Shelter support

May 2026

During the protracted conflict in Syria, millions of people were forced to flee their homes internally or abroad. In 2026, around 5.5 million people remain displaced inside Syria.
Housing units in Syria were extensively destroyed or severely damaged during the conflict. Over 6 million people require shelter assistance in 2026.

Since the political transition in December 2024, some 1.6 million Syrians and 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) returned to their areas including 1.1 million IDPs in camps/sites.

In the past year, over 260 sites were closed or decommissioned. Consolidation and transition efforts for the remaining 1,275 sites hosting estimated 870,436 individuals are expected to continue in line with the Government's "No camps, no tents vision". Support to refugee and IDP returnees from closed sites remains a UNHCR priority.

Large-scale returns are contributing to increased demand for housing repairs, restoration of basic services, and durable housing solutions in areas of origin.

Damage to public infrastructure including civil registry and cadastral offices, immigration centres, and key economic facilities, continues to disrupt public service delivery. This also complicated property verification and claims processes, which are critical for accessing shelter assistance. Restoring these functions and strengthening access to public services are key enablers for effective shelter and return programming.

The humanitarian response must balance return support with ongoing emergency preparedness, including readiness for natural disasters and continued assistance for population still living in emergency shelters or informal sites. Ensuring adequate living conditions is essential to safe, sustainable, and dignified returns.

Emergency response

Camp maintenance

UNHCR maintains contingency stocks, including family tents, as part of its emergency preparedness for sudden displacement. The standard UNHCR family tent accommodates up to five people.
As of 2026, UNHCR's stocks include approximately 16,000 tents, sufficient to shelter approximately 80,000 people. During 2026, UNHCR supported Akburhan camp in Aleppo Governorate, which hosts people relocated from Al-Hol camp in north-east Syria, with general site improvements. UNHCR also distributed replacement tents in camps in north-west and north-east Syria to replace damaged shelters and delivered general infrastructure support to remaining camps according to identified needs and priorities. In addition, UNHCR maintains capacity to support collective shelter repairs, and site improvement in Herjalleh (Rural Damascus), and in Deir-ez-Zor after flooding affected the area and displaced people.

UNHCR supports site improvements and tent rehabilitation at Akburhan camp in Aleppo. ©UNHCR

Rehabilitation of collective shelters

Outside of camps, public buildings at times accommodate displaced people, who lack access to other forms of housing options when an emergency occurs. UNHCR rehabilitates selected public buildings and upgrade them into mid-term transitional collective shelters.

Rehabilitation includes repairs of shared washing facilities, entrances, staircases, roofs, and plumbing systems to ensure safe, dignified and habitable living conditions for residents. Once the emergency ends, these buildings can be restored to their original function, benefiting host communities.

Long term shelter support

Housing repairs Programme solutions

This programme supports the rehabilitation of minor to moderately damaged homes of the most vulnerable returnees enabling them to live in safe and dignified living conditions. Close coordination with municipalities ensured verification of structural soundness and ownership.

This support is delivered through direct implementation via commercial contractors as well as under partnership arrangements in areas witnessing high returns. UNHCR uses a mixed modality of in-kind repairs or cash assistance depending on assessed damage levels and beneficiary capacity and preference.

A damaged house is repaired in Maaret Al-Nouman, Idleb Governorate. ©UNHCR/H.Maarouf

In 2026, over 4,000 houses are planned to benefit from in-kind shelter repairs, along with 4,700 households through the cash-for-shelter support. In 2025, UNHCR and its partners supported the repair of 3,790 houses and provided cash for shelter to 1,031 households.

