Syrian Arab Republic

April 2022

The Syria crisis has now entered its twelfth year. The UN estimates that 14.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, a 9% increase from the previous year.

The security situation in parts of the country is unpredictable and the economic situation is increasingly dire. Economic deterioration is a major driver of needs.

UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to refugees, internally displaced people, returnees and stateless people based on identified needs and vulnerabilities.

HIGHLIGHTS

244

UNHCR-supported community/satellite centres and mobile units provide comprehensive protection-related services

140,000

Families received winter core relief items between September 2021 and end-March 2022

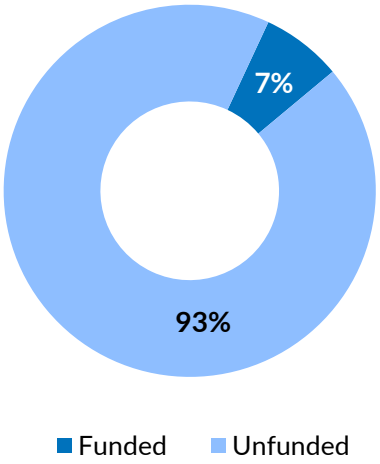
4,400

Refugee families received multi-purpose cash grants in March and April 2022

FUNDING (AS OF 5 MAY 2022)

USD 465.2 million

requested for the Syria Operation in 2022



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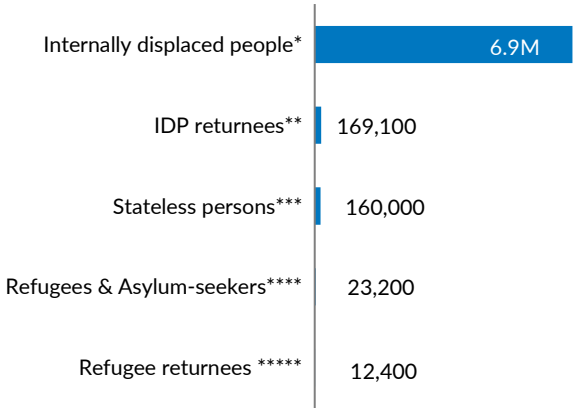


UNHCR's partner provides a medical counselling session at a health point in Aleppo Governorate. UNHCR/H. Maarouf

** Source: 2022 HNO*
*** Source: OCHA, December 2021*
**** Estimated*
*****Source: UNHCR April 2022*
****** Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2022 as of 15 April*

Operational Context

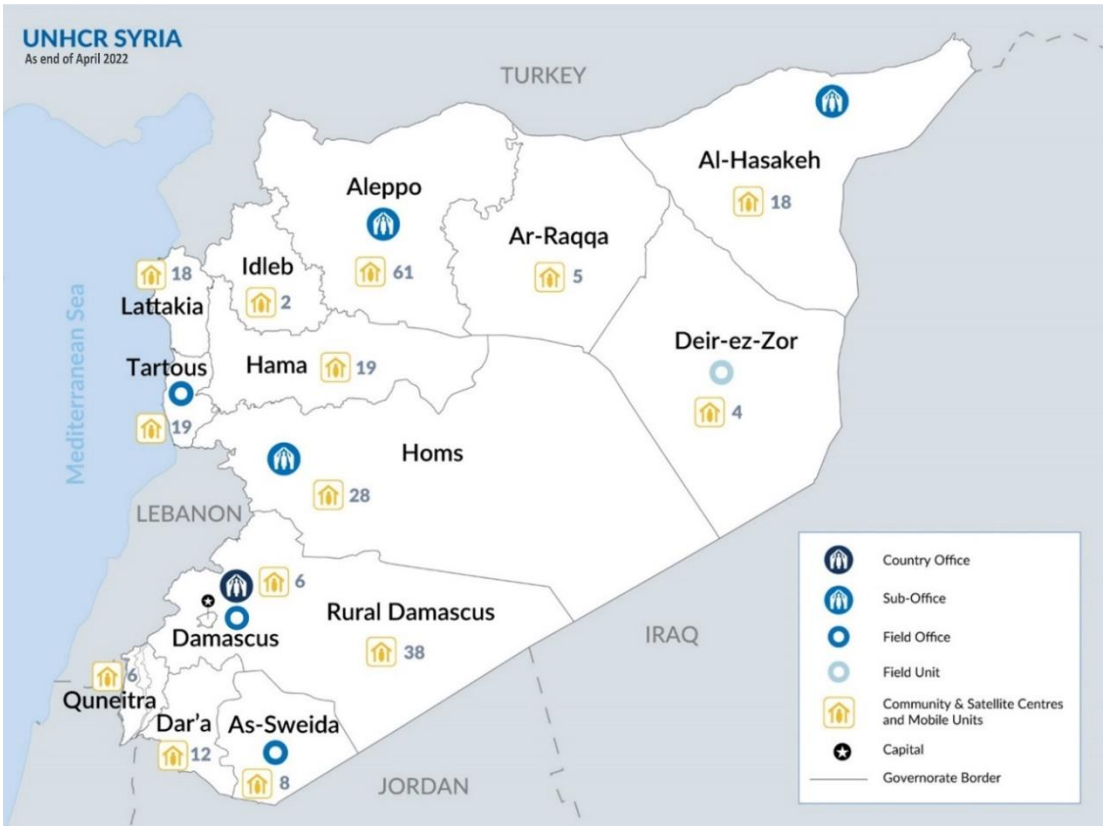
The 2022 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) estimates that over 14.6 million people need humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including 6.9 million internally displaced Syrians. Of that number, approximately 9.6 million are in severe need of humanitarian assistance. The 2022 HNO finds that economic 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 through targeted assistance following a community-based and area-based approach. UNHCR works with 28 partners which include government ministries, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national NGOs and UN agencies.

