



## Interim Survey Results on the Profile of Persons from Syria arriving at the Greek borders

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# Interim survey results on the profile of persons from Syria arriving at the Greek borders

## A. Introduction

UNHCR's continued border monitoring at entry points in Greece, with a targeted focus on the profiling of the population fleeing Syria and arriving in Greece, mainly via the Greek-Turkish border, is included in UNHCR's Regional Plan to address increased arrivals from Syria. On 1 April 2015, UNHCR Greece Borders' team launched a data collection exercise through individual interviews with Syrian nationals and other persons coming from Syria arriving in Greek entry locations.

The high number of arrivals point out the need to gain a realistic understanding of the situation, needs, concerns and expectations. Data collected and represented in this brief interim overview provides an estimation of the number of refugees planning to stay in Greece or move onwards to other EU countries. Information on locations of entry and first reception as well as the conditions and services available was also captured. The data will enable UNHCR and partners to better integrate the needs and concerns into strategies and programming.

## B. Methodology

The structured questionnaire was designed to ask questions on different aspects of the conditions, intentions, expectations of persons fleeing Syria, before, upon and after their entry into Greece. The team designed and planned the exercise on the basis of the 2014 figures of new arrivals in Greece. Furthermore, the team set a target of filling out 3,500 questionnaires in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015 and planned a representative sample on the basis of the 2014 nationality and country of origin, sex and age breakdown and percentages.

During the period 1 April 2015 to 31 May 2015, UNHCR Greece borders' team, gathered **670 responses to the questionnaire** in border locations, in accordance with specific guidelines and methodology.

Values presented in the findings section, both absolute and percentages (as applicable), refer to the responses provided by the 670 participants, while the total number of Syrians that arrived in Greece for the same period (April-May) was 18,257. It is to be noted that for all questions participants were given the option to "not reply", which was included on the final tables.

## C. Findings

### Sex and age breakdown

The majority of newcomers were **male** (83.13%) belonging primarily to the **age group 18- 35** (71.04%).

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	557	83,13%
Female	113	16,87%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Age	Frequency	Percent
18 to 35	476	71,04%
36 to 59	132	19,70%
12 to 17	50	7,46%
60+	12	1,79%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

### Ethnic origin and Religion

77.76% of the persons were **Arabs, of which 11.19% Palestinians from Syria**. 86, 87% were followers of **Sunni Islam**.

Ethnic Origin	Frequency	Percent
Arab	596	88,95%
Kurdish	62	9,25%
Circassian	5	0,75%
Other	5	0,75%
Turkoman	2	0,30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Sunni Islam	582	86,87%
Syriac Orthodox	19	2,84%
Syrian Catholic	16	2,39%
Other	13	1,94%
<i>No reply</i>	18	2,68%
Yezidi	7	1,04%
Greek Orthodox	5	0,75%
Druze	4	0,60%
Roman Catholic	3	0,45%
Alawite Islam	1	0,15%
Greek Catholic	1	0,15%
Twelver Shia	1	0,15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

## Status and place of residence in Syria

91.19% were **Syrian nationals** and 7.46% were **Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA**. The majority of newcomers were resident in the Governorates of **Damascus** (35.52%) and **Aleppo** (23.43%).

Status in Syria	Frequency	Percent
Nationality	611	91,19%
Palestinian Refugee UNRWA	50	7,46%
Palestinian Refugee GAPAR*	5	0,75%
No reply	3	0,45%
Palestinian not registered	1	0,15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

\* GAPAR: General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees

Residence	Frequency	Percent
Damascus	238	35,52%
Aleppo	157	23,43%
Daraa	50	7,46%
Homs	48	7,16%
Deir ez Zor	27	4,03%
Al Hasakah	24	3,58%
Hama	24	3,58%
Idlib	23	3,43%
Latakia	20	2,99%
Quneitra	16	2,39%
Ar Raqqah	14	2,09%
Tartus	11	1,64%
No reply	10	1,49%
As Suwayda	4	0,60%
Rif Dimashq	4	0,60%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>



## Family Status and children

326 persons were **single** (48.66%) and 299 persons (44.63%) **married**. 297 persons (44.33%) had children. The majority of them had between **1-3 children**. 128 persons (19.10%) reported that some **members of their family were missing** as a result of the war.

