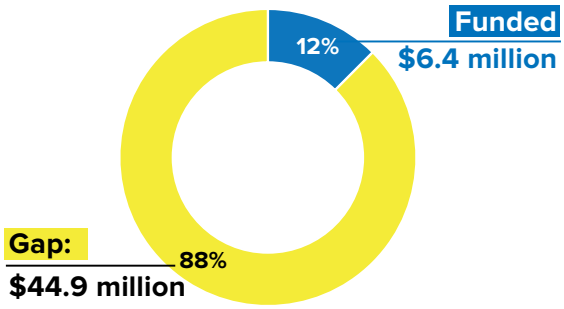
WHOLE OF SYRIA
Emergency Response to the Earthquake - Update #5
15 March 2023

The UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi observes damage caused by the earthquake in Jableh, Latakia Governorate. Photo: ©UNHCR/E. Kabbas

$51.3 million

UNHCR's financial requirements for the earthquake emergency response in Syria, **targeting 385,000 individuals**



8.8 million people are **affected** by the earthquake in Syria

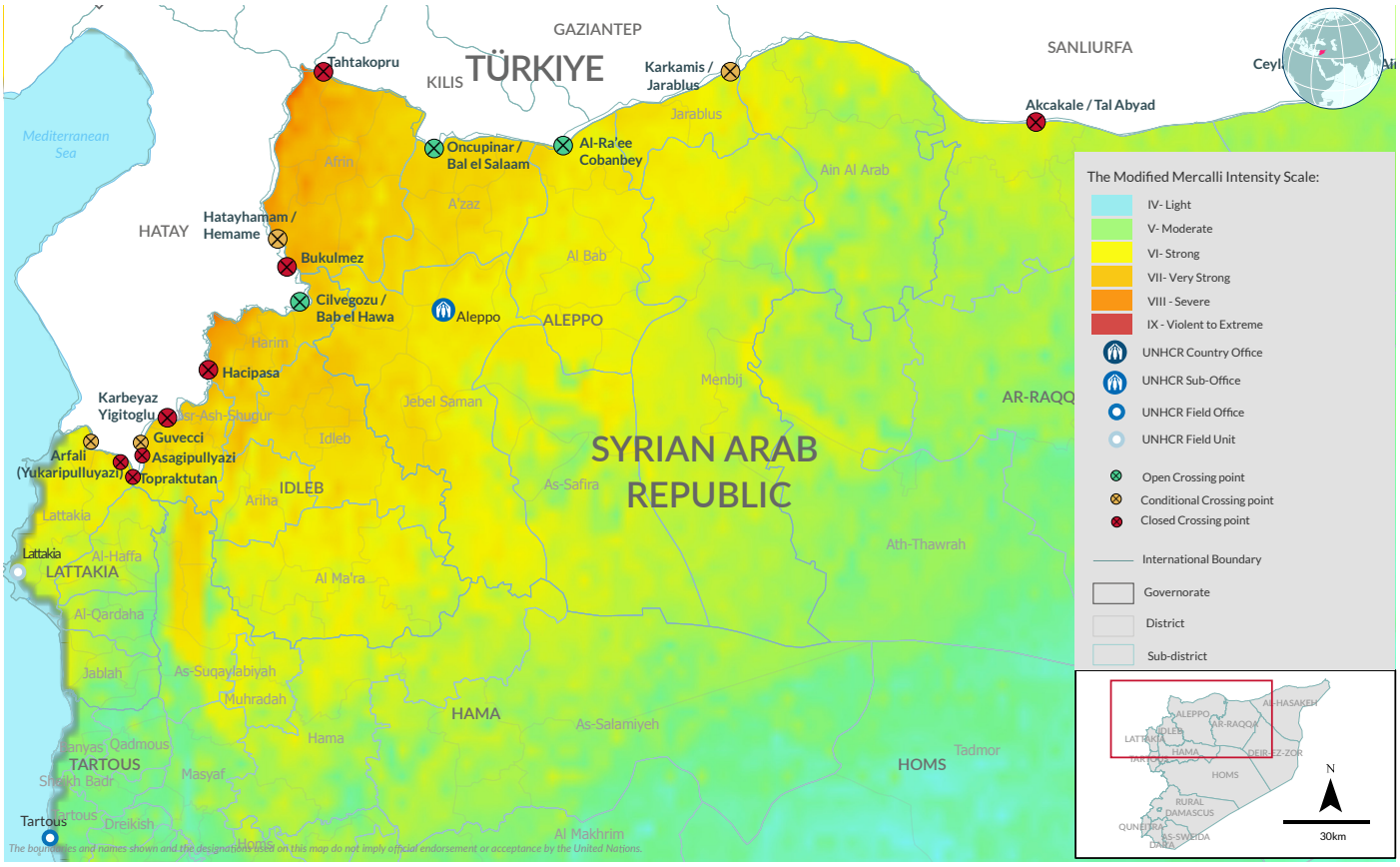
369,355 people reached with protection services in the whole of Syria

