

Syrian Arab Republic

November 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 security situation in parts of the country remains unpredictable, and 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 people, returnees, stateless people, and host communities based on identified needs and vulnerabilities.

HIGHLIGHTS

1,320

families benefited from cash assistance to repair their damaged houses since the February earthquakes

67,880

families received core relief items and seasonal items since the beginning of the year

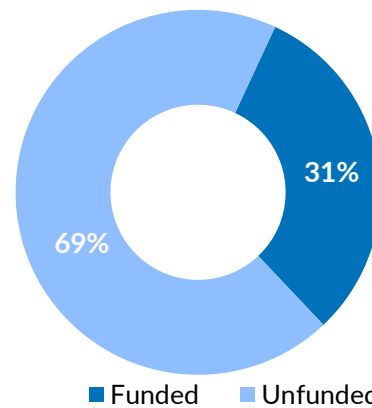
2,780

individuals have benefited from UNHCR entrepreneurship training so far in 2023

FUNDING (AS OF 31 OCTOBER 2023)

USD 504.3 million

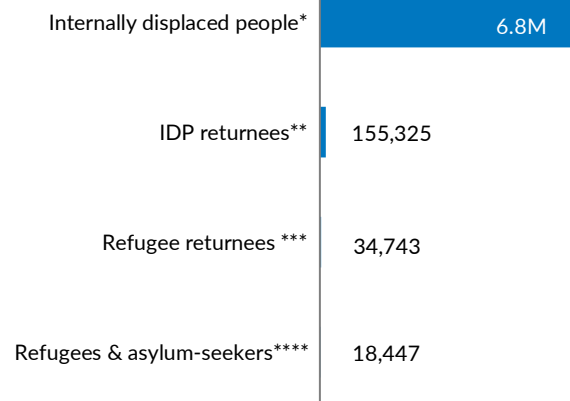
requested for the Syria Operation in 2023



PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



Distribution of agriculture toolkits to over 150 farmers in Nashabiyeh in Rural Damascus Governorate. The kit includes pea and bean seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. ©UNHCR Syria



* Source: 2023 HNO

** Source: OCHA, January-July 2023

***Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2023 as of 30 November

**** Source: UNHCR, October 2023

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

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 (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 [community-based](#) and [area-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 2023, UNHCR is working with 29 partners including international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs.

Operational Updates



Protection

- In line with its community-based protection approach, as of end November, UNHCR was supporting 116 [community/satellite centres](#) and 113 mobile units across the country. UNHCR is also engaging over 2,520 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.
- UNHCR through one of its partners completed the supply and installation of solar systems in the two civil registries in Izra' and Sheikh Miskeen villages (Dar'a Governorate). This intervention will assist people in registering vital events including births, deaths, and marriages.
- UNHCR organized a three-day training from 21 to 23 November attended by over 50 lawyers and legal outreach volunteers working with UNHCR partners. The training included an introduction to international protection; UNHCR's mandate; the legal aid programme; housing, land and property rights; as well as basic protection concepts.
- In collaboration with WHO, UNHCR organized a five-day workshop on the capacity gap in mental health

assistance (mainly shortage of mental health professionals), and 25 participants including community health workers, midwives, nurses, case managers, and referral focal points attended. The workshop aimed to ensure that individuals with mental health conditions receive high quality mental health services, including treatment that is based on the most current scientific evidence.

- Under the theme "UNiTE! Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls", UNHCR and its partners conducted various activities across Syria to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence from 25 November to 10 December. The activities included legal awareness sessions, women empowerment workshops, recreational activities such as sports, music, theatre performances, and video screenings.



A friendly basketball match by four teams at a local club as part of the campaign on the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence organized by UNHCR and its partners. ©UNHCR Syria



Education

- UNHCR in collaboration with a partner completed the rehabilitation of Sbeneh Aloula Almokhtalata School in Sbeneh (Rural Damascus Governorate). The rehabilitated school will ensure access to education for 700 students from the area.



Core relief items

- In November, UNHCR provided core relief items to around 10,040 vulnerable internally displaced and returnee families (around 52,210 individuals) in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Hama, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Latakia, Idleb, Quneitra, and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates. In total this year, 67,880 families (almost 355,220 individuals) received core relief items and seasonal items. An additional 49,860 families (240,800) individuals received core relief items as part of the emergency response to the February earthquakes.



