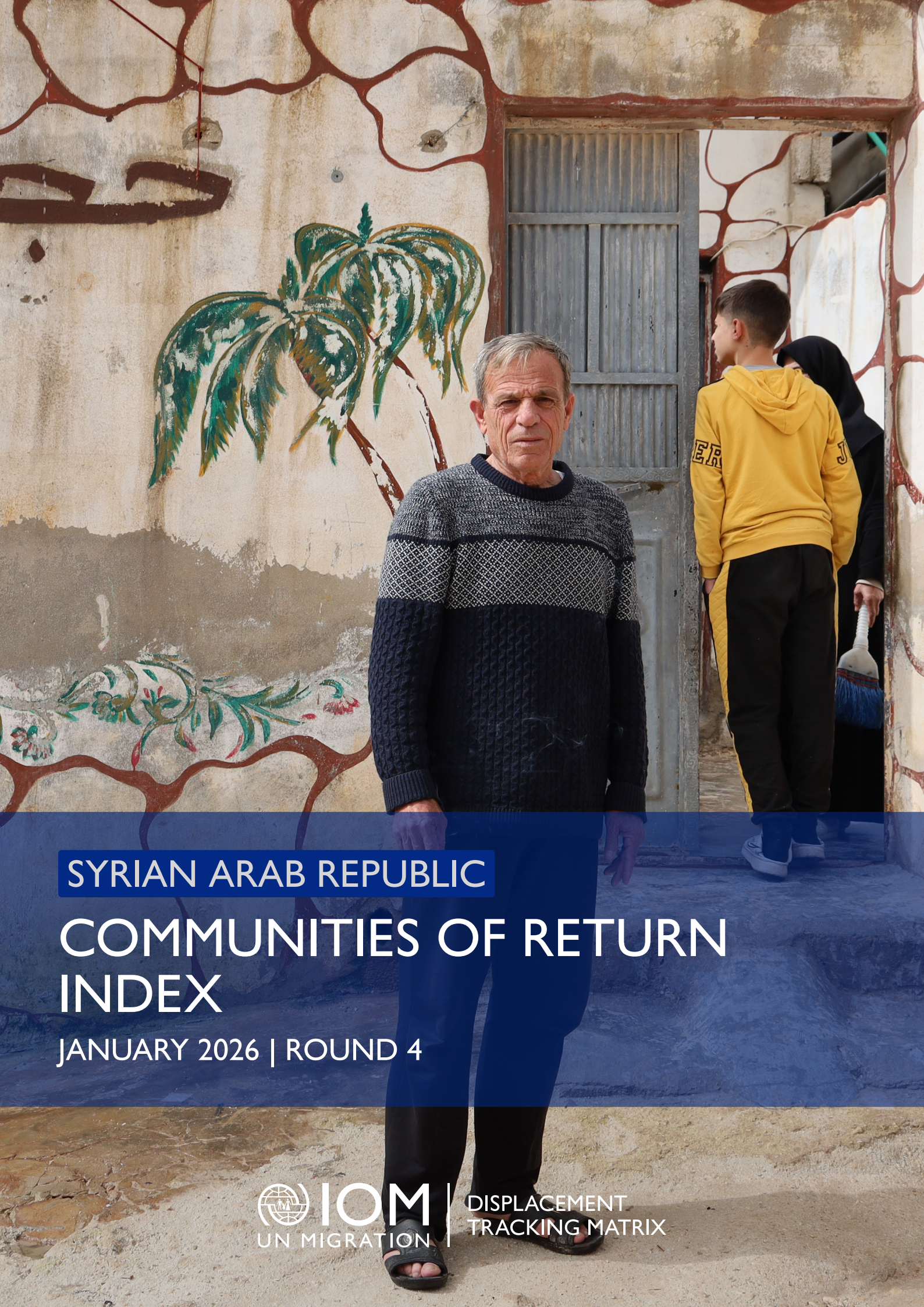




SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

COMMUNITIES OF RETURN INDEX

JANUARY 2026 | ROUND 4



IOM
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DISPLACEMENT
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Cover photo: Abu Nader, an IDP for 13 years, currently resides with his family in Al Rayyan camp in Idlib. He has benefited from water trucking, solid waste management and desludging activities funded by ECHO in his camp. © IOM 2026/ May Mahmoud

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DEFINITIONS

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Individuals who have been forced to leave their location of origin to another location within Syria for at least one month.

IDP Returnees: Individuals who were previously displaced within Syria and have now returned to their location of origin with the intention of staying in the long term, regardless of whether they have returned to their exact former residence.

Arrivals from Abroad: Individuals who were living outside Syria, regardless of their legal status in host countries, and have returned with the intention to remain, either in their place of origin or another location within Syria. These figures are based on key informant reports collected inside Syria, not from host countries.

[For specific queries on refugee returns, please refer to UNHCR.](#)

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons

HLP: Housing, Land and Property

KIs: Key Informants

UXOs: Unexploded ordnance

INTRODUCTION

As the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter referred to as Syria) enters a new year, the impact of the shift in power over a year ago (8 December 2024) continues to shape the country. The significant transformation in the political, humanitarian, and mobility landscape has enabled the return of approximately 1.94 million IDPs since December 2024, with continued return intentions into 2026.

Within this shifting landscape, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is releasing the fourth round of the Communities of Return Index (CoRI). This series monitors conditions in areas already witnessing or anticipating return movements to evaluate whether they offer an environment conducive to safe, dignified, and sustainable reintegration.

As of January 2026, the population of Syria is estimated at 27.43 million. Of this total, approximately 6.08 million individuals remain internally displaced, while 1.94 million internally displaced persons have returned to their areas of origin since December 2024. In addition, an estimated 1.12 million individuals have arrived from abroad and are currently residing across the country's 14 governorates.¹ For the purposes of this report, the term "returnees" encompasses both IDPs who have returned and individuals arriving from abroad, irrespective of whether they have settled in their community of origin or in an alternative location.

Despite return movements, significant vulnerabilities persist. Returnees continue to face challenges associated with displacement, including disrupted livelihoods, limited access to services, and fragile housing conditions. These individual-level constraints are often compounded by structural changes that occurred in communities during periods of absence, such as damaged infrastructure, reduced service capacity, and altered socio-economic dynamics.

To support IDPs in making progress towards durable solutions, this report analyses conditions in communities currently experiencing return movements. It aims to highlight persisting displacement related vulnerabilities in order to inform humanitarian and development planning. The findings are intended to assist national and local authorities, humanitarian and development actors, and donor partners in identifying priority geographic areas for thematic assessments and in guiding targeted, area-based interventions.

The analytical framework is informed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and focuses on five principal dimensions: safety and security; standards of living; livelihoods; Housing, Land and Property (HLP); and access to civil documentation.² These thematic pillars are applied at community level to assess the extent to which locations provide conditions conducive to safe, dignified, and sustainable reintegration.

The governorate, district, and sub-district level scores presented in this report are calculated by aggregating the scores from individual communities (admin level 4). For community-level data, please reference the dataset on the [DTM Syria webpage](#).

MEASURING RETURN CONDITIONS

To support comparative analysis across geographic areas and help stakeholders prioritise locations for technical sectoral assessments, a five-tier scoring index has been applied to indicate the relative conduciveness of conditions for return and sustainable reintegration. For further information on the scoring methodology, please see [Annex B](#).

Not Conducive
0 - 1.5

Challenging
1.6 - 2.5

Partially Conducive
2.6 - 3.5

Mostly Conducive
3.6 - 4.5

Fully Conducive
4.5 - 5



¹ IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, 'Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 12 (01-31 January 2026)', IOM DTM Syria.

² Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), [IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons](#).

KEY POPULATION FIGURES (*BASELINE ASSESSMENT, ROUND 12*)**27.43M** TOTAL POPULATION


1.94M
TOTAL IDP RETURNEES
SINCE DECEMBER 2024


1.12M
TOTAL ARRIVALS FROM ABROAD
SINCE DECEMBER 2024


6.08M

TOTAL IDPS SINCE 2011

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS



For the second consecutive round, Idlib and Damascus had the most conducive conditions for return: At the governorate level, Idlib (3.6) and Damascus (3.5) had the most overall conducive conditions for the sustainable return and reintegration of returnees at the time of assessment, based on composite scores across all five criteria of the Index. In contrast, Al-Hasakeh (2.3) and Ar-Raqqa (2.5) Governorates had the least conducive sustainable return conditions, consistent with the previous two rounds.



Return movements are contingent on short-term security developments: In January 2026, Aleppo Governorate and North East Syria (NES) were affected by significant humanitarian impacts following an escalation of hostilities that began on 6 January 2026 in the northern neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud, Ashrafiyah, and Bani Zaid in Aleppo City. By 29 January, as a result of the ceasefire agreement announced on 18 January, an estimated 68 per cent of individuals had returned in Aleppo, since the peak of hostilities (138,053 on 9 January). These circular return movements underscore the fluidity of return dynamics, highlighting the significant role that the security situation plays in decisions to return.



Access to documentation remains the lowest scored durable solutions criteria assessed, with significant cross-sector impact: For the third consecutive round, across the five durable solutions criteria assessed, access to documentation had the least conducive average scoring (2.6 out of 5). However, minimal improvements were reported, achieving an improved average index classification of 'Partially Conducive'. Without access to documentation, returnees are unable to access humanitarian assistance, government schemes, employment opportunities, alongside HLP claims.



Limited livelihood opportunities are compounded by the high cost of living and limited access to services: Nearly half of KIs (49%) reported that only a few households had earned enough to meet their basic needs in the previous three months. Conditions were particularly severe in As-Sweida (38%) and Rural Damascus (18%), where communities reported that no households were earning sufficient income. The inability to meet basic needs pushes households to resort to negative coping strategies. Residents in 83 per cent of communities reportedly went into debt in order to meet their basic needs, an increase from 75 per cent in October 2025.



Mines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) remain a major protection concern, significantly limiting safe return prospects: KIs in 31 per cent of assessed locations reported the presence of mines or UXOs, and in 59 per cent of these locations, no demining activities were underway. As Syria rebuilds, investment in the reconstruction of critical infrastructure, housing, and essential services will be undermined by the continued threat of mines and UXOs.



Persistent gaps in areas of high returns require sustained recovery efforts: Aleppo (748,370), Idlib (615,914), and Rural Damascus (482,409) Governorates host the largest share of returnees, all achieving a composite classification of 'Partially Conducive', highlighting the need for continued recovery efforts to ensure sustainable returns.



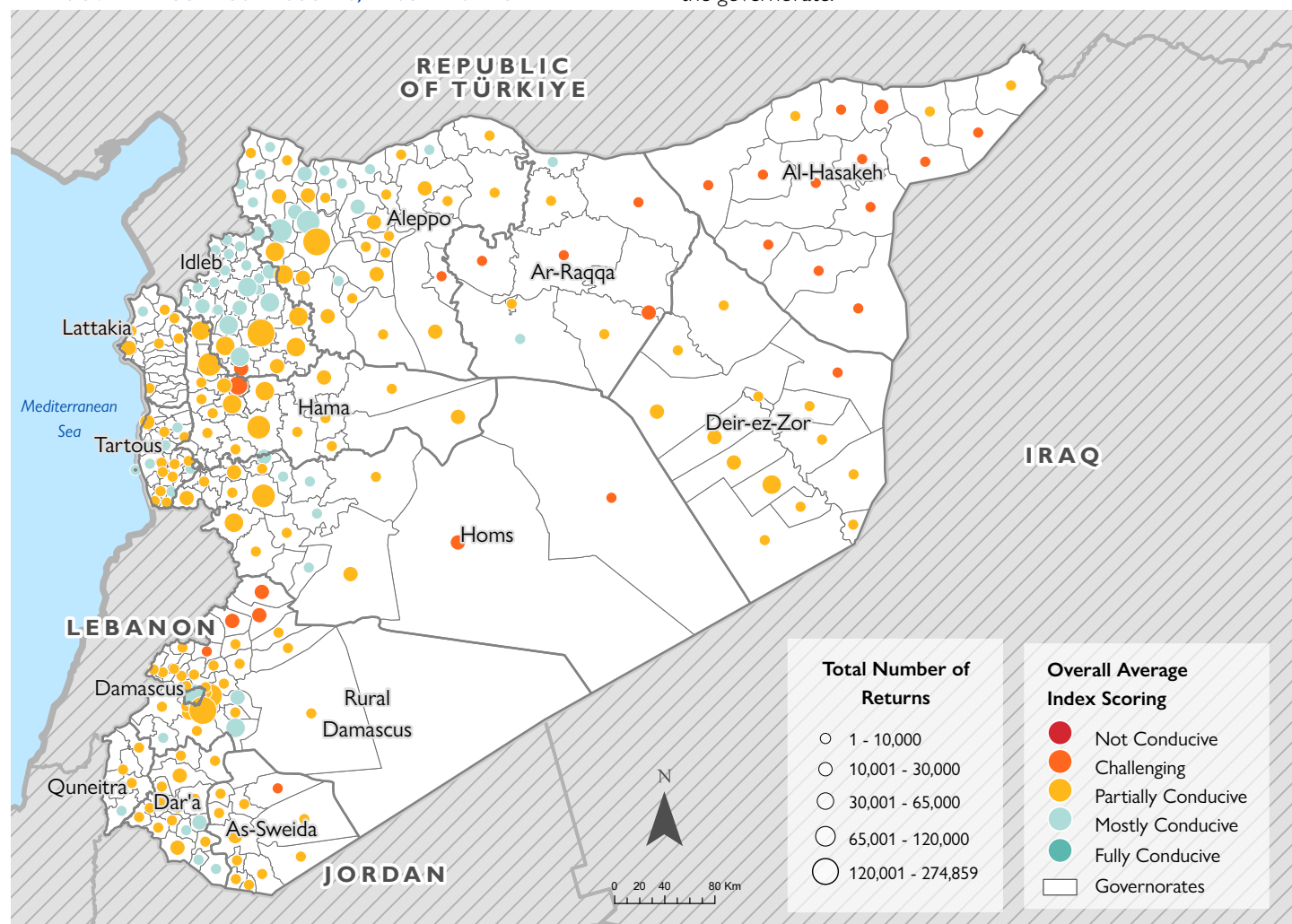
The presence of legal mechanisms must be accompanied by building trust in these systems to successfully and effectively address disputes: Although dispute resolution mechanisms were reportedly available in most communities, 63 per cent of communities described these mechanisms as only "somewhat effective". Reports of limited effectiveness were particularly high in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Quneitra Governorates, indicating that the mere presence of legal structures does not guarantee confidence in, or utilisation of, these systems.

