

Syrian Arab Republic

Multi-year Strategy 2023 – 2025



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1.1 Executive Summary

UNHCR's 2023-2025 Strategic Directions for the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), developed through a consultative planning process, focus on three main objectives:

1-Support Solutions: UNHCR will further enhance its engagement with partners to facilitate solutions for internally displaced people (IDPs) and for those who have spontaneously returned, including through the UN's area-based return support approach, in order to strengthen humanitarian early recovery and resilience of communities, and therefore the sustainability of return and reintegration.

2-Maintain Emergency Preparedness and Response: UNHCR will preserve its readiness to respond to new and protracted emergencies, with readiness to scale up cross-line assistance when needed.

3-Enhance Refugee Protection, Inclusion, and Solutions: UNHCR will intensify its involvement and engagement in refugee protection, enhance their inclusion into services and assistance provided by other actors (such as livelihoods support) and advocate for solutions.

To achieve these objectives, UNHCR will reinforce strategic partnerships with UN agencies, international and local NGOs, and communities, particularly in its lead sectors (protection and shelter/non-food items). As co-leads of the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the Accountability to Affected Populations working groups of the UN Country Team, UNHCR will improve accountability, adapt programming based on findings, and enhance communication on sexual exploitation and abuse with partners and communities, and other concerned stakeholders.

Enhanced data access and analysis, especially concerning returnees, alongside a strong focus on risk management will underly a robust operational plan for 2023-2025.

1.2 Situation Analysis

The situation in Syria remains dire. Despite a partial improvement in regional relations, the ongoing conflict, humanitarian crisis, and the February 2023 earthquakes as well as the current influx from Lebanon have intensified the challenges faced by the population. In 2024, over 16.7 million people need live-saving and life-sustaining assistance,

marking an 9 per cent increase from 2023, despite all the efforts invested in the last few years to reduce the vulnerability of Syrians affected by the crisis. People in Syria are sliding deeper into poverty. As of the end of 2021, 97 per cent of the Syrian population was estimated to be living at or below the poverty line, with 65 per cent living in extreme poverty. This decline has led to more negative coping strategies, including child labour, early marriage, begging, increased household debt, deferment of needed medical care, school dropout, and reduced or lower quality food intake, amongst others.

In October 2023, at the Executive Committee of UNHCR, the Government of Syria issued a statement of intent on refugee returns (later repeated at the UN Security Council) in which it committed to continuing its cooperation with UNHCR to effectively tackle the main concerns of refugees. Despite the political, economic and security situation in the country, the regional and global developments, including the recent changes in the position of some EU Member States towards the crisis in Syria, might lead to an increased waves of returns from neighbouring countries to Syria and within the country. The main target group for UNHCR Syria will be IDP and refugee returnees.

Despite these challenges, some 17,100 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR as of end January. Most of the registered refugees are from Iraq and reside primarily in urban areas in Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and Latakia governorates.

In 2025, UNHCR will continue to work with the authorities, national and international NGOs, UN partners and other stakeholders to collectively address the deteriorating protection environment for all people in situations of displacement in Syria, including refugees, internally displaced people and returnees. The Office's protection and solutions strategy will follow a rights and community-based approach emphasizing community mobilization, empowerment and self-reliance through the engagement of other UN agencies to complement services in community centres. In addition, UNHCR will continue to maintain a robust contingency plan for emergencies, including natural disasters, large displacement due to sudden deterioration of the security situation in any part of the country, or large-scale precipitous refugee returns in adverse circumstances due to the deterioration in the protection environment in host countries.

The Office will enhance its advocacy, evidence-based policies, and programme to continue to contribute to a more enabling environment for the voluntary, safe and dignified return and sustainable integration of IDPs and refugees in their home communities, by improving their living conditions using a multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approach.

UNHCR will also advocate for a comprehensive national refugee policy to uphold the rights of all refugees and for clear and appropriate administrative procedures to regularize the stay of refugees who have entered the country irregularly through unofficial border crossings. In addition, the Office will promote resettlement as an

international responsibility-sharing solution as reflected in the Global Compact on Refugees.