Overall Shelter Targets per Governorate

Governorate	Total	Governorate	Total
Aleppo	2,311	Latakia	297
Idleb	1,300	Ar-Raqqa	466
Damascus	50	Deir-ez-Zor	990
Homs	600	As-Sweida	150
Rural Damascus	1,328	Dar'a	402
Hama	905	Tartous	-
Total			**8,799**

Housing Repair Programme 2026

4,064	4,735
Direct house repair (in kind)	**Cash for Shelter**

Cross-cutting renewable and sustainable energy solutions

In line with UNHCR's sustainable energy approach, renewable energy interventions continue to support protection, safe access to services, and climate-sensitive humanitarian response.

In 2025, UNHCR supported the installation of 5,496 solar streetlights, contributing to safer public spaces and improved access in displacement and return areas. UNHCR also continued solarization of civil registry offices to ensure the continuity of essential documentation services for returnees and vulnerable individuals.

Building on this progress, UNHCR plans to install over 10,500 additional solar streetlights in 2026, with a focus on protection-sensitive areas, return locations, and border crossings to facilitate safer and more dignified movement for returnees. UNHCR is also supporting the solarization of two border crossings points and providing 38 solar systems in and around collective shelters, vocational training centres, civil registry, cadastral, immigration and passport offices.

In addition, solar energy solutions will be integrated into selected livelihood infrastructure projects that require renewable energy systems, enhancing the sustainability and resilience of income-generating activities.

Basic social infrastructure upgrade

In the areas with high numbers of potential returnees, UNHCR is rehabilitating and equipping cadastral offices to address critical gaps in housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, which is a pre-condition for accessing damaged houses repair support. These interventions complement other projects by UNHCR and UN partners within the framework of the Area Based Return Support in high return locations. In 2025, UNHCR supported rehabilitation and solarization of immigration and cadastral offices, as well as livelihoods, vocational training centres, health centres (total 39 facilities).

Social infrastructure repair 2026					
15	**17**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**11,000**
cadastral offices	civil registry offices	immigration centre	School rehabilitation	vocational training centres	solar streetlights

- Repair of Dabbousieh bridge, immigration centre and customs building

As part of UNHCR's efforts to support access to basic services and infrastructure in areas of return, significant progress has been made at the Dabbousieh border crossing point (Homs-Lebanon). Stage one of the bridge repair rehabilitation is complete, with stage two planned for completion in early July, following damage to the bridge, during the 2024 regional conflict. In parallel, UNHCR has supported repairs to the immigration centre at the border and has begun rehabilitation of the customs building, including installation of a solar power system. These works are expected to restore basic services at the border crossing by mid-July.

Ongoing rehabilitation of the Dabbousieh bridge, including the immigration centre and customs building, to enhance cross-border movements. ©UNHCR

- Rehabilitation of the Immigration and Passports Centre

Following the damage sustained during events in late 2024, the rehabilitation of the Immigration and Passports Centre located in the Zablatani area in Damascus has become critical.

UNHCR is currently supporting the efforts to restore the functionality of the centre and enhance its capacity to provide legal identity documentation and ensure access to essential services for citizens.

The Immigration and Passports Centre in Al Zablatani, Damascus, prior to rehabilitation works. ©UNHCR/O.Kabalan

Implementation Arrangements

UNHCR implements housing and infrastructure projects through two modalities: direct implementation and partnerships with INGOs engaging engineers and technical experts with a countrywide presence. These engagements produce significant indirect benefits for the housing programme by strengthening local technical capacity with national engineers participating in planning, assessment, design, implementation and monitoring, gaining hands-on experience with complex recovery works.

UNHCR ensures adherence to Syrian construction standards and codes and involves consulting engineers at strategic and project levels, while advising partners to hire local engineers, skilled and semi-skilled labour. This approach strengthens local capacity, prioritizes affected people in programme delivery, and generates local capacity, employment and livelihoods. All project staff receive training on assessment tools and humanitarian principles, improving design quality, compliance, accountability and long-term sustainability of housing interventions.

UNHCR infrastructure partners
Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)
Secours Islamique France (SIF)
Watan
Syrian construction companies and consultancy office, engineering Syndicate