

# Refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria

January - September 2022

**13,883**  
refugees

**8,784**  
asylum-seekers

**209** new individuals  
registered  
**167** individuals recognized  
as refugees

## Population Demographics



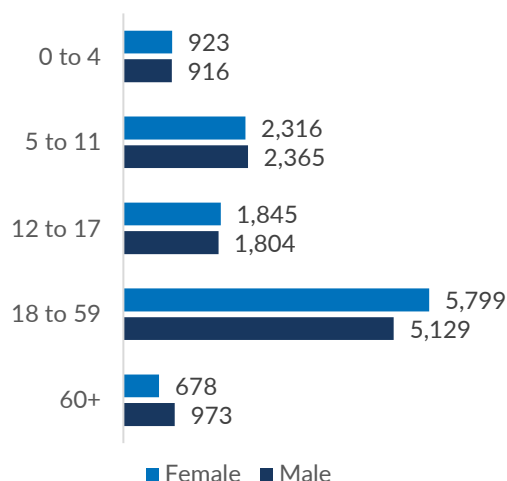
7% of refugees  
are elderly

45% of refugees  
are children

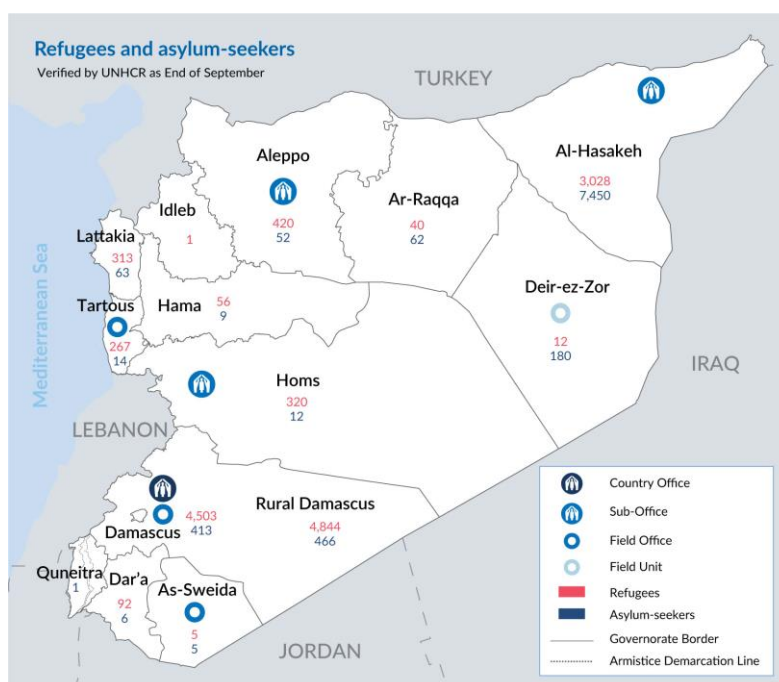
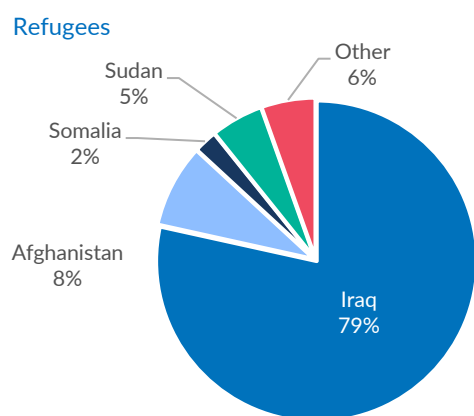
22,748  
Total population

51% of refugees  
have special needs

## Age Distribution



## Country of Origin





## Registration and Identity Management

Registration of people seeking international protection is critical, as it enables the **early identification of individuals with specific needs** and their **referral to available protection responses**. Additionally, registration provides comprehensive population data needed for programme planning, including for shelter, food, health, water and sanitation, cash-based interventions and other forms of assistance.

In Syria, UNHCR identification cards provided to refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR constitute proof of legal identity, can prevent arbitrary arrest and *refoulement*, and **facilitate greater freedom of movement**. The cards also enable refugees and asylum-seekers to apply for **legal residency**, **register vital events** (particularly birth registration) and access basic assistance in Syria.

During the third quarter of 2022, UNHCR registered **209 new individuals** and issued **4,890 identification cards**.



## Refugee Status Determination

Refugee Status Determination (RSD) is the legal or administrative process by which governments or UNHCR determine whether a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international, regional or national law. RSD is often a **vital process in helping refugees realize their rights under international law**. In agreement with the Government of Syria, UNHCR conducts RSD for asylum-seekers in the country.

During the reporting period, interviews were conducted for **84 cases (169 individuals)**, **96 cases (242 individuals)** were submitted for review, and **122 cases (301 individuals)** were reviewed. **281 decisions** were taken, out of which **68 cases (167 individuals)** were recognized as refugees, and **44 cases (104 individuals)** were rejected.

An **RSD hotline** is fully operational, providing counselling on the process and status to asylum-seekers and refugees on their individual cases. In the third quarter of 2022, UNHCR received over **165** calls relating primarily to status of individual cases and requests for cash assistance.