OVERALL SITUATION

For the third consecutive assessment round, conditions for sustainable return remained least favourable in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa Governorates. Based on composite scores across all five durable solutions criteria, Al-Hasakeh recorded the lowest overall score (2.3), followed by Ar-Raqqa (2.5). Despite these challenging conditions, both governorates host substantial numbers of returnees, with approximately 31,299 returnees residing in Al-Hasakeh and 34,120 returnees hosted in Ar-Raqqa, underscoring the urgency for improving reintegration conditions in these areas of high returns. The persistence of low index scores suggests that large numbers of returnees continue to face structural barriers to recovery, including limited access to services, livelihoods, and documentation.

In contrast, Idlib recorded the highest composite index score (3.6), followed by Damascus (3.5) and Tartous (3.4), indicating more conducive conditions for returns and reintegration at the time of assessment. These locations had reportedly favourable safety and security conditions, each recording composite scores above 4.2 for this pillar. The concentration of return movements in these governorates, exceeding 1.11 million combined, highlights the critical role that security perceptions and stability play in shaping decisions to return.

MAP 1: OVERALL COMPOSITE SCORES, BY SUB-DISTRICT



However, when comparing these findings with the intended areas of return identified in [UNHCR's February 2025 intentions survey](#) among refugees in neighbouring countries, significant gaps between intentions and prevailing conditions emerge. Homs, Dar'a, Aleppo, Damascus, and Rural Damascus achieved a classification of 'Partially Conducive' across all durable solutions assessed in the CoRI. High return numbers combined with poor conditions raises concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of future return movements and successful reintegration, if remaining humanitarian needs are not addressed and essential services and recovery support are not delivered.

Among these locations, Homs, Rural Damascus (3.1 each), and Dar'a (3.2) recorded relatively low composite scores across multiple durable solutions criteria. In particular, Rural Damascus scored relatively poorly in the access to livelihoods (2.6) and adequate standards of living (2.8) pillars, reflecting persistent gaps in employment opportunities and service availability. Key informants (KIs) in Rural Damascus cited high living costs, an inability to access and afford identification documentation, and the general shortage of key infrastructure and services, including limited health care and fuel, as fundamental challenges hindering successful recovery within the governorate.

PERCEPTIONS OF STABILITY AND RISK OF FURTHER MOVEMENT

In the majority of assessed communities (74%), KIs reported that over the next six months most returnees will still be living in the community. Consistent with the previous assessment period (October 2025), KIs in Hama Governorate continued to report a high likelihood that returnees will remain (97% of communities). This was followed by Lattakia (88%) and Tartous (86%), where KIs also widely expected returnees to remain.

These governorates generally recorded relatively strong scores across key pillars of the Index, particularly in safety and security and adequate standards of living. Although Lattakia recorded comparatively lower results for standards of living, it performed well in the restoration of HLP. Taken together, these findings suggest that improved perceptions of security and the possibility of reclaiming homes are influential factors shaping decisions to remain. When communities experience a degree of stability, returnees may feel more confident investing time and resources into rebuilding homes, restoring livelihoods, and re-establishing social ties.

In 26 per cent of communities, however, KIs expected some degree of onward movement, with 2 per cent of KIs believing that most or all returnees would depart. The expectation of movement was most prominent in Al-Hasakeh, where 89 per cent of communities anticipated that at least some returnees might leave again. Although this marked a significant decrease from the share of communities anticipating departure movements in the previous assessment period (94% in October 2025), Al-Hasakeh continues to record some of the most challenging conditions across the Index, with a composite score of 2.3 out of 5, the lowest of all governorates assessed. Lower results in safety and security (2.5) and access to documentation (0.5) distinguish the governorate from areas where returnees are more likely to remain. Recent escalations in hostilities across Al-Hasakeh, neighbouring Aleppo, and the wider North East Syria (NES) region have also contributed to renewed displacement movements. While many of these movements appear to be temporary or circular in nature, persistent instability disrupts settlement patterns and slows recovery, making it difficult for households to establish longer-term stability.³

Documentation-related barriers further compound these challenges. Limited access to civil documentation restricts returnees' ability to secure housing, access services, obtain employment, or exercise basic civil rights. Without recognised identification or property documentation, individuals may struggle to reclaim homes, enrol children in school, or access public assistance, increasing their vulnerability to exclusion and exploitation. These administrative obstacles not only weaken reintegration prospects but also interact with broader security and service-related challenges, reinforcing a cycle in which returnees remain uncertain about their ability to remain and rebuild their lives in the long term.

³ As of the publication of this report (March 2026), the situation in Aleppo and NES has stabilised relatively. As such, DTM has halted emergency tracking operations. All related emergency mobility tracking updates can be accessed [here](#).

FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF KIS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE STABILITY OF RETURNEES' RESIDENCE IN THEIR CURRENT COMMUNITY OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

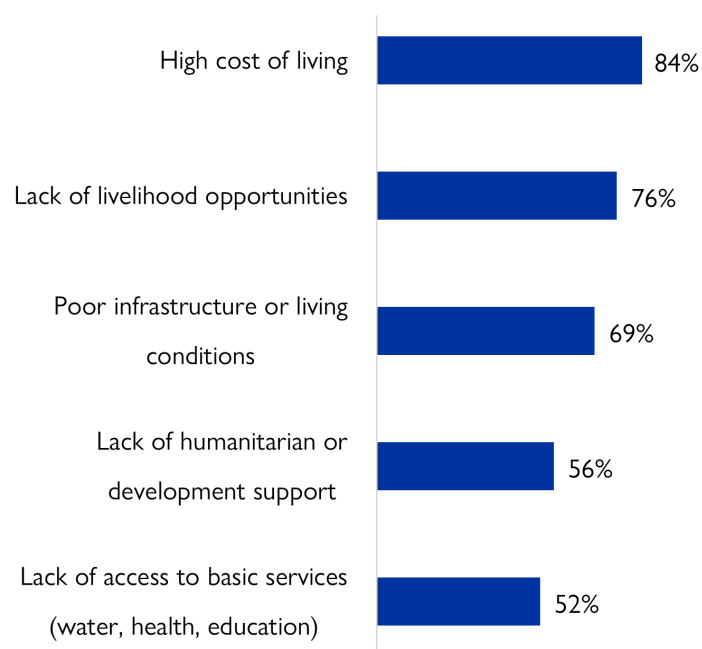


BARRIERS TO RETURN AND SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

KIs identified the high cost of living as the most significant barrier to sustainable returns and reintegration. In 84 per cent of communities this was reported as a major factor affecting the ability of returnees to re-establish themselves. The challenge is further intensified by limited livelihood opportunities, cited in 76 per cent of communities, which reduce household purchasing power and make it difficult for returnees to meet basic needs. Additional structural barriers were also highlighted, including poor infrastructure and living conditions (69% of communities), insufficient humanitarian or development support (56%), and limited access to basic services (52%).

“I have no shelter, no income, and none of life's basic necessities. Every possible obstacle stands in my way...”
 — Female returnee from Jordan, Governorate Unknown (via Upinion)

FIGURE 2: PERCEIVED TOP 5 MAIN CONCERNS HINDERING RETURNS AND SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION (MULTIPLE RESPONSES PER COMMUNITY POSSIBLE)



SOCIAL COHESION

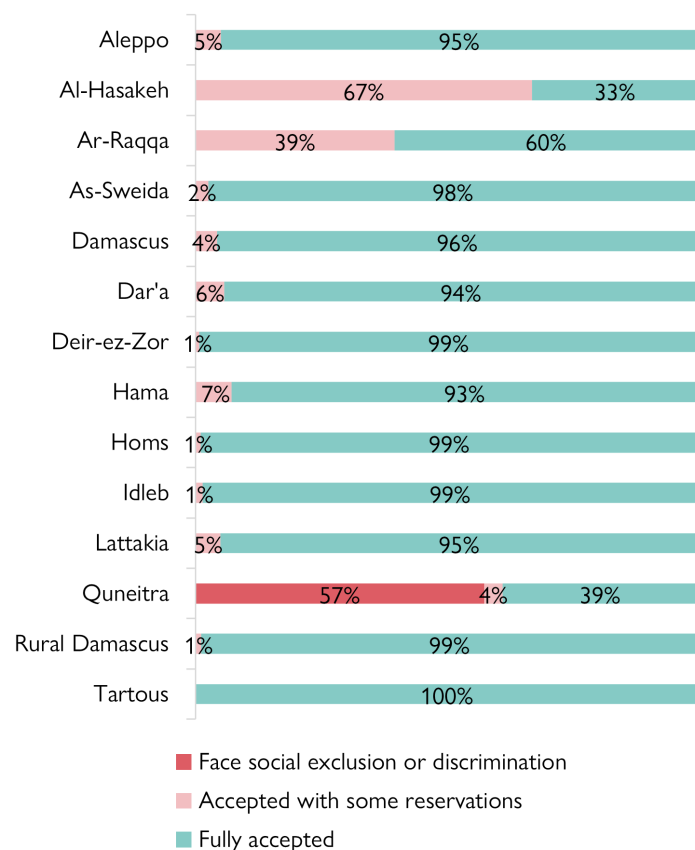
Strong social cohesion is a key factor in enabling sustainable returns, as it promotes community acceptance, helps prevent tensions between returnees and existing residents, and supports collective recovery and rebuilding efforts. According to KIs, returnees are largely welcomed within their communities. The vast majority (92%) reported that returnees are fully accepted by local populations.

However, a smaller share of KIs (8%) indicated that returnees are either accepted with reservations or experience social exclusion and discrimination. These reports were concentrated primarily in Quneitra, Al-Hasakeh, and Ar-Raqqa Governorates. In Quneitra, such concerns were reported in 61 per cent of communities, where approximately 4,391 returnees currently reside. Similarly, KIs in 67 per cent of communities in Al-Hasakeh (hosting around 31,299 returnees) and 40 per cent of communities in Ar-Raqqa (where 34,120 returnees currently reside) reported reservations or exclusion. Across these three governorates, the proportion of communities reporting social cohesion issues was more than four times greater than in any other governorate.

“There is also a view toward those who left [Syria] as if they simply ran away or looked out for themselves and did not endure.”

— Female returnee from Jordan, in Dar'a (via Upinion)

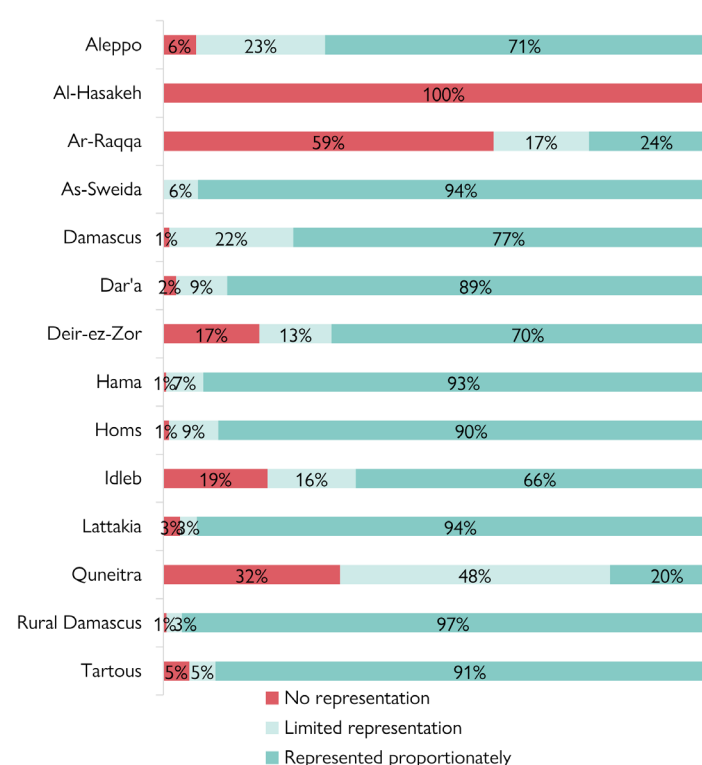
FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF KI'S PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF RETURNEES



KIs were also asked about the extent to which returnees are represented in local decision-making structures, such as committees and councils. In most assessed communities (73%), KIs reported proportional representation. This was particularly evident in Rural Damascus (97%), as well as in As-Sweida and Latakia Governorates (94% each).

