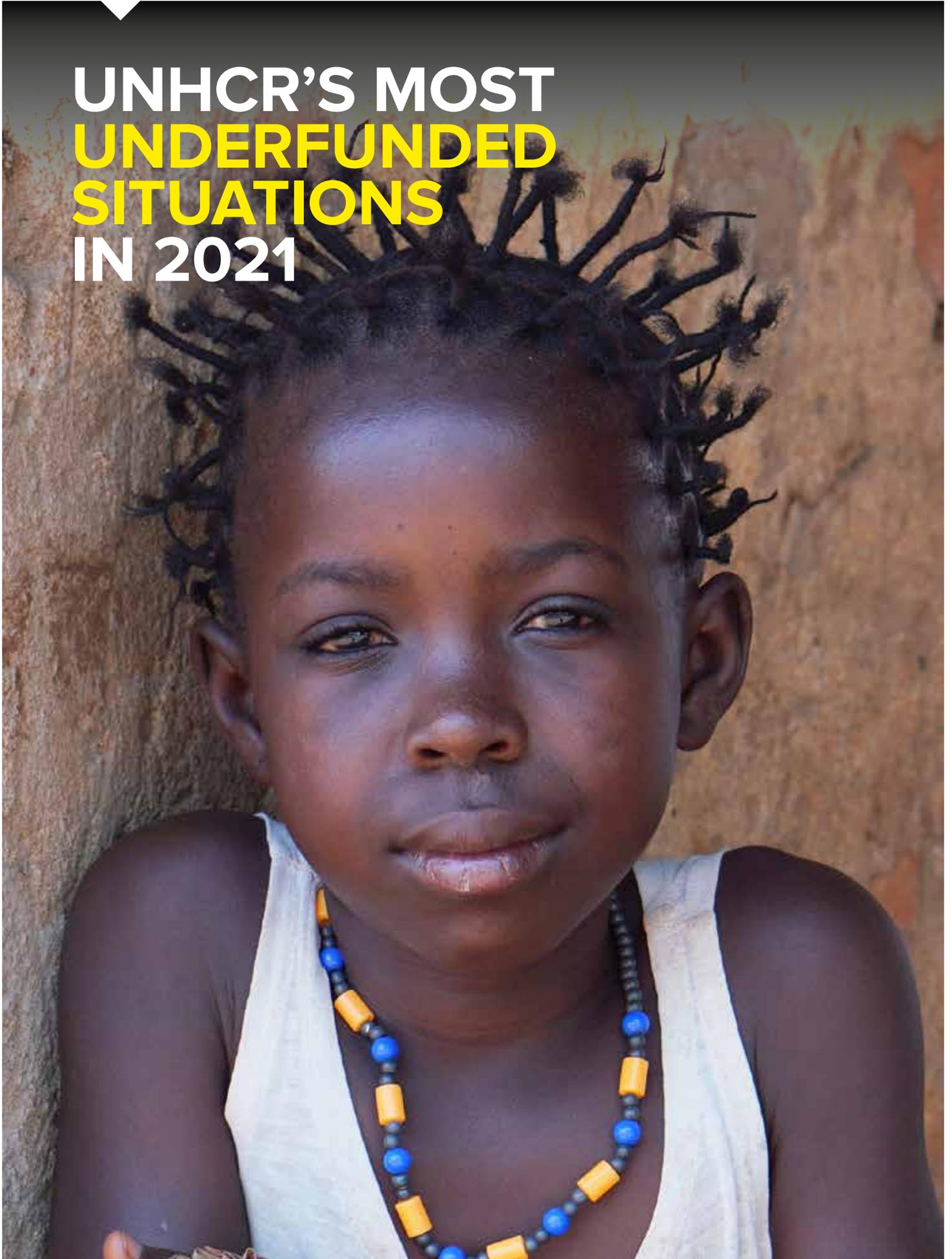


# UNHCR'S MOST **UNDERFUNDED** SITUATIONS IN 2021



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**COVER PHOTOGRAPH:**

*A young refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) sits outside a building in Makpandu camp, South Sudan. © UNHCR/Andreea Campeanu*



*120,000 people fleeing the eruption of the Mount Nyiragongo volcano in Goma, DRC, arrived in the town of Sake, 25 km away.*  
© UNHCR/Guerchom Ndebo

# Underfunded forgotten crises

## But donors can break the negative cycle

Being forcibly displaced means being confronted with a desperate need for the very basics of life – safety, water, food, shelter and healthcare. Less urgent, but no less vital, are the fundamental rights that underpin the route back to a dignified, stable and sustainable life: the right to work, to be educated, to travel, to have a nationality. The potential cost of meeting such needs – for refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and others of concern to UNHCR – is projected in UNHCR's annual budget, totalling **\$9.248 billion** in 2021.

