

UNHCR 2018-2019 Regional Winterization Assistance Plan

(Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt)

More than 14 million people have been displaced from their homes in Syria and Iraq, with nearly 5.9 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. **UNHCR estimates that 3.4 million vulnerable people (Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees) need urgent help to properly prepare for the up-coming winter.**

USD 168 million is needed to ensure that life-saving winterization assistance is in place before freezing temperatures grip the region, exposing tens of thousands of families. For many, this will be the eighth consecutive winter in displacement.

The majority of the planned intervention will be in the form of cash assistance and core winter items. Significant investment is also planned in insulating and repairing shelters and improving drainage in camps. UNHCR winterization programme covers the period from September 2018 to March 2019.


3.4 million

Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees assessed to be in need of winterization support


\$168 million

Total requirements

Syria situation

Overall

by Country


Beneficiaries

2.67 million
Syrian IDPs and refugees

94,400



Egypt

228,000



Iraq

267,378



Jordan

732,049



Lebanon

1,350,000



Syria


Budget (USD)

\$137 million

\$3.2 M

\$17.5 M

\$20 M

\$55.2 M

\$41.2 M

Seasonal cash assistance

Beneficiaries 1.27 M (48%)

Total budget \$92 M (67%)

In-kind assistance

Beneficiaries 1.41 M (53%)

Total budget \$45 M (33%)

Iraq situation

Overall

by Country


Beneficiaries

716,000
Iraqi IDPs and refugees

1,200



Egypt

656,100



Iraq

22,124



Jordan

8,829



Lebanon

27,484



Syria


Budget (USD)

\$31 million

\$40.8 K

\$23.5 M

\$5 M

\$1 M

\$1.5 M

Seasonal cash assistance

Beneficiaries 538 K (75%)

Total budget \$23.5 M (76%)

In-kind assistance

Beneficiaries 177.6 K (25%)

Total budget \$7.6 M (24%)

UNHCR's winterization strategy focuses on three broad areas of intervention:

Provision of seasonal cash assistance for vulnerable families to meet their additional needs during the winter months.



Provision of core relief items specific to winter such as high thermal blankets, plastic sheets, heaters and gas cylinders, and winter clothes.



Winterization of shelter including shelter weather-proofing and repairs, improvements to drainage systems and other infrastructure in camps and informal settlements.

The winterization programme is implemented through UNHCR's own staff, government agencies, partners, and community outreach volunteers in coordination with the broader inter-agency response platforms.

SYRIA

- As part of the Whole of Syria approach, UNHCR aims to provide winter assistance to 1.35 million Syrian internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities (270,000 families) through the distribution of core relief items (CRIs) such as high thermal blankets, plastic sheeting, sleeping bags, winter jackets, and winter clothing kits beginning in September. Assistance will be prioritized for newly displaced vulnerable families (including people displaced multiple times), people living in hard-to-reach areas and in sub-standard shelters, spontaneous and self-organized returnees, as well as people in newly accessible locations who have not been assisted in the past. This includes several locations in Dara'a, Rural Damascus, Hama, Deir-Ez-Zour, Ar-Raqqa and Idlib governorates, depending on access for delivery of aid and assistance. Monitoring of the programme will be conducted by UNHCR and partners during the distribution of the items.
- In addition, UNHCR plans to support some 27,500 refugees and asylum-seekers from Iraq and other countries (8,400 families) with unconditional one-off cash assistance of USD 54 in November to cover additional expenses during winter, such as for fuel, electricity, blankets and clothing. Cash transfers will be made to refugees through ATM cards and to asylum-seekers through cheques to be collected at UNHCR office and cashed at a partner bank.
- For cross-border assistance from Gaziantep (Turkey), UNHCR aims to provide winterized CRI kits for 100,000 Syrian IDPs (20,000 families), targeting locations in most need and beneficiaries identified by agreed vulnerability criteria as determined by a Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFI) needs assessment in north-west Syria. The distribution is planned to start in October. UNHCR will deploy a commercial third party company for on-site and post-distribution monitoring, in addition to partner post-distribution monitoring.

