

# Syrian Arab Republic

December 2024

The Syria crisis entered its 14<sup>th</sup> 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 hostilities in Lebanon that escalated between 23 September and 27 November led to the influx of thousands of families from Lebanon to Syria.

The fall of the Syrian Government further exacerbated the situation after a coalition of armed forces launched an offensive and managed to control most parts of Syria including the capital on 8 December 2024.

The security situation in the country remains unpredictable and the economic situation is dire.

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

**57,700**

individuals have benefited from the repair of damaged houses and distribution of shelter materials since January 2024

**6,100**

refugee and asylum-seeker families benefited from unconditional winter grants

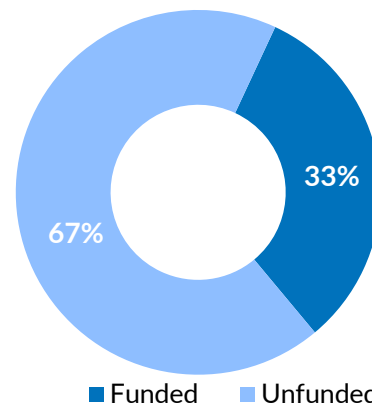
**15,500**

families are restoring irrigated areas after UNHCR and FAO rehabilitated three key irrigation canals and systems in Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, and Latakia Governorates

## FUNDING (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2024)

**USD 460.6 million**

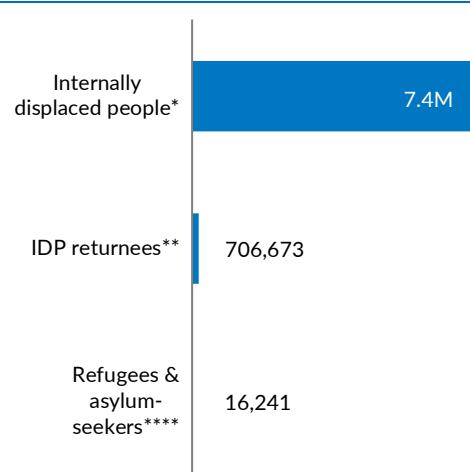
requested for the Syria Operation in 2024



## PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



Abdullah and his family fled Aleppo when a coalition of armed forces took control of the governorate. They walked 30km through a three-day journey until they reached Latakia city where they stayed in a collective shelter. UNHCR and partners provided core relief items and winter kits to the families in the shelter to help them overcome displacement challenges. ©E.Kabbas/UNHCR



\* Source: OCHA, June 2024

\*\* Source: Population Movement Reporting Tool, January 2025

\*\*\*\* Source: UNHCR, December 2024

## 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 (7.4 million).

The 2024 HNO states that the humanitarian and economic indicators in Syria continue to deteriorate, and many basic services have collapsed.

The recent political change in Syria and the influx of families from Lebanon due to the regional conflict, have further compounded existing needs in a country that 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

### Regular response



#### Protection

- Due to the vacuum caused by the sudden fall of the government in Syria, the security situation deteriorated until a new caretaker government was assigned. This affected some of UNHCR and partners' assets which were subject to damage and looting. In December, a total of 23 UNHCR-supported [community centres](#) out of 114 across Syria were affected, out of which 20 centres in Aleppo, Damascus, Latakia and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates became out of service. The community centres work in line with UNHCR's community-based protection approach and are supported by around 2,220 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.

- In December, 59 [community-led initiatives](#) were approved by UNHCR and its partners in Homs, Aleppo, As-Sweida, Dar'a, Quneitra, Deir-ez-Zor and Tartous Governorates involving the maintenance of schools and child friendly areas. Six other community-led initiatives were completed in December focusing on street cleaning in Damascus. The community-led initiatives are proposed and managed by communities to respond to challenges while contributing to social cohesion, life skills development, and poverty reduction.
- In December, UNHCR partners provided legal assistance through lawyers and legal outreach volunteers to over 19,500 individuals (334,000 since the beginning of the year). The assistance included legal awareness raising, legal counselling and direct legal interventions.
- In December, UNHCR conducted a training course for 16 focal points working with UN partners on gender-based violence prevention and response in Damascus and the coastal area. The training was the third of a series of trainings on the curriculum of the [Girl Shine](#) programme. The participants learned communication approaches with girls and ways to deliver sensitive content, respond to the diverse needs of adolescent girls, engage caregivers, and handle group disclosures with practice sessions. In Rural Damascus, 26 sessions of the Girl Shine programme were conducted which engaged over 460 girls and caregivers.



#### Core Relief Items

- In December, 21,827 families (95,445 individuals) in Al-Hasakeh, Idleb, Latakia, Hama, Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Rural Damascus, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor, Tartous, Dar'a, Quneitra, Damascus and As-Sweida Governorates, including those who recently returned to Syria from Lebanon and those displaced from Aleppo to other governorates, were assisted with core relief items, at the borders and at their final destination.
- The UNHCR Syria 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 was completed. Reading glasses were provided to over 113,400 people.



#### Shelter

- By the end of December, UNHCR in collaboration with partners continued to work on shelter projects planned for 2024. Over 57,700 individuals received emergency shelter support which included the repair of collective shelters, provision of around 7,800 tents,

and regular operation and maintenance of camps in north-east Syria.