Family status	Frequency	Percent
Single	326	48,66%
Married	299	44,63%
Widowed	20	2,99%
Divorced	9	1,34%
Other	6	0,90%
No reply	6	0,90%
Cohabiting	3	0,45%
Separated	1	0,15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Children	Frequency	Percent
No	352	52,54%
Yes	297	44,33%
No reply	21	3,13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Missing persons*	Frequency	Percent
No	541	80,75%
Yes	128	19,10%
No reply	1	0,15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

*\*Missing persons in the family during war*

Children Number	Frequency	Percent
2	95	32,42%
3	76	25,94%
1	59	20,14%
4	35	11,95%
5	16	5,46%
6	6	2,05%
7	4	1,37%
8	2	0,68%
No reply	4	1,37%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Temporary residence in another country prior to entering Greece

391 persons (58.36%) stated that they spent time in **Turkey** prior to arriving in Greece. 211 of the individuals interviewed (31.49%) did not provide a response, as this was perceived as a sensitive question.

412 persons (61.49%) declared that they had private accommodation while staying in the transit country. 220 (32.84%) did not provide a response.

Country	Frequency	Percent
Turkey	391	58,36%
No reply	211	31,49%
Lebanon	40	5,97%
Other* (see table next)	10	1,49%
Jordan	7	1,04%
Egypt	6	0,90%
Iraq	5	0,75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>



Other* (Country)	Frequency
Emirates	4
Dubai	2
Libya	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Sudan	1
Yemen	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

## Accommodation in the country of transit

Accommodation in the transit country	Frequency	Percent
Private	412	61,49%
No reply	220	32,84%
Other* (see table next)	23	3,43%
Camp	15	2,24%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>



Other* (Accommodation)	Frequency	Percent
Hotel	15	65.22%
Youth hostel	3	13.04%
Friend's house	1	4.35%
Workplace	1	4.35%
Homeless	1	4.35%
Shelter for injured persons from Syria	1	4.35%
Tents	1	4.35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Out of 333 respondents among those having transited in another country before entering Greece, 220 persons stated that they received **no assistance while in the transit country**, while others mentioned that they received some form of assistance.

220 persons (32.84%) gave **no response** when asked about the duration of their stay in the transit country. 181 persons (27.01%) stated that they remained in the transit country for a duration of **1-3 months**. 46 persons (6.87%) declared that they had spent there 2 or more years.

### Assistance received in the country of transit

Assistance	Frequency	Percent
None	220	66,07%
Free medical	40	12,01%
Food items	26	7,81%
Shelter	12	3,60%
<i>Other* (see table next)</i>	10	3,00%
Subsistence allowance	8	2,40%
Financial assistance	7	2,10%
Non-Food	6	1,80%
Work permit	4	1,20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100%</b>



Other* (Assistance, responds as provided by participants)	Frequency
24 dinars/ month	1
Assistance from the U.N.	1
Food provided by German NGO once a month	1
Food and clothes provided every 3 months from organizations (mainly in Saudi Arabia)	1
Medical assistance to my parents	1
Food items received once a month	1
Second hand items (clothes)	1
Under previous regime we had a low cost rent for house, a discount card for super market and food for kids	1
UNHCR Assistance	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>

### Duration of stay in the transit country

Duration of stay	Frequency	Percent
No reply	220	32,84%
1-3 months	181	27,01%
3-6 months	81	12,09%
6-12 months	75	11,19%
1-2 years	67	10,00%
2 or more years	46	6,87%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

### Documentation in the transit country

Documentation	Frequency	Percent
None	366	54,63%
No reply	217	32,39%
Other	49	7,31%
Temporary Protection	29	4,33%
Refugee status	9	1,34%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

286 persons attributed **unemployment** as their reason for leaving the transit country, with 222 persons leaving as a result of **lack of financial assistance**. 16 persons stated that they left the transit country due to a **discontinuation of assistance**.

