Syrian Arab Republic

January 2026

Syria continues to experience a deep humanitarian crisis, with an estimated **16.5 million** people estimated to have required humanitarian assistance in 2025. Certain parts of the country remain insecure and access to essential services is still limited.

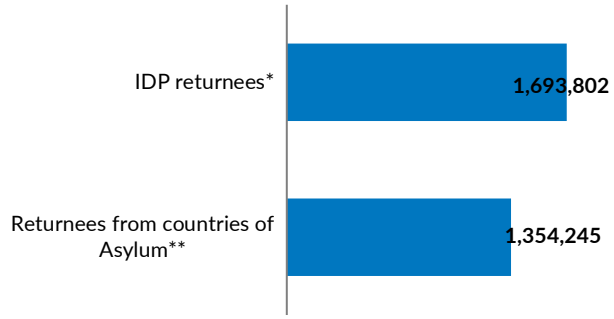
Following the political transition in Syria on 8 December 2024, more than **1.3 million** Syrian refugees have returned from countries of asylum.

Up to **1.9 million** internally displaced people (IDPs) have gone back to their areas of origin since 27 November 2024.

In response to both ongoing and anticipated return trends, UNHCR gradually shifted toward facilitating voluntary returns to Syria. This approach remains grounded in the voluntary character of return and refugees' well-informed and free choices.

At the same time, UNHCR continues to deliver protection and assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless individuals, and host communities, prioritizing interventions based on assessed needs, vulnerabilities, and available resources.

PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA

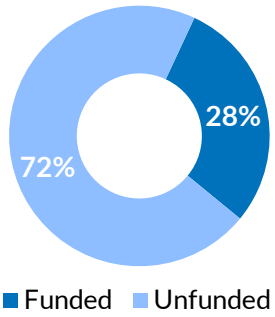


Source: UNHCR, since January 2025 till January 2026
**Source: UNHCR, since 8 December 2024*

FUNDING (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2025)

USD 575.4 million

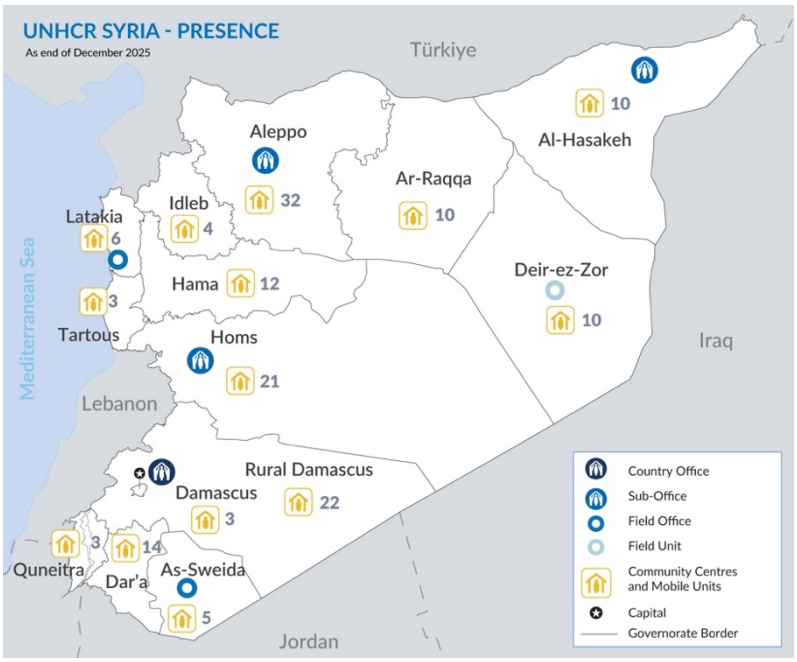
requested for the Syria Operation in 2025



UNHCR PRESENCE

Offices: 8

1 Country Office in Damascus
3 Sub-Offices in Aleppo, Homs and Qamishli
2 Field Offices in As-Sweida, and Latakia
1 Field Unit in Deir-ez-Zor



Strategic Direction

UNHCR Syria's 2026-2029 Multi-year Strategy envisions a Syria where displaced persons can return safely, reclaim their rights, and rebuild their lives within inclusive, resilient communities – contributing to national recovery. Taking stock of the significant contextual changes in the country since December 2024, the strategy marks a shift from a care-and-maintenance approach to a solutions-oriented and return-focused response, balancing immediate protection needs with long-term solutions, emphasizing collaboration with authorities, regional actors, and partners to foster sustainable return, reintegration, and resilience. Through the strategy, UNHCR will focus on:

- Repositioning the operation around Return and Reintegration by shifting from displacement management to creating conditions for sustainable returns.
- Investing in Area-Based Solutions that integrate protection, shelter, livelihoods, and local governance interventions.
- Strengthening Legal Identity and housing, land and property rights as foundations for stability.
- Advancing National Ownership through institutional capacity-building and coordination with UN and development partners.
- Maintaining Emergency Preparedness to respond to evolving risks and new displacement while protecting refugees, asylum seekers and stateless.

