

Syria and Iraq situations

(Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt)

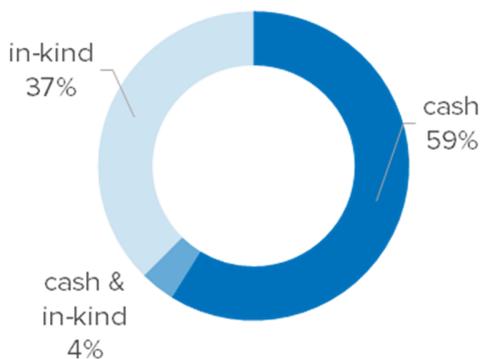
With the generous contributions received from donors, UNHCR provided lifesaving winterization support to **over 3.6 million vulnerable Syrian and Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees** in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

This included **1.25 million IDPs in Syria, 1.8 million Syrian refugees in the region, nearly 482,000 IDPs in Iraq, and over 84,000 Iraqi refugees in the region.** With early planning, preparation and procurement, timely and efficient response was provided ensuring families were equipped to survive the winter.

The winterization programme covered the period from **September 2017 to March 2018 including cash and in-kind assistance.** Post distribution monitoring is taking place in all countries to assess the impact of the support.

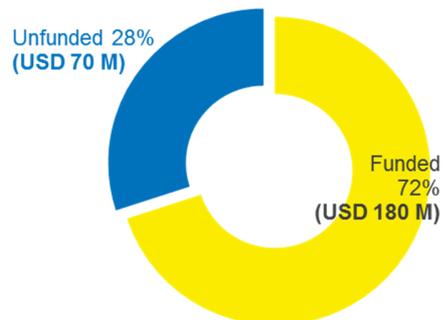
Over 3.6 million

People in camps and urban areas provided with winterization support, assisting **100%** of the planned target.



FUNDING

USD 250 M | 180 M
requested received



UNHCR's winterization support focused on three broad areas of intervention:



Winterization of shelter including shelter weather-proofing and repairs, and improvements to drainage systems and other infrastructure in camps and informal settlements.



Provision of seasonal cash assistance for vulnerable families to meet their additional needs during the winter months.

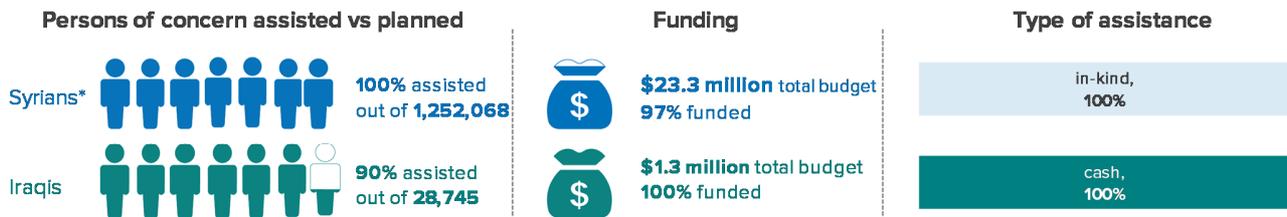


Provision of core relief items specific to winter such as high thermal blankets, plastic sheets, heaters and gas cylinders, and winter clothes.

The winterization programme was implemented through UNHCR's own staff, government agencies, partners, and community outreach volunteers in coordination with the broader inter-agency response platforms.

Country updates

SYRIA



*Includes Syrian IDPs reached by UNHCR operations inside Syria and through cross-border operations from Turkey and Jordan

- As part of its Whole of Syria winter plan, UNHCR reached over 1.25 million IDPs with winterization assistance across Syria including through cross-border operations from Jordan and Turkey. Between September 2017 and March 2018, more than 1.1 million Syrian IDPs (229,008 families) were reached from inside Syria with winter items in 13 governorates, representing over 100 per cent of the 2017-2018 winterization programme target. The majority of the people reached were in the governorates of Aleppo, Rural Damascus and Homs.
- Priority was given to newly displaced vulnerable families (including people displaced multiple times), people living in hard-to-reach or besieged areas and in sub-standard shelters, and with specific needs and vulnerabilities such as unaccompanied minors or elders, single women, presence of disability or mental health, and serious medical condition. Lack of approvals continued to affect timely delivery of winterization items.