Shelter

- In November, UNHCR completed the repair of over 600 damaged houses in Aleppo, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Latakia, and Rural Damascus Governorates, in

addition to the repair of 45 common areas of damaged apartment buildings where around 3,100 people are living.

- Clearing of debris being an essential step allowing families to return to (and safely access) their houses, UNHCR removed a total of 31,000 cubic meters of debris from Rural Damascus Governorate, since the beginning of the year, benefiting 3,200 returnee families (16,000 individuals).
- UNHCR distributed and installed over 3,150 shelter material packages including doors, windows, water tanks, and electrical cables benefiting 15,750 individuals in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idleb, and Quneitra Governorates as of end November.
- Since January, UNHCR and its partners repaired about 4,700 linear meters of the sewage system and started repairing an additional 1,000 linear meters of the system for potable water in several governorates in Syria.



Livelihoods

- UNHCR and partners are providing entrepreneurship training through community centres to enhance people's financial management skills, which benefited over 205 individuals in November (and around 2,780 people so far in 2023). UNHCR also supported micro and small-business enterprises of around 235 individuals in November (780 since the beginning of the year).
- UNHCR distributed 100 pumps for damaged wells, seeds, water tanks, and drip irrigation toolkits to returnees, host community, and asylum-seekers in Al-Hasakeh Governorate as well as 50 drip irrigation and agriculture inputs in Ar-Raqqa Governorate.



Cash Assistance

- UNHCR continues to provide multi-purpose cash assistance to people affected by the earthquakes in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, and Hama Governorates. In November, 846 households (3,624 individuals) in Latakia and Tartous received cash assistance. As of end November, over 8,400 families benefited from the multi-purpose cash assistance.
- In addition, around 560 families (2,485 individuals) in Aleppo and Latakia Governorates benefited in November from cash for minor repair for their houses damaged by the earthquakes. As of end November, around 1,320 families benefited from this intervention.



Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of end November, 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 November, UNHCR renewed identification cards for around 1,470 refugees. The identification cards protect them against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.
- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** In November, two families (five individuals) were recognized as refugees, helping to ensure their protection from *refoulement* and detention due to irregular stay, and their access to basic services. UNHCR re-opened and accepted six cases of previously rejected asylum-seekers who remained in Syria in light of the change of circumstances in their countries of origin.
- **Resettlement:** In November, UNHCR submitted three cases of 13 individuals for resettlement, while three families (10 individuals) were accepted for resettlement in Finland and Norway. UNHCR, in close coordination with IOM Lebanon, also facilitated the departure of three individuals to Canada as well as 19 individuals under private sponsorship complementary pathway arrangements****.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR continued to provide regular multi-purpose cash assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers, supporting a total of 611 families (228 individuals) this month.
- **Education:** UNHCR enrolled 25 refugee students in the DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship programme, which enables them to pursue their higher education in public universities of Damascus, Tartous, Tishreen, and Aleppo. With the newly enrolled students, a total of 89 refugee students for the academic year 2023/2024 are benefiting from the direct financial support to cover tuition fees and study materials, in addition to having some pocket money.



Return

- In November, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 3,482 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.***** This brought the total number of refugee returnees verified or monitored by UNHCR in 2023 to 34,743 individuals. In total, between 2016 and November 2023, UNHCR has verified or monitored the return to Syria of some 388,679 individual refugees.*****

**** 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.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- [UNHCR Syria: Shelter factsheet \(November 2023\)](#)
- [Post Distribution Monitoring Exercise- Non-Food Items Distribution \(November 2023\)](#)
- [Post Distribution Monitoring Exercise- Adult Diapers Distribution \(November 2023\)](#)
- [Post Intervention Monitoring - Damaged House Repair \(November 2023\)](#)
- [Post Intervention Monitoring - Livestock Distribution Programme \(October 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria: Core relief items factsheet \(October 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria: Winterization factsheet \(September 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR SYRIA: Cash-Based Interventions \(August 2023\)](#)
- [Legal Aid factsheet \(Q2 2023\)](#)
- [Mental health and psychosocial support factsheet \(Q2 2023\)](#)
- [Education factsheet \(Q2 2023\)](#)
- [Child Protection factsheet \(Q2 2023\)](#)
- [Gender-based violence factsheet \(Q2 2023\)](#)
- [Refugees and Asylum-seekers factsheet \(Q2 2023\)](#)

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