

Staatendokumentation

Research Paper



Syria: The Role of Family and Social Networks for Returning Syrian Refugees

from the COI-CMS

[Country of Origin Information – Content Management System](#)

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Version 1

Publication date: 2025-10-21

(See date of actualization at each section heading)



This project was co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

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The product is published on the Staatendokumentation website (<https://www.staatendokumentation.at>) – a cooperation with ACCORD of the Red Cross – in accordance with § 4 IFG (proactive publication).

Contents

1	Executive Summary	1
2	About the author	2
3	Introduction	2
4	Family and Social Networks in Syrian Everyday Life	3
5	Transnational Family Networks and Return	4
6	Reestablishing Contact	7
7	Alternatives to Family Networks and Support	7
8	Conclusion	9
9	Sources	11
10	Imprint	12
10.1	Copyright	12
10.2	Privacy Notice	12

1 Executive Summary

Last modification 2025-10-21 07:54

This report examines the central role of family and social networks in the reintegration of Syrian refugees following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024. Building on existing scholarship on displacement, kinship, and social capital, the analysis underscores the enduring importance of familial ties as structuring principles of Syrian social life, even in the face of conflict, exile, and return. The discussion is organised around four guiding questions: the general significance of family and social networks in Syrian society; the role of transnational kinship networks in shaping reintegration and return; the possibilities of re-establishing contact once ties have been severed; and the alternatives available to returnees without access to kinship support. The findings demonstrate that kinship provides the material, emotional, and moral infrastructures upon which the trajectories of return are negotiated, while also exposing the vulnerabilities of those who lack such networks.

The report highlights that transnational kinship networks, rather than being dissolved by displacement, have been reconfigured across multiple geographies. These networks facilitate the circulation of remittances, information, and emotional support, while relatives within Syria provide housing, orientation, and access to employment and bureaucratic resources. In contexts marked by devastated infrastructure, economic fragility, and weakened institutions, these networks constitute vital lifelines for returnees. At the same time, the absorptive capacities of households are constrained by widespread precarity, producing tensions around resource distribution. Transnational kinship networks thus function as both enablers of reintegration and potential sources of strain, with outcomes shaped by the uneven distribution of resources and the differentiated resilience of families.

The analysis also addresses the re-establishment of contact following displacement-related ruptures. While the loss of devices or documents can disrupt communication, advances in digital technologies, cloud-based services, and social media platforms have reduced the irreversibility of such losses. Moreover, humanitarian mechanisms such as the family tracing services of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent offer institutional pathways for re-connection. For those unable to draw on kinship ties, alternative support exists, primarily in the form of non-governmental organisations and international agencies. These actors provide short-term assistance through cash transfers, relief items, psychosocial services, and vocational training. Yet such forms of support rarely replicate the durability, reciprocity, and depth of kinship-based assistance, and remain constrained by eligibility requirements, uneven coverage, and limited resources.

Taken together, the findings underscore the decisive role of family and social networks, and in particular transnational kinship systems, in shaping the processes of return and reintegration. While these networks offer critical material and emotional resources, their uneven distribution produces significant disparities in reintegration outcomes. For returnees without family support, available alternatives provide only partial substitution and cannot fully replace the depth of

solidarity embedded in kinship. The report therefore concludes that the trajectories of Syrian returnees remain closely bound to the resilience or fragility of family and social networks.

2 About the author

Last modification 2025-10-21 07:54

Dr. Lena-Maria Möller is a Research Assistant Professor at the College of Law, Qatar University, where she is affiliated with the Center for Law and Development. She specializes in comparative law, private international law, and contemporary Middle Eastern legal systems. She holds a Ph.D. in Law and an M.A. in Middle East Studies, both from the University of Hamburg, Germany. Her research employs comparative legal methods and theories to examine the interaction between state, religious, and international legal regimes in pluralistic legal contexts, with a particular focus on legislative developments and judicial practices in Muslim family law. Her scholarship, including research on law and society in Syria, has been published or is forthcoming in the *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, and the *Journal of Private International Law*, among other journals. Her work has been recognized with several distinctions, including the Otto Hahn Medal from the Max Planck Society and the Dissertation Award from the Faculty of Law at the University of Hamburg.

Dr. Möller serves as Associate Editor of *Arab Law Quarterly* and is an alumna and former Co-President of the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Before joining Qatar University, she was a Senior Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law in Hamburg and held teaching positions at the Universities of Münster, Leipzig, and Augsburg.

