

Syrian Arab Republic

October-November 2024

The Syria crisis entered its fourteenth year in March 2024. The UN estimates that **16.7 million** people need humanitarian assistance across the country – a 9 per cent increase from 2023.

The security situation in the country is unpredictable and the economic situation is increasingly dire. The hostilities in Lebanon that escalated as of 23 September further exacerbated the situation due to the sudden displacement of families crossing from Lebanon to Syria.

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

HIGHLIGHTS

48,000

individuals crossing from Lebanon to Syria were provided with transportation to reach their destination in Syria as of the end of November

17,500

displaced persons and returnees in eight governorates benefited from community-led initiatives supported by UNHCR in October and November

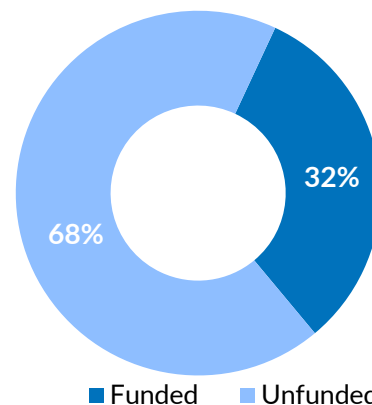
950

individuals participated in October and November in entrepreneurship training to enhance their financial management skills

FUNDING (AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 2024)

USD 460.6 million

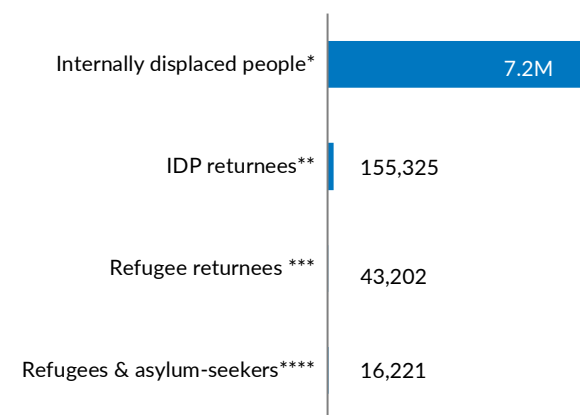
requested for the Syria Operation in 2024



PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



UNHCR partner providing educational classes through teachers experienced in the Lebanese curricula. Some 200 Lebanese refugee students benefitted from the programme in Hurjelleh hosting centre, Rural Damascus Governorate. ©UNHCR



* Source: 2024 HNO

** Source: OCHA, January-July 2023

***Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2024

**** Source: UNHCR, November 2024

More information on UNHCR's operations in the Syrian Arab Republic, including north-west Syria, is available on [Global Focus](#).

Operational Context

The [2024 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#) estimates that over 16.7 million people need humanitarian assistance in Syria. This is the highest number of people in need since the beginning of the crisis. Syria also has one of the largest numbers of IDPs in the world (7.2 million). The 2024 HNO states that the humanitarian and economic indicators in Syria continue to deteriorate, and many basic services have collapsed. The displacement of families from Lebanon due to the regional conflict, as well as the implications of the February 2023 earthquakes, have further compounded existing needs in a country that has experienced over 13 years of crisis.

UNHCR supports refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, host community members, and returnees (refugees and IDPs who have returned to their home areas) by providing assistance to those most in need using the [area-based](#) and [community-based](#) approaches. UNHCR's [community-based approach](#) focuses on community mobilization and building self-reliance. It aims to reduce 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 2024, UNHCR is working with 28 partners including international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs in all 14 governorates.

Operational Updates

Response to Displacement from Lebanon

In October and November, displacement continued from Lebanon to Syria through the borders. Around 527,000 individuals (including Syrians, Lebanese and third-country nationals) had crossed the borders into Syria before the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hezbollah on 27 November.

Despite the multiple attacks on the border crossings between Syria and Lebanon, UNHCR and partners continued to provide essential services at the four Border Health-Protection Support Points, at the destination areas of arrivals, and in hosting centres where arrivals were residing. The services included border entry facilitation, transportation from the border for the new arrivals to their destinations for around 48,000 individuals, distribution of core relief items, as well as protection services including legal assistance, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence prevention and

response, and referrals to the nearest UNHCR-supported community centres at the host communities.