> **"I am so happy. Nothing compares to this feeling. These are tears of happiness."**
>
> *Say's Rasha*

After 14 years as refugees in Lebanon, Rasha Mohammad Mahameed and her five children return to Syria through UNHCR's voluntary return programme. ©UNHCR/ Vivian Toumeh

Main Activities

Protection

UNHCR works closely with partners, the authorities, and communities to strengthen the protection environment in Syria and support returnees, IDPs, refugees, and vulnerable host community members. UNHCR-supported community centres serve as one-stop hubs for protection services, including legal assistance, psychosocial support, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response, child protection, and specialised support for persons with disabilities and older persons. The community centres also support community-led initiatives and provide safe, inclusive spaces for people to gather, connect, and access information on other services and assistance available in their areas.

Besides the community centres, mobile units attached to the centres offer protection services based on identified needs in underserved or remote locations. The latter respond flexibly to population movements and increase outreach to the most vulnerable populations who do not have easy access to the community centres.

A network of outreach volunteers supports the community centres. These outreach volunteers who are selected from the affected communities are the first responders and assist those in need in a timely manner. They help identify individuals in need and refer them to relevant support provided by UNHCR, other humanitarian actors, and appropriate institutions.

In 2026, UNHCR and its partners will manage 55 community centres supported by 86 mobile units and a network of 1,520 Outreach Volunteers (ORVs) in all 14 governorates.

For refugees and asylum-seekers, UNHCR conducts refugee status determination, registration, and resettlement, when applicable. Refugees and asylum-seekers also benefit from additional protection services such as multi-purpose cash grants while others may receive education cash grants and scholarships for students.

Cash-Based Interventions

UNHCR provides cash-based interventions to support vulnerable populations in Syria, enabling them to meet essential needs while promoting their dignity, choice, and protection outcomes. Assistance is delivered through multiple programme modalities, each designed to respond to specific vulnerabilities and operational priorities.

Support for Syrians (Returnees and Vulnerable Host Communities)

- **Return and Reintegration Assistance:**
  For Syrian refugee returnees, UNHCR provides cash assistance in the form of **return and reintegration** grants to support their reintegration. A one-time cash grant of USD 600 is provided per vulnerable household, with eligibility based on prior inclusion in assistance programmes in countries of asylum and vulnerability criteria and prioritization when resources are limited.
- **Cash for shelter repairs:**
  UNHCR provides financial support for minor to moderate shelter rehabilitation for returnees. Assistance is USD 2,000, delivered in one or two instalments, based on damage level and legal occupancy documentation.
- **Cash for livelihoods:**
  To promote self-reliance and economic inclusion, UNHCR implements cash for livelihoods programmes for refugees, returnees, IDPs, and vulnerable host community members. These grants, amounting to USD 1,500 per household, enable beneficiaries to establish small businesses. The programme includes vulnerability and capacity assessment, business development training, and proposal evaluation by a joint UNHCR–partner committee.
- **Cash for transport (North-East Syria Camps):**
  This assistance enables voluntary return of camp residents to areas of origin through a one-time cash transfer of USD 400 per household, monetizing previously in-kind transport assistance and provided prior to departure as well as linked to camp de-registration.

Support for IDPs

UNHCR provided in 2025 multipurpose cash assistance to vulnerable IDPs to address their essential basic needs and reduce protection risks. Assistance is delivered as a one-off cash transfer, with an average value of USD 390 per household, and targeted based on vulnerability criteria for families with disabilities.

Support for refugees and asylum-Seekers

Multipurpose Cash Grants (MPCG) are the cornerstone of UNHCR's basic needs assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers, with eligibility determined through vulnerability scoring and individual protection risk assessments to ensure that support reaches those most in need. Since 2025, MPCG distributions have shifted to USD-based transfers to address liquidity constraints and enhance predictability, with a current transfer value of USD 80 per household per month, based on an average family size of three.

