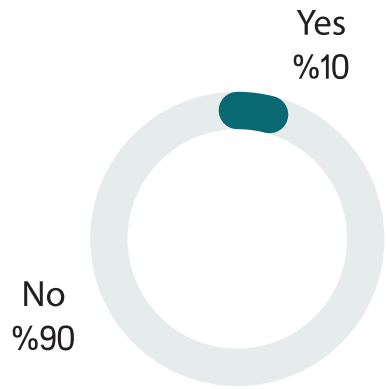

Table No. (23): Distribution of Sample Individuals by Possession of a Work Permit

The data collected from the surveyed sample regarding the impact of possessing a work permit on securing stable employment reveal diverse opinions. The findings show that 46% of the sample believe that having a work permit significantly helps in obtaining a stable job. In contrast, 38% of respondents stated that the permit had no noticeable impact on job stability. The remaining 16% felt that the permit somewhat helps in achieving employment stability.

This variation reflects the influence of multiple factors on the likelihood of securing a job when holding a permit, such as the type of sector, the employer's willingness to issue a permit, and the difficult economic conditions coupled with a shortage of stable opportunities. Those who view the permit as important believe it facilitates access to continuous work and provides legal protection, allowing them to work lawfully. On the other hand, some participants felt that the permit had little impact, as they continue to work in the informal sector with intermittent employment. Others thought the permit might be somewhat beneficial, as it reduces legal liability, though it does not improve working conditions or increase wages.

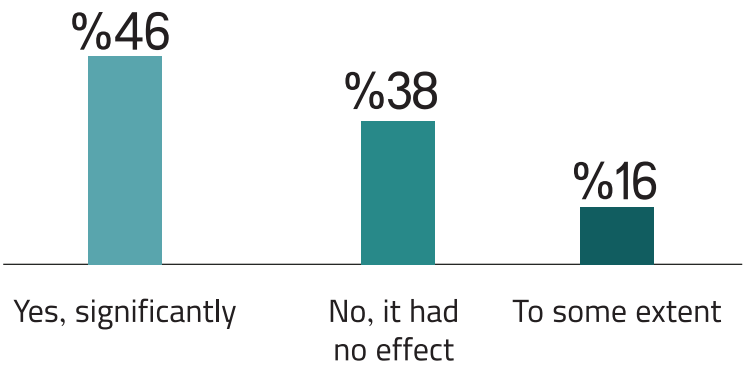

Table No. (24): Distribution of Sample Individuals by the Perceived Impact of a Work Permit on Securing Stable Employment

Distribution of Sample Individuals Based on the Existence of Barriers to Returning to Syria

The results reveal the views of the 1,242 surveyed individuals regarding the potential obstacles they might face when considering returning to Syria. According to the data, 75% (932 individuals) reported that no barriers hinder their return, while 25% (310 individuals) indicated the existence of obstacles preventing them from returning.

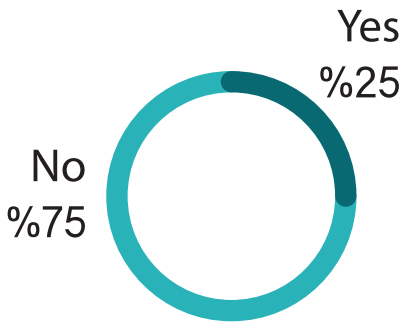

Table No. (25): Distribution of Sample Individuals by the Existence of Barriers to Returning to Syria

There are several barriers preventing individuals from returning to Syria, varying between economic and legal in nature. The most frequently reported obstacle is the difficulty in obtaining a work permit, cited by 16% of respondents. This is followed by the high cost of living at 14%, and labor inspections conducted by the Ministry of Labor, accounting for 13%. Additionally, 3% of participants identified other barriers, such as chronic health conditions, limited access to healthcare services, and inadequate housing in Syria. Moreover, mobility restrictions, such as the inability to leave and re-enter Jordan if conditions in Syria prove unfavorable, further complicate the decision to return.