In a further 15 per cent of communities, returnees were reportedly represented but only to a limited extent, while 12 per cent of communities reported no returnee representation in local decision-making structures at all.

FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF KI PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE REPRESENTATION OF RETURNEES IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES



As in the previous assessment period, KIs in all assessed communities (100%) in Al-Hasakeh Governorate reported that returnees were not represented at all in local governance structures. Similarly, in Quneitra, 80 per cent of communities reported either limited or no representation of returnees. Such gaps in representation may reduce returnees' ability to influence decisions affecting their recovery, access to services, and reintegration, potentially contributing to feelings of exclusion or marginalisation. Addressing intersecting barriers to sustainable reintegration is necessary to prevent further displacement.

INDEX: SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security conditions were assessed through interviews with KIs, focusing on perceptions of overall stability, recent security events, freedom of movement, and risks related to mines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs). KIs also explained the extent to which residents are able to carry out their daily routines and how safe they feel during both daytime and nighttime hours.

It should be noted that the index captures only the security perceptions reported for the month preceding data collection in each assessed site. As assessments are not conducted simultaneously across all areas, any incidents or changes in the security situation occurring after data collection in a given location are not reflected in this round. In addition, although KIs reported improvements in the security situation in several locations, this does not necessarily indicate a substantial or lasting change in actual conditions on the ground. Rather, perceived improvements may reflect a degree of desensitisation after years of exposure to conflict, as communities compare the current situation to earlier periods marked by intense hostilities. Consequently, even a temporary reduction in violence or fewer visible incidents may be interpreted as meaningful progress, despite underlying risks and structural insecurity remaining largely unchanged.

Mostly Conducive: 4.0
AVERAGE INDEX OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS



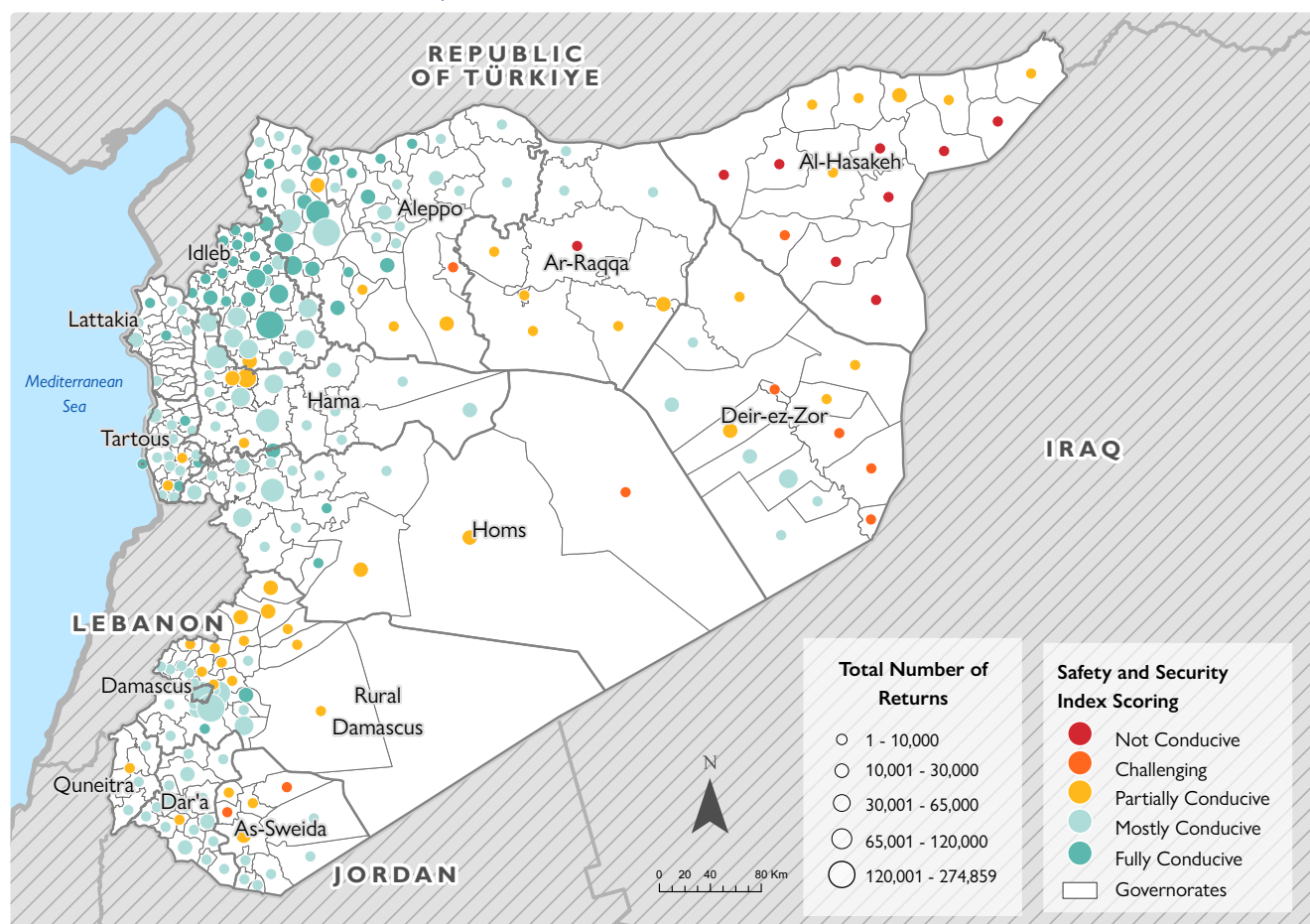
31%
OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED THE PRESENCE OF
MINES/ UXOS

52%
OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED INSTANCES OF
ATTACKS USING STICKS AND OTHER NON-FIREARMS

Across all assessed locations, KIs reported relatively positive perceptions of safety and security, resulting in a composite index classification of 'Mostly Conducive' (4.0 out of 5). Higher index scores represent safer environments that are more favourable for return and long-term reintegration, and the findings therefore provide a location-specific snapshot of how prevailing security dynamics shape the reintegration prospects of returnees.

KIs reported that freedom of movement was largely unrestricted across assessed locations, with 88 per cent of communities indicating no significant restrictions and 11 per cent reporting the presence of some limitations on free movement.

MAP 2: SAFETY AND SECURITY INDEX SCORING, BY SUB-DISTRICT



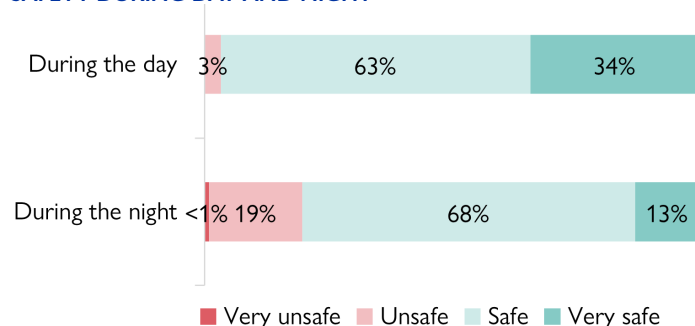
This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

However, for the second consecutive round, the majority of KIs in Al-Hasakeh (100%) and Ar-Raqqa (86%) indicated that at least some restrictions to free movement were present, despite minimal reported restrictions across most other governorates. Notably, in Ar-Raqqa, 20 per cent of KIs reported that significant restrictions were in place. This situation can be linked to the escalation of hostilities in North East Syria (NES) during January 2026, which began in Aleppo on 6 January 2026 in the northern neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud, Ashrafiyah, and Bani Zaid in Aleppo City, before spreading into Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa.

For the third consecutive round, KIs indicated that residents generally feel safer during the day than at night. Daytime safety was reported in 97 per cent of assessed locations, compared with 81 per cent at night. It is important to note that these classifications are subjective. Prolonged exposure to insecurity may have desensitised key informants to certain risks, leading them to report feeling safe in conditions that others might still consider unsafe.

KIs reported safety and security incidents related to the use of sticks and other non-firearms (reported in 52% of locations assessed), incidents related to housing, land, and property (HLP) disputes (52%), direct and indirect attacks (19%), and the presence of mines and UXOs (14%), among other incidents.

FIGURE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF KIS' PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY SAFETY DURING DAY AND NIGHT



Most KIs reported that mechanisms are in place within their communities to support individuals who experience violence, theft, or abuse (97%). However, in 10 per cent of communities these mechanisms are either not trusted or are rarely utilised. Nearly all KIs (98%) also indicated that returnees have equal access to legal mechanisms compared to other population groups. Formal structures such as local police or law enforcement (90%) were reported as the primary means of representation, followed by the court system or local judiciary (69%) and community elders or religious leaders (67%). However, not all residents use or trust these mechanisms equally.

Although legal services are reportedly available in most assessed communities, levels of trust and utilisation vary among residents.

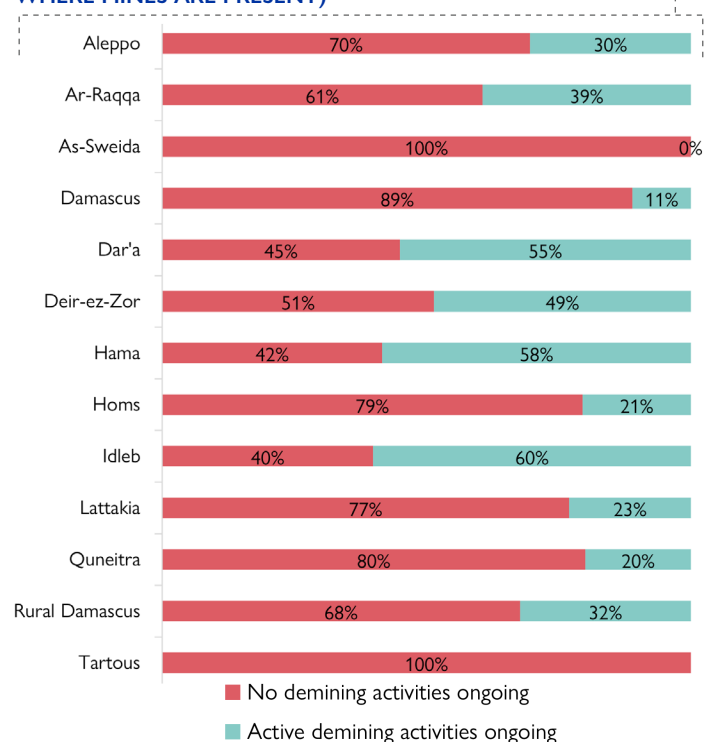
Improvements were recorded in both the accessibility and utilisation of legal mechanisms in Ar-Raqqa compared with the previous assessment periods. The proportion of assessed communities reporting difficulties in accessing or relying on existing structures decreased from 88 per cent in Round 2 (June 2025) to 44 per cent in Round 3 (October 2025), and further to 34 per cent as of January 2026 (Round 4). While this indicates continued progress, sustained efforts remain necessary to strengthen widespread trust in these mechanisms and rebuild confidence in the impartiality and effectiveness of existing structures upon return.

Explosive remnants of war and landmines continue to pose a serious threat to civilians throughout Syria. KIs in almost a third (31%) of assessed locations reported the presence of mines or unexploded ordnance. The highest levels of contamination were reported in Lattakia (62%), Hama (54%), Homs (53%), As-Sweida (52%), Deir-ez-Zor (51%), and Ar-Raqqa (50%) Governorates. Notably, KIs in Ain Issa District in Ar-Raqqa Governorate reported the presence of widespread landmines and tunnels across the district, primarily in locations along the M4 highway, where the previous front line was located. Reportedly, this has resulted in at least two fatalities in the previous month alone. Related injuries were also reported, specifically among children, who often encounter landmines unknowingly.

FIGURE 6: PROPORTION OF KIS' REPORTING THE PRESENCE OF MINES/UXOS



FIGURE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF KIS REPORTING ONGOING DEMINING ACTIVITIES, BY GOVERNORATE (IN LOCATIONS WHERE MINES ARE PRESENT)



KIs in over a half of locations (59%) where the presence of mines were reported indicated that no demining activities were underway, showing minimal improvement in the past six months (64% in Round 2, June 2025). The situation is critical in As-Sweida, where contamination remains high (52%), but no demining efforts were ongoing at the time of assessment. Without the continued clearance of mines and UXOs from affected areas across the country, individuals will not be able to safely return to their areas of origin. Despite successes in other sectors facilitating returns, addressing these life-threatening safety risks is a prerequisite for safe returns.



“ I live in an area that was littered with war remnants, my relative died in an explosion of an arms depot near his farm, some of my relatives were injured in the explosion. We always live in fear.

— Female returnee from Türkiye, in Idlib (via Upinion)

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INDEX: ADEQUATE STANDARDS OF LIVING

The Adequate Standards of Living pillar focuses on community-level access to essential public services. KIs provided information on the availability of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, electricity supply, primary and secondary education services, telecommunication networks, as well as primary, emergency, and specialised health services. Together, these indicators demonstrate the capacity of local infrastructure to support returnees and enable long-term reintegration.

