Syria
October 2020

The Syrian crisis continues to have profound impact on the lives of ordinary families mainly women and children who face protection risks and need a wide range of humanitarian assistance. The extent to which essential services such as schools, health facilities, electricity and water supply have been affected has had far reaching implications on the daily lives of ordinary people. Although some of the affected population has returned to lives, recovery efforts are confronted with the harsh reality of growing economic challenges ranging from the devaluation of the local currency to high prices of essential goods and services. The inability of individual households to meet their basic needs remains even further compounded by the global COVID-19 Pandemic with its attending negative health and socio-economic impact on already vulnerable communities in Syria. UNHCR with the support of donors is working with the government and partners to assist those in need of humanitarian assistance under its refugee programme and the wider Syrian humanitarian response as the lead Protection, Non-Food Item and Shelter sector agency.

HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT

11.06 million
people in need of humanitarian assistance

13.2 million
people in need of protection services

12 million
people in need of health assistance

5.5 million
people in need of shelter support

3.42 million
people in need of core relief items

FUNDING (AS OF 22 OCTOBER 2020)

USD 577.0 million
requested for the Syria Operation

Funded 32%
181.9 million

Unfunded 68%
395.1 million

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
Internally displaced persons 6.7 million

Returnees
Spontaneous IDP return movements 371,600*
Syrian refugee returnees 21,618 **

Refugees and Asylum seekers
Current population 23,627***
Total urban refugees 15,333
Total asylum seekers 8,294
Camp population 30,893****

*OCHA, Jan-July 2020
** Operational Portal, 31 July 2020
***This figure excludes the camp population
****Only 6,800 individuals that arrived to Al-Hol before the recent influx are persons of concern of UNHCR.

UNHCR and its partners marked the International Day of Older Persons with several recreational activities, Homs ©SSSD.
Update on Achievements

Operational Context
According to the 2020 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), over 11 million people need humanitarian assistance, including over 6 million internally displaced people. Approximately 4.7 million vulnerable people exposed to hostilities have limited access to basic goods and services and some 1.1 million people in hard-to-reach locations need assistance. Considering the protracted nature of the crisis, UNHCR shifted its operational focus from emergency response to durable solutions. The operation is providing initial support to returnees and vulnerable people through an area-based approach, which includes immediate shelter repair, rehabilitation of targeted infrastructure, vocational training and livelihood support, legal aid and support for documentation, community-based protection, primary health care, and education.

With the consolidation of government control, there has been an increase in the number of internally displaced persons and refugees returning to their places of origin. In 2020, over 371,600 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) chose to return to their places of origin (OCHA).

Through its area-based and village-support programmes, UNHCR is using a need-based approach and concentrating on high return areas, implementing an integrated package including, protection services, legal services, livelihood support as well as minor rehabilitation of bakery, health clinic and houses.

Working in partnership
Under the overall leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, UNHCR continues to lead Protection and coordinates Non-Food Item (NFI) and Shelter sectors in support of the ongoing humanitarian response in Syria. The agency is working with 74 Protection, 27 NFI and 26 Shelter agencies in the overall response efforts. Due to the size of the humanitarian operation in Syria and the area-specific issues in different regions, UNHCR has various partners and different levels of access. For NFI/Shelter and Protection, there are six sub-national coordination mechanisms in Aleppo, Damascus, Dar’al-As-Sweida, Homs, Qamishli and Tartous.

By the end of October, UNHCR, under its refugee and IDP programmes, had partnership agreements with 28 agencies including two government ministries (Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE) and Ministry of Higher Education); 20 national and 06 international non-governmental organizations.

Achievements

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS BY NUMBERS:
Between January and October, UNHCR Syria provided community-based protection to 864,696 displaced persons, returnees and host community members, including 145,429 individuals provided with legal assistance, 158,748 children with social and recreational activities in community centres, child-friendly spaces, schools and other outreach activities. Others included 15,531 students who were supported with remedial classes and catch-up activities and 77,280 individuals who took part in awareness sessions on Gender Based Violence (GBV).

Meanwhile, during the same period, 998,019 persons of concern received at least one core-relief item, 134,947 from UNHCR shelter activities, while 88,067 others were supported through community-based health interventions.

