

Legal Aid in Syria

January-June 2025

86,233

returnees, IDPs and host community members benefited from legal aid

48,998

individuals reached through awareness raising on legal matters

35,772

individuals received legal counselling

1,463

individuals benefited from interventions before courts and administrative bodies

1,968

refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from legal aid

IMPACT OF LEGAL INTERVENTIONS

*BEFORE COURTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES

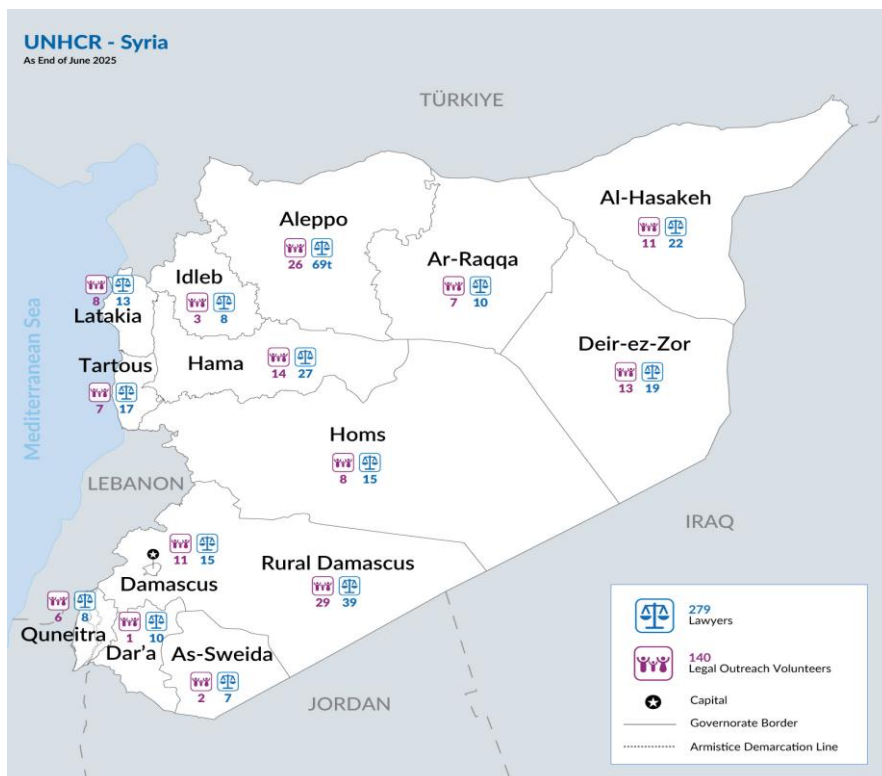

10 individuals assisted to obtain national identity cards

262 marriages documented

412 children assisted to be officially registered and obtain birth certificates

Legal services are provided in all **14** governorates, through UNHCR-supported community centres, mobile teams and partners' legal clinics. UNHCR also supports six legal clinics operated by legal partners in Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Deir-ez-Zor and Hama Governorates.

The legal teams consist of **279** experienced lawyers who work closely with **140** legal outreach volunteers (ORVs). Legal ORVs include law students, trainee lawyers and senior lawyers, often members of the communities they work in, who on a voluntary basis support the dissemination of legal information and the identification of legal needs and the referral of individuals to legal assistance.



Legal assistance for returnees, IDPs and host communities

The main purpose of UNHCR's legal assistance programme is to support the most vulnerable individuals with:

- **Documenting vital events** such as births, marriages, divorces, and deaths;
- **Obtaining personal civil documentation** including but not limited to identity cards, family booklets, and civil status records;
- **Supporting the realisation of housing, land, and property (HLP) rights** by facilitating the issuance of HLP documents, and documenting HLP transactions;
- **Responding to protection risks encountered by women and children** including risks arising from gender-based violence and custody, alimony, and inheritance disputes.

Legal assistance includes individual **legal advice and counselling**, **legal awareness-raising** sessions, and **legal interventions and representation** before courts and other governmental administrative bodies, with the latter supporting those who face protection concerns and/or financial and logistical constraints to initiate and/or follow-up on legal procedures.

The fall of the Syrian Government on 8 December 2024 led to a temporary halt of some legal services in Syria including Civil Registries and Cadastral Offices services, with limited services being provided from January to June 2025, such as obtaining civil records and family statements for the events registered before 8 December, in addition to obtaining real estate records from Cadastral Offices. At the end of May, the registration of civil events that occurred abroad resumed, and civil records for these events became obtainable. Throughout this time, UNHCR proactively engaged in advocacy that has led to the resumption of services in mid-2025. Moreover, legal partners were present in Civil Affairs Offices around the country to provide on-the-spot legal aid for the issuance or recovery of civil documentation.

Legal assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers

UNHCR and legal teams provide legal assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria with the aim of:

- Intervening in favour of **cases at risk of refoulement**;
- Supporting issues related to **immigration procedures**, including obtaining and renewing residency permit and acquiring exit visas;
- **Documenting vital events** such as births, marriages, divorces, and deaths that occur in Syria;
- **Responding to protection risks encountered by refugee women and children** including prevention from and response to gender-based violence, and best interest of unaccompanied and separated children.

The suspension of institutional capacity during the first half of the year also impacted immigration services, particularly the issuance of residency permits that need to be acquired by refugees and asylum-seekers while in Syria. Until the end of June 2025, and as result of UNHCR's advocacy, 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.

Restoring capacities of national institutions

Since 2017, UNHCR has supported a total of 112 national facilities in Syria. As reported by the Directorate of Civil Affairs and the General Directorate of Cadastral Affairs, **2,555,239** civil and HLP

documents were successfully obtained by Syrian citizens across the country from 2017 to 2025. Out of this figure, **2,416,793** were civil documents, including birth certificates, identity cards and family booklets, while **138,446** were real estate documents, such as ownership and real estate records.

Out of 360 Civil Registries that had been active prior to 8 December 2004, only 80 have been reactivated so far. To further enhance the institutional capacity, UNHCR has worked on identifying Civil Registries, Cadastral Offices and Immigration Offices –to be supported with rehabilitation and/or provision of solar kits and technical equipment in the reminder of 2025. Identified locations include the Directorate of Immigration and Passports in Damascus, and civil registry and/or cadastral offices in Aleppo, Latakia, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor and Dar'a located in areas with high return rates.

During the first half of 2025, UNHCR supported the installation of solar kits at **Jdaidet Yabous** border crossing point with Lebanon, **Nassib** border crossing point with Jordan and **Marjeh Immigration Department** in Damascus Governorate.



The installation of solar kits at Jdaidet Yabous, ©UNHCR Damascus