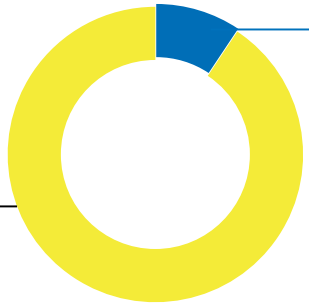
WHOLE OF SYRIA
Emergency Response to the Earthquake - Update #4
9 March 2023

Damage caused by the earthquake in Jableh, Latakia Governorate.
Photo: ©UNHCR/S. Sawas

$51.3 million

UNHCR's financial requirements for the earthquake emergency response in Syria, **targeting 385,000 individuals**



Funded
$5.2 million
10%

Gap:
$46.1 million
90%

8.8 million
people are **affected** by the earthquake in Syria

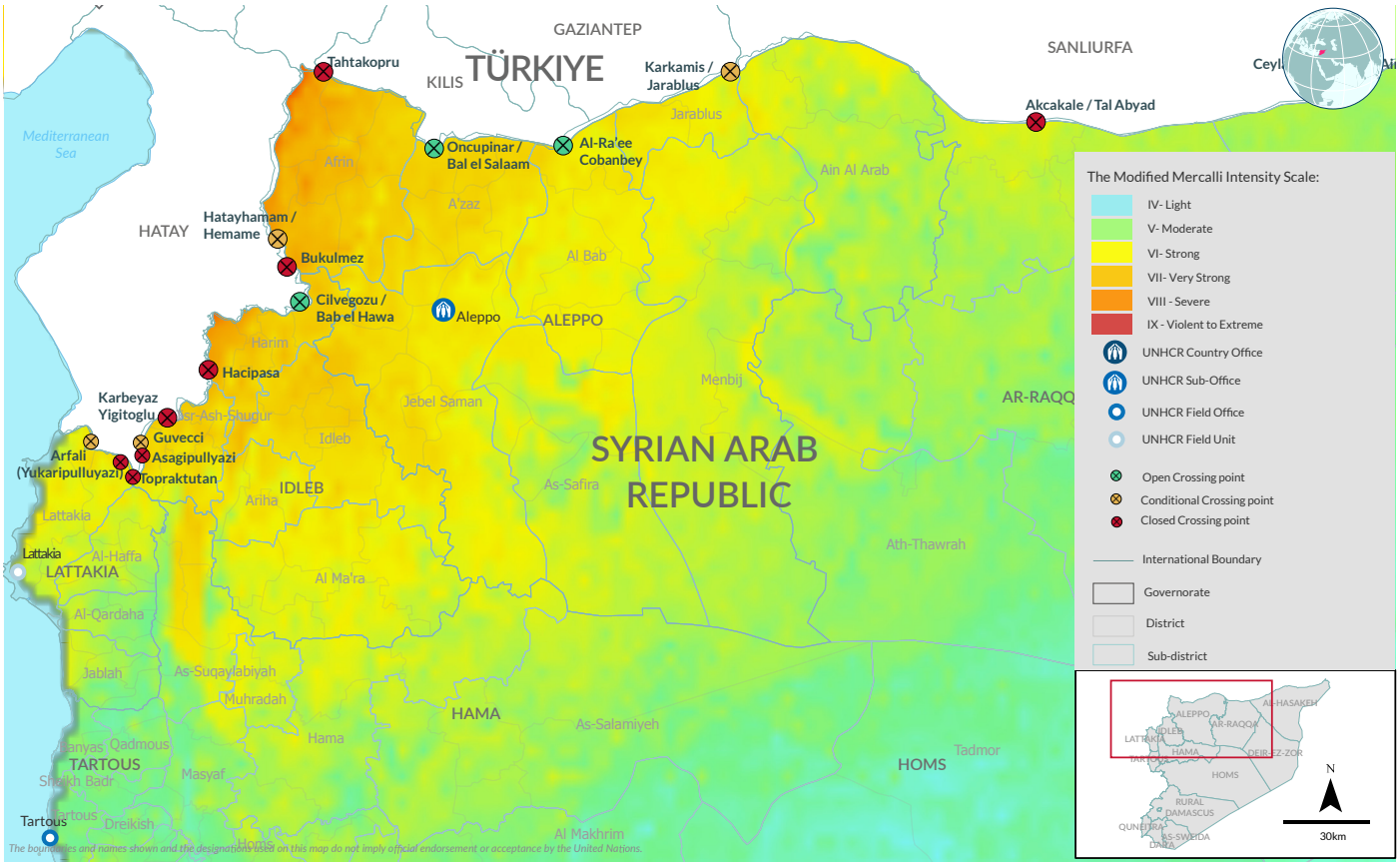
281,340
people reached with protection services in the whole of Syria

