



UPINION

Informing return: Lessons from go-and-see visits of Syrian refugees in Türkiye

July 2025

Key findings

Go-and-see visits

- **Limited participation:** A minority (12%) of respondents had personally participated in "go-and-see" visits, with an additional 14% knowing someone who had.
- **Reasons for not conducting them:** The primary barriers included lack of information/awareness, security concerns in Syria, financial/economic barriers, and lack of housing/place to stay in Syria. Legal/administrative restrictions and personal circumstances also played a role.
- **Purpose of visits:** The main motivations were to "feel the atmosphere" and check on/reclaim property.
- **Experiences of visitors:** Those who visited Syria consistently reported dire living conditions, lack of basic services, economic devastation and lack of livelihood, widespread insecurity, and destroyed homes/infrastructure.

Impact on return intentions

- **Mixed impact:** Go-and-see visits have a significant, albeit mixed, impact on Syrian refugees' return intentions, either encouraging (46%) or deterring (46%) return, with only a small percentage (9%) reporting no effect. This suggests the visits are effective in facilitating informed decisions.
- **Reasons for increased likelihood:** Nostalgia, family connections, and hope for stability/positive change were key drivers.
- **Reasons for decreased likelihood:** Lack of basic necessities/infrastructure, financial hardship, and lack of safety/security were the main deterrents.
- **Perceived usefulness:** Over half of respondents found the visits beneficial, with 57% reporting them as useful (40% essential, 17% useful).

Urgent needs

- **Financial need:** The most frequent request to donors was to provide financial support for basic living in Türkiye, or rebuilding and travel costs to Syria.

- **Housing and reconstruction:** There is an urgent need for housing and reconstruction in Syria.
- **Desire for resettlement:** A notable number of refugees desire resettlement to a third country, indicating Türkiye and Syria are not seen as viable long-term solutions for all.
- **Conditions in host countries:** Calls for better living conditions, legal certainty, and economic opportunities in Türkiye were also prominent.

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Introduction

After the fall of the Assad regime in Syria in December 2024, the so-called “go-and-see” visits have aimed to provide Syrian refugees in Türkiye with firsthand experience to evaluate whether conditions in Syria were safe and suitable for sustainable return. Since 1st of July 2025, this policy has been put on hold by the Turkish government. Against this backdrop, and to inform future policy, Upinion spoke with more than 200 Syrians in Türkiye who shared their insights on the impact of “go-and-see” visits and their return intentions.

Drawing on this data that also informed a recent embassy briefing in Ankara, this report summarizes refugees' experiences with and the impact of “go-and-see” visits, factors influencing their return intentions, and their perceptions of the visits' usefulness. Additionally, Upinion investigated knowledge and interest in split-household arrangements and their current understanding of Temporary Protection status.

Methodology

The study's methodology consisted of a conversation held through Upinion's Digital Engagement Platform (DEP), as part of a broader series of monitoring conversations conducted with Syrian individuals in Türkiye over the past four years. Upinion has developed this online platform that allows it to securely connect and stay in touch with marginalised or hard-to-reach communities, including people in crisis and displacement-affected countries. The in-house developed platform enables Upinion to engage real-time with people in the same way they connect with their friends and families, using messaging apps like Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, which are also widely used by Syrian refugees in Türkiye.

Important to mention is that the DEP enables Upinion to send tailored, neutral information to respondents about relevant services or initiatives in their area, thereby turning the conversation into an information exchange. This sets the study's methodology apart from traditional surveys, as participants become active agents engaged in and influenced by knowledge exchange, rather than being simply providers of data.

Demographics

It is essential to interpret the results while considering the sample characteristics unique to this conversation.

Of the Syrian refugees engaged in Türkiye, 68% were male (n=268) and 29% were female, which amounts to a male to female ratio of 1:0.4.

Age distribution showed that 2% were between 18 and 25, 20% between 26 and 35, 35% between 36 and 45, 18% between 46 and 55, and 12% between 56 and 65. Three respondents were older than 65.

Of the respondents, 34% (n=271) were from the Southeastern Anatolia region, 28% from the Mediterranean region, 26% from the Marmara region, 8% from the Central Anatolia region, 3% from the Aegean region, and 2% from the Black Sea region.

Representativeness

Upinion does not aim to establish statistical representativeness through its findings, as the conversations conducted for research purposes constitute qualitative or quantitative inquiries that do not simulate a reflection of the actual population. When comparing our distribution to actual country distributions, readers are invited to see for themselves how our samples can be reflective of a larger tendency.

