

# 2019-2020 Regional winterization programme progress report

December 2019

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

This winter, UNHCR estimates that 4.1 million Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees (including refugees of other nationalities) are in need of winterization assistance in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. For many, this is the ninth consecutive winter in displacement.

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions received for its winterization programme which have facilitated early provision of assistance across the region, allowing vulnerable Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees to be prepared for the harsh winter season.

As of 31 December, nearly 2.3 million Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees have been reached with winterization assistance in the region. The winterization programme covers the period from September 2019 to March 2020.



**4.1 million** vulnerable people assessed to be in need of winterization assistance<sup>1</sup>

including more than

**3.3 million** Syrians & **746,700 Iraqis** including refugees of other nationalities



**2.3 million** people reached with winterization assistance as of 31 December (56%)

<sup>1</sup> Due to the scale of needs in the region, UNHCR has revised the total number of people in need of winterization assistance from 3.88 million people (September 2019 UNHCR Regional Winterization Assistance Plan) to 4.1 million people (December 2019)

**Funding requested**  
**USD 222 million**  
**(100% funded)**

UNHCR is pleased to announce that its 2019-2020 Winter Programme is fully funded. Thank you to all the donors and supporters who have made this possible.



UNHCR on the ground with local partners distributing UNHCR non-food items to the internally displaced people to the Fafin village in rural Aleppo and the newly returning families to the area. UNHCR team speaking with families to respond to their needs. Fafin is located in the northern rural Aleppo, about 20 Km north of Aleppo. ©UNHCR/Antwan Chnkdji

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



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



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



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

- 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.
- The provision of seasonal cash assistance does not overlap with the provision of core relief items and shelter assistance for winter.

# SYRIA

## PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(AS OF 31 DECEMBER)

### SYRIANS

#### Individuals

**1.6 million** individuals targeted\*  
**601,788** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**In-kind: 100%**

\*Includes 1.5 million Syrian IDPs planned to be reached by UNHCR operations inside Syria and 100,000 IDPs through cross-border operation from Gaziantep (Turkey).

### IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

#### Individuals

**15,010** individuals targeted\*  
**15,010** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100%**

\*The number of planned beneficiaries decreased from the initial winterization plan due to the revised cash grant amount provided to the beneficiaries.

- In Syria, UNHCR's winterization campaign started at the beginning of September, and has already made significant progress. As of end-December, UNHCR Syria provided winterization assistance to 551,788 individuals (121,437 families), including high thermal blankets, additional plastic sheets, sleeping bags, winter jackets and winter clothing kits in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Tartous, Lattakia, Dar'a, As-Sweida, Quneitra, Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates. This winter, UNHCR is planning to reach 1.5 million individuals (300,000 families) throughout the country. So far, UNHCR has reached nearly 37 per cent of its planned target.
- UNHCR continued with the provision of winterization assistance to all out-of-camp refugees and asylum seekers in Syria in December. For this winter, UNHCR plans to reach 22,644 refugees and asylum seekers (7,284 families) with a one-time cash grant of USD 165 per person. During December, 5,043 refugees (2,119 families) received cash grants, bringing the total number of assisted refugees in November and December to 15,010 individuals (5,338 families). UNHCR delivered winterization grants to people who were eligible for multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG) through ATM cards and to those who were not eligible for MPCG (non-ATM cardholders) through vouchers.
- In north-east Syria, as of mid-December, some 70,000 people are estimated to remain in displacement. As part of inter-agency efforts, UNHCR is responding to the needs of the affected population through the provision of emergency assistance. UNHCR has so far reached 203,444 individuals with core and winter relief items, including 91,787 people in Al-Hol, Areesha, Ain Issa (before its closure), Roj and Mahmoudli camps.
- As part of the UN cross-border operation from Turkey, UNHCR provided winterized non-food item (NFI) kits to some 50,000 people (10,000 families) through partners in north-west Syria. The NFI kits consisted of high

thermal blankets, foam mattresses, solar lamps, plastic tarpaulins, and certain hygiene items. UNHCR and its distribution partners actively participated in the Shelter/NFI Cluster winterization coordination meetings to prevent duplication and to target those most in need.

