

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria

January – June 2025

10,829
refugees

4,458
asylum-seekers

197 new individuals
registered and **57**
individuals recognized as
refugees

Population Demographics



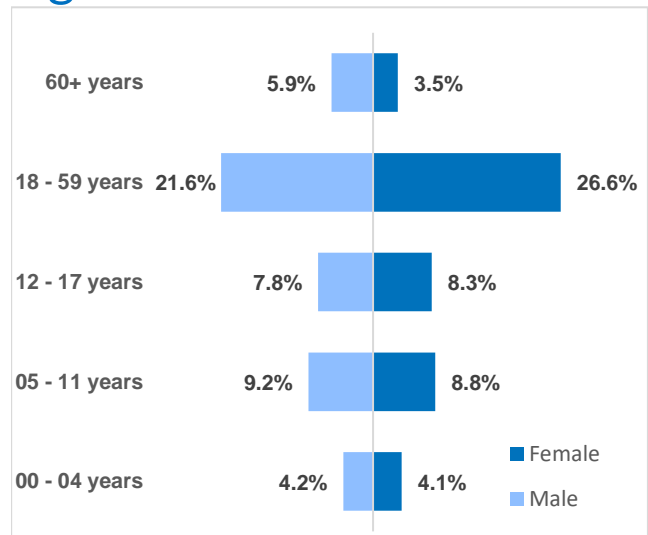
10% of refugees
are elderly

41% of refugees
are children

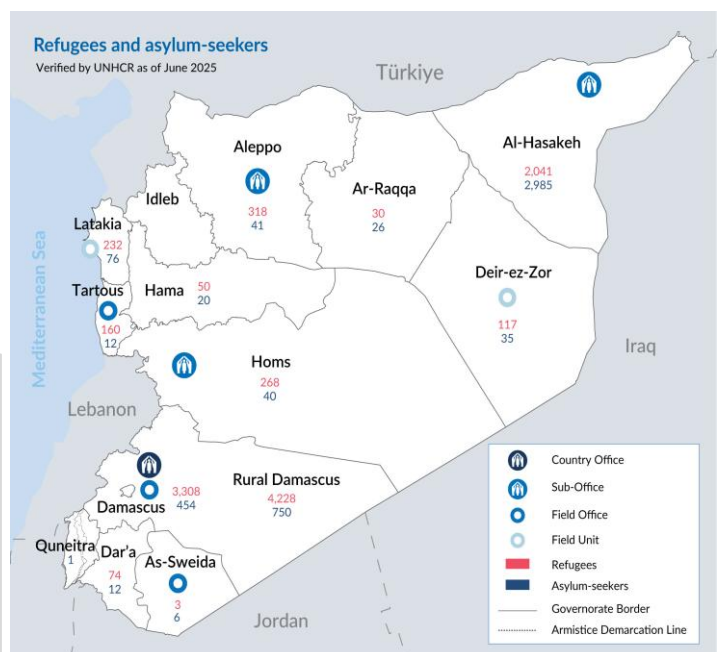
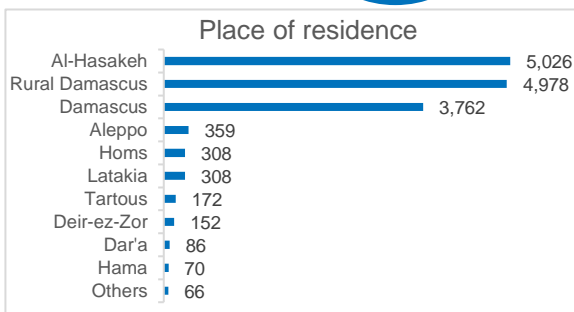
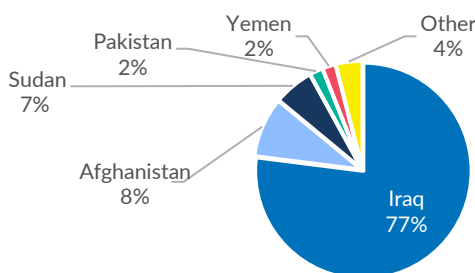
15,287
Total population

37% of refugees
have special needs

Age Distribution



Country of Origin





Registration and Identity Management

Registration of people seeking international protection is critical, as it enables the **early identification of individuals with specific needs** and their **referral to available protection responses**. Additionally, registration provides comprehensive population data needed for programme planning including shelter, food, health, water and sanitation, cash-based interventions and other forms of assistance.

UNHCR identification cards provided to refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR constitute proof of legal identity, can prevent arbitrary arrest and *refoulement*, and **facilitate greater freedom of movement**. The cards also enable refugees and asylum-seekers to apply for **legal residency, register vital events** (such as birth registration), and access basic assistance in Syria.

