Earthquake Emergency Response Whole of Syria
Final Report



UNHCR team visits families displaced by the earthquakes in a reception center in Harim, Idleb. Photo: © Ataa

Context

As the Syria crisis enters its 13th year, the scale, severity, and complexity of needs across the country remain overwhelming. Over 15 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and an estimated 8.8 million people have been affected by the February earthquakes.

Four months after the earthquakes, UNHCR continues its transition to a longer-term response to address the needs of affected populations and help them rebuild their lives and livelihoods. This includes ongoing provision of protection services, multipurpose cash transfers, shelter assistance and repairs, and support for income-generation activities.

311,000
people reached with protection interventions in the whole of Syria

283,650
people assisted with **58,200** CRI kits[1] in the whole of Syria

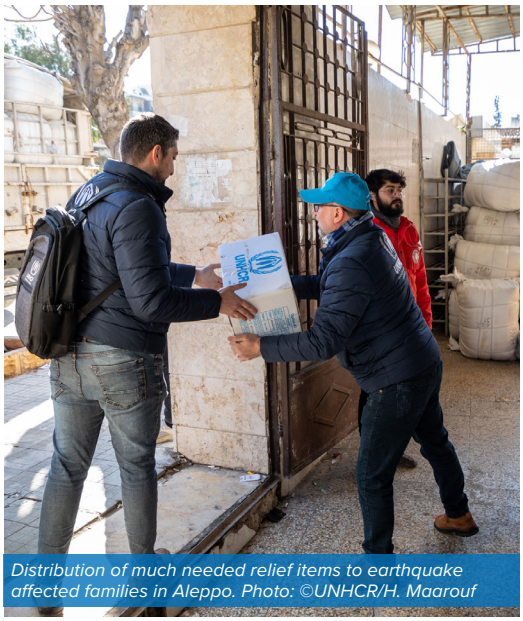
53,000
people assisted with **10,000** tents in north-west Syria

928
households assisted with cash assistance in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia

[1] A Core Relief Items (CRI) kit includes the following items: high-thermal blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, solar lamps and sleeping mats.)

UNHCR Response

Since the onset of the emergency, UNHCR and its partners, with the support of local actors, have been providing core relief items and shelter support to thousands of vulnerable families staying at collective shelters and reception centres, as well as families hosted by local communities. UNHCR has also been providing psychosocial support, child protection, legal assistance and multipurpose cash assistance.



Distribution of much needed relief items to earthquake affected families in Aleppo. Photo: ©UNHCR/H. Maarouf

In the first few weeks of the response, more than 300 collective shelters were set up to accommodate earthquake-affected families in Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and Hama Governorates. At the end of May, eight collective shelters hosting 369 families (over 1,800 people) and 10 collective shelters hosting 648 families (around 2,500 people) were active in Aleppo and Latakia, respectively. Families who still require shelter support are gradually being relocated to mid-term shelters. UNHCR and partners continue providing support to the affected population in mid-term shelters and in the host community, while aiming at ensuring a safe, voluntary and dignified relocation as temporary shelters are closed.

In north-west Syria, according to the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, 97 of the 109 IDP sites and reception centres newly established after the earthquakes remain active and still host some 74,000 individuals that have not been able to return to their homes due to earthquake damage.

Syrian Arab Republic

Protection

To support earthquake-affected families, UNHCR continues to deliver protection services including child protection, gender-based violence response and psychosocial support, among others. Over **211,000** people[2] were reached with protection services as of end-May in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs Rural Damascus and Idleb Governorates. This also includes legal support for civil documentation and housing, land and property issues, mental health and psychosocial support, monitoring, referrals and case management, and individual protection assistance to people with disabilities and older people. Between February and May, UNHCR deployed **499** outreach volunteers to support the earthquake emergency response, **465** field and community visits were conducted and over **1,000** household visits were completed to assess needs. Over **8,600** focus group discussions were held to help identify people with the most vulnerable needs.

In Latakia, UNHCR and protection partners were able to monitor the relocation of people from two temporary collective shelters in May. Between 15 and 21 May, the Operations Room in coordination with protection teams organized several focus group discussions with 115 families in the two shelters. The discussions aimed to introduce alternative shelter solutions including the option of receiving multi-purpose cash, rent or relocation to other collective shelters. Most families preferred to cover their rent costs through multi-purpose cash assistance, a few families expressed their interest in having their rent covered through a partner, and the remaining families said they were willing to be voluntarily relocated to other collective shelters. UNHCR will continue to coordinate with partners and the Operations Room to expand access to future relocations of earthquake-affected families from the collective shelters.

