

Syrian Arab Republic: 2022 Strategy and Response Plan Overview

March 2022

KEY FIGURES



14.6 million people need humanitarian assistance, a 9% increase from 2021



6.9 million people are internally displaced



75% of people in need of assistance are women and children



2 million people live in informal settlements and camps



76% of households are unable to meet their basic needs



23,200 refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR

OVERVIEW

The Syrian displacement crisis remains the largest globally, with **5.6 million** refugees across the region and **6.9 million** people internally displaced. A decade of crisis, coupled with COVID-19 and other factors, has generated far-reaching consequences for people of concern. While many communities across Syria have experienced improving security conditions in the past year, protection concerns persist and, in some areas, insecurity has triggered new population movements.

The last 12 months brought a significant deterioration in the daily lives of Syrians, linked to the devaluation of the Syrian Pound, a significant increase in the price of basic commodities, shortages in fuel, gas and electricity, and the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns. The economic crisis in Lebanon, COVID-19, and the soaring cost of living increasingly tested the resilience of Syrians.

According to the [2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#), **14.6 million** Syrians are estimated to require some form of humanitarian and protection assistance on account of rising prices, protracted displacement, and localized hostilities. In addition, the widespread destruction of shelter and infrastructure, and the limited availability of basic services such as health care and education are deterrents to IDP and refugee returns.

The economic crisis has also affected the response capacity of humanitarian actors. Financial service providers are often not able to deliver services to agencies and people of concern. Procurement activities face challenges in a highly unstable market subject to supply shortages. Partners struggle in the face of the enormous needs of and the diminishing value of available resources.

The compounded effects of conflict, economic crisis and COVID-19 will continue to require humanitarian and early recovery assistance to build resilience, mitigate harmful coping strategies and foster enabling conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced populations. Despite the challenges, spontaneous refugee returns continued in 2021 (at a rate 3% higher than in 2020) along with self-organized IDP returns. Such movements are envisaged to increase moderately in 2022.

While emergency response capacities will need to be maintained, increased humanitarian assistance is needed across the country, including to people who have chosen to return home following years of displacement. Preparedness for potential larger-scale returns will also be undertaken.

PRIORITY NEEDS



UNHCR's Representative in Syria, Sivanka Dhanapala visits a partially damaged school in Tishreen village in Al-Ashara sub-district, Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. UNHCR/V. Toumeh

The 2022 HNO finds that economic deterioration is now a major driver of needs in areas historically less directly affected by hostilities and displacement. Over three quarters of households (76%) were unable to meet their most basic needs in 2021, an increase of 10% from 2020. Seven out of ten households report that their debt load is increasing.

Gaps in access to shelter, livelihoods, health, education and civil status documentation continued to be pervasive, affecting all communities. Populations living in overcrowded conditions, collective shelters and informal settlements were especially exposed to gaps in services, and risks of exposure to COVID-19 remained high. Children, women-headed households, older people and people with disabilities were exposed to particular protection risks as social protection structures and community support continued to break down and people's capacity to meet their basic needs and services continued to erode.

According to the 2021 Multi-Sector Needs Analysis (MSNA), food/nutrition ranked the highest priority followed by livelihoods, electricity,

winterization, water and sanitation, shelter, health care, core relief items and hygiene assistance. Protection issues related to civil documentation, Housing Land and Property (HLP) issues and freedom of movement remain significant and impact Syrians' ability to access basic needs. Lack/loss of civil documentation was reported in 76% of assessed communities (compared to 61% in 2020) and spread across all governorates. Over 60% of assessed communities reported HLP concerns (compared to 50% in 2020). Meanwhile, the MSNA found that over a third of the overall population is living in substandard, damaged and/or inadequate shelters, noting that shelter needs are particularly pronounced during winter.

[UNHCR's sixth regional survey on Syrian refugees' perspectives and intentions on return to Syria](#), carried out in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon early 2021, highlighted the following key drivers influencing refugees' thinking on return: **1)** livelihoods opportunities, **2)** safety and security **3)** access to adequate housing and/or concerns about housing and property, and access to basic services. These considerations serve to guide UNHCR's operational engagement and advocacy on return-related matters.

VISION AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- **Foster** an environment for voluntary, dignified, safe and sustainable return of refugees and IDPs focussing on supporting those who have returned spontaneously and their communities.
- **Prepare** for and respond to potential influx of IDPs, refugees, and returnees.
- **Enhance** the protective environment for refugees and promote innovative solutions through a community and area-based approach.
- **Strengthen** delivery-focused partnerships to enable UNHCR to achieve its interventions through inter-agency and sector coordination mechanisms. This includes the Special Situations Group, UN Country Team, Humanitarian Country Team, Area Humanitarian Country Teams and the Return and Reintegration Working Group.



UNHCR's lawyer provides legal consultation for a refugee at a community centre in Kisweh city in Rural Damascus. UNHCR/V. Toumeh

In 2022, UNHCR's engagement maintains emergency response capacity and assistance to IDPs in protracted displacement, in parallel to strengthening access to protection and enhancing resilience of communities where spontaneous refugee and IDP returns are under way. To date, the number of refugees opting to return voluntarily to Syria has been relatively modest, with over 300,000 refugees recorded by UNHCR as having returned to Syria between 2016 and 2021. During the same period, OCHA's IDP Task Force estimated over 3 million IDPs returned to their governorates of origin. UNHCR will further enhance its multi-sectoral, area-based support to communities where returns are taking place, and will strengthen its coordination role, supported by information management services, to facilitate the engagement of partners through joint area-based engagement.