Overall, communities received a composite Adequate Standards of Living classification of 'Partially Conductive' (3.2 out of 5). At the governorate level, Damascus (4.0) and Tartous (3.7) recorded the strongest availability of services. By contrast, Lattakia continued to show the lowest average score (2.3), followed by Rural Damascus and As-Sweida (2.8 each).

Across assessed governorates, the lack of public electricity and waste disposal services remained the most consistently reported challenges. KIs indicated that 40 per cent of communities had no access to public electricity, while 28 per cent lacked any waste management services, although some improvements in access have been observed since the previous round.

Partially Conductive: 3.2
AVERAGE INDEX OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS



30%

OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED THAT MOST OR ALL RESIDENTS COULD ACCESS TO PUBLIC ELECTRICITY

50%

OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED THAT MOST OR ALL RESIDENTS COULD ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

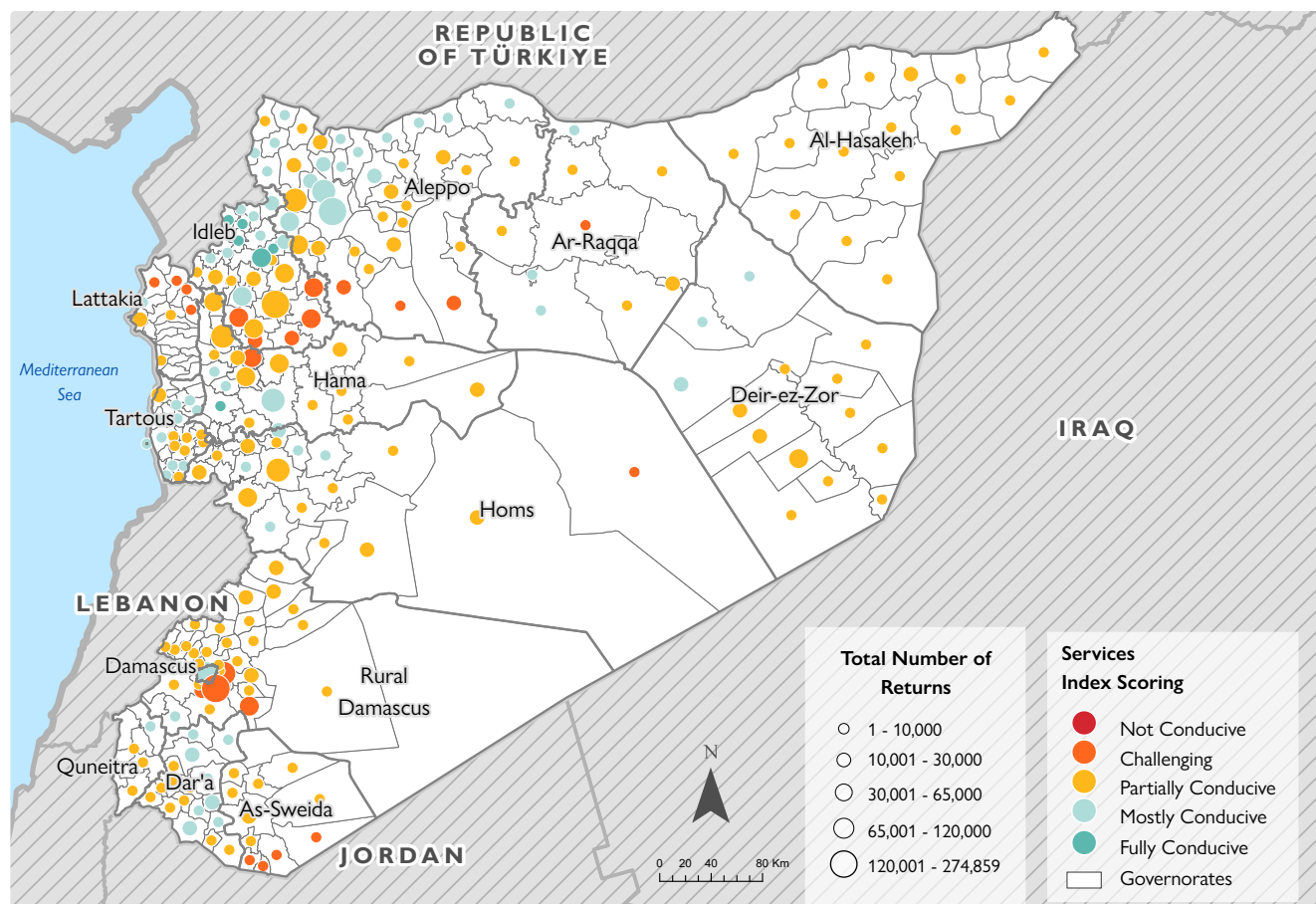
61%

OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED THAT MOST OR ALL RESIDENTS COULD ACCESS TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The situation was particularly severe in Lattakia and Hama, where 67 and 66 per cent of communities, respectively, reported the absence of waste management services.

This lack of waste disposal poses significant public health risks, including waste accumulation, environmental pollution, and the spread of disease, with children and older persons especially vulnerable to these effects.

MAP 3: ADEQUATE STANDARDS OF LIVING INDEX SCORING, BY SUB-DISTRICT



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Public health risks are further exacerbated where waste management gaps coincide with limited health care services. More than one fifth of assessed locations (22%) reportedly lack specialised health care, while 17 per cent lacked emergency health services. These constraints were especially pronounced in Lattakia, where the likelihood of disease is elevated due to minimal waste management and limited treatment capacity. KIs reported that 67 per cent of locations in Lattakia lacked waste management services, while 67, 62, and 61 per cent of locations reported the absence of specialised, emergency, and primary health care services, respectively.

Health-related vulnerabilities are also intensified by insufficient access to safe drinking water, increasing the potential for waterborne disease outbreaks. KIs in 17 per cent of assessed locations reported that residents had limited or no access to safe drinking water, representing a notable improvement compared with the previous assessment period (27% in Round 3, October 2025). While this progress reflects positive movement toward the restoration of basic infrastructure, significant gaps persist. The proportion of assessed communities without safe drinking water in Lattakia declined by more than half from 36 per cent in Round 3 (October 2025), yet 16 per cent of communities continue to report no safe water access (as of Round 4). Aleppo (8%) and Rural Damascus (3%) Governorates followed with a relatively high share of communities lacking any access to safe drinking water. However, efforts are being made to improve water systems and sewage networks. KIs in Rural Damascus emphasised the importance of social initiatives in the recovery of water networks, referencing campaigns in Al-Kiswah, including the drilling of a second strategic well in the Al-Jabal area of Al-Kiswah. These activities form part of ongoing efforts in the governorate to enhance water security and improve access to reliable water supplies for residents.

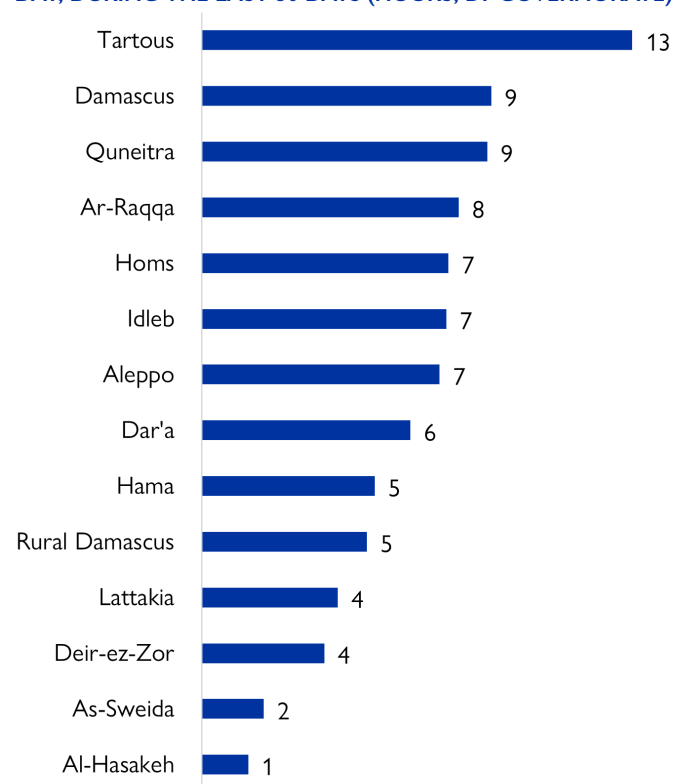
Electricity access showed signs of improvement across assessment periods. Public electricity was available in 60 per cent of assessed locations, and among these, 30 per cent of KIs reported that most or all residents rely on it. This represents a threefold increase within six months, rising from 11 per cent in Round 2 (June 2025). KIs also reported improvements in the average daily supply, with communities receiving an average of seven hours of public electricity per day over the past 30 days, marking an increase of one hour since October 2025. These improvements can largely be attributed to increased electricity imports from neighbouring countries, following the increase in demand.

Despite these improvements, electricity access remains both limited and uneven. Forty per cent of assessed locations continued to report no access to public electricity. Although private electricity sources were available in 95 per cent of locations, affordability constraints significantly limited their use, with KIs in 36 per cent of these communities indicating that only a few residents could access them. KIs in Idleb and Rural Damascus Governorates recalled the high

cost of private electricity when not subsidised by the government, reporting that electricity bills are often disproportionate to income. These disparities were especially evident in Al-Hasakeh, where only 16 per cent of communities reported access to public electricity, resulting in significant reliance on private supplies. While private electricity sources were more commonly available, high costs continued to limit their accessibility. As a result, the unequal distribution of electricity services reinforces existing vulnerabilities, particularly among displaced and low-income households.

Alongside the significant role electricity plays in protection, providing lighting in homes, shelters, and public spaces, limiting the risk of gender-based violence and improving perceptions of safety at night, electricity plays a fundamental role in reconstruction. As Syria begins to rebuild, electricity for machinery, tools, transportation, and electrical water pumping will prove fundamental in the process of reconstructing infrastructure and shelters.

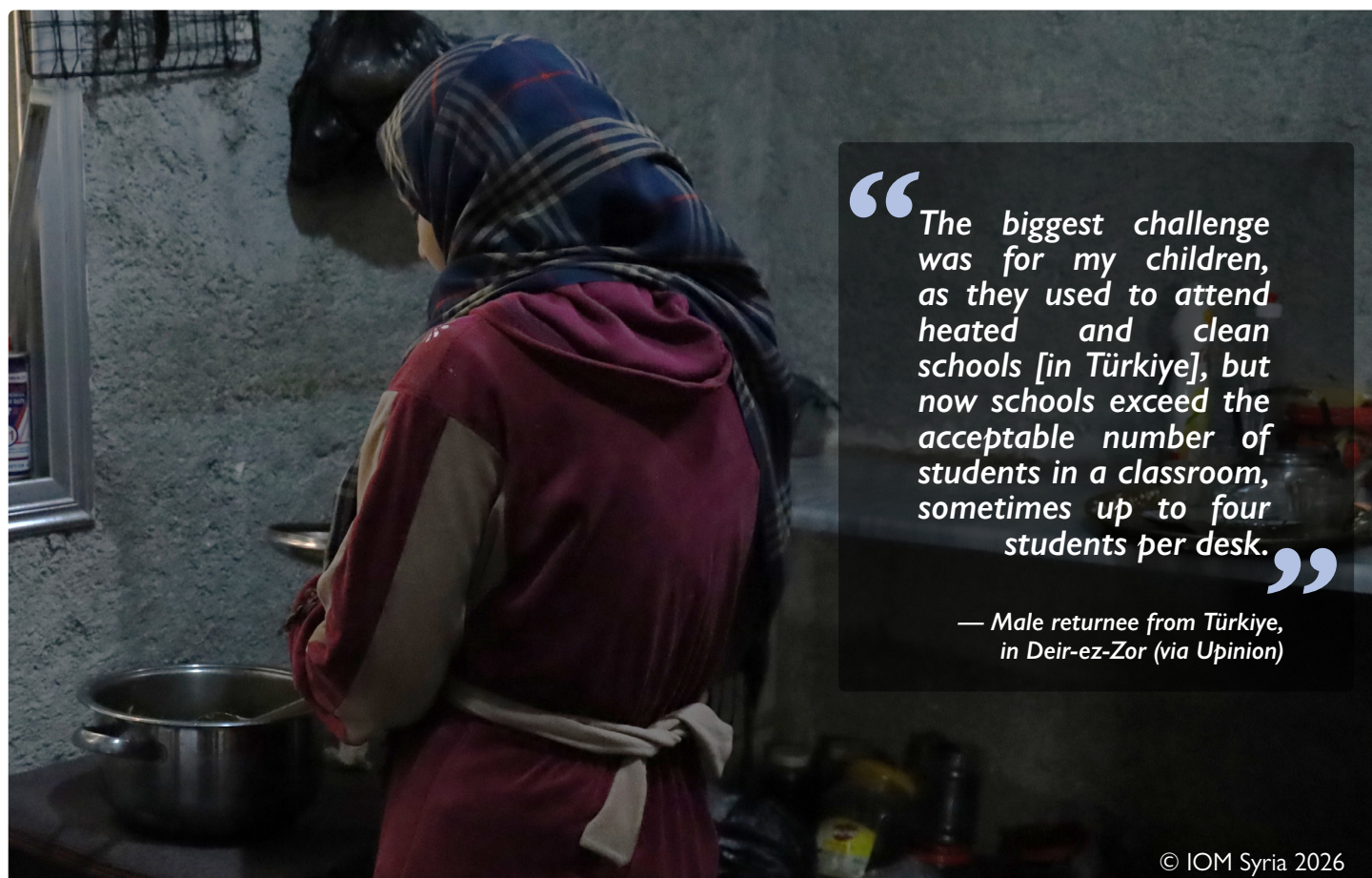
FIGURE 8: AVERAGE AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC ELECTRICITY PER DAY, DURING THE LAST 30 DAYS (HOURS, BY GOVERNORATE)



Likewise, access to education services remained largely uneven across assessed locations. The situation was severe in Al-Hasakeh, where the majority of KIs reported that less than 60 per cent of the community could access primary (reported in 96% of communities) and secondary (100%) schooling. Notably, KIs in 48 per cent of communities in Ar-Raqqa reported that no children could access secondary schooling at all, followed by Lattakia (42%) and Idleb (30%). KIs reported a lack of staffing, schooling equipment and furniture, overcrowding, significant damage, and the requirement of high fees to register students in schools as key barriers hindering access to education.