Consequences of underfunding

- Lack of funds will result in the significant reduction of winter assistance for the most vulnerable 1.35 million IDPs, exposing people in need to harsh weather conditions without assistance. This can lead to negative coping mechanisms, loss of dignity, as well as health concerns.
- Under-funding will lead to all refugee and asylum-seeker families being unable to meet basic needs during the winter months and a further deterioration of their living conditions. If the response is only partially funded, UNHCR will have to prioritize further among the population and will only be able to target refugees under more severe vulnerability categories, while asylum-seekers will not be able to benefit from assistance.



Syrian refugees remove snow from their shelter rooftops at an informal tented settlement in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon.
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LEBANON

- UNHCR intends, as part of this appeal, to provide winter assistance to 732,049 vulnerable Syrian refugees (146,410 families) and 8,829 Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (2,729 families). Based on UNHCR analysis of household visit data, a refugee family's winter expenditure increases between USD 70 and 150 per month. This increase indicates the burden of additional costs during the winter season, including for heating, health care and clothing, which places an overwhelming pressure on families.
- Winter cash assistance of USD 375 per family will be provided to help families meet their needs during the winter period (calculated at a rate of USD 75 per family per month for five months), which will be delivered through a one-off payment. UNHCR's current targeting tool for basic assistance identifies the most vulnerable by organizing refugee households into poverty/vulnerability thresholds compared to the survival and minimum expenditure basket levels (USD 87/capita/month and USD 114/capita/month respectively). The targeting criteria for the winter cash assistance programme will use these classifications to prioritize severely vulnerable families not already receiving multi-purpose cash (top-up cash package). This assistance is supplemented by distribution of items such as insulation materials, thermal blankets, stoves for heating, and shelter repairs. Many refugees in Lebanon live in informal settlements, where the shelters are not sturdy and need to be weatherproofed and insulated every winter.
- Provision of winter assistance will be coordinated by the Basic Assistance working group composed of UN agencies, NGOs and the Government. Additionally, the Lebanon One Unified Inter-organizational System for E-Cards (LOUISE) will continue to play a key role in multi-agency collaboration and coordination. Post-distribution monitoring will be conducted in January and February 2019 through household visit surveys and focus group discussions.

Consequences of underfunding

- Underfunding will leave 732,049 vulnerable Syrian refugees without the means to cover their survival needs during the winter period. This will lead to increased debt as needs of a family are higher during winter.
- Refugee families will face more pressure to resort to negative coping mechanisms, especially affecting women, children, people with special needs and elderly.



JORDAN

- UNHCR aims to reach 267,378 Syrians (69,452 families) in the refugee camps of Azraq and Zaatari and in urban areas with winter assistance in the form of cash assistance¹, as well as selected winter CRIs. In the camps, this is primarily in the form of one-off cash assistance for gas refills and one-time cash assistance for winter, as well as selected winter CRI provision. In urban areas, a one-off cash assistance will be provided to 158,380 Syrian refugees (45,252 families) through the Common Cash Facility (CCF).
- The selection of beneficiaries will be coordinated through the inter-agency Winterization Task Force, which UNHCR co-chairs with the Norwegian Refugee Council, to ensure a uniform approach while avoiding duplication or overlap. Special attention will be given to female-headed households, the elderly, people with disabilities, children who are alone or otherwise at risk, people with medical needs as well as survivors of violence or torture.
- Assistance is also needed for 22,124 Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (11,062 households), identified by the same selection criteria, in the form of a one-off cash distribution through the CCF. UNHCR remains one of the few agencies that continues to provide assistance to non-Syrian refugees in Jordan. As humanitarian support is limited and few may obtain work permits, the majority of Iraqi and other non-Syrian refugees are in particular need of winter assistance. Beneficiaries will include families that are already part of the UNHCR regular cash assistance programme or on the waiting list. UNHCR and its Winterization Task Force partners will undertake regular joint monitoring throughout the implementation period. Cash beneficiaries will be part of the UNHCR's post-distribution monitoring mechanism which is conducted on a quarterly basis. Field monitoring, home visits, and discussion groups also serve as a platform to gain insight on implementation from beneficiaries.

