

Syrian Arab Republic

October 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

755

individuals have established their micro and small-business enterprises since the beginning of the year with the support of UNHCR

2,367

refugee and asylum-seeker students received education grants in October

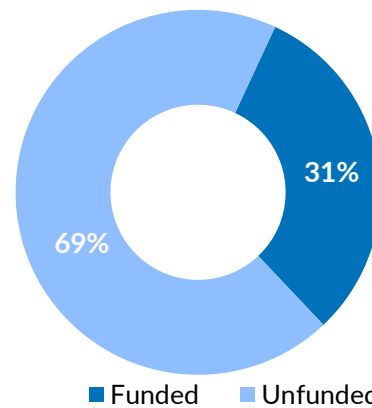
29

partners including national and international NGOs are working with UNHCR in 2023

FUNDING (AS OF 31 OCTOBER 2023)

USD 504.3 million

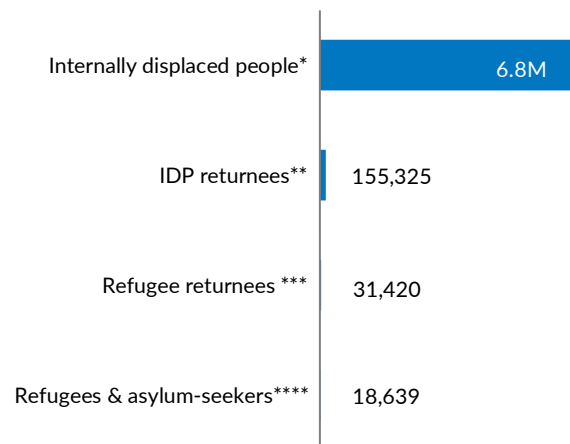
requested for the Syria Operation in 2023



PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



Distribution of winter items to IDPs in Morek, Hama Governorate. The items include extra high thermal blankets, sleeping bags, waterproof floor covers, extra plastic sheeting, portable heaters, rubber boots, and winter jackets. ©UNHCR Syria



* Source: 2023 HNO

** Source: OCHA, January-July 2023

***Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2023 as of 31 October

**** 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 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 (INGOs) and national NGOs.

Operational Updates



Protection

- In line with its community-based protection approach, as of end-October, UNHCR was supporting 117 [community/satellite centres](#) and 114 mobile units across the country. UNHCR also engaged over 2,425 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.
- UNHCR and its partner opened a new community centre in Al- Khaldieh area (Homs Governorate) to reach vulnerable people in need of protection interventions in the surrounding areas.
- Several community-led initiatives were successfully completed in October in As-Sweida, Rural Damascus and Homs Governorates in collaboration with partners. The initiatives involved rehabilitating a street lighting network, installing a basic solar system, repairing classrooms, maintaining a water network, producing school uniforms, and creating a safe space for children, among others. These initiatives are proposed and managed by communities to respond to challenges while contributing to social cohesion, life skills development, and poverty reduction.

- The rehabilitation of six civil registry offices (two in As-Sweida Governorate and four in Ar-Raqqa Governorate) and one citizen centre in Ar-Raqqa Governorate has been finalized. UNHCR also provided solar kits (panels and batteries) to 43 civil registry offices and service centres out of the planned 67 in Damascus and Ar-Raqqa Governorates and at the border points in Homs and Latakia Governorates. These interventions support the resumption of crucial services, such as the issuance of civil documentation to people in these areas.
- A UNHCR partner has recently accessed Talee and Tweina camps (Al-Hasakeh Governorate) to provide legal services for IDPs, mainly related to civil documentation. The two camps accommodate over 30,000 IDPs mainly from Ras al-Ain in Al-Hasakeh.
- UNHCR and its partner intervened in over 1,100 instances before courts and administrative bodies, mainly for marriage and birth registration as well as issuance of personal documents particularly family booklets in support of IDPs affected by hostilities in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. Legal counselling to people in need was also provided.
- UNHCR conducted a five-day training workshop in Damascus to prepare 12 facilitators of partners' staff on Engaging Men in Accountable Practices, a curriculum-based prevention programme to engage men in preventing violence against women and girls. The training supports facilitators to identify male allies within the community and establish "men's committees" while working closely with the existing "women's committees" to prevent violence against women and girls.



Core relief items

- In October, UNHCR provided core relief items to around 11,580 vulnerable internally displaced and returnee families (around 65,660 individuals) in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Hama, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Latakia, and Tartous Governorates. In total this year, 57,845 families (almost 303,000 individuals) received core relief items and seasonal items.



Livelihoods

- UNHCR and partners are providing entrepreneurship training through community centres to enhance people's financial management skills, which benefited 553 individuals in October (and over 2,570 people so far in 2023). UNHCR has been supporting the micro and small-business enterprises of around 760 individuals since the beginning of the year.
- In addition, 116 IDPs and refugees in Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh Governorates were temporarily employed as part of the cash-for-work intervention (repair of tents, solar lights and fans).



Cash Assistance

- UNHCR continues to provide **multi-purpose cash assistance** to people affected by the earthquakes in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, and Hama Governorates in line with the recommendations of the Cash Working Group. In October, 1,428 households (11,219 individuals) in Aleppo, 595 households (2,733 individuals) in Latakia and Tartous, and 254 households (1,354 individuals) in Hama received cash assistance. As of end-October, over 7,443 families benefited from the multi-purpose cash assistance as part of the earthquake emergency response.
- In addition, 453 families in Aleppo and Latakia Governorates benefited in October from cash for minor repair for their houses affected by the earthquakes. As of end-October, 740 families benefited from this intervention.
- UNHCR launched its pilot project of cash assistance (replacing its general in-kind assistance) through the distribution of cash to 47 vulnerable families in Aleppo and Tartous Governorates in October.



Health

- More than 17,000 individuals participated in and benefited from the community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities at 38 health points at UNHCR-supported community centres. In addition, over 1,250 individuals benefited from basic medical and psychiatric consultations.



Health counselling at As-Sukkary health point, Aleppo Governorate.
 © UNHCR Syria



Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of end-October, some 18,600 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 October, UNHCR renewed identification cards for around 1,400 refugees. The identification cards protect against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.

- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** In October, three families (four 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 also provided counselling on the RSD process and individual cases through its hotline. Inquiries received during October primarily related to the status of individual cases.
- **Resettlement:** In October, UNHCR submitted the cases of nine individuals for resettlement, while two families (4 individuals) were accepted for resettlement in Norway and Canada.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR continued to provide regular multi-purpose cash assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers for the months of September and October, supporting a total of 5,013 families (14,788 individuals). UNHCR also finalized the cash assistance distribution for 1,593 families (5,483 individuals) that was pending due to the newly added documentation requirements for identity verification by financial institutions, as well as the liquidity restrictions in Syrian banks. UNHCR also supported 2,367 refugee and asylum-seeker students aged between 6-17 years with unconditional education grants as refugees and asylum-seekers are eligible to attend school in Syria.
- **Health:** In October, over 1,700 refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from primary health care services in seven primary health clinics in Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Al-Hasakeh Governorates.



Return

In October, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 3,448 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.^{*****} This brought the total number of refugee returnees verified or monitored by UNHCR in 2023 to 31,420 individuals. In total, between 2016 and October 2023, UNHCR has verified or monitored the return to Syria of some 385,344 individual refugees.^{*****}

^{*****} Provisional figures pending further verification

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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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