Data findings

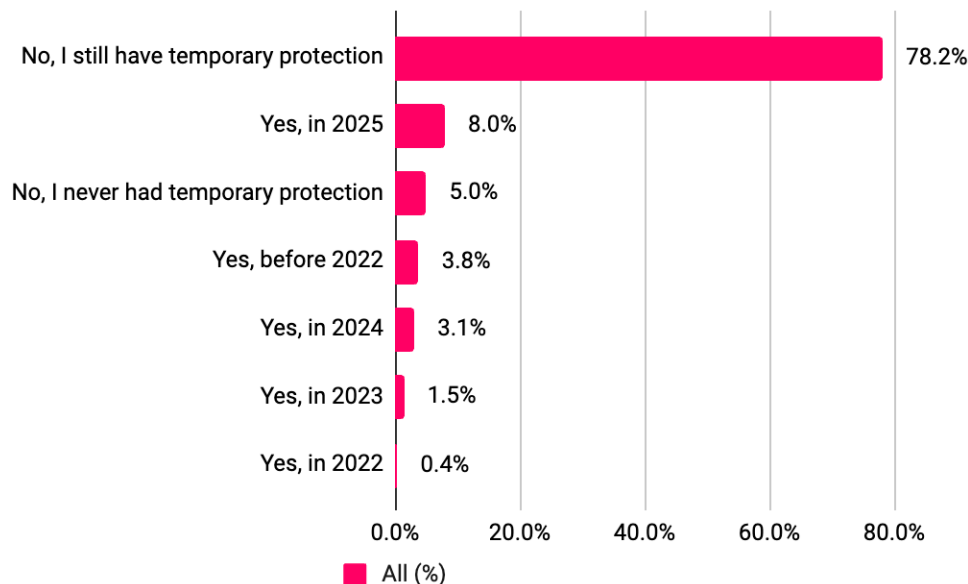
1. Temporary protection status

To understand the factors shaping Syrian refugees' participation in "go-and-see" visits, along with the implications for their future in either Türkiye or Syria, it is necessary to first situate these decisions within the broader framework of Türkiye's temporary protection regime. Examining how this status influences family unity and long-term planning provides a critical foundation for drawing broader conclusions about the need for more sustainable and predictable solutions.

The data reveals a breakdown of temporary protection status among the surveyed population. A large majority, 78% (n=262), still hold temporary protection status, indicating that for most, this protective measure remains active. Conversely, 17% have had their temporary protection status deactivated.

A smaller proportion, 5%, never held temporary protection status. This group warrants further investigation to understand their circumstances and why they were not granted or did not seek temporary protection.

Figure 1. Temporary protection status - All respondents



2. Go-and-see visits

Following the collapse of Syria's ruling regime on December 8, 2024, Türkiye introduced a "go-and-see" visit policy¹ enabling adults in Syrian households under temporary protection to make up to three short visits to Syria between January and July 2025 without forfeiting legal status in Türkiye. This carefully designed interim measure was aimed at letting Syrians assess firsthand whether conditions in their homeland were conducive to safe and sustainable return. Testimonies and accounts from visiting Syrians or returnees have provided critical insights, also revealing that basic services remain severely constrained, leading many to delay or not consider permanent return.

a. Low participation in go-and-see visits

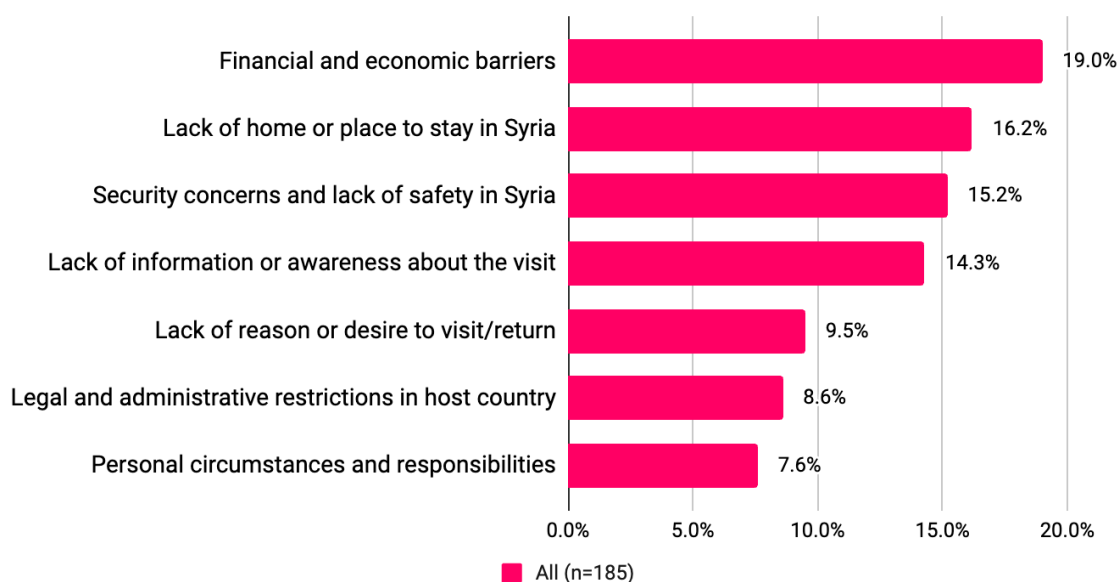
A small percentage of individuals (18%, n=271) have personally participated in a visit, and a slightly smaller group (13%) knows someone who has. The vast majority of respondents (70%) have not gone on a visit.

