



JANUARY 2025

RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**INTENTIONS OF SYRIAN COMMUNITIES IN TÜRKİYE
TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMETOWNS IN SYRIA**

TABLE OF CONTENT

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Highlights | 1 |
| Part 1: Context | 2 |
| Part 2: Methodology | 3 |
| Part 3: Findings | 6 |
| Part 4: Recommendations | 12 |
| About Dünya Doktorları | 16 |

HIGHLIGHTS

**SYRIANS' RETURN INTENTIONS DEPENDS ON SAFETY AND POLITICAL STABILITY:
NEARLY NONE FROM NORTHEAST SYRIA PLAN TO RETURN, WHILE 45% FROM
OTHER REGIONS, WHERE CONDITIONS ARE BETTER, AIM FOR A GRADUAL RETURN.**

KEY BARRIERS TO RETURN



**Damaged or
destroyed
shelter**



**Lack of access
to basic services**



**Ongoing security
concerns**



**Limited income-
generation
opportunities**

MAIN NEEDS RELATED TO RETURN



**Financial
Assistance**



**Transportation
Support**



Legal Support



Education Support

PART 1

CONTEXT

In light of significant recent developments in Syria, this assessment, conducted by Dünya Doktorları, explores the intentions of Syrian communities in Türkiye regarding their potential return to their hometowns in Syria.

Conducted between December 27, 2024, and January 3, 2025, the assessment focuses on two specific groups:

- Syrian communities in **İzmir province**, primarily **seasonal agricultural workers (SAWs)** residing in informal settlements, mainly **originating from the northeast of Syria**.
- Syrian communities in **Hatay province**, primarily **earthquake-affected populations** residing in temporary accommodation centers, **originating from other regions of Syria**.

By examining the **motivators** that drive their willingness to return, the **barriers** that hinder or delay the process, and the types of **support** required for a successful and sustainable reintegration, this assessment seeks to advocate for concerned stakeholders to address the humanitarian needs of displaced communities in light of the evolving context.



PART 2

METHODOLOGY



The assessment relied on **27 key informant interviews** with community leaders, local authorities, and temporary accommodation centers management staff across **fourteen communities**: seven in Torbali district of **Izmir province** and seven in Antakya, Kırıkhan, and Reyhanli districts of **Hatay province**.

The data collection methodology combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect involved scoring motivators and barriers on a scale of 1 to 10 based on their perceived importance, along with documenting community opinions, such as their willingness to return and the anticipated timeframe.

Complementing this, the qualitative approach captured more nuanced insights through open-text questions, addressing issues that were not covered by predefined response categories.

The sampling strategy was designed to ensure a variety of communities, representing diverse geographical regions of Syria, including the northeastern, northwestern, and southern parts. While the communities in Izmir were relatively homogenous in terms of their Syrian origins, the Hatay-based communities were more diverse, offering a broader representation of the Syrian population.



PART 3

FINDINGS

The findings underscore **the critical role of security conditions in the hometowns of assessed Syrian communities in shaping their willingness to return.** They also highlight the complexities surrounding the plans to return, including barriers that may hinder or delay the process and the types of support required to facilitate successful returns. These insights emphasize the necessity of targeted interventions to address these barriers and provide actionable recommendations.

Significant differences in return intentions between Syrian communities in İzmir and Hatay provinces were observed:

In İzmir, according to the key informants, 55% of the community, primarily originating from northeast Syria, reported **no intention to return at the moment.**



This reflects the considerable impact of security conditions in their hometowns, such as Deir ez-Zor, Hasakah, and Raqqa. Conversely, **in Hatay, only 20% of the community indicated no intention to return**, suggesting a relatively stronger willingness among the population in this region to consider returning.

Additionally, **45% of the Syrian communities in Hatay** — mainly originating from other parts of Syria where conditions are comparatively better — **expressed a preference for a gradual return.**

In contrast, only 5% of the Syrian community in İzmir reported the same, highlighting a significantly lower level of readiness for this option. Furthermore, none of the key informants in İzmir indicated the communities have the intention for an immediate return, whereas 5% of those in Hatay expressed readiness to return immediately (See *Chart 1*).