TABLE 1: PROPORTION OF LOCATIONS PER GOVERNORATE WITH ACCESS TO SERVICES (LOCATIONS WITH MOST OR ALL OF THE POPULATION COVERED)

Governorate	Drinking water	Transportation	Waste garbage service	Access to primary school	Access to secondary school	Primary health facilities	Emergency health facilities	Specialised health facilities	Telecommunications
Aleppo	51%	53%	63%	36%	75%	62%	75%	83%	42%
Al-Hasakeh	85%	100%	99%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%
Ar-Raqqa	74%	73%	87%	27%	82%	69%	84%	92%	67%
As-Sweida	96%	77%	57%	86%	46%	79%	86%	99%	84%
Damascus	12%	16%	23%	3%	13%	28%	46%	65%	19%
Dar'a	41%	35%	41%	27%	44%	52%	63%	76%	40%
Deir-ez-Zor	54%	53%	91%	48%	69%	69%	91%	84%	54%
Hama	30%	37%	84%	35%	70%	61%	72%	83%	36%
Homs	40%	80%	54%	27%	51%	75%	96%	98%	56%
Idleb	52%	56%	67%	43%	72%	63%	73%	84%	38%
Lattakia	80%	96%	96%	71%	89%	92%	97%	99%	97%
Quneitra	20%	83%	80%	9%	24%	87%	96%	100%	41%
Rural Damascus	45%	83%	80%	37%	75%	81%	90%	96%	92%
Tartous	39%	49%	49%	12%	37%	45%	59%	76%	53%
Total Average	50%	57%	68%	39%	69%	65%	78%	86%	49%



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INDEX: ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS

Access to livelihoods assesses the extent to which communities offer viable economic prospects for returnees. KIs reported on the availability of jobs, access to markets, the presence of cultivable land, household income sources, and the coping strategies residents rely on. Together, these indicators provide insights into the economic landscape into which returnees reintegrate.

Across assessed locations, the composite index classification for access to livelihoods was 'Partially Conductive' (2.7 out of 5). According to KIs, there has been little to no noticeable change in the livelihoods sector over the past six months. Opportunities for employment linked to local market activity continue to be constrained by security incidents across Aleppo and NES, in addition to the high cost of living observed nationwide. Despite challenges, the reconstruction and repair of infrastructure and homes has led to a significant increase in related service employment, especially in cities where the demand is high and the labour force is relatively small.

The majority of communities (93%) reported that returnees are equally engaged in the primary livelihood sectors. In the remaining 7 per cent of communities, KIs indicated that returnees could be better integrated into livelihood activities, while less than 1 per cent reported the exclusion of returnees.

Partially Conductive: 2.7
AVERAGE INDEX OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS



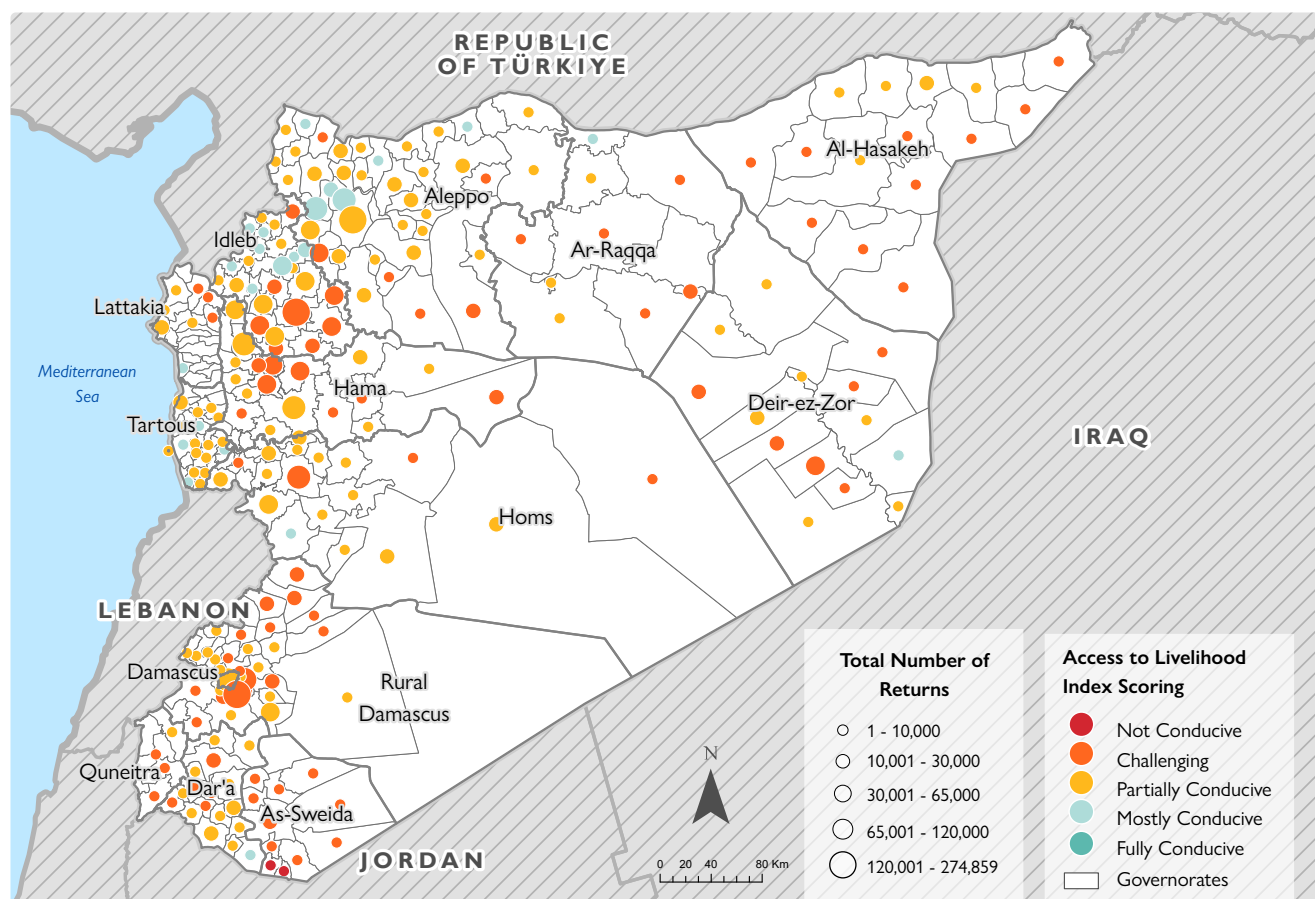
79%
OF AGRICULTURE-RELIANT COMMUNITIES
REPORTED THAT THE SECTOR IS NOT FULLY
FUNCTIONING

100%
OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED THAT SOME RESIDENTS
ARE RESORTING TO NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES
TO MEET UNMET NEEDS

The need for improved engagement was reported primarily in Al-Hasakeh Governorate (80%), likely linked to the escalation in hostilities disrupting the recovery of the sector.

For the fourth consecutive round, agriculture and livestock were identified as the primary source of livelihoods for most communities, with 74 per cent of communities relying on this sector. Other commonly reported income sources included employment in the public sector (7%), as well as daily wage labour and small businesses or trade (6% each).

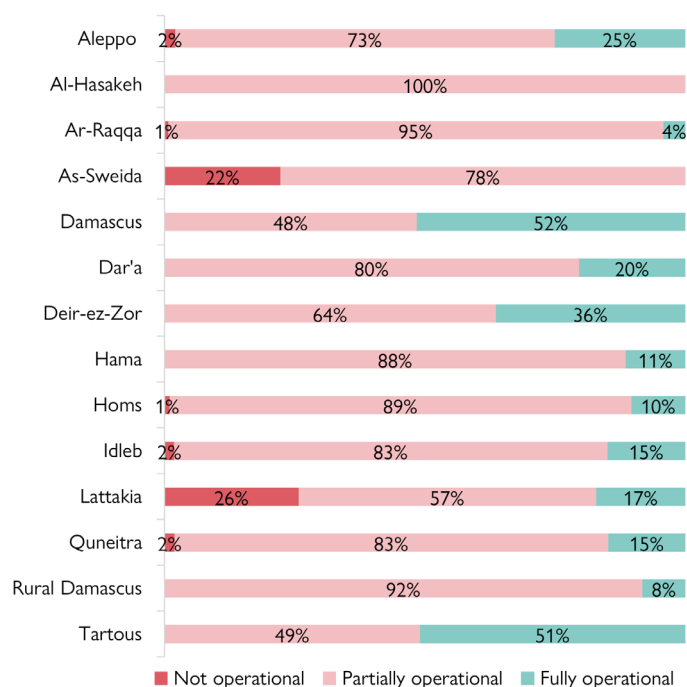
MAP 4: ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS INDEX SCORING, BY SUB-DISTRICT



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Among the locations where agriculture was cited as a primary source of income, 79 per cent of communities reported that the sector was only partially functional. Fully functioning agricultural activities have resumed in less than a fifth (19%) of locations, declining marginally since the previous assessment period (from 21% in Round 3, October 2025). This slight decline in agricultural activities can likely be attributed to the impact of the harsh winter months preceding the assessment period. Only 2 per cent of communities had no active operations at all.

FIGURE 9: REPORTED FUNCTIONALITY OF THE PRIMARY LIVELIHOOD SECTOR PRESENT IN THE COMMUNITY



The partial or non-operational state of the agricultural sector has a significant impact in areas reliant on the sector as their primary source of income. KIs in Hama (86%), Deir-ez-Zor (84%), and Aleppo (80%) Governorates reported the highest share of those reliant on the agricultural sector, despite only 11 per cent, 36 per cent, and 25 per cent of the sector in each governorate fully operational, respectively. In Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Rural Damascus Governorates, KIs reported that in over 90 per cent of assessed locations the agricultural sector is partially or fully non-operational, despite at least 50 per cent of KIs reporting that the population rely on the sector.

In communities where the primary sector was reported to be functioning at a limited level, KIs most frequently attributed this to shortages of equipment and tools (including farming materials, 42%). Additional constraints included insufficient water availability and a lack of capital or investment, each cited in 33 per cent of communities. These challenges underscore the need to scale up investment in infrastructure restoration, which can generate employment both in the short term through reconstruction activities and in the longer term by revitalising sectors once infrastructure is re-established.

“...to fully establish my trade, I face three primary barriers: First, I lack the specialised tools and heavy equipment essential for plumbing. Second, I need a reliable means of transportation to reach clients. Third, I require startup capital to rent a dedicated workshop that would serve as a business hub, allowing me to scale up and reach full production capacity.”

— Male returnee from Lebanon, in Dar'a (via Upinion)

Although daily waged labour was reported as the primary livelihood sector in only 6 per cent of communities assessed, when considering the second (28%) and third (37%) livelihood sectors, daily wage labour appeared top for both. The reliance on daily wage labour underscores the persistent dependence on informal and often seasonal employment across Syria. These forms of work are typically characterised by high levels of flexibility but also significant insecurity, as individuals frequently face irregular working hours, inconsistent demand, and unpredictable income streams. The absence of formal contracts or labour protections further exacerbates this precarity, leaving workers vulnerable to a sudden loss of income. Such instability undermines financial security, as households are unable to plan or budget effectively, limiting their capacity to consistently meet basic needs.

Less than half (49%) of household were earning enough to cover their basic needs in the past three months.. In 38 per cent of assessed communities, KIs indicated that around half of the population had been earning enough to meet their needs, while 8 per cent reported that most or all households were able to do so.

“Living conditions are difficult, and sometimes it's hard to secure basic household necessities.”

— Female returnee from Lebanon, in Homs (via Upinion)

For the second consecutive round, the situation remained particularly severe in As-Sweida (38%) and Rural Damascus (18%) Governorates, where a notable share of communities reported that no households were earning enough to meet their basic needs. KIs in Rural Damascus cited high electricity costs, fuel shortages, limited employment opportunities, and low salaries as contributing factors to the high cost of living, making daily life challenging as returnees struggle to meet their basic needs.

This limited financial capacity is likely linked to continued instability across the governorates, driving some residents to resort to negative coping mechanisms. This can include secondary displacement or engagement in alternative forms of employment that can be both dangerous and unsustainable.