1.3 Vision and Strategic Orientation

To achieve UNHCR's strategic directions in Syria, key enablers will include:

- Building Strategic Partnerships: UNHCR will explore how to better leverage its sector leadership in the areas of protection and shelter and non-food items (NFIs), as well as ensure a close linkage of its strategies with comprehensive gap analyses and prioritisation of sectors. Partnerships will be strengthened with key partners on protection, livelihoods, and engagement in the rollout of the inter-agency area-based return support approach (addressing the needs of communities experiencing high returns and high needs).
- Strengthening Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Empowering Communities: Efforts to integrate AAP more deeply into programs will include utilizing findings from participatory assessments and enhancing communication with communities on issues such as sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Enhancing Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms: UNHCR will continue strengthening, assessing, and evaluating existing complaint and feedback channels. Guidance and support will continue to be extended to all partners in order to ensure feedback channels are diversified and accessible to all populations including children, women, girls and boys, older people and people with disabilities.
- Advancing Data and Analysis: This involves improved analysis of data related to new displacement and returns of internally displaced people and refugees.
- Mobilizing Support: UNHCR will enhance reporting on the combined impact of UNHCR interventions and programmes and diversify income streams considering multiple crises competing for financial and material resources.
- Ensuring Robust Risk Management and Operational Integrity: This will ensure a principled approach, with operations focused on reaching those most in need.

1.4 Fair Access and Representation

UNHCR and its partners adhere strictly to UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity policy by facilitating equal access to information, services, and opportunities that respond to the needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse backgrounds. All people with whom UNHCR works have equal access to services available at community centres,

such as thematic case management (including gender-based violence, child protection, and psychosocial support), legal aid and education, among others.

Mobile teams and outreach volunteers will continue to provide services to people with specific needs, such as older people and those with disabilities who may find it difficult to access centres.

To strengthen accountability to affected populations, UNHCR will enhance its digital feedback mechanism while reinforcing face-to-face strategies, managing expectations, countering misinformation, and addressing rumours through timely feedback and dissemination of information.

In support of LGBTIQ+ individuals and considering the sociocultural norms that remain a challenge in Syria as elsewhere, UNHCR will continue to make efforts to identify specific partners to work on inclusion of safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ individuals and communities. The Office will support the mainstreaming of their concerns across different sectors, promote social and cultural change and engage in public awareness and sensitisation campaigns.

Promoting gender equality remains a priority, including addressing discriminatory practices which have emerged or been exacerbated as a result of the crisis. This is an UN-wide priority in Syria, given that the significant progress in gender equality achieved until 2011 has since retreated. The gender gap has widened due to many factors related to the crisis, including displacement, limited mobility for men in conflict affected areas, the number of adult males leaving the country for different reasons related to the crisis, and other incidents which affected men due to their engagement in armed conflict. UNHCR and its partners will strengthen integration and synergies between areas of work, such as education, livelihoods, health, shelter, registration, child protection, youth programming and gender-based violence prevention and response, to strive for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

UNHCR will continue to conduct age, gender and diversity participatory assessments and other strategic focus group discussions to support the meaningful participation of those with whom UNHCR works including women and girls. UNHCR will also identify opportunities to increase participation by people with specific needs, such as older people and those with disabilities. These will include face-to-face meetings, key informant interviews and other platforms, taking into account the risks and accessibility of various groups.

Promoting active participation of women in decision-making and engaging them in the design of protection interventions will continue through the establishment of women's committees and community-based organisations, which recognize the resilience, capacities, skills and resources of women and girls and build on these to deliver protection and solutions. UNHCR will work with outreach volunteers, of which 60 per

cent are female, to promote community ownership to identify and implement community-based solutions. The Office will further strive to achieve gender equality with the outreach volunteer networks and other community leadership structures established at community centres.

2. Impact Statements

Impact statement

By 2025, people UNHCR serves enjoy improved access to documentation

Impact area: Attaining favourable protection environments

Outcome statements

By 2025, identified affected people have enhanced access to effective civil documentation

Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation

By 2025, local laws and policies are developed and more favorable to affected people

Outcome area: Protection policy and law

Impact statement

By 2025, all asylum seekers have better access to safe and equal asylum procedures, and risk of refoulement reduced

Impact area: Attaining favourable protection environments

Outcome statements

By 2025, UNHCR's registration procedure improves in effectiveness and efficiency

Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation

By 2025, Refugee Status Determination is conducted in a strategic manner, pursuant to transparent and fair procedures and enhanced efficiency

Outcome area: Refugee status determination

Impact statement

By 2025, all people UNHCR serves identified in need, receive timely assistance

Impact area: Realizing rights in safe environments

Outcome statements

By 2025, the health system's capacity is strengthened to support continuity of care and community resilience

Outcome area: Healthy lives

By 2025, affected communities have improved access to clean water and satisfactory sanitation/hygiene

Outcome area: Clean water, sanitation and hygiene

By 2025, people in need have access to more sustainable shelter solutions and UNHCR's capacity for emergency response is maintained