38,495 CRI kits[1]
distributed in the whole of Syria, reaching **186,975** people

3,893 tents
distributed in north-west Syria, reaching **19,465** people

[1] *A Core Relief Items (CRI) kit includes the following items: high-thermal blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, solar lamps and sleeping mats.*

Earthquake affected areas



Overview of Developments

In Syria, an estimated **8.8 million individuals** have been affected by the earthquakes. Over **1,400 deaths** and **2,350 injuries** have been reported by the Syrian Ministry of Health. The Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI) Sector, led by UNHCR, estimates that the homes of approximately **2.7 million** people inside Syria have sustained various levels of damage because of the earthquakes.

The earthquakes heavily impacted north-west Syria (NWS), a region where **4.1 million people depend on humanitarian assistance**, the majority of whom are women and children. **Over 4,500 deaths** and **8,700 injuries** have been reported according to the Health Cluster, mainly in the districts of Harim, Afrin and Jebel Saman. The earthquakes have affected at least 96 communities and 35 sub-districts in NWS; more than **10,600 buildings** have been partially or completely destroyed,[2] leaving an estimated **55,000 households** as displaced, either within or between assessed communities.

UNHCR Emergency Response

Response in Syria

In Syria, UNHCR is leading the Protection and SNFI Sectors and working in close coordination with other sectors to effectively assist families affected by the earthquakes. Since the onset of the emergency, UNHCR and its partners have been providing protection services, core relief items and shelter support to thousands of families staying at collective shelters and hosted by local communities, particularly the most vulnerable such as female-headed households, elderly people, and people with disabilities.

On 7 March, UNHCR and its partners started emergency cash distributions to families displaced by the earthquakes and whose houses were evaluated as uninhabitable. As of 9 March, 34 households (125 individuals) have cashed out their entitlements in Hama and rural Hama, which will support them to address their most pressing needs such as shelter material to fix damages on their houses, relief items, and food. UNHCR is looking into expanding the emergency cash assistance programme to other Governorates, such as Aleppo and Latakia.

[2] *OCHA - North-West Syria: Situation Report - 9 March 2023*

Protection

Since the beginning of the earthquake emergency response, the UNHCR-led Protection Sector and its partners have carried out around **245,000 protection interventions**, mainly in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous and Hama. UNHCR and partners reached a total of approximately **18,000** affected individuals with awareness sessions on identified needs such as gender-based violence (GBV) support and legal assistance; **13,440** children through community-based child protection activities; and **9,400** individuals with psychological first aid (PFA).

Complaints from families affected by the earthquakes are channelled to UNHCR and members of the Protection Sector through feedback and complaint mechanisms that had been established in the UNHCR-supported community centres prior to the earthquakes, and through staff members, mobile units, and outreach volunteers. UNHCR is also liaising with partners to ensure community consultations are in place prior to and during relocations of affected families to other collective shelters, in line with rights-based, needs-based and community-based approaches.

To date, UNHCR and partners have provided protection assistance to approximately 310 individuals in the southern governorates, mostly displaced from Latakia and Aleppo due to the earthquakes. As part of the response plan, child protection, GBV, and psychosocial support (PSS) case managers started linking the identified cases with several services by referring them to recreational activities, medical in-kind assistance, awareness sessions on GBV and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and enrollment of children in schools.