41,746 CRI kits[1] distributed in the whole of Syria, reaching **201,230** people

4,634 tents distributed in north-west Syria, reaching **23,170** people

[1] *A Core Relief Items (CRI) kit includes the following items: high-thermal blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, solar lamps and sleeping mats.*

Earthquake affected areas



Overview of Developments

On 11 March, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, concluded a five-day visit to earthquake-devastated areas of Syria and Türkiye, where he met families affected by the earthquakes. In Syria, he visited Latakia, Hama, and Damascus and undertook a cross-border visit to earthquake-affected areas in north-west Syria. At the collective shelters, he met families who had been displaced multiple times – first during the crisis in Syria and now by the earthquakes. He urged for more support for affected families trying to rebuild their lives.

In Syria, an estimated 8.8 million individuals have been affected by the earthquakes. **Over 1,400 deaths** and **2,350 injuries** have been reported by the Syrian Ministry of Health. The Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI) Sector, led by UNHCR, estimates that approximately **5.3 million** people in Syria are in need of shelter and relief items, with 10,000 households having lost their homes, and 45,000 households unable to return to their damaged houses.

Since the first earthquakes of 6 February, around **77,300** families (**387,000** individuals) have been newly displaced in Aleppo (38,700 families), Latakia (36,300 families), Homs (750 families), Tartous (660 families), Hama (350 families), Rural Damascus (300 families), As-Sweida (80 families), Deir-ez-Zor (70 families), Dar'a (65 families), and Damascus (10 families). According to the latest OCHA dashboard, as of 9 March humanitarian organizations provided assistance to **456,000** people affected by the earthquakes, primarily in the Governorates of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia.

The earthquakes heavily impacted north-west Syria (NWS), a region where **4.1 million people depend on humanitarian assistance**, the majority of whom are women and children. **Over 4,500 deaths and 8,700 injuries** have been reported according to the Health Cluster, mainly in the districts of Harim, Afrin and Jebel Saman. The earthquakes have affected at least 96 communities and 35 sub-districts in NWS; **more than 10,600 buildings** have been partially or completely destroyed,[2] leaving an estimated **55,000 households** as displaced, either within or between assessed communities.

[2] *OCHA - North-West Syria: Situation Report - 14 March 2023*

UNHCR Emergency Response

Response in Syria

In Syria, UNHCR is leading the Protection and SNFI Sectors and working in close coordination with other sectors to effectively assist families affected by the earthquakes. Since the onset of the emergency, UNHCR and its partners have been providing protection services, core relief items and shelter support to thousands of families staying at collective shelters and hosted by local communities, particularly the most vulnerable such as female-headed households, elderly people, and people with disabilities.

Protection

Since the beginning of the earthquake emergency response, the UNHCR-led Protection Sector and its partners have carried out around **310,000** protection interventions, mainly in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous and Hama. According to the Protection Sector, Aleppo Governorate presents the highest percentage of earthquake emergency interventions **(67%),** followed by Hama **(10%)**, Latakia **(9.5%)**, Tartous **(2.5%)** and Homs **(2.3%)**. Those governorates represent almost **92%** of the total interventions, while the remaining **8%** of interventions are being implemented in less affected governorates.

