Syrian Arab Republic

May 2022

During May, north and eastern areas of Syria were hit by sandstorms, heavy rains and flooding. As part of the inter-agency response, UNHCR and partners carried out needs assessments and replaced tents.

Across the country, UNHCR continued to provide protection and assistance to refugees, internally displaced people, returnees and stateless people based on identified needs and vulnerabilities.

The UN estimates that 14.6 million people need humanitarian assistance in Syria, a 9% increase from the previous year. The security situation in parts of the country is unpredictable and economic deterioration is a now major driver of needs.

HIGHLIGHTS

41,500

Households received core relief items so far this year, including seasonal support

131,700

People received primary health care services so far in 2022

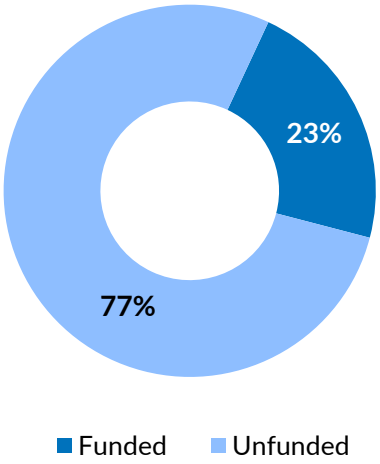
290

People received small business start-up training so far in 2022

FUNDING (AS OF 31 MAY 2022)

USD 465.2 million

requested for the Syria Operation in 2022



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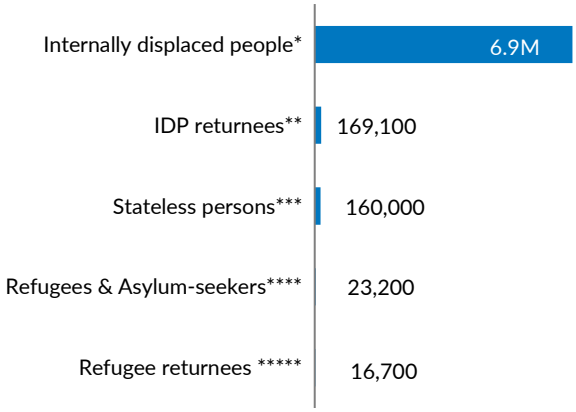


UNHCR and partners distributed solar energy devices to women in rural Aleppo Governorate. UNHCR/H. Maarouf

** Source: 2022 HNO*
*** Source: OCHA, December 2021*
**** Estimated*
*****Source: UNHCR May 2022*
****** Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2022 as of 31 May*

Operational Context

The 2022 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) estimates that over 14.6 million people need humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including 6.9 million internally displaced Syrians. Of that number, approximately 9.6 million are in severe need of humanitarian assistance. The 2022 HNO finds that economic deterioration is now a major driver of needs in areas which have historically been less directly affected by hostilities and displacement.

UNHCR supports refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and returnees (that is, refugees and internally displaced people who have returned to their home areas) through targeted assistance to those most in need following a community-based and area-based approach. The community-based approach focuses on community mobilization and building self-reliance. It aims to reduce vulnerabilities and protection risks by providing services through community-based structures and networks. UNHCR's area-based approach entails working with partners to enhance support in areas where the needs are greatest and where self-organised refugee and IDP returns are taking place.

