

Movement Intentions For Internally Displaced Persons in Camps

January 2025 | Northeast Syria

Context and rationale

Recent events that led to the fall of the Assad government on 8 December 2024 have caused a significant political shift in Syria. After thirteen years of conflict marked by repeated displacements, economic stagnation and inadequate basic services, this new reality offers [opportunities for an inclusive transition](#), including the potential for returns of IDPs to their areas of origin (AoO).

In this context, providing humanitarian actors with updated, reliable data on IDPs' movement intentions is crucial to enable safe and dignified returns. Building on a similar exercise from [December 2024](#), this factsheet presents updated findings on IDPs' intentions and factors influencing their movement decisions.

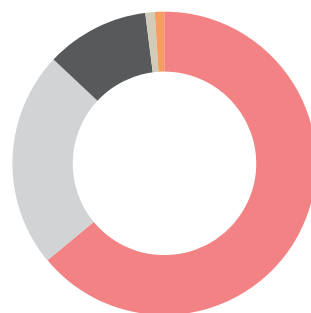
Key messages

- **Only a small minority (11%) of IDPs reported the intention to return to their areas of origin (AoO)**, and almost one in four IDP HHs was undecided.
- **Access to livelihoods and basic services, both in current locations and in AoO, are key factors influencing IDPs' decision to return.** For those not intending to stay, the lack of these services was seen as both a barrier for return and a condition that must be met. Conversely, for IDPs considering a return, improved access to these services in their AoO was a strong pull factor.
- **Most IDPs willing to return are planning it for the first half of 2025.** In **Areesha**, up to **20%** of IDPs mentioned the intention to return within 3 to 6 months.
- The **vast majority of returns (78%)** are expected in areas of the **Deir-Ez-Zor** governorate. Further analysis on areas of returns could help better understand living conditions and needs of new returnees.

Key findings

IDP Households' movement intention

For the month following data collection (in % of HHs, weighted by camp population)



- 64% Remain in current location
- 23% Not sure
- 11% Return to area of origin
- 1% Relocate elsewhere in Syria
- 1% Relocate outside of Syria

77% of IDPs willing to return are planning it for the first half of 2025.

Areesha

was the camp with the largest proportion of households intending to return (**25%**)