Although donors are extremely generous, a persistent shortfall in funding, and the earmarking of most of the funds to specific purposes or areas, means that some of the most pressing needs remain unmet.

This report looks at the ten current situations where funding has fallen furthest behind the needs projected in the budget, by the end of August 2021. With real examples of gaps in funding, it seeks to highlight the scale of needs and the real consequences of underfunding for people forced to flee, as well as the impact that donors can make if they take urgent action.

Underfunded situations are often those that have fallen out of the media spotlight or were never there at all, but the needs of people caught up in such crises are no less deserving of support.

UNHCR is grateful to its donors and to all those who raise awareness of the plight of refugees and other people of concern.

In August the spotlight fell on the [Afghanistan situation](#), which was set to be among the top 10 most underfunded in 2021. The country's latest crisis led to a robust and continuing surge in funding from private sector donors and individuals worldwide, and Member States such as Germany, lifting it out of the top 10 most underfunded situations and enabling UNHCR to undertake emergency preparedness and response to the maximum extent possible.

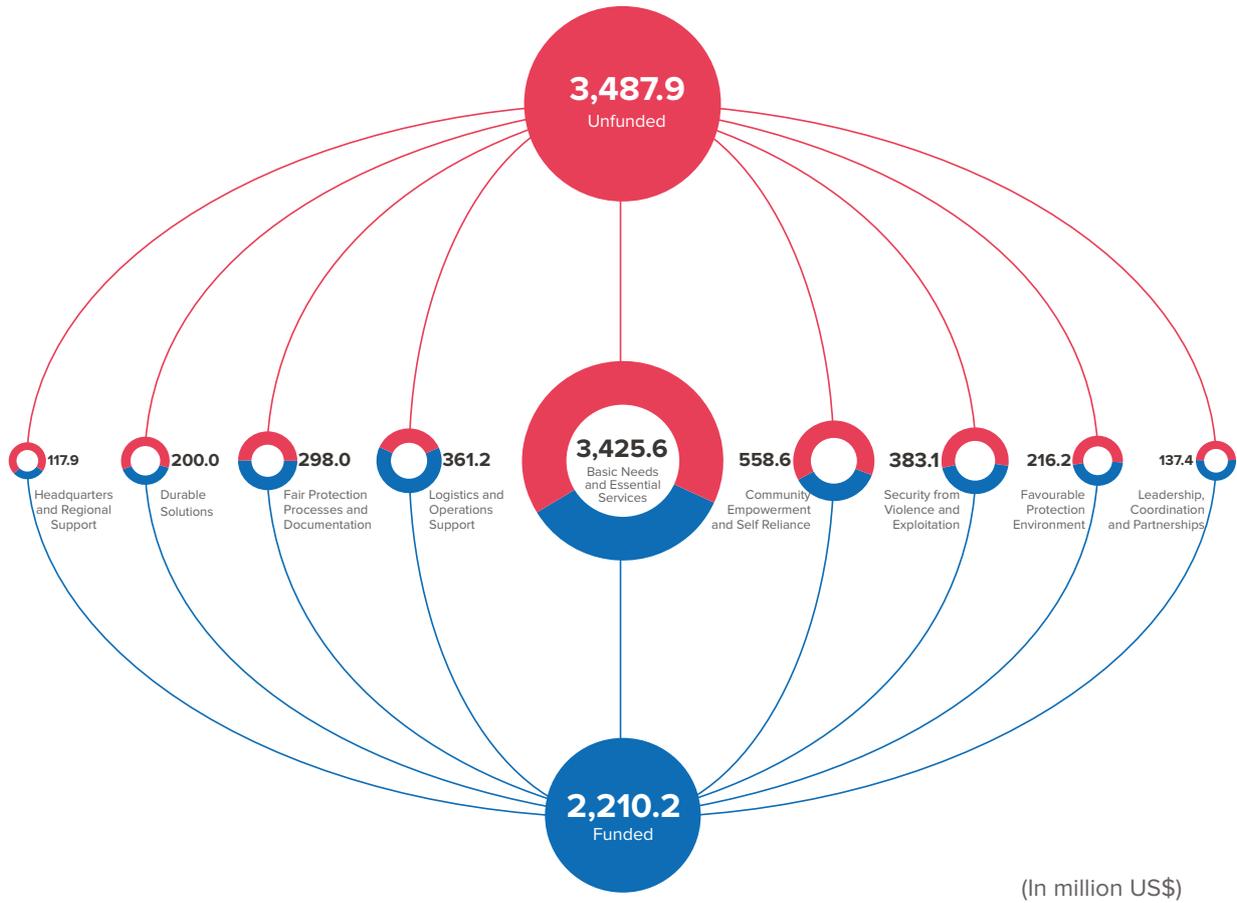
Unfortunately, Afghanistan is the exception that proves the rule: in general, forgotten crises tend to attract little funding until the situation becomes so dire a new emergency occurs that catches the world's attention. Many situations involve overlapping layers of crisis, and new events simply compound the suffering and add to the complexity, without offering an easy hook for media or social media to take notice. Even a disaster such as the May 22 eruption of [Mount Nyiragongo](#) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which added a new emergency to an existing humanitarian crisis, rapidly fades from the news.

