Syrian Arab Republic

June-July 2024

The Syria crisis entered its fourteenth year in March 2024. The UN estimates that 16.7 million people need humanitarian assistance across the country – a 9 per cent increase from 2023.

The security situation in the country is unpredictable due to the current regional tension impacting relatively stable areas. The economic situation is increasingly dire. Economic deterioration is a major driver of needs.

UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, stateless people, and host communities based on identified needs and vulnerabilities.

HIGHLIGHTS

11,000

students from hard-to-reach areas were assisted by UNHCR to sit their national exams.

3

Border Health and Protection Support Points became fully operational in June and July, bringing the total number of these points to five.

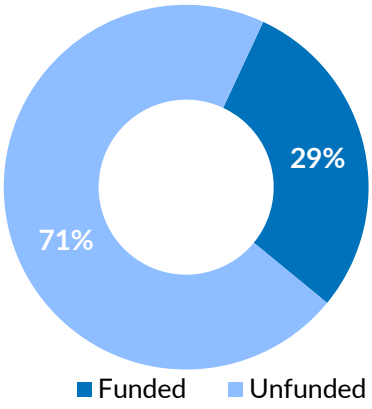
2,224

outreach volunteers assist vulnerable populations in all governorates who do not have easy access to the UNHCR-supported community centres.

FUNDING (AS OF 31 JULY 2024)

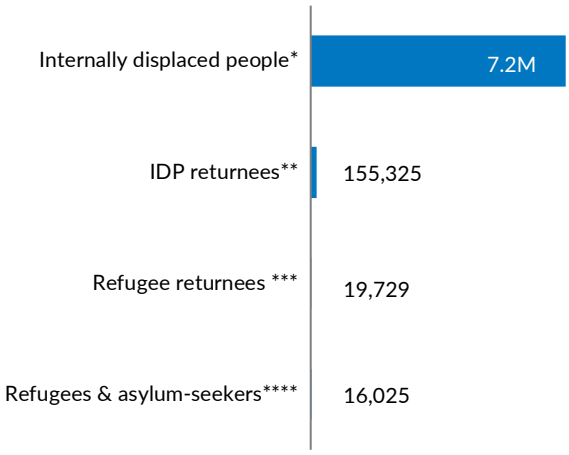
USD 466.6 million

requested for the Syria Operation in 2024



A family who recently returned to Abu Dali village in Idleb Governorate receive core relief items distributed by a UNHCR partner. H.Maarouf ©UNHCR

PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



** Source: 2024 HNO*
*** Source: OCHA, January-July 2023*
****Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2024*
***** Source: UNHCR, July 2024*

More information on UNHCR's operations in the Syrian Arab Republic, including north-west Syria, is available on Global Focus.

Operational Context

The 2024 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) estimates that over 16.7 million people need humanitarian assistance in Syria. This is the highest number of people in need since the beginning of the crisis. Syria also has one of the largest numbers of IDPs in the world (7.2 million). The 2024 HNO states that the humanitarian and economic indicators in Syria continue to deteriorate, and many basic services have collapsed. The February 2023 earthquakes have further compounded existing needs in a country that has experienced over 13 years of crisis.

UNHCR supports refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, host community members, and returnees (refugees and IDPs who have returned to their home areas) by providing assistance to those most in need using the *area-based* and *community-based approaches*. UNHCR's *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 geographic areas where the needs are greatest.

In 2024, UNHCR is working with 28 partners including international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs in all 14 governorates.