Between January and June 2025, UNHCR registered **197 individuals** (new registrations), mainly comprising Iraqi and Sudanese nationals. Additionally, **4,985 identification cards were issued**, including renewals, representing a 34% decrease compared to **7,606** cards issued between January-June 2024. This decrease is mainly attributed to a lower number of expired cards since the launch of cards with two-year validity in June-2024. The registration helpline received **4,408** calls relating primarily to documentation renewals, activation queries, and inquiries about cash assistance.



Refugee Status Determination

Refugee Status Determination (RSD) is the legal administrative process by which governments and UNHCR determine whether a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international, regional, or national laws. RSD is often a **vital process in helping refugees realize their rights under international law**. In agreement with the Government of Syria, UNHCR conducts RSD for asylum-seekers in the country.

By the end of June 2025, interviews were conducted for **153 individuals**, and **140 individuals** were submitted for review. Decisions were taken for **118 individuals**, out of which **57 individuals** were recognized as refugees, and **61 individuals** were rejected.

An **RSD helpline** is fully operational, providing counselling on both the RSD process and the status of asylum-seekers and refugees' individual cases. By the end of June 2025, the RSD helpline had received **145** calls relating primarily to the status of individual cases and requests for cash assistance.



Resettlement / Durable Solutions

UNHCR Syria identifies and submits resettlement cases to third countries for highly vulnerable refugees. By the end of June 2025, **79 individuals** went through needs assessment/case identification process, however no cases were submitted to resettlement countries due to the lack of an allocated quota to Syria Operation. In addition, UNHCR facilitated the departure of **14** individuals under resettlement and complementary pathways.

Resettlement remains one of the most sought-after services by refugees. However, resettlement countries offer limited quotas, meaning that most refugees cannot be considered for resettlement to another country even if UNHCR believes it would be necessary for their protection or to reunite them with family members.

During the reporting period, UNHCR provided counselling to 46 individuals who expressed an interest in receiving assistance from the Office to facilitate their return to their country of origin. In line with current Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), UNHCR shared relevant country of origin information and details regarding the assistance that may be available through UNHCR to support their voluntary repatriation

A ‘Solutions helpline’ offers regular counselling to refugees, providing accurate information on the status of individual cases and managing expectations, regarding both resettlement and Voluntary Repatriation. By the end of June 2025, a total of **420 individuals** were offered counselling.

Community-based protection

By the end of June 2025, there were **69** UNHCR-supported **community centres**, out of which one is located in north-east Syria, where many refugees and asylum-seekers reside. UNHCR-supported community centres are designed as a “one-stop shop” which is critical for people in need, particularly in remote areas where availability of services is scarce. Moreover, community centres cooperate with other facilities and service providers to ensure complementarity in service provision. Refugees and asylum-seekers have access to all UNHCR-supported community centres and can benefit from a wide variety of protection interventions. As of end June, a total of 19,087 service incidents were recorded across the community centers supported by UNHCR. These incidents reflect the number of times services were provided to individuals, including health care, psychosocial support, child protection, empowerment activities, and legal documentation assistance. It is important to note that these figures represent **service occurrences**, not **unique individuals**, as some beneficiaries may have accessed multiple services.

UNHCR also engages **92 refugee outreach volunteers** (RORVs) of different nationalities in Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Latakia, and Tartous Governorates. The volunteers promote community engagement and assist in mobilizing youth to design and lead community-led initiatives. One of the initiatives’ examples implemented by refugees is in Harbanifse, Hama, where local women collaborated with refugee women to establish the Vocational Station, a youth-driven initiative designed to assist female-headed households through training in tailoring and embroidery. Together, they developed a safe and inclusive environment where women could enhance their skills, increase their self-sufficiency, and support their families’ income. By collaborating closely, women from refugee and host communities reinforced social connections and promoted resilience across different community groups—illustrating the strength of collective action and solidarity in recovery initiatives.

Additionally, through follow-ups and home visits, the volunteers identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable households either directly or through referrals to community centres, and other service providers including charities, local organizations, and government entities.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

By the end of June 2025, **1,264** refugees and asylum-seekers received mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), including individual and group counselling, with **19** refugees referred to specialized mental health services such as psychiatrists and

psychotherapists. In addition, **33** older refugees and refugees with disabilities received inclusive care interventions.

UNHCR and partners conducted **99** social/recreational activities and awareness-raising sessions for **1,971** refugees.

Child Protection

During the first half of 2025, UNHCR and partners conducted awareness-raising sessions in Damascus as well as in Al-Hol camp and Tal Hamees in Al-Hasakeh Governorate, reaching **1,079 individuals (999 children and 80 caregivers)**. The awareness sessions covered topics on various child protection risks, including mine risk, child labour and parenting skills. As a result of the awareness-raising sessions, a positive impact was observed by the child-friendly space facilitators, including improvement of children's capacities and skill sets, especially in areas where there is a lack of schools.

By mid-2025, a total of **42** refugee and asylum-seeker children received tailored case management services in north-east Syria. The most common concerns in **Qamishli for example** were Child labour, child neglect and maltreatment, as for specific needs, most children were school dropouts. As for **Al-Hol camp**, the most prevalent protection concerns were child labour and emotional distress, with a few cases of maltreatment, witnessing violence, and exposure to gender-based violence (GBV); while the most commonly identified specific needs were school drop-out, critical medical conditions and chronic diseases.