3 Introduction

Last modification 2025-10-21 12:58

The Syrian uprising of 2011, and the Assad regime's brutal war on the civilian population that followed, triggered one of the largest and most protracted displacement crises of the 21st century. Over the course of nearly 15 years of conflict, more than 14 million Syrians were uprooted, with over half displaced either within Syria or across international borders ([UNHCR 13/3/2025](#)). Neighbouring states such as Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan absorbed millions of refugees, while European countries including Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands became major destinations for asylum-seekers. For those forced to flee, displacement entailed more than geographic relocation: it fractured kinship, neighbourhood, and communal ties that had long underpinned Syrian society. Although many of these ties were partially reconstructed in exile, they often assumed diminished or reconfigured forms ([Tuzi 16/3/2023](#), [Tobin et al 28/7/2022](#), [AUB/Ghandour-Demiri 1/1/2018](#)).

With the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, the prospect of return has moved to the forefront of political and personal debates ([Dincer et al 2025](#)). Some refugees have returned voluntarily, motivated by the desire to reunite with relatives or rebuild livelihoods. Others face external pressures, including restrictive asylum policies in Europe or the withdrawal of assistance

in host states. Yet return is rarely a purely individual choice. As during the conflict itself, post-war mobility continues to depend strongly on family ties, as well as on the social capital and knowledge-sharing networks they provide ([Tobin et al 2023](#)).

This report examines the role of family and social networks in the experiences of Syrian returnees, with particular attention to those returning from Europe. It is organized around four guiding questions: (1) What role do family and social networks play in Syrian everyday life? (2) How are ties with relatives abroad sustained, and how do such networks influence the reintegration of returnees? (3) Can severed links be re-established? (4) What alternatives exist for returnees lacking family networks? By addressing these questions, the report underscores the enduring importance of kinship ties in Syrian society and highlights the vulnerabilities of those who have lost these networks or are compelled to rebuild them in the aftermath of displacement.

The analysis draws on a wide body of literature addressing family and social networks, social capital, and displacement. Key contributions include research on social networks among Syrians in Jordan ([Stevens 26/4/2016](#)), Lebanon ([AUB/Ghandour-Demiri 1/1/2018](#)), and Canada ([Hanley et al 2018](#)), the role of kinship figurations in shaping displacement trajectories ([Becker et al 2023](#)), and the entanglement of refugee family networks with patterns of mobility ([Tobin et al 28/7/2022](#), [Tobin et al 2023](#)). Additional scholarship highlights the barriers to family reunification ([Chandler et al 10/2020](#)), the connections between social networks and mental health ([Ekoh et al 2/2023](#)), the role of family in refugee adjustment ([Xiong et al 4/8/2021](#)), and the practices of 'doing family' across borders ([Tuzi 16/3/2023](#)). Taken together, this body of work demonstrates how Syrian refugees sustain kinship ties and social networks under conditions of displacement, fragmentation, and return, while also revealing the vulnerabilities that emerge when such networks are disrupted.

4 Family and Social Networks in Syrian Everyday Life

Last modification 2025-10-21 12:58

Before the war and the mass displacement of millions, family and social networks lay at the heart of Syrian daily life, serving as vital sources of support, belonging, and resilience. These networks extended beyond the nuclear household to encompass extended kin and broader community ties rooted in ethnicity, religion, or region. Together, they formed a cohesive, yet dynamic, system that provided identity, solidarity, and shared resources ([AUB/Ghandour-Demiri 1/1/2018](#), [Stevens 26/4/2016](#)). Despite the upheaval of war and displacement, Syrians retained elements of their family and social networks, continuing to rely on kinship ties and community bonds as vital sources of connection and resilience ([Becker et al 2023](#), [Xiong et al 4/8/2021](#), [Hanley et al 2018](#)). At the same time, however, the conflict fractured many of these networks, forcing families apart and straining the very systems that had long sustained social life ([Tuzi 16/3/2023](#), [Chandler et al 10/2020](#), [Stevens 26/4/2016](#)).

