

The image shows the cover of a policy brief. At the top left is the 'ipl' logo (Immigration Policy Lab) and at the top right is a 'POLICY BRIEF' label. The title 'Returning Home? Why Pushing Syrian Refugees To Return Is Unlikely To Be Effective' is prominently displayed in red. Below the title, there are two images: a map of the Middle East highlighting Lebanon and Syria, and a photograph of a densely packed, multi-story residential building in a refugee settlement. The text on the cover provides a summary of the research, including the location (Lebanon), the research question (factors influencing return decisions), the research design (panel survey), and the research team (Ali Alarabshi, Daniel Mesteron, Melina Casella, Dominik Hangartner, and Jeremy Weinstein). It also mentions the date of the survey (2019) and the organizations involved (UKaid, ipa, and ETH zürich).

Returning Home? Why Pushing Syrian Refugees To Return Is Unlikely To Be Effective

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Twelve years after Syria’s civil war began, 5.5 million Syrians live in neighboring countries, many of whom have been displaced for a decade or more. Much of Syria remains devastated, and many refugees considering returning fear violence, persecution, and government retribution in the postwar period.

In February 2023, the country’s ongoing humanitarian crisis was compounded by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit southern Turkey and northwestern Syria, leaving even more people without basic shelter and public services. This has rekindled important questions over the fate of displaced Syrians and their prospects for returning home. Some governments have taken active steps to push refugees to return to Syria, yet many in the international community believe that conditions in the country remain unsuitable. Absent in these

discussions is the voice of Syrian refugees. Do they want to go back to Syria? If so, when and under what conditions? What factors predict the return of refugees? Researchers at the Immigration Policy Lab (IPL) conducted a representative survey of 3,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon in 2019 to learn about their return intentions.