

Core Relief Items

October 2023

The protracted crisis in Syria has negatively affected the lives of people in the country who are suffering from a deteriorating socioeconomic situation, widespread poverty, breakdown of family or community support structures, and sometimes multiple cycles of displacement. The security situation in parts of the country remains unpredictable, while the impact of the February earthquakes has brought additional constraints and further negatively impacted the daily lives of Syrians.

People are struggling to afford basic items and to prepare for the harsh weather conditions both in winter and in summer. According to the [2023 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), the overall number of people in need of Core Relief Items (CRIs) increased in 2023 by 15 per cent to 5.7 million.

UNHCR Syria prioritizes the provision of CRIs to vulnerable people as a life-saving activity. In particular, the distribution of seasonal items such as blankets, winter clothing, and plastic sheeting is critical to protect people from harsh weather as winter approaches.

51,200

families received CRIs and seasonal items so far in 2023

5.7 million

people are in dire need of CRIs in Syria*

70%

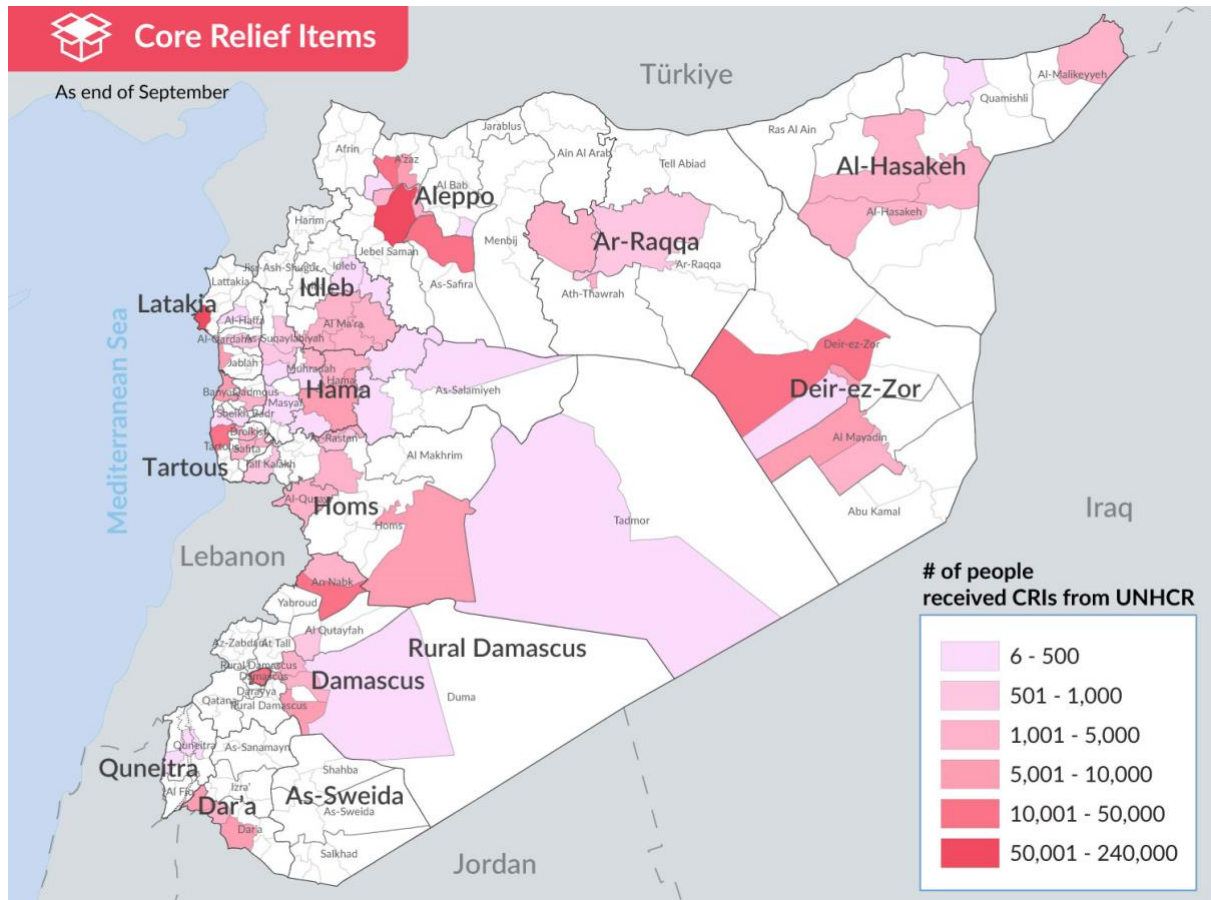
of the population in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance



Distribution of CRIs to internally displaced people in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. ©UNHCR

* Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023

Core Relief Items assistance



Following assessments carried out by UNHCR and its partners, UNHCR distributes CRIs based on identified needs to internally displaced persons, returnees, and host communities in all 14 governorates in Syria.

Priority is given to:

- Newly displaced families, especially those displaced multiple times, including because of the February 2023 earthquakes;
- Families living in hard-to-reach areas;
- Returnees;
- Vulnerable groups (unaccompanied minors, older persons, single women or women-headed households, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic diseases, people at risk due to inadequate shelter conditions, vulnerable host community members);
- Families with unmet needs not addressed by other agencies; and
- New arrivals, families who have not been reached, and emergency cases of those in last-resort sites.

