

# Syrian Arab Republic

September 2023

The Syria crisis entered its thirteenth year in March 2023. The UN estimates that **15.3 million** people need humanitarian assistance across the country – a 5 per cent increase from 2022.

The February earthquakes further exacerbated the situation in Syria. An estimated **8.8 million** people were affected by the earthquakes, and UNHCR has been responding to this additional emergency.

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

## HIGHLIGHTS

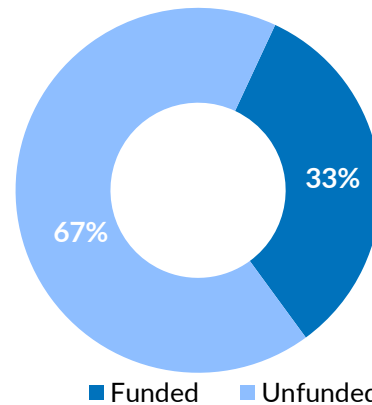
**115** community/satellite centres and **115** mobile units are providing support to vulnerable people in Syria

**5,224** families have benefited so far from cash assistance as part of the earthquake emergency response

**51,165** families received core relief items and seasonal items since the beginning of 2023

## FUNDING (AS OF 4 OCTOBER 2023)

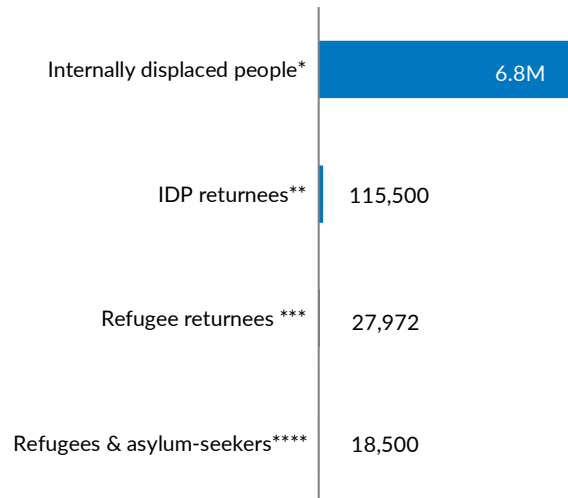
**USD 504.3 million** requested for the Syria Operation in 2023



## PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



UNHCR visiting earthquake-affected families living in prefabricated units in Al-Naq'a in Jableh city (Latakia Governorate). ©UNHCR/E.Kabbas



\* Source: 2023 HNO

\*\* Source: OCHA, January-December 2022

\*\*\* Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2023 as of 30 September

\*\*\*\* Source: UNHCR, September 2023

## Operational Context

The [2023 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#) estimates that over 15.3 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 the largest number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in the world, with 6.8 million. The 2023 HNO states that humanitarian and economic indicators in the country continue to deteriorate, and many basic services have collapsed. The February earthquakes have further compounded existing needs in a country that has experienced more than 12 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 a [community-based](#) and [area-based approach](#). 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 2023, UNHCR is working with 29 partners including international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national NGOs.

## Operational Updates



### Protection

- In line with its community-based protection approach, as of end-September, UNHCR was supporting 115 [community/satellite centres](#) and 115 mobile units across the country. UNHCR also engaged over 2,560 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.
- UNHCR upgraded one of its supported satellite community centres in Al-Nairab (Aleppo Governorate) to operate as a full-fledged community centre, with a capacity to expand outreach to underserved areas around the centre. Following a needs assessment, the community centre in Al-Waer (Homs Governorate) is being relocated to Khalidiyeh neighbourhood in Homs city to serve more people.

In addition, two new mobile units were established, one in Sabkha (Ar-Raqqa Governorate) and one in Sheikh Miskeen (Dar'a Governorate) to support people in these areas.

- In cooperation with its partners, UNHCR has started repairing public administration premises in Ar-Raqqa

Governorate, including the civil registries in Mansoura, Sabkha, Maddan, and Debsi Afnan, as well as the citizen service centre in Sabkha. This will allow these departments to resume essential services, such as issuance of civil documentation.



### Core relief items

- In September, UNHCR provided core relief items to around 12,040 vulnerable internally displaced and returnee families (around 62,000 individuals) in Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Hama, Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Latakia and Tartous Governorates. In total this year, 51,165 families (almost 259,300 individuals) received core relief items and seasonal items. In addition, it provided core relief items to people recently displaced in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate (see below).