### Reasons for leaving the transit country (multiple choices)

Reasons for leaving the transit country	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment	286	30.39%
Lack of financial assistance	222	23.59%
Other* (see table)	117	12.43%
Lack of permit/Undocumented	91	9.67%
Security reasons	86	9.14%
Lack of shelter	47	4.99%
Family reunification in EU	35	3.72%
Fear of deportation to Syria	21	2.23%
Medical reasons	20	2.13%
Discontinuation of assistance	16	1.70%

Other* (Reasons as provided by responders)	Frequency	Percent
Living cost	21	15.33%
Education	21	15.33%
Perceived labor exploitation & discrimination in Turkey and Lebanon	18	13.14%
Perceived discrimination towards Syrians	15	10.95%
Better future for self and	14	10.22%
Poor quality of life	13	9.49%
Perceived lack of refugee rights	7	5.11%
Perception of ineffective asylum system	4	2.92%
Family Reunification	4	2.92%
Medical issues could not be addressed	4	2.92%
Non-renewal of residency	4	2.92%
Parents' decision, brought as child	3	2.19%
Plan to migrate further	3	2.19%
Lack of proper shelter	2	1.46%
Lack of women's rights	2	1.46%
Language	2	1.46%

## Attempts to enter Greece

550 persons (82.09%) stated that they entered Greece **on their first attempt** whereas 113 persons (16.87%) said that it took **more than one attempt** to enter the country. 7 persons (1.05%) did not provide an answer.

First Attempt	Frequency	Percent
Yes	550	82,09%
No	113	16,87%
No Reply	7	1,05%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Number of Attempts, if not first attempt	Frequency	Percent
2	64	57%
3	26	23%
1	12	11%
4	5	4%
7	2	2%
5	1	1%
6	1	1%
8	1	1%
12	1	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Future plans/intentions

89.40% of the participants stated that they planned to apply **for asylum in an EU country** other than Greece. 3.43% stated they would apply for **asylum in Greece**. 317 persons said the country of destination/asylum was Germany and 106 persons indicated Sweden.

Future plans	Frequency	Percent
Apply for asylum in another EU country	599	89,40%
No Reply	26	3,88%
Apply for asylum in Greece	23	3,43%
Other	22	3,28%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Apply in another EU country - specify	Frequency	Percentage
Germany	317	52.92%
Sweden	106	17.70%
Denmark	35	5.84%
No Reply	28	4.67%
Austria	24	4.01%
Norway	23	3.84%
United Kingdom	20	3.34%
Netherlands	19	3.17%
Belgium	7	1.17%
Finland	7	1.17%
Other	7	1.17%
France	3	0.50%
Switzerland	2	0.33%
Italy	1	0.17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Why have you decided to apply for asylum in Greece? (Multiple choices)

Reason to apply for asylum in Greece	Frequency	Percent
No financial means to move further	7	30,43%
Family and social network	7	30,43%
First entry	6	26,09%
Previous stay in	2	8,70%
Access to asylum	1	4,35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Why have you decided to apply for asylum in another EU country and not in Greece? (Multiple choices)

Reason	Answers	Percent
Employment opportunities	367	26%
Assistance and rights for recognized refugees	309	22%
Family/social network	198	14%
Reception conditions for asylum seekers	193	14%
Education opportunities	174	13%
Family reunification	72	5%
Access to Asylum	71	5%
Previous stay in	8	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1392</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Other reasons:

Other reasons to apply in another EU country and not Greece	Frequency	Percent
Medical issues cannot be addressed	8	47,06%
Better future for self & children	4	23,53%
Interest in education	3	17,65%
Language	2	11,76%

### What would change your opinion to apply for asylum in Greece?

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Employment opportunities	360	50%
Education opportunities	151	21%
Fast family reunification for recognized refugees	78	11%
Access to nationality	59	8%
Only if I could not move further	43	6%
Access to asylum	36	5%

