

Syrian Arab Republic

March 2026

Syria's operational context reflects a dual dynamic: large-scale returns alongside persistent humanitarian needs. As of March 2026, **15.6 million** require assistance, while over **1.5 million** refugees and **1.8 million** internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned since December 2024. Despite these movements, internal displacement remains high (**5.5 million**), underscoring that returns are occurring within a still-fragile system with strained absorption capacity.

Based on actual and projected return numbers and in response to calls from Syrian refugees and IDPs for UNHCR to support their return, UNHCR is facilitating voluntary return.

This gradual operational shift is anchored in the **voluntary character of return and refugees' well-informed and free choices**.

This effort, however, remains constrained by challenges, including funding shortfalls, limited absorption capacity in areas of return, access restrictions, and the extensive scale of humanitarian needs.

UNHCR continues to deliver protection and assistance across displacement groups, with increasing emphasis on supporting reintegration in high-return areas where service gaps and protection risks remain most acute.

HIGHLIGHTS

300

returnees were received and supported by UNHCR in March as part of the organized convoys from Jordan

5,877

returnee families received return and reintegration cash assistance in March

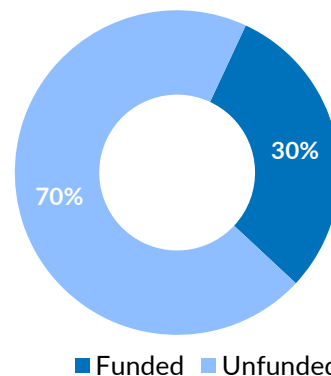
19,677

families have received core relief items since the beginning of the year

FUNDING (AS OF 31 MARCH 2026)

USD 323.9 million

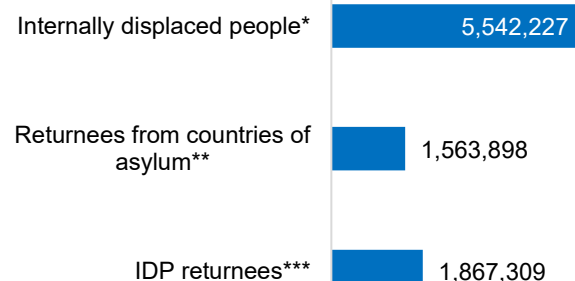
requested for the Syria Operation in 2026



RETURNEES AS OF MARCH 2026



UNHCR and its partners provide assistance at the Joussieh border crossing in Homs to thousands of people fleeing hostilities in Lebanon. ©UNHCR/A.Alkady



*Source: OCHA, August 2025

**Source: UNHCR, since December 2024. This is calculated by triangulating multiple data sources, including population-movement reporting and border-monitoring data.

***Source: OCHA and UNHCR, from December 2024 to March 2026

Operational Context

Syria is experiencing an increase in both refugee and IDP returns, yet internal displacement remains widespread, and humanitarian needs across the country continue to be substantial.

The security situation in the country is still unpredictable in some areas, and humanitarian and economic conditions remain dire, with limited access to basic services in many parts of the country.

UNHCR's [Enhanced Refugee Perceptions and Intentions to Return to Syria Survey](#) published in September 2025, which analysed the intentions of Syrian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon to return to their home country, indicated that the political transition had triggered a sharp and almost immediate increase in refugees who stated intentions to return within a year. Among those still residing in host countries, the survey found that 18% of the respondents intended to return within a year, and 80% expressed a desire to return to Syria one day. However, housing availability and property damage, limited employment opportunities, and safety and stability within Syria remain key factors in the refugees' decision-making and are likely to influence return trends.

This context reinforces the fact that displacement dynamics are increasingly linked to access to housing, services, and livelihoods, positioning broader recovery outcomes as central to sustainable reintegration.

Through the [area-based](#) and [community-based approaches](#), UNHCR supports refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, host community members, and returnees (refugees and IDPs who have returned to their home areas). UNHCR's [community-based approach](#) focuses on community mobilization and building self-reliance. It aims at reducing 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. UNHCR and partners continue to reach thousands of returnee families across Syria to support their reintegration and access to basic services.

In 2026, UNHCR collaborates with 22 partners, including ministries, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs in all 14 governorates.

