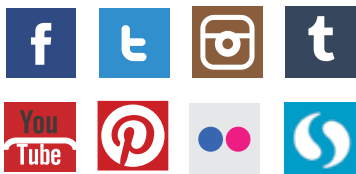


Highlights

- UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi Visits Syria
- UNHCR Crossing lines throughout Syria
- UNHCR uses Airlifts for Emergency Planning
- Winterization Programme Continues
- Sleeping bags in Aleppo
- CBIs improving Lives in Hassakeh

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UN High Commissioner for Refugees Visits Syria



On 21 January the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi visited Syria and appealed to all parties to the conflict to allow regular, unimpeded and sustained access for humanitarian organizations to besieged and hard-to-reach areas. During his one day visit, he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Foreign Minister and the Minister of Local Administration where he emphasized UNHCR's commitment to delivering aid to the internally displaced people throughout Syria and supporting refugees as well as thanking the Government of Syria for their assistance. He also pledged cooperation to increase livelihood programmes, on-line education and vocational training.

In addition, the High Commissioner met Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Um Attiah Al Ansaria Shelter in Damascus, a former school now hosting 73 families, half who are children. After listening to them Mr. Grandi said: "In these hard times, it's truly inspiring to witness such resilience and courage, but an end to the five-year-old crisis is called for to end the suffering endured by millions of people."

Also during his visit he handed over seven fully equipped ambulances to UNHCR partner the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) at its Polyclinic Al Zahira, Damascus in order to enhance its capacity to provide medical emergency response and perform life-saving health services and operations. He also took the opportunity to tour the medial center and attend a psychosocial session for children. Al Zahira polyclinic is the largest of 10 SARC polyclinics providing health services to IDPs and refugees in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Tartous with the support of UNHCR. In 2015, over 300,000 IDPs benefited from the primary health care services in these clinics.

The High Commissioner also met the UN team, international NGOs and national NGOs in Damascus as well as UNHCR staff from both Damascus and the field offices, who were both excited and encouraged by his visit. "It's only possible to understand the true scale of the crisis after you meet with people affected by it and listen to them first hand, hear their stories and try to offer them the specific help they need" said Sajjad Malik, UNHCR's Representative in Syria "for this reason we welcomed and encouraged the High Commissioner's decision to come to Syria."



The High Commissioner Handing Over the Ambulances to SARC
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UNHCR High Commissioner Visiting UNHCR Supported Vocational Training
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UNHCR Participates in Interagency Convoys throughout Syria

As the crisis in Syria nears its sixth year, up to 4.5 million people in the country live in hard-to-reach areas, including nearly 400,000 people in 15 besieged locations who do not have access to the aid that they desperately need.

On 11, 14 and 18 January UNHCR participated in interagency convoys that delivered life-saving humanitarian aid such as food and blankets to thousands of people trapped in dire conditions in the besieged town of Madaya in Rural Damascus and simultaneously in the besieged towns of Foua and Kafraya in Idlib. Trucks, carrying blankets and food packages of rice, oil and lentils entered the town, where volunteers began unloading them in the dark, watched by groups of hungry people, including children. UNHCR's Representative in Syria Sajjad Malik who participated in the first convoy observed that there was "Crowds of hungry kids around, it's heart-breaking to see so many hungry people. It's cold and raining but there is excitement because we are here with some food and blankets." The Representative also joined the convoy to Foua and Kafraya on 18 January, which was refused permission by Non-State Armed Group to enter the towns, hence could only get as far as the last Government check point at Qalaat Al Madyq . However, a fuel tanker containing 10,000 litres of fuel, badly needed due to the present extreme cold spell was handed to the SARC Idlib branch for distribution. UNHCR's contribution to the convoys included blankets for 40,000 beneficiaries in Madaya and 20,000 individuals in Foua and Kafraya.



A hungry Child in Madaya
©UNHCR / WFP 2016



Offloading Aid in Madaya
©UNHCR / WFP 2016

UNHCR Participates in Three Successful Interagency Missions to Al Waer

As part of the ceasefire agreement between the fighting parties and following the first and the second interagency missions to the besieged Al Waer neighborhood of Homs, on 05 and 12 December 2015, UNHCR participated in the third and the last interagency mission delivering humanitarian aid to Al Waer on 11 January. Overall, the provided assistance benefited over 35,000 individuals, through the provision of core relief items, including plastic sheets, hygiene kits, adult diapers, sleeping mats, blankets and mattresses.