UNHCR recorded 3,542 Syrian refugees who spontaneously returned in October. This followed the reopening of the borders by the Government of Syria in July. The borders were earlier closed in March following the outbreak of COVID-19. UNHCR together with its national partners is assessing the needs of returnees at the border entry points and quarantine centre in Damascus. UNHCR is also assisting families in their return areas in Syria.
SITUATION IN NORTH-EAST SYRIA
The humanitarian situation in North-East Syria (NES) remains dire with an estimated 1.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Over the last two years, humanitarian actors have been responding to the needs of some 800,000 people every month with assistance in IDP sites, spontaneous settlements, and host communities. Currently, there are four camps as well as informal IDP settlements in Al-Hasakeh, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqah governorates. As of 31 October, the camp population in NES stood at 87,871 individuals (22,740 households) with the largest numbers in Al-Hol Camp, Al-Hasakeh Governorate. The population also includes about 30,000 individuals who live in collective shelters across all three governorates.

UNHCR RESPONSE TO COVID-19:
In support of UNHCR’s COVID-19 response in Syria, 853,659 individuals benefited from variety of services including awareness and information campaigns, distribution and community training by 31 October. Of that number, 121,355 individuals were reached through 860 different virtual groups; 321,445 through outreach volunteers and 102,216 through UNHCR mass communication campaigns. Also, 101,740 calls were received by hotline on child protection, gender-based violence, legal, mental health and Psychosocial Support (PSS), health and other related issues, and 61,805 medical consultations were provided. 137,997 individuals benefited from community-led initiatives (CLIs) conducted through 51 professional trainings on COVID-19. 208,262 examination gloves, 214,879 surgical masks and 8,751 alcohol hand rub gel sanitizers were also distributed in community centres, distribution points and health facilities.

PROTECTION:
Achievements and Impact
By 31 October, the number of UNHCR-funded community and satellite centres reached 128 (92 community and 36 satellite). They were supported by a network of 120 mobile units and 2,659 Syrian Outreach Volunteers (ORVs) associated with 18 national partners.

During the reporting period, UNHCR provided non-formal education programmes through remedial classes and catch-up activities to 801 children, bringing to 13,531 the number of primary and secondary students assisted at community centres since January this year. Out of that number, 142 (1,559 from January-October) children were out of school. Moreover, 1,326 (5,316 from January to October) benefited from Homework Café activity in UNHCR supported community centres.

Distribution of sanitary kits to children and awareness raising on the importance of hygiene as part of a CLI in Kesweh, Rural Damascus@ UNHCR.
In October, UNHCR partners provided legal assistance to 29,238 displaced persons and returnees in 14 governorates. They included 9,402 individuals who benefited from legal counselling remotely through hotlines, 13,914 individuals from awareness sessions via virtual groups, and 5,922 from direct interventions of lawyers before courts and administrative bodies.

Since the beginning of the year, 145,429 displaced persons, returnees and host community members have benefited from UNHCR’s legal aid programme on issues related mainly to personal documentation, authentication of customary marriages and birth registrations. The programme also provided support in divorce authentication in the context of response to gender-based violence incidents, preserving rights of women and children, property documentation, lease contracts and inheritance. As a result of direct legal interventions by lawyers, 6,285 individuals obtained national identity cards, 2,821 children were registered and obtained birth certificates, 4,349 women succeeded to document their marriage, and 4,000 obtained family booklets, in addition to 08 HLP-related interventions before courts.

UNHCR and partners in October also identified and assisted 499 GBV survivors; bringing to 2,587 the total number of survivors identified and supported since the beginning of the year. Survivors were referred for specialized services through multi-sector community centre response mechanisms. Furthermore, 660 awareness sessions were conducted (3,864 from January to October) for approximately 13,200 individuals; bring to 77,280 beneficiaries from January to October. To enhance the role of women in the decision-making process and in designing activities to address their needs, 03 women committees were established during the reporting period (60 from January-October).