In Aleppo, a rapid protection needs assessment in the eight remaining collective shelters was completed by the Protection Sub-national Sector led by UNHCR. The assessment was carried through 42 focal group discussions with the participation of 490 shelter residents. Results highlighted the presence of protection risks and needs in all collective shelters. These include the need for legal assistance due to the loss of civil status documentation; gender-based violence prevention and response activities; child protection needs including the increase in out-of-school children and child labour, incidents of violence against children and forced marriage; widespread psychosocial support needs; the need for assistive devices for the elderly and people with disabilities; and the need to strengthen feedback and complaint mechanisms in collective shelters. The assessment results will inform the prioritization of protection activities in the shelters.

[2] Including 56% children, 57% women and girls, 6% elderly and 4.4% people with disability.

Cash assistance

The distribution of emergency cash assistance to families in Aleppo, Latakia and Hama for the earthquake emergency response is ongoing in line with the recommendations of the Cash Working Group. As of 8 June, **928** households received at least the first instalment of cash assistance, and verifications of additional families were ongoing. Over 900 additional cases have been approved and will soon receive their cash assistance. UNHCR plans to reach a total of **11,000** households affected by the earthquakes with cash assistance. Priority is given to people residing in the most affected neighbourhoods by the earthquakes with available buildings safety assessment data, while avoiding duplication of assistance with other humanitarian actors.

Core relief items

As of end-May, UNHCR distributed almost **38,200** core relief item kits (**546,352** items) reaching **183,650** affected individuals. The distributed items include high thermal blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, solar lamps, sleeping mats in addition to winter jackets, winter clothing kits, rubber boots and adult diapers.

Core relief items distributed (February-May 2023)

125,657 blankets	**86,266** mattresses	**85,864** sleeping mats
33,513 jerry cans	**21,787** kitchen sets	**6,505** hygiene kits
23,421 solar lamps	**21,635** plastic sheets	**67,704** winter jackets and clothing **74,000** rubber boots

In addition, to increase the warehouse capacity of UNHCR partners responding to the earthquake emergency in Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus Governorates, UNHCR provided six Rubb halls to partners involved in the emergency response.



Needs assessment of most vulnerable affected families in Sheikh Maksoud neighborhood, Aleppo. Photo: ©UNHCR/H. Maarouf

Shelter

UNHCR and its partners have so far rehabilitated seven collective shelters in Aleppo and Latakia Governorates, in addition to providing two generators at the beginning of the emergency to support rescue efforts at night. Rehabilitation works in collective shelters aimed to improve the living conditions for families and included the installation of gender-segregated WASH facilities and partitions to enhance hygiene, privacy and dignity.

Rapid damage assessments of affected buildings are ongoing in Aleppo (70% completed) with support of the Shelter Sector (UNHCR, UNDP and UN-Habitat) and in coordination with the Operations Room. So far 104,931 buildings have been assessed and around 70% were found to be habitable, 26% need retrofitting works and 4% need to be demolished. In Latakia, a similar assessment was led by the Operations Room for 107,638 buildings. It found that 55% of buildings are habitable, 25% need rehabilitation, 18% need reinforcement and 2% need to be demolished.

As part of the shelter response in the coming months, UNHCR and partners will be supporting earthquake-affected families with cash for minor repairs to homes that have sustained minor damages. Among other support, UNHCR and partners are also planning to conduct minor repairs of affected sewage systems in Aleppo and Latakia.



UNHCR and partners supported the rehabilitation of collective shelters for people affected by the earthquakes in Aleppo. Photo: ©UNHCR/H. Maarouf

UNHCR also completed the delivery and installation of eight Rubb halls in seven schools in Latakia Governorate. The Rubb halls were installed in the school yards and are being used as temporary classrooms for children.

North-west Syria

In north-west Syria, UNHCR is providing direct assistance through its partners and leads the Protection, Shelter/NFI and CCCM clusters in close partnership with the Humanitarian Liaison Group, local and international NGOs, and the Whole of Syria coordination structure.

Protection

UNHCR protection partners continued their work to address urgent protection needs by conducting outreach activities and work inside community centres, reception centres and through mobile teams, assisting both earthquake and conflict-affected individuals. Between February and May, more than **101,000** individuals were supported with community-based protection interventions, such as awareness raising and psychosocial support sessions, case identification and referrals to basic services, as well as legal assistance and information related to civil status documentation.

