

Children of Syria: A UNICEF update



A child ill-equipped for winter uses a blanket as a coat at Za'atari refugee camp.

Delivering essential supplies

As winter sets in, many displaced Syrians, particularly children, are ill-equipped for the icy weather. UNICEF is procuring distributing huge quantities of winter supplies to help them survive the coming months.

Winter supplies at the ready

DAMASCUS/AMMAN/GENEVA – UNICEF is urgently mobilizing more than 100,000 children's clothing kits and around 160,000 blankets, including baby blankets, along with other winter supplies for displaced children in Syria and surrounding countries.

Drawing on its global supply networks, UNICEF is sourcing winter supplies where they are available and can be provided at speed.

"Temperatures are falling fast, down to 5 degrees Celsius this week with expected lows around freezing point. We urgently need to get clothing and other essential items to the most vulnerable children, no matter where they are," said Ettie Higgins, Deputy Representative, UNICEF Syria.

Many Syrian children fled their homes with only summer clothing. Now they are in temporary shelters and in desperate need of warm clothes. UNICEF is worried about the impact winter will have on children's health, including increased risk of respiratory conditions. Children are al-

Safa's story

Safa*, a mother of five, has been at Za'atari for two and a half months. She says her children are often sick due to the cold as they do not have enough warm clothes and blankets.

"I often need to line up for medicine because all my children get sick from the cold," she says. "We didn't bring many clothes from Syria, only what we were wearing. It's freezing at night - when my seven-month-old baby wakes up her fingers feel icy." (*name changed)



Safa's children often get sick from the cold. © UNICEF/Jordan 2012/AI-Sayed

ready fragile from the ongoing stress associated with displacement and conflict.

UNICEF is procuring clothing kits for some 75,000 vulnerable children up to 15 years old inside Syria. Each kit includes thermal underwear, long trousers, a woolen sweater, socks, woolen gloves and hat, shoes and a winter jacket.

Children of Syria

The blankets will be distributed to children and families displaced by the ongoing conflict, the vast majority inside Syria. They include 11,000 baby blankets for infants in Syria. More than 26,000 pre-positioned blankets will be leaving UNICEF's humanitarian hub in Dubai in the next week bound for Syria, while 41,000 further blankets are being sourced in Pakistan.

Health supplies that can meet the needs of more than 225,000 people for three months are also on their way to Syria from UNICEF's Copenhagen supply warehouse. UNICEF has already readied half a million school bags, each containing stationery supplies, to boost numbers already distributed. Further supplies are being sourced within Syria where possible.

"Sourcing supplies from around the world and getting them into Syria is only half the solution," said Higgins. "We face enormous challenges on the ground because of the security situation, but with our network of dedicated partners we will do everything we can to ensure that children get the warm clothes and blankets that they urgently need."

The situation of the estimated 400,000 Syrian refugees in surrounding countries, around half of them children, is also grim.



Blankets at UNICEF's humanitarian hub in Dubai are loaded for delivery to Syria. ©UNICEF/UAE 2012/Al-Masri

In Lebanon, UNICEF plans to reach more than 24,000 children with clothing kits and clothing vouchers, along with an initial 10,000 blankets. In Jordan, 78 heated winter tents for use as child friendly spaces and classrooms are to be set up over the next month. Solar panels are being installed at refugee washing centres in both Jordan and Iraq to provide hot water.

UNICEF urgently needs an additional \$79.33 million to support its emergency response in Syria and the four surrounding countries hosting refugees.

Life in a refugee camp

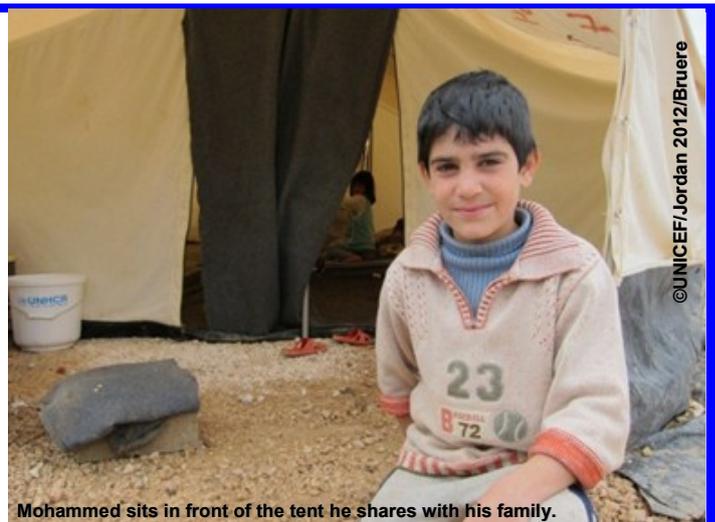
Mohammed, 10, and his family have been living in Za'atari camp since October.