Reasons for not going on a visit

This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the reasons why Syrian refugees in Türkiye have not undertaken go-and-see visits to Syria (n=185). Their insights gather a range of barriers, from practical limitations to deeply rooted fears and personal circumstances.

¹ <https://help.unhcr.org/turkiye/volrep/movement-procedures/>

Figure 2. Reasons for not going on a visit - Respondents who had not gone on a go-and-see visit



Financial and economic barriers

A lack of financial resources is a very common reason respondents gave for not undertaking a visit, cited by 27 participants. This includes the inability to cover travel costs, everyday living expenses, or expenses related to rebuilding homes in Syria. As one respondent explained, **"I don't have money because I don't work."** Others noted the impact of their overall financial situation: **"My financial situation is bad so I can't move,"** and the direct challenge of affording a trip: **"I don't have enough money to go on a visit and come back."**

These barriers are reflected in the **messages shared by the respondents addressed to donors**, with the most urgent and widespread mention being the need for financial assistance (22 responses), whether for potential resettlement to Syria or sustaining life in Türkiye.

Respondents emphasized that financial support is critical for covering basic living expenses, such as rent, food, and medicine, as well as for rebuilding destroyed homes in Syria or covering travel costs for return. Many also expressed that existing aid is insufficient or fails to reach them. As one respondent highlighted, **"Financial support so we can pay the rent and secure food and medicine."** Others echoed the need for assistance to return home, stating, **"I want to return to Syria, but I don't have any money. I hope you can give me some money to help me,"** and called for support in rebuilding and reestablishing their communities: **"We want to help those returning to their homeland with financial compensation to rebuild homes and establish projects."**

Lack of home or place to stay in Syria

Many refugees (21 responses) explicitly stated they have no home or place to stay in Syria, as their properties are destroyed, occupied, or they have no relatives to stay with. This makes even a

visit difficult, let alone a permanent return.

"My house is completely destroyed. My workplace is completely destroyed. I have nowhere to go except for some relatives whom I can only visit, but I cannot stay with them."

Respondents (13 responses), highlighting the devastation of homes and infrastructure in Syria as a major barrier to return, **directly appealed to donors** for support in rebuilding and providing suitable housing. As one respondent described, **"Our villages and towns are completely wiped out. There are no buildings, no trees, and no infrastructure."** Others emphasized the urgency of assistance for returning home, stating, **"Please help us return and restore our homes,"** and urging donors to consider reconstruction as essential for enabling return: **"I hope that donors will consider the issue of rebuilding homes because we cannot return."**

Security concerns and lack of safety in Syria

A major deterrent is the persistent fear for personal safety in Syria. Respondents (21 responses) frequently cite the presence of terrorism, unstable security situations, and specific threats, particularly for certain groups.

"The security situation there is unstable, and I fear for my safety and that of my family."

Lack of information or awareness about the visit

Many respondents (20 responses) simply were not aware that such a "go-and-see" visit was an option or didn't understand what it entailed. This highlights a communication gap regarding potential return initiatives.

Personal circumstances and responsibilities

Syrian refugees highlight that personal and family responsibilities serve as a primary obstacle to mobility, a theme mentioned in 13 responses. These individual circumstances are directly shaping their ability to consider a return to Syria. As one respondent explained, **"Because there is a little girl at home, it is somewhat difficult for one person from the family to go,"** while another stated, **"My health condition does not allow for that. My four children are in university and have exams."** The burdens of caring for sick family members and the commitment to their children's education in host countries have created a reality where they cannot simply pack up and leave.

This deep-seated commitment to their families has now translated into a **call to donors** for sustained support in their host communities (Türkiye) (32 responses). Refugees are asking that support be tailored to secure the future they are building for their children, rather than encouraging a return to an uncertain environment. One community member pleaded, **"I request support to enable my children to complete their education and obtain at least a high school**

diploma," while another emphasized, "I hope that the amount of financial support provided to school-age children... will increase." Ultimately, the message is a direct request to donors to acknowledge their current reality and act accordingly: "Please do not cancel temporary protection. Syria is not safe enough for us to return to. The children are used to life in Türkiye. They think of it as their home."

In addition, Syrian refugees (22 responses) are **appealing to donors** to recognize and address the specific vulnerabilities of families and individuals who cannot be served by broad return initiatives. The community's requests extend to the most complex and sensitive cases, often involving unique family structures or the care of a vulnerable relative. As one family man pleaded, "I am a family man in Türkiye and I have a daughter with autism and I cannot return because I do not own a home in Syria with the high costs of rent and food, and there are no educational centers for autistic children." The fear of family separation is also a profound concern, as one mother expressed, "I am a mother of two children from a marriage to a Turkish man... What is my fate and my children's? Will we be separated?" Other pleas are direct and urgent, such as from one respondent who stated, "I am a single mother with 3 children. I hope you can help me as soon as possible." These are not abstract issues but deeply personal dilemmas that require tailored and compassionate support.