In the first half of 2025, **four** refugee and asylum-seeker children clubs and child welfare committees were supported in Damascus, as well as in Al-Hol camp and Tal Hamees in Al-Hasakeh Governorate where the majority of refugee communities are located. The members of the child welfare committees and children's clubs received several trainings, including their role in the communities as well as child protection basics and referral mechanisms.

Gender-based violence

During the first half of 2025, UNHCR and partners identified and supported **32** refugee and asylum-seeker survivors of **gender-based violence (GBV)** with available multi-sectoral services (psychosocial services, livelihood opportunities, legal aid, and in kind assistance). Outreach volunteers helped to link the survivors with support networks within their communities.

Additionally, UNHCR conducted several GBV awareness sessions on psychological violence, deprivation of resources, opportunities and services, child marriage, sexual harassment, and physical violence, in addition to the International Women's Day celebration, for **406** adolescent and adult women in Rural Damascus, as well as Tal Hamees in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. As a result of the awareness-raising sessions on behavioural change, higher levels of awareness and implementation of prevention measures designed by the communities were observed during the assessments conducted by GBV team members.

During the first half of 2025, **two** refugee **women's committees** consisting of **23** refugee women continued their community involvement in Rural Damascus and Al-Hasakeh Governorates, working to enhance women's participation in decision-making and the design of activities, including for the prevention of GBV.



Cash assistance

Cash assistance continues to be the most efficient and dignified way to allow people with and for whom UNHCR works to meet their basic needs, especially in the prevailing economic situation. As of 1 March 2023, the multi-purpose cash grant – which refugees were already receiving – was extended to asylum-seekers when UNHCR had the resources to do so. Refugees and asylum-seekers currently have equal access to cash assistance, subject to their specific needs and based on vulnerability assessments. The legal status is no longer used as a criterion to determine eligibility for cash assistance.

Additionally, exceptional financial assistance (for urgent and unforeseen protection needs) continued during the reporting period. Multi-purpose cash grants (MPCGs) and winterization grants targeted both asylum-seeker and refugee families who were prioritized based on demographics and specific needs. The assistance was provided through a cash-over-the-counter modality.

By the end of June 2025, **monthly multi-purpose cash grants** were provided to **4,291** households (**11,497 individuals**) over two distribution cycles. This is less than what was distributed during the same period last year, due to the non-operational status of banks in the first months of the year in addition to liquidity issues.



Legal Assistance

Lack of identity and travel documents, irregular status, and limited knowledge on national legislation and procedures are the main legal challenges encountered by refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria, affecting their ability to secure residency and register vital events, as well as limiting their freedom of movement and access to basic rights and services.

In response to some of these challenges, UNHCR provides **legal assistance** on a range of issues such as *refoulement*, residency, civil documentation, registration of vital events (particularly birth registration), detention, exit visas, prevention of and response to GBV, and child protection issues.

The legal assistance includes counselling and support for legal interventions before courts and administrative bodies as well as awareness-raising activities conducted either through direct sessions or printed materials to disseminate information and raise the awareness of refugees and asylum-seekers on the applicable laws and procedures.

Until the end of June 2025, UNHCR legal assistance programmes provided support to **1968** refugees and asylum-seekers on various legal matters. Out of the mentioned, **713** refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from legal services related particularly to birth registration and certificates and **1255** refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from legal services related to residency, exit visa, CP/GBV, and other legal matters.

Legal assistance on detention and refoulement

During the same period last year, UNHCR did not record detention of asylum-seekers and refugees in Syria for illegal entry or absence of residency permit. During the reporting period, **four** refugees and asylum-seekers were reported to be detained for suspicion of involvement in

criminal actions (security and drug abuse). In this case, UNHCR could not intervene to release any of the detained refugees, however, it continues to provide legal assistance when possible. By the end of June, two refugees were in detention.

Additionally, UNHCR did not record any deportation/refoulement cases within the reporting period.

Through its awareness-raising activities, UNHCR will continue reminding refugees and asylum-seekers of the importance of and their obligation to abide by the laws and avoid any involvement in illicit activities.

Legal Advocacy

During the reporting period, UNHCR initiated successful advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Interior/Directorate of Immigration as follows:

- UNHCR secured approval to extend the validity of residency permits for refugees and asylum-seekers residing in Syria. Short-term residency receipts were issued to applicants while their annual residency permits were being processed. Additionally, UNHCR advocated for the **acceptance of residency applications** from refugees and asylum-seekers who either **lacked passports or held expired ones**.
- Moreover, UNHCR effectively intervened with the Syrian interim government to **facilitate the entry of Iraqi nationals** into Syria and to **halt the enforcement of reciprocal restrictions**. This intervention significantly eased the entry procedures for refugees and asylum-seekers, allowing them to enter Syria without obstacles.