Syrian households are typically extended and multigenerational, often including parents, children, grandparents, and sometimes cousins or in-laws living together under one roof or in close proximity ([Becker et al 2023](#), [Xiong et al 4/8/2021](#)). Kinship is reinforced through cultural norms that emphasise duty to parents, respect for elders, and solidarity with siblings and cousins. In

everyday practice, kinship manifests in the pooling of resources, collective child-rearing, and the sharing of income (Becker et al 2023, Chandler et al 10/2020). It is common for individuals working abroad, for example in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, to remit funds to parents, siblings, and even more distant relatives (Dincer et al 2025, Stevens 26/4/2016), or for older family members to mediate conflicts and facilitate employment opportunities for younger kin (Becker et al 2023). Such exchanges are construed not as discretionary practices but as obligations embedded within the moral fabric of Syrian society, underpinned by mistrust toward strangers and, in particular, state institutions (Hanley et al 2018). The expectation that family members will provide support in times of need fosters resilience during crises but also places pressure on households when resources are scarce, as has been evident since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict and the mass displacement of millions both within the country and abroad.

In exile, many of the structural characteristics of Syrian family networks have persisted. Xiong et al. (2021) demonstrate that even in displacement, family continues to serve as a vital source of emotional, financial, instrumental, and educational support. Both nuclear and extended family remain central institutions and key shapers of identity for Syrians abroad. At the same time, the dispersion of Syrian families across continents has expanded the meaning of family, which in exile increasingly extends to members of the broader ethnic community. This surrogate family often assumes comparable support functions, partially replicating traditional kinship networks (Xiong et al 4/8/2021).

The protracted displacement crisis has given rise to extensive Syrian transnational family networks. Although these networks have retained certain characteristics from pre-war social life, they have also been subjected to profound challenges that have undermined their foundations. These include the separation not only of extended but also of nuclear families, the sharp reduction of available resources, the imperative to establish and sustain new forms of bridging capital, and the inevitable loss of everyday family life in the country of origin.

5 Transnational Family Networks and Return

Last modification 2025-10-21 12:58

At the time of writing, less than a year has passed since the fall of the former Assad regime, and the processes of return and reintegration are still unfolding in highly uncertain conditions. Academic research has not yet comprehensively examined the situation of returnees or the role of family and social networks in this context. Nevertheless, important insights can be drawn from earlier studies conducted during the years of mass displacement, when millions of Syrians fled the country and established lives in host states abroad. Although centered on exile rather than return, these studies lay an essential foundation for understanding how kinship ties and social networks shape mobility, subsistence strategies, and the possibilities of reintegration in post-war Syria.

a) The Importance of Transnational Family Connections

For many Syrians, displacement has not severed but rather reconfigured ties with family members abroad. Even when separated by thousands of kilometres, Syrians often maintain frequent

communication, emotional bonds, and material exchanges across borders (Tuzi 16/3/2023). Such transnational connections are of particular importance for returnees, offering access to information, emotional stability, and, at times, financial resources. The durability of these ties reflects the strength of Syrian kinship but also reveals inequalities: while some returnees benefit from extensive family and social networks, others are left without meaningful external and internal support.

Syrian families are rarely confined to a single geographic location. Decades of labour migration to the GCC and elsewhere, and more recent refugee movements to Europe, have produced family constellations that stretch across multiple countries (Tobin et al 2023, Tobin et al 28/7/2022). These networks are not incidental but form the backbone of strategies for survival and mobility (Becker et al 2023). Given the strained economic conditions in post-war Syria, remittances from relatives abroad have become indispensable for many households (Dincer et al 2025, Tuzi 16/3/2023). For some returnees, these transfers can provide the foundation for reintegration, enabling them to repair damaged homes, establish businesses, or simply secure daily necessities. In other cases, however, returnees themselves may become providers, drawing on savings or resources acquired abroad to support relatives who remained in Syria.

Digital technologies have played a crucial role in sustaining these links. Platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger enable cheap and regular contact, allowing families to exchange information and maintain emotional closeness. This regular interaction helps preserve a sense of unity, even in the face of long separations (Tuzi 16/3/2023). Yet access to communication is not uniform. Older generations often struggle with new technologies (Ekoh et al 2/2023), and while government surveillance under the former Assad regime created significant obstacles, problems such as poor internet infrastructure continue to limit connectivity in post-war Syria. Despite these challenges, the persistence of digital exchanges underscores the centrality of kinship bonds in both exile and return.

b) Kinship as a Source of Material Security

Family networks remain decisive in shaping reintegration outcomes. With infrastructure devastated by conflict, an economy still in recovery, and state institutions weakened, particularly outside the capital (Dincer et al 2025), families take on a critical role. They provide housing, sustenance, and access to informal channels of employment and bureaucratic navigation. Returnees often rely immediately on relatives for accommodation, orientation, and introductions to local contacts. Family members also play a key role in facilitating the reacquisition of identity documents or assisting in reclaiming property.

