Syrian Arab Republic

January 2025

The UN estimates that **16.7 million** people across Syria need humanitarian assistance.

The fall of the Assad Government in December 2024 resulted in the displacement of many civilians from several areas.

Meanwhile, more Syrian refugees in neighboring countries have returned and continue to express their intention to return home, and thousands of IDPs are going back to their places of origin. Based on actual and projected returns, and triggered by calls on UNHCR from refugees to support them to return, UNHCR is moving into a phase of facilitating voluntary returns to Syria.

This will be gradual and on phases, based on **voluntary character of return and refugees' well-informed and free choices**.

UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless people, and host communities based on identified needs and vulnerabilities.

HIGHLIGHTS

28,000

individuals were assisted with core relief and winter items in January

7,160

individuals received legal assistance through legal services provided by UNHCR and partners and legal outreach volunteers in January

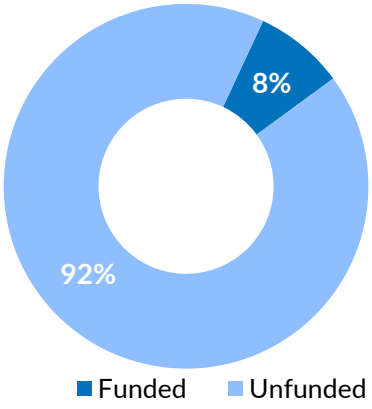
800

individuals including refugee returnees received tools, equipment, and support for their livelihood projects in January

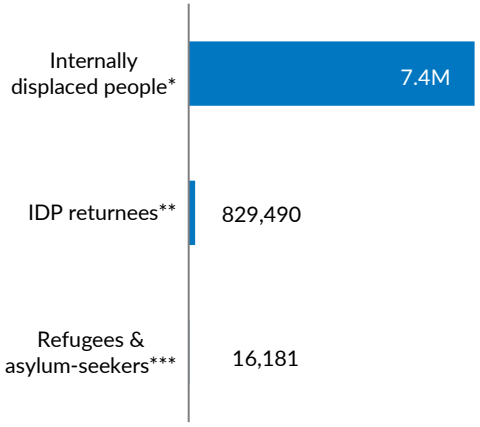
FUNDING (AS OF 31 JANUARY 2025)

USD 564 million

requested for the Syria Operation in 2025



PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



** Source: OCHA, June 2024*
*** Source: Population Movement Reporting Tool, since 27 November 2024*
**** Source: UNHCR, January 2025*

Wesal, who lives in Tadamon (Damascus Governorate) with her two children, receives a battery and LED lights to cope with the severe electricity shortage and prolonged power outages. This is part of UNHCR's assistance for vulnerable families to meet their essential needs. ©V.Toumeh /UNHCR

Operational Context

Syria has one of the largest numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world (7.4 million IDPs). The UN and humanitarian partners also estimate that over 16.7 million people in Syria need humanitarian assistance.

The security situation in the country remains unpredictable, the humanitarian and economic conditions are dire, and many basic services remain collapsed.

Through the *area-based* and *community-based approaches*, UNHCR supports refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, host community members, and returnees (refugees and IDPs who have returned to their home areas).

The UNHCR's *community-based approach* focuses on community mobilization and building self-reliance. It aims at reducing vulnerabilities, and protection risks by providing services through community-based structures and networks. UNHCR's *area-based approach* entails working with partners to enhance support in geographic areas where the needs are greatest.

In 2025, UNHCR is collaborating with 28 partners including international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs in all 14 governorates.

Operational Updates

Protection

- In line with its community-based approach, UNHCR supported in January 106 community centres out of 122 and 115 mobile units across the country including in north-west Syria. A total of 16 community centres remained non-functional in January due to various reasons, including damage and looting after the fall of the former Syrian Government. UNHCR also engages around 2,250 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.
  In January, UNHCR and its partner expanded the services of an existing community centre in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate to cover Dweir village, with approximately 20,000 individuals.
- A community-led initiative supported by UNHCR's partner was implemented in Homs in January to rebuild a vital sidewalk for pedestrians and rehabilitate a vehicular bridge destroyed by the recent Israeli attacks. Works included the installation of concrete pipes to manage water flow, the expansion of the bridge's width, and the paving of roads to ensure durability. The initiative eliminated the need for a hazardous 30km detour and enabled farmers and residents to transport goods and access essential supplies. It also allowed access to schools for more than 2,000 university students and 5,000 school children.
- A total of 45 skilled young people designed and installed a youth-led initiative, a safe and eco-friendly parking facility for 60 bicycles in Salamiyah (Hama Governorate), to address transportation challenges for approximately 15,500 people, including students, employees, and residents.
- In January, UNHCR partners provided legal assistance through lawyers and legal outreach volunteers to over 7,160 individuals. The assistance included legal awareness raising, counselling, and direct legal interventions related to civil documentation and housing, land, and property matters.
- UNHCR, through its supported community centres in Hama, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa Governorates, conducted 19 awareness-raising sessions on gender-based violence (GBV) in January. The sessions aimed to equip 260 women and 35 adolescent girls and boys with essential knowledge on GBV, its causes and effects, and introduce the available GBV prevention and response services focusing on domestic violence and women empowerment.
- In January, UNHCR organized 13 awareness-raising sessions on mine risk education for 223 children and 21 women in Damascus, Tartous, Latakia and Homs Governorates. The sessions included sensitization on war remnants, recognition of signs of their presence, and the dangers of approaching them or handling abandoned weapons and empty bullets. Mine risk brochures were shared with the participants.
- UNHCR and its partner organized psychosocial support sessions at the community centres in Ghizlaniyeh, Mliha, Az-Zabdani, and Sabboura (Rural Damascus Governorate). A total of 65 women heads of households attended the sessions, which aimed to capacitate the community as a first responder to psychological issues and foster resilience and emotional well-being among themselves.
- UNHCR delivered 238 medical in-kind assistance items to its partners in Qamishli for distribution to vulnerable people. The items included crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, medical beds, toilet chairs, and oxygen cylinders.