As of 14 March, the protection partners assisted more than **78,000 beneficiaries** with awareness-raising sessions on the identified protection concerns, such gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection; **61,000** people benefitted from psychosocial support sessions; **43,000** attended psychological first aid sessions, and **26,000** participated in recreational activities. The Protection Sector also distributed almost **68,000** dignity kits to people affected by the earthquakes.

In response to the reports of GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in collective shelters, UNHCR, as a co-chair of the prevention against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) In-Country Network, prepared a SEA risk mitigation plan and a checklist of PSEA minimum standards to be used by all humanitarian actors. This checklist includes the organization of PSEA orientation and refresher sessions for staff and outreach volunteers working in all sectors, and enhancement of information dissemination on available complaint and feedback mechanisms.

According to the Protection Sector, the closure of some collective shelters and relocation of affected families to other shelters is generating risks of exposure to negative coping mechanisms, particularly among the most vulnerable (including early marriage). The number of female-headed households is increasing as men are moving back closer to the damaged houses to assess the situation and conduct repairs. Thus, ensuring the availability and accessibility of GBV essential services, especially for women and girls in collective shelters, remains a priority. UNHCR participated in a GBV sub-sector mission to six collective shelters in Aleppo city where GBV and SEA risks were reported during multi-sectoral assessments. Urgent needs for mental health and psychosocial support, GBV case management and GBV awareness-raising activities were identified during the visit. UNHCR will support the GBV sub-sector with preparations for an intervention plan to address the most pressing issues identified.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, UNHCR and partners, in coordination with community-based structures, reached out to hundreds of women through a series of awareness-raising and recreational activities under the theme #Embracing Equity in GBV prevention and response interventions. The activities were conducted in the collective shelters and community centres in Latakia and Tartous. During the sessions, UNHCR and partners explained how to express and deal with fear and trauma, particularly after the earthquakes.

In Hama, 13 collective shelters remain operational and hosting 1,700 displaced individuals mainly from Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and Hama itself. During the reporting period, UNHCR and a legal partner have provided legal counselling and awareness raising sessions on legal issues to hundreds of affected families staying in those shelters. The legal interventions are mostly related to civil documentation and housing, land, and property rights, which have been identified as the main legal concerns among the affected families.

Protection Sector partners developed a new protection tool, the "protection necklace", aimed at preventing separation of children from their families. The protection necklace has a QR code that includes the child's full name, address, and phone numbers of caregivers and relatives; so far, it has been distributed to 800 children in two schools in Aleppo. Moreover, Protection Sector partners provided case management to children on family tracing and reunification and alternative care with extended families.

Core relief items

As of 14 March, UNHCR had distributed approximately **32,900 core relief item kits** reaching a total of **157,000 affected individuals** in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama and south Idleb Governorates. UNHCR has also distributed additional some **110,000 relief items** to affected families, including winter jackets, winter clothing kits, rubber boots and adult diapers. Relief items are being released regularly from UNHCR warehouses in Aleppo, Tartous and Homs for distribution to affected families.

Shelter

UNHCR and shelter partners are implementing adaptation works in 18 collective centres, nine in Aleppo and nine in Latakia, to ensure safety, security, privacy, and protection for thousands of people affected by the earthquakes and currently being hosted at these collective shelters. It remains essential to equip collective shelter spaces with lighting, and secured toilets and washing facilities that are gender segregated. UNHCR and partners are also designating specific rooms in collective shelters for case management services, and more child friendly spaces are being prepared for child protection and educational activities.

According to UNHCR-led SNFI Sector, there is a need to scale-up emergency assistance with temporary shelter and emergency relief items. In the meantime, UNHCR and Shelter Sector partners continue working closely with Operations Room on how to mainstream protection inside the collective shelters.

The Latakia Operations Room has informed partners of plans to consolidate collective shelters and has so far confirmed two sites. UNHCR and partners continue supporting the technical assessment of other possible locations for the collective shelters.

