

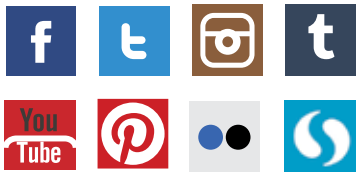
Highlights

- UNHCR Livelihoods Projects are Changing Lives
- UNHCR Celebrates World Autism Day Throughout Syria
- Capacity Building in Damascus
- UNHCR Delivers Humanitarian Assistance
- The Importance of Child Protection

Syria Emergency Shelter Sector Factsheet, March 2016, available at:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/572068704.html>

Syria - Emergency NFI Sector Factsheet, March 2016, available at:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/572068024.html>

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UNHCR: Supporting Livelihoods, Changing Lives



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Displaced people often flee their homes with just the clothes on their backs, but forcibly displaced people always carry something of considerable value: their knowledge, skills and experience. A few of the more fortunate ones manage to bring along productive assets, such as tools, livestock or money. But no matter how much or how little they arrive with, most displaced people have the potential to become self-reliant in their places of refuge. UNHCR, through its Livelihoods support, helps refugees, returnees and internally displaced people tap this potential and build a platform for a better future.

Investing in livelihood activities helps reduce the costs associated with the provision of aid and protection. Building self-reliance is essential throughout all phases of displacement; during emergencies, following emergencies, and towards durable solutions. UNHCR aims to ensure that refugees and displaced people contribute to local economies as well as creating self-reliance to enable displaced people to live with dignity and create a future for themselves and their families.

UNHCR: You have given me a new life in Homs

Ahmed and his family of eleven which includes two sick parents and two mentally disabled children lost everything they had due to the conflict in Old Homs. It became so bad that the family could barely feed itself. 'I lost my house, workshop, my dignity and my hope' he says. During a UNHCR protection monitoring visit Ahmed explained his family's situation and requested financial assistance. UNHCR staff then reviewed his family situation as well as the skills he possessed. The team heard that he comes from a third generation of barbers and when they observed his high motivation they advised him to apply for livelihood assistance to open a barber shop. Ahmed submitted a business plan to the UNHCR led Project Proposal Reviewing Committee (PPRC) which was established to review projects, conduct analysis and ensure results based management. He also found a suitable place for rent and was interviewed by a UNHCR Shelter Officer in relation to the refitting of the premises for its use as a barbers. The PPRC approved the project and subsequently Ahmed opened his new business in the Kareem Al Shamee neighborhood in Homs City.



Business is now booming. As he says 'At the beginning I was a bit nervous but now I hardly have any free time during the day. Last night I closed at 9pm'. He has employed two displaced youths to help him meaning the business is also supporting two extra families now. 'You cannot imagine what UNHCR has given to my family, it's not only the income but also the return to my family of our self-esteem' he says with emotion. In addition Ahmed is giving back to the community and has committed that he will train 30 displaced youths this year. He asserts that after an intensive four months training they can acquire the skills needed and even start up their own businesses. But Ahmed is not finished there and plans to extend his business in the future. After the training finishes he will select three very good graduates and give them a job working in this saloon, ensuring support for three more families. 'Thank you UNHCR, you have given me and my family a new life' he adds.

Throughout Syria UNHCR is supporting many types of proposed livelihoods start-ups in the future such as beauty salons for women, bakeries, carpentry shops, car mechanic workshops and car wash, agricultural projects such as greenhouses and seed cultivation, mini markets, mobile phones repair shops, the production of soap and candles, sewing/tailor workshops to name but a few.

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Nazeera and Her Lost Companion in Aleppo

Nazeera is a 50 year old woman from Aleppo who has been working and supporting herself on a manual wool knitting machine since she was fifteen. In 2012, Nazeera and her family had to leave their house in fear of their lives leaving everything behind, including her 35 year old wool knitting machine. After the family's displacement her husband had a heart attack and was no longer able to work putting the family in a dire situation.

In December 2015, she received a start-up small business grant from UNHCR with the help of the Namaa Association. This included a new knitting machine and supplies such as wool yarns. When recently visited by UNHCR staff to follow up on her project she informed them that she is now providing for her family of six by selling the wool products she makes. She expressed her gratitude and said with tears of joy 'I was incomplete without my long time companion and I want to thank UNHCR for bringing back my lost child (the wool machine) to me'.