Key Achievements

Protection

In line with its community-based protection approach, UNHCR supports 94 community centres, 32 satellite centres (smaller versions of community centres providing services in underserved or remote locations) and 118 mobile units. UNHCR also engages over 2,800 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.



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

The community centres provide comprehensive protection-related services such as support to child protection activities, catch-up classes for children, and legal assistance benefitting IDPs, returnees, host communities and other crisis-affected people. At these UNHCR-supported community centres, outreach volunteers also engage with communities to identify and address specific protection concerns by developing small-scale community-led or livelihood projects. For example, in April UNHCR partners implemented various community- and youth-led initiatives in areas of Damascus and Rural Damascus which benefitted over 5,000 IDPs, returnees and members of the host community. These initiatives included the repair of schools and damaged houses, organizing knitting skills trainings for internally displaced women, installing streetlights, providing mental health and psychosocial support services to older people and organizing skills development activities for children, amongst others.

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.

The UNHCR Syria Winterization Programme started on 1 September 2021 and was completed on 31 March 2022. Some 139,600 Syrian families (close to 640,000 people) received seasonal items which were much needed as temperatures were as low as zero degrees in many areas of the country. Some 1,400 asylum-seeker families (around 5,000 people) also received winter items. The winter kit comprises high thermal blankets, plastic sheets, sleeping bags, and winter clothing kits and was distributed to vulnerable Syrians in all 14 governorates in Syria.

A UNHCR staff member speaks with a displaced woman in Al-Mintar, rural Tartous Governorate about the assistance just received. UNHCR/E. Kabbas

UNHCR's Winterization Programme prioritized the needs of the most vulnerable people such as those recently displaced, new returnees, people living in hard-to-reach or in newly accessible areas and in sub-standard shelters who had not been assisted in the past. UNHCR monitored winter assistance distribution activities by conducting regular field visits together with partners. Overall, the feedback received was positive and most families requested for additional items such as carpets, heaters, sleeping mats, boots, and cash assistance. In addition, some beneficiaries requested female winter jackets and sweaters to be larger. Families said the assistance helped them withstand the harsh winter circumstances.

Livelihood

UNHCR is conducting assessments in collaboration with its partners to identify and prioritize targeted locations for the 2022 livelihoods programme. At the same time, UNHCR field teams are monitoring the small business start-up support provided in 2021 to follow up with beneficiaries and identify areas of improvement to be considered for the 2022 programme. In 2021, UNHCR supported Syrians to establish sewing workshops, grocery and detergent shops, car maintenance and clothing stores. Around five months after receiving UNHCR support, the families visited in April said they were more economically independent, and their financial security had improved. In total in 2021, UNHCR provided 1,700 people with small business start-up support.

UNHCR staff visited a displaced woman in Tartous Governorate who received entrepreneurship training and support to start a sewing business. UNHCR/E. Kabbas

Shelter and Infrastructure

UNHCR implements a range of shelter interventions. In camps, UNHCR distributes tents, 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, water and sanitation facilities. 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.

UNHCR started distributing materials for the repair of doors and windows, and water and sanitation facilities. So far this year around 600 families have already received shelter assistance and 500 families have received water and sanitation assistance in Homs and Hama Governorates. Meanwhile in Rural Damascus, around 100 families received shelter assistance in April to repair doors and windows.