Outcome area: Sustainable housing and settlements

By 2025, vulnerable people are assisted to meet basic and specific needs

Outcome area: Well-being and basic needs

Impact statement

By 2025, all people UNHCR serves, particularly women and girls, are empowered to access their rights, are equally engaged and participate in their own protection

Impact area: Empowering communities and achieving gender equality

Outcome statements

By 2025, coordination and partnership management will continue to be enhanced

Outcome area: Systems and processes

By 2025, fundraising, media and communication will continue enable the smooth implementation of the Operation

Outcome area: External engagement and resource mobilization

By 2025, access to quality primary, secondary, and tertiary education for all affected people is enhanced

Outcome area: Education

By 2025, identified vulnerable people have access to sustainable livelihood opportunities and services

Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods

By 2025, the risks of gender-based violence are reduced, survivors have adequate and timely access to quality services and prevention programming effectively addresses root causes of gender-based violence

Outcome area: Gender-based violence

By 2025, children UNHCR serves have access to enhanced child protection systems, procedures, and services

Outcome area: Child protection

By 2025, community groups and outreach volunteers are empowered, and community participation is enhanced

Outcome area: Community engagement and women's empowerment
Impact statement

By 2025, an increased number of people UNHCR serves have enhanced access to safe and dignified durable solutions

Impact area: Securing solutions

Outcome statements

By 2025, a more enabling environment for the voluntary, safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration of refugees and IDPs will be created

Outcome area: Voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration

By 2025, enhanced advocacy and evidence-based policies will have contributed to an enabling environment for voluntary, safe and dignified return of asylum-seekers and refugees

Outcome area: Voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration

By 2025, increased advocacy efforts result in more resettlement opportunities and avenues for complementary pathways

Outcome area: Resettlement and complementary pathways

3. Syrian Arab Republic 2025 Indicators and Targets

Country	Results Level	Result Area	Indicator	Population Type	Baseline	Target 2025
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98%	Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	IDPs	72%	Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	72%	Not applicable
Syrian	Impact	IA2:	2.2 Proportion of people	Returnees	72%	Not

Arab Republic		Respond	residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities				applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education	IDPs	77%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education	Returnees	77%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	IDPs	77%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Returnees	77%		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	19		Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-	45		Not applicable

				seekers		
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed	Stateless Persons	120,000	Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6,683	Not applicable
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	76%	100%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	96%	100%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	773	180
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol	None	Progressing towards alignment: 70-89 points	Progressing towards alignment: 70-89 points
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the	None	Not yet aligned: ≤69 points	Not yet aligned: ≤69 points

				Reduction of Statelessness			
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	IDPs	68%	83%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	68%	83%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	Returnees	68%	83%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	IDPs	87%	87%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98%	98%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Returnees	88%	88%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	IDPs	72%	To be confirmed	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	42%	50%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	Returnees	72%	To be confirmed	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	IDPs	49%	49%	
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	63%	80%	

Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Returnees	49%	49%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	IDPs	Extensive: ≥70 points	Extensive: ≥70 points
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Extensive: ≥70 points	Extensive: ≥70 points
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Returnees	Extensive: ≥70 points	Extensive: ≥70 points
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	IDPs	84%	85%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Returnees	85%	85%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	IDPs	72%	60%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	56%	56%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	Returnees	70%	60%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	IDPs	63%	66%
Syrian	Outcome	OA8: Well-	8.1 Proportion of people that	Refugees	86%	96%

Arab Republic		being	receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	and Asylum-seekers		
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	Returnees	60%	68%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	IDPs	100%	To be confirmed
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	To be confirmed
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	Returnees	100%	To be confirmed
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	IDPs	72%	80%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	37%	55%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	Returnees	72%	80%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	IDPs	72%	50%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	72%	50%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	Returnees	72%	50%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA10: Health	10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	80%	82%

Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA10: Health	10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	90%	95%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA11: Education	11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	21%	20%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA11: Education	11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	IDPs	77%	77%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA11: Education	11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95%	95%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA11: Education	11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	Returnees	77%	77%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA12: WASH	12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services	IDPs	60%	79%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA12: WASH	12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services	Returnees	60%	79%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA12: WASH	12.2 Proportion of people with access to a safe household toilet	IDPs	60%	76%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA12: WASH	12.2 Proportion of people with access to a safe household toilet	Returnees	60%	76%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	IDPs	25%	30%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0%	30%

Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Returnees	25%	30%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	IDPs	58%	60%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	60%	65%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Returnees	54%	60%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	IDPs	21%	21%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	90%	60%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Returnees	21%	21%
Syrian Arab Republic	Outcome	OA15: Resettle	15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	55	To be confirmed