These various barriers are interconnected and collectively influence the decision to return to Syria. The lack of economic security, for instance, is closely tied to the loss of income sources, which increases dependence on external aid and reduces individuals' capacity to return. Moreover, the continued instability in security conditions heightens Syrian refugees' hesitation to take the step of returning, undermining the stability of returnees and contributing to the ongoing crisis. In addition, the availability of basic services and the level of stability play a pivotal role in this context. The deterioration of the health and education sectors has a negative impact on living conditions in Syria, prompting many potential returnees to remain in host countries in search of better living standards. These internal challenges are compounded by external factors, such as international sanctions imposed on Syria, which hinder reconstruction efforts, raise unemployment rates, and increase the cost of living; making daily life even more difficult for Syrians.

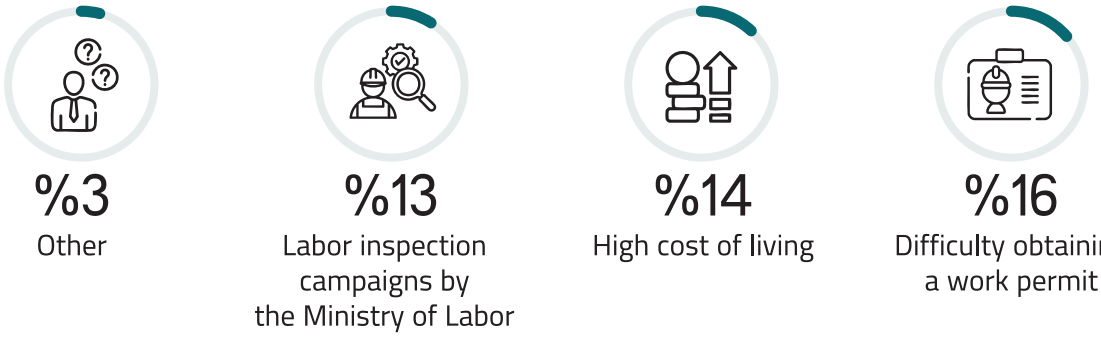

Table No. (26): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Barriers to Returning to Syria

Distribution of Respondents by Governorate and Their Willingness to Return to Syria

The survey data reveals the distribution of respondents by governorate and their willingness to return to Syria, with significant variations between regions. Amman recorded the highest percentage of respondents expressing a desire to return, with 165 individuals (55.4% of the governorate's sample) indicating their willingness to return, compared to 133 individuals (44.6%) who preferred to stay.

In contrast, the percentage in Zarqa was notably lower, with only 61 individuals (18.9%) expressing a desire to return, while 262 individuals (81.1%) rejected the idea.

Meanwhile, some governorates with very few respondents such as (Tafilah, Aqaba, and Ma'an) reported a willingness to return, which may be attributed to the smaller refugee populations in those areas and limited job opportunities. On the other hand, relatively high percentages were observed in Karak (52%) and Ma'an (83.3%), despite the small sample sizes in these areas. This may indicate motivating factors for return, such as limited employment prospects.

Amid prevailing economic and social conditions, refugees' willingness to return to their homeland varies based on several influencing factors. For instance, in the capital, Amman which offers abundant job opportunities; many refugees prefer to stay and benefit from these opportunities that may not be available in other areas such as Ma'an. Conversely, in Ma'an, where job opportunities are scarce and the refugee population is lower, there is a stronger inclination toward returning to Syria. This decision is largely driven by the lack of economic prospects, which diminishes the desire to remain. In Zarqa, on the other hand, refugees tend to wait until the situation in Syria fully stabilizes before making a decision to return. This waiting period reflects their desire to ensure financial stability, which would allow them to rebuild their lives upon return.

In conclusion, these variations highlight that the decision to return to Syria is shaped by multiple factors, including the economic conditions of the host governorate, the nature of refugee communities, the opportunities available in Syria, and the duration of displacement.