Additionally, a one-off emergency cash grant of USD 100 is provided to address urgent protection concerns and life-threatening situations. Refugee children enrolled in public schools also receive education cash grants to help cover transportation and related expenses, as education is provided free of charge to refugees in Syria; the grant amount is USD 50 for primary school students and USD 80 for secondary school students.

Core Relief Items

UNHCR provides core relief items such as blankets, sleeping mats, mattresses, jerry cans, plastic sheets, kitchen sets, and solar lamps to IDPs, returnees, and vulnerable host community members during emergencies and regular distributions. In addition, UNHCR offers winterization support through winter clothing kits or kits donated by donors such as UNIQLO, waterproof winter jackets, blankets, and plastic sheets to assist individuals in emergency situations and during routine distributions. Alongside these core relief and winter items, UNHCR also distributes supplementary item s— including plastic buckets, carpets,

rubber boots, transparent plastic sheets, stove heaters, and indoor solar devices — based on assessed needs of IDPs, returnees, and host community members.

Shelter Interventions

UNHCR's shelter programme in Syria continues to provide critical assistance to IDPs, refugees, and returnees through an integrated approach that combines emergency response with early recovery interventions. In north-east and north-west Syria, where displaced and refugee households remain in substandard shelter conditions within tented camps, UNHCR delivers life-saving support, including the provision and installation of tents, alongside essential maintenance of camp infrastructure such as access roads, energy systems, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and networks. In parallel, the programme strengthens emergency preparedness by pre-positioning shelter materials to ensure timely and effective assistance to newly displaced populations. This capacity was notably demonstrated during the 2025 emergency response in the coastal area and As-Sweida, where pre-positioned stocks enabled UNHCR's rapid and coordinated intervention.

Furthermore, the programme undertakes the restoration of conflict-damaged housing units through light and moderate repairs, and essential improvements such as fiting of windows, doors, WASH facilities, and electrical upgrades.

In addition to individual housing improvements, UNHCR invests in community infrastructure, such as the installation of solar streetlights to enhance safety in public spaces. as well as repairs to institutions including civil registry offices, cadastral buildings, and administrative units, which are crucial for communities' access to civil documentation and housing, land and property (HLP) rights, along with the repair of social economic infrastructure to support livelihoods. Furthermore, interventions are designed to begin at entry points to ensure safe return routes for returnees, including the repair of immigration centres, roads, and damaged bridges that connect neighbourhoods with the countries of origin.

These comprehensive interventions do not only aim to provide immediate shelter solutions but also to promote long-term stability and resilience for both returnees and host communities.

Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

UNHCR supports vulnerable people, particularly refugee returnees, by improving their self-reliance, reducing dependency on humanitarian assistance, and supporting their reintegration into communities by providing, among others, supporting small businesses through grants and training opportunities . In addition, UNHCR facilitates access to livelihoods by promoting vocational and digital skills training, financial literacy and inclusion, job matching, and linkages to microfinance and credit. It also works to rehabilitate socio-economic infrastructure and fosters partnerships with private sector and development actors to create an enabling environment for employment and entrepreneurship.

Partnership and Coordination

In 2026, UNHCR will collaborating with 27 partner agencies, including government counterparts, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national NGOs, and UN agencies.

In the context of the inter-agency coordination framework in Syria, UNHCR leads the Protection and Community Services sector and co-leads the Shelter sector with the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment and the Non-Food Items sector with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). UNHCR also participates in the work of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the Area Humanitarian Country Teams (AHCTs), with several heads of field offices acting as Area Humanitarian Coordinators. Furthermore, UNHCR has been co-chairing the In-Country Network on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) together with UNICEF since 2022.