Between January and October, 9,358 awareness-raising sessions on topics related to Child Protection were organized at UNHCR community centres, shelters, child-friendly spaces, schools, and via WhatsApp. Participants included children, caregivers and community members. Through these interventions, UNHCR in collaboration with Syrian partners identified and assisted 4,679 children at risk among displaced persons and in host communities. Main risks identified were child labour, neglect, school dropouts and lack of documentation. Moreover, by the end of October, UNHCR and partners in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, established 91 community-based Child Protection structures across the country including children clubs and child welfare committees. Additionally, 158,748 children benefited from social and recreational activities organized at community centres, child friendly spaces, schools, via phone, social media and other outreach activities.

To address the specific needs of older persons, 495 individuals in October benefited from home-based training programmes and older persons’ clubs. Through partners, UNHCR also continued its support to children with developmental difficulties by implementing a special home-based rehabilitation programme designed to meet the specific needs of 155 children.

The impact of COVID-19 on the psychological well-being of affected populations remains significant. Therefore, during the reporting period, 1,852 individuals received psychosocial support services through community centres and ORVs. Of that number, 423 individuals were referred to specialized mental health services. A total of 24,752 individuals participated in 3,094 social and recreational events including awareness raising sessions. These activities were conducted remotely through virtual groups to increase the awareness on the psychological effects of COVID-19. Due to the Ministry of Health and WHO instructions on COVID, different types of general and medical in-kind assistance were also provided to 9,788 vulnerable individuals to help them meet their various basic needs.
SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFIs):

Achievements and Impact
In October, UNHCR provided 260,409 individuals with at least one core relief and supplementary items. This brought the total number of individuals assisted between January and October this year.

In addition, 134,947 individuals were supported with shelter and infrastructure assistance, which included the installation of 654 shelter kits in Aleppo and Al-Hasakah that benefited 4,748 individuals. Also, 5,124 tents were distributed in Al-Hol, Areesha, Mahmoudli, Newroz, Roj, Abu Kashab camps and Tel Samen informal settlement in the North East Syria. Infrastructure repair to meet existing and new displacement needs were also provided. 16 damaged buildings were repaired in Aleppo benefiting 775 individuals. Additionally, 1,927 damaged houses were being repaired in Dar’a, Aleppo, Lattakia, and Rural Damascus to benefit some 3,218 individuals.

Between January and October, 508 shelter packages including doors, windows, electrical and water & sanitation materials were installed in Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor and Quneitra.

As a further response to the COVID-19 emergency, 111 emergency shelters in three collective shelters were being rehabilitated to support 555 individuals in Lattakia and Tartous. The construction of 479 units in five collective shelters in Hama started in October. Furthermore, 15 rub halls with the capacity to accommodate 650 persons of concern were equipped with fans, windows, beds, and lightings. This was in addition to the rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure to improve the living conditions of returnees in Al Dweir Centre with the capacity to support 600 individuals.

Camp fumigation and sterilization started in eleven formal and informal camps, and collective shelters in NES hosting 119,291 individuals. Two isolation centres were completed in Al-Hol Camp, Al-Hasakah Governorate to support 70 individuals.

UNHCR through its partners provided 215 solid waste bins, rehabilitated 2,045 linear meter of sewage system, upgraded 400 linear meter of water network, and removed 62,500 cubic meters of debris to benefit 86,225 individuals.

A plan to support the capacity building of 800 partner staff started in October. In addition, 46 engineers were trained in Aleppo during the same period.
HEALTH:

Achievements and Impact
Between January and end of October, UNHCR assisted 187,533 displaced persons with Primary Health Care (PHC) services through 11 clinics. They included 5,235 IDPs provided with Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services through SARC clinics in Damascus and Rural Damascus.

UNHCR and its partners continue providing primary health services in Aleppo © Namaa.

During the reporting period, 88,067 individuals were reached by community-based health activities through health points in community centres. Also, 14,893 individuals received basic medical consultation at 26 health points functioning in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, rural Aleppo, rural Hama, rural Homs, Tartous, rural Tartous, Quneitra, rural Dar’a, and Al-Hasakeh. 73,174 individuals also participated in and benefited from health promotion and disease prevention activities conducted by the community-health workers in and out of community centres.