Economic reintegration is especially dependent on family networks. In Syria's informal economy, jobs are often accessed not through applications but through personal ties. The mediation of labor market access and the circulation of material resources through kinship ties underscore the extent to which reintegration is contingent upon relational infrastructures. These dynamics reflect the entanglement of patronage and informality, wherein social capital functions as a constitutive principle of economic possibility. Tobin et al. (2023) argue that the mobility of Syrian refugees is directly linked to the strength of their networks: those with strong ties can seize opportunities and

move, while those without remain immobilised (Tobin et al 2023). For returnees, the presence or absence of family and kin may determine whether reintegration leads to renewed livelihoods or prolonged unemployment.

Families hosting returnees inevitably confront their own constraints. Many Syrian households already live under conditions of extreme precarity, marked by soaring costs of food, rent, and fuel, such that the arrival of additional members further stretches scarce resources. Research has also shown that protracted displacement has fragmented familial structures, thereby weakening their absorptive capacity (Tobin et al 2023, Chandler et al 10/2020, Stevens 26/4/2016). While kin may receive returnees on the basis of moral obligation, this incorporation often produces intra-household tensions. Returnees are at times perceived as economic liabilities when they arrive without savings or prospects for employment, while political and ideological differences accumulated during exile may exacerbate conflict. In this sense, the hosting of returnees cannot be assumed as a stable or harmonious process, but rather reflects the interplay of material scarcity, moral economies of kinship, and broader social dynamics.

c) Kinship Networks as Sources of Emotional Resilience

Beyond material assistance, relatives at home and abroad provide essential emotional and psychological support. As Ghandour-Demiri (2018) notes, Syrians in exile relied on social networks for both individual and collective wellbeing (AUB/Ghandour-Demiri 1/1/2018), a pattern that persists upon return. Kinship thus offers not only practical resources but also a moral anchor. Reconnecting with family restores belonging and continuity with the past, helping to ease the psychological strain of return. Similarly, Tuzi (2023) highlights how Syrians practice 'doing family' across borders, sustaining family life through phone and video calls that mitigate the effects of separation (Tuzi 16/3/2023). For returnees too, these practices can ease the challenges of readjustment by maintaining continuity with the past and reaffirming their place within wider kinship networks. In other cases, return to Syria may reunite long-separated families, restore the possibility of shared everyday life, and foster positive mental health outcomes.

The psychological dimensions of family ties are equally significant. Many returnees encounter reverse culture shock, finding that Syria has changed profoundly during their absence. In such cases, family offers continuity through shared traditions, language, and rituals, helping to re-establish identity and belonging. Chandler et al. (2020) note that separation from relatives created deep distress for many refugees during exile, underlining the centrality of kinship (Chandler et al 10/2020). For returnees, reunion with family can alleviate trauma and provide a sense of stability. Conversely, the absence of family ties exacerbates feelings of isolation, compounding the challenges of return in a country that may feel both familiar and estranged.

Taken together, these dynamics reveal the decisive role of family and social networks in shaping the trajectories of Syrian returnees. The process of return itself is rarely an individual act. Decisions about when and how to return are mediated by networks, as families weigh risks and resources collectively. Transnational kinship provides lifelines of money, information, and emotional support, while proximate family within Syria offers housing, work opportunities, and everyday forms of social and material support. Yet these networks are unevenly distributed,

burdened by poverty, and fragmented by conflict. Their importance underscores both the resilience of Syrian social capital and the vulnerabilities of those without it.

6 Reestablishing Contact

Last modification 2025-10-21 12:53

For many Syrians, communication with family members abroad or across Syria is maintained through digital technologies such as mobile phones and social media applications. However, displacement often entails the loss of devices, documents, or contact lists, severing the direct lines of communication that sustain family and social networks. In such cases, returnees may find themselves cut off from relatives and friends, raising the question of whether it is possible to re-establish contact once it has been lost.

Nowadays, the loss of a mobile phone no longer entails the irretrievable loss of personal contacts. This is largely due to the increasing reliance on cloud-based services and social networking platforms for the storage and management of contact information. Unlike earlier practices, where addresses and telephone numbers were stored exclusively within the physical memory of the device, contact data is now routinely synchronized with cloud infrastructures provided by companies such as Google, Apple, or Microsoft. Consequently, users can re-establish access to their entire address book simply by signing into their account on a new device. Furthermore, the proliferation of social networking platforms has redefined the very notion of contact, as communication often occurs through these digital networks rather than direct phone numbers. Thus, even in the absence of a device, individuals can easily reconnect with relatives and friends through applications and web interfaces, underscoring the diminished dependence on the physical storage capacity of a single phone.