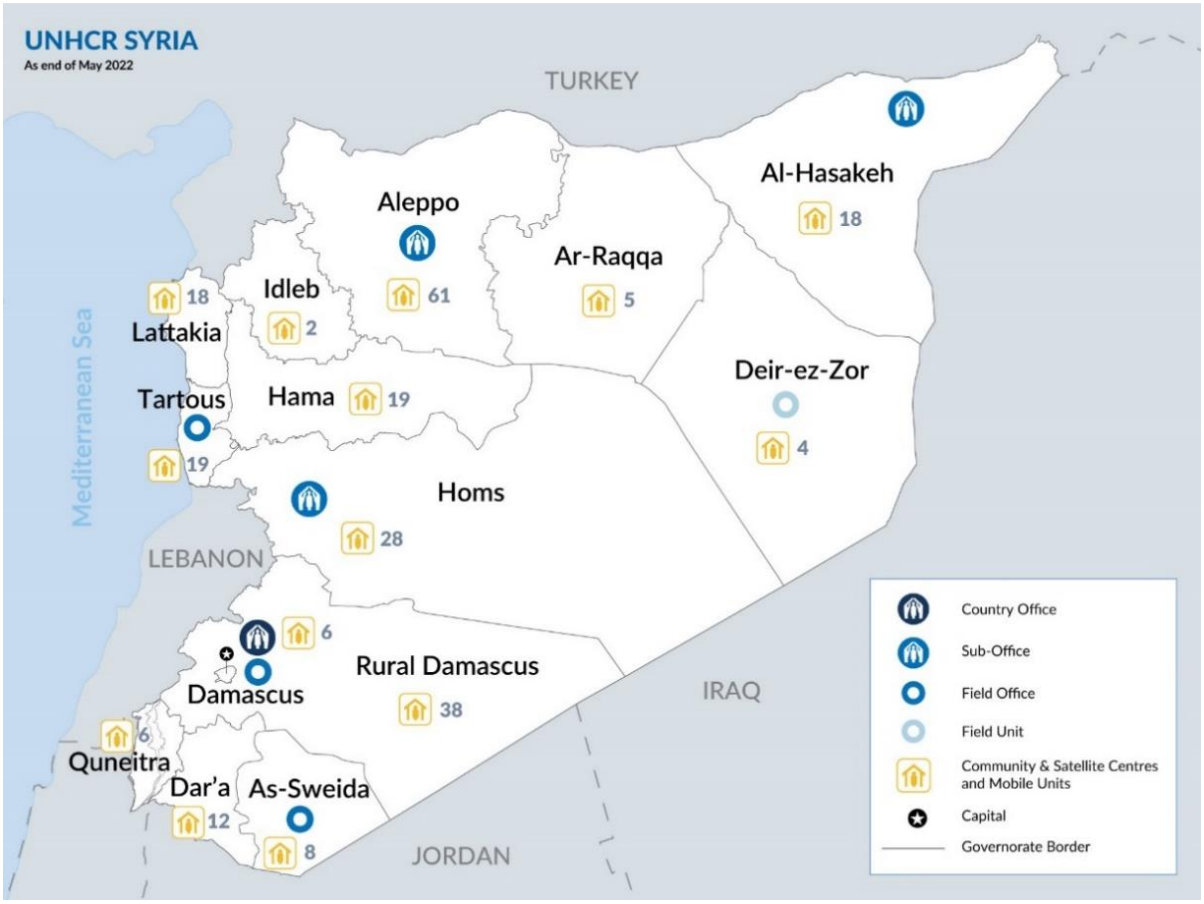
UNHCR works with 28 partners which include government ministries, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national NGOs and UN agencies.

Key Achievements

Protection

UNHCR-supported community centres provide protection services such as support to child protection activities, catch-up classes for children and legal assistance benefitting refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities. A satellite centre is a smaller version of a community centre which is established as another means of outreach in underserved or remote locations. Mobile units operate from the community/satellite centres and provide a set of protection services based on the identified needs. Mobile units can respond flexibly to population movements and increase outreach to the most vulnerable populations who do not have easy access to the community and satellite centres for a variety of reasons. The community and satellite centres are supported by a network of outreach volunteers who inform communities of the services available, identify needs, provide first response and refer cases to community centres for further services.

In line with its community-based protection approach, UNHCR supports 94 community centres, 32 satellite centres and 118 mobile units. UNHCR also engages around 2,800 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.



UNHCR-supported community/satellite centres and mobile units in Syria.

Core Relief Items

UNHCR through its partners supports IDPs, returnees, and vulnerable host community families with essential core relief items. A standard core relief items kit contains plastic sheets, mattresses, solar lamps, high thermal blankets, sleeping mats, jerry cans and kitchen sets. So far in 2022, UNHCR assisted around 6,400 households in 12 governorates with core relief items. An additional 35,100 households received winter core relief items in 2022.

In addition, in rural Aleppo Governorate, UNHCR this year distributed solar lighting devices to more than 5,500 female-headed households with children under the age of 14. The distribution started in early February after assessments highlighted the impact of severe electricity shortages. These solar devices provide vulnerable families with electricity during the night, decreasing the risk of theft and enabling children to study in the evenings. UNHCR teams provide briefings on the safe usage of the solar device during distributions.