Cross-border interventions from Jordan

- UNHCR provided winter items to nearly 69,000 people in need in southern Syria between October 2017 and March 2018. In addition, almost 45,000 vulnerable individuals including IDPs, returnees and members of host communities in southern Syria, prioritizing those living in colder and higher altitude locations, or in tented settlements, received winter clothing. The geographical coverage comprised non-government controlled areas of Dar'a and Quneitra governorates as well as very limited reach into adjacent non-government controlled areas of As-Sweida.
- Monitoring was undertaken through verification of beneficiary lists, on site monitoring by partners, face-to-face household questionnaires and third party monitoring. Hotlines were maintained by partners as part of their feedback mechanisms and accountability to affected populations. Dedicated staff members monitored and acted on complaints ensuring appropriate confidentiality, including a dedicated reporting channel on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). However, no PSEA complaints were received. As part of the 'do no harm approach', promoting safety and dignity, efforts were made to ensure more smaller distributions were held, mitigating the risks associated with crowds at distribution sites, and making distribution sites closer to beneficiaries' homes. Post distribution monitoring suggested that most recipients of the clothing kits saw the quality as "good" or "fair".

Cross-border interventions from Turkey

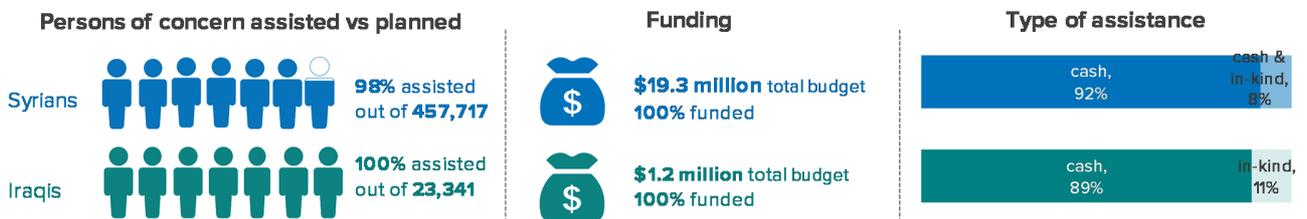
- Between October 2017 and February 2018, UNHCR provided 80,940 individuals (16,188 households) with winter core relief item kits in northwest Syria. In January and February 2018, an additional 8,000 emergency core relief item kits with winter items were provided to 40,000 individuals newly displaced from Northern Hama and Southern Idlib to Northern Idlib and Northern Aleppo. All the winterization support and emergency assistance was coordinated with the UNHCR-led Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFI) Cluster.

- In addition to partner post distribution monitoring, UNHCR hired a third party for at site distribution monitoring and post distribution monitoring. The monitoring found that an overwhelming majority (99.5%) of the survey respondents found the items in the kit useful, with high thermal blankets, solar lamps, and plastic tarpaulins were most useful, Over 91.2 per cent respondents found the items to be of good quality.



Returning families receive their winter core relief items distributed by UNHCR in east Aleppo, Syria, October 2017.
© UNHCR/Hameed Maarouf

TURKEY

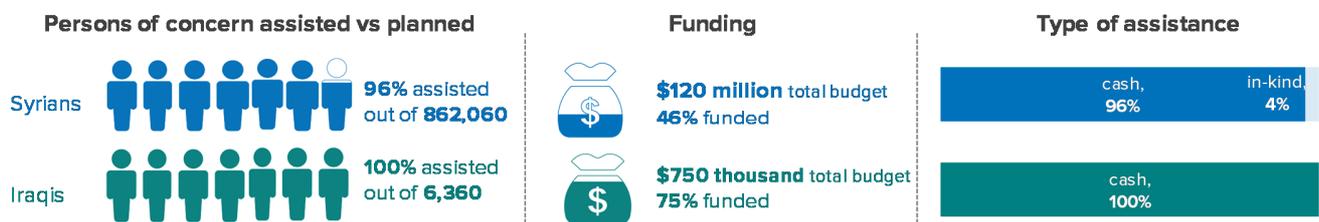


- As part of the 2017-2018 winterization programme, approximately half a million of the most vulnerable refugees of all nationalities (483,454 individuals) living across the country, including in the camps, were supported with a one-off cash assistance using a pre-paid MasterCard 'PTTkart' issued by Turkey's Post and Telecommunication Office (PTT). The programme was implemented across all 81 provinces using PTT's existing infrastructure. In order to reach those inside the camps, UNHCR deployed mobile PTT branches for a period of time inside the camps.