In April, a UNHCR Country Office team conducted a two-day mission to the Dar'a Governorate in southern Syria to visit completed shelter projects, a school and a recently repaired borehole in Kherbet Ghazala and Sheikh Maskine towns. The team also visited completed shelter projects in Dar'a Al-Balad and assessed damaged houses with a view to repair them during 2022.

Assistance to Refugees

Awareness campaign on new residency regulations

On 15 March, a new Law No. 12/2022 which regulates the residency and entry of non-Syrians to Syria was issued amending law No. 2/2014. The new law increased the fees of residency permits and increased the fines for overstaying the residency period. Overstays exceeding six months include a prison sentence of one to six months. UNHCR lawyers are conducting information sessions in Damascus and Rural Damascus for refugees and asylum-seekers to be aware of these new regulations.

Registration

Registration and providing documentation are key to ensuring the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria. At the end of April, 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 have been biometrically enrolled.

In April, UNHCR renewed identification cards for almost 1,000 people. These documents provide protection against refoulement, ensure access to basic rights and assistance, and facilitate freedom of movement.

Refugee status determination (RSD)

UNHCR uses RSD procedures to help asylum-seekers realize their rights under international law. So far in 2022, UNHCR interviewed 37 cases comprising 85 individuals. In addition, 35 assessed cases comprising 89 individuals were submitted for review. So far this year, 30 cases comprising 79 individuals were recognized as refugees enabling them to access protection and access to basic services. UNHCR also continued to provide counselling on the RSD process and individual cases through its hotline. Inquiries received during April were primarily related to the status of individual cases and requests for cash assistance.

Resettlement and complementary pathways

UNHCR counselled 48 individuals on their resettlement cases in April providing them with information on their case status and the limited opportunities available for resettlement.

Cash-Based Assistance

UNHCR provides multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG) to the most vulnerable refugee families. UNHCR enrols families for MPCG assistance on a bi-monthly basis (every two months) and beneficiaries' continued eligibility is also reviewed every two months. Vulnerability is determined using either a scoring system based on demographics, 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 4,400 refugee families received their entitlements in March and April 2022.

Protection Sector Update

During the first quarter of 2022, 64 Protection and Community Service Sector partners carried out around 928,000 protection interventions in 14 governorates, over 200 sub-districts and 1,200 communities/neighbourhoods.

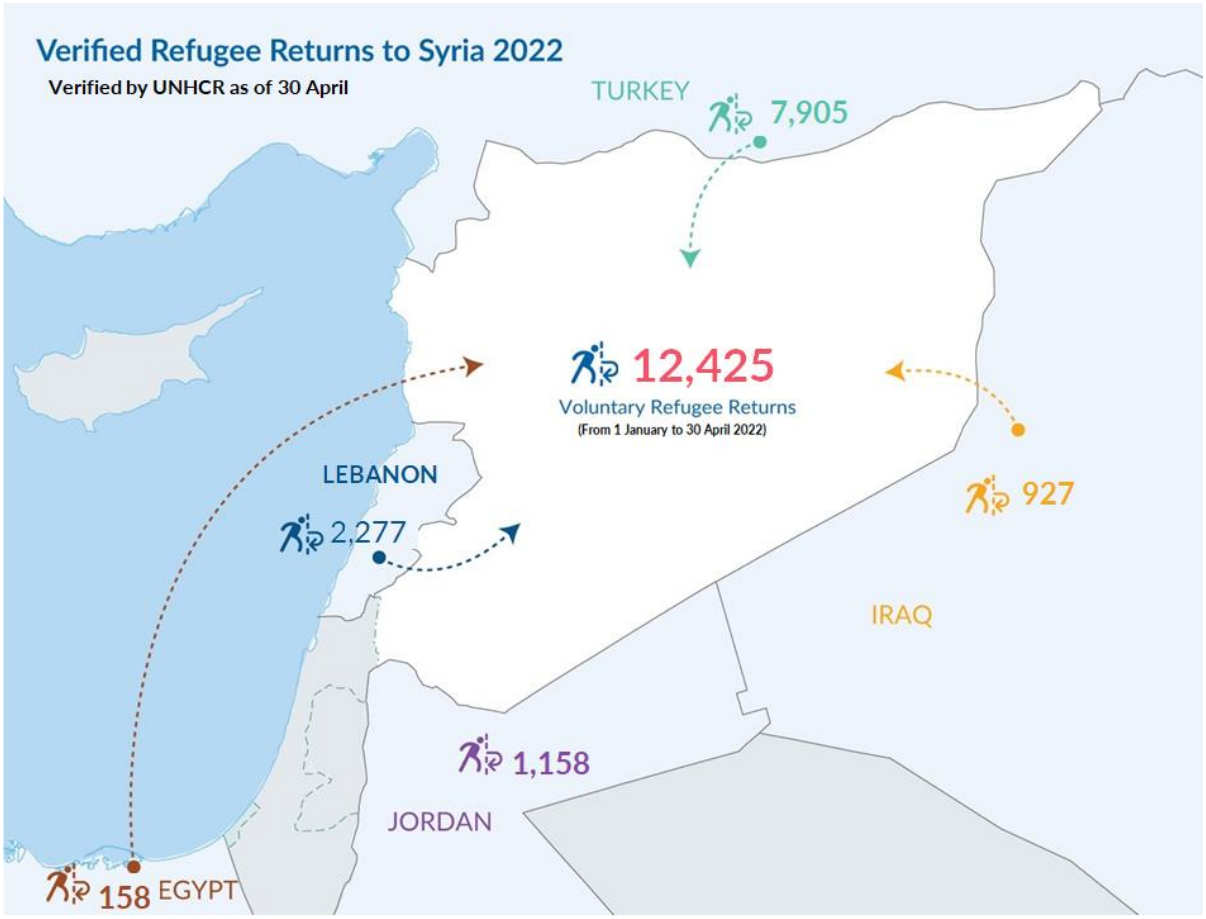
In April, the Protection Sector participated in the first UN inter-sector mission to Al-Hajar Al-Aswad area in Rural Damascus Governorate. The aim of the mission was to conduct an initial needs assessment, visit several neighbourhoods and service facilities and meet relevant authorities such as the Head of the Municipality.