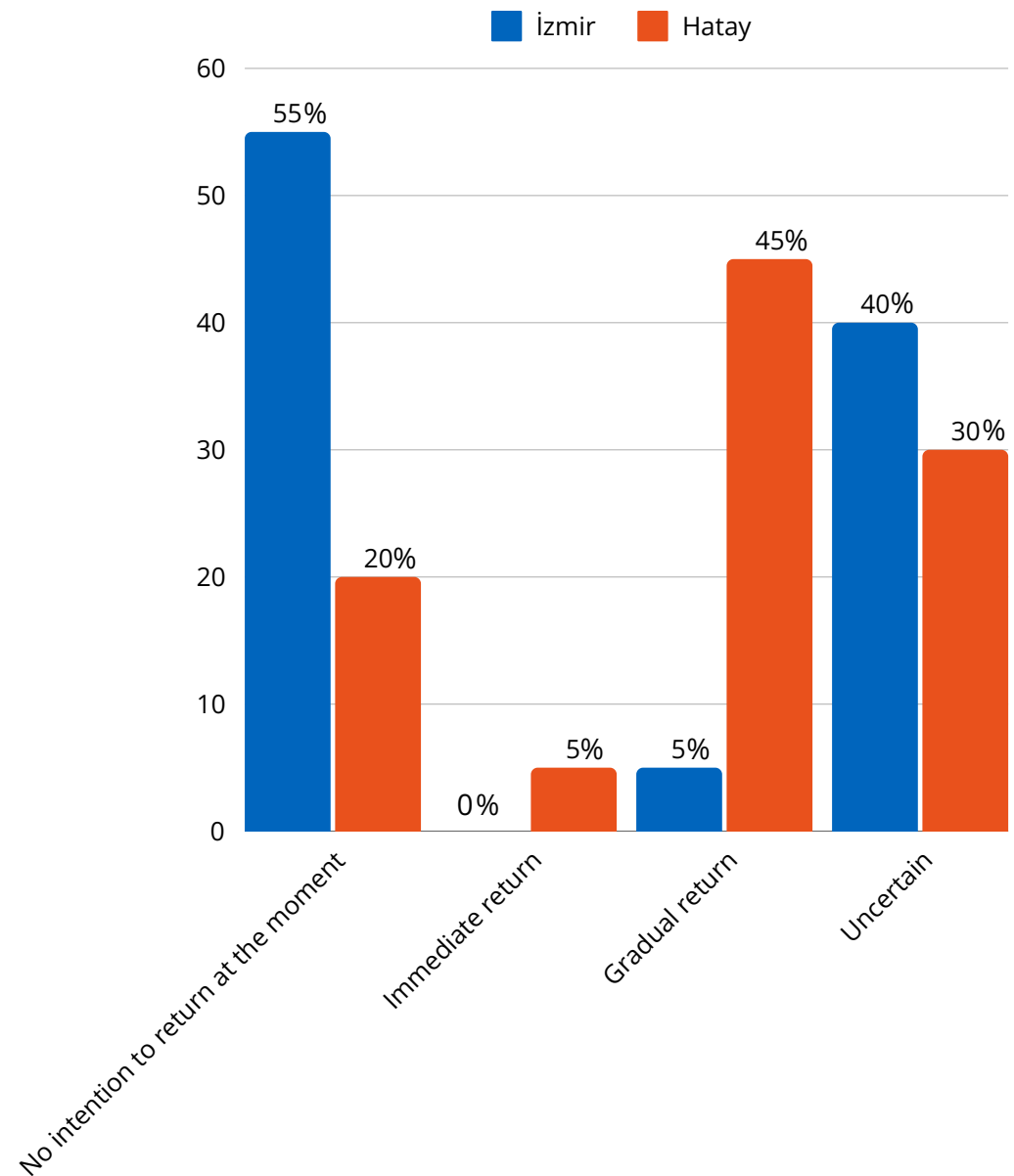


Chart 1: Intention to return, by target province

Timeframes for return

The anticipated timeframe for return among the assessed communities in Hatay and İzmir varies between provinces, influenced by the safety conditions in their hometowns in Syria.