Amman	
No	Yes
165	133

Balqa	
No	Yes
23	4

Zarqa	
No	Yes
262	61

Mafraq	
No	Yes
254	42

Aqaba	
No	Yes
1	4

Jerash	
No	Yes
22	3

Ajloun	
No	Yes
20	6

Irbid	
No	Yes
127	22

Tafilah	
No	Yes
3	0

Ma'an	
No	Yes
2	10

Karak	
No	Yes
24	26

Madaba	
No	Yes
25	3

Table No. (27): Distribution of Sample Individuals by Governorate and Willingness to Return to Syria

Length of Stay in Jordan and Syrian Refugees' Willingness to Return to Syria

The data reveals a clear correlation between the length of stay in Jordan and Syrian refugees' willingness to return to Syria. The vast majority of those who have been residing in Jordan for 14 years or less (821 individuals from the total sample) do not wish to return, compared to only 342 individuals who expressed a desire to go back. As for those who have been residing in Jordan for 15 years or more, 74 individuals indicated they do not wish to return, while only 2 expressed a desire to do so. The group that has been in Jordan for less than 5 years is very small (3 individuals), making it difficult to draw any generalized conclusions about them.

These results suggest an inverse relationship between length of stay and willingness to return to Syria, as the longer the duration of stay, the lower the desire to return. This supports the hypothesis of "voluntary integration" over time, where refugees gradually become part of the host society and feel less connected to their country of origin. However, this does not mean they completely dismiss the idea of returning, especially if conditions in Syria significantly improve and stability is restored.

Number of Years Residing in Jordan	Do You Wish to Return to Syria?	
	No	Yes
14 years or less	821	342
15 years or more	74	2
Less than 5 years	1	2
Total	896	346

Table No. (28): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Number of Years Residing in Jordan and Willingness to Return to Syria

Willingness to Return to Syria by Timeframe

The results show that among the respondents willing to return to Syria are (346 individuals) according to the period in which they plan to return. The majority of 189 individuals (54.6%) prefer to return within the next six months. Additionally, 71 individuals (20.5%) wish to return within the next three months. As for medium-term return plans, 77 individuals (22.3%) prefer to return within the next three years, which may indicate a cautious approach as they wait for more stability in Syria or to settle their financial and legal matters before returning. On the other hand, only 9 individuals (2.6%) plan to return within the next five years.

The data indicates a division among Syrians who are considering returning to their homeland: half prefer to return within six months, possibly reflecting either improvements in conditions inside Syria or economic pressures in host countries. Meanwhile, a quarter of the sample adopts a more cautious stance, opting to wait three years or more before returning. This delay likely reflects their expectations for improvements in security and economic conditions in Syria to make it more stable.