Legal and administrative restrictions in host country

Restrictions imposed in Türkiye on movement and travel permits are a significant barrier (12 responses). There is also a fear that undertaking such a visit could jeopardize their temporary protection status.

"My legal status under temporary protection does not permit this. Even if the state grants permission, I will not risk my presence in Türkiye and visit Syria, only to have my temporary protection revoked."

Lack of reason or desire to visit/return

For some (11 responses), there is simply no compelling reason or desire to visit Syria. This can stem from a feeling of alienation from their country of origin after a long absence, the painful memories associated with it, or a clear preference to stay in their host country or resettle elsewhere.

"My mother was killed there in a very bad way... I have nothing there... No home... No job... No friends... I don't feel safe in Syria... Syria for me is just a source of anxiety..."

b. Experiences shared by people who went on a visit

This section details the firsthand accounts of refugees who participated in "go-and-see" visits to Syria (n=46). Their testimonies offer crucial qualitative insights into the current conditions within Syria and the factors influencing their decisions regarding return.

Dire living conditions and lack of basic services

A consistent theme in respondents' answers (16 responses) is the catastrophic state of basic services and infrastructure in Syria, making daily life incredibly difficult.

"Poverty. Hunger. Crime. Drugs. Little work. Low wages. Sectarian conflict in some places. No homes, no schools, no services in many areas, and the percentage varies from one place to another."

"The situation is deplorable, especially in the working-class neighborhoods. There are no basic necessities of life, no services, especially cleanliness. There is no electricity or water."

Economic devastation and lack of livelihood

Respondents (10 responses) consistently report a devastated economy, with little to no job opportunities, insufficient wages, and widespread poverty, making it impossible to secure a decent living.

"The economic situation is devastating and there is no ability to recover without external intervention and support."

Widespread insecurity and fear

The lack of safety and pervasive fear is a major concern (8 responses), mentioned by many, indicating that personal security is far from guaranteed.

"There is no security, and there is no ability to return, repair, live, and secure a decent living."

Destroyed homes and infrastructure

Many (6 responses) who visited found their homes and communities in ruins, making return impractical or impossible without massive reconstruction support.

"My house is completely destroyed. My workplace is completely destroyed."

Limited or no access to essential services

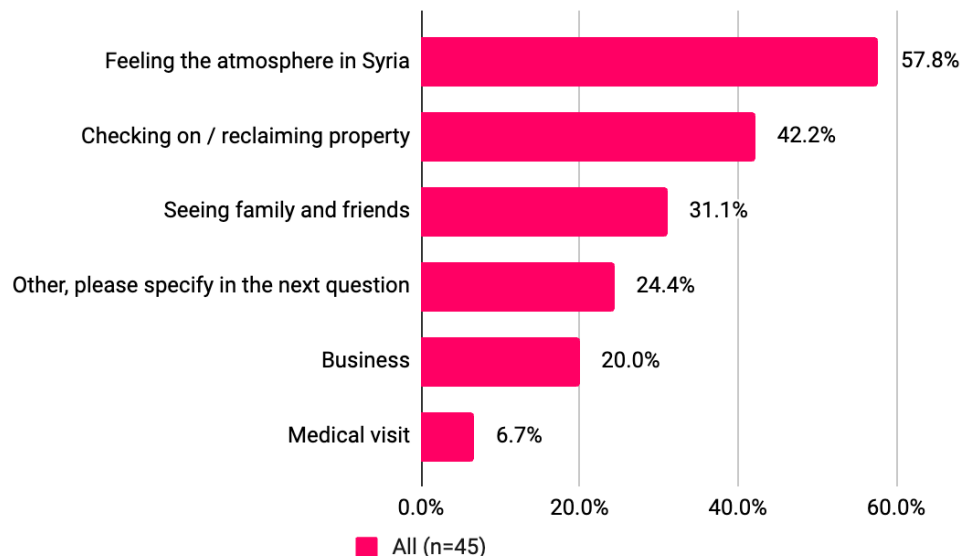
Specific mentions (8 responses) of the lack of medical care, treatment, and educational opportunities are highlighted, emphasizing the severe deficiency in crucial public services.

"No medical care or treatment, no educational opportunities, and no job opportunities except for minorities who previously had jobs."

c. Purpose of visits

Respondents (n=45) also shared insights about why they chose to go on a "go-and-see" visit. The primary reasons for the visits were to feel the atmosphere in Syria (58%) and check on or reclaim property (42%). Seeing family and friends (31%) was also a significant factor, followed by business (20%) and medical visits (7%). A number of respondents (24%) cited other reasons for their visit.