A UNHCR partner provided services benefiting 470 displaced individuals in rural Damascus. The services included home visits and protection assessments, medical assistance (medical check-ups and medicines), legal aid, PFA and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) activities.

Meanwhile, families originally from Deir-ez-Zor who were displaced for years in Aleppo and Latakia and lost their temporary homes due to the earthquakes, have returned to Deir-ez-Zor, even though their houses are destroyed there as well. In Ar-Raqqa, many people are living in damaged houses and several others remain displaced. Due to the increasing number of people in need of MHPSS after the earthquakes, the MHPSS sub-working group for north-east Syria agreed to develop a service mapping of all the actors in north-east Syria and a referral pathway to ensure that people can easily access much needed services.

An inter-agency minimum package of services has been launched this week, based on results from multi-sectoral assessments, aiming at enhancing coordination between actors and ensuring collective shelters are receiving the same set of assistance and services. The minimum package consists of relief items (mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, solar lamps, and winter clothing kits); nutrition; protection (PSS for individuals and groups, PFA, and dignity kits); water, sanitation, and hygiene; food; and shelter. In Aleppo, UNHCR and protection partners provided PSS and PFA in 39 collective shelters, following the inter-agency minimum package of services. Among these collective shelters, three have been identified as having high protection concerns, particularly sexual exploitation and abuse and GBV.

A displaced man plays the oud in a collective shelter in Latakia Governorate, to ease the impact of the earthquake on his wife and others staying at the collective shelter. Photo: ©UNHCR/S. Sawas

Core relief items

As of 9 March, UNHCR had distributed approximately **30,500 core relief item (CRI) kits** reaching a total of **147,000 affected individuals** in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama and south Idleb Governorates. UNHCR has also distributed additional some **110,000 relief items** to affected families, including winter jackets, winter clothing kits, rubber boots and adult diapers. Relief items are being released regularly from UNHCR warehouses in Aleppo, Tartous and Homs for distribution to affected families.

On 7 March, a referral pathway for provision of emergency NFI assistance was developed in Latakia, with a focal point assigned in the Operations Room, established at the Governor's office, for coordination of emergency NFIs through a call center. Since then, data from 20 municipalities in need of NFIs have been received through the call center and shared with UNHCR staff, who referred them to partners accordingly.

Shelter

Efforts are ongoing to identify midterm transitional shelters so that some of the current ones, especially schools, can resume their regular activities. In the meantime, UNHCR is coordinating with legal partners to ensure displaced families have the proper documentation to prove that they cannot return to their homes, and thus need to stay at the collective shelters. UNHCR legal partners are joining the technical assessment committees to support affected families in obtaining proof that their houses are collapsed or been damaged.

From a total of 235 collective shelters active in Aleppo a few days after the 6 February earthquakes, only 83 collective shelters remain operational in the Governorate. The transition from a short-term shelter solution to a medium-term solution is ongoing. As previously reported, the 17 unused schools that had been identified by authorities, together with UNHCR-led SNFI sector and other sectors, are being rehabilitated to become collective shelters. UNHCR continues working in close coordination with the Aleppo Operations Room to find suitable shelter solutions for the families affected by the earthquakes.

Cross-border response in north-west Syria

UNHCR is leading the coordination of three clusters – Shelter/NFI, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Protection – in close partnership with the Humanitarian Liaison Group, local and international NGOs, and the Whole of Syria coordination structure, and providing direct assistance through its partners.

Since the Government of Syria accepted that UN staff can cross into NWS from Gaziantep, 19 UN missions have been organized to meet with local officials, NGOs and the community. The Shelter/NFI Cluster conducted a technical mission to NWS together with IOM, UNICEF and the WASH Cluster on 1 March to assess the shelter conditions in reception centers hosting families displaced by the earthquake in Azaz, Aleppo. The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster facilitated on 9 March the first Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) mission to monitor conditions and needs gaps at reception centres in Iqraa, Bardakli and Al-Kawthar Reception centres in Idleb Governorate.