Shelter and Infrastructure

UNHCR implements a range of shelter interventions. In camps, UNHCR distributes tents and emergency shelter kits and maintains camp infrastructure. In urban areas, UNHCR helps people repair damaged shelters by providing materials to repair doors and windows, electrical connections, and water and sanitation facilities at household level. UNHCR also repairs public infrastructure such as pavements, installs streetlights and rehabilitates communal facilities. In areas where spontaneous returns of IDPs and refugees are ongoing, UNHCR removes debris, repairs sewage systems, distributes solid waste bins and repairs public water networks and boreholes.

By the end of May, 2,350 families in Homs and Hama Governorates received assistance to repair doors and windows, basic water and sanitation facilities and electrical materials such as lights, cables and switches. An additional 470 families in Rural Damascus received assistance to repair doors and windows.

During May, north-east Syria was hit by sandstorms, heavy rains and flooding. As an urgent response in the camps, UNHCR in coordination with the camp management agencies and partners in the affected camps carried out a rapid needs assessment and replaced 243 tents in Mahmoudli, Twehina, Abu Khashab, Areesha and Newroz camps. UNHCR also provided technical guidance to enhance the drainage system in the affected sites.

In north-east Syria so far this year, UNHCR repaired seven collective shelters (shelters hosting groups of IDPs) in Al-Hasakeh Governorate benefitting over 500 internally displaced families. This included repair of WASH facilities and electricity networks and the installation of doors, windows and partitions. In addition, in total this year, over 770 tents have been installed or repaired in camps in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-Ez-Zor Governorates benefitting almost 800 families. Meanwhile, in response to new arrivals to Newroz camp from the areas of Abu Raseen and Tal Tamer as a result of hostilities in northern Syria, UNHCR started preparing the site and expansion of six community blocks in Newroz camp to increase its reception capacity. The expansion work includes setting up communal kitchens, repairing roads, installing a fence and setting up electricity connections.

Education

UNHCR is contributing to inter-agency efforts to support Syrian students to take their national exams which started at the end of May in designated centres in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor, Hama and Rural Damascus Governorates. UNHCR and its legal aid partners assisted approximately 250 students to obtain identity and other personal documentation required to take the exams. UNHCR also provided 9,000 blankets and mattresses for students, remedial education sessions and offered other protection services such as psychosocial support.

Health

UNHCR health interventions benefit refugees, IDPs, returnees and host community members. In May, UNHCR supported 25,250 people with primary health care services, such as medical consultations and check-ups, in 13 primary health care clinics supported by UNHCR in Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hama and Homs Governorates. Treatment courses were provided to around 16,500 people in May. In total in 2022, more than 131,700 people received primary health care services at UNHCR-supported primary health care clinics.

In May, the Ministry of Health launched a campaign to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in all Governorates. UNHCR supported vaccination awareness through 38 health points established in community centres in Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Idleb and Rural Damascus Governorates. During April and May, UNHCR and partners trained 186 health outreach volunteers and provided awareness sessions to around 3,250 people on vaccine hesitancy. UNHCR also coordinated with Ministry vaccination mobile teams to reach out to vulnerable groups. This helped address the challenges of reaching vaccination centres from rural areas. A total of 1,120 people received their COVID-19 vaccination in community centres and through mobile teams in May.

Also in May, a UNHCR partner supported a heath community-based initiative in the Al-Kallaseh area in Aleppo Governorate where trainee doctors from a private university provide awareness on dental health and treatments. The initiative prioritizes orphans, older people and women. The initiative is still ongoing but so far has already provided dental check-ups for 180 people and dental care for 15 people.

Livelihoods

In May, UNHCR provided over 290 people with entrepreneurship/business training in Aleppo, As-Sweida, Homs, Lattakia and Rural Damascus Governorates. UNHCR plans on providing these trainings to more than 1,500 people in 2022 to help them establish or operate small businesses. UNHCR partners also identified those who will benefit from an agriculture support programme which aims to support more than 8,000 farmers from the return, IDP and host communities across all governorates. Priority is given to the most vulnerable including people with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence, people who are unemployed and female-headed households. Additional criteria to identify people who will benefit from the agricultural support includes previous farming experience and access to adequate land or other relevant farming resources. UNHCR also assessed five livelihoods-related infrastructures such as vocational training schools, bakeries, and an irrigation system to be repaired during 2022 in Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Lattakia Governorates.