UNHCR Continues to Deliver Assistance Throughout Syria

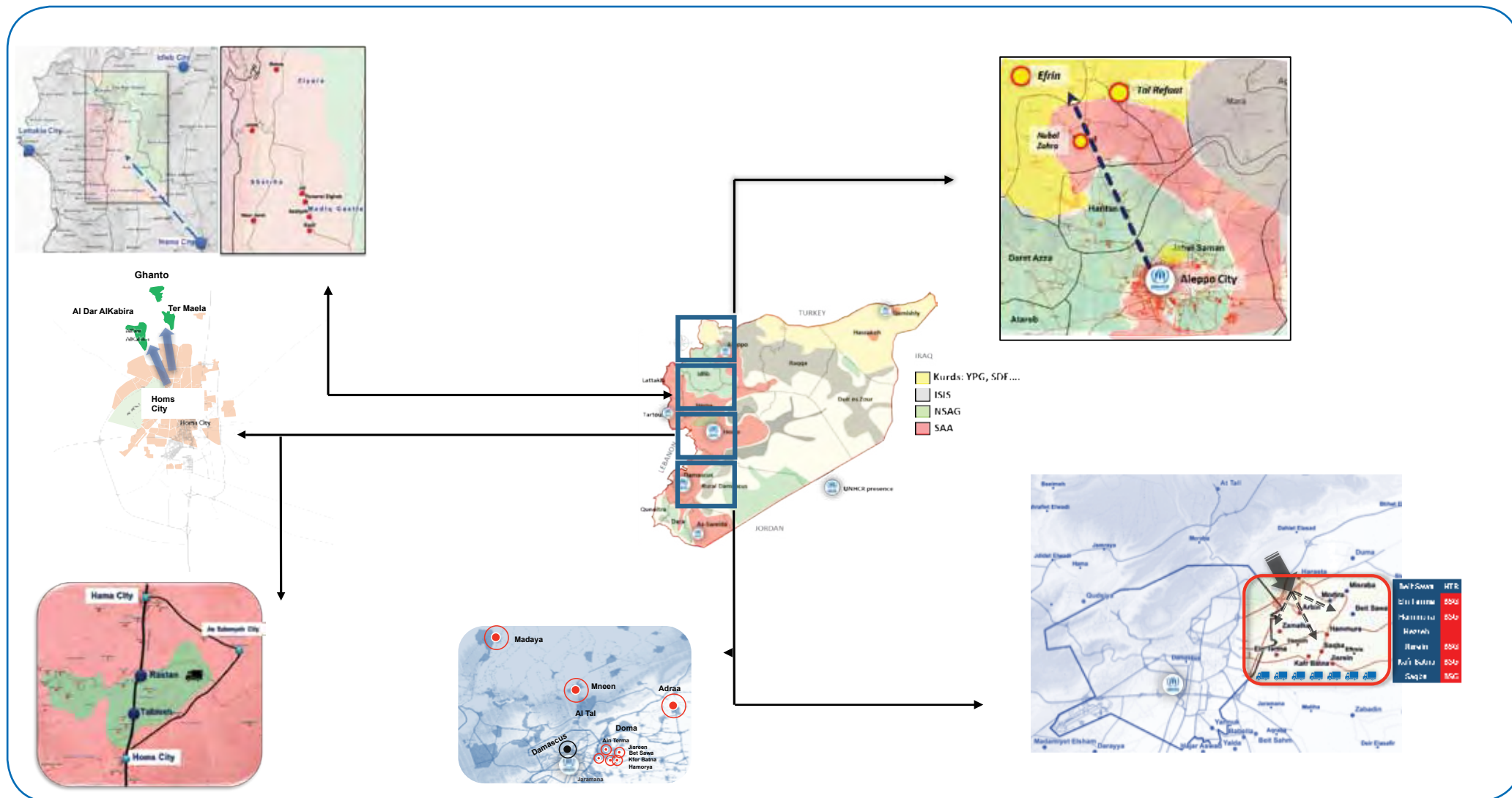
In April 2016, UNHCR Syria reached a total of 279,292 individuals with Core Relief Items (CRIs). Of these 168,280 were in hard to reach and besieged areas. These include:

- On 02 April, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency convoy to the hard-to-reach Ter Maala, Ghanto and Dar Kbierah in Homs which have not been reached since October 2014. The UNHCR assistance included blankets, mattresses, sleeping mats, plastic sheets and elderly diapers for 22,000 individuals.
- On 03 April, UNHCR delivered 11 truckloads of core relief items for 10,000 individuals in an inter-agency convoy to Afrin, a Kurdish-held district north of Aleppo. The area witnessed a fresh displacement two months ago from northern rural Aleppo following fighting there. On 16 April, UNHCR also participated in a second inter-agency convoy there with food and nutrition supplies for 50,000 beneficiaries. The convoy was originally planned for 14 April but got delayed due to shelling along the planned route. During the mission, the convoy delivered a portion of the supplies, with UNHCR contributing NFIs for 2,500 IDPs in the Tal Rafaat sub district of Azaz.
- On 12 April, UNHCR, in cooperation with SARC Hama distributed CRIs such as mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, plastic mats, diapers, plastic sheets and jerry cans to 23,000 IDPs in towns in north western Rural Hama such as Al Bahsa, Joren, Naor Joren, Al Rasef, Al Azezia, Al Jaed and Tamana Al Gab
- On 16 April, UNHCR with other UN agencies in cooperation with SARC managed to deliver humanitarian assistance to the besieged Kafr Batna, Jisreen, Ain Tarma in East Ghouta in Rural Damascus. The assistance included core relief items for 21,750 individuals such as hygiene kits, kitchen sets, jerry cans, clothes, sanitary napkins, baby diapers, elderly diapers and school supplies. Also, on 19 April, UNHCR participated in an IA convoy carrying assistance for 28,250 beneficiaries to four towns with two of them, Saqba and Hazzeh besieged and the other two, Beit Sawa and Hamoria being hard-to-reach. On both missions protection monitoring was also carried out.
- On 21, 25 and 27 April, three inter-agency convoys to the hard-to-reach Arrastan including Tal-biseh in rural Homs successfully reached the area with core relief items. In all convoys, UNHCR dispatched mattresses, blankets, plastic sheets, adult diapers, sleeping mats and kitchen sets for the benefit of 36,000 individuals
- On 30 April, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency convoy to besieged Madaya as part of the four towns agreement with the humanitarian assistance for 40,000 individuals there. The humanitarian delivery benefited the host community and IDPs with plastic sheets, jerry cans, kitchen sets and adult diapers.



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On all these missions UNHCR, in addition to delivering aid also monitored Protection issues



World Autism Day Celebrated throughout Syria



World Autism Day was celebrated on 02 April this year with UNHCR as the lead Protection agency organizing activities throughout the country to raise awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder.

In Damascus and Rural Damascus the UNHCR-supported GOPA community centres in Sahnaya, Jdait Artouz and Dweila launched several psychosocial support activities with the aim of spreading awareness about integrating autistic children into the community. The activities included Psychosocial Support (PSS), recreational activities for 120 children and awareness sessions for 100 parents which focused on protecting affected children from risks of violence.

In Hama city, a specialist in the area of autism conducted a session with UNHCR Outreach Volunteer (ORV) team leaders in his clinic where they collected information on the condition and sensitized ORVs to disseminate information amongst the community. In addition, GOPA conducted a fair mainstreaming UNHCR vocational training products with a community based NGO dealing with autism. This initiative included incorporating vocational training in the NGO's curriculum for 70 autistic students enrolled in its programmes as well as conducting training workshops for persons with disabilities, their parents as well as NGO and community based volunteers. 268 individuals benefitted from the sessions and were trained as 'trainers for trainers'. In addition, UNHCR partner SSSD arranged for an activity in the Fatima Al Saqqa kindergarten which was attended by 87 individuals on the talents of autistic children and the signs of autism spectrum disorder. The same activity addressing over 100 people was also conducted in Misyaf area there. A campaign was organized in Al the Mawada center by children with the title of "Together We Can" which included a session introducing autism, an integration activity in the special needs center as well as a sports event in the stadium there.



In Homs, under the title of “Autism is a disorder, not an illness” UNHCR’s partner SSSD conducted an event in Qatina rural Homs for 443 individuals in which an informative video was displayed and parents shared their experiences with their children. GOPA conducted two awareness raising activities in Old Homs attended by 46 autistic children accompanied by their parents. A similar activity was organized in the Al Midan and Hamra Community Centres in Homs which were attended by 70 women. A focus group about autism also took place in the Aman community center which offered advice to parents in dealing with their autistic children.

In Hassakeh city, UNHCR’s partner SSSD organized celebrations and activities in the Baytna autism center and four collective shelters with groups of women and teenagers/children. Celebrations were also carried out in one collective shelter in Qamishly. The activities included lectures on autism and an explanation of symptoms as well as entertainment and games. Videos were displayed and leaflets on the condition were prepared and distributed.

In Sweida, UNHCR in cooperation with GOPA conducted a recreational activity for 25 autistic children in the Al Mustaqbal institute, which is a private institute for children with autism and mental disorders. The children were from both the IDP and host community’s and the activities included dancing, singing and playing games as well as the distribution of gifts. In Daraa, UNHCR conducted a recreational activity for 22 children with autism as well as an awareness session for their parents.