The UNHCR-led Protection Cluster has also been providing psychosocial support and psychological first aid services to more than 117,000 individuals, awareness sessions for some **107,000** individuals, legal assistance to some **11,000** individuals, cash and vouchers for protection service to **8,800** individuals and case management and referral for over **8,100** individuals as part of the earthquake response.

Shelter and core relief Items

Thanks to prepositioned stocks and increased cross-border deliveries in the wake of the earthquakes, UNHCR managed to respond quickly to the emergency. By 18 April, UNHCR had successfully completed the transhipments of the emergency earthquake response, which began on 11 February, delivering a total of **20,000** CRIs kits, reaching **100,000** earthquake-affected individuals. UNHCR moreover distributed **10,000** tents, **eight** rub halls (large tents used as reception centres) and **1,000** Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), supporting some **53,000** affected people.

Assistance distributed (February-April 2023)

100,072 blankets	**80,000** mattresses	**80,000** sleeping mats
40,000 jerry cans	**20,000** kitchen sets	**20,000** hygiene kits
20,000 solar lamps	**40,000** plastic sheets	**10,000** tents and **1,000** RHUs

Members of the UNHCR-led Shelter/NFI Cluster have distributed NFI kits to over 300,000 earthquake-affected individuals and supported close to 135,000 individuals with emergency shelter as part of the first phase of the earthquake response. Around 21,200 individuals have moreover been reached with the provision of emergency shelter kits and some 11,000 individuals have received transitional shelter units. Following the conclusion of the emergency phase of the earthquake response, the Shelter/NFI Cluster is advocating for more resources for dignified shelter, and rehabilitation and repair assistance of partially damaged buildings, to de-congest overcrowded reception centres and camps.



Recreational activity in Qabasin, Aleppo. Photo by: © SRD

Remaining needs

The scale of needs inside Syria is immense. The earthquake is another tragedy on top of the crisis that has affected Syria and the region for the last 12 years. Prior to the earthquakes, 15.3 million people were already in need of humanitarian assistance and an estimated 90% of the population lived in poverty. In north-west Syria, more than 90% of the population already rely on some form of humanitarian aid to meet their most basic needs and the earthquake has only worsened their suffering. There is a need for shelter, food, water, health, and sanitation support, and livelihoods and protection responses as families resort to harmful coping mechanisms to survive.

- A summary report of a UN earthquake rapid needs assessment was issued in May to provide an overview of the needs of affected people residing in communities outside of collective shelters. UNHCR was among the agencies that provided the enumerators who carried out the assessment. Respondents estimated that assessed communities hosted somewhere between 583,000 and 793,000 additional IDPs because of the earthquake. Around 431,500 households in assessed communities needed emergency core relief item assistance while 79,700 households needed emergency shelter. Around 89% of respondents said their communities had no specific services for persons with disabilities, an estimated 83,550 people in assessed communities did not have civil documentation and 332,200 people were missing housing, land and property documentation.

- Identifying and mitigating existing risks of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse remains a key priority for UNHCR in the earthquake emergency response. UNHCR and partners are committed to strengthen assistance to survivors of gender-based violence and victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, including through the provision of case management and psychosocial support.

- There is a pressing need for safeguarding the rights of affected populations, especially in relation to housing, land, and property. UNHCR stands ready to provide technical, institutional, and logistical support in response to the housing, land, and property issues that were exacerbated by the earthquakes.

- UNHCR continues to advocate for access through all modalities to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable. Continued access to north-west Syria will allow UNHCR to further strengthen its programmes and deliver better humanitarian assistance.

Funding

Thanks to timely support received from donors, UNHCR and partners were able to rapidly scale up its response in Syria to deliver critical assistance and protection to earthquake-affected families. Without urgent and flexible funding, this first phase of the response - which has seen thousands of core relief items, health kits, essential shelter supplies and protection services provided - would have struggled to get off the ground.

However, affected communities remain extremely vulnerable. Ongoing support remains critical to help families rebuild their lives, particularly as the response continues to develop beyond the immediate emergency phase. **UNHCR is urgently appealing for $535 million** to support its response across Syria and north-west Syria. Your partnership is vital, now more than ever, to meet the urgent needs of the many families and individuals affected by this emergency and the challenges that lie ahead.

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to its operations in Syria and north-west Syria, including in response to the earthquake emergency.

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