

# Syrian Arab Republic

July 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 in Syria were affected by the earthquakes, and UNHCR has been responding to this additional emergency.

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

## HIGHLIGHTS

**1,851**

Families affected by the earthquakes received emergency cash assistance as of end-July

**3,000**

Farmers have been provided with agricultural assets such as seeds and tools as of end-July

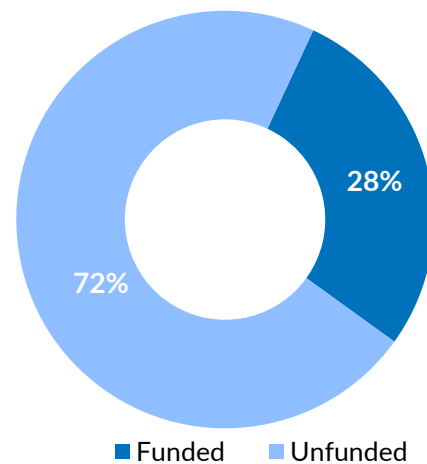
**148,500**

People received core relief and winter items as part of UNHCR regular response as of end-July

## FUNDING (AS OF 20 JULY 2023)

**USD 504.3 million**

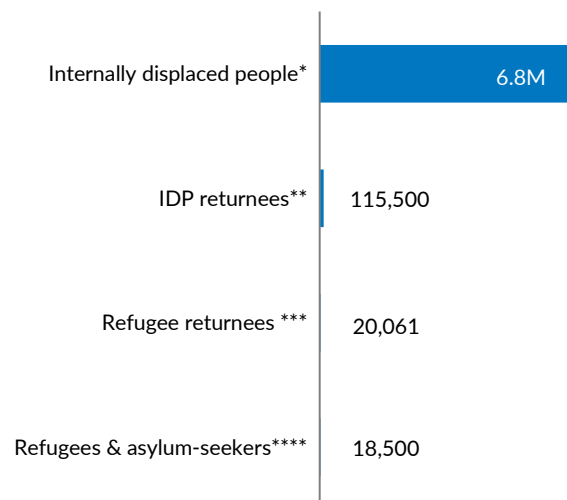
requested for the Syria Operation in 2023



## PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



UNHCR and its partner's staff in a monitoring visit to a completed community-led initiative in Ras Al-Basit, rural Latakia Governorate. The initiative aimed to rehabilitate a spring to support more than 200 families (around 1,000 individuals) in having access to potable water. ©UNHCR/E. Kabbas



\* Source: 2023 HNO

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

\*\*\*Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2023 as of 31 July

\*\*\*\* Source: UNHCR, July 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 people internally displaced. 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 exacerbated by over 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-July, UNHCR was supporting 114 [community/satellite centres](#) and 108 mobile units across the country. UNHCR also engaged over 2,300 community outreach volunteers in all 14 Governorates.
- On the basis of needs assessments, and in an ongoing effort to optimize resources, new community centres opened in July in Sabkha (Ar-Raqqa Governorate), Ghabagheb (Dar'a Governorate) and Al-Rafid (Quneitra Governorate) to reach additional people in need of protection services. Meanwhile three others were discontinued (in Tartous, Dar'a, and Quneitra Governorates).
- In July, UNHCR held a training for 188 partner staff working in Aleppo, As-Sweida, Homs and Hama Governorates, on implementing accountability towards affected populations – including complaints and feedback mechanisms – most effectively within the community centres and during the provision of multi-sectoral activities.



### Education

- UNHCR in coordination with its partners started the summer courses for over 2,000 elementary and secondary level students in the community centres of Mleha, Al-Saboura, Al-Zabadani, Al-Ghizlaniah, and Dmaer (Rural Damascus Governorate). Students are provided with catch-up classes covering the main school subjects, while being involved in athletic and recreational activities in a safe environment.



### Core relief items

- In July, under its regular programme, UNHCR provided core relief items to over 1,000 vulnerable internally displaced and returnee families (over 5,000 individuals) in Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Hama, Damascus, Homs, and Tartous Governorates. In total this year, around 27,200 families (almost 148,500 individuals) received core relief and seasonal items. In addition, some 42,700 households (205,000 individuals) have been supported with core relief and winter items as part of the earthquake emergency response.