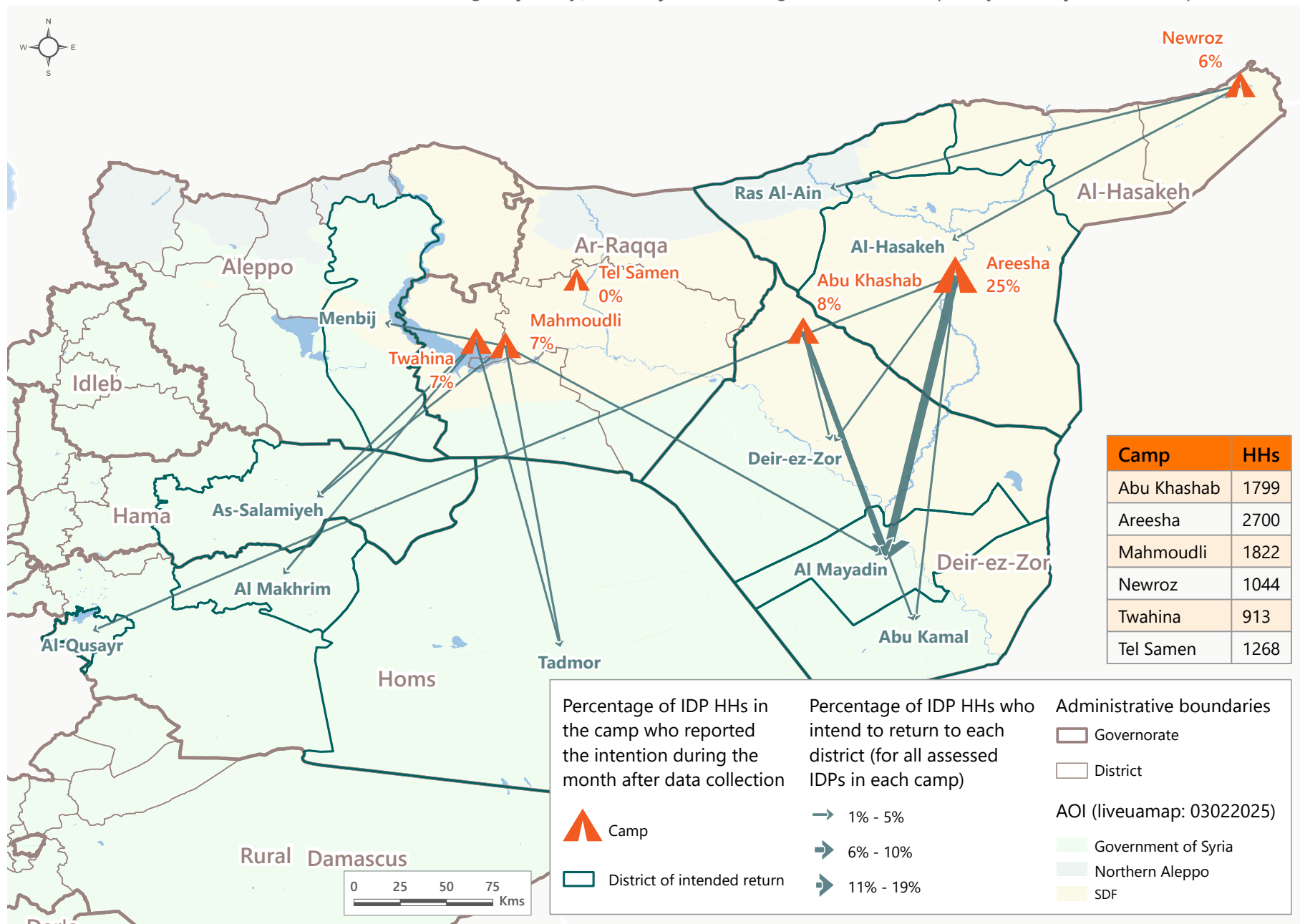
Methodology overview

This assessment aims to provide humanitarian actors with insights into the movement intentions of IDPs residing in camps in Northeast Syria (NES), with a particular focus on IDP returns to their AoO. Data collection was conducted between January 21 and 28, 2025, in six camps: Abu Khashab (102 households), Areesha (103), Mahmoudli (100), Newroz (99), Tel Samen (99) and Twahina (97). The assessment included 600 HHs, who were randomly sampled using a spatial sampling methodology, stratified per camp. The sample size was calculated to achieve a 95% confidence level and a 10% margin of error based on population figures provided by camp management.

It is important to note that any reductions in assistance provided to camps that took place after the end of data collection will not be captured nor will any associated changes in the intentions of assessed populations be reflected.

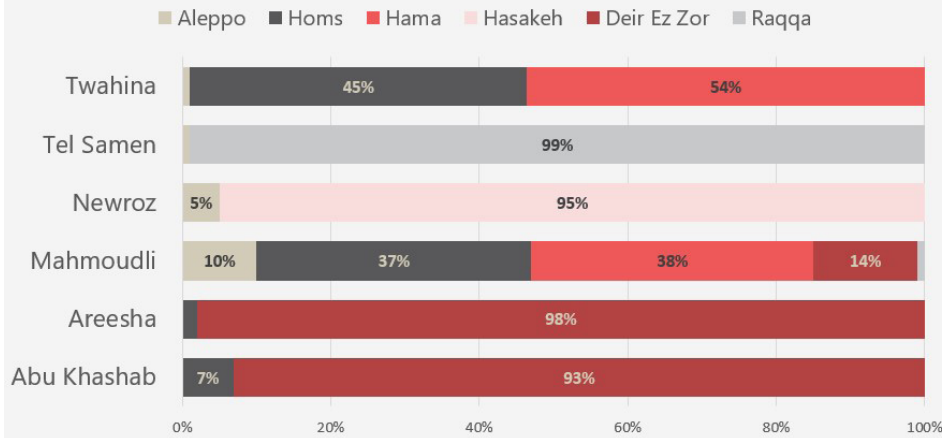
The full analysis of this assessment is accessible [here](#), and the Terms of Reference can be found [here](#).

