

Syrian Arab Republic

February-March 2024

The Syria crisis entered its fourteenth year in March 2024. The UN estimates that **16.7 million** people need humanitarian assistance across the country – a 9 per cent increase from 2023.

The security situation in the country is becoming unpredictable due to the current regional tension impacting relatively stable areas. 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 persons (IDPs), returnees, stateless people, and host communities based on identified needs and vulnerabilities.

HIGHLIGHTS

1,200

refugees and asylum-seekers were provided with legal assistance in February and March

1,450

families affected by the earthquakes in Aleppo and Latakia received multi-purpose cash assistance in February and March

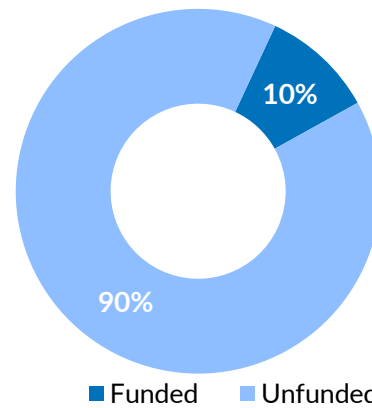
31,500

individuals benefitted from the installation of solar streetlights in 10 areas in As-Sweida Governorate

FUNDING (AS OF 31 MARCH 2024)

USD 466.6 million

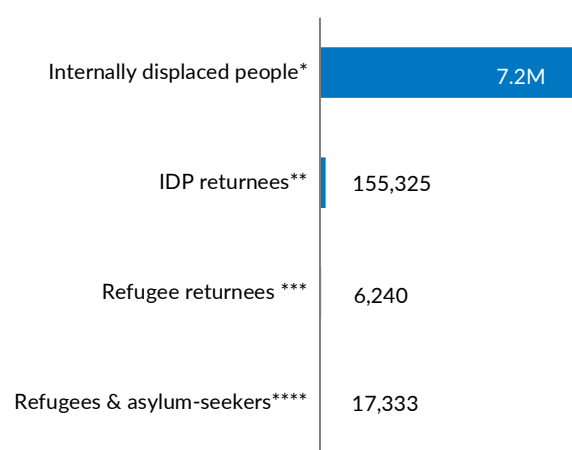
requested for the Syria Operation in 2024



PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT IN THE WHOLE OF SYRIA



UNHCR and partners organized activities in Souran (Hama Governorate) for 120 children and their caregivers on the occasion of the World Down Syndrome Day on 21 March. This included awareness-raising and recreational activities carried out by home-based rehabilitation specialists, a health point doctor, and a psychologist to improve social integration of children with Down Syndrome and reduce stigma and stereotypes. ©UNHCR/SSSD



* Source: 2024 HNO

** Source: OCHA, January-July 2023

***Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2024

**** Source: UNHCR, March 2024

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

Operational Context

The 2024 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) estimates that over 16.7 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 one of the largest numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world (7.2 million). The 2024 HNO states that humanitarian and economic indicators in the country continue to deteriorate, and many basic services have collapsed. The February 2023 earthquakes have further compounded existing needs in a country that has experienced 13 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 *area-based* and *community-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 2024, UNHCR is working with 28 partners including international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs in all 14 governorates.

Operational Updates



Protection

- In line with its community-based protection approach, in March, UNHCR supported 117 [community/satellite centres](#) and 116 mobile units across the country. UNHCR is also engaging over 2,500 community outreach volunteers in all 14 governorates.
- Since the beginning of 2024, UNHCR legal partners provided legal assistance through lawyers and legal outreach volunteers to over 21,500 individuals. The assistance included legal awareness raising, direct legal interventions provided mainly to IDPs for birth and marriage registration, as well as legal assistance on gender-based violence prevention and response.
- In response to the increasing number of mine explosion incidents, UNHCR partners organized awareness-raising sessions on mine risk education for over 150 children and caregivers in Dar'a, Rural Damascus, Hama and Homs Governorates. Self-protection measures against such hazards and ways to report these incidents through a hotline were presented.
- On the occasion of the International Women's Day, UNHCR and partners organized women

empowerment activities with the participation of 17,000 women, men and children within the first two weeks of March across Syria. The activities were wide-ranging from awareness raising sessions on women's rights and engagement, loan and business-related workshops, to literacy courses for older women.