Figure 3. Purpose of "go-and-see" visits - Respondents who went on a "go-and-see" visit



The other reasons mentioned by participants for going on a visit to Syria were diverse, encompassing deep emotional connections, practical intentions of settlement, and even circumstances of coercion. Many individuals were driven by a profound sense of longing for their homeland, seeking to reconnect with family and friends they had not seen in years, and to witness their abandoned homes. This motivation is often intertwined with a patriotic desire to contribute to Syria's reconstruction and participate in building a better future. However, for a significant number, the purpose of the visit was a final, voluntary return with the hope of settling down permanently. This was sometimes successful, with individuals managing to rebuild their homes

and lives. In contrast, a more somber reason for return was coercion, where some were forced to go back to Syria to join family members who had been arrested or deported, highlighting that not all returns are a matter of free will.

d. Impact on return intentions

The "go-and-see" visits appear to have had a mixed impact on Syrian refugees' likelihood to return to their home country. Slightly less than half of the respondents (43%, n=46) indicated that the visit made them more likely to return, while the same number (43%) reported that it made them less likely to return. What stands out is that only a small fraction (13%) stated that the visit had no effect on their decision. This suggests that these visits are effective in helping Syrians making an informed and dignified decision to return or not. While the visits can encourage some refugees to consider returning, they can also deter others, highlighting the complex and varied realities faced by those contemplating return.

Reasons for increased likelihood to return

This section delves into the various factors that increased Syrian refugees' likelihood of returning to Syria after participating in "go-and-see" visits. The breakdown of open answers (n=20) highlights the motivations behind increased return intentions, such as nostalgia and family ties, as well as the hope for a better future.

Hope for stability and positive change

6 refugees hold onto hope for improved conditions in Syria, including political advancements or a desire to actively participate in the country's rebuilding and recovery. This suggests a forward-looking perspective where they envision a better future in their homeland.

"First, the barrier of fear that was sitting on our chests from the murderous regime. I walk freely without fear, but the living conditions are difficult"

Nostalgia and longing for the homeland

5 respondents express a profound yearning for Syria, highlighting their roots, birthplace, and a fundamental sense of belonging. The feeling of patriotism and sacrifice for their homeland is a strong motivator.

"Yes, it is my country, my birthplace, my roots, my breath, and my lungs with which I breathe in order to survive. It is the homeland. No one knows the value of the homeland except those who sacrifice themselves for it, flee from it, and live humiliated and oppressed outside of it. Nothing is higher than the homeland."

Family and community connection

The desire to reunite with family members and re-establish ties within their community is a significant driving force for return for 4 respondents. This speaks to the social and emotional bonds that refugees wish to restore.

"The close community, the sense of belonging to the homeland, and trying to find solutions to the current situation."

Reasons for decreased likelihood to return

This section delves into the various factors that decreased Syrian refugees' likelihood of returning to Syria after participating in "go-and-see" visits. The breakdown of open answers (n=20) highlights the reasons for decreased return intentions, such as the lack of infrastructure and home destruction, as well as the significant deterrents, including dire living conditions, economic hardship, and pervasive insecurity.

Financial hardship and lack of livelihood

This theme points to the severe economic challenges, including the inability to secure employment, low wages, and the prohibitive cost of living or rebuilding (9 responses).

"The difficulty of obtaining everything, the fear of not finding a job, and the monthly responsibilities I have towards my younger siblings in Syria. I don't have enough money to remain unemployed until I find a job that suits me there."

Lack of basic necessities and infrastructure

A dominant theme (8 responses) highlights the severe absence of fundamental services and infrastructure in Syria, making a return unfeasible for sustained living. Respondents noted issues such as the poor living conditions, with no **"electricity, water, and little work,"** as well as **"Poor infrastructure" and "workers' wages (...) not enough to live on."** Other comments reinforced this, stating, **"There is no electricity or water, there is a slight decrease in security, and most importantly, there is no housing and no good job opportunities."**

Accordingly, Syrian refugees made in their **recommendations to donors** a broad appeal to maintain and increase humanitarian support, but with a specific focus on directing resources to the country's internal needs (10 responses). As one respondent stated, **"We believe that donors must continue to support the humanitarian situation,"** underscoring a shared sense that the crisis is far from over. This call for action is rooted in the dire conditions on the ground, with one individual pleading for **"more attention and focus on the internal situation in Syria because there is famine, poor services, everything is destroyed, and there are no minimum necessities of**

life." The community's vision for this support is not indefinite; rather, they hope for targeted aid that can empower the country to rebuild and recover. As another respondent put it, **"Syria needs a small amount of aid to get going. We hope donors will continue their humanitarian work until the country can take off on its own."**

Destruction of homes and property

The physical destruction of their homes was indicated as a direct and insurmountable barrier by 5 respondents, as they have no place to live if they return.

"My house is destroyed and the king has money to buy a house and the rent is very high and I have no work there."

Lack of safety and security

4 respondents express deep concerns about ongoing insecurity and instability in Syria, which poses a direct threat to their lives and well-being.

