



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF
MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

unicef 
for every child



Safe and Voluntary Return

Planning for a Safe and Voluntary Return

A step-by-step guide to documents, health, education, and support services for traveling with your family. Returning to Syria is your voluntary decision. Ensure that this decision is made after fully understanding the process and its consequences.



Get free legal advice before making your final decision.

You can contact the nearest Bar Association:
www.barobirlik.org.tr/Barolar



You have the right to accurate information. Therefore, ask questions, seek support, and take your time.



Book your return appointment online at:
randevu.goc.gov.tr



Your **Voluntary Return Form and Travel Permit** (usually valid for only 15 days) from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management and plan your trip accordingly.

Carefully choose your border crossing point (Kilis or Hatay) and follow the instructions sent via SMS.



What documents do I need?

You need to obtain a **Voluntary Return Form and Travel Permit** from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. If your travel permit is valid for **15 days**, plan your trip accordingly.

If you are traveling with a child under 18 years of age

1. Make sure all children are registered and have **birth certificates**.
2. If your child was born in a hospital, obtain a birth certificate from the hospital. Otherwise, visit the Directorate of Population and Citizenship Affairs in the province where you are registered to obtain a birth notification form.

♦ **Children traveling with their parents:** Parents must sign a consent form before a notary or officials from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in order to travel with their children . Both parents must be present during the signing process (the signing can take place at the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management office, at the border crossing, or at a notary).

♦ **Divorced or separated parents:** They must present a court order showing that they have custody of the child, along with the consent of the parent who will remain in the country and has visitation rights to the child (a consent form is not required if the court has granted all rights regarding the child to the parent who will voluntarily return).

♦ **Children traveling with a relative:** The caregiver must **carry a guardianship order** proving they are the child's legal guardian and a **court-issued travel permit**.

- ✓ Fingerprint will be taken and all documents will be checked at the border.
- ✓ Bring the originals and copies of all documents with you.
- ✓ Store all documents securely in an easily accessible folder.



How can my child continue their education?

Certificate of Graduation and Academic Status:

- ♦ The official requirement is that all documents obtained with school approval must be confirmed by the district/provincial governor's office and apostilled (a certification that ensures the document is officially recognized abroad) by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ankara) or the Syrian Consulate (Istanbul).

If these requirements cannot be met:

- ♦ Having school-certified documents approved by the district governor's office or provincial governor's office,
- ♦ Final-year grade reports must be obtained from the school with the school's official stamp;
- ♦ Providing a document proving that you have passed your final year (including a certified transcript) is sufficient.



Once you arrive in Syria, use school documents to enroll your child in the nearest school.

Even if the required documents are incomplete, school registration is still possible.

1. Families returning to Syria can enroll their children in state or private schools through conditional enrollment.
2. A written commitment may be submitted to verify the child's identity and to complete any missing documents before the start of the term.
3. All children, even those without approved documents, can enroll in schools in Syria by taking the placement exam.
4. Approved documents must be submitted by the start of the second term to confirm placement.



For Syrian students who wish to continue their education in Syria, more information is available via the QR code.

Arabic Language Support is Available in Türkiye

- ♦ The Ministry of National Education offers elective Arabic language courses through schools and public education centers. Information regarding these courses can be found at <https://eyaygin.meb.gov.tr/pagePrograms.aspx> (e-Yaygın Eğitim). Families voluntarily returning to Syria must apply to and register **with Public Education Centers**. Applications are reviewed by the Provincial Directorate of National Education based on teacher availability. Remember to contact the Public Education Centers regarding the progress of your application.



Scan the QR code to learn more about elective Arabic language courses.

- ♦ In addition, NGOs that are members of the UNICEF-led Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) also provide Arabic and learning support classes to help children catch up with their lessons, gain confidence, and improve their learning. For information about language classes offered by SGDD-ASAM, please call the numbers below:



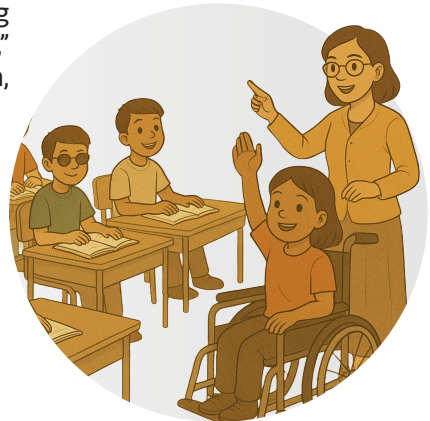
Gaziantep: +90 342 321 1168

Hatay: +90 326 227 3939

İstanbul: +90 212 256 1007

Inclusive Education for All

To access “Education and Learning Opportunities for Children Returning to Syria,” including information on inclusive education, please scan the UNICEF QR code below:





Health, Safety and Well-being

Before the Voluntary Return Journey:

1. Ensure all your health records and vaccination cards are up-to-date. If they are not, update your information at your nearest Migrant Health Centre, Family Health Centre, or public hospital.
2. Bring your child's necessary medications and medical equipment with you.
3. Checklist of health documents:
 - ✓ *Vaccination Card*
 - ✓ *Medical reports of chronic illnesses (if any)*
 - ✓ *Disability reports (if any)*
 - ✓ *Records of assistive devices (if any)*
 - ✓ *Allergies and dietary restrictions (if any)*
4. If you own property in Syria, check your property documents and remember to bring them with you.
5. If you lack shelter, find out if you can receive shelter assistance **from relatives in Syria**. For any assistance, you can call the **UNHCR Türkiye** helpline at **444 48 68**.



During the Voluntary Return Journey:

1. Stay together as a family. Teach your children the emergency numbers to call in case of an emergency.
2. For some children, memorizing a phone number or verbally providing information in an emergency can be difficult. Therefore, the following alternative and practical methods can be helpful for families on the journey back to Syria: **Using labels that can be carried in the child's bag, on their clothing, or on their wrist, with emergency phone numbers written on them.**
3. Prepare small information cards that the child can carry with them, containing the parent's name, phone number, and contact information for someone who can be reached in case of an emergency.



4. Recognize the signs of illness in your child. Before and during your trip, be aware of the following danger signs:

- ◇ Breathing rapidly
- ◇ Severe nausea that prevents the child from eating or drinking
- ◇ Increased, severe, or persistent vomiting
- ◇ Refusal to breastfeed or inability to suckle
- ◇ Using the abdomen or shoulders when breathing
- ◇ Fever, chills
- ◇ Weight loss
- ◇ Skin rashes
- ◇ Weakness
- ◇ Excessive sleepiness
- ◇ Cold, bruised hands and feet
- ◇ Constant crying
- ◇ No tears come out when crying
- ◇ Decrease in urine volume
- ◇ Yellowing or bruising of the skin
- ◇ Not having a bowel movement for several days



How do you know if your child is dehydrated?

Your child may become dehydrated during the journey. This is called dehydration, and it means the body is losing water. This can happen to anyone, but babies and young children are at greater risk. Therefore, notice the symptoms early, support your child with fluids, and consult a healthcare professional as soon as possible.

Here are some early warning signs of dehydration in children:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ◇ Sensation of thirst | ◇ Slight hollowing around the eyes and cheeks. |
| ◇ Dry mouth | ◇ Sunken fontanelle (soft spot on the baby's skull) and dizziness, |
| ◇ Weakness | ◇ Weak pulse |
| ◇ Cold and clammy limbs | |
| ◇ Little or no urination | |

Always keep water handy to prevent dehydration. Ensure your children drink water regularly throughout the day. For babies under six months, continue to breastfeed exclusively.



For more information for families, scan the QR code.



For more information for children, scan the QR code.

Why is breast milk important?

Remember, breast milk is the safest source of nutrition for your baby during travel. Continue breastfeeding throughout the journey. Breastfeed whenever your baby wants, including at night. Bottles, pacifiers, or sippy cups are not recommended for babies. If you haven't given these to your child before, you shouldn't start using them on this trip. Breast milk contains a lot of water, so it is sufficient to meet the water needs of babies under 6 months old. Your milk supply may decrease during travel. This is normal. Continue breastfeeding your baby. You will see your milk flow return to normal after a while.



Watch for signs of hunger in babies

Crying is a late sign that a baby is hungry.



Early signs that babies need to be breastfed include:

- ◆ Babies become restless or fidget excessively.
- ◆ They open their mouths and turn their heads from side to side.
- ◆ They frequently stick their tongues out and move them around.
- ◆ They suck their fingers and fists.



How is hygiene ensured?