According to the interviewed key informants, communities in Hatay generally expect to return sooner compared to those in İzmir. For example, **35% of the communities in Hatay** plan to return **within 3 to 6 months**, while **none of the communities in İzmir** are indicated to share this expectation.

Additionally, **60% of Syrian communities in İzmir** are reportedly **uncertainty** about their return timeframe, while similar uncertainty is valid for **only 20% of Syrian communities in Hatay** (see *Chart 2*).

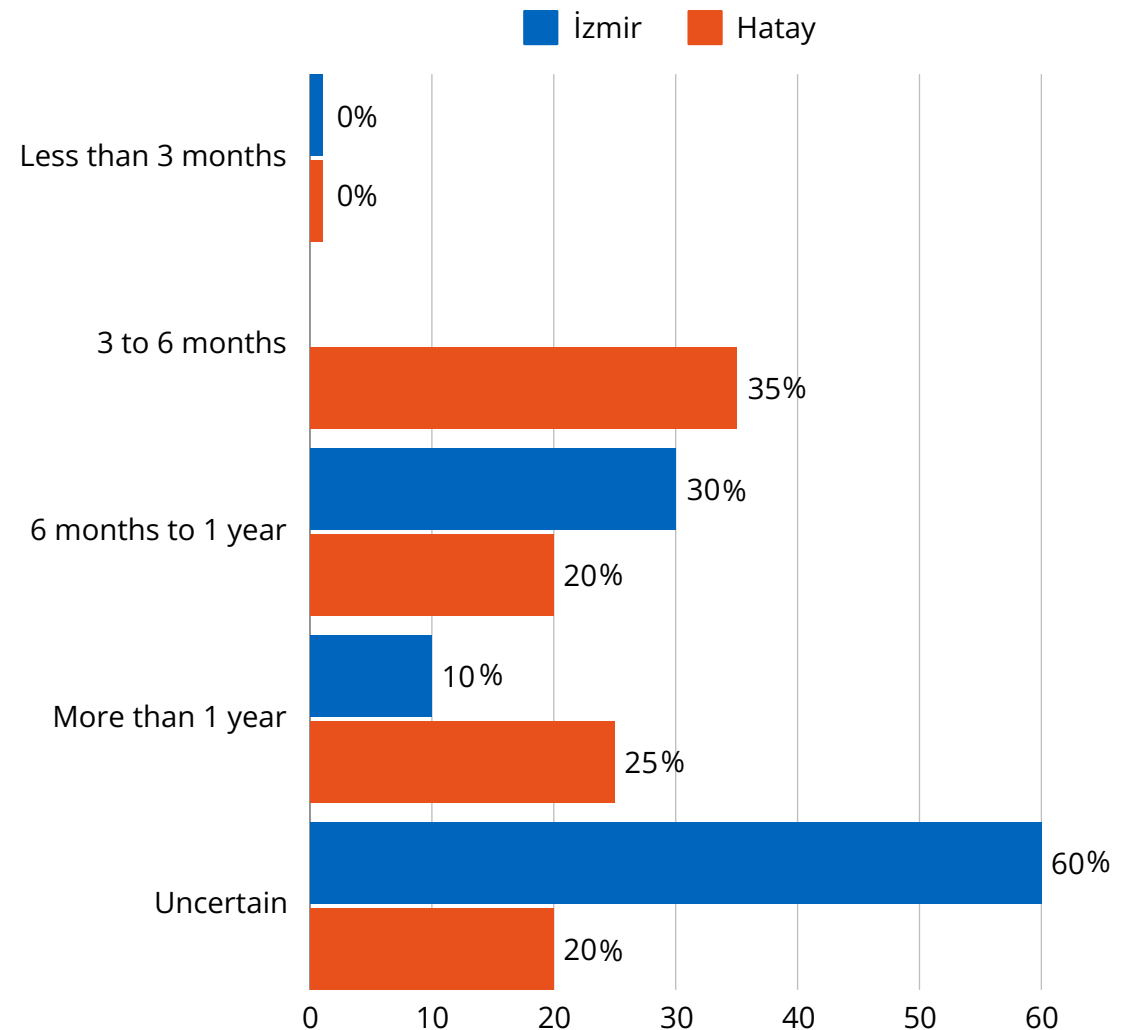


Chart 2: Timeframe of the return, by target province



Key motivators and barriers

The primary motivator for the assessed Syrian communities in Hatay and İzmir provinces to return is **the opportunity to regain their property**, followed by **a longing for their hometown and community members**.