Consequences of underfunding

- Without funding, nearly 267,378 Syrians in urban areas and camps will be unable to meet the increased expenditure of the winter season, driving vulnerable households to take on debt and thereby drastically worsening their economic vulnerability.
- As there are few avenues for support available to non-Syrian refugees, it is unlikely another organisation will be in the position to assist those that UNHCR cannot support due to a lack of funding, leaving 22,124 Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities without assistance.

¹ The amount for cash assistance will depend on the family size and vulnerability, funding received and other factors.



The needs of refugee families normally increase during winter, leading to higher expenditure. Poor families exposed to various risks are pushed further into poverty and vulnerability. For many, this will be the eighth consecutive winter in displacement.
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IRAQ

- UNHCR aims to assist some 656,100 IDPs (109,350 families) and 228,000 Syrian refugees (45,600 families) in Iraq with winterization assistance. A large part of the assistance will be cash-based, allowing families to decide for themselves how to spend the money on important priorities during the difficult winter months. A one-off cash assistance of USD 200 per family will be provided to IDPs living in camps and in urban areas. For Syrian refugees, USD 400 per family will be provided to both those in camps and out of camps. Winterization assistance also includes the distribution of items such as heaters, high thermal blankets, and plastic sheeting as well as, in camps, distribution of insulation kits for tents.
- Beneficiaries are identified based on vulnerability assessments conducted with partners and community representatives, with priority placed on socio-economic vulnerabilities and persons of concern living in the coldest geographical areas. UNHCR coordinates with relevant Cluster actors, particularly the Shelter and NFI clusters and the Cash Working Group, to share responsibilities and maximize UNHCR's ability to deliver winterization support. UNHCR also continues to coordinate with the Government of Iraq, particularly the Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs and the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, to establish and maintain communication channels and manage reputational risks, access and delivery of assistance.
- UNHCR staff and partners will monitor cash distributions to ensure that intended beneficiaries receive correct amounts of cash through spot checks during distribution site visits. Post-distribution monitoring will be conducted through mobile field teams, focus group discussions, telephone interviews, and household visits.

Consequences of underfunding

- UNHCR's winterization assistance programme remains vital to ensure that 656,100 IDPs and 228,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq are well equipped with the necessary resources to survive the winter.
- In some mountainous areas of Iraq, especially in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) where 97 per cent of Syrian refugees reside, temperatures can drop to below freezing during winter months. The majority of people rely heavily on UNHCR's winterization assistance.

EGYPT

- UNHCR Egypt plans to provide 94,400 Syrian refugees (23,600 families) and 1,200 Iraqi refugees (375 families) with one-off cash assistance of USD 34 per person. With the support of UN agencies, UNHCR seeks to increase this amount to USD 56 to compensate effects of the recent inflation and rising fuel and electricity costs. Beneficiaries of the winterization grant consist of those who are: 1) registered with UNHCR and cannot meet their basic domestic needs; and 2) identified by either partners or UNHCR Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees (EVAR) as vulnerable cases. The assistance will be distributed through Egypt Post offices beginning in November, and will be primarily concentrated in the three governorates of Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta. In previous years, winter cash support was distributed through two different service providers for Syrian refugees, and refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. However, in 2017 a test for the planned roll-out of one delivery mechanism through Egypt Post proved viable, and in 2018 Egypt Post will be used for distribution of cash assistance to refugees of all nationalities.
- UNHCR will be monitoring the provision of winter assistance through regular meetings with Basic Needs and Cash working group partners as well as by conducting post-distribution monitoring using a standardized template and sampling framework.