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UNHCR on Track with its Winterization Programme

UNHCR is continuing its winter aid programme across Syria reaching as of 31 January 642,067 individuals with 683,825 winter items. The programme which began in the second week of October is well on track to meet its prioritized target of 750,000 people using 150,000 winter kits. The standard winterized kit is composed of winter clothes, high thermal blankets and plastic sheets. Priority is given to the newly displaced individuals, people in hard-to-reach areas, people with specific needs and vulnerabilities such as unaccompanied minors or elders, single women as well as people with disability, mental health problems or serious medical conditions and chronic diseases.

In Aleppo because of the particularly harsh conditions faced by IDPs residing in skeleton, unfinished and sub-standard shelters with no efficient means for warmth, a supplementary winter package was agreed upon. This package includes sleeping bags and shelter kits consisting of timber, plywood and a tool kit which will enable the residents of the skeleton buildings to reinforce and adjust their shelters to changing climate conditions.

In January, UNHCR distributed 6,783 of these sleeping bags which were sourced and manufactured locally, also having the knock on effect of supporting local livelihoods in Aleppo. The sleeping bags were distributed with appreciation to the affected population as it can serve them as a mattress, sleeping mat, blanket and quilt in one piece. One beneficiary who received the sleeping bags told UNHCR that “my eldest son had a shower yesterday in order to sleep in the bag, the rest are still waiting to have shower before start using it” with a big smile on her face.



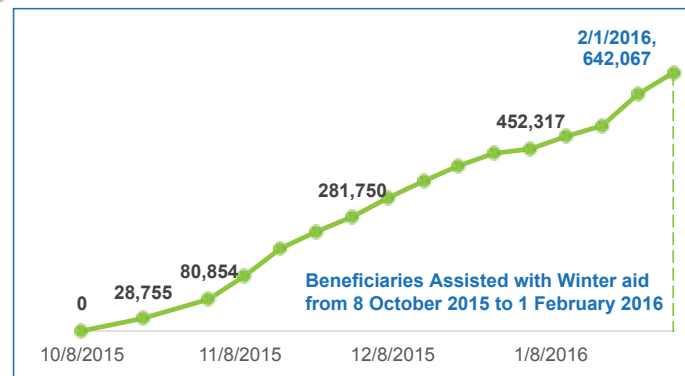
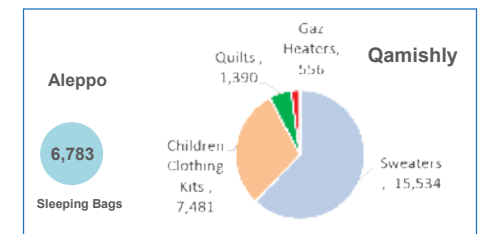
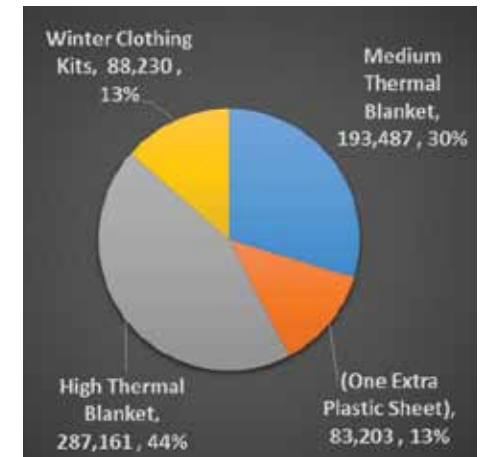
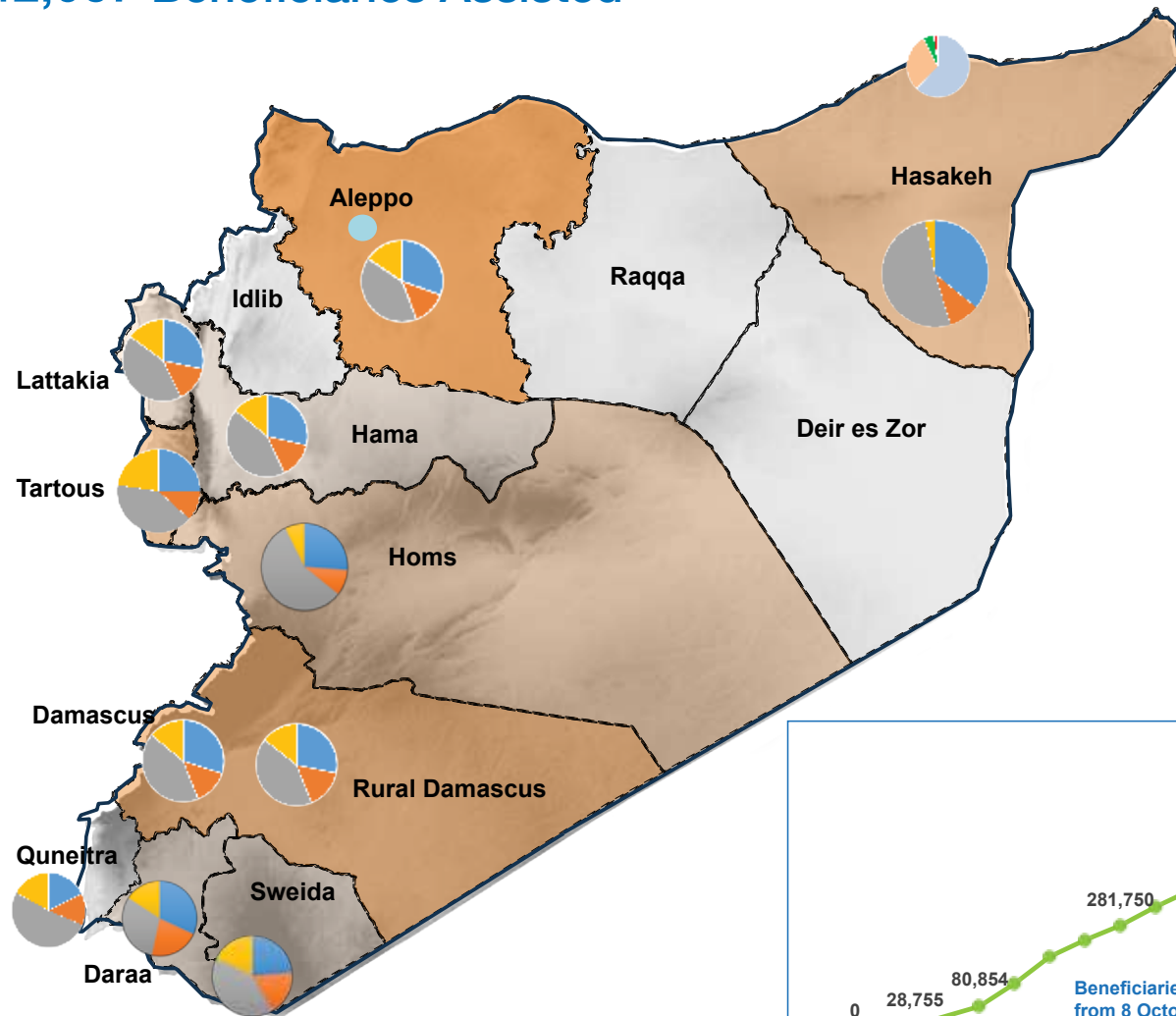
Happy faces in Aleppo after receiving sleepingbags
©UNHCR / B.Diab 2016