### Shelter

- UNHCR completed the repair of 500 linear meters of sewage network in Adra, Rural Damascus Governorate, benefitting around 1,000 families while a new sewage repair project started in Beit Sawa, Rural Damascus, aiming to repair an additional 500 linear meters.
- UNHCR and partners started the damaged house repair project in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. As of end of July, 68 houses have been repaired, benefitting around 340 individuals.
- UNHCR installed 477 solar streetlights in July in Tartous, Latakia, and Quneitra Governorates, providing over 24,000 persons with safe movement and an enhanced protection environment. The project is still ongoing across Syria and aims to install 6,400 devices till end of 2023.
- A total of 33 tents for IDPs and refugees in several camps in north-east Syria were replaced in July. UNHCR also maintained and enhanced six recharging stations in Al-Hol camp (Al-Hasakeh Governorate) allowing people to recharge their fans, mobile phones and other electronic devices. In addition, UNHCR is supporting construction works in Zone 3 in Al-Hol camp including new communal units, each of which contains four kitchens, four showers and four latrines. As of end-July, UNHCR completed and handed over 213 of these units (out of a planned 484). The relocation of eligible families

(who meet certain vulnerability criteria) to Zone 3, which is part of the ongoing 're-organization' project in Al-Hol camp, started on 10 July.



## Livelihoods

- In Aleppo, UNHCR and WFP are jointly restoring the services of a bakery which will serve an estimated 9,500 families. UNHCR's intervention consists of providing a new bread production line to increase the bakery's output.
- UNHCR and partners continued providing entrepreneurship training through community centres to enhance people's financial management skills, benefitting 458 individuals in July (2,000 people so far in 2023). UNHCR also supported micro and small-business enterprises of 137 individuals and provided agricultural assets, including seeds and tools, to 3,030 individuals/families since January 2023.
- UNHCR with its partner is replicating the cash-for-work project from Al-Hol camp (Al-Hasakeh Governorate) in Mahmoudli camp (Ar-Raqqa Governorate). The project will provide livelihood opportunities to households in the camp who will receive cash in exchange for working on the repair of tents and replacement of missing tent parts. A total of 27 individuals in the camp received cash-for-work in July.



Agricultural project supported by UNHCR in Eastern Ghouta, Rural Damascus Governorate. ©UNHCR/F. Alkhoury



## 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 July, 233 households (1,088 individuals) in Hama,

<sup>1</sup> Provisional figures pending further verification.

and 47 households (287 individuals) in Latakia received cash assistance. As of end-July, 1,851 families benefitted from the multi-purpose cash assistance as part of earthquake emergency response.



## Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of end-July, 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. Meanwhile, in July, UNHCR renewed identification cards for some 1,500 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 July, 14 asylum-seeking families comprising 38 individuals were interviewed to determine if they are refugees. During the same period, seven families comprising 24 individuals mainly from Afghanistan were recognized as refugees, ensuring that they could be protected from *refoulement* and detention due to irregular stay and could access basic services. UNHCR also provided counselling on the RSD process and individual cases through its hotline. Inquiries received during July were primarily related to the status of individual cases and requests for cash assistance.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR provided regular multi-purpose cash assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers for the months of July and August, supporting in July a total of 1,229 families (3,315 individuals). UNHCR also continues to provide education grants to students aged between six to 17 years. In July, 949 students were supported with the grant.



## Return

- In July, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 3,588 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.<sup>1</sup> This brought the total number of refugee returnees verified or monitored by UNHCR in 2023 to 20,061 individuals. In total, between 2016 and July 2023, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of some 373,912 individual refugees.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The numbers reported are only those verified or monitored by UNHCR and do not reflect the entire number of returns, which may be significantly higher.

## UNHCR co-led inter-agency sector updates

- UNHCR leads the inter-agency **Protection** and **Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI)** sectors as part of the Syria and Whole of Syria inter-agency response.
- The Protection sector organized and conducted a training with an expert in disability inclusion to enhance partners' capacity in including persons with disabilities in their programming and activities covering all Governorates.
- The Protection sub-national working groups in the earthquake-affected locations (mainly Aleppo and Latakia) contributed to the analysis of people's needs in mid-term shelters led by the Operations Rooms to plan the way forward and evaluate possibilities.
- The Protection sub-national working group in Latakia Governorate supported the assessment missions to wildfire-affected locations in the coastal area to guarantee protection mainstreaming in all interventions.

### RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- [UNHCR Syria - Key Figures and Achievements](#) (June 2023)
- [Whole of Syria Earthquake Emergency Response – Final Report](#) (June 2023)
- [UNHCR Syria Factsheet](#) (June 2023)
- [Eighth Regional Survey on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions & Intentions on Return to Syria](#) (May 2023)
- [Area-Based Programming and Humanitarian Early Recovery](#) (December 2022)

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