Mohammed says he is happy at the camp so long as he has friends to play with, but that as the weather gets colder he is often sick and cannot go out to play or go to school.

"Each day I find other kids here to play with, and later I come back to my tent to get ready for school [the afternoon shift]. I like school, and I like to learn maths, but I can't go to school when it gets too cold at night because I get sick. I get colds and stomach aches.

"The water in the showers is freezing – it's too cold to wash in. My family all have one blanket each. One isn't enough to stay warm at night, but I can't take anyone else's blanket.

"I don't have any socks at the moment. People sell them at the camp, but we can't afford them. Some kids got given jackets [by a private donor], but some didn't. It's just luck here."



Mohammed sits in front of the tent he shares with his family.

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To assist refugees like Mohammed, UNICEF is urgently working to procure sets of warm winter clothing for children, to provide heating and insulation for schools and child friendly spaces, and to supply hot water in shower blocks.

Country updates

Displaced Syrian children and families need blankets, warm clothes and other items to get through the winter. Across the region, UNICEF is distributing winter supplies, as well as continuing to organise school supplies, essential vaccines and other goods to reach those most in need.

In Jordan

With winter fast approaching, UNICEF is scaling up its assistance to Syrian refugee children and their families by providing the following: clothing packages for children (0-6 months, 6-12 months, and 1- 5 years); heated and insulated Child Friendly Spaces at Za'atari camp and transit centres; heated and insulated learning spaces/schools at Za'atari camp; hot water supply in Za'atari camp; and newborn health kits.

UNICEF has also facilitated the delivery of 16,000 school textbooks for the Ministry of Education.

UNICEF is procuring sets of winter clothing for infants like this little girl at Za'atari camp. ©UNICEF/Jordan 2012/Al-Sayed



A UNICEF shipment of 24,000 measles and polio vaccines arrives in Amman, Jordan. ©UNICEF/Jordan 2012/Balian

In Syria

UNICEF continues to consolidate winterization stocks for Syria, coordinating the supply and delivery of essential items to beneficiaries, and ensuring the standardization of clothing and hygiene kits for children under five.

In response to recent conflict in Yarmouk camp, UNICEF delivered the following supplies to support the newly-displaced families through a local NGO on the ground: 1,000 children's food kits; 400 first aid kits; 1,000 baby hygiene kits; 500 children's clothing sets; 500 blankets; and 200 electrical stoves.



These packages are some of the 26,700 blankets to be shipped to Syria from UNICEF's humanitarian hub in Dubai. ©UNICEF/UAE 2012/Al-Masri

Country updates



Displaced Syrians across the region are bracing for the freezing winter months.
©UNICEF/Jordan 2012/Malkawi

In Iraq

In an effort to prepare refugee camps in Western Iraq for winter, 28 solar-powered water boilers were recently delivered to Al-Qaim Camp 1. Teaching and learning materials, including stationery, blackboards, recreation kits, first aid kits, sanitation kits, school bags, and tents, have been delivered to a warehouse in Al-Qaim; the supplies will be delivered when the new Camp 2 school opens. The Camp 2 school will include 15 prefabricated classrooms with water and sanitation facilities supported by UNICEF funding.

In Turkey

Through the supply of 150 school tents, UNICEF Turkey provided classrooms for 12,000 Syrian children in the refugee camps in Hatay province. Each tent measuring 72 square meters can serve as a classroom for 80 children, attending classes in shifts. Some tents also serve as child friendly spaces for pre-school children attending play groups. UNICEF plans to support schools in all Turkey's refugee camps. Electric heating in the classrooms will be provided during winter. UNICEF also plans to provide each of the 14 camps with at least two child friendly spaces in addition to the classrooms.

In Lebanon

To prepare for winter, UNICEF is finalising the urgent purchase of emergency health kits and essential life-saving drugs, focussing mainly on medicines to treat acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases, which are expected to increase.

Water filters have been procured and distributed to families (refugees and host communities) in Taalabaya, Saadnayel, Al Faour and Al Fayda. To date, 328 families have access to safe water through distribution of filters. The distribution of Back-to-School supplies is on-going. Since the beginning of the Back-to-School operation, 84 schools have been reached. Out of 14,871 pupils in the area, 5,120 Syrian refugee children have received education supplies.

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In Turkey, UNICEF is establishing insulated tents like these to serve as child friendly spaces in refugee camps through the winter. ©UNICEF/Turkey 2012