In addition, family tracing services offered by organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, in coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, help locate relatives or restore contact by gathering information and utilizing local community centers and official channels ([SysHome n.d](#)).

7 Alternatives to Family Networks and Support

Last modification 2025-10-21 12:54

Family remains the primary source of support for Syrians returning from abroad. However, not all returnees can draw on kinship networks. Some have lost relatives during the conflict, others are estranged, and many return to places where family is no longer present. In such circumstances, the question arises as to what alternatives are available to help returnees rebuild their lives. Research indicates that religious institutions, NGOs, and community associations may offer important forms of assistance, yet such support does not always match the depth, durability, and reciprocity provided by kinship ties.

Mosques and churches have long been central to social life in Syria. Beyond their religious role, they function as hubs of charity and community solidarity. For returnees without family support, religious charities may provide temporary shelter or distribute food. In this way, religious institutions partially substitute for kinship networks, offering both material and emotional support.

Yet such assistance is usually limited in scope and duration; unlike family, religious institutions rarely provide long-term housing or sustained financial support.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international humanitarian agencies also play a role in filling the gap left by absent family networks. The Syria is Home platform ([SysHome n.d](#)) outlines the forms of assistance and financial support available to Syrian refugees, with particular focus on those returning from regional host states such as Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, and Türkiye. The provision of such support reflects both humanitarian imperatives and broader efforts to facilitate reintegration in a context marked by protracted displacement and widespread material deprivation. The type and scale of assistance are shaped by vulnerability assessments, registration status, and the geographical area of return, with eligibility determined through UNHCR criteria and the operational capacities of implementing partners.

A central element of financial support is a one-time cash grant of USD 400, disbursed to returnee families who had previously been registered with UNHCR in host states and were eligible for monthly basic needs assistance prior to return. The grant is intended to alleviate the immediate economic pressures of re-establishing a household and is accessible only once per family. Transportation assistance constitutes another form of support. At several border crossings, including Bab al-Hawa and al-Salama from Türkiye and Joussieh from Lebanon, UNHCR partners provide buses and travel bags to facilitate movement into Syria. These services seek to reduce both the financial burden and logistical challenges of re-entry, particularly for families returning with limited resources.

Beyond cash transfers and transportation assistance, returning refugees may receive a variety of non-financial forms of assistance. These include the distribution of core relief items such as non-food essentials, as well as access to food assistance programmes often administered in coordination with the World Food Programme. Protection-related services are also prioritised, particularly those addressing documentation, legal counselling, and civil status registration, which are essential for securing access to property, education, and public services. Targeted support is extended to survivors of gender-based violence, children at risk, older persons, and individuals with disabilities. In certain circumstances, livelihood support, multipurpose cash assistance, or shelter rehabilitation may be available, though such services are dependent on both need and the presence of partner organisations in the relevant locality.

UNHCR coordinates a network of community-based centres, mobile units, and outreach volunteers designed to serve as focal points for reintegration inside Syria. Through these centres, returnees can access legal aid, psychosocial counselling, housing repairs, and referrals to public services such as schools, hospitals, and electricity providers. Community centres also support vocational training and income-generation initiatives, thereby linking immediate humanitarian relief with longer-term socio-economic recovery.

Nevertheless, the framework of support is marked by significant constraints. The USD 400 cash grant is both a one-time payment and limited to those who previously received assistance abroad, thereby excluding a substantial proportion of returnees. Moreover, the provision of services is uneven, varying geographically and depending on the resources of local partners.

While UNHCR's assistance constitutes a crucial entry point for many returnees, its restricted scope and conditional nature highlight the continuing reliance on informal support through kinship and community networks.

Well before regime change and during displacement, the inherent constraints of humanitarian assistance had already been exposed: Stevens (2016) observes that humanitarian agencies in Jordan frequently struggled to compensate for the erosion of social networks and kinship-based forms of solidarity (Stevens 26/4/2016). Addressing this challenge requires moving beyond a narrow focus on immediate needs toward a comprehensive framework of humanitarian assistance that supports self-sustaining activities and cultivates longer-term prospects for Syrian returnees. Such a framework could be strengthened by drawing on the expertise and capacities of the Syrian diaspora, particularly through mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of skills and channel investment (Dincer et al 2025).