In Tartous, UNHCR-supported community centres ran different activities in coordination with the Al Majd NGO, the ‘My Child and I Centre’ all of which are specialized in disability services. UNHCR partner Al Batoul conducted two PSS and one recreational activity focusing on developing the kinesthetic sense of children. An SGBV awareness session was also held for 30 mothers of autistic and disabled children focusing on protection from sexual harassment. In addition, UNHCR partner GOPA also conducted a recreational activity for 18 children in a local park where they played games and drew pictures as well as a PSS awareness session for 15 mothers of autistic children on the definition of autism, causes, symptoms and therapy.

Finally, in Aleppo, UNHCR organized several awareness raising sessions in Al Hamadaniah attended by more than 200 beneficiaries. The sessions focused mainly on the idea that autism is not a disease and suggested methods parents could follow to deal with their autistic children.



Key Facts about Autism Spectrum Disorder:

Autism spectrum disorder is typically evident during the second year of life, and in severe cases, a lack of developmentally appropriate interest in social interactions may be noted even in the first year.

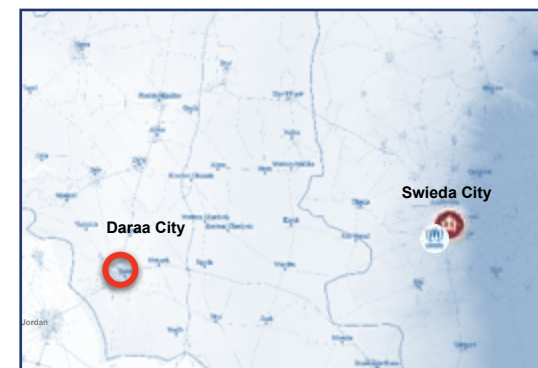
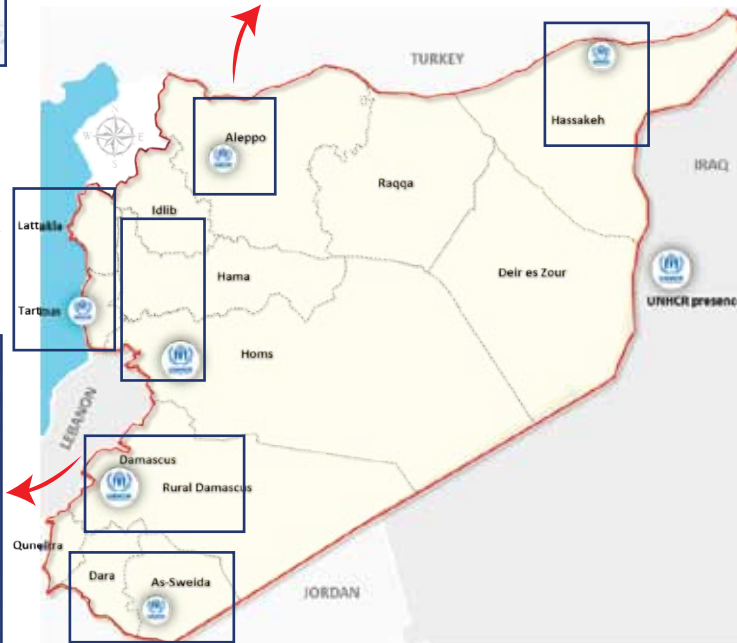
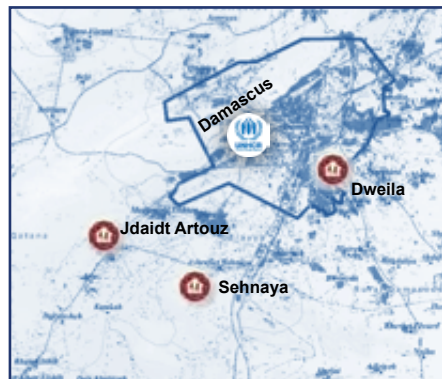
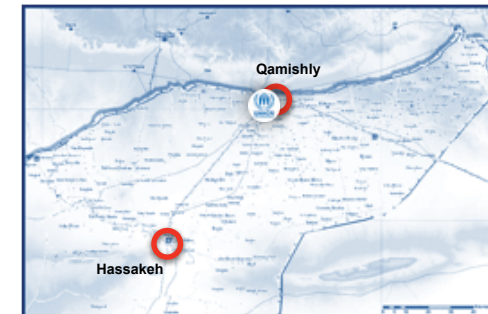
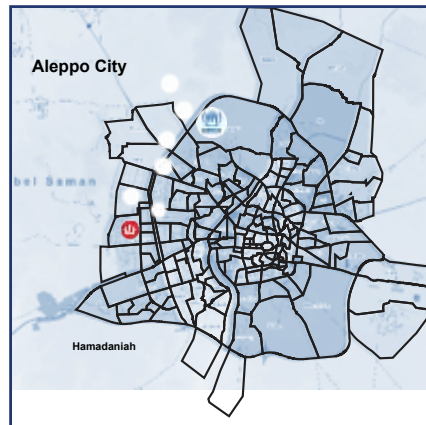
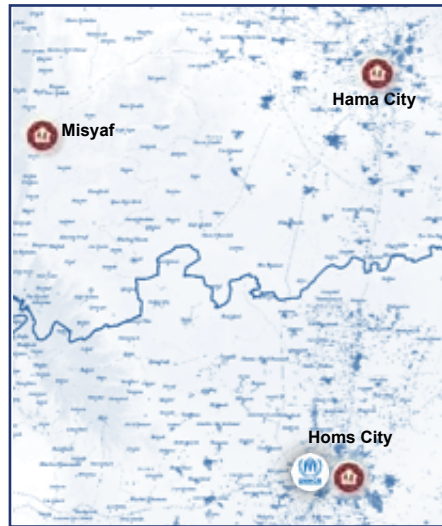
Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by a wide range of impairments in social communication and restricted and repetitive behaviors in social communication and restricted and repetitive behaviors. Aberrant language development and usage is no longer considered a core feature of autism spectrum disorder.