IDP Return Intentions to Areas of Origin by camp, for the year following data collection (as reported by Households)



Overview

Most common governorates of origin for assessed Households by % of IDP HHs in each of the Camps



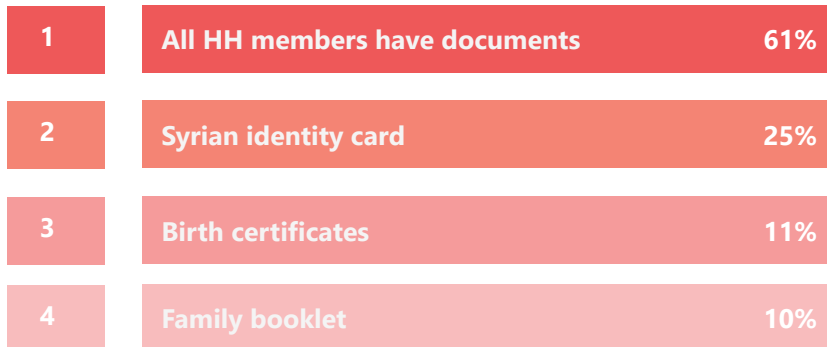
9 years

Average duration of displacement for IDP HHs in the assessed camps

On average, IDPs have been **displaced more than 3 times** since their first displacement

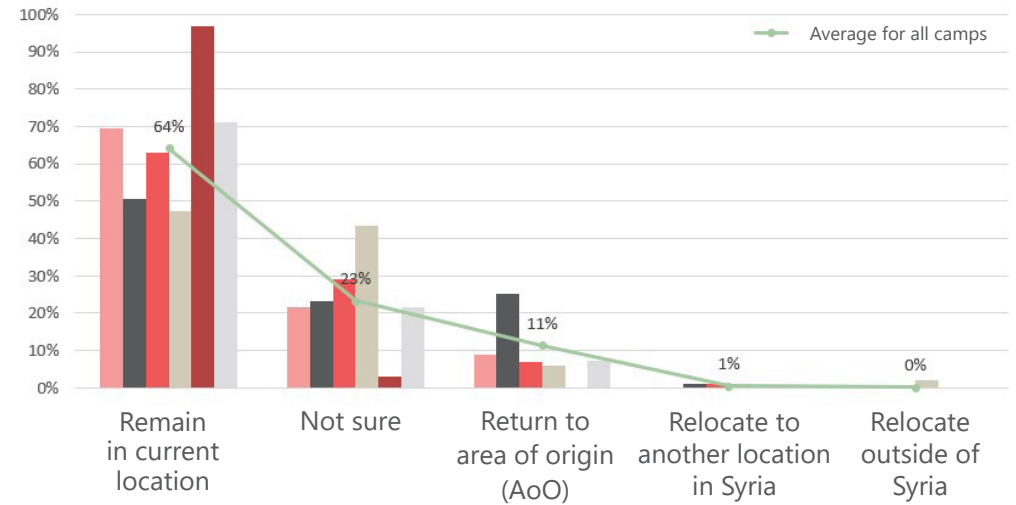
Most common missing documents for assessed Households