## LEBANON

### PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(AS OF 31 DECEMBER)

### SYRIANS

 **Individuals**

**1.1 million** individuals targeted  
**774,440** individuals reached

### Type of Assistance

**Cash and In-kind**

### IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

 **Individuals**

**10,713** individuals targeted  
**7,642** individuals reached

### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100%**

- Delivery of the winter cash assistance for refugees in Lebanon began in November and continued through December. Implementation remained affected by the exceptional circumstances prevailing in the country and the deteriorating financial situation. The operation witnessed a higher impact on programmes with lack of liquidity and availability of cash, increased pressure on banking services, especially to withdraw cash from ATMs, and the unstable exchange rate at non-official markets.
- UNHCR maintained adjusted modalities of its cash assistance programmes, such as: staggered loading of cash assistance over several days and introduced loading activities on Saturdays in coordination with the financial service provider as well as WFP and UNICEF, as part of the LOUISE scheme. These measures were meant to reduce pressure on the ATMs, avoid large queues which generate tensions with the host community.
- In December, a total of 37,397 additional cards were distributed in temporary distribution points and whenever accessibility allowed, bringing the total number of cards distributed since the beginning of the winterization programme to 54,779. The validation of beneficiaries through a two-way-SMS and telephony scheme continued and was finalized by 20 December. In addition, 83,298 families (81,791 Syrian refugee families and 1,507 refugee families of other nationalities) received their winter cash assistance during the reporting period.
- UNHCR assessed the conditions of 44,000 makeshift shelters across 5,300 informal settlements. Around 30,000 eligible households were identified for shelter support, and by the end of December, 150,986 refugees (28,488 vulnerable households) were assisted to weatherproof their shelters against the elements. Around 1,500 eligible households were not reached as they had moved from their settlements prior to distribution. UNHCR provided this assistance primarily through in-kind assistance (80%) with shelter kits composed of plastic sheets, timber pieces and tools but also through a 'cash for weatherproofing' modality (20%) which targeted around 6,000 households.
- In December, UNHCR Lebanon also started implementing a winter campaign targeting poor Lebanese families with one-off cash grants in the North and in Mount Lebanon or fuel voucher cards in the North, Bekaa and South with value of USD 200 per family. During the reporting period, targeted families were identified, and first cash grant payments/fuel cards distribution were processed. By the end of December, 5,229 families received cash grants and 7,335 families received fuel cards.
- UNHCR conducted a phone survey with 481 refugee families who received winter cash assistance to monitor and assess access to ATM as well as to identify any challenges faced with cash withdrawal. Results showed

that most families withdrew their assistance, at most, three days after receiving the loading SMS. Average time to reach an ATM was about 32 minutes, a notable increase from the usually reported 17 minutes in previous monitoring from multi-purpose cash assistance. The most commonly reported challenge was long queues at ATMs, mainly in the Bekaa and North. These challenges were linked to tighter restrictions at some banks due to the deteriorating economic situation in the country. Families reported using the winter cash assistance to cover expenses related to food, heating and rent. In addition to continuous monitoring of the distribution and transfer activities, a Post Distribution Monitoring exercise will be conducted after the completion of implementation in February.

## JORDAN

### PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(AS OF 31 DECEMBER)

### SYRIANS

 **Individuals**

**378,785** individuals targeted  
**378,785** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100%**

### IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

 **Individuals**

**30,000** individuals targeted\*  
**30,000** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100%**

\*The number of planned beneficiaries decreased from the initial winterization plan due to the smaller family sizes of the most vulnerable non-Syrians targeted.

- During the months of November and December 2019, UNHCR Jordan provided cash-based winterization assistance to around 410,000 individuals (more than 90,000 families), including over 70,000 refugee households in urban areas and over 22,000 households in the refugee camps of Zaatari and Azraq. Families received cash grants totaling JOD 241 (approximately USD 340), to cover the cost of a gas heater, a gas cannister, gas refills for four months, and blankets for each family member.
- UNHCR adheres to a 'one refugee' approach (not discriminating against different nationalities/origins) and remains one of the few agencies that continues to assist non-Syrian refugees in Jordan, including Iraqis, Yemenis, Sudanese and Somalis among other nationalities. Winterization assistance included approximately 15,000 non-Syrian families in urban areas from the total of 90,000 families supported in winter, reaching over 30,000 individuals. Special attention has been given to female-headed households, the elderly, people with disabilities, children who are alone or otherwise at risk, and people with medical needs as well as survivors of violence or torture. The multi-agency Winterization Task Force, co-chaired by UNHCR, coordinates winter interventions in urban areas. Strong collaboration between members of the task force ensures uniform criteria for selection of beneficiaries, standard assistance packages for transparency and fairness, and avoidance of duplication of assistance.