## Resettlement

UNHCR Syria identifies and submits a few cases for resettlement including highly vulnerable refugees. During the reporting period, three refugees were submitted to resettlement countries (one to Sweden and two to Australia) under the unallocated quota. One refugee was accepted to Sweden. In addition, UNHCR facilitated the departure of 30 individuals under resettlement, privately sponsored refugee programmes, and humanitarian visas.

As many refugees are keen on resettlement, although resettlement opportunities remain very limited, the Resettlement hotline offers regular counselling to refugees, providing accurate information on the status of individual cases and trying to manage expectations. A total of **769 individuals** were counselled about their resettlement cases as by the end of the third quarter of 2022.



## Community-based protection

There are **126** UNHCR-supported **community centres**, of which **2** centres were established and implemented under the leadership of the community groups and located in north-east Syria, where many refugees and asylum seekers reside. UNHCR-supported community centres are

designed as a “one- stop shop” which is critical to reach to the people in need, particularly in remote areas where availability of services is scarce. Moreover, community centres cooperate with other facilities and service providers to ensure complementarity in service provision. Refugees and asylum-seekers have access to all UNHCR-supported community centres and can benefit from variety of protection interventions.

UNHCR also engages **123 refugee outreach volunteers** (RORVs) of different nationalities in Tartous, Latakia, Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Al-Hassakeh governorates. The RORVs promote community engagement and empower youth to design and lead community-based projects. Additionally, through follow-ups and home visits, the volunteers identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable households either directly or through referrals to community centres, other service providers including charity and local organizations or government entities.



### **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support**

During the reporting period, **554** refugees and asylum-seekers received **mental health and psychosocial support services** (MHPSS), including individual and group counselling, with a smaller number referred to specialized mental health services such as psychiatrists and psychotherapists.

**66** persons with disabilities and **8** older persons received services and support from home-based programs that enhance their independence, provide them with household services, and connect them with activities organised at community centres such as educational and social/recreational activities.

UNHCR distributed medical and general in-kind assistance to **512** refugees and asylum-seekers, for instance wheelchairs and hearing aids, to help restore their sense of dignity, prevent harmful coping mechanisms, and reduce the financial burden on them and their caregivers.

UNHCR has identified the lack of adult diapers as one of the most pressing needs, with high numbers of marginalized older persons and persons with disability requesting support. During the reporting period, UNHCR distributed adult diapers to **486** refugees and asylum-seekers.



### **Child Protection**

UNHCR and partners have conducted **182** awareness-raising sessions in Damascus, and Tel Hamees and Al-Hol camp in the Al-Hasakeh Governorate targeting **3,626** refugee children and their caregivers. The awareness sessions covered topics on various child protection risks as well as on capacity-building for children. As a result of the awareness raising sessions, a positive impact was observed on the children's capacities and skillsets, especially in areas where there is lack of schools.

**Six** refugee and asylum-seeking children clubs and child welfare committees were established in Damascus, Al-Hol camp and Tal Hamees in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. The members of the child welfare committees and children's clubs received several trainings, including on their role in the communities as well as child protection basics and referral mechanisms.

A total of **114** refugee and asylum-seeking children received tailored case management services. The main identified risks in north-east Syria were child labour, child neglect, and child maltreatment, while in Damascus the top risks were drop-out of children from school and lack of documentation. As a consequence of the provided services, positive improvements on the children's daily life, relationships with their families, friends at home and school, and psychosocial well-being were observed.

During the third quarter of 2022, UNHCR Syria facilitated a Best Interest Procedures (BIP) training for UNHCR staff and partners to implement BIP for refugee and asylum-seeking children on a regular basis.



### Gender-based violence

Since the beginning of 2022, UNHCR and partners identified and supported **111** refugee and asylum-seeker survivors of **gender-based violence (GBV)** with psychosocial services, livelihood opportunities, legal aid and material assistance. The survivors were linked with support networks within their communities with the support of outreach volunteers.

Additionally, UNHCR conducted **232** GBV awareness sessions on psychological violence, deprivation of resources, opportunities and services, child marriage, sexual harassment, and physical violence, targeting **4,530** adolescent and adult women in Rural Damascus and in Tal Hamees and Al-Hol camp in the Al-Hasakeh governorate, where a large number of refugee communities are located. As a result of the awareness-raising sessions on behavioural changes, higher levels of awareness and implementation of prevention measures designed by the communities were observed.

UNHCR distributed risk reduction kits (including hygiene materials and other items), which enhanced the dignity of the beneficiaries and provided them with essential items necessary for their safety and personal hygiene.

During the reporting period, **two** refugee **women's committees** were established in north-east Syria to enhance the role of women in decision-making and designing activities inside refugee camps.



### Legal Assistance

**Lack of identity and travel documents, irregular status, and limited knowledge on national legislation and procedures** are the main legal challenges encountered by refugees and asylum-seekers in Syria, affecting their ability to secure residency and register vital events, as well as limiting their freedom of movement and access to basic rights.

In response to some of these challenges, UNHCR provides **legal assistance including counselling and support for legal interventions before courts and administrative bodies**.

These legal services are provided on range of issues, such as **refoulement, civil documentation, registration of vital events (particularly birth registration), exit visas, prevention and response to GBV, and child protection issues**.

During 2022 and as of end of September, **2,313** refugees and asylum-seekers benefitted from UNHCR legal assistance programmes.