"Yes, the lack of security, stability, development, infrastructure and the lack of life information."

Personal trauma and loss

A powerful response highlights extreme personal loss and trauma suffered due to the conflict, which makes returning to Syria emotionally impossible.

"I have no home, no property, no money, and no family. My brothers were executed in Sednaya, and my uncle, my cousin, my paternal uncle, my paternal cousin, and my paternal cousin were raped for two years, and then she was released when the regime fell."

Desire for other destinations

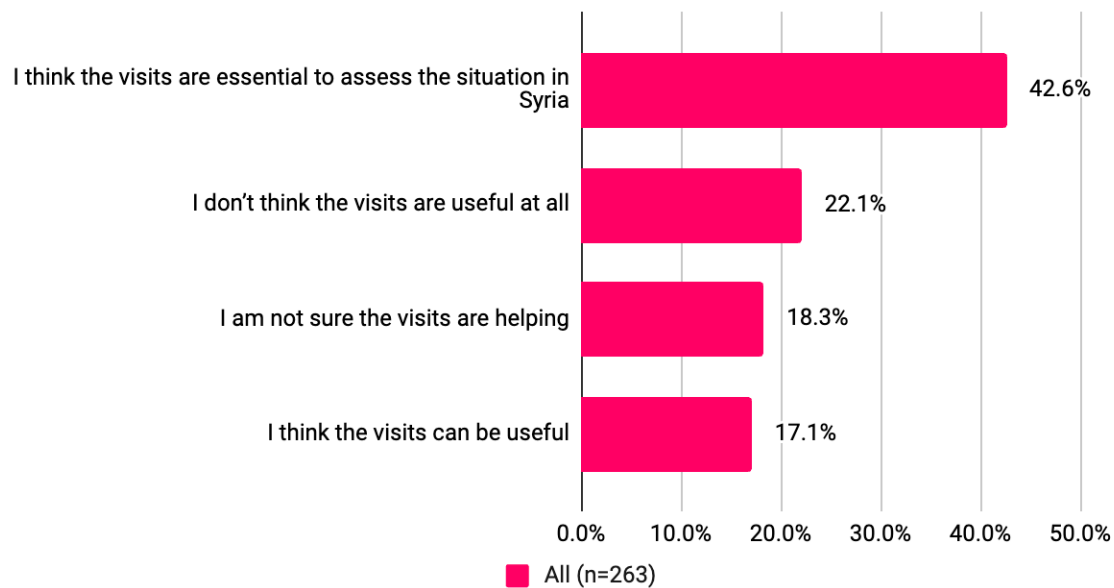
One respondent explicitly expresses a desire to return to their host country (Türkiye) or seek resettlement in a European country, indicating that even after visiting Syria, it is not a preferred destination.

"I am stuck here. I want to return to Türkiye or to one of the European countries. Can you help me?"

e. Overall perception of usefulness of the visits

The following question was asked to the entire participant cohort, encompassing all members, rather than being limited to the subset who went on a visit. 43% of respondents (n=263) considered the visits essential, while 17% would find them useful. A significant portion of respondents were either unsure (18%) or viewed the visits as not useful at all (22%), indicating a mixed or slightly positive perception of their effectiveness.

Figure 4. Usefulness of “go-and-see” visits - All respondents



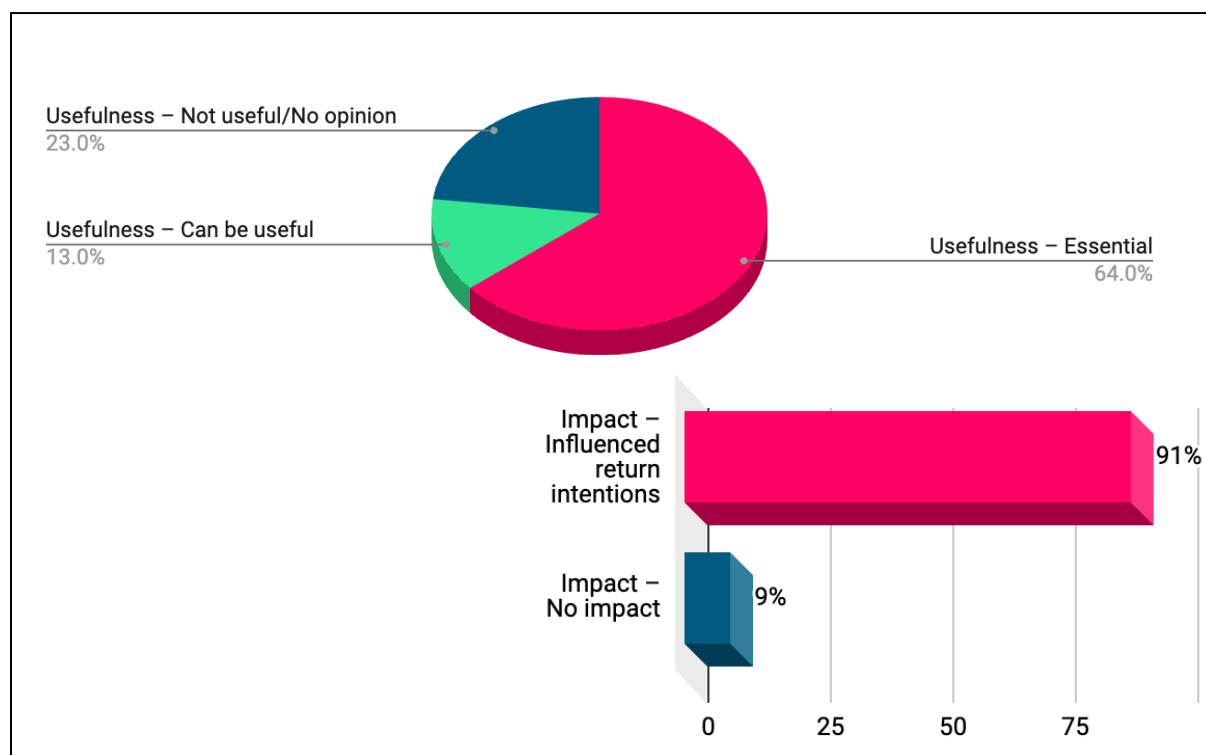
f. Perceived usefulness: correlation to the impact and obstacles of the visits