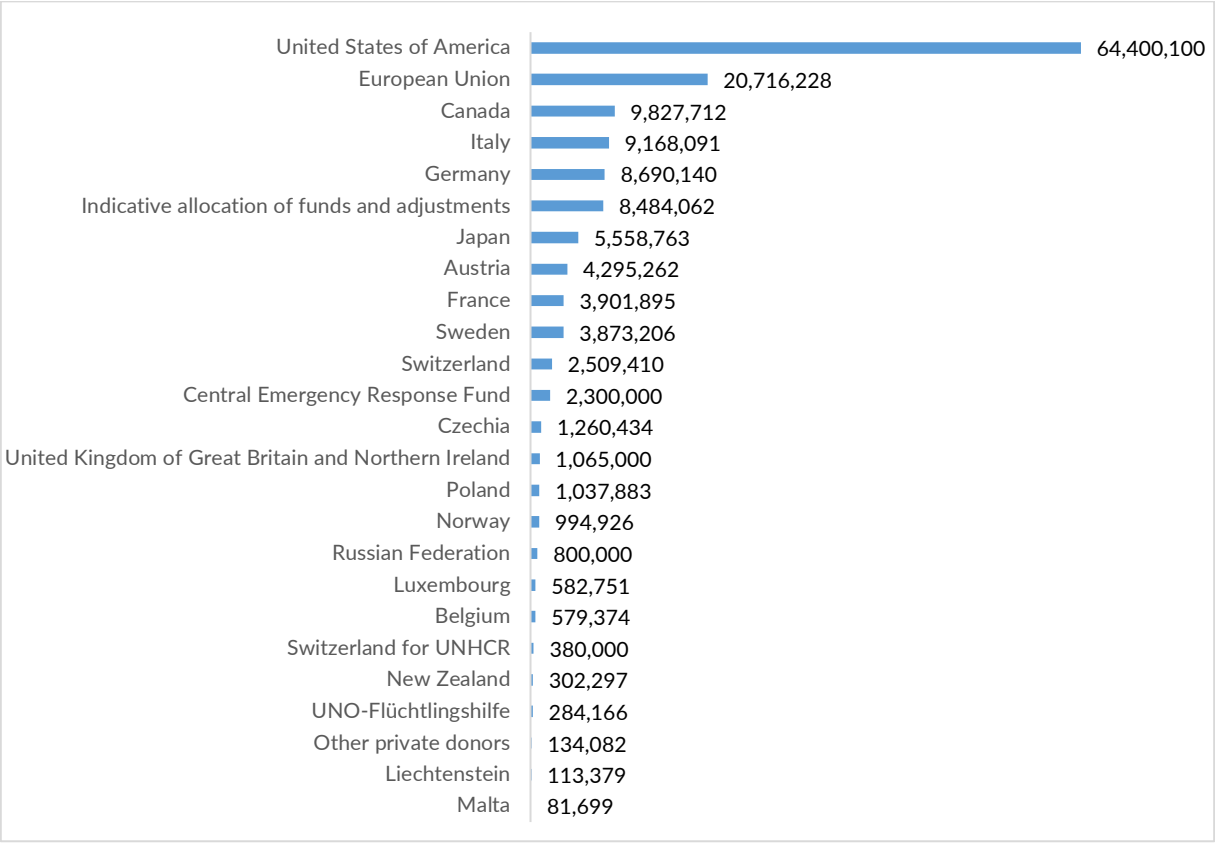
UNHCR co-leads inter-agency efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation in areas with high numbers of spontaneous refugee and IDP returns, using multi-stakeholder, multi-sector, area-based approaches. For broader collaboration, the Solutions Working Group, co-led by UNHCR, UNDP, and IOM, will provide a unified platform for UN agencies, INGOs, local NGOs, and the Syrian Government to support the sustainable return and reintegration of displaced populations, in alignment with global policies and operational frameworks.

Funding Update | 2025 | As of 31 December 2025

UNHCR Syria is grateful to all donors providing critical financial support to address the needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless people, and host communities.

CONTRIBUTIONS | US$

Donor earmarked contributions and indicative allocation of funds for the operation in 2025 (as of 30 November) amounted to **$ 163,714,657.**



OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | US$

UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe 11.5 million | Sweden 10.4 million | Australia for UNHCR 9.4 million | Denmark 9.1 million | Norway 4.8 million | Canada 3.6 million | UK for UNHCR 2.9 million | Spain 2.6 million | Finland 2.5 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | US$

Sweden 74.1 million | España con ACNUR 63.7 million | Norway 56.9 million | Japan for UNHCR 45.9 million | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 41.6 million | Denmark 37.8 million | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) 36.3 million | Private donors in the Republic of Korea 27 million | Germany 25.1 million | Private donors in Italy 21.2 million | Switzerland 20.4 million | Republic of Korea 16.8 million | Australia 14.3 million | France 13.9 million | Sweden for UNHCR 13.7 million | Private donors in the Netherlands 13.6 million | Ireland 13.6 million | Belgium 10.7 million

CONTACT

UNHCR Syria External Relations Unit | Email: SYRDAREPORTING@unhcr.org

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