

35,266 Syrian refugees were submitted for resettlement or humanitarian admission in 2015

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

Across the region, a total of 35,266 Syrian individuals have now been submitted for resettlement or humanitarian admission since January, exceeding the end-2015 target of 33,794.

As of the end of the month, over 1.8 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt have updated registration records, including biometric/iris scan enrolment (see story at right). In addition, the registration of camp and non-camp Syrian refugees in Turkey continues to take place under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior - Directorate General of Migration Management. By the end of December, 2,503,549 Syrians were biometrically registered in Turkey, representing an increase of 211,649 from November.

Throughout 2015, child protection and SGBV have consistently remained key components of the protection response. Over 585,000 girls and boys have now participated in structured and sustained child protection or psychosocial support programmes and 173,657 women, girls, boys, and men who are survivors or at risk of SGBV received specialist support.

In Turkey this month, 1,068 Syrian families, including families with SGBV cases and children at risk, were provided with technical advice, counselling and assistance. In addition, over 5,640 Syrian children benefitted from the 25 Child Friendly Spaces in camps and host communities in December. This brings the total number of children benefitting from these activities to 49,551.

Advocacy, community mobilization and awareness campaigns also continued across the region. In Jordan, a regional conference on SGBV and child protection was held on 9 and 10 December under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah. Bringing together 100 government and non-government representatives from the region, the conference highlighted the importance of adopting a survivor-centred approach to strengthen national protection systems in refugee settings.

NEEDS ANALYSIS:

While the conflict in Syria continues to cause loss of life, injury, destruction and displacement on a large scale, it is increasingly difficult for Syrians to find safety, including by seeking asylum. Many of those arriving in host countries in the region are increasingly vulnerable and many have been displaced multiple times prior to arriving.

International solidarity and responsibility-sharing with host countries are therefore ever more important to preserve protection space for refugees and ensure protection from refoulement. Access to registration, verification, including through the use of biometrics, and the renewal of documentation remain critical. These tools facilitate outreach to communities and, along with community-based protection processes, ensure that refugees' need for information and engagement - especially for those living outside of camps - is met.

Refugee children, including the more than 142,000 Syrian children who have been born in exile since the conflict began, require specific assistance, as do survivors of violence, including SGBV, which has been a persistent feature of the conflict which affects women, girls, boys and men in different ways.



A young Syrian refugee from Raqqa plays in an informal settlement near Zahle in the Bekaa Valley. © UNHCR/Sam Tarling

Sector Response Summary:



4,687,450 Refugees & Local Community Members targeted for assistance by end-2015
5,009,574 assisted in 2015



Syrian Refugees in the Region:



4,270,000 Syrian Refugees expected by end-2015
4,591,939 currently registered or awaiting registration



Protection Sector Funding Status:



USD 459 million required in 2015 (Agencies)
USD 277 million received in 2015



BIOMETRIC REGISTRATION ENHANCES REFUGEE PROTECTION

Registration of refugees and asylum-seekers is, first and foremost, a key protection tool. It protects refugees from the threat of forced removal from host countries, including from forced returns to countries of origin. It also helps ensure access to basic rights and family reunification, helps identify persons in need of special assistance, and provides information crucial to finding appropriate durable solutions. With the exception of Turkey, where the Government registers Syrian asylum-seekers and refugees, UNHCR receives and registers Syrians in the four main refugee-hosting countries - Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

During registration, applicants have their biometrics (iris scan) recorded by UNHCR. Biometric data not only enhances the integrity of UNHCR's registration system through improved identification, registration and documentation management, it also contributes to more accurate data and enables a better coordinated emergency response. Biometric data collection helps alleviate concerns regarding identity substitution or fraudulent family composition, it detects and deters individuals who may seek to register under multiple records for the purpose of obtaining extra benefits, and addresses the issue of identity theft. The implementation of biometric registration also helps UNHCR validate refugees' identity over time and upholds the integrity of the registration system.

Iris scans (and where applicable, fingerprints) captured at registration are verified on an ongoing basis through a biometric recognition process conducted by UNHCR. The data is verified every time there is a renewal of UNHCR-issued documents or an update to family composition records. Moreover, iris scans are verified during individual sessions with refugees (i.e. protection, community service interviews and counseling) and annually, as per standard operating procedures. The data is also used as a basis to provide assistance, particularly targeted cash-assistance. With the exception of very young children and persons with visual impairments, over 90 per cent of UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees now have their biometrics captured in the region.

REGIONAL RESPONSE INDICATORS: JANUARY - DECEMBER 2015