The standard UNHCR CRI kit for a family of five members consists of **plastic sheets, mattresses, sleeping mats, blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, jerry cans, and solar lamps**. These items help improve somewhat the quality of daily life and help maintain dignity.

Families receive the standard CRI kit at the time of displacement and/or return to their homes. Vulnerable host communities also receive CRI kits. Families can also ask for the replacement of CRIs based on need. As of September 2023, UNHCR had distributed CRIs to a total of some **51,200 families** (approximately 259,300 people) across the country, as part of its **regular distribution programme**.

As part of its **preparedness planning** to respond to the urgent needs for CRIs in case of emergencies, UNHCR reserves 20,000 CRI kits in its warehouses in the Governorates of Aleppo, As-Sweida, Homs, Rural Damascus, Qamishli, and Tartous. Pre-positioned CRIs in different locations across the country enable UNHCR to release the items fast in case of an emergency. As of September 2023, UNHCR had released CRIs for 45,710 families (228,550 individuals) as part of its emergency response, including to people affected by the **February earthquakes** and to IDPs in north-east Syria.

<p>Standard UNHCR CRI kit</p>	 <p>Jerry can</p>	 <p>Solar lamp</p>	 <p>Kitchen set</p>
 <p>Blanket</p>	 <p>Plastic sheet</p>	 <p>Mattress</p>	 <p>Sleeping mat</p>

In line with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, UNHCR also participated in inter-agency **cross-line missions** to north-west Syria to deliver CRIs to vulnerable people. In January and June 2023, UNHCR participated in two cross-line inter-agency missions delivering 800 CRIs to families in Idleb Governorate.

Seasonal item assistance

In some parts of the country, the weather conditions are excessively harsh during summer and winter. Besides regular CRIs, UNHCR distributes supplementary seasonal items to provide additional protection against extreme and life-threatening weather conditions.

Summer items

Temperatures often exceed 45 degrees Celsius in some parts of Syria during the summer months. To prepare for these conditions, UNHCR distributes rechargeable solar fans. Since the beginning of 2023, over 9,520 families have received summer items. Priority is given to:

- Displaced and returnee families who lost their belongings during displacement;
- Families residing in hard-to-reach locations with very high temperatures; and
- Families residing in locations where there is no other source of power supply.

Winterization Programme

In winter, temperatures fall below zero degrees in many areas of the country. The inter-agency Non-Food Item (NFI) sector estimates that **2.7 million people in Syria are in urgent need of winter assistance in 2023.**

UNHCR's winter assistance targets the most vulnerable people, including those recently displaced, newly returned, living in hard-to-reach or newly accessible areas, or in sub-standard shelters as well as people with specific needs.



Winter items distributed to displaced persons in Aleppo Governorate. © UNHCR/H.Marrouf

The winter items include extra **high thermal blankets, sleeping bags, waterproof floor covers, extra plastic sheets, portable heaters, rubber boots, and winter jackets.**

UNHCR's last winterization programme (November 2022 - March 2023) **assisted** 121,600 Syrian families (close to 562,000 people) in 14 governorates. Some 6,230 refugee and asylum-seeker families (around 17,700 people) also benefited from additional winter assistance. In total, some **579,700 people** were reached by UNHCR with winter assistance in Syria (excluding north-west Syria, which is outside of UNHCR Syria's mandate).

For this year's **winterization** programme (September 2023 - March 2024), UNHCR is planning to support around **38,000 vulnerable families.** This represents approximately a 78 per cent decrease from last year due to the limited funding available. This decrease comes as new displacement, surging economic inflation, fluctuating currency, limited livelihood opportunities, and unpredictable weather patterns have diminished people's purchasing power and increased their vulnerability.

Challenges

The operational environment in Syria poses various challenges to UNHCR's activities, particularly CRI and seasonal assistance. These challenges have caused delays in assistance delivery and negatively impacted the quality of life of displaced people as follows:

- **High prices of items:** The depreciation of the Syrian currency, inflation, and rising prices of oil and other commodities have drastically increased the production and procurement costs of the required CRIs.
- **Unpredictable logistics:** The current sanctions only allow a certain number of white-listed containers and operators to transport items to Syria, leading to unpredictability in the supply line.
- **Limited funding:** The costs of distributing CRIs have increased significantly due to inflation, impacting UNHCR's planned response. At the same time, due to the challenging global context and multiple emergencies worldwide, funding from the international community to the Syria operation decreased in 2023. As a result, UNHCR will be unable to respond to urgent needs this winter unless additional funding is received.

2023 total budgetary requirement for CRIs

US\$ 171 million

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LINKS: [UNHCR Global Focus](#) | [UNHCR Syria Data Portal](#) | [UNHCR Syria Website](#) | [UNHCR Syria Twitter \(@UNHCRinSYRIA\)](#) | [UNHCR Syria Facebook](#)

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USEFUL DOCUMENTS

[UNHCR 2022-2023 Regional Winterization Programme – Final Report](#)

LINKS

[UNHCR Global Focus – Syrian Arab Republic](#)
[UNHCR Syria Website](#)
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[Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023](#)
[Syria Humanitarian Response Plan 2023](#)