LIVELIHOODS AND SELF-RELIANCE:

Achievements and Impact
By end of October, UNHCR assisted 1,257 individuals through entrepreneurship training courses in 12 governorates. Of that number 279 received support to operate start-up small business projects in nine governorates. Additionally, 3,109 individuals received livelihood support through the provision of agricultural inputs in Hama, Homs, Idleb, Dar’a, and Tartous. The support included provision of seeds, livestock, drip irrigation and other inputs prioritized by returnee farmers in the selected villages. UNHCR also supported 117 individuals through cash-for-work activities in Al-Hol Camp, benefiting women headed
households and persons with disabilities. UNHCR also continued the rehabilitation of several economic infrastructure projects in Homs, Hama, Tartous, Dar’a, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, and Al-Hasakeh including public bakeries, vocational training schools, and public markets.

**PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES:**

**Achievements and Impact**

In October, UNHCR continued the cash distribution to eligible refugees through cash over the counter modality for the months of September and October in conjunction with the education assistance for eligible refugee children between 6 and 17 years old. The distribution of the education grant will continue for refugee children between 5 and 18 years until the end of the year.

12,257 individuals from 4,304 refugee families benefited from multi-purpose cash grants (MPCGs). This brought to 13,690 individuals, the total number of those assisted under the MPCG scheme since January this year. In addition, 4,164, refugees from 1,949 families benefited from the education grant. UNHCR also provided cash related hotline support to 1,124 families during the reporting period.

Interviews were undertaken for 03 individuals/01 family. Until the end of October, the overall Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews conducted by UNHCR for asylum seekers at different stages were 17 individuals from 07 families. Decisions were submitted for 11 individuals/03 families, and the total number of RSD submissions from January to October were 38 individuals from 20 families.

Additionally, UNHCR conducted 6 resettlement interviews for 5 families / 59 individuals/ 40 families from January to October. None of those interviewed in October was recognized. That said, between January and September, 17 individuals/10 families were recognized as refugees.

It is estimated that there are currently 1,900 refugees in need of resettlement in Syria. Submissions to potential resettlement countries remained suspended due to ongoing COVID restrictions. However, in October, UNHCR Resettlement Hotline counselled 1,090 persons on resettlement related issues.

Two UNHCR-supported community centres functioning in Al-Hasakeh Governorate provided wide range of protection services to refugees including child protection, SGBV
prevention, services for persons with specific needs, community mobilization and livelihoods.

As of end of October, 126 Outreach Volunteers (ORVs) supported refugee communities in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh governorates. The ORVs were comprised of refugees from Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Chad, Guinea and Eritrea in the four governorates.

UNHCR through a dedicated education hotline, provided individual counselling and information to 220 refugees on education cash grant distribution as well as university scholarship program. From January to October, 668 refugees were assisted with individual counselling and information on education cash grant distribution.

22 GBV survivors were identified during the reporting period and supported with needed services including referrals – bringing to 80, the total number of survivors identified and supported since January. Additionally, 14 referrals were made, and survivors linked to ORVs to ensure the support network within their communities. That brought to 68, the total referrals made from January to October. In addition, 59 GBV awareness sessions were conducted on psychological violence, deprivation of resources, opportunities and services, early marriage, sexual harassment, and physical violence – bringing to 133, the total number of sessions since January this year conducted in Al-Hassakeh governorate (Tal Hamis and Al- Hol Camp) with the participation of 939 individuals mostly adolescent females and adult women (2,304 from January-October). The number of refugee committee members reached 1,158 between January and October.

Also, 17,193 refugees and asylum seekers received free-of-charge comprehensive primary health care services through 10 UNHCR-supported primary health care clinics. 740 of the beneficiaries received mental health services through SARC clinics in Damascus and Rural Damascus. Secondary and tertiary health care were also provided to 2,282 of the beneficiary population through designated public, charitable and private contracted hospitals in Syria.

**SUPPORT TO SPONTANEOUS RETURNS:**

The number of the verified refugee returns by UNHCR during October stood at 3,542.

During October, UNHCR provided non-formal education programmes through remedial classes and catch-up activities to 294 returnee students totalling 11,919 since January this year at the primary and secondary school levels in community centres. 122 children were documented to be out-of-school. That brought to 1,121, the total number of out of school children recorded from January to October. Additionally, 1,459 children (6,050 from January-October) benefited from Homework Café activities in UNHCR supported community centres.

