Shelter and Infrastructure

November- 2025

During the protracted conflict in Syria, millions of people had to flee their homes to safer areas in Syria or in other countries.

Almost one-third of all housing units in Syria were either destroyed or severely damaged during the conflict. Approximately 7 million individuals in Syria are in need of shelter assistance in 2025.

The large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has led to severe overcrowding in displacement sites, increasing the need for emergency shelter support.

Following the political transition in Syria in December 2024, a surge in returns to home areas significantly increased the demand for housing repairs.

Damage to public infrastructure, and key economic facilities disrupted public service delivery by authorities. This entails verification and claiming of property ownership, which is critical for affected Syrians to receive shelter assistance.

Having an adequate living environment is basic human right and essential to creating conducive conditions for returns.

228,165

individuals received **UNHCR's shelter assistance** from January to November 2025

Emergency response

Emergency preparedness
To respond to a sudden onset of displacement, UNHCR maintains contingency stock—including family tents— as emergency preparedness.

The standard UNHCR tent is designed to accommodate a family of up to five individuals.

Currently UNHCR has some 28,000 tents in stock which can benefit approximately 140,000 people.

UNHCR and partner install a Rubb Hall at Arida border crossing to protect arrivals during immigration processing. The Rubb Hall is, equipped with chairs, fans, solar lights, and bins. ©UNHCR/E.Kabbas

Camp maintenance
In northern Syria, camps were originally established as temporary facilities accommodating displaced persons and refugees, yet many people remain in camps for years for various reasons.

Following the political transition in Syria in December 2024 and up to the end of November 2025, approximately 1 million IDPs in the camps returned to their areas of origin. While over 1.4 million people still live in camps and collective shelters. The number of IDP returnees from the camps is expected to increase.

The family tents have been utilized as the only possible shelter solution in camps, where long-term and any other form of shelter assistance is not feasible. UNHCR's family tents, while designed for a five-year lifespan, deteriorate rapidly in northern Syria due to extreme weather conditions, ranging from sub-zero winter temperatures to summer heat exceeding 45°C. To maintain adequate shelter, waterproofing, and safety standards, tents must be replaced more frequently than five years.

Besides, overall camp infrastructure requires regular maintenance. UNHCR provides infrastructure interventions, such as maintenance of roads, electricity, drainage systems, and block adjustments among others.

Rehabilitation of collective shelters
Outside of camps, public buildings at times accommodate displaced people, who lack access to other forms of housing options when an emergency occurs. UNHCR conducts rehabilitation of some of these buildings like schools, and upgrade them into mid-term transitional collective shelters.

The rehabilitation entails repairs of shared washing facilities, entrances, staircases, roofs, and plumbing systems to ensure safe, dignified and habitable living conditions for residents. Once the emergency ends, these buildings can be restored to their original function benefiting host communities.

At the Sports City collective shelter in Latakia Governorate, a UNHCR team meets Abdulla Ghalia, who fled Aleppo with his wife and four children after violence escalated in November 2024. ©UNHCR/E.Kabbas

Longer-term solutions

Following the political transition in Syria in December 2024 up to the end of November 2025, over 1.2 million Syrians returned home from countries of asylum, alongside the return of 1.9 million IDPs to their areas. Despite an increasing number of returnees, the extensive damage to property and infrastructure, coupled with essential service disruptions remain a significant challenge hampering safe and sustainable returns.

34.436 individuals benefited from UNHCR's emergency shelter response (January-November 2025)

Camp maintenance and expansion: UNHCR and its partners assisted **17,515** people residing in camps in northern Syria with maintenance and rehabilitation of facilities within camps. UNHCR also provided **4,098** family tents to replace the damaged and old ones, benefitting 15,053 individuals residing in camps in northern Syria, in addition to 200 family tents for 1,000 IDPs following the violent events in As-Sweida Governorate, southern Syria.

Collective shelter rehabilitation: UNHCR completed the rehabilitation of hosting centres in Dar'a and As-Sweida Governorates, expanding sleeping spaces, and improving water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, as well as accessibility and safety of the premises for 868 persons who were displaced due to the tension in As-Sweida.

Damaged housing repair
As shelter remains a key determinant for the sustainability of return contributing to a safe and dignified living environment, UNHCR adapts its housing repair programme to support both returnees and host communities, with a continued focus on areas heavily affected by conflict-related damage.

Many returnees are coming back to uninhabitable homes that are either partially or fully destroyed, often resorting to temporary arrangements such as staying with relatives which puts additional strains on host communities, living in overcrowded conditions, or renting accommodation.

A damaged house is repaired in Maaret Al-Nouman, Idleb Governorate. ©UNHCR/H.Maarouf

To address these challenges, UNHCR provides small to medium-scale repairs to damaged homes. These interventions are guided by detailed technical assessments and include structural repairs, electrical installations (such as cabling and lighting), as well as water and sanitation improvements. Repairs also extend to common areas in buildings, enabling families to access their accommodation in a safe and dignified manner.

UNHCR follows a range of implementation modalities for housing repairs, including physical repairs through partners, direct implementation in some locations, distribution and installation of materials, and cash-for-shelter and cash-for-rent when feasible.

Solarization, renewable and sustainable energy

UNHCR is promoting sustainable energy technologies, including the expanded use of renewable energy. A total of 1,863 solar streetlights have been installed since the beginning of the year out of 11,000 which are expected to benefit approximately 600,000 individuals. The solarization of 19 civil registry offices and four cadastral offices is ongoing and is expected to be finalized by the end of 2025.

Basic social infrastructure repair

UNHCR addresses the shelter needs in view of the area-based return support* approach, which aims to maximize the impact of UNHCR's interventions through complementing other projects by UNHCR and other agencies. For example, in the areas with the high number of returnees, in addition to repairing damaged houses, UNHCR is strategically rehabilitating and equipping cadastral offices to address critical gaps in housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, which is vital for people to benefit from damaged house repair support.

4	19	7	5	4	11,000
cadastral offices	civil registry offices	immigration centres	primary health centres	vocational training centres	solar streetlights

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* *The inter-agency area-based return support (ABRS) is a coordinated humanitarian strategy designed to support communities receiving returnees—through multi-sectoral, locally driven interventions. It is led by the Solutions Working Group, co-chaired by UNHCR, UNDP and IOM – global "Solutions Champions" – and aligns with UN Secretary General's Action Agenda.*