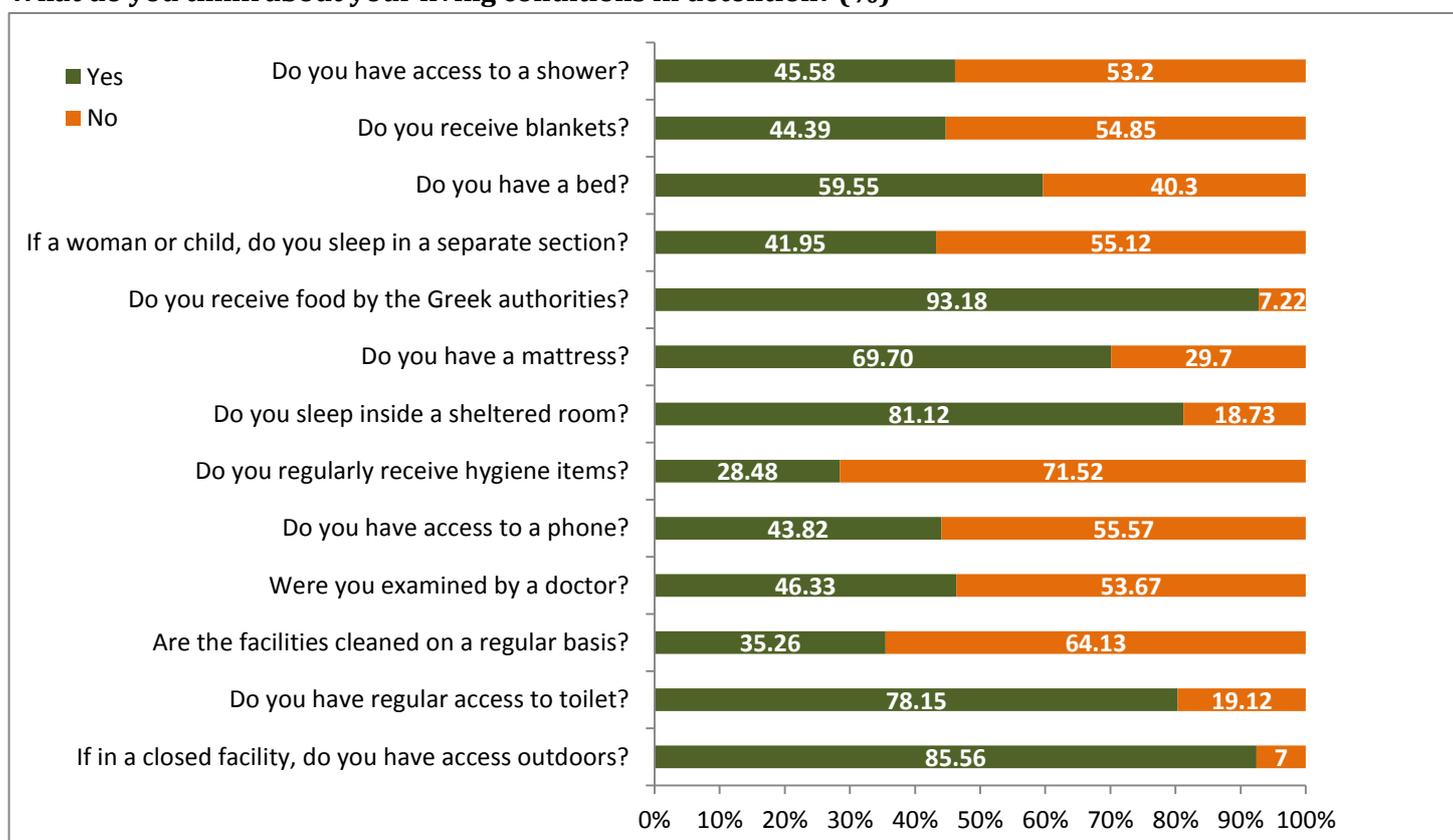
### Are you planning to apply for family reunification in the country of asylum?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Yes	365	54,48%
No	188	28,06%
No reply	67	10%
Not decided yet	50	7,46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