UNHCR's core relief items distribution in Jebel Saman, Daret Azza, Aleppo. Photo: ©WATAN

Shelter and Core relief items

Over 690 trucks loaded with aid provided by six UN agencies have crossed the Bab Al-Hawa, Bab Al-Salam and Al-Ra'ee border-crossings since the earthquake. UNHCR has participated in 13 convoys to date:

Delivered

Crossing Points	86 UNHCR trucks	9,300 CRI Kits	5,300 tents	4 Rubb halls*	300 RHU**
Bab Al-Hawa	60	6,250	3,500	4	300
Bab Al-Salam	20	2,300	1,800	-	-
Al-Ra'ee	6	750	-	-	-

**temporary warehouse*
***Refugee Housing Unit*

Upcoming

Date	Crossing point	UNHCR trucks	CRI Kits	Tents	RHU
Upcoming 14 March	Bab Al-Salam	6	900	200	-
Upcoming 15 March	Bab Al-Salam	6	800	200	-
Upcoming 16 March	Bab Al-Hawa	11	500	900	200

Assistance distribution as of 9 March:

Tents 3,893 distributed
19,465 individuals reached

CRI Kits 7,995 distributed
39,975 individuals reached

Thanks to stock already prepositioned in NWS and the expansion of its delivery assistance following the earthquake, **UNHCR** has managed to quickly distribute CRI kits and tents to people in need. UNHCR's partner WATAN continued to support communities across Aleppo and Idleb with the distribution of 997 CRI kits from 7 to 9 March. To provide additional shelter solutions, on 9 March, the first batch of 300 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) was transported to NWS, with another 200 planned for next week. Since 6 February, a total of **3,893 tents** have been installed,[3] and **7,995 CRI kits** have been distributed.[4] The distribution of assistance is fully coordinated with the Shelter/NFI Cluster.

Tents installation in Janudiyeh, Yaqubiyeh, in Idleb.
Photo: ©WATAN

Shelter/NFI Cluster members, led by UNHCR, are responding with emergency shelter and NFIs in affected communities, reception centres, existing camps and collective centres. As of 8 March, Shelter/NFI Cluster members have distributed NFI kits to over 119,900 individuals and tents to over 59,500 individuals. Around 11,900 individuals have been reached with the provision of emergency shelter kits[5]. Partners have reported an increase in prices for shelter rehabilitation as well as

[3] *Tents were distributed in Andnaniyeh – Farjein, Ariha, Armala, Armanaz, Atma, Baksariya, Harim, Hassaniyeh – Hatya, Kelly, Maland, Qanniyeh, Sarmada and Yaqubiyeh communities in Idleb and Afrin, Atareb, Bulbul, Dowaibeq, Fadrah, Jandairis, Kafrantin, Qatoura, Ra'el, Sejjo, Sijraz camp, Suran and Tuwama communities in Aleppo.*

[4] *CRI kits were distributed in Aghtrin, Al Bab, Baruz, Bulbul, Fadrah, Jandairis, Kafrantin, Qatoura, Sandara and Sejjo in Aleppo, and Armanaz, Armanaz Biret, Azar, Batenta, Darkosh, Foz - Zuf, Idleb, Jdidet Eljisr, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Kafraya, Kherbet Eljoz, Mudiah - Luxin, Qanniyeh, and, Salqin and Taftanaz communities in Idleb.*
CRI kits were distributed in Aghtrin, Al Bab, Bulbul, Fadrah, Jandairis, Kafrantin, Qatoura, Sandara and Sejjo in Aleppo, and Armanaz, Armanaz Biret, Azar, Batenta, Darkosh, Foz - Zuf, Idleb, Jdidet Eljisr, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Kafraya, Kherbet Eljoz, Mudiah - Luxin, Qanniyeh, and Salqin communities in Idleb.

[5] *Main targeted locations were Dana, Salqin, Maaret Tamsrin, Januhdiye, Armanaz and Harim sub-districts (in descending order) in Idleb and Jandairis, Afrin, Atareb, Daret Azza, A'zaz and Suran sub-districts (in descending order) in Aleppo*

challenges in responding to the huge needs for shelter components, winter items and fuel. Moreover, partners have reported that the quality of items procured in local markets is not in line with the minimum cluster recommendations. Capacity to conduct structural damage assessments is reportedly limited.