For more information about the response to the displacement from Lebanon, please refer to UNHCR Syria's flash updates on [Global Focus](#) and the [UNHCR Syria Data Portal](#).



UNHCR High Commissioner listens to the challenges faced by families who crossed the borders from Lebanon to Syria. ©UNHCR

Regular response



Protection

- In line with its community-based protection approach, in November, UNHCR supported 114 [community centres](#) and 119 mobile units across the country. UNHCR also engages around 2,220 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.
- To reallocate resources to locations where needs are higher, UNHCR closed a community centre in Tartous city and relocated it in Wata Al-Khan in rural Latakia, where the area-based return support approach is applied, following an exit strategy to link the concerned communities with alternative service providers. Moreover, the community centre in Tal Refaat (Aleppo Governorate) was closed from 21 to 28 October due to instability in the area between armed forces. The community centre in Al-Qusair (Homs Governorate) was also temporarily closed in November due to Israeli airstrikes near the Syria-Lebanon borders.
- Several community-led initiatives were successfully completed in Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, As-Sweida, Dar'a, Quneitra, Deir-ez-Zor and Tartous Governorates in collaboration with partners. The initiatives involved street lightening, schools' rehabilitation, playgrounds and community-friendly spaces establishment, distribution of agricultural seeds benefiting around 34,000 displaced persons and

returnees. The community-led initiatives are proposed and managed by communities to respond to challenges while contributing to social cohesion, life skills development, and poverty reduction.

- In October, six community-based organizations trained by UNHCR were approved to benefit from UNHCR's fund. These organizations are implementing projects including rehabilitation of centres for children with autism, sewing and laundry projects, physical therapy for persons with specific needs, and educational centres, and are expected to serve around 600 individuals.
- In October, UNHCR rolled out a training on Accountability to Affected Population Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms in Aleppo Governorate. More than 100 partner staff, UNHCR staff and outreach volunteers participated and learnt ways to strengthen accountability for the people with and for whom UNHCR works.
- In November, UNHCR organized a two-day workshop on voluntary return and legal response, attended by 40 senior lawyers working with UNHCR partners. The workshop aims to enhance the capacity of partners' lawyers on conditions of return, potential challenges and solutions, as well as their response to the major protection/legal challenges that could be encountered in the context of return.
- In October and November, UNHCR partners provided legal assistance through lawyers and legal outreach volunteers to around 84,700 individuals. The assistance included legal awareness raising, legal counselling and direct legal interventions.
- UNHCR and its partner organized ten awareness sessions in Tartous and Latakia for 160 individuals from the displaced and host communities on the rights of persons with disabilities, and the exemptions from fees and taxes. The sessions were followed by individual counselling.
- UNHCR facilitated two training courses from 20 to 24 October on "Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media" (SCREAM), a curriculum-based child labour prevention programme. Partner staff in Latakia, Tartous, Rural Damascus, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a, Quneitra, and As-Sweida were trained in Damascus to roll out the SCREAM curriculum in their respective community centres. This programme, developed by the International Labour Organization, aimed to help educators enhance understanding and awareness on child labour among young people. In October, the SCREAM curriculum was launched for the first time in one of the community centres in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.
- UNHCR in collaboration with WHO conducted a comprehensive six-day training on group counselling attended by 29 partner staff including mental health and psychosocial support case managers. The training

aimed to develop skills and knowledge in conducting group counseling for specific types of psychological disorders.



Core Relief Items

- In October and November, 95,283 families (488,254 individuals) in Al-Hasakeh, Idleb, Latakia, Hama, Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Rural Damascus, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor, Tartous, Dar'a, and As-Sweida Governorates, including those who recently returned to Syria from Lebanon and those displaced from Aleppo to other governorates, were assisted with core relief items, at the borders and at their final destination.
- The UNHCR Syria campaign for free-of-charge eye examinations and the provision of reading glasses for people registered at the UNHCR-supported community centres who are above 43 years old was completed in November. Reading glasses were provided to over 113,400 people.