8 Conclusion

Last modification 2025-10-21 12:57

This report has examined the role of family and social networks in the lives of Syrians returning from abroad, with particular focus on returnees from Europe. The analysis was structured around four guiding questions: the general importance of family and social networks in Syrian everyday life; the nature and strength of contact with family abroad and the significance of these networks for returnees; the possibilities of re-establishing contact after loss; and the alternatives available to those without family networks. The findings from the literature demonstrate the continued centrality of kinship and social ties in shaping the trajectories of return, reintegration, and survival in Syria.

The first question concerned the general importance of family and social networks in Syria. The evidence shows that family and social networks have long been central to Syrian life, providing support, belonging, and resilience through extended kinship and community ties rooted in culture, religion, and region. These networks are often expressed through multigenerational households, shared resources, and obligations of care that bind relatives across generations and even across borders. While conflict and displacement have fractured many of these bonds, Syrians continue to rely heavily on kinship and, increasingly, on surrogate families within the broader ethnic community to meet emotional, financial, and practical needs. In exile, family remains a key source of identity and resilience, even as dispersion across continents reshapes its meaning and practice. Transnational family networks have emerged, blending continuity with adaptation, yet they also face deep strains from separation, reduced resources, and the erosion of everyday family life in Syria.

The second question concerned the extent and strength of contact with family abroad and the significance of family and social networks for returnees. The reintegration of Syrians following the fall of the Assad regime cannot be understood without acknowledging the decisive role of both transnational and local kinship ties, which provide the social, material, and emotional infrastructures upon which return processes depend. Research on exile demonstrates that displacement has not severed but rather reconfigured familial relations, creating networks that

span multiple regions and facilitate the circulation of remittances, information, and emotional support across borders. For many returnees, such networks function as vital lifelines: financial transfers enable housing repairs, small-scale entrepreneurship, or the securing of basic needs, while relatives within Syria often provide accommodation, employment opportunities, and assistance in navigating fragile bureaucratic systems amid widespread infrastructural devastation and institutional weakness. Yet the absorptive capacity of families is far from unlimited; many Syrian households already live under conditions of acute precarity, meaning that the return of additional members can intensify resource scarcity and heighten intra-household tensions. Beyond material concerns, however, family networks also operate as emotional anchors, restoring a sense of belonging, continuity, and identity in the face of cultural dislocation and reverse culture shock, while their absence leaves returnees particularly vulnerable to isolation and marginalization.

The third question explored the possibility of re-establishing contact when communication is lost. For many Syrians, maintaining contact with family across borders relies heavily on digital technologies such as mobile phones and social media. While displacement can sever these connections through the loss of devices, documents, or contact lists, the growing reliance on cloud-based services and social networking platforms means that contacts can often be restored simply by signing into an account or reconnecting through online networks. In addition, humanitarian initiatives such as family tracing services provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent offer vital support in helping individuals re-establish contact with relatives when digital means are insufficient.

The fourth question asked what alternatives exist for returnees without family. For Syrians returning from abroad, family remains the primary source of support, but not all returnees have relatives to rely on, leaving religious charities, NGOs, and humanitarian agencies to fill the gap. Religious charities may provide temporary shelter, food, or emotional support, though their assistance is limited in scope and duration compared to kinship ties. International actors such as UNHCR offer structured aid, including a one-time cash grant, relief items, food assistance, legal and documentation services, and transport from border crossings, as well as access to community centres providing psychosocial support, vocational training, and referrals to public services. Yet this framework remains constrained by eligibility criteria, uneven geographic coverage, and limited resources, meaning that formal aid cannot fully replace the depth, reciprocity, and resilience traditionally provided by family and social networks.

Taken together, the findings of this report underscore the central role of family and social networks in shaping the experiences of Syrian returnees. Kinship offers material, emotional, and moral resources that few other institutions can replicate. While transnational ties extend these networks across borders, unequal access means that not all returnees benefit in the same way. For those without family, alternative sources of support exist but remain fragile and insufficient. Ultimately, the prospects of returnees are closely bound to the strength or fragility of their family and social networks.

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10 Imprint

Published by Staatendokumentation, the Country of Origin Information Unit (Staatendokumentation) Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Vienna (BFA – <https://bfa.gv.at>), Austria

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ISBN 978-3-903109-18-6