Shelter

- In February and March, 359 families (1,636 individuals) in Aleppo and Latakia Governorates received cash to repair their houses that were damaged by the 2023 February earthquakes. UNHCR also distributed cash to 85 families to rent houses after leaving from the collective shelters in Aleppo.
- In March, UNHCR completed the installation of 630 solar streetlight devices in 10 areas in As-Sweida Governorate. The project contributes to protecting around 6,300 families (31,500 individuals) mainly women and children.



Installation of solar streetlights in under-served areas in As-Sweida Governorate. ©UNHCR



Core Relief Items

- In February and March, 1,067 families (6,711 individuals) in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate were assisted with winter items following their displacement due to hostilities in eastern Deir-ez-Zor.
- Moreover, UNHCR provided core relief and winter items to 281 forcibly displaced families (877 individuals) who are residing in camps in Qamishli (Al-Hasakeh Governorate).



Health

- UNHCR supported two health centres in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. The centres are providing primary healthcare, including vaccinations, essential laboratory tests, and midwifery and gynecology services. The Department of Health is in agreement that all services in these centres are accessible to refugees and asylum-seekers too.



Livelihoods

- UNHCR offered barley kits and seeds as well as sterilized barley kits to 50 families in Nashabiya and Deir Salman (Rural Damascus Governorate). This will facilitate barley sprouting enabling families to sell and feed their animals and generate sustainable income.
- UNHCR standardized its entrepreneurship training material across Syria and carried out training on the new material for its partners in Latakia, Tartous, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates. Training is also planned in other governorates during the next few months. The entrepreneurship training helps attendees learn basic business skills and develop detailed business plans to become eligible for receiving support to establish their small businesses.



Cash Assistance

- UNHCR continues to provide [multi-purpose cash assistance](#) to people affected by the 2023 February earthquakes. In February and March, 1,450 households (6,822 individuals) in Aleppo and Latakia received this assistance.
- UNHCR continued its pilot project of cash assistance replacing the distribution of relief items. In February and March, 314 households (1,069 individuals) received cash in Aleppo and Tartous.
- In addition, UNHCR continued its pilot project of cash assistance replacing the distribution of its general and medical in-kind assistance. This benefitted 532 vulnerable individuals with protection risks in Aleppo and Tartous Governorates in February and March.
- UNHCR also continued the distribution of cash for livelihoods benefiting in February and March 97 families (540 individuals) in As-Sweida and Dar'a Governorates.



Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of end March, some 17,300 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 February and March, UNHCR renewed identification cards for around 2,600 refugees. The identification cards protect them against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.
- **Resettlement:** In February, UNHCR in close coordination with IOM Lebanon, facilitated the departure of three families (10 individuals) who were accepted for resettlement in Finland and Norway. In March, UNHCR received a new quota of 50 refugees for 2024 from the UK Refugee Resettlement Scheme. This is the first quota allocated to Syria since 2020.
- **Cash Assistance:** UNHCR provided regular [multi-purpose cash assistance](#) to refugees and asylum-seekers, supporting 5,093 families (14,359 individuals) covering the entitlement up to the end of April.
- **Legal Assistance:** In February and March, UNHCR-contracted legal teams and lawyers to provide legal assistance to over 1,200 refugees and asylum-seekers. This included legal counselling, assistance related to residency and exit visa, and legal response to gender-based violence and child protection issues.



Return

- In January and February, UNHCR verified or monitored the return to Syria of 6,240 refugees from Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.***** compared to 5,754 individuals in the same time last year. In total, between 2016 and February 2024, UNHCR has verified or monitored the return to Syria of some 398,433 individual refugees.*****

RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- [UNHCR Syria- 2024 Needs Overview \(February 2024\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria Factsheet \(January 2024\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria: Area-Based Programming and Humanitarian Early Recovery \(December 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria: People with special needs \(December 2023\)](#)
- [UNHCR Syria: Shelter factsheet \(November 2023\)](#)

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

***** Provisional figures pending further verification