This month, UNHCR repaired a vocational training centre in Al-Faid neighbourhood in Aleppo city. In cooperation with UNDP, the centre will be soon receiving the necessary equipment and machinery to become fully operational and run vocational training courses.

Assistance to Refugees

Registration

As of end-May, almost 23,200 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR. Most registered refugees originate from Iraq and reside primarily in urban areas in Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous, Homs and Qamishli Governorates. Of the total number of registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria, around 20,200 individuals (primarily heads of household) have been biometrically enrolled.

In May, UNHCR renewed identification cards for over 1,500 refugees as a means to protect them against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.

Refugee status determination (RSD)

So far in 2022, 40 asylum seeking families (comprising 92 individuals) were interviewed to determine if they are refugees. So far this year, 36 cases comprising 101 individuals have been recognized as refugees, ensuring that they can be protected from *refoulement* and detention due to irregular stay and can access basic services. UNHCR also provided counselling on the RSD process and individual cases through its hotline. Inquiries received during May were primarily related to the status of individual cases and requests for cash assistance.

Resettlement and complementary pathways

UNHCR counselled 73 individuals on their resettlement cases in May providing them with information on their case status and the limited opportunities available for resettlement.

In May, UNHCR and its partner facilitated the movement to Canada of one case comprising seven individuals who had been accepted for resettlement under the Privately Sponsored Refugees Programme.

Cash-Based Assistance

UNHCR provides multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG) to the most vulnerable refugee families. UNHCR enrols families and reviews eligibility for MPCG assistance every two months. Vulnerability is determined using either a scoring system based on age and gender special needs or a panel review of individual's protection risks. Each family of three receives some 300,000 Syrian pounds monthly (approximately USD 119) which is delivered via a cash-over-the-counter modality. Almost 460 refugee families received cash grants in May 2022.

In May, the Central Bank of Syria granted a six-month approval for the use of UNHCR-issued refugee identification cards as acceptable documents to access financial services. This enables UNHCR to provide cash assistance to refugees in Syria through ATM cards, allowing refugees to collect their assistance without having to travel to designated bank locations. It also allows refugees to withdraw the amount in instalments if preferred. However, as the authorization is temporary for six months, UNHCR is continuing its advocacy with relevant authorities to find a long-term arrangement.

UNHCR Co-led Sector Updates

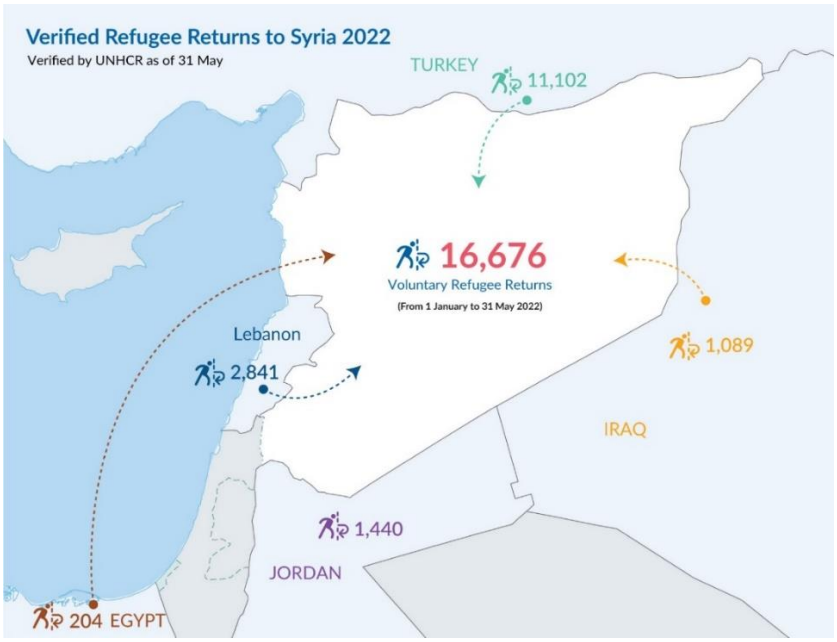
UNHCR leads the inter-agency Protection and Shelter/Non-Food Item (NFI) Sectors as part of the Syria and Whole of Syria inter-agency response.