Pay attention to hygiene to protect your child and family from illnesses while traveling. Store your food safely. Wash your and your child's hands with soap and water every time you use the toilet, after changing your baby's diaper, before and after meals, before and after preparing food, and whenever necessary.

Provide sensitive care for your child

- ◆ Make eye contact with your child and continue talking to them.
- ◆ Have skin-to-skin contact with your child.
- ◆ Gently rock, stroke, and hold your child.



Protecting Your Children

1. Teach children to stay away from suspicious objects and unfamiliar/unrecognized items. These can be dangerous for your children.
2. Encourage your children to play only in areas designated as "safe zones," to stay away from unfamiliar objects, and to immediately alert others.
3. Explosive debris can come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. If you see anything unusual, move away immediately and warn others around you. Due to a lack of information, children are most susceptible to the dangers associated with explosives and mines. Therefore, teach your children to recognize the danger signs of unfamiliar objects.
4. Try to limit your exposure to upsetting news or social media, and avoid sharing unverified news.
5. Report any suspicious/unknown objects immediately to local authorities or the nearest NGO.



How can I protect my child?



For more information,
scan the QR code.





Young People and Adolescents: Be Aware

- ♦ **If you are 15–17 years old, don't forget to voice your concerns and questions when your family decides to return to Syria.**
- ♦ Talk to adults you trust or encourage your family to consult with legal counsel before making a decision.
- ♦ Many young people cannot attend school because they have to work. If you are returning voluntarily, ask your elders about educational opportunities in Syria.
- ♦ Vocational training and flexible learning programs can help shape your future. Seek information on this topic from your elders or non-governmental organizations.
- ♦ **For more information, you can call the UNHCR Türkiye helpline at 444 48 68.**



The elderly and people with disabilities

- ♦ For elderly and disabled individuals, seek information from family members or NGOs in Syria regarding home health care, mobility support, and long-term care options.
- ♦ Before returning to Syria, be sure to check whether mobility support and healthcare services are available.





Housing Problems

- ◇ Many homes in Syria may have been damaged or destroyed. **If you own property, check if you have valid documentation** and discuss this with your elders.
- ◇ If you have nowhere to stay, before returning, ask your elder family members, relatives, or acquaintances in Syria about accommodation options.
- ◇ For more information, you can call the **UNHCR helpline on 444 48 68**.



Where can I get support?

- ◇ Visit your local Provincial Directorate of Migration Management to obtain Voluntary Return forms, permits (usually valid for 15 days), and legal advice and guidance for court applications.
- ◇ For 24/7 support (in Arabic and Turkish), you can call the **YIMER** support line by dialing **157**.
- ◇ For any assistance, you can call the **UNHCR Turkey** helpline at **444 48 68**.
- ◇ For free legal aid in your province, contact your local Bar Association. You can find the address of your local Bar Association via the link: <https://www.barobirlik.org.tr/Barolar/>
- ◇ For all other matters, please contact the staff of your nearest NGO.



Please scan the QR code to find out where you can get assistance after returning to Syria.

My Checklist for the Voluntary Return Process and My Emergency Contact Information

Required Documents – Did I Bring Them?

For my children:

- ☐ Ministry of Health Birth Certificate with QR Code (can be obtained from the hospital or e-Government)
- ☐ Multilingual Birth Registration Certificate (Form A) (obtained from the Provincial Directorate of Population and Citizenship)
- ☐ Consent form signed by both parents simultaneously (if necessary) – obtained from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management or border crossing point
- ☐ Guardianship/custody decision (if necessary)
- ☐ Vaccination card
- ☐ Health reports (reports issued by a healthcare institution indicating chronic diseases, disabilities, medications used, medical devices, allergies, and dietary restrictions , if any)
- ☐ School documents (report card for the last completed grade, educational status certificate for intermediate grades, transcript)



For My Family:

Apprenticeship and/or vocational training certificates

- ☐ Population Registration Certificate for all family members (obtainable from e-Government)
- ☐ Customs export declaration, especially documents for the export of movable goods and vehicles (Customs export declaration)

Emergency Numbers:



YIMER 157 – Available 24/7 for emergencies and reports, and Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM for general inquiries.



UNHCR Türkiye – For consultation, call **444 48 68**.



You can receive free legal assistance by applying to your local Bar Association (you can find the address of your local Bar Association via [this link: https://www.barobirlik.org.tr/Barolar/](https://www.barobirlik.org.tr/Barolar/)