# IRAQ

## PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(AS OF 31 DECEMBER)

### SYRIANS

#### Individuals

**191,500** individuals targeted  
**142,670** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100 %**

### IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

#### Individuals

**687,000** individuals targeted  
**267,394** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100 %**

- Since September 2019, around 410,000 persons (over 83,000 families) received winter cash assistance. During December, 78,692 Syrian refugees (18,362 families) residing in camps and 9,718 Syrian individuals (2,525 families) residing in urban, peri-urban and rural areas received winter cash assistance through the EyePay system using iris authentication. Female headed households accounted for 17 per cent of the winter assistance recipients. Each household received IQD 480,000 (USD 400). The remaining beneficiaries will receive cash assistance during January. In addition, 2,289 non-Syrian refugees (764 families) received winter cash assistance of USD 400 per family.
- Financial service providers continued to open e-wallets for the beneficiaries residing across 25 IDP camps (25,056 families). To ensure efficient delivery, winter cash assistance was conducted in a phased approach during December. During the month, a total of 120,204 IDPs (23,418 families) residing in camps received winter cash assistance. Each household received IQD 240,000 (USD 200) which will be complemented with kerosene foreseen to be distributed by the Iraqi government.
- UNHCR coordinates the implementation of the winterization programme for IDPs and returnees in Iraq with the Shelter and NFI Cluster and Cash Working Group. For the refugee response, UNHCR coordinates with the Basic Needs Sector under the 3RP platform. UNHCR and WFP are also working together in some camps and are using the same financial service providers to deliver assistance.
- Financial service providers have fully dedicated call centres available to receive generic and specific queries related to e-wallet and cash-out issues.

# EGYPT

## PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(AS OF 31 DECEMBER)

### SYRIANS

#### Individuals

**87,184** individuals targeted  
**52,047** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100 %**

### IRAQIS

#### Individuals

**3,934** individuals targeted  
**240** individuals reached

#### Type of Assistance

**Cash: 100 %**

- Distribution of winter assistance commenced in December. As of 31 December, over 52,000 Syrian refugees and 240 Iraqi refugees were supported with winterization assistance. In addition, UNHCR Egypt supported 43,979 refugees of other nationalities including Sudanese, South Sudanese, Ethiopians and Eritreans with winterization assistance as of 31 December.

- As of end-December, UNHCR was the main provider for winter assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt. Unlike previous winter distribution cycles, in collaboration with Egypt Post and Iris Guard, UNHCR Egypt enhanced its recipient authentication processes through biometric scanning. A total of 54 Egypt Post Office branches were biometric enabled and a total of 14,734 cases identified for biometric authentication. These recipients were expected to receive their cash transfers only after positive match of their iris scans with UNHCR's database.
- The collection trends among Iraqi refugees remains a key concern. Discussions are ongoing with different stakeholders to understand the low collection from this population group.
- UNHCR Egypt conducted two monitoring visits to Egypt Post Office branches in Cairo and Alexandria. The monitoring visits focused on the distribution efficiency of the financial service provider with a focus on monitoring the launch of biometric-enabled cash collection. In both locations the financial service provider actions were satisfactory. UNHCR observed some payment processing delays where the biometric systems did not positively identify a potential recipient. However, Egypt Post developed effective responses by resorting to manual searches, directing refugees to other branches with better connectivity and less crowding, re-attempting biometric verification and, if needed, referring the individual back to UNHCR for identity re-verification.



Syrian refugee Rajaa, originally from Homs, picks up her winter cash assistance in Mafraq City, Northern Jordan, after receiving an SMS to collect for herself and her three children. Photo © UNHCR/M.Hawari

## Donors:

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to the winterization programme for the Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees with unearmarked and earmarked funds as well as those who have contributed directly to the operations.

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