The Shelter/NFI Cluster Coordination team is receiving staffing support from the Global Shelter Cluster and UNHCR to cover critical staffing gaps and support the emergency response after the earthquake. Surge support will increase the team's capacity on technical matters including coordination of damage assessment and provide additional support to partners the earthquake response context and cross-border missions.

Protection

UNHCR's protection partners, Syrian Relief and Development (SRD) and SHAFAK, continue to conduct outreach activities and work inside their community centers, communal shelters and through mobile teams. On 6 and 7 March, partner SRD reached 368 individuals with community-based protection services. Since 9 February, at least **36,340 individuals** have been supported with protection activities, which include psychological first aid, psychosocial support, awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, case management and referrals to basic and specialized services, child protection activities, and legal counseling on civil status documentation. The emergency response efforts are taking place in Al Bab, Atareb, Azaz, Bazagh, Qabasim and Salama in Aleppo, as well as in Atma, Dana, Ehsem, Haranbush, Kafr, Maaret Qourqeena, Tamsrin, Takharim and Sarmada, in Idleb.

UNHCR's partners continue to report that targeted areas are overcrowded, limiting the availability of safe spaces where to conduct protection activities. Shelters are not fully equipped in terms of sanitation and there is not a sufficient number of tents on the ground to cover the extensive needs. An important level of seismophobia has been reported among the impacted population, further impacting the mental wellbeing of the population in NWS.

The Protection Cluster in coordination with the areas of responsibility (child protection, gender-based violence, mine action) launched its Earthquake Response Plan which focuses on: family reunification, legal, civil documentation and housing, land and property related issues, mapping and strengthening of community based mechanisms, tailored and specialized response to most affected population groups, prevention and response to child protection risks, and emergency gender-based violence service provision.

The initial findings of the rapid needs assessment conducted in 259 communities confirm that vulnerable population groups, such as persons and children with disabilities, women and children head of households and destitute older persons are the most affected. Other groups requiring tailored services include homeless persons, youth and persons with chronic illness. Although some of the risks existed prior to the earthquakes, the current conditions of overcrowding, separated families, homelessness and lack of service provision and documentation exacerbate exposure to trafficking and forced recruitment. Evictions, civil documentation and legal related issues are the main issues referred by key informants. In many of the communities, significant gaps remain in the provision of assistance and protection services, particularly for health, nutrition and shelter.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster and REACH have finalized the joint earthquake displacement monitoring situation report on Northern Aleppo. The report highlights key displacement triggers, trends, and conditions in displacement sites as well as return locations in the area.

The CCCM Cluster released the monthly IDP Sites Integrated Monitoring Matrix (ISIMM) for February 2023. By the end of February 2023, there are an estimated 1.9 million IDPs (362,051 families) hosted in 1,437 IDP sites across NWS. Of these, 80% are women and children, and close to 80,000 IDPs are reported to be persons with specific needs. Five new IDP sites were opened following the earthquake.

The CCCM Cluster has tracked more than 86,500 displacements between 6 and 17 February after the earthquake.[6] Departures principally occurred from Jandaris, followed by Salqin and Harim. The main locations where displaced people arrived included Dana, Salqin and Idleb sub-districts. Displacements are ongoing and the figure is expected to rise dramatically. Establishing reception centres for IDPs and safe spaces for women and girls are priorities. Many of the displaced families report fear of returning home, even when damages to their homes were cleared. The Cluster continued to receive reports of incidents in IDP sites. On 6 March, 23 IDP sites suffered from wind incidents in both Idleb and Aleppo. Over 250 tents and IDPs' belongings were destroyed or damaged.

[6] *This figure reflects the number of movements in February 2023 due to the earthquake, noting that individuals may have been exposed to multiple displacement, and that the reasons for moving may vary.*

Core relief items distribution in Badama-Kherbet Eljoz, Idleb.
Photo: ©WATAN

Donors

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to the earthquake response, with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds as well as those who have provided earmarked contributions.

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