FIGURE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITIES BY THEIR ESTIMATED SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS ABLE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS (PAST 3 MONTHS)⁴

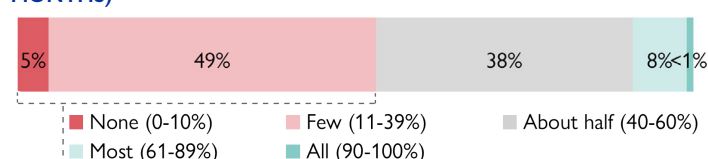
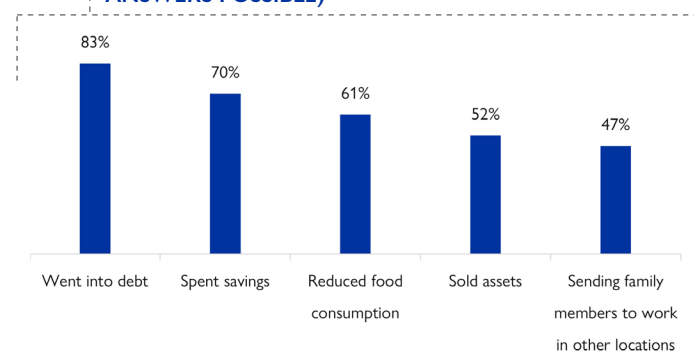


FIGURE 11: TOP 5 COPING MECHANISMS REPORTED BY COMMUNITIES (% OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS, MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)⁵



Across all assessed governorates, KIs reported that residents were relying on at least one negative coping strategy to meet their basic needs. The most commonly reported strategy was taking on debt, with residents in 83 per cent of communities reportedly borrowing through personal loans or informal credit arrangements to cover unmet needs. This represents a notable increase compared with the previous assessment period (75% in October 2025), raising concerns about rising living costs and the growing difficulty households face in meeting basic expenses.

Other widely reported coping strategies included spending savings, cited in 70 per cent of communities, reducing food consumption (61%), and selling assets (52%). Notably, in 22 per cent of communities assessed, households rely upon humanitarian aid or cash support from those within their community. The widespread reliance on these strategies indicates increasing financial pressure on households, highlighting limited economic resilience within many communities. Addressing the underlying drivers that compel returnees to rely on such measures is therefore critical. Without targeted interventions to improve livelihoods and reduce the cost burden on households, communities may increasingly resort to more severe coping mechanisms, which can pose significant protection risks and further undermine sustainable reintegration.

“There is no sense of safety because we have no money to support ourselves. We lack heating supplies despite the harsh winter, and I have small children under the age of five. I need assistance including food, baby formula, fruit, meat, and fuel for heating.”

— Male returnee from Lebanon, in Idleb (via Upinion)

^{4,5} This figure is based on key informant perceptions. It therefore indicates the proportion of communities reporting the issue, rather than the proportion of households affected, as no household-level data was collected.

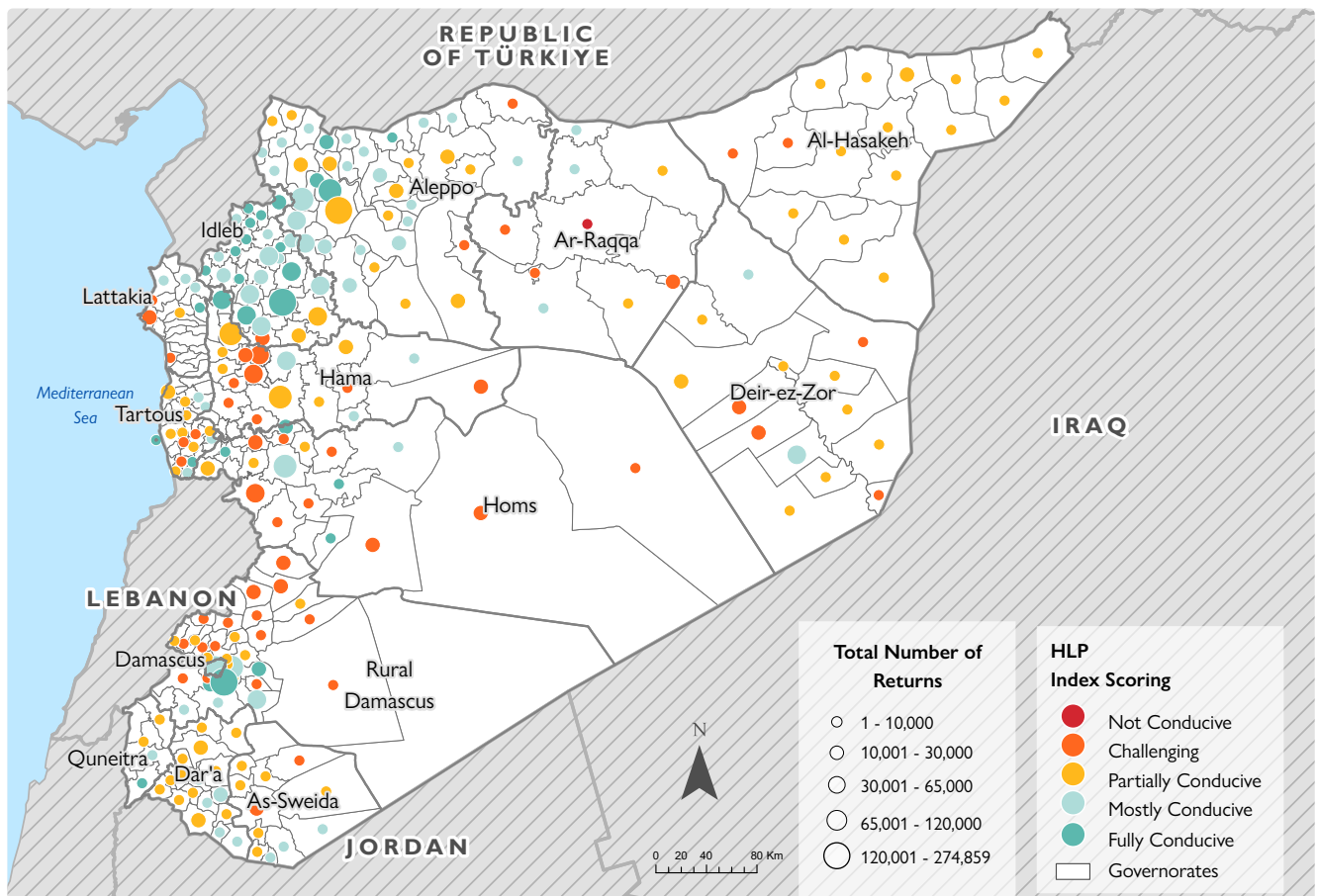
INDEX: RESTORATION OF HOUSING, LAND & PROPERTY (HLP)

Secure housing, land, and property (HLP) rights are essential for enabling successful return and reintegration, as they provide returnees with stability, legal protection, and a foundation for rebuilding livelihoods. In this assessment, the restoration of HLP received a composite score of 3.5 out of 5, classified as 'Partially Conducive', unchanged from the previous assessment period.

However, significant variation was observed across governorates. Idleb recorded the highest average score (4.2), followed by Lattakia (3.8). In contrast, the lowest scores were reported in Ar-Raqqa (2.4), as well as Homs and Al-Hasakeh (2.9 each). Ongoing instability in Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh Governorates throughout January likely hindered shelter recovery efforts. The escalation of hostilities in NES has undermined advancements in HLP restoration made, requiring secondary repair efforts as shelters are damaged or destroyed once again.

In locations with severely damaged shelters, few shelters had undergone reconstruction at the time of assessment. Approximately 70 per cent of communities reporting significant destruction had no reconstruction efforts initiated at the time of assessment, showing minimal improvement since the previous assessment period (72% in October 2025).

MAP 5: HLP INDEX SCORING, BY SUB-DISTRICT



Partially Conducive: 3.5
AVERAGE INDEX OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS

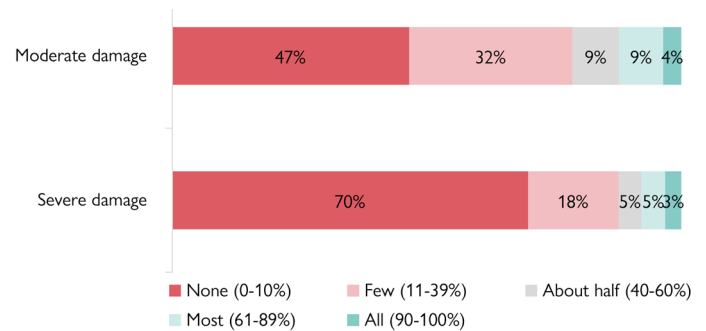


44%
OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED SEVERE DAMAGES TO SHELTERS

30%
OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED ONGOING RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS FOR SEVERELY DAMAGED SHELTERS

65%
OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED INSTANCES OF HLP DISPUTES IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS

FIGURE 12: EXTENT OF SHELTER RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS IN ASSESSED LOCATIONS (%)

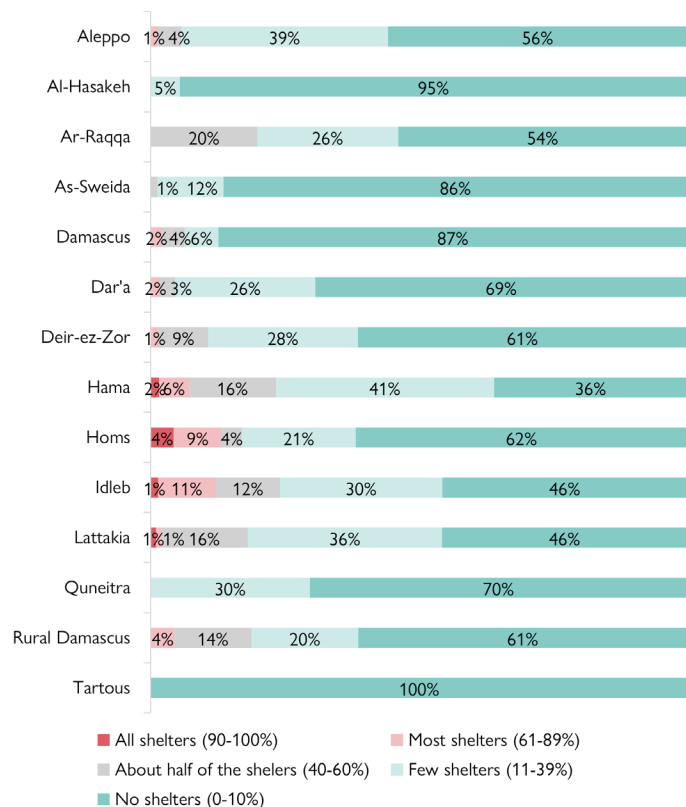


When reconstruction had begun, this was minimal (a few shelters were being reconstructed in 18% of locations with severe destruction).

Shelter reconstruction was most significant in Aleppo Governorate, where in 16 per cent of locations most or all severely damaged shelters were undergoing reconstruction at the time of assessment, likely attributed to the prioritisation of the governorate as a central operational hub for government and humanitarian led initiatives.

Notably, in areas where less significant damage to shelters was reported, reconstruction operations were significantly more likely to be ongoing (53% of locations). Less significant damage requires less monetary and labour intensive recovery efforts, which can often be initiated by individuals themselves rather than reliant on external support, which can be lengthy and difficult to access.

FIGURE 13: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITIES REPORTING THE EXTENT OF SEVERE DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION OF SHELTERS (%)

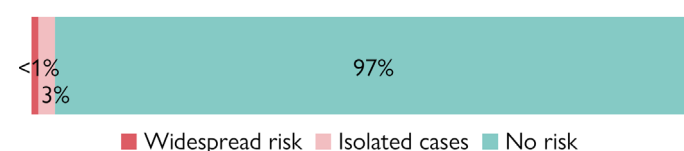


“They need complete renovation, and many are destroyed. If you want to rent a house, you'll rarely find one, and if you do, the rent is very high.”

— Male returnee from Türkiye, in Deir-ez-Zor (via Upinion)

When asked whether returnees were at risk of eviction at the time of assessment, the majority of communities (97%) reported no such risk. Among the 3 per cent of communities where isolated or widespread eviction risks were reported, communities in Ar-Raqqa Governorate were most likely to report widespread risks (27%), followed by Homs (11%). KIs attributed the significant risk of eviction in Ar-Raqqa to the lack of real estate registry offices in the governorate, which have not yet been rehabilitated due to inadequate logistical services, including poor internet connection, alongside a lack of other equipment and qualified staff. This marks the thirteenth consecutive year without any real estate documentation or registration in the governorate, significantly undermining property protection mechanisms. Without accessible real estate documentation or registration services, shelters remain unprotected, both legally and physically, leaving space for forced evictions and squatting.

FIGURE 14: PROPORTION OF COMMUNITIES WITH RETURNEES CURRENTLY AT RISK OF EVICTION FROM THEIR HOMES



In the 30 days prior to assessment, HLP disputes were absent in 35 per cent of assessed locations, a significant improvement from 13 per cent recorded in the previous assessment round (October 2025). When instances were reported, these were primarily rare (39% of communities), or occasional (23%). Only 3 per cent of communities reported very common instances.

Ar-Raqqa Governorate again fared poorly, with 23 per cent of KIs reporting very frequent instances of HLP related disputes. This can once again be attributed to the lack of real estate documentation or registration services. The situation was significant in Ar-Raqqa (69%), Homs (49%), Deir-ez-Zor (43%), and Rural Damascus (42%) Governorates, where most KIs reported frequent or occasional HLP disputes. Consistent with the previous round, HLP disputes were primarily related to disputes over inheritance (35%), land boundaries and usage rights (31%), and ownership claims (17%).