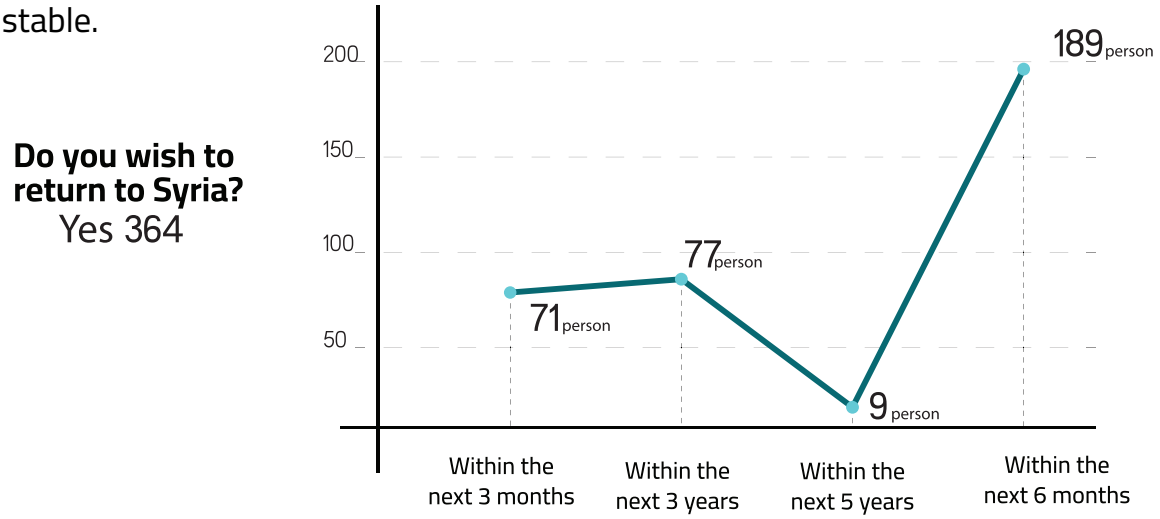

Table No. (29): Distribution of Respondents According to Their Willingness to Return to Syria and the Planned Timeframe

Monthly Income Sufficiency and Syrian Refugees' Willingness to Return

The data reveals a clear correlation between the sufficiency of monthly income and Syrian refugees' willingness to return to their homeland. Among the 1,242 individuals surveyed, 71.8% a total of 896 individuals expressed no desire to return, compared to 28.2% (346 individuals) who indicated a willingness to return.

Notably, the proportion of those willing to return decreases as income sufficiency improves. Among individuals whose income is insufficient (673 individuals), 21.4% (144 individuals) expressed a desire to return. The percentage rises to 41.3% (76 individuals) among those whose income is barely sufficient (184 individuals). Among those whose income is sufficient but with some difficulties (385 individuals), 32.7% (126 individuals) reported a willingness to return.

A striking finding is that the highest percentage of willingness to return is observed among the group whose income is barely sufficient, at 41.3%, rather than among the poorest group, whose rate stands at 21.4%. This suggests that multiple factors influence the decision to return. Among these factors is a certain level of financial stability that enables individuals to plan for return, as they may view going back as an opportunity to improve their economic situation; especially given the rising cost of living in Jordan. This financial stability provides them with the ability to absorb the risks associated with return—an option that may not be available to the poorest groups, who may see returning as a risk and may hold a more pessimistic view regarding their prospects for improvement in Syria. Meanwhile, the middle group (those whose income is barely sufficient) may perceive return as a viable opportunity to enhance their economic status. Those in a slightly better situation (whose income is sufficient but with difficulties) show a moderate willingness to return at a rate of 32.7%.

This indicates that economic factors are not the sole determinants in the decision to return; the economically worst-off are not necessarily the most willing to go back. Willingness to return increases when a limited level of financial stability is present, specifically within the "barely sufficient" group, which may reflect the feasibility of planning for return when conditions are not overly difficult.

How do you evaluate your monthly income compared to your basic needs?	Total	Do you wish to return to Syria?	
		No	Yes
Insufficient	673	529	144
Barely sufficient	184	108	76
Sufficient with some difficulties	385	259	126
Total	1242	896	346

Table No. (30): Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income Compared to Basic Needs and Their Willingness to Return to Syria

Employment Status and the Willingness of Syrian Refugees to Return

The data reveals a correlation between employment status and Syrian refugees' willingness to return to their homeland. Employed individuals appear more willing to return compared to those who are unemployed, highlighting the influence of economic factors in the decision-making process.

Among the unemployed group, which includes 593 individuals (47.7% of the sample), 80% (474 individuals) do not wish to return, while only 20% (119 individuals) expressed a desire to return.

In contrast, among the employed group comprising 649 individuals (52.3% of the sample); there are 65% (422 individuals) who do not wish to return, while 35% (227 individuals) indicated a willingness to return.

Accordingly, the percentage of those willing to return is higher among the employed (35%) compared to the unemployed (20%), which may suggest that having financial resources and access to employment increases the likelihood of considering return. On the other hand, the unemployed may fear a lack of job opportunities in Syria. However, it is important to note that the majority in both groups prefer to remain, reflecting broader concerns beyond the economic dimension such as security or social factors and indicating a relative sense of stability in their current place of residence.