Operational Updates

Protection

- In line with its community-based protection approach, in July, UNHCR supported 113 community centres and 112 mobile units across the country. UNHCR is also engaging over 2,220 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.
- To reallocate resources to areas where needs are higher, UNHCR closed a community centre in Qamishli city to relocate it to a new area. Two community centres and one mobile unit in Aleppo Governorate were also closed, while implementing an exit strategy to link the concerned communities with alternative service providers.
- In June and July, UNHCR partners provided legal assistance through lawyers and legal outreach volunteers to over 69,400 individuals. The assistance included legal awareness raising, direct legal interventions provided mainly to IDPs for birth and marriage registration, as well as legal assistance on gender-based violence prevention and response. UNHCR facilitated two training courses of "Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media" (SCREAM), a curriculum-based child labour prevention programme. Partner staff from Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Damascus and Rural Damascus Governorates were trained to roll out the SCREAM curriculum in their respective community centres. This programme, developed by the International Labour Organization, aims to help educators enhance understanding and awareness of child labour among young people.
- On 12 June, the 2024 UNHCR NGO Awards were dedicated to three local organizations worldwide. One of the award-winning local organizations is Takatof Shababe Association which assists persons with disabilities, mainly returnees in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. UNHCR Syria supported the capacity-building of this newly established organization to initiate its first project for people with disabilities.
- On the occasion of World Refugee Day (20 June), UNHCR organized a variety of events across Syria with refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan and other countries. The refugees participated in dance and musical performances, talent shows, bazaars, cultural exhibitions, games for children, and sports activities. These events aimed to raise awareness about refugee rights, and promote cultural diversity and community integration, while highlighting challenges refugees have faced through interactive dialogue sessions.

A representative of the Takatof Shababe Association (far left) receives the 2024 UNHCR NGO Award in Geneva, in the presence of the UNHCR High Commissioner. ©UNHCR

Education

- Thousands of 9th and 12th grade students arrived from non-government-controlled areas in north-west and north-east Syria to sit their national exams in the government-controlled areas of Aleppo, Idleb, Damascus, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates. UNHCR and its partners supported the issuing of custody certificates for students whose guardians were unable to accompany them to government-controlled areas. Around 11,000 students benefited

from UNHCR's support, including some 5,500 who received national identity cards. In addition, UNHCR and partners provided students with psychosocial support, catch-up classes, awareness sessions and stationery items.

- UNHCR and its partners launched summer classes in eight community centres in Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Latakia Governorates. These classes aim to develop the students' learning skills and improve learning outcomes. The students also took part in cultural activities and talent development opportunities. Over 1,300 students benefited from these activities in June and July.

Core Relief Items

- In June and July, around 1,000 families (4,700 individuals) in Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh, Tartous and Idleb Governorates including those who recently returned to Sinjar and Khan Shaikhoun (Idleb Governorate) were assisted with core relief items.
- On 17 July, UNHCR Syria launched a campaign for free-of-charge eye examinations and the provision of reading glasses for people registered at the UNHCR-supported community centres who are above 43 years old. The reading glasses were donated by Flying Tiger Copenhagen, a private sector donor. In July alone, a total of 20,241 glasses were provided.

An outreach volunteer conducting an eye examination to assist Abdul Nasser Ashi in selecting appropriate reading glasses. ©E.Kabbas/UNHCR

Shelter

- In July, the High Relief Committee adopted the Shelter Sector and UNHCR's plan, which aims to support the housing of around 5,000 vulnerable families in cooperation with nine partners in all Syrian governorates. This includes projects related to water, sanitation, solarization, tent distribution and communal shelter renovation mainly for the new arrivals, in addition to the operation and maintenance of eight camps in north-east Syria.

Livelihoods

- As part of the entrepreneurship training, 465 individuals in Latakia, Tartous, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, and Homs Governorates participated in sessions on microfinance held at UNHCR-supported community centres. These sessions were conducted in coordination with microfinance institutions in Syria to raise awareness among participants on how to benefit from the existing national financial services. The training offered participants the knowledge to find alternative solutions to start or expand their businesses and make a sustainable income.

Cash Assistance

- In June and July, UNHCR provided 25 families (153 individuals) in Damascus and Rural Damascus Governorates with cash assistance to start up or expand their small businesses.

Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of the end of July, 16,025 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR. The majority of the registered refugees are from Iraq and reside primarily in urban areas in Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and Latakia Governorates. In June and July, UNHCR renewed the identification cards for over 1,560 refugees. The identification cards protect refugees against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.
- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** In June and July, four families (11 individuals) were recognized as refugees. This helps to ensure their protection from *refoulement* and detention due to irregular stay, and facilitates access to basic services.
- **Durable solutions:** In July, UNHCR, in close coordination with IOM Lebanon, facilitated the departure of eight families (16 individuals) to the UK and Australia. In addition, under the private sponsorship complementary pathway arrangements[1], one Syrian departed to Australia.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR provided regular multi-purpose cash assistance to 5,138 refugee and asylum-

[1] *Complementary pathways are safe and regulated avenues for persons in need of international protection that provide for a lawful stay in a third country where international protection needs are met.*

seeker families (14,367 individuals) during the reporting period.

- **Legal Assistance:** In June and July, UNHCR's legal teams and lawyers provided legal assistance to over 1,400 refugees and asylum-seekers. This included legal counselling, assistance related to residency and exit visas, legal response to gender-based violence, child protection issues as well as interventions to obtain personal civil documentation for Iraqi refugees in light of the latest instructions of the Iraqi Government to receive civil record extracts exclusively from Iraq.

Return

- Since January till the end of June 2024, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 19,729 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt[2]. In total, between 2016 and June 2024, UNHCR has verified or monitored the return of 411,922 individual refugees[3] to Syria.
- In June and July, the UNHCR-supported Border Health and Protection Support Points of Al-Arida and Joussieh (at the Syria-Lebanon border), as well as Kassab (at the Syria-Türkiye border), became fully equipped and operational. The Jdaidet Yabous point (at the Syria-Lebanon border) and the Nassib point (at the Syria-Jordan border) were already operational. The Dabbousieh point (at the Syria-Lebanon border) will become operational in August.
  All these points provide information on available services in the areas of return for refugees coming from neighbouring countries as well as counselling and referral services for those who register with UNHCR. The Border Health and Protection Support Points also offer access to internet or a hotline to communicate with relatives, basic medical attention and other amenities. Furthermore, they provide the physical capacity to observe daily movements at the borders.
- Following the Lebanese General Security Office (GSO)-facilitated return movement of 238 Syrians from Lebanon on 11 July, UNHCR and its partners have further reached out directly to the returnees in their areas of return to better understand their situation there and to support their needs. The identified challenges include housing repairs, access to civil documentation, and access to basic services such as medical, educational and psychosocial support. UNHCR directed the returnees to its closest community centres where suitable services for shelter and legal assistance can be accessed.
- On 18 July, UNHCR officially launched the "*Establishment/Reinforcement of Local Participatory Platforms*"-phase of the area-based return support approach in Tadamon and Yarmouk areas in Damascus Governorate.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- Return of Syrian Refugees (July 2024)
- UNHCR Syria Factsheet (June 2024)
- UNHCR Syria: Area-based Programming and Humanitarian Early Recovery factsheet (April 2024)
- UNHCR Syria- 2024 Needs Overview (February 2024)
- UNHCR Syria: 2024 Implications of Underfunding in Syria
- Legal Assistance factsheet (Q4 2023)
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) factsheet (Q4 2023)
- Education factsheet (Q4 2023)
- Child Protection factsheet (Q4 2023)
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) factsheet (Q4 2023)
- Refugees and Asylum-seekers factsheet (Q4 2023)
- Community Centres factsheet (Q4 2023)
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) factsheet (Q4 2023)
- UNHCR Syria: Community-Led and Youth-Led Initiatives factsheet (Q4 2023)
- UNHCR Syria: 2023 Key Achievements
- UNHCR Syria: Achievement Dashboard (December 2023)

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LINKS: UNHCR Global Focus | UNHCR Syria Data Portal | UNHCR Syria Website | UNHCR Syria Twitter (@UNHCRinSYRIA) | UNHCR Syria Facebook

[2] *Provisional figures pending further verification*
[3] *Provisional figures pending further verification*