Meanwhile, UNHCR is coordinating with Latakia technical committee to install 160 solar streetlights in Latakia city, improving safety during the night particularly for women and girls. In parallel, UNHCR is planning to install additional solar streetlights in other locations in collaboration with relevant authorities.

The UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi met families affected by the earthquakes and currently hosted in a collective shelter in Latakia. Photo: ©UNHCR/E. Kabbas.

Cross-border response in north-west Syria

UNHCR is leading the coordination of three clusters – Shelter/NFI, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Protection – in close partnership with the Humanitarian Liaison Group, local and international NGOs, and the Whole of Syria coordination structure, and providing direct assistance through its partners.

Since the Government of Syria accepted that UN staff can cross into NWS from Gaziantep, 19 UN missions have been organized to meet with local officials, NGOs and the community. The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster facilitated on 9 March the first Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) mission to monitor conditions and needs gaps at reception centres in Iqraa, Bardakli and Al-Kawthar Reception centres in Idleb Governorate.

A mission from the UNHCR Cross-border Operation visits families impacted by the Turkiye-Syria earthquake hosted at the Al Marj settlement
Photo: UNHCR

Shelter and Core relief items

Over 750 trucks loaded with aid provided by six UN agencies have crossed the Bab Al-Hawa, Bab Al-Salam and Al-Ra'ee border-crossings since the earthquake. UNHCR has participated in 15 convoys to date:

Delivered

Crossing Points	100 UNHCR trucks	11,000 CRI Kits	5,700 tents	4 Rubb halls*	300 RHU**
Bab Al-Hawa	60	6,250	3,500	4	300
Bab Al-Salam	34	4,000	2,200	-	-
Al-Ra'ee	6	750	-	-	-

**temporary warehouse*
***Refugee Housing Unit*

Upcoming

Date	Crossing point	UNHCR trucks	CRI Kits	Tents	RHU
Upcoming 16 March	Bab Al-Hawa	10	500	900	200

Assistance distribution as of 14 March:

Tents	4,634	distributed
	23,170	individuals reached

CRI Kits	8,846	distributed
	44,230	individuals reached

A mission from the UNHCR Cross-border Operation exchange with a group of women representative from the Al Marj settlement. Photo: ©OCHA

Thanks to stock already prepositioned in NWS and the expansion of its delivery assistance following the earthquake, **UNHCR** has managed to quickly distribute CRI kits and tents to people in need. UNHCR's partner WATAN continued to support communities across Aleppo and Idleb with the distribution of 850 CRI kits and 741 tents on from 9 to 14 March. Since 6 February, a total of **4,634 tents** have been installed,[3] and **8,846 CRI kits** have been distributed.[4] The distribution of assistance is fully coordinated with the Shelter/NFI Cluster.

Shelter/NFI Cluster members, led by UNHCR, are responding with emergency shelter and NFIs in affected communities, reception centres, existing camps and collective centres. As of 13 March, Shelter/NFI Cluster members have distributed NFI kits to over 143,700 individuals and tents to over 73,500 individuals. Around 16,000 individuals have been reached with the provision of emergency shelter kits.[5]

A gap analysis focusing on remaining needs of emergency response for temporary shelter (tents) and basic needs items (NFIs) shows that the highest need for tents is in Salqin, Atma and Allani communities in Idleb, while the highest need for NFIs is in Allani, Eskat and Ariha in Idleb. The Shelter/NFI Cluster is also collecting secondary data to gain a better overview of the damages in the most affected areas. This exercise will support an estimation of the total need per damage category for light and moderate and heavy/structural damages.

Partners continue to report an increase in prices for shelter rehabilitation as well as challenges in responding to the huge needs for shelter components, winter items and fuel. Moreover, partners have reported that the quality of items procured in local markets is not in line with the minimum cluster recommendations. Capacity to conduct structural damage assessments is reportedly limited.