It is also worth noting that the group whose income is "barely sufficient" recorded the highest percentage of willingness to return, at 41.3%, a figure close to the percentage of employed individuals who expressed a willingness to return (35%). These findings highlight the significance of a minimum level of financial stability as a key driver of the willingness to return. It also appears

that having a job or a nearly sufficient income plays a more decisive role in the decision to return than extreme poverty. This suggests that individuals seek a certain level of financial security that allows them to maintain an acceptable standard of living, underscoring the importance of economic safety in decisions related to return.

Do you work?	Total	Do you wish to return to Syria?	
		No	Yes
No	593	474	119
Yes	649	422	227
Total	1242	896	346

Table No. (31): Distribution of Respondents by Employment Status and Willingness to Return to Syria

The Relationship Between Possessing a Work Permit and the Decision to Return to Syria

The findings reveal a connection between possessing a work permit and the decision to return to Syria. The overall data on work permits indicates that the vast majority of the sample 1,122 individuals (90.3%) do not possess a work permit, while only 9.7% (120 individuals) do.

Regarding the relationship between having a work permit and the willingness to return, among the 896 individuals who expressed unwillingness to return to Syria, 93.1% (834 individuals) do not hold a work permit, while only 6.9% (62 individuals) do.

This data suggests that the vast majority of refugees who are unwilling to return to Syria do not possess work permits. This may indicate that legal and economic instability in the host country does not necessarily push them toward return. Instead, they may fear losing even unstable sources of income, be concerned about their ability to find work in Syria, or feel uncertain due to the security and political situation there.

Among those who expressed a desire to return, there were 346 individuals. The figure includes 288 individuals (83.2%) who do not possess a work permit, while 16.8% (58 individuals) do.

Do you wish to return to Syria?	Total	Do you possess a work permit?	
		No	Yes
No	896	834	62
Yes	346	288	58
Total	1242	1122	120

Table No. (32): Distribution of the Sample by Possession of a Work Permit and Willingness to Return to Syria

Willingness to Return to Syria by Gender (Male, Female)

The data reveals a clear disparity in the willingness to return to Syria between genders, with males showing a greater inclination to return compared to females. While females make up 30.5% of the sample, totaling 379 individuals. Among them, 80% (303 individuals) do not wish to return, whereas only 20% (76 individuals) expressed a desire to do so.

Among males, who represent 69.5% of the sample (863 individuals), 68.7% (593 individuals) do not wish to return, while 31.3% (270 individuals) do.

This difference in the desire to return between males and females may be influenced by differing priorities and social roles. For instance, males may be more willing to take the risk of returning in search of job opportunities, especially if they consider themselves the primary breadwinners of the family. Furthermore, if the male is the ultimate decision-maker within the household, the percentage of males expressing a desire to return may be higher even if the women are not in agreement. On the other hand, women often place greater emphasis on family stability, education, and health, making them more cautious about relocating. This caution is particularly evident when women are the primary caregivers for children, as they tend to prefer maintaining a stable environment for their families.

Gender	Total	Do You Wish to Return to Syria?	
		No	Yes
Female	379	303	76
Male	863	593	270
Total	1242	896	346

Table (33): Distribution of Sample by Gender and Desire to Return to Syria

Educational Attainment of Syrian Refugees and Their Desire to Return to Syria

The data reveals a clear relationship between the educational level of Syrian refugees and their desire to return to Syria. The results show that the vast majority of the sample (80.2%) have a school-level education (Tawjihi or below). Among this group, 71.8% do not wish to return, while 28.2% express a desire to do so. In contrast, higher education levels are associated with a greater desire to return. Among those holding a bachelor's degree, 39.6% expressed a desire to return being the highest percentage among all education groups. Among those with a diploma or vocational training, the desire to return stands at 30.9%. Meanwhile, the return rate among illiterate individuals is only 15.8%.