Shelter

- Following the influx of Syrian and Lebanese families from Lebanon to Syria, UNHCR worked in October and November on improving the conditions at the border points where people gathered to process their entry to Syria. This included offering shaded areas, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, lighting, and effective water management in five border points in Homs, Tartous, and Rural Damascus Governorates. In addition, UNHCR rehabilitated two collective shelters in Rural Damascus, comprising 472 rooms (Herjalleh shelter) and 287 rooms (Dweir shelter) accommodating around 760 families (3,800 individuals).
- UNHCR also repaired 48 damaged houses, distributed 230 shelter packages, repaired a sewage system in Aleppo, provided solarization to a civil registry in Quneitra, and provided 480 solar streetlights in various areas in Syria. UNHCR also provided emergency support in camps in north-east Syria through the consistent operation and maintenance as well as installed 350 tents.



Livelihoods

- UNHCR and partners continue to provide entrepreneurship training through the community centres to enhance financial management skills, benefiting over 950 individuals in October and November.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR supported 77 micro and small-business enterprises either through cash or in-kind assistance in Rural Damascus, Idleb,

Tartous, and Al-Hasakeh Governorates. These entrepreneurs are part of 400 individuals who underwent an entrepreneurship training including on microfinance held at UNHCR-supported community centres.



Cash Assistance

- In November, UNHCR received approval for cash-for-livelihood for Syrians, and accordingly provided cash to 24 families (147 individuals) in Rural Damascus Governorate to start-up a small business.
- UNHCR also received approval to provide emergency multi-purpose cash assistance to support Syrians returning from Lebanon due to the conflict there.



Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of the end of November, 16,221 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 October and November, UNHCR renewed the identification cards for over 2,670 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 October and November, two families (three 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 October and November, six families (15 individuals) were accepted for resettlement in the UK with the support of UNHCR. UNHCR also facilitated departure arrangements for five already accepted refugee families (16 individuals) for resettlement in the UK from Damascus International Airport.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR provided regular multi-purpose cash assistance to 5,210 refugee and asylum-seeker families (14,021 individuals), along with unconditional winterization grants to 6,146 refugee and asylum-seeker families (15,778 individuals) in September, October, November and December.

- **Legal Assistance:** In October and November, UNHCR's legal teams and lawyers provided legal assistance to around 690 refugees and asylum-seekers. This included legal counselling, assistance related to residency and detention cases as well as interventions to obtain personal civil documentation for Iraqi refugees in light of the instructions of the Iraqi Government to receive civil record extracts exclusively from Iraq. Moreover, UNHCR lawyers communicated with all refugees and asylum-seekers who were not able to legalize their status in the country due to the imposed fines. Over 100 cases were assisted through the regularization of their residency status in the country, benefiting from the amnesty that waived fines imposed for delayed renewal of residency.



Return

- Since January till the end of October 2024, UNHCR [verified or monitored](#) the return to Syria of 43,202 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt¹. Between 2016 and October 2024, UNHCR verified or monitored the return of 435,395 individual refugees² to Syria. From 23 September till 27 November, an increase in the number of people crossing from Lebanon to Syria was observed due to the hostilities in Lebanon.
- In October and November, the UNHCR-supported Border Health-Protection Support Points of Jdaidet Yabous, Al-Arida, Joussieh and Dabbousieh (at the Syria-Lebanon border) were subject to several attacks during the conflict in Lebanon, with some in need of full rehabilitation. These points played an important role in supporting people fleeing hostilities in Lebanon and crossing to Syria, including providing them with information on available services in the areas of return as well as counselling and referral services for those who register with UNHCR. They also offered access to the internet or a hotline to communicate with relatives, and provided basic medical attention and other amenities. Furthermore, through these points, UNHCR and its partners had physical capacity to observe daily movements at the borders.

¹ The reported voluntary return figures do not include movements of Syrians into Syria as a result of the conflict in Lebanon.

² Provisional figures pending further verification

RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- [UNHCR Response factsheet \(30 December 2024\)](#)
- [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 \(21 November 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #18 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #17 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #16 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #15 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #14 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #13 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #12 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #11 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #10 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #9 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #8 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #7 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #6 \(October 2024\)](#)
- [Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria \(October 2024\)](#)

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