by % of IDP HHs, across all assessed camps



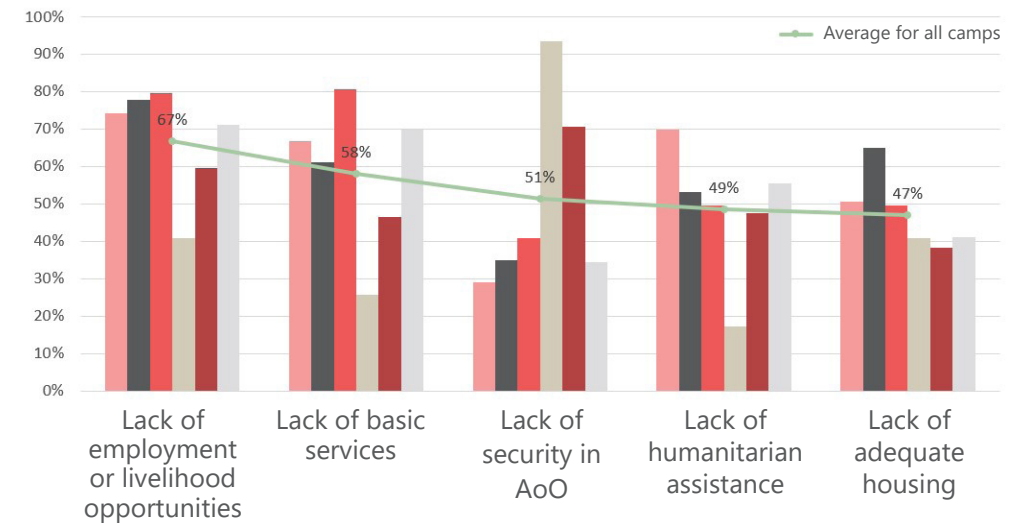
Legend: Abu-Khashab (light red), Areesha (dark grey), Mahmoudli (red), Newroz (tan), Tel Samen (dark red), Twahina (light grey)

Movement intentions for the year following data collection as reported by HHs (%)



Most commonly reported barriers to returning to AoO

In % of HHs not intending to return in the month following data collection



IDPs reporting intention to return

IDP return intentions in assessed camps

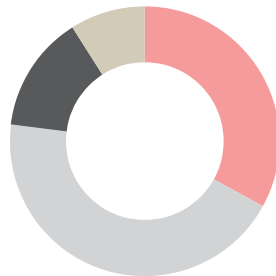
in % of HHs who reported intending to return during the year following data collection

Abu Khashab	Areesha	Mahmoudli	Newroz	Tel Samen	Twahina
9%	25%	7%	6%	0%	7%

Half of households planning to return reported that their houses are either destroyed or severely damaged

Most commonly reported timeline for return

in % of HHs who intend to return during the year following data collection (subset n=56)



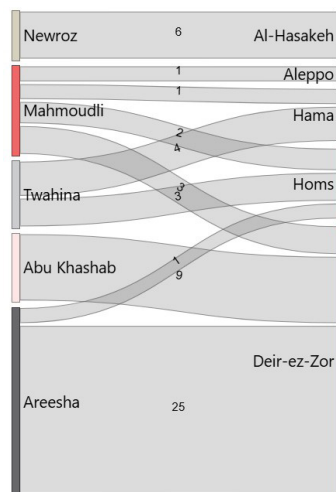
- 33%** Within 3 months
- 44%** Within 6 months
- 14%** Within 1 year
- 9%** Not sure

Governorates of origin for IDPs intending to return

in % of HHs who intend to return during the year following data collection (subset n=56)

Deir-Ez-Zor	78%
Homs	8%
Hasakeh	7%
Hama	5%
Aleppo	2%

In # of HHs intending to return to each governorate



Legend*: Abu Khashab (Red), Areesha (Black), Mahmoudli (Dark Red), Newroz (Light Green), Twahina (Light Grey)

*No IDPs reported the intention to return in Tel Samen

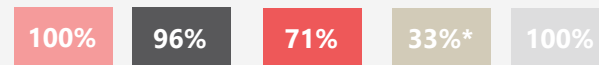
Most commonly reported pull and push factors

in % of HHs who intend to return during the year following data collection (subset n=56)

Pull factors		Push factors	
68%	Emotional desire to return	1	Lack of employment and livelihoods 78%
65%	Better access to employment and livelihoods	2	Lack of basic services 48%
57%	Better access to housing and shelter	3	Lack of health care services 29%
39%	Better access to basic services	4	Lack of humanitarian assistance 23%

Across assessed camps, IDPs generally reported similar factors influencing their decisions to leave and return to their areas of origin. In particular, the lack of employment and livelihood opportunities was the most commonly reported push factor in all assessed camps. Moreover, more than 70% of IDPs in both Abu Khashab and Areesha -where most IDPs intending to return are originally from Deir-Ez-Zor governorate- highlighted improved access to livelihoods in their AoO as a pull factor.