Accordingly, the least educated group (illiterate individuals) shows the highest percentage of reluctance to return (84.2%). The desire to return nearly doubles among university graduates compared to illiterate individuals. As for those with postgraduate education, the sample size is too small (only 3 individuals) to draw generalizable conclusions.

In summary, educational attainment plays a significant role in shaping individuals' orientation toward returning to their country of origin. The higher the level of education, the more likely individuals are to consider returning, especially if the country is in a phase of reconstruction. Conversely, those with lower education levels tend to prefer staying, as they rely more heavily on available job opportunities and assistance provided in the host country.

Educational Level	Total	Do You Wish to Return to Syria?	
		No	Yes
Illiterate	101	85	16
Bachelor's Degree	48	29	19
Tawjihi or Below	996	715	281
Diploma / Vocational Training	94	65	29
Postgraduate Studies	3	2	1
Total	1242	896	346

Table (34): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Educational Level and Desire to Return to Syria

Desire to Return to Syria Among Syrian Refugees Residing Inside and Outside Camps

The data reveals clear differences in the desire to return to Syria between Syrian refugees living inside camps and those living outside. The results show that among the 1,087 individuals residing outside camps representing 87.5% of the sample, 71.5% (777 individuals) of them do not wish to return, while 28.5% (310 individuals) expressed a desire to do so.

In contrast, among the 155 individuals living inside camps representing 12.5% of the sample, 76.8% (119 individuals) do not wish to return, and 23.2% (36 individuals) expressed a desire to do so.

The findings indicate that those residing outside camps are more inclined to consider returning (28.5%) compared to camp residents (23.2%). However, it is noteworthy that the majority in both groups prefer to remain in their current place of residence.

Do You Live in a Camp?	Total	Do You Wish to Return to Syria?	
		No	Yes
No	1087	777	310
Yes	155	119	36
Total	1242	896	346

Table (35): Distribution of Sample Individuals According to Camp Residence and Desire to Return to Syria

Key Findings from the Survey:

1. There are numerous factors influencing refugees' desire to return to Syria, making the return decision far more complex than it may appear.

2. There is a notable variation in the preferences and attitudes among Syrian respondents, with their decisions shaped by economic, social, and security-related factors.

3. The data shows that 72% of Syrian refugees in Jordan do not currently wish to return to Syria. The primary reasons behind this decision include the lack of adequate housing, with 59.26% expressing concern in this regard, in addition to the absence of security (56.44%) and unstable economic conditions (55.07%).

4. There are certain reasons that lead some refugees to consider returning, such as the return of relatives (15.7%) and the high cost of work permits in Jordan (13.61%). Nevertheless, the likelihood of return for Syrian refugees in Jordan remains limited, as it heavily depends on the security, economic, and social conditions within Syria.

5. There are concerns related to housing and legal issues such as missing documents and property deeds, in addition to the availability of basic livelihoods and services currently accessible in Jordan such as healthcare and schools which they may be deprived of upon return.

6. There is a noticeable variation in the desire to return based on several demographic and social factors. For example, the results showed that Amman Governorate recorded the highest percentage of desire to return at 55.4%. In terms of length of stay, those who had been residing for 15 years or more were the least likely to express a desire to return. Regarding income, individuals whose income is barely sufficient showed the highest willingness to return at 41.3%. Lastly, in terms of educational level, those holding a bachelor's degree expressed a higher desire to return at 39.6%, compared to illiterate individuals, whose rate stood at 15.8%.

Recommendations:

1. Provide financial incentives and logistical support for those wishing to return, along with targeted assistance for families experiencing income shortfalls.
2. Urge the international community to fulfill its financial commitments to support refugees and host countries.
3. Establish joint programs between Jordan and international organizations to facilitate voluntary return once conditions stabilize in Syria.
4. Conduct regular studies to monitor shifts in refugees' perspectives on return, especially as the situation in Syria evolves.

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