Consequences of underfunding

- The required funds will cover the needs of 94,400 Syrian refugees and 1,200 Iraqi refugees. Failure to provide winter assistance will impair the ability of vulnerable households to cope with lower temperatures resulting in high risk of harm to their physical and psychological well-being and/or causing them to resort to other harmful coping strategies.

Impact of the 2017-2018 UNHCR Winterization Assistance Programme

During last winter, with the generous contributions from donors, UNHCR provided life-saving winterization support to over 3.6 million vulnerable Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. This included 1.25 million IDPs in Syria, 1.8 million Syrian refugees in the region, nearly 482,000 IDPs in Iraq, and over 84,000 Iraqi refugees in the region. With early planning, preparation and procurement, timely and efficient response was provided ensuring families were equipped to survive the winter.

- **Lebanon:** As part of the 2017-2018 winterization programme, a total of 828,090 highly and severely vulnerable Syrian refugees (165,618 families) and 6,360 severely vulnerable Iraqi refugees (1,590 families) received winterization assistance, mainly through cash. The cash assistance was used by refugee families to cover basic household requirements, with food, fuel for heating, rent and healthcare costs among the top reported priorities among all families. Almost everyone (99%) found the timing of the distribution to be convenient and over 90 per cent of families did not face any challenge when withdrawing cash from ATM. For those who did, the main issue reported was long waiting times at the bank – in locations with higher density of refugees. Winterization assistance also provided refugee families with an additional and needed income source during the winter months. Families receiving multiple forms of cash assistance, including for winter, reported being better able to deal with the challenges of winter, including shelter preparation, food coping strategies and higher winter-related expenditure.
- **Jordan:** UNHCR provided over 334,000 Syrian refugees and more than 26,800 Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities with winterization assistance last winter. Forty-nine per cent of Syrian refugee families who received UNHCR's winterization cash assistance were able to cover their immediate needs for the winter and 76 per cent reported the assistance was provided at the right time. The vast majority (94%) of beneficiaries reported the cash assistance received help them to buy winter items, with heating accounting for the majority of expenditure (65% gas cylinders, gas refills, and heaters). Almost all non-Syrian refugees stated that the one time-winterization assistance helped them to buy winter-related items (90%). However, less than half (40%) found the assistance sufficient. For a majority of families, the accumulation of unpaid rent and debt meant that the amount received was insufficient to cover these pressing expenses in addition to the required purchases for winter.
- **Iraq:** Between October 2017 and February 2018, UNHCR provided 481,848 IDPs and 121,930 Syrian refugees with winter assistance in camps and urban areas. The vast majority of IDP and refugee families (over 90%) reported the cash assistance was utilized for shelter maintenance and to purchase various winter items, such as heaters/stoves, winter clothing, gas refills/canisters, carpet/rugs etc. Some families utilized the amounts received to cover other priorities, such as healthcare costs and to alleviate incurred debt.
- **Egypt:** UNHCR together with UNICEF provided winter cash assistance to 91,531 Syrian refugees (27,220 families) and 1,373 Iraqi refugees (527 families) in November 2017. The main expenditures reported by the beneficiaries were on clothes, rent, food, and health. Eighty-five per cent of respondents indicated that the cash transfer improved their capacity to cope during the winter. In terms of the cash transfer value, 63 per cent of the respondents stated that the transfer did not cover all of their requirements.
- **Syria:** As part of its Whole of Syria winter plan, UNHCR reached over 1.25 million IDPs with winterization assistance across Syria including through cross-border operations from Jordan and Turkey. In the post-distribution monitoring exercise conducted at all field locations during 2017, IDPs expressed satisfaction, commenting that the winterization programme covered their priority needs during winter.

CONTACTS

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