Refugees were able to use the card in any shop that accepts MasterCard as well as used it to withdraw cash from any PTT branch or ATM machine.

- A total of 258,032 refugees (55,792 families) of all nationalities living among the host community received cash assistance; majority of them were Syrian and Iraqi refugees. In camps, 225,422 Iraqi and Syrian refugees (44,977 households) received cash assistance. A limited number of refugees (7,950 households) living inside and outside the camps were provided with additional in-kind assistance in the form of heaters.
- UNHCR worked in coordination with the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey (AFAD) and partners. Partners utilized its existing counselling line or established hotlines to address the increasing volume of calls during the winter months. Contingency non-food items stocks including winter items were prepositioned in certain locations for emergency. Different information channels were used to reach refugees living outside the camps, such as engagement of local authority figures like imams and local community leaders. These community-based communication channels and the close coordination with AFAD resulted in successful implementation rates with 95 per cent of cards having been picked up across country in camp and out of camp areas.
- Over the course of the winter programme, progress monitoring was conducted by UNHCR and partners. Inter-agency coordination efforts have produced a post distribution monitoring (PDM) questionnaire and sampling methodology, which will be implemented in the coming months.

LEBANON

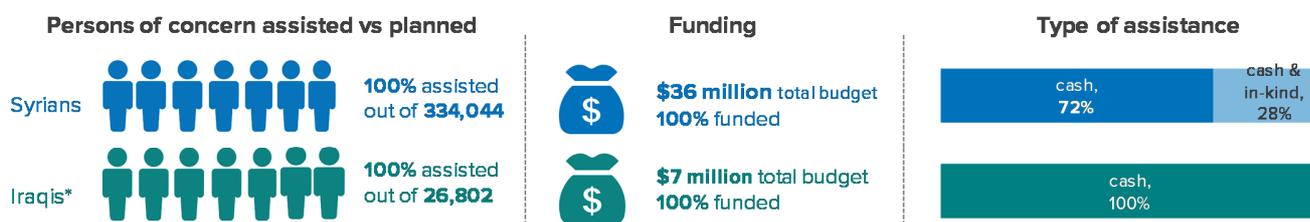


- UNHCR successfully implemented winter assistance programme covering the period from November 2017 to March 2018. A total of 828,090 highly and severely vulnerable Syrian refugees (165,618 families) and 6,360 severely vulnerable Iraqi refugees (1,590 families) have received winter assistance, mainly through cash. In addition, 18,628 vulnerable individuals from the local communities (4,657 families) were also supported with fuel vouchers and blankets. Furthermore, 14,100 weatherproofing shelter kits were distributed to 120,680 persons (24,136 families) living in informal settlements. In addition to the provision of winter cash assistance, ad-hoc core-relief items distribution was done by UNHCR in different areas of Lebanon.
- Winter cash assistance was implemented via the common ATM card. A winter package of USD 325 was provided to all highly and severely vulnerable families that did not receive the regular monthly multi-purpose cash assistance. For those who were receiving the multi-purpose cash grant from UNHCR, WFP and other cash actors, a top-up amount of USD 225 was provided. UNHCR worked closely with WFP for the joint validation of the beneficiaries and distribution of cards. In the Bekaa valley, vulnerable families from the eight municipalities received two fuel-cards per family while three municipalities preferred one fuel-card per family. Five local schools also received 20 vouchers per school. UNHCR also supported host communities with fuel vouchers of USD 100. Around 6,300 blankets were provided to 19 municipalities and three local NGOs. Winter assistance was coordinated by the Basic Assistance

Working Group composed of UN agencies, NGOs and the government. Bilateral coordination was also done at the local level with municipalities on the selection and distribution of complementary items and emergency stocks.