Core Relief Items

- In January, over 6,000 families (28,000 individuals) in Aleppo, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa Governorates, including those who recently returned to Syria from Lebanon and those displaced from Aleppo to other

governorates, received core relief and winter items. The distributed items included jackets, rubber boots, carpets, heaters and indoor solar devices.

Shelter

- From January 2024 to January 2025, UNHCR provided over 83,450 individuals with emergency shelter support, which included the repair of collective shelters, provision of around 8,950 tents, and operation and maintenance of seven camps in north-east Syria.
- UNHCR continued the repair of damaged houses and distribution of shelter materials. Although facing various challenges, such as shortage of construction materials and fuel and delay in approvals, UNHCR supported around 11,500 individuals from January 2024 to January 2025.
- UNHCR restored basic public infrastructure in areas receiving returnees or IDPs. This includes the repair of boreholes, rehabilitation of sewage systems, and installation of solar streetlights. From January 2024 to January 2025, over 129,000 individuals benefited from these interventions.

Livelihoods

- In January, UNHCR supported over 800 displaced and refugee returnees with tools, equipment, and support through livelihood projects in Rural Damascus, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh, Tartous and Latakia Governorates.
- UNHCR and ILO have launched a joint skills mapping exercise for refugee returnees across four key return governorates. This initiative aims to assess existing skills of returnees and identify opportunities for livelihood support. Expected to be completed in February, findings and recommendations of the exercise will help sustainable reintegration of refugee returnees through collaboration with relevant actors.

Cash Assistance

- Due to the lack of cash liquidity in Syrian banks and money transfer companies following the fall of the Syrian Government in December 2024, UNHCR had to suspend the cash assistance in January. UNHCR resumed cash distribution on a limited scale and continues exploring all options to resume the distribution at larger scale.

Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of the end of January, 16,181 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR. The majority of the registered refugees are from Iraq and reside primarily in urban areas in Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and Latakia Governorates.
  In January, UNHCR renewed the identification cards for over 1,100 refugees. The identification cards protect refugees against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.
- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** In January, nine families (15 individuals) were recognized as refugees. This helps to ensure their protection from *refoulement* and detention due to irregular stay, and facilitates access to basic services.
- **Durable solutions:** In January, eight individuals were accepted for resettlement in the UK with the support of UNHCR.
- **Legal Assistance:** In January, UNHCR's legal teams and lawyers provided legal assistance to 312 refugees and asylum-seekers. This included civil documentation particularly birth registration, residency, and other legal issues.

Return

With the support of UNHCR and partners, Mohammad and other Syrian refugee returnees were transported from Jordan to Syria. Outreach volunteers at the border provided returnees with information about the available services in the community centres at their final destination. ©V.Toumeh /UNHCR

- Over half a million Syrians have returned to Syria since September 2024[1]. Of these, some 236,400 individuals have crossed into Syria since the fall of the former Syrian Government (from 8 December 2024 to 30 January 2025). It is estimated that the majority of returnees came from Lebanon, followed by Jordan, Türkiye, Egypt and Iraq.

[1] *This also includes the movements of Syrians who returned from Lebanon to Syria under duress following the escalation of hostilities on 23 September 2024, primarily through the border crossing points of Jdaidet Yabous, Dabbousieh, and Joussieh.*

- In January, the UNHCR-supported Border Health-Protection Support Points at Nassib (Syria-Jordan border), Jdaidet Yabous and Joussieh (Syria-Lebanon border) continued to support people crossing into Syria, including returnees. The Dabbousieh and Al-Arida points (Syria-Lebanon border) remain under repair due to pervious attacks.

The points provided individuals with information on available services in their areas of return, as well as counselling and referral services to around 15,000 returnees who are registered with UNHCR in January. They also offered access to the internet or a hotline to communicate with relatives, basic medical attention, and other amenities.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- UNHCR Response factsheet (30 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (8 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (5 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (2 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (30 November 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (28 November 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (25 November 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (21 November 2024)

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