Furthermore, **the living conditions in informal settlements and temporary accommodation centers** also influence their decision. **Improved security in their hometowns** is more commonly viewed as a motivator by the assessed **Syrians in Hatay** compared to those in İzmir (see *Chart 3*).

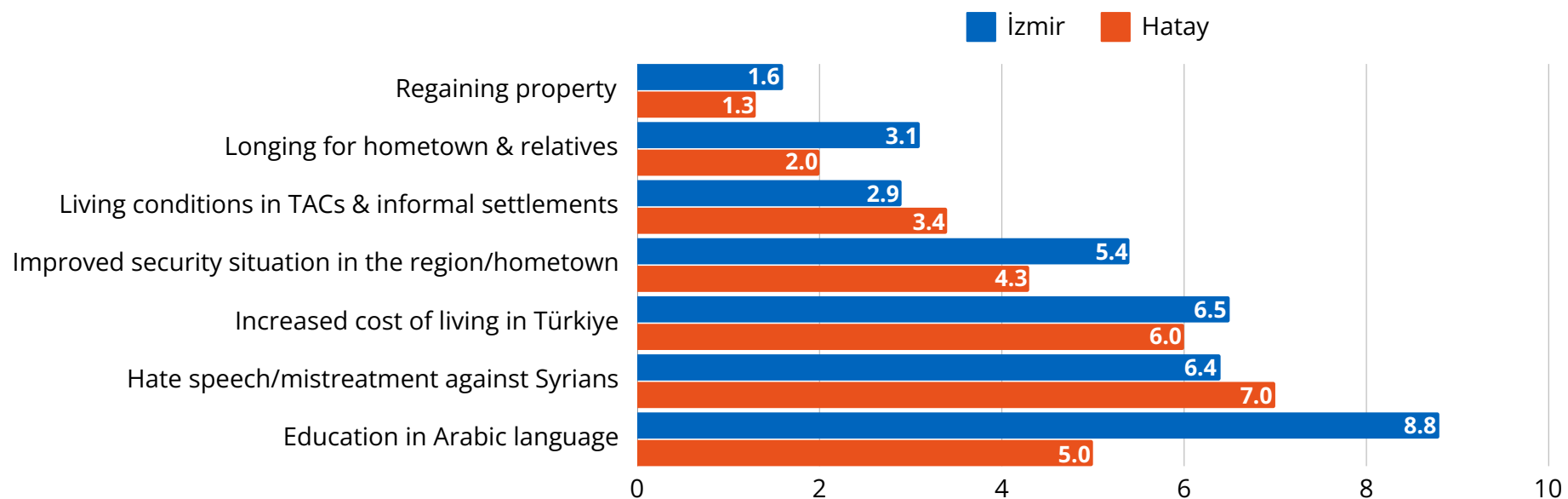


Chart 3: Key motivators to return, by target province
(1: Most important, 10: Least important)

Considering the protracted conflict in Syria and the imposed sanctions, **several barriers** continue to **prevent or delay the return of Syrian communities**, with similar trends observed in both Hatay and İzmir provinces. These barriers include **destroyed shelters, the lack of basic services such as clean water and healthcare, and damaged or dysfunctional infrastructure** (e.g. electricity, waste management, and sewage systems).

Additionally, **the high cost of returning and limited financial resources** pose significant challenges.

Ongoing security concerns and limited income generation opportunities remain among the most pressing issues related to the return (See *Chart 4*).