Percentages of households, in each of the camps, reporting having enough information to inform their decision to return:



*In **Newroz**, all HHs reporting not having enough information mentioned the security situation, livelihood opportunities and the status of their house as information needs.

IDPs not intending to leave assessed camps

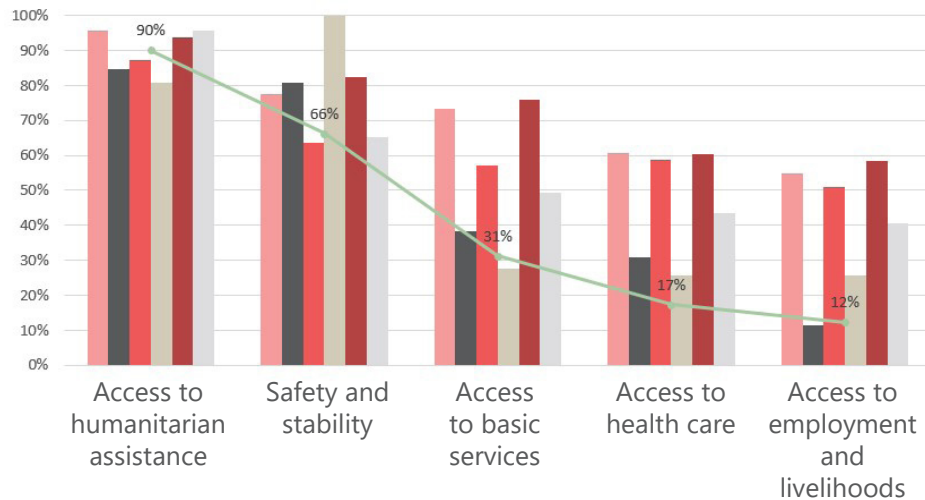
IDPs intending to stay or not decided

in % of assessed households

	Abu Khashab	Areesha	Mahmoudli	Newroz	Tel Samen	Twahina
Intention to stay	70%	50%	63%	47%	97%	71%
Not decided	22%	23%	29%	43%	3%	22%

Most commonly reported reasons for staying in camps

In % of HHs intending to stay in the year following data collection (subset n=398)



Percentages of households intending to stay in camps who estimated their living conditions as good or very good:

Abu Khashab	Areesha	Mahmoudli	Newroz*	Tel Samen	Twahina
23%	40%	27%	13%	39%	42%

*In **Newroz**, 40% reported living conditions in the camp as poor or very poor

Legend: Abu-Khashab Areesha Mahmoudli Newroz Tel Samen Twahina

Most commonly reported conditions necessary for IDPs' safe and dignified return:

In % of HHs intending to stay or undecided, across all assessed camps (subset n=545)

- Livelihood/income generating opportunities / Professional development training** 72%
- Basic services (water, electricity, sanitation, etc)** 71%
- Rehabilitation / reconstruction of homes** 58%

Although more than 80% of IDPs in every camp cited access to humanitarian assistance as one of the reasons for not leaving, the necessary conditions for returns varied across camps.

In **Mahmoudli** and **Twahina**—where most IDPs are originally from areas of the Hama and Homs governorates previously under government control—economic factors, including improved access to livelihoods, services, and food, were emphasized.

In contrast, in **Newroz** and **Tel Samen**—where most IDPs are originally respectively from Ras al Ain and Tel Abiad districts—more than **70%** of IDPs reported **political stability** as a condition for return, with nearly **70%** in Newroz also highlighting the need for **stability and security** in their areas of origin and more than **40%** mentioning **improved access to information**.

About REACH Initiative

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).