Brothers Ahmed and Hani warm in their new sleeping bag
©UNHCR / B.Diab 2016

Winterization Programme 2015 - 2016

642,067 Beneficiaries Assisted



Gov	beneficiaries: (Individuals)
Aleppo	268,152
Rural Damascus	110,175
Homs	87,245
Hassakeh	51,290
Hama	37,750
Damascus	32,250
Tartous	29,545
Lattakia	10,530
Daraa	7,655
Swieda	3,875
Quneitra	3,600
Grand Total	642,067

UNHCR Uses Airlifts for Emergency Planning in the Hassakeh Governorate

From 31 December 2015 to 04 January 2016, UNHCR carried out five airlifts to Qamishly in the Hassakeh governorate which delivered 700 tents, 6,300 kitchen sets and 10,000 sanitary napkins as part of contingency planning in the event of a large displacement from Raqqa.



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Improving Streets, Improving Lives in Hassakeh

UNHCR Syria recognizes the important role of Community Based Initiatives (CBIs) as a suitable approach to respond to some of the challenges identified by affected communities and find solutions for their problems. They encourage affected communities to design and implement, in a participatory manner, initiatives to improve their living conditions. UNHCR supported CBIs which have included self-managed kindergartens, community garbage management systems, clean-up campaigns, collective food conservation initiatives, improvement of living conditions in collective shelters, peer support groups, home schooling, recreational activities for children and many other initiatives.

In January a UNHCR supported CBI was carried out in street of the Al Nasera clinic in Hassakeh aimed at improving the area, by cleaning the street, installing stones on the pavement, drawing and painting the walls of the street and planting trees. The CBI, which benefited 120 residents and IDPs promoted peaceful collaboration as well as beautifying the street through art wall painting and improving the environmental living conditions of the residents.



Thanks To Our Donors



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