The social development of children with autism spectrum disorder is characterized by atypical, but not absent, attachment behavior.

Children with autism spectrum disorder characteristically do not conform to the expected level of reciprocal social skills and spontaneous nonverbal social interactions. Less frequent and poor eye contact is common during childhood and adolescence compared to other children.

Children with autism spectrum disorder may not explicitly acknowledge or differentiate the most important persons in their lives and on the other hand, may not react as strongly to being left with a stranger compared to others in their age. They often feel and display extreme anxiety when their usual routine is disrupted and their social behavior is often awkward and may be inappropriate.

World Autism Day Celebrated throughout Syria: Activity Locations



Capacity Building for UNHCR Partners

In order to ensure partners provide appropriate protection services to affected communities, UNHCR invests in the capacity building of protection service providers in Syria to provide proper assistance to vulnerable people especially those affected by displacement. UNHCR capacity building promotes Protection mainstreaming in such areas as the field of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Legal Awareness, Child Protection, Community Mobilization, Psychosocial Support (PSS), Code of Conduct as well as professional skills such as reporting needed by humanitarian workers to improve standards of work in the field.

On 11 April, a one-day workshop on UNHCR reporting modalities was organized by UNHCR and attended by Damascus-based reporting focal points of Protection partners. The workshop focused on reporting guidelines, new streamlined reporting templates, visibility, photography and information management. This workshop was in response to needs raised by partners during orientation meetings held in March and April.

In addition from 19 to 21 April, a three-day orientation workshop was conducted by UNHCR and its partner IMC for managers and coordinators of partner agencies on the basics and concepts of Child Protection. A total of 20 participants from different governorates attended the training.



UNHCR Supports Child Protection Activities

In 2015, UNHCR developed a child protection strategy for 2015-2017 that describes the child protection situation in Syria, the legal framework, key approaches and actions, child protection mainstreaming and coordination. This was necessary because children from different age groups are constantly being exposed to various protection concerns. Separated families, unaccompanied children, children with disabilities in addition to school drop-outs, child labor, exploitation and child recruitment are concerns that increased significantly due to the crisis in the country.

UNHCR in coordination with its partners, UNHCR tries to tackle these concerns by ensuring that Protection is mainstreamed in recreational and child friendly activities as well as guaranteeing that Partners are trained on case management and identification of children protection concerns during these activities. As enshrined in the convention of the rights of the child, children have the right to play, therefore, UNHCR supports child friendly spaces, one children and family care center and recreational activities in collaboration with its partners.

One such activity took place in April in Tammyoz child friendly space in Al Midan, Damascus when a birthday party was conducted for 20 IDP children and their mothers. The children were identified by Child Protection focal points during recreational activities in the child friendly space or awareness rising sessions of their mothers as being in need of PSS activities. Great fun was had by all and the mothers mentioned to UNHCR staff that thanks to these activities and other individual counseling sessions as well as follow up from Child Protection workers, the relationship between them and the children is improving which is resulting in decreased domestic violence, them being more active in school and significantly, their children engaging and interacting with other children.



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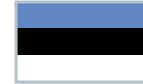
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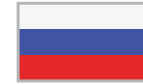
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