Impact of the visits

Building on the overall findings regarding the usefulness of visits, it is clear that these experiences are also associated with a significant impact on respondents' future plans.

Among respondents who went on a visit, 64% (n=45) described them as essential and a further 13% saw them as useful, meaning that over three-quarters (77%) hold a positive view of their usefulness. This strong perception of usefulness can be closely linked to the visits' large impact: 86% (n=46) of respondents said the visits influenced their plans regarding their intention to return permanently to Syria. The findings suggest that people see visits as valuable in deciding their future return plans.

Figure 5. Impact and usefulness of "go-and-see" visits to Syria for those who went on a visit to Syria



Obstacles to the visits

As for respondents who did not go on a visit, fewer but still about half of the respondents assess the visits as useful (49%, n=186) for 51% who are not sure or do not see them as useful.

Among those who found visits useful (n=86), the primary barriers were logistical and personal. Financial and economic difficulties were the most frequently cited obstacles (27 mentions), followed by the lack of a home or place to stay in Syria (21 mentions), and security concerns and lack of safety (21 mentions). For this group, the inability to undertake a visit was largely attributed to practical and safety-related issues that directly impacted their ability to travel and reside in Syria.

In contrast, respondents who did not find visits useful (n=83) faced a more complex combination of practical, emotional, and safety-related barriers, with a greater emphasis on deeply personal and foundational issues. The lack of a home was a significantly higher obstacle for this group (51 mentions) suggesting a more fundamental and possibly complete displacement, often coupled with financial difficulties (45 mentions), implying interconnected constraints. While personal safety and security remained a major concern (29 mentions), other noteworthy obstacles included political and legal barriers (12 responses), personal health and family responsibilities (11 responses), lack of basic infrastructure and job opportunities (6 responses), and, uniquely to this group, a lack of desire or feeling of not belonging (5 responses), indicating a potential deeper

psychological and emotional barrier and a more permanent detachment from their country of origin.

3. Split-household arrangements

The concept of split-household arrangements has emerged as a potential alternative to full-scale return for Syrian refugees in Türkiye. Given the complex realities revealed by "go-and-see" visits regarding the dire conditions in Syria, such arrangements could offer a way for families to maintain ties with their homeland while ensuring the safety and well-being of some members in Türkiye, and has been undertaken by multiple people. This section examines refugees' awareness of these arrangements and their interest in pursuing them.

a. Awareness of split-household situations

A small proportion (10%, n=262) of respondents reported being in a split-household situation themselves. However, a large majority (65%) were aware of other families experiencing this, suggesting that while not universally applicable, it is a recognized phenomenon within the community. A minority (13%) were completely unaware, and 12% were unsure or preferred not to answer, indicating some level of unfamiliarity or sensitivity around the topic.

b. Interest in such arrangements

22% (n=262) of respondents expressed interest in arrangements that would separate their families, finding them beneficial. 43% indicated a preference to keep their families together in Türkiye. 20% maybe would consider it but needed more information, and 15% were unsure, highlighting a notable level of uncertainty or hesitancy regarding these arrangements.

While "split-household" arrangements are a recognized concept among Syrian refugees in Türkiye, with 65% aware of them, a large portion of respondents prefers to keep their families together in Türkiye, highlighting a general hesitancy towards such arrangements, and underscoring the importance to consider alternatives for Syrian refugees who wish to remain in Türkiye and to create viable opportunities for long-term integration if a safe, voluntary, and dignified return is not possible.