In north-east Syria, the Al-Hol Protection Working Group met on 27 April, covering different protection issues including the ongoing registration exercise for Iraqi returns, new standard operating procedures, working modalities during curfews, cases located in the camp's safe zone and sexual exploitation and abuse risks related to water shortages in the camp. Furthermore, the Protection Sector resumed discussions with camp management on the 'Registration and Identification Guidelines' developed for new arrivals to the camps.

Returns

In April 2022, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 4,000 individual refugees from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. This brought the total number of returnees in 2022 to over 12,400. 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 2021, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of a total of 315,600 individual refugees[1].

In April, a meeting of the Return and Reintegration Working Group (RRWG) took place in Damascus. The meeting was chaired by the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and attended by Heads of UN Agencies and international NGOs. It provided an update on the work of the Technical Working Group (TWG) co-chaired by UNHCR and UNDP as well as next steps relating to the rollout of the joint area-based return support (ABRS) approach.



[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 5 May 2022

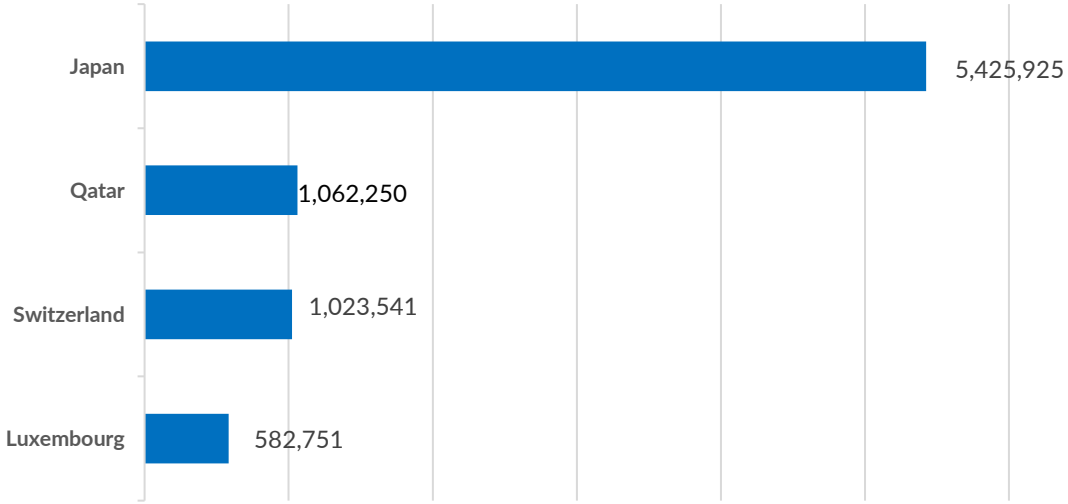
UNHCR Syria is grateful to all donors for the critical support provided with earmarked and unearmarked funding.

CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

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

US$ 33,969,859

as of 5 May 2022



OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

United States of America 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** 19.9 million | **France** 18.5 million | **Switzerland** 18.4 million | **Private donors** Japan 14.9 million | **Belgium** 11.9 million | **Ireland** 11.8 million | **Italy** 10 million

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