FIGURE 15: FREQUENCY OF HLP DISPUTES IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS

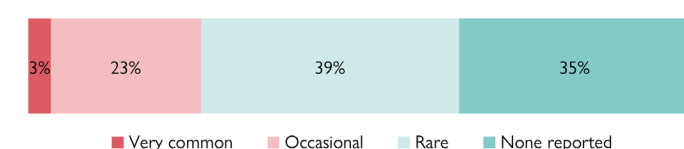
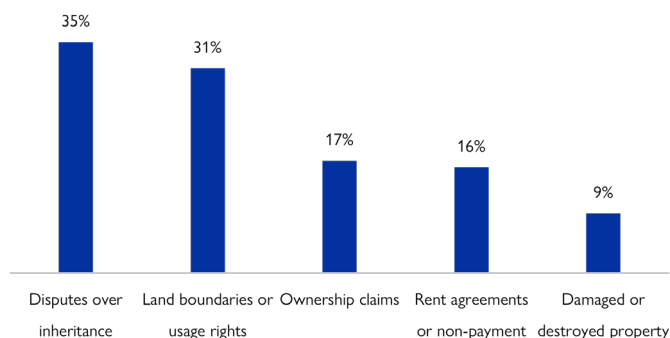


FIGURE 16: TOP 5 REASONS FOR HLP DISPUTE IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS (% OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS, MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



HLP-related disputes were reported to involve multiple population groups within communities. Among locations where such disputes occurred, KIs most frequently cited the involvement of host community members (64%), followed by returnees (55%). In contrast, fewer reports indicated the involvement of IDPs (16%) or authorities (11%). Although fewer HLP disputes were reported overall, continued return movements are likely to sustain tensions between different population groups as demographic dynamics shift. The arrival of additional returnees can place further pressure on land ownership claims and increase the burden on existing dispute resolution mechanisms. This challenge was observed in Al-Hasakeh, where government authorities are encouraging the return of residents to their previous homes, many of which are currently occupied by IDPs. In As-Sweida, KIs reported similar instances of host community members reclaiming and seizing property from displaced individuals.

When disputes occurred, most communities reported relying on a combination of formal (84% of locations) and informal (79%) resolution approaches. However, KIs in 2 per cent of assessed locations indicated that no dispute resolution mechanisms were available at all. Where mechanisms did exist, their effectiveness was often described as limited. These services were often reported as only somewhat effective (63%), with just over a third (36%) of communities describing them as "very effective". Reports of ineffective or only somewhat effective mechanisms were particularly common in Al-Hasakeh (97%), Ar-Raqqa (96%), and Quneitra (94%) Governorates.

Access to property documentation remains a critical challenge across Syria, particularly for returnees who lack proof of ownership or face obstacles in obtaining replacement documentation. These documentation gaps limit individuals' ability to reclaim property or assert legal rights, prolonging displacement-related vulnerabilities and undermining prospects for sustainable reintegration. In such contexts, individuals may also face increased exposure to forced evictions, land appropriation, or exploitation linked to unclear legal status.

Limited access to reliable documentation can also weaken confidence in formal legal systems. As a result, some residents may rely more heavily on informal mechanisms to resolve disputes, which may lack transparency or formal legal authority. In governorates where access to formal civil structures is constrained, unresolved HLP claims can persist, contributing to social tensions within communities. Over time, these unresolved issues may discourage reconstruction efforts, undermine property market stability, and hinder broader community recovery and social cohesion.



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INDEX: ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION

Access to civil documentation is crucial for achieving durable solutions, enabling returnees to exercise their legal rights, access basic services, secure property claims, and participate fully in economic and social life. Access to documentation received a composite index classification of 'Partially Conductive' (2.6 out of 5) across the assessed locations. Although access to documentation remained the lowest-scoring of all durable solutions pillars assessed, a significant improvement was recorded compared to the previous assessment period (October 2025), shifting from 'Challenging' (2.3 out of 5) to 'Partially Conductive' (2.6). This improvement can primarily be attributed to the reopening of civil registry offices across Syria, however, in many locations residents are still required to travel long distances to their nearest cities for access.

Notably, a significant improvement was reported in the share of communities where residents could easily access documentation, rising to a third (33%) of assessed communities from 15 per cent (October 2025). Easily accessible documentation services were primarily reported in Idleb (65%), Hama (64%), and Damascus (56%) Governorates. Most KIs continued to report that although residents were able to access documents, the process was difficult (51% of communities). Likewise, the share of communities reporting that no or few residents were able to access documentation almost halved from 33 per cent in October 2025 to 16 per cent.

Partially Conductive: 2.6

AVERAGE INDEX OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS



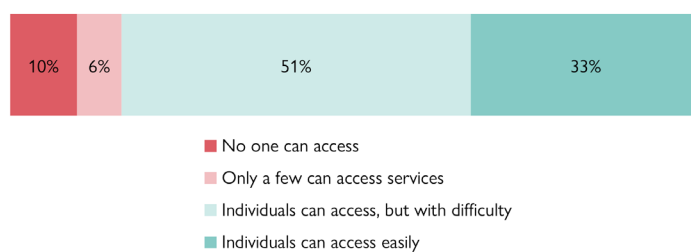
67%

OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED CHALLENGES TO ACCESSING CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

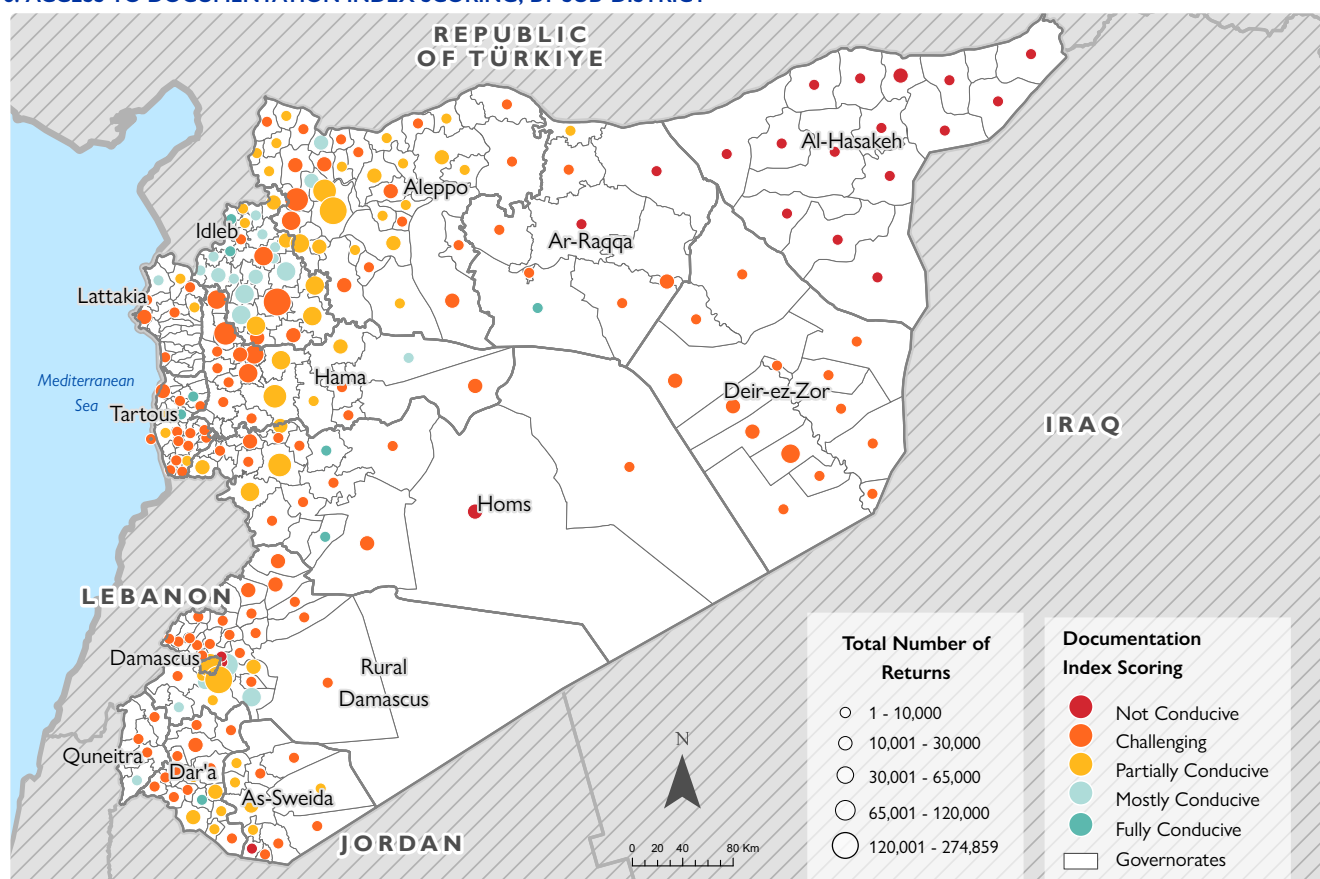
62%

OF COMMUNITIES REPORTED THAT A LACK OF DOCUMENTATION IMPACTS ACCESS TO LEGAL PROCESSES

FIGURE 17: PERCEIVED EASE OF DOCUMENTATION ACCESS



MAP 6: ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION INDEX SCORING, BY SUB-DISTRICT



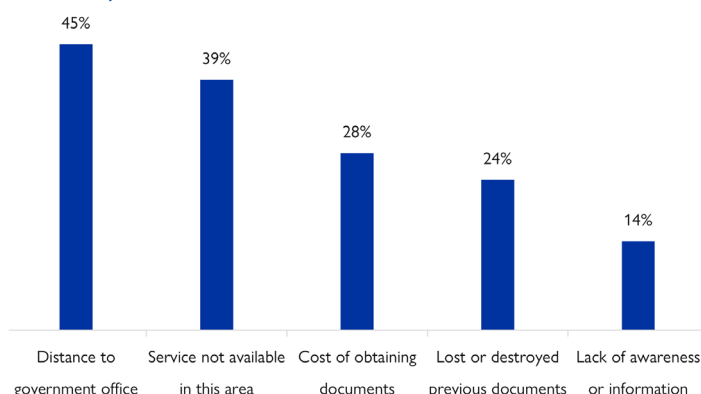
This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The situation remained severe in Al-Hasakeh, where no one was able to access any form of documentation at the time of assessment (100% of communities with no access), over double that of the next highest governorate, Ar-Raqqa (38%). The lack of access reported in Al-Hasakeh can be attributed to longstanding legal barriers affecting individuals without civil status, alongside the continued closure of all government departments in the governorate. Furthermore, the escalation in the security situation in January 2026 has compounded the situation, likely hindering any attempts toward improvements made. In alignment with the previous assessment, ID cards were reportedly the most difficult document to obtain or replace (82% of communities), followed by property documents (58%), marriage/divorce (36%), birth certificates (33%), and death (30%) certificates, among others (9%).

Where documentation access was limited, the most frequently mentioned barriers to documentation access were long distances to government offices (45%), followed by a lack of available services in the area (39%), and the high cost of obtaining documentation (28%). Notably, cost was a significantly less-reported barrier to documentation, compared to the previous assessment period.

KIs consistently reported challenges related to long travel distances to registry offices, overcrowding, lengthy waiting times, and the lack of universal recognition of documentation across districts and governorates. Challenges were reported related to informal documentation services, where high costs are met with documentation that is often not legally recognised, or recognised only within the limited bounds of the location the documentation serves. This was the case with identity documentation, land claims, and car registrations.

FIGURE 18: TOP 5 REPORTED BARRIERS TO DOCUMENTATION ACCESS (% OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS, MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



KIs in 62 per cent of assessed communities reported that a lack of documentation impacts access to legal processes, including restitution claims, alongside HLP rights (57%) and livelihood and employment opportunities (52%). Reports of impacted HLP claims increased significantly, from 30 per cent of assessed communities in Round 3 (October 2025), to 57 per cent in January 2026. As returnees continue to return to their places of origin, seeking to formally reclaim property and land, documentation gaps will become more prevalent. These gaps will reveal themselves as increased claims place a significant burden on systems that are likely ill-prepared for the rapid shift in caseload.

Ensuring access to documentation and related services is fundamental in enabling continued returns, ensuring returnees are able to successfully reintegrate and remain. Without access to documentation, returnees are unable to access humanitarian assistance, government schemes, employment opportunities, alongside HLP claims. Documentation is the first step in rebuilding, enabling returnees to establish themselves and access the primary services required to engage in the recovery process.



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METHODOLOGY

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a suite of tools designed to track and monitor displacement and mobility trends. Building on its extensive Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) experience, DTM Syria was activated on 1 February 2025 to collect primary data on conditions in locations of return. This report presents findings based on data collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026, through a network of 409 field enumerators and 11,343 key informants (KIs) across 3,686 locations in all 14 governorates in Syria. Locations hosting approximately 3.06 million returnees (both previous IDPs who have returned to their place or origin and arrivals from abroad) are represented in this report.