Operational Updates

Response to the situation in Lebanon

Between 2 and 31 March, 221,912 individuals (190,166 Syrians and 31,746 Lebanese) living mainly

in Southern Lebanon and the Southern Suburb of Beirut fled Israeli airstrikes into Syria through the three official border crossing points; Jdaidet Yabous (Rural Damascus), Joussieh (Homs), and the newly opened Arida (Tartous). These movements occurred amid escalating hostilities linked to the wider regional conflict. Some Syrians returned permanently but earlier than planned, while others intended only a temporary stay until the situation stabilizes in Lebanon.

UNHCR has strengthened its presence at the three border crossing points and in communities to closely monitor arrivals and better understand the needs of the newly displaced populations. In parallel, UNHCR has led coordination efforts with border authorities, UN agencies, and humanitarian partners to enhance the delivery of immediate assistance. This includes facilitating referrals to protection services, legal aid providers, and shelter support mechanisms in areas of destination.

Together with its partners, UNHCR has provided a comprehensive package of life-saving support at the borders, including water and food, core relief items, transportation assistance to destination areas and information materials to help families access services. UNHCR also offered protection assistance such as legal counselling and psychological first aid. In addition, UN partner agencies including UNICEF reached children with vaccinations, nutrition screening, and health awareness sessions, while WFP distributed meals. UNFPA continued providing gender-based violence prevention and response, referral services, and reproductive health support. Mobile medical clinics operated at multiple border points.

In areas of return across Syria, UNHCR and partners directly engaged with new arrivals through field missions, home visits, outreach volunteers and focus group discussions. UNHCR is prioritizing interventions to meet the returnees identified needs.

Regular response



Protection

- UNHCR advanced its protection and community-based interventions to strengthen individuals' access to essential services and the enjoyment of their rights, contributing to more sustainable and durable reintegration outcomes for returnees.
- By the end of March, UNHCR supported 56 [community centres](#) and 69 mobile units across the country, assisted by a network of 975 community outreach volunteers in all 14 Syrian governorates. Five UNHCR-supported community centres were closed in

March in Homs, Hama and Dar'a Governorates due to budget constraints.

- In relation to the implementation of [Decree No. \(13\) of 2026](#) granting nationality to Kurds residing in Syria, UNHCR secured agreement for its partner lawyers to be deployed to government application centres, and provided equipment, including laptops, to Civil Affairs Offices, such as in Al-Hasakeh, to facilitate the process.
- On 12 March, the Civil Registry Office in Deir-ez-Zor rehabilitated by UNHCR was formally handed over to the Syrian Government. The upgraded facility is expected to significantly improve access to civil documentation and contribute to wider reintegration efforts in the area.
- On 26 March, UNHCR completed the registration of 972 households (3,864 individuals) in Akburhan camp (Aleppo Governorate), which hosts families relocated from Al-Hol camp (Al-Hasakeh). Protection teams continue service monitoring, community engagement, and recreational and mental health and psychosocial support activities. Preparations for the rollout of the Complaints and Feedback Mechanism are ongoing, which is expected to identify gaps, improve accountability, and adapt assistance to the specific needs of the camp residents.
- In Roj camp (Al-Hasakeh), UNHCR and its partners commenced preparatory activities, including team training and communication with residents, ahead of the population verification exercise approved by the Camp Administration. The exercise is expected to commence on 1 April.
- The [Syria is Home](#) platform, launched in April 2025 to help Syrian refugees make informed decisions about return to Syria, recorded around 115,000 visits by the end of March, with most new users from Syria, Lebanon, the United States, Germany, and Türkiye.



Shelter

- In March, UNHCR assessed houses in need of repair across Syria, prioritizing returnee families, including those from camps. To date, 522 houses have been assessed, with repairs having commenced for 412 damaged houses out of the 1,500 planned for rehabilitation in 2026 to enhance safety and improve living conditions for vulnerable returnees. House repair efforts signal progress in advancing area-based recovery in return locations; however, needs remain significantly higher than available resources.
- UNHCR is carrying out an assessment to evaluate the feasibility of installing a solar energy system in Akburhan camp (Aleppo). The system will provide reliable electricity improving protection of residents, and water access considering power shortages.

- To enhance safety and reduce protection risks for residents of the Newroz camp (Al-Hasakeh), UNHCR has implemented a large-scale lighting improvement project, installing 338 solar powered lighting units.