- In order to properly and timely respond to refugees during winter, UNHCR and WFP boosted up the capacity of the joint call-centre for cash and food assistance. Between November 2017 and January 2018, the call centre answered 5,500 to 7,500 calls per day, whereby 50 operators answered calls related to winter assistance and ATM cards management queries. In addition to the centralized call centre, field offices also had hotlines that provided counselling to refugees on issues related to winter assistance. Beneficiaries also approached the help desks located at UNHCR reception centres in the field.
- Post-distribution monitoring was conducted through household visit surveys and focus group discussions. Approximately 900 refugee families that received winter assistance were visited as part of the exercise. Many families cited spending winter assistance on rent due to the fact that work in the winter months is scarce and securing rent is thus more difficult. Others mentioned that the cash assistance helped them to purchase heaters or fuel for heating, winter clothes for children and paying health expenses. According to the feedback received from refugees of other nationalities than Syria, the winter assistance was helpful but not enough. Most of the interviewed refugees mentioned that they used it for their medical fees/healthcare or for rent.

JORDAN



* The figure for Iraqis include refugees of other nationalities.

- As part of efforts to assist the most vulnerable refugees in Jordan during the winter months, UNHCR provided cash assistance to over 235,000 refugees (56,000 families) of all nationalities living outside camps. In addition, nearly 115,000 Syrian refugees (24,000 families) in Zaatari and Azraq camps also received a cash payment to buy winter materials. This assistance was supplemented by distribution of items such as insulation materials, gas cylinders, and shelter repairs in both camps. Overall, UNHCR was able to deliver assistance worth just over USD 40 million for the winter months, thanks to strong donor support at a crucial time.
- Of the 245,877 individuals outside the camps targeted to receive winterization assistance, 10,049 individuals (4,601 families or 6%) did not pick up cash assistance. This included 4,578 Syrian refugees who did not collect, equating to 2 per cent of the Syrian refugees targeted. For other nationalities, 5,471 refugees did not collect assistance, equating to 20 per cent of the refugees targeted. Overall, 94 per cent of cash assistance reached the intended beneficiaries.
- Through the collaboration and participation in 25 Community Support Committees across the country catering to all refugee nationalities, UNHCR and its partners monitored the conditions of vulnerable cases through outreach activities referring the cases identified to the relevant units for follow up and assistance. Particular focus of the

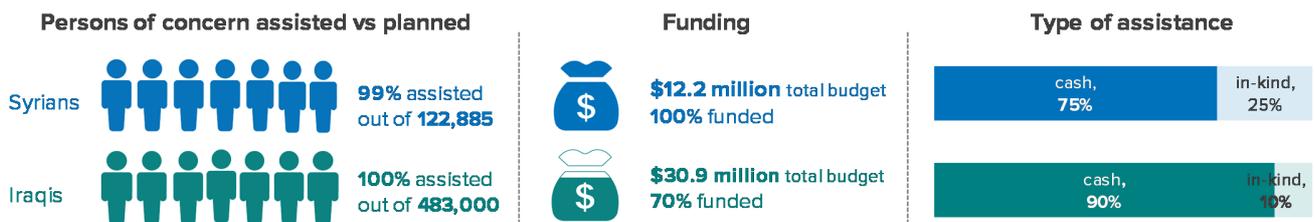
outreach teams were the Informal Tented Settlements located in hard to reach areas where the most vulnerable cases reside. Help Desks and mobile Help desks are established across the country.

- As part of the inter-agency coordination, UNHCR together with Norwegian Refugee Council chaired the Winterization Task Force which established the “Harsh Weather Conditions Sub-Task Force” which designed guidelines and procedures in the event of adverse weather conditions, including a harsh weather alert system to strengthen partners’ coordination and a more efficient use of resources. Partners of the winterization taskforce will undertake joint Post Distribution Monitoring and reports will be available in the coming months.
- UNHCR conducted a post distribution monitoring which found that 49 per cent of families receiving UNHCR’s winterization cash assistance were able to meet their basic needs for the winter. The vast majority (94%) of beneficiaries reported the cash assistance received helped them to buy winter-related items with heating accounting for the majority of expenditure (65% gas cylinders, gas refills, and heaters). Almost all non-Syrian refugees stated that the winterization assistance helped them to buy winter-related items (90%). However, less than half (40%) found the assistance sufficient to meet their basic needs. For a majority of families, the accumulation of unpaid rent and debt meant that the amount received was insufficient to cover these pressing expenses in addition to the required purchases for winter, i.e. heaters, fuel canisters, fuel refills and plastic sheeting. Twenty-nine per cent of families were unable to cover health-related expenses during the winter months. Similar to the Syrian respondents, the non-Syrian respondents stated they were able to find needed winterization items in the market (95%).