To achieve its objectives, the Communities of Return Index assessment adopts a community key informant (KI) methodology. KIs were selected based on their knowledge of the community, reliability in providing information, and familiarity with the needs and situation of the target population groups. Data collection was conducted through structured interviews with these KIs, capturing their perceptions of risks, needs, and living conditions within their communities. An average of five KIs per community (admin 4 level) were identified to ensure triangulation and accuracy of information provided, resulting in one answer per community. Comparative results were verified with field teams, thematic experts, and with members of the Solutions Working Group. For further details on data collection procedures, please refer to the [DTM Methodological Note](#). This report is intended to be used for further triangulation by sectoral experts within the humanitarian and development stakeholder community.

To strengthen qualitative insights in the CoRI, the [Upinion Digital Engagement Platform](#) was utilised, a two-way conversational research tool that allows engagement with respondents via messaging apps and browser interfaces. In conversation with Syrian returnees since 15 December 2025, Upinion provided DTM with direct quotes from respondents to illustrate lived experiences. Quotes were translated from Arabic to English and lightly edited for clarity and readability. Contextual information has been added in square brackets.

LIMITATIONS

The governorate, district, and sub-district level scores and indicator results presented in this report are calculated by aggregating the scores and data from individual communities (admin level 4). The dataset may be downloaded on the [DTM Syria webpage](#) for further information on assessed locations.

Data is based on key informant reporting and may be affected by bias, incomplete information, or subjective views which may result in the over or under estimation of conditions of return. Additionally, while efforts were made to achieve gender balance among KIs, this was limited by the underrepresentation of women in relevant roles as well as a lower willingness among some to participate.

Data collection is carried out over the course of a month, with enumerators visiting different locations on different days. As such, the index scores reflect perceived conditions during the one-month period leading up to the day of data collection in each specific location. As not all locations are assessed simultaneously, any incidents or changes occurring after data collection in a given location, particularly significant for shifts in safety and security, are not captured in the current round of the Index.

DISCLAIMER

All maps in this report are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

TABLE 2: KI PROFILES

Type	Female	Male	%	# of individuals
Local administration	2%	19%	21%	2,368
Group Leader of Returnees	5%	14%	19%	2,140
Community Leader	<1%	17%	18%	2,032
Teachers	9%	4%	13%	1,507
Social Worker	2%	4%	5%	609
Health Worker	4%	2%	5%	597
Trader/Shopkeeper	<1%	4%	5%	524
NGO/Humanitarian Aid Worker	2%	2%	4%	443
Group Leader of IDPs	1%	3%	4%	422
Other	2%	1%	3%	338
Religious leaders	<1%	2%	2%	213
Community Based Organization Leader	<1%	1%	1%	150
Total	27%	73%	100%	11,343

TABLE 3: ASSESSED LOCATIONS

Governorate	# of communities
Aleppo	1,277
Al-Hasakeh	111
Ar-Raqqa	141
As-Sweida	81
Damascus	95
Dar'a	176
Deir-ez-Zor	140
Hama	394
Homs	212
Idleb	668
Lattakia	105
Quneitra	54
Rural Damascus	181
Tartous	51
Total	3,686

ANNEX A

SUMMARY: COMPOSITE INDEX SCORE OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS PER GOVERNORATE

Not Conducive
0 - 1.5

Challenging
1.6 - 2.5

Partially Conducive
2.6 - 3.5

Mostly Conducive
3.6 - 4.5

Fully Conducive
4.5 - 5

TABLE 4: SCORING PER DURABLE SOLUTIONS CRITERIA, BY GOVERNORATE

Governorate	# of Returnees	Safety and Security ⁶	Adequate Standard of Living	Access to Livelihoods	Restoration of HLP	Access to Documentation	Overall Index
Aleppo	748,370	4.2	3.3	2.9	3.6	2.5	3.3
Al-Hasakeh	31,299	2.6	2.9	2.6	2.9	0.5	2.3
Ar-Raqqa	34,120	2.7	3.0	2.5	2.4	1.7	2.5
As-Sweida	32,890	3.2	2.8	2.0	3.0	2.4	2.7
Damascus	98,296	4.3	4.0	2.9	3.6	2.9	3.5
Dar'a	103,863	3.9	3.5	2.8	3.1	2.4	3.2
Deir-ez-Zor	121,859	3.2	3.3	2.6	3.0	2.2	2.8
Hama	411,826	3.9	3.4	2.6	3.1	2.7	3.1
Homs	322,698	4.0	3.2	2.7	2.9	2.5	3.1
Idleb	615,914	4.5	3.2	2.6	4.2	3.4	3.6
Lattakia	34,088	4.1	2.3	2.4	3.8	2.2	3.0
Quneitra	4,391	3.8	3.4	2.6	3.7	2.4	3.2
Rural Damascus	482,409	3.9	2.8	2.6	3.4	2.6	3.1
Tartous	15,825	4.3	3.7	3.3	3.2	2.3	3.4

SUMMARY: COMPOSITE INDEX SCORE OF ASSESSED LOCATIONS PER DISTRICT

TABLE 5: SCORING PER DURABLE SOLUTIONS CRITERIA, BY DISTRICT

Governorate	District	Safety and Security ⁷	Adequate Standard of Living	Access to Livelihoods	Restoration of HLP	Access to Documentation	Overall Index
Aleppo	Afrin	4.4	3.5	2.9	3.5	2.6	3.4
	Ain Al Arab	3.9	3.3	2.8	3.5	2.3	3.1
	Al Bab	4.3	3.4	3.0	3.7	2.6	3.4
	As-Safira	4.2	2.9	2.7	3.7	2.8	3.2
	Azaz	4.4	3.7	3.3	4.0	2.6	3.6
	Jarablus	4.3	3.9	3.0	3.6	2.4	3.4
	Jebel Saman	4.4	3.2	3.0	4.0	2.5	3.4
	Menbij	3.4	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.8
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	2.4	2.8	2.5	3.0	0.5	2.2
	Al-Malikeyyeh	2.1	3.1	2.5	3.0	0.5	2.2
	Quamishli	3.2	3.0	2.8	2.9	0.5	2.5
	Ras Al Ain	2.0	3.0	2.4	2.5	0.5	2.1
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	1.8	2.6	2.4	1.6	1.2	1.9
	Ath-Thawrah	3.1	3.1	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.6
	Tell Abiad	3.6	3.3	2.7	3.4	1.6	3.0

^{6,7} As the index scores reflect perceived conditions during the one-month period leading up to the day of data collection in each specific location, the current escalation in hostilities since the data collection period is not accurately reflected in this report.

Governorate	District	Safety and Security*	Adequate Standard of Living	Access to Livelihoods	Restoration of HLP	Access to Documentation	Overall Index
As-Sweida	As-Sweida	2.7	3.2	2.4	2.3	3.0	2.7
	Salkhad	4.2	2.4	1.6	4.0	1.9	2.8
	Shahba	2.4	2.9	2.2	2.7	2.1	2.5
Damascus	Damascus	4.3	4.0	2.9	3.6	2.9	3.5
Dar'a	As-Sanamayn	3.9	3.8	2.7	3.0	2.2	3.1
	Dar'a	3.8	3.4	2.9	3.3	2.7	3.2
	Izra'	3.9	3.5	2.7	3.1	2.3	3.1
Deir-ez-Zor	Abu Kamal	3.0	3.2	3.0	2.8	2.0	2.8
	Al Mayadin	3.2	2.9	2.5	3.1	2.0	2.8
	Deir-ez-Zor	3.2	3.4	2.5	3.0	2.3	2.9
Hama	As-Salamiyeh	3.8	3.1	2.5	2.9	2.7	3.0
	As-Suqaylabiyah	3.9	2.8	2.8	3.4	2.2	3.0
	Hama	4.1	3.8	2.8	3.2	2.9	3.4
	Masyaf	3.9	4.6	3.1	2.3	2.4	3.2
	Muhradah	3.6	2.7	1.9	2.4	2.2	2.6
Homs	Al Makhrim	3.9	3.4	2.6	3.1	3.0	3.2
	Al-Qusayr	4.1	3.1	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.9
	Ar-Rastan	4.3	3.7	3.0	3.4	2.7	3.4
	Homs	4.1	3.3	2.6	3.3	2.6	3.2
	Tadmor	2.7	2.8	2.6	1.8	1.5	2.3
	Tall Kalakh	4.1	3.4	2.5	3.1	3.1	3.2
Idleb	Al Ma'ra	4.2	2.4	2.1	3.6	2.6	3.0
	Ariha	4.6	3.4	3.1	4.3	4.2	3.9
	Harim	4.7	4.0	2.4	4.7	3.2	3.8
	Idleb	4.5	3.2	2.9	4.1	3.6	3.7
	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	4.8	3.5	3.2	4.5	4.1	4.0
Latakia	Al-Haffa	4.1	2.0	2.0	4.2	1.8	2.8
	Jablah	3.7	3.2	3.5	2.3	2.0	3.0
	Latakia	4.2	2.6	2.9	3.4	2.7	3.2
Quneitra	Al Fiq	4.3	2.6	2.5	4.7	4.2	3.7
	Quneitra	3.8	3.4	2.6	3.6	2.3	3.1
Rural Damascus	Al Qutayfah	3.4	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.1	2.7
	An Nabk	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.5
	At Tall	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.0	2.6
	Az-Zabdani	3.6	3.0	2.9	2.5	2.0	2.8
	Darayya	4.0	2.5	2.5	3.3	3.2	3.1
	Duma	4.2	2.7	2.6	4.1	2.9	3.3
	Qatana	3.8	3.4	2.4	2.7	2.4	2.9
	Rural Damascus	4.2	2.6	2.6	3.9	3.1	3.3
	Yabroud	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.5
Tartous	Banyas	4.2	3.5	2.9	2.7	2.0	3.1
	Dreikish	3.8	3.3	3.0	2.8	2.0	3.0
	Qadmous	4.6	3.9	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.7
	Safita	4.2	3.4	3.3	3.6	2.3	3.4
	Sheikh Badr	4.3	3.8	3.3	3.8	2.8	3.6
	Tartous	4.3	3.9	3.5	3.2	2.4	3.5

ANNEX B

INDEX METHODOLOGY: SCORING INDICATORS

This assessment employs a standardized scoring methodology to measure conditions across five of the IASC durable solutions criteria: Safety and Security; Adequate Standards of Living; Access to Livelihoods; Housing, Land and Property; and Access to Documentation. The resulting index provides a comparative indication of how conducive conditions are for the return and sustainable reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees.

Each indicator was based on a corresponding question in the assessment tool. All possible response options were ranked from least to most conducive and assigned a value from 0 to 5, with 0 representing the least conducive condition and 5 the most conducive. Intermediate responses were scored proportionally based on their rank.

Index scores were calculated in three steps:

1. Criterion-level Index: For each of the five durable solutions criteria, the average score of all associated indicators was calculated for each location.
2. Composite Index: An unweighted average of the five criteria scores was then calculated to produce a single composite index for each location, on a 0–5 scale, where higher scores indicate more conducive conditions for return and reintegration.
3. A triangulation of results was conducted by sharing the comparative indices with DTM field teams and IOM thematic experts to validate the index results in alignment with the situation on the ground. Future reports will include a validation exercise with members of the Solutions Working Group

To support area-based planning and analysis, location-level index scores were then aggregated and averaged at both the sub-district and governorate levels.

This approach enables comparison across locations and administrative levels, and helps identify areas requiring targeted intervention or support to inform strategic efforts to encourage sustainable returns.

REPORTED SITUATION	QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTION
Not Conducive 0 - 1.5	Conditions severely inadequate: Conditions are unsafe, unsustainable or completely unsuitable for return
Challenging 1.6 - 2.5	Major obstacles to return: Significant obstacles exist; returns are possible but highly constrained
Partially Conducive 2.6 - 3.5	Minor barriers remain: Some conditions support return, but notable barriers remain.
Mostly Conducive 3.6 - 4.5	Minor barriers remain: Most key conditions are met, with only minor issues.
Fully Conducive 4.5 - 5	Conditions favorable: Conditions are safe, dignified, and sustainable for voluntary return.

TABLE 6: DURABLE SOLUTIONS CRITERIA INDICATOR TABLE

Durable solutions criteria pillars	Indicators
Safety and Security	Safety during the day and night
	Security incident: Landmines, UXOs, IEDs
	Security incident: Tensions or incidents related to HLP disputes
	Security incident: Destruction of property
	Security incident: Direct and indirect attacks (firearms)
	Security incident: Attacks using non-firearms
	Security incident: Abduction and kidnapping
	Security incident: Arbitrary arrest
	Security incident: Recruitment of children
	Security incident: Petty crime
	Presence of landmines or unexploded ordnance
	Restrictions to freedom of movement
Adequate Standards of Living	Access to legal mechanisms and justice
	Access to electricity (public and private)
	Access to safe water for drinking
	Access to water for hygiene and domestic needs
	Access to education
	Access to transportation
	Access to waste garbage service
	Access to telecommunication services
	Access to healthcare
	Access to markets
Access to Livelihoods	Shelter damage/ destruction
	Top 3 livelihood sector functioning
Restoration of Housing, Land and Property (HLP)	Households not earning enough income to meet their basic needs over the past three months
	Frequency of disputes related to HLP
Access to Documentation	Mechanisms present to help resolve HLP disputes
	Tensions or incidents related to HLP disputes
Access to Documentation	Access to civil documentation services
	Impact of the lack of documentation: prevention of returnees from accessing services



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