- The repair of damaged houses and distribution of shelter materials continued throughout the year despite the significant challenges due to approval delays, the emergency in Lebanon, shortage of construction materials and fuel, and market instability. By December 2024, UNHCR managed to support around 7,900 individuals and will complete the pending projects by February 2025.
- UNHCR restored basic infrastructure in areas receiving returnees or IDPs. This included the repair of boreholes, rehabilitation of sewage systems, and installation of solar streetlights. From January till December, over 98,000 individuals benefited from these interventions.
- During the conflict in Lebanon, UNHCR not only fulfilled the immediate housing requirements at the borders with Lebanon but also established the infrastructure required to protect Syrian returnees and Lebanese refugees fleeing the conflict. This included installation of five prefabricated covered spaces to serve as temporary shelter for arrivals waiting at the borders, improving access to sanitation and water and waste disposal systems, deploying portable toilets, and installing illumination. UNHCR also renovated three collective shelters (two in rural Damascus and one in Tartous) to provide accommodation to around 1,000 families, mainly Lebanese refugees.



### Livelihoods

- From January to December, 4,900 families across all governorates were supported with livelihoods and economic inclusion activities, out of whom around 1,000 families engaged in farming and livestock-rearing after receiving agricultural assets and inputs from UNHCR. Additionally, around 3,400 selected individuals received training as well as in-kind or financial support to start-up micro or small enterprises. UNHCR also supported individuals in rapid income generation, on-the-job-training, and establishment of linkages with national microfinance institutions.
- UNHCR completed the rehabilitation of a vocational training centre in Baniyas (Tartous Governorate) which will provide technical training to around 1,500 students per year. The rehabilitation of two other vocational schools in Aleppo Governorate is ongoing.
- In collaboration with FAO, UNHCR completed the rehabilitation of three key irrigation canals and systems in Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, and Latakia Governorates supporting around 15,500 families in restoring irrigated areas.
- A total of 150 individuals in Latakia and Aleppo Governorates received skills training and short-term

employment in public work programmes including improvement of community infrastructure, in collaboration with UNDP.



### Cash Assistance

- In December, UNHCR provided cash for livelihood for 183 families (980 individuals) in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous and Homs Governorates.
- The year 2024 witnessed delays in obtaining approvals for multi-purpose cash assistance for Syrians, as well as cash for shelter rehabilitation, cash for livelihoods, and emergency multi-purpose cash assistance for Syrian returnees from Lebanon. Additionally, the fall of government in Syria led to the suspension of bank transfer and cash withdrawal services towards the end of 2024. These challenges affected UNHCR cash assistance programme throughout the year.



### Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of the end of December, 16,241 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 December, UNHCR renewed the identification cards for over 760 refugees. The identification cards protect refugees against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.
- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** From January to December 2024, 61 families (27 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:** From January till December, 17 families (44 individuals) were resettled in several countries, and six families (15 individuals) were accepted for resettlement with the support of UNHCR.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR provided regular multi-purpose cash assistance to 5,210 refugee and asylum-seeker families (14,021 individuals), along with unconditional winter grants to 6,146 refugee and asylum-seeker families (15,778 individuals) from September to December.
- **Legal Assistance:** In December, UNHCR's legal teams and lawyers provided legal assistance to 33 refugees and asylum-seekers. This included legal counselling, assistance related to residency and detention cases as well as interventions to obtain personal civil documentation for Iraqi refugees in light of the instructions of the Iraqi Government to receive civil record extracts exclusively from Iraq.



## Return

- From January till the end of October 2024, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 43,202 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt<sup>1</sup>. Between 2016 and October 2024, UNHCR verified or monitored the return of 435,395 individual refugees<sup>2</sup> to Syria.
- From 23 September till 27 November, an increase in the number of people crossing from Lebanon to Syria was observed due to the hostilities in Lebanon. Following the ceasefire announcement between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon on 27 November, UNHCR observed some movements from Syria to Lebanon among the estimated 562,000 individuals who arrived in Syria from Lebanon. The majority of those returning to Lebanon were of Lebanese nationality.
- As of 15 January 2025, UNHCR estimates that over 195,000 Syrians crossed back into Syria since the fall of the former government on 8 December 2024. Pendular movement of Syrians through unofficial border crossings have been observed, often motivated by the desire to “go and see” the situation in Syria prior to return and/or avoid a re-entry ban.
- In November and early December, the UNHCR-supported Border Health-Protection Support Points of Jdaidet Yabous, Al-Arida, Joussieh and Dabbousieh (at the Syria-Lebanon borders) were subject to several attacks, with some in need of full rehabilitation. However, these points continue to play an important role in supporting people crossing to Syria as well as those who returned to Syria after the fall of the former government. The points provided people with information on services available in the areas of return as well as counselling and referral services to over 26,000 returnees who agreed to register with UNHCR during December. They also offered access to the internet or a hotline to communicate with relatives and provide basic medical attention and other amenities. Through these points, UNHCR and its partners had physical capacity to observe daily movements at the borders.

### RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- UNHCR Response factsheet (30 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (8 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (5 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (2 December 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (30 November 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (28 November 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (25 November 2024)
- UNHCR Emergency Response Brief (21 November 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #18 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #17 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #16 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #15 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #14 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #13 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #12 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #11 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #10 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #9 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #8 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #7 (October 2024)
- Response to displacement from Lebanon flash update #6 (October 2024)
- Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria (October 2024)
- Legal Assistance factsheet (June 2024)
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) factsheet (June 2024)
- Education factsheet (June 2024)
- Child Protection factsheet (June 2024)
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) factsheet (June 2024)
- Refugees and Asylum-seekers factsheet (June 2024)
- Community Centres factsheet (June 2024)
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) factsheet (June 2024)

<sup>1</sup> The reported voluntary return figures do not include movements of Syrians into Syria as a result of the conflict in Lebanon.

<sup>2</sup> Provisional figures pending further verification

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**LINKS:** [UNHCR Global Focus](#) | [UNHCR Syria Data Portal](#) | [UNHCR Syria Website](#) | [UNHCR Syria Twitter \(@UNHCRinSYRIA\)](#) | [UNHCR Syria Facebook](#)