We cannot wait for another emergency to occur before we take action. The cycle of forgotten crises can be broken by tackling underfunded situations such as those highlighted in this report.



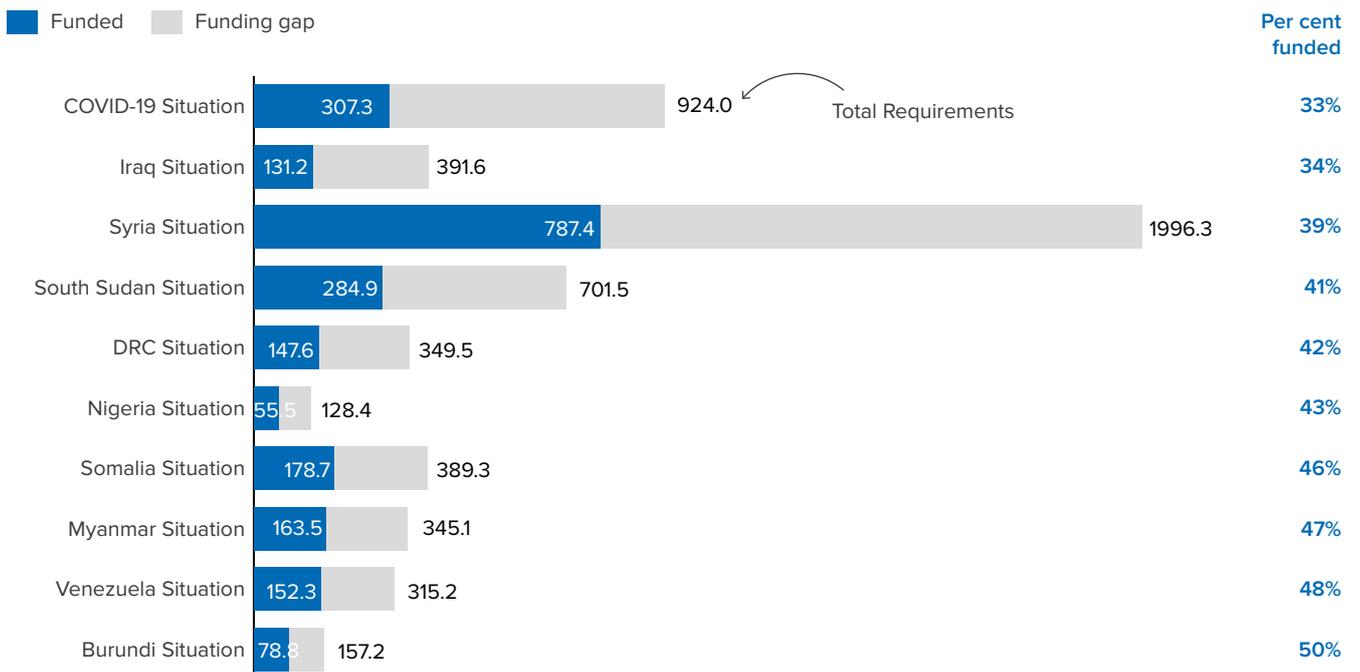
*Siba Issa El Ali, a 10-year-old Syrian refugee girl, spends day and night removing water from her tent in an informal settlement camp in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon. © UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sánchez*

## Underfunding hits every area of UNHCR's work, and hits the basics hardest



### Top 10 underfunded UNHCR emergency situations | August 2021

(In million US\$)



# A closer look at the most underfunded situations

## COVID SITUATION

**\$924.0 million**  
required in 2021

**\$616.7 million**  
funding shortfall

33% funded



Please see page 9 for more on the COVID-19 situation



Afghan refugees getting their COVID-19 vaccination jab at a Red Crescent Mass Vaccination Centre in Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.  
© UNHCR/Asif Shahzad



## IRAQ SITUATION

**\$391.6 million**  
required in 2021

**\$260.4 million**  
funding shortfall

Funding type:

- Unearmarked
- Softly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Tightly earmarked

34% funded



 340,000 vulnerable Iraqi IDPs, returnees and refugees need life-saving winterization assistance to cope with extreme weather conditions and meet their needs over the winter season.