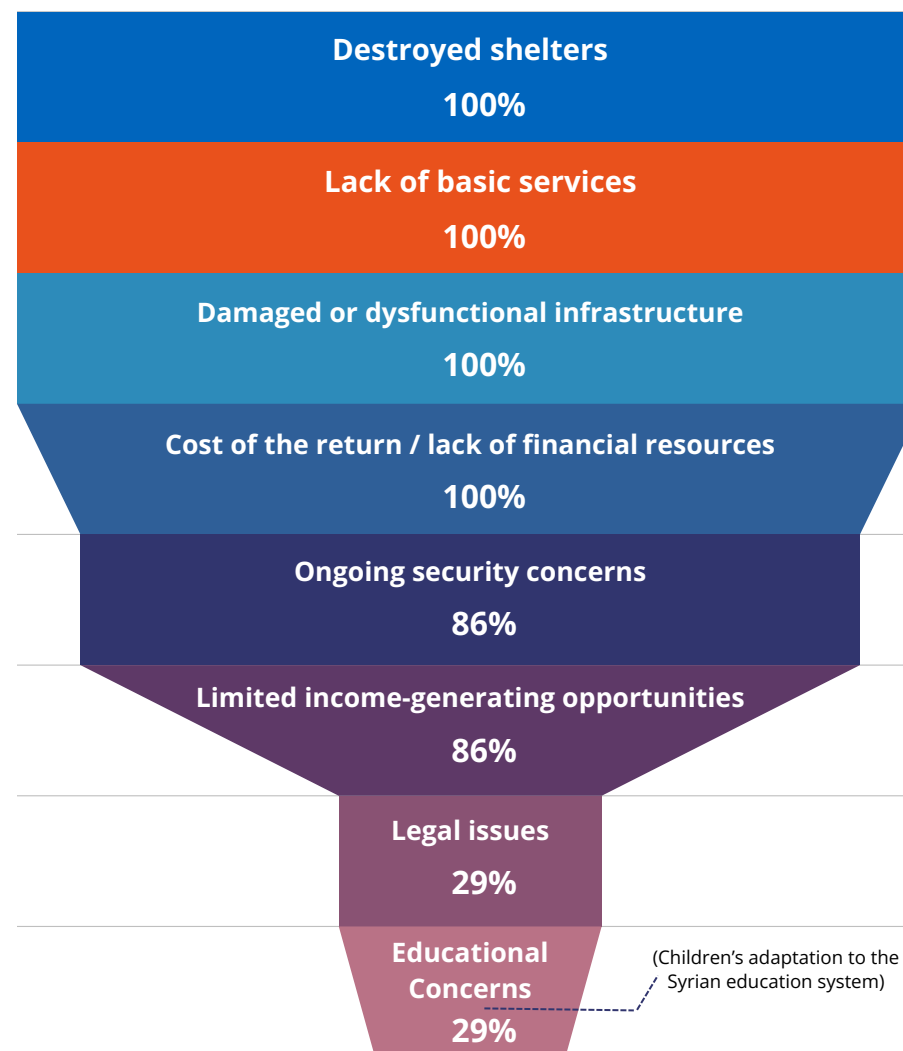


Chart 4: Key factors that prevent and/or postpone the return



PART 4

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this assessment emphasize the critical need for coordinated and targeted actions to address the barriers and challenges faced by displaced Syrian communities in Türkiye. Achieving sustainable and voluntary returns requires a collaborative effort from donors, concerned authorities, and the international community.

The following recommendations are designed to advocate for the humanitarian needs of these communities, urging stakeholders to provide effective support that ensures safe, dignified, and successful reintegration into their places of origin.

TO DONORS

- **Invest in security and de-mining efforts:**

Donors are also urged to invest in security and de-mining efforts, particularly in areas like Deir ez-Zor, Hasakah, and Raqqa, where security concerns remain a significant obstacle.