Protection

UNHCR's protection partners, Syrian Relief and Development (SRD) and SHAFAK, continue to conduct outreach activities and work inside their community centers, communal shelters and through mobile teams. Between 7 and 13 March, partner SRD reached 1,115 individuals with community-based protection services, while partner SHAFAK reached 7,306 individuals with protection interventions. Since 9 February, over **59,000 individuals** have been supported with protection activities, which include psychological first aid, psychosocial support, awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, case management and referrals to basic and specialized services, child protection activities, and legal counseling on civil status documentation. The emergency response efforts are taking place in Al Bab, Atareb, Azaz, Bazagh, Qabasim and Salama in Aleppo, as well as in Atma, Dana, Ehsem, Haranbush, Kafr, Maaret Qourqeena, Tamsrin, Takharim and Sarmada, in Idleb.

UNHCR's partners continue to report that targeted areas are overcrowded, limiting the availability of safe spaces where to conduct protection activities. Shelters are not fully equipped in terms of sanitation and there is not a sufficient number of tents on the ground to cover the extensive needs. An important level of seismophobia has been reported among the impacted population, further impacting the mental wellbeing of the population in NWS.

The **Protection Cluster** has been analysing the initial findings of its rapid needs assessment: around 27% of the key informants interviewed have confirmed facing housing, land and property (HLP) related issues, including homelessness

[3] *Tents were distributed in Andnaniyeh – Farjein, Ariha, Armala, Armanaz, Atma, Badama, Baksariya, Harim, Hassaniyeh – Hatya, Kelly, Maland, Nasra, Qanniyeh, Salqin, Sarmada and Yaqubiyeh communities in Idleb and Afrin, Atareb, Bulbul, Dowaibeq, Fadrah, Jandairis, Kafrantin, Qatoura, Ra'el, Sejjo, Sijraz camp, Suran and Tuwama communities in Aleppo.*

[4] *CRI kits were distributed in Aghtrin, Al Bab, Baruz, Bulbul, Dabeq, Daret Azza, Fadrah, Jandairis, Kafrantin, Mashaala, Qatoura, Sandara, Sejjo and Tall Husso in Aleppo, and Armanaz, Armanaz Biret, Azar, Batenta, Boayba, Darkosh, Foz - Zuf, Hafasraja, Idleb, Jdidet Eljisr, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Kafraya, Kherbet Eljoz, Mudiah - Luxin, Qanniyeh, Salqin and Taftanaz communities in Idleb.*

[5] *Main targeted locations were Dana, Salqin, Maaret Tamsrin, Januhdiye, Armanaz and Harim sub-districts (in descending order) in Idleb and Jandairis, Afrin, Atareb, Daret Azza, A'zaz and Suran sub-districts (in descending order) in Aleppo.*

and evictions. To address this concern, the HLP Working Group under the Protection Cluster has developed an eviction monitoring tool which will identify trends and patterns, including possible rights violations, identify most affected and exposed population groups and monitor access to multisectoral services. The tool will aim at strengthening community-based mechanisms for evictions mitigation and guarantee safeguards of existing legal documents.

Moreover, based on the assessments led by Protection Cluster partners in 34 reception centers, the Protection Cluster was able to prioritize 10 sites,[6] in which protection response and risks mitigations are mostly needed, particularly in relation to freedom of movement, forced recruitment and trafficking, and evictions.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster has tracked more than **108,900 displacements**,[7] between 6 February and 13 March after the earthquake. At the same time, the CCCM Cluster tracked that over 17,500 IDPs have returned to their place of origin within NWS.

The CCCM Cluster and REACH have finalized the joint earthquake displacement monitoring situation report on Northern Aleppo. Data was collected through key informants from 797 communities between 28 February- 4 March 2023; CCCM data is from 2 March 2023, from the 1,439 last-resort sites that existed prior to the earthquake, and the 91 newly established last-resort sites. The report highlights that 103,472 IDPs have arrived in communities and last-resort sites since the first earthquake on 6 February. Moreover, there have been 47,250 returnee movements from inside Syria and cross-border movements to communities in NWS.

UNHCR's partner SRD organizing recreational activities for earthquake affected children in Haranabush. Photo: ©SRD

Donors

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to the earthquake response, with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds as well as those who have provided earmarked contributions.

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