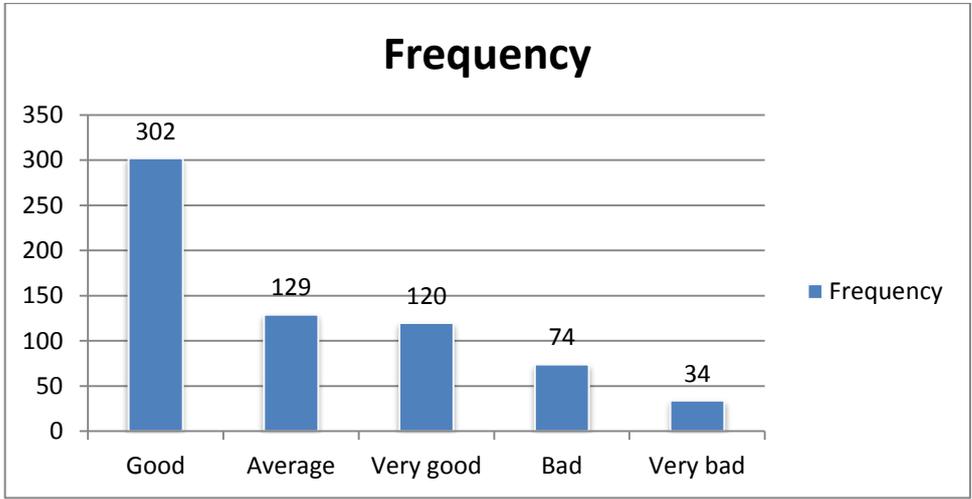
### Where will you stay while in Greece after you leave the border location?

Accommodation plan	Frequency	Percent
Hotel	320	47,76%
Nowhere	155	23,13%
Friend	137	20,45%
Other	23	3,43%
No Reply	20	2,99%
Reception Facility	15	2,24%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

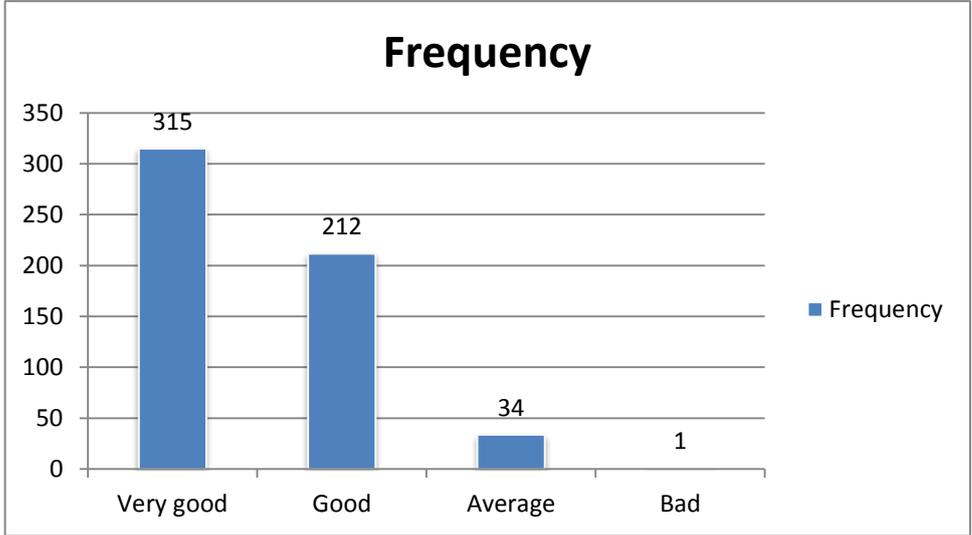
### What do you think about your living conditions in detention? (%)



**How would you describe the treatment by the guards?**



**How would you describe the treatment by the other personnel?**



## Concerns/Recommendations by participants

Finally, **when asked what they suggest that Greece and EU could/should do to improve the situation of refugees from Syria**, most participants mentioned safe access to Europe, access to asylum and to relevant rights. Safe and legal passage to EU, opportunities to obtain travel documents as well as employment opportunities were also mentioned. The majority of participants claimed that they were forced to pay large amounts of money to smugglers and to travel illegally from Turkey to Greece, which put their lives in extreme danger.

- Other concerns raised by participants referred to access to resettlement programmes from Syria's neighboring countries to the EU, access to asylum and fast family reunification procedures. In their views, the EU should advocate for the opening of asylum offices of its Member States in Turkey, as family members, usually the most vulnerable, are left behind in Syria looking for a safe passage to the EU. In addition, resettlement programmes to countries with better benefits and support mechanisms for refugees should be put in place
- Respondents also mentioned the need for more reception facilities and assistance upon arrival, at least for the first few months. They also referred to the need for employment and educational opportunities in Greece, so that people are not forced to leave for other EU countries. Other countries to accept more Syrians from Greece.
- Participants also called on Europe to help find a solution to stop the war in Syria.