Increased funding for organizations specializing in de-mining and the explosive remnants of war and related capacity-building measures of the communities is essential to fostering safer environments for returnees

- **Prioritize multi-sectoral funding:**

Donors are encouraged to prioritize multi-sectoral funding to rehabilitate essential infrastructure and services, such as shelters, water and sanitation systems, electricity, healthcare, and education. Addressing these critical needs is vital for overcoming the barriers that prevent the displaced populations from returning.

- **Support sustainable and gradual returns:**

It is equally important for donors to support sustainable and gradual returns by creating funding mechanisms aligned with long-term development goals. These mechanisms should ensure that displaced populations, particularly those in Hatay expressing readiness for phased returns, can reintegrate effectively.

- **Address the cost of return:**

Donors should consider establishing financial support programs to assist displaced populations in covering the high costs of returning, ensuring economic barriers do not hinder voluntary returns.

In addition, financial assistance should be offered to the returnees to cover their most essential basic needs until a certain period of time after they arrive in their hometown in Syria.

TO CONCERNED AUTHORITIES

- **Strengthen security and safety:**

It is crucial for authorities to ensure safe living conditions by addressing ongoing security threats and promoting community-level trust-building initiatives. Creating an environment of safety and stability is fundamental to encouraging voluntary returns.

- **Rehabilitate basic services and infrastructure:**

Authorities must take urgent action to rehabilitate the infrastructure and ensure the provision of basic services in the areas of return. This includes restoring access to clean water, healthcare services, waste management measures, and electricity to meet the basic needs of returnees and foster sustainable living conditions

- **Engage displaced communities in decision-making:**

Authorities are also encouraged to adopt participatory approaches that actively involve displaced communities in decision-making processes. This will ensure that return-related plans and interventions are aligned with the priorities and needs of the affected populations.

- **Coordinate with humanitarian partners:**

Collaboration with humanitarian partners is essential for a cohesive and efficient response to the elimination of the barriers faced by displaced populations. Authorities should strengthen partnerships with the humanitarian agencies to maximize the impact of return-focused programs.

- **Monitor and evaluate returns:**

Finally, establishing robust monitoring mechanisms is necessary to track the progress and challenges of returnees. Authorities are urged to use these systems to identify and address emerging issues promptly, ensuring long-term stability for returning populations.





ABOUT DÜNYA DOKTORLARI

Dünya Doktorları (DDD) is a Türkiye-based civil society organization that facilitates universal access to healthcare services for communities affected by armed conflict, violence, natural disasters, disease, famine, poverty and social exclusion.

DDD implements humanitarian projects in Türkiye's Hatay, focusing on primary health care, mental health and psychosocial support services, and protection to respond to the needs of displaced populations and strives to meet the health needs of vulnerable people around the world.

As the 16 th member of the Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) International Network, DDD responds to humanitarian crises in the regions where it operates from the heart of the crisis, building the necessary health infrastructure to provide long-term and sustainable health care to affected populations.

Dünya Doktorları (DDD) began its work in Syria in 2018, providing primary healthcare, sexual and reproductive health, mental health and psychosocial support, and social protection services to internally displaced people affected by the war that erupted in 2011.

Since then, during the 14 years of conflict in Syria, DDD has carried out numerous medical and humanitarian activities to provide access to health care and humanitarian assistance to the war-torn population. The complexity of the war, as a result of multiple actors fighting in the region, limited access to resources, direct attacks on medical personnel and health facilities, and great needs, has led to a humanitarian response that has been conducted under equally complex and challenging conditions.

DDD continues to provide humanitarian assistance directly or through partnerships with eleven health centers in Aleppo and five in Idlib to ensure access to healthcare for people affected by the war in Syria.

©DÜNYA DOKTORLARI

The findings presented in this report reflect the perspectives and experiences of the assessed communities, as gathered through interviews conducted with individuals selected as key informants based on their professional roles. While the results provide valuable indicative information about the assessed communities, they are not representative of all Syrian populations. These findings should be used as a basis for further exploration and to guide tailored interventions.



**ALSO
TREATING
INJUSTICE**



www.dunyadoktorlari.org.tr



info@dunyadoktorlari.org.tr



[/dunyadoktarlari](https://www.youtube.com/dunyadoktarlari)