

90,000 Syrians flee to Lebanon since overthrow of Bashar al-Assad

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A UNHCR staff member assists an elderly man arriving at a Lebanese border crossing from Syria on December 11, 2024. (Photo by UNHCR)

Damascus, December 14 (RHC)-- Lebanese media say some 90,000 Syrian citizens have fled to the Arab country since the resurgence of armed foreign-backed militants that led to the collapse of President Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria.

The Beirut-based al-Akhbar newspaper said in a report published on Friday that the majority of the 90,000 displaced Syrians are from sectarian minorities who have been forced to leave their country since December 8 and are currently inside the Lebanese territory.

"The official number of those entering Lebanon from Syria does not exceed 7,000 displaced persons, at a rate of 1,000 to 1,200 displaced persons per day since last Sunday, and all of them meet the agreed upon legal conditions, such as having residency permits, humanitarian status, or for whom Lebanon is a transit country for travel abroad," the daily quoted unnamed security sources as saying.

"These numbers are the official data available to the authorities, and they do not include the thousands of displaced persons who entered through illegal crossings, and some estimates put their number at 90,000," the sources added.

"There are about 4 to 5 thousand Syrians gathering daily at the only open crossing (Masnaa) and they are facing a problem entering Lebanon," according to the sources.

The Lebanese paper said the majority of those Syrians are from minorities who were residing in areas controlled by the Assad government, such as the vicinity of the Sayyida Zainab shrine and the countryside of Homs and Hama.

"These people were distributed in several areas, where a small number came to Beirut, but the vast majority entered the Bekaa region, including the city of Hermel."

The security sources also warned of a "very dangerous" reality, which is the simultaneous presence of displaced people who oppose and those who support the Assad government in areas that are close to each other, which could lead to acts of revenge and problems between the two parties

The Beirut-based paper said some of the displaced Syrians had been "attacked by militants in their homes and villages, subjected to threats, and asked to leave."

Foreign-backed militants in Syria, led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), stormed the capital of Damascus early on Sunday after scoring major gains in the Arab country's north following their resurgence in two weeks.

Amid the militants' attempts to stage a comeback in the country, reports pointed to their receiving strong support on the part of the Israeli regime, Turkey, and some Western states, which have been acting as the main backers of anti-Damascus outfits since the outbreak of foreign-backed militancy in Syria in 2011.

Pouncing on the heightened chaos in the Arab country, the Israeli regime launched a ground offensive in Syria's southwest and targeted various areas with a fusillade of missiles.

The Israeli military claimed to have destroyed up to 80 percent of Syria's military capabilities in what it bragged to be one of the largest offensive operations in the illegal regime's history.

Israel has also sent troops into a so-called buffer zone east of the occupied Golan Heights and presses ahead with its attempts to advance deeper into Syrian soil.

[SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES]

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