These interventions will aim not only to increase access of returnees to critical services and assistance, such as community basic infrastructure, shelter, education and health care, but also to build the resilience of returnees and affected







communities, in order to enhance social cohesion and foster enabling conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return.

UNHCR will maintain an appropriate emergency stockpile and in close coordination with Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) partners, will continue to lead the Protection and Shelter/NFI Sectors and ensure timely response to displacement.

Protection and identification of solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria will remain a strategic priority for UNHCR. As voluntary repatriation may not be viable for most of refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR will continue actively pursuing solutions, including resettlement, complementary pathways, or local integration.

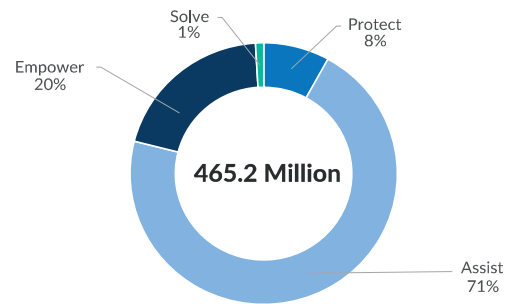
In order to achieve these mid-term objectives, UNHCR will continue working closely with national authorities at both central and local levels and will provide capacity building support to ensure timely delivery of protection services.

2022 PLANNING FIGURES AND FUNDING NEEDS

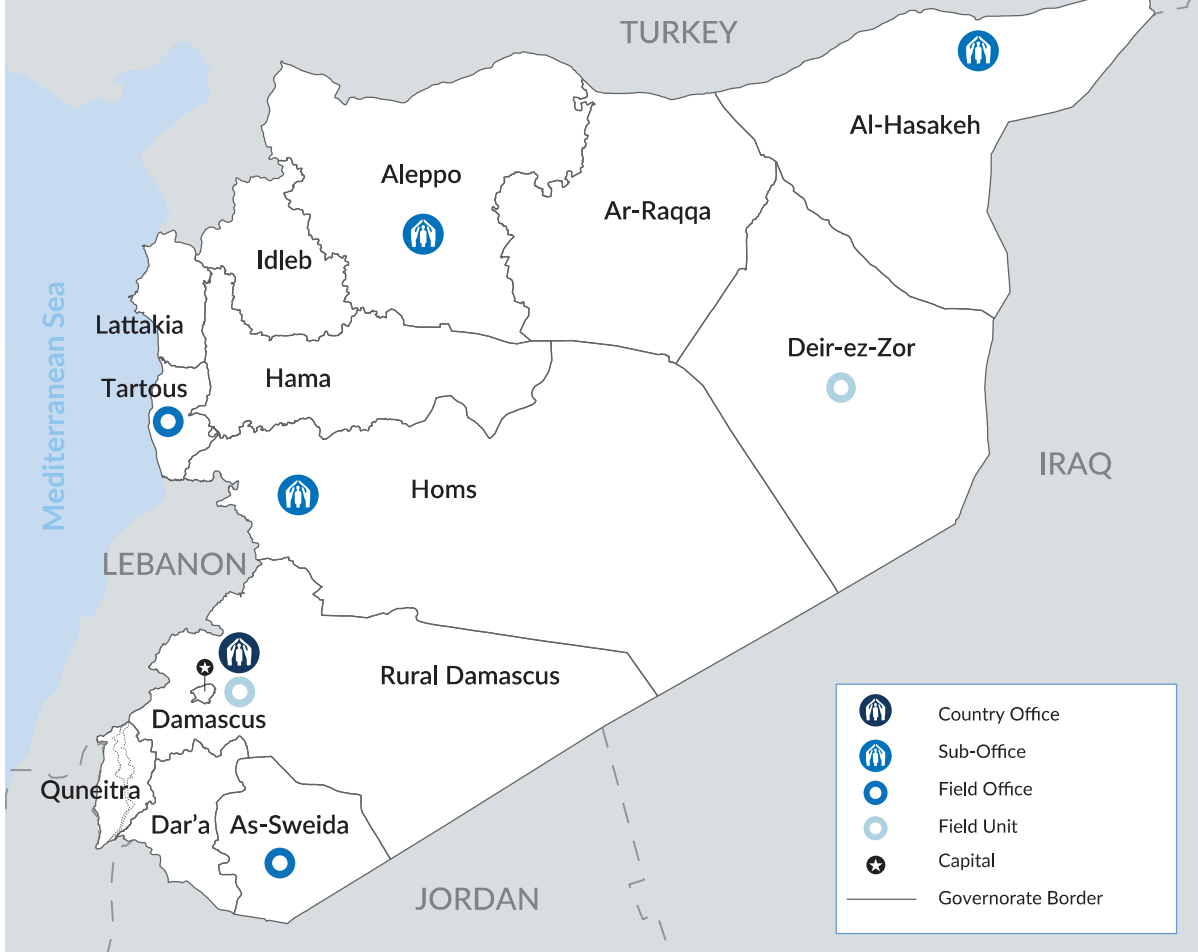
 6.7 million IDPs	 15,500 Refugees (80% Iraqi Refugees)
 320,000 Returned IDPs	 160,000 Stateless People
 130,000 Returned Syrian Refugees	 9,000 Asylum-Seekers

Budget by Impact Area Syrian Arab Republic | 2022

- Protect:** Attaining favourable protection environments
- Assist:** Realizing rights in safe environments
- Empower:** Empowering communities and achieving gender equality
- Solve:** Securing solutions



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