A Syrian man receives cash assistance in Zaatari camp in Jordan utilizing the Common Cash Facility to assist him and his family to buy the winter items they need.
© UNHCR/M.Hawari

IRAQ



- Between October 2017 and February 2018, UNHCR provided 481,848 IDPs (out of a target of 483,000 individuals) with winter assistance in camps and urban areas, targeting displaced people from Ninewa, Salah-al-Din and Anbar

governorates as well as other vulnerable IDPs across the country. Cash assistance was provided to 432,588 IDPs living in camps and urban areas. In camps, UNHCR distributed core relief items specific to winter (including blankets, heating stove, rubber mat, and a tent insulation kit) to 49,260 displaced Iraqis. UNHCR provided 121,930 Syrian refugees (out of a target of 122,885 individuals), with winter assistance: 121,390 Syrian refugees received winter cash assistance in camps and urban areas, of which 30,600 Syrian refugees in camps received complimentary core relief item kits.

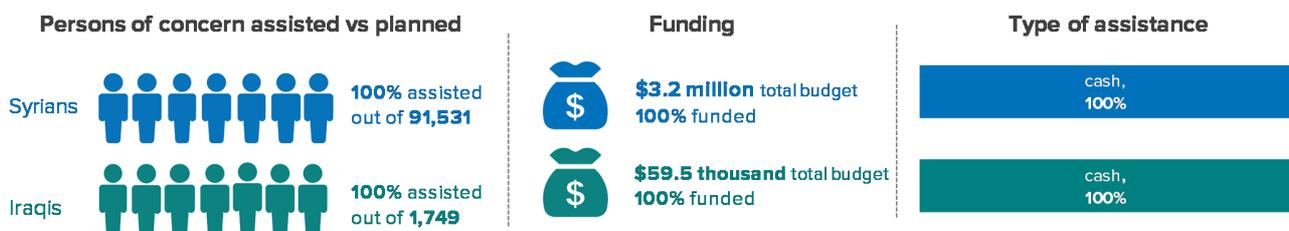
- For the first time this winter, UNHCR implemented the monetized winter assistance programme with country wide coverage. This allowed for a wider reach as opposed to winter core relief item distribution and the associated logistical challenges. UNHCR was the sole provider of winter cash assistance and for the next winter, UNHCR will look to improve coordination with the Shelter/NFI cluster through the Cash Working Group to expedite the process and ensure better targeting and identification. UNHCR was not able to provide cash assistance to 31,663 IDP families identified in need due to funding constraints.



Asraa Hassan fled her home in Al-Qaim in Anbar Governorate in Iraq in August 2017 when fighting intensified. "I lost my husband during the conflict, and I'm now responsible for my family," says Asraa. "I have two disabled children, and will use the cash to purchase what I need to keep them warm. This makes me feel more prepared for the harsh winter."

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EGYPT



- UNHCR together with UNICEF launched the winter assistance programme for 94,306 Syrian refugees (28,733 families) and 1,373 Iraqi refugees (527 families) in November 2017. At the end of the collection period on 31

January, some 91,531 Syrian refugees (27,220 families), representing 97 per cent of the Syrian refugees who were targeted, collected their cash assistance. Despite multiple reminders, only 640 Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers (186 families), representing 47 per cent of the Iraqi refugees targeted, collected the cash assistance.

- The cash transfer was delivered over the counter by Egypt Post Office which has over 3,000 outlets across the country. An amount of USD 34 was defined as the household requirements to meet basic needs during winter (Winter Minimum Expenditure Basket - MEB). UNICEF complemented UNHCR's winter budget by USD 1.5 million which allowed UNHCR to provide the entire MEB of USD 34, and to ensure that additional vulnerable refugees could be assisted. UNHCR monitored the collection process through weekly reports received from the financial service provider (Egypt Post) and regular discussions were also held. A third party organisation is currently conducting a post-distribution monitoring and the final report is expected soon.

FUNDING

UNHCR is grateful to the following Governmental and inter-governmental donors who have contributed to the winter programme for Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees with unearmarked and earmarked funds. UNHCR is also grateful to private donors, charities and other organizations for their contributions.



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