In this light, a growing number of Syrian refugees in Türkiye (12 responses) are **calling on international donors** to fundamentally change their approach to aid, arguing that current support models fail to address their long-term needs in Türkiye. Community members revealed a collective sense of being trapped, with one respondent stating, **"I'm reaching a point where I can no longer stay in Türkiye and cannot return to Syria."** The appeals center on a critical need for economic and legal stability, with refugees urging for **"improving the economic, social and cultural living conditions in Türkiye."** and for **"the Turkish government to take into consideration our situation as Syrians in their country and take the legal measures and facilities that guarantee our stay"**. This desire for permanence is rooted in a daily struggle for

survival. As one individual recounted, **"They stopped the protection card for me and my children because I do not have a home address... Now my family and I live in a tent and work as laborers to secure our livelihood."** This collective plea underscores a desire for dignified integration and an end to the pervasive uncertainty that defines their lives.

Recommendations

This section presents key recommendations derived from the insights and calls to action provided by 252 respondents. While many of their suggestions have been integrated into the core analysis of this report, we highlight 5 principal recommendations that directly reflect the community's priorities and critical needs:

Recommendation 1: Provide direct financial support both for those who desire to stay in Türkiye (i.e. rent, food, medicine) and those desiring to return to Syria (i.e. travel, rebuilding homes, urgent needs, safe return support). (22 responses)

Recommendation 2: Support housing and reconstruction in Syria to enable safe return and restore devastated communities. (13 responses)

Recommendation 3: Invest in sustainable, long-term support for Syrian refugees in host countries like Türkiye, focusing on economic integration and the recognition of refugee skills and potential, legal stability, education, and access to essential services to create a more dignified and secure life. (12 responses)

Recommendation 4: Prioritize the future of children by providing support for educational opportunities, financial assistance for school-aged children, and the continuation of temporary protection, recognizing that children raised outside Syria now consider their host country to be home. (32 responses)

Recommendation 5: Prioritize and fund initiatives that address family reunification and the specific needs of vulnerable individuals, such as single mothers or those with unique legal statuses, by providing targeted support that helps secure housing and overcomes administrative barriers to family cohesion. (22 responses)

Conclusion and future research

The "go-and-see" visits policy introduced in early 2025 offered Syrian refugees in Türkiye a rare opportunity to assess return conditions firsthand. However, participation remained limited due to widespread concerns over safety, lack of housing, economic hardship, and insufficient information. Among those who did visit, the majority encountered severe insecurity, destroyed infrastructure, and minimal access to basic services, leading nearly half to conclude that return is not feasible at this time. While a small group reported increased willingness to return, driven by nostalgia or family ties, most continue to view both Syria and Türkiye as unstable or uncertain in the long term. Many expressed a desire for resettlement to third countries, underscoring the need for durable, rights-based solutions that extend beyond short-term return policies.

Importantly, the findings highlight that the conditions in Syria remain far from conducive to safe, voluntary, and dignified return. Simultaneously, deteriorating conditions in Türkiye, combined with legal uncertainty and insufficient aid, leave many refugees in limbo. This calls for a renewed commitment by donors and policymakers to address urgent needs and co-create long-term solutions grounded in refugee voices.

To address these complex realities Syrian refugees face, policymakers and humanitarian actors must take an approach that centers refugee voices. This includes acknowledging the limitations of "go-and-see" visits and working to remove the significant barriers to voluntary return, namely insecurity, economic collapse, and widespread destruction. Bridging critical information gaps and investing in housing and livelihood opportunities inside Syria are essential to make return a viable future option. At the same time, sustained support in host countries like Türkiye is non-negotiable: refugees must be guaranteed legal clarity, access to services, and meaningful opportunities for economic participation. For those unable to return or remain, resettlement and complementary pathways should be expanded, especially for the most vulnerable. Finally, prioritizing the education and well-being of children, ensuring aid is delivered transparently and equitably, and enabling community participation in aid design are all essential steps toward long-term stability and trust-building.

In terms of research and monitoring of Upinion's Syrian community in Türkiye, further investigation and follow-up conversations are needed to address several key areas concerning Syrian refugees in Türkiye. These include delving deeper into specific security concerns cited by refugees to determine necessary safety guarantees for return, and conducting a more in-depth analysis of the economic viability of return areas, identifying promising livelihood sectors and required investment. Additionally, it's crucial to explore the long-term psychological impact of "go-and-see" visits on refugees, particularly those experiencing increased trauma. Further exploration of split-household arrangements, including their practicalities, benefits, challenges,

legal frameworks, financial implications, and social support networks, is also necessary. The precise implications of temporary protection deactivation and its impact on refugees' decision-making regarding return or resettlement must be investigated. Finally, identifying and analyzing successful "go-and-see" visits or return initiatives can provide valuable lessons and best practices for supporting Syrian refugees' return decisions, especially in light of the visits having now been put on hold by the Turkish authorities.

Contact

Noor Lekkerkerker
CEO
noor@upinion.com

Augustine Hacques
Researcher
augustine@upinion.com