The border policies of Syria’s neighbouring countries have fluctuated regularly over the past year due to the security situation, political developments and the increasing number of refugees. This has caused uncertainty among those trying to flee and international responders. Some people trying to leave have been trapped inside Syria due to border restrictions, and at the border with Turkey this has led to the establishment of several IDP camps.

Given the various restrictions imposed by the governments of neighbouring countries, irregular and unmonitored movement of refugees across borders is reported to be widespread. The legal status and rights of individuals exiting Syria may be compromised when they enter a country via an unofficial crossing.

Movements across borders also involve the smuggling of goods (food, fuel, medicines etc.), weapons and the movement of armed personnel.

Widespread information gaps persist in relation to border areas. The limited access of humanitarian organisations to border areas and scarcity of information hampers understanding of the situation on the ground and the scale of population movements. The proliferation of armed groups in Syria and the fluid nature of territorial control lead to further ambiguity of the situation and challenges for movement of population into safer areas.

Some border crossing points are in remote, hard to reach and insecure areas making it more difficult for those forced to flee by foot to reach a host country.

Of the 8 official crossing points into Turkey, the one controlled by the GoS (1) is closed and the 4 controlled by Syrian Kurdish Forces (Kurdish IŞİD and Kurdish OSX) are open. The remaining 2 crossings in August 2012, preventing refugees entering into Syria. The authorities have said that these measures are temporary, but as of 1 September 2013 they remain in place.

The northern provinces host the 3 official border crossings: Ar-Ra‘i’s (12) and Harem (14) in Dohuk province and through Sahel’s un oficial crossing (13) just to its south. Both crossings were closed in May, though entry was allowed in medical evacuation and goods being transported through.

The main entry points to Egypt for Syrians have been the international Cairo and Alexandria airports and to a lesser degree the seaports, particularly Nusseiba. Syria had extended an open border policy to Syrians fleeing the conflict, allowing them to obtain a visa on arrival, until July 2013 when the political and social turmoil in Egypt lead to a revision of this policy. Syria now requires an entry visa and security clearance prior to arriving in Egypt; those arriving without the necessary documents are returned to Syria. The authorities have said that these measures are temporary, but as of 1 September 2013 they remain in place.

There are no known cases of refugee movement across the Quneitra border (19). There are reported isolated cases of medical evacuation and goods being transported through.

ACAPS and MapAction would like to thank all organisations who have provided input to this report. The information is compiled from partner organisations, key informants, reports and media sources. ACAPS and MapAction would like to thank all organisations who have provided input to this report.

Purpose - This thematic report shows the border crossing points between Syria and neighbouring countries. The Syria Needs Analysis Project welcomes all information that could complement this report. For additional information, comments or questions please email acaps@mapaction.org

Disclaimer - Information provided is provisional as it has not been possible to independently verify that borders. Border crossing points can be subject to frequent changes in regime authorities and closure decisions. The information is current at the date of publication.

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