### Shelter

- In September, UNHCR completed the repair of 43 damaged houses in Daraya, Nashabiyeh, and Duma (Rural Damascus Governorate), in addition to the repair of 17 common areas in damaged buildings sheltering 725 individuals.
- As debris clearing is an essential step for shelter programmes to allow them to return to and safely access their houses, a total of 800 cubic metres of debris was removed from Ein Elfijeh (Rural Damascus Governorate), benefiting 80 returnee families (400 individuals).
- UNHCR distributed and installed 190 shelter material packages including doors, windows, water tanks, and electrical cables benefiting 950 individuals in Homs and Hama Governorates.
- UNHCR started the distribution of cash for minor house repairs on 17 September. A total of 308 families (1,555 individuals) affected by the February earthquakes (out of the planned 3,439) have received the assistance so far in Aleppo and Latakia Governorates.



### Livelihoods

- UNHCR and partners continued providing entrepreneurship training through community centres to enhance people's financial management skills, benefitting 291 individuals in September (and over 2,000 people so far in 2023). UNHCR also supported the micro and small-business enterprises of 312 individuals.
- In addition, 150 indoor solar lights and fans were repaired for the benefit of the camp residents in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. This project provided livelihood opportunities to 47 families in the camp who received cash in exchange for working on the maintenance of items delivered by UNHCR.

## Cash Assistance

- UNHCR continued to provide **multi-purpose cash assistance** to people affected by the earthquakes in Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama Governorates in line with the recommendations of the Cash Working Group. In September, 2,344 households (11,219 individuals) in Aleppo, and 1,098 households (5,024 individuals) in Latakia and Tartous received cash assistance. As of end-September, over 5,220 families benefited from the multi-purpose cash assistance as part of the earthquake emergency response.



## Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of end-September, some 18,500 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 September, UNHCR renewed identification cards for 876 refugees. The identification cards will protect against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.
- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** In September, nine families comprising 16 individuals were recognized as refugees, helping to ensure their protection from *refoulement* and detention due to irregular stay, and access to basic services. UNHCR also provided counselling on the RSD process and individual cases through its hotline. Inquiries received during September primarily related to the status of individual cases and requests for cash assistance.
- **Resettlement:** In September, UNHCR submitted several resettlement cases to Canada (3 individuals), UK (4 individuals), and Norway (6 individuals).
- **Cash Assistance:** Due to the delay caused by an additional documentation requirement for identity verification by financial institutions for refugees and asylum-seekers to receive cash assistance as well as the restricted liquidity, the regular multi-purpose cash assistance, which was to have been completed by August, continued throughout September and will finish in October. In September, UNHCR supported a total of 314 families (895 individuals). UNHCR also supported 325 students aged between 6-17 years with education grants.

\*\*\*\*\* Provisional figures pending further verification



## Return

In September, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 3,684 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.\*\*\*\*\* This brought the total number of refugee returnees verified or monitored by UNHCR in 2023 to 27,972 individuals. In total, between 2016 and September 2023, UNHCR has verified or monitored the return to Syria of some 381,850 individual refugees\*\*\*\*\*

## Humanitarian Response in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate

Clashes erupted on the eastern bank of the Euphrates river (Deir-ez-Zor Governorate) and along the border with Iraq, causing fatalities and forcing thousands of civilians across the river to seek safety. As of end-September, UNHCR has registered over 3,000 newly displaced families and distributed around 2,500 kits of core relief items. The items will protect around 13,500 people from harsh weather and alleviate challenges during displacement. UNHCR is proceeding with further distributions, prioritizing people from the most affected areas.



Distribution of core relief items during the emergency in rural Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. ©UNHCR/SARC

\*\*\*\*\* Provisional figures pending further verification

**RECENTLY PUBLISHED:**

- [UNHCR Syria: Winterization factsheet \(September 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR SYRIA: Cash-Based Interventions \(August 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria: Key Figures and Achievements \(June 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria: Factsheet \(June 2023\)](#)
- [Eighth Regional Survey on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions & Intentions on Return to Syria \(May 2023\)](#)

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