Solar lights installed in Newroz camp, improving living conditions for residents. ©UNHCR



Core Relief Items

- UNHCR continues to work with partners to organize distributions for families in Akburhan camp (Aleppo), with a large-scale distribution on 17 March reaching around 1,000 households with assistance comprising winter clothing, hygiene kits, and children's items.
- In March, 3,777 families (17,152 individuals) across Syria received core relief item (CRI) kits, bringing the total number receiving this assistance since the beginning of the year to 19,677 families (88,906 individuals). The kits comprised essential household items including blankets, mattresses, sleeping mats, jerry cans, plastic sheets, solar lamps, kitchen sets, and winter items.



Livelihoods

- Since the beginning of the year, UNHCR has provided livelihood support to establish micro and small enterprises to 419 families (2,678 individuals) across Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, As-Sweida, Rural Damascus, Hama, Dar'a, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh, and Quneitra.



Cash Assistance

- A total of 5,877 returnee families (25,945 individuals) received return and reintegration cash assistance (\$600 per family). Since the beginning of the year, 17,218 returnee families (67,210 individuals) received this type of assistance, enabling them to meet essential needs upon return and supporting their safe and dignified reintegration.



Refugee Response

- **Registration:** As of the end of March, 14,100 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR in Syria. 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 March, UNHCR also renewed the identification cards of 43 refugees. These cards protect refugees against *refoulement*, ensure access to basic rights and services, and facilitate freedom of movement.

- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD):** In March, one individual was recognized as refugee, helping to facilitate access to basic services and ensure protection from refoulement and detention due to irregular stay.
- **Durable solutions:** In March, UNHCR facilitated the departure of one family (two individuals) from Damascus to the United Kingdom for resettlement. UNHCR also maintained communication with persons with and for whom it works, through weekly counselling over the dedicated [helplines](#).



Return

- Following the political transition in Syria on 8 December 2024 until the end of March 2026, 1,563,898 Syrians returned to the country, mainly from the region¹.
- UNHCR facilitates voluntary return based on informed decision-making. However, return intentions and actual movements continue to be shaped by structural constraints inside Syria.
- UNHCR Syria received [organized convoys](#) from Jordan consisting of 300 returnees at the Nassib

border crossing point (Dar'a). The returnees were transported to Dar'a, Homs, Damascus and Rural Damascus. UNHCR and partners continue monitoring their post-return situation through home visits, while referring those in need to available services.

- UNHCR continues to support the return of IDPs from camps to their areas of origin. On 16 March, transportation assistance was provided to eight households (39 individuals) returning from five camps in Khirbet Al-Jouz (Idleb) to their village in the governorate, bringing the total number of supported returnees from camps in north-west and north-east Syria to 1,520 households (6,756 individuals) since the process began in 2025.
- UNHCR and partners continue following up on the post-return situation of returnees through a range of monitoring activities and home visits, providing assistance and making referrals to available services, including UNHCR-supported community centres most accessible to their locations of return.
- Early monitoring indicates that reintegration conditions vary across locations, and are influenced by factors such as service availability, housing conditions, local security dynamics, and livelihood opportunities. When these conditions are met, returnees begin to re-establish their lives and contribute to the recovery of their communities.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

- [UNHCR Preliminary Protection Analysis on New Arrivals from Lebanon \(April 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR IDPs and IDP returnees overview \(9 April 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR refugee return overview \(9 April 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR IDPs and IDP returnees overview \(2 April 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR refugee return overview \(2 April 2026\)](#)
- [Regional Flash Update #70 \(27 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR IDPs and IDP returnees overview \(26 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR refugee return overview \(26 March 2026\)](#)
- [Regional Flash Update #69 \(20 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR IDPs and IDP returnees overview \(19 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR refugee return overview \(19 March 2026\)](#)
- [Regional Flash Update #68 \(13 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR IDPs and IDP returnees overview \(12 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR refugee return overview \(12 March 2026\)](#)
- [Regional Flash Update #67 \(6 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR IDPs and IDP returnees overview \(5 March 2026\)](#)
- [UNHCR refugee return overview \(5 March 2026\)](#)

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¹ This figure is calculated based on a triangulation of data from Syria, Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and beyond.