The **Protection Sector** continued to strengthen coordination and information-sharing to enable better access of beneficiaries to protection services. In May, this was done through consultation sessions with partners to finalise inter-agency referral standard operating procedures. The quarterly online dashboard was also published which includes a summary of all protection resources, including community centres, satellite centres, mobile teams and outreach volunteers.

The Sector developed a capacity-development plan for protection partners to be rolled out during the course of the year with trainings starting in June. The topics in the plan include community-based protection, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence and child protection, minimum standards in emergency situations, accountability to affected population, mental health and psychosocial support, disability inclusion, and explosive ordnance awareness, among others.

Returns

In May 2022, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of almost 4,300 individual refugees from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. This brought the total number of refugee returnees verified by UNHCR in 2022 to almost 16,700. In 2021, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of a total of 35,700 individual refugees from Turkey, followed by Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt. In total between 2016 and 2022, UNHCR has verified or monitored the return to Syria of almost 319,900 individual refugees[1].



[1] *The numbers reported are only those verified or monitored by UNHCR and do not reflect the entire number of returns, which may be significantly higher.*

Financial Information

As of 31 May 2022

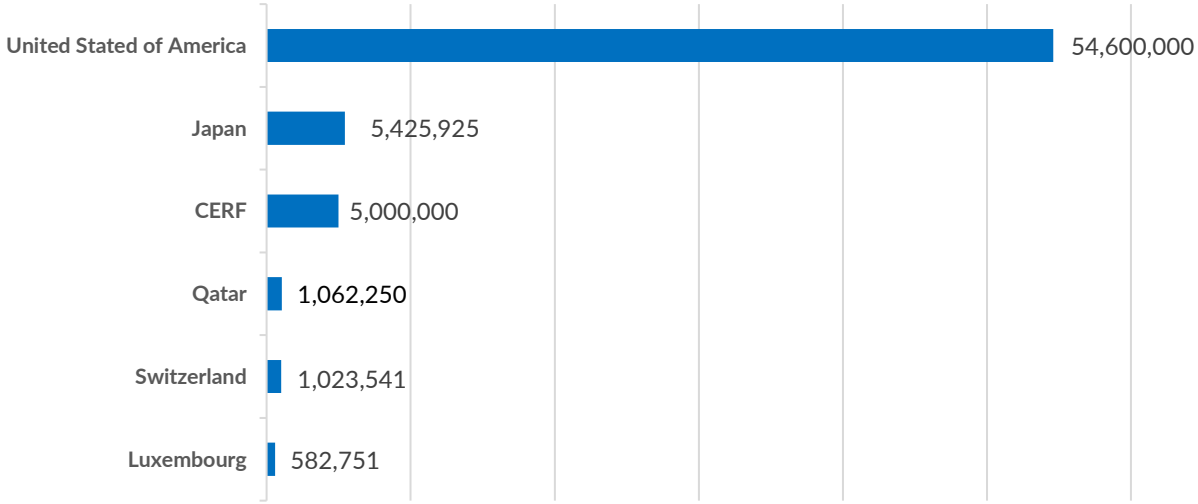
UNHCR Syria is grateful to all donors for the critical support provided with earmarked and unearmarked funding.

CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions and indicative allocation of funds for the operation amount to some

US$ 105,208,895

as of 31 May 2022



OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

United States of America 3.7 million **| Private donors Australia** 3.7 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 95.2 million | **Norway** 72.5 million | **Netherlands** 37.2 million | **Denmark** 35.6 million | **Germany** 27 million | **Private donors Spain** 26.4 million | **France** 18.5 million | **Switzerland** 18.4 million | **Private donors** Japan 14.9 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 13.2 million | **Belgium** 11.9 million| **Ireland** 11.8 million | **Italy** 10 million

CONTACT

Alessia Pignatti
Reporting Officer
UNHCR Syria
Email: pignatti@unhcr.org

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