As of end of October, 4,749 awareness raising sessions on Child Protection topics were organized at UNHCR community centres, shelters, child-friendly spaces, schools and virtually. The participants included children, caregivers and community members. Through these interventions, UNHCR in collaboration with Syrian partners identified and assisted 4,213 children at risk among the returnees and host communities. The main risks identified were neglect, school dropouts, maltreatment and those subjected to violence. Moreover, by 31 October, UNHCR along with partners including the Ministry of Education established and supported 89 community-based Child Protection structures across the country. They included children clubs and child welfare committees. Additionally, during the reporting period, 89,844 returnee children benefited from social and recreational activities conducted in community centres, child friendly spaces, schools, via WhatsApp, and other outreach activities.
During the same period, UNHCR and partners identified and referred for specialized services 388 survivors of SGBV through the community centres - bringing to 2,339 the total number of survivors referred since January. Furthermore, approximately 11,720 women participated in 586 awareness sessions conducted to enhance their role in the decision-making process and in designing activities to address their needs. Between January and October, approximately 61,480 women participated in 3,074 awareness sessions.

during the same reporting period, UNHCR supported 674,135 returnees from approximately 134,827 returnee families with core relief items and seasonal items including rechargeable fans in summer and extra blankets and plastic sheets, sleeping bags, jackets and other clothing during the winter.

UNHCR SYRIA MISSIONS
471 Missions to 74 Sub Districts
January - October 2020

UNHCR conducted 61 missions in the October 2020, bringing to 471, the overall missions undertaken to 74 sub-districts in Al-Hasakeh, Lattakia, Aleppo, Tartous, Homs, Hama, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Idlib, and Ar-Raqqa. UNHCR staff from Protection, Shelter, NFI, Health and Livelihood units participated in the missions, which were used to follow up on the work of partners and ORVs on the ground. The missions also visited return areas to meet with returnees and produce sub-district profiles, monitor NFI distribution and assess the overall humanitarian needs in the different sectors.
Financial Information

As of 22 October 2020, please find attached more details in Annex 1.

We are grateful to all donors for the critical support provided to the UNHCR Syria Operation with earmarked and unearmarked funding.

**EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD**
Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some **US$ 161,637,942**

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<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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**OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD¹**
Germany 62.7 million | United States of America 26.4 million | United Kingdom 24.8 million | Denmark 14.6 million | Private donors Australia 10.1 million | Private donors USA 9.1 million | Canada 8.7 million | Private donors Germany 7 million | Sweden 6.1 million | Finland 5.5 million | Private donors Japan 4.5 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 3.9 million | Spain 3.4 million | Ireland 3.3 million | Private donors United Kingdom 3 million | Private donors Lebanon 2.2 million | Japan 2.1 million | Private donors United Arab Emirates 2 million

**UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD²**
Sweden 76.4 million | Private donors Spain 59.9 million | Norway 41.4 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | United Kingdom 31.7 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 30.6 million | Germany 25.9 million | Japan 23.8 million | Private donors Japan 21 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Italy 14 million | France 14 million | Private donors Sweden 11.7 million | Italy 10.6 million

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**LINKS**
www.unhcr.org/sy
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¹ Due to their earmarking at the region or sub-region, or to a related situation or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for Syrian Arab Republic. Where a donor has contributed $2 million or more, the total amount of the contributions is shown.

² Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contribution $10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.
Annexes

Annex 1
Syrian Arab Republic Funding Update – as of 22 October 2020

Annex 2
UNHCR main activities as of end of October 2020
$577.0 million
UNHCR’s financial requirements 2020 1

32% funded 2

FUNDING UPDATE | 2020

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
as of 22 October 2020

3. The percentage funded (32%) and total funding amount ($181,942,997) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of $395,098,268 representing 68% of the financial requirements.

Notes:
1. The financial requirements for Syrian Arab Republic include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency, Iraq Situation Response and the Syria Situation Response.
3. Contributions to Syrian Arab Republic are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.

4. Due to their earmarking at the region or sub-region, or to a related situation or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for Syrian Arab Republic. Where a donor has contributed $2 million or more, the total amount of the contributions is shown.

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