 8,000 IDP, returnee and refugee families in Iraq still require unrestricted cash assistance to mitigate the negative socioeconomic impacts of displacement, which have been compounded by COVID-19.

Funding type:

- Unearmarked
- Softly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Tightly earmarked



### SYRIA SITUATION

**\$1.996 billion**  
required in 2021

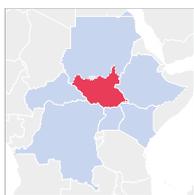
**\$1.209 billion**  
funding shortfall



2 million vulnerable Syrian IDPs and refugees require life-saving winterization assistance to prepare for and cope with the harsh winter season.



180,000 impoverished Syrian refugee families require unrestricted cash assistance to meet their basic needs and forestall negative coping mechanisms.



### SOUTH SUDAN SITUATION

**\$701.5 million**  
required in 2021

**\$416.6 million**  
funding shortfall



905,000 South Sudanese refugees urgently need running water.



290,269 South Sudanese women and girls of reproductive age in Uganda are in need of sanitary materials.



### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO SITUATION

**\$349.5 million**  
required in 2021

**\$201.9 million**  
funding shortfall



27 per cent of Congolese child refugees under five in Lôvua settlement in Angola are affected by malnutrition and 62 per cent of refugee households are completely dependent on food assistance.



The number of IDP households benefitting from cash assistance was reduced from 6,000 to 2,200.



500,000 IDPs in South Kivu and 1.3 million in North Kivu need shelter assistance.



### NIGERIA SITUATION

**\$128.4 million**  
required in 2021

**\$72.9 million**  
funding shortfall



58,000 IDP families in northeast Nigeria will not receive core relief items.



66,700 IDP families are at risk of going without adequate shelter.



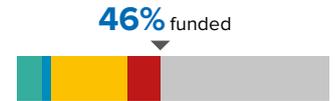
### SOMALIA SITUATION

**\$389.3 million**  
required in 2021

**\$210.6 million**  
funding shortfall

Funding type:

■ Unearmarked    ■ Softly earmarked  
■ Earmarked    ■ Tightly earmarked



40,000 Somali refugees in Yemen risk being left without primary healthcare, and almost 4,000 more deprived of secondary and tertiary referrals, and UNHCR may have to halt COVID-19 awareness and hygiene campaigns.

2,500 individuals wishing to return, as per the Kenya roadmap in 2021, need support for facilitated returns.



### MYANMAR SITUATION

**\$345.1 million**  
required in 2021

**\$181.7 million**  
funding shortfall



Support to medical facilities and procurement of medical supplies and COVID-related PPE was cut in Rakhine and Kachin states.

142,500 conflict-displaced individuals in Myanmar need 28,500 core relief items and emergency shelter kits to meet their basic needs.



### VENEZUELA SITUATION

**\$315.2 million**  
required in 2021

**\$162.9 million**  
funding shortfall



10,000 Venezuelans in an irregular status in Aruba need essential health services.

4,500 refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have received no cash assistance to meet their basic needs in Argentina.

800 refugees and migrants risk not having support from public and private projects that will help them find jobs and run small businesses in southern Latin America.



### BURUNDI SITUATION

**\$157.2 million**  
required in 2021

**\$78.4 million**  
funding shortfall



120,000 Burundians who have returned since 2017 lack cash assistance, fuel and basic goods.

72,000 Burundian refugees in Uganda receive only 14.2 litres of water per person per day, below the 20 litre standard, an especially critical need during the COVID-19 situation.

# COVID-19: the underfunded response

UNHCR's most underfunded situation so far in 2021 is the response to COVID-19. Only one third of the budgeted requirements of \$924 million has been received, leaving a yawning gap in UNHCR's ability to protect people of concern from the fallout from the disease – including social and economic consequences that can drive people into poverty and exploitation. On health grounds alone, the sheer number of forcibly displaced people, 1 per cent of the world's population, suggests that failing to fully integrate them into the global pandemic response is a historic mistake. But the pandemic hurts refugees and others of concern to UNHCR in ways that stretch far beyond the risk posed by the virus itself, and the failure to adequately fund the response deepens their plight.

A [recent study](#) by the Joint Data Center of UNHCR and the World Bank noted evidence of COVID-19 causing a drastic reduction in movement across borders and in resettlement, and surveys from eight countries showed a deterioration in employment, food security and access to health and education. The pandemic has fostered [a rise in gender-based violence and violence against children](#), as well as triggering restrictions on movement and societal stresses that hit people of concern to UNHCR hardest. The slow vaccination rate of refugees and other people of concern – with around 350,000 vaccine

doses administered so far – not only has health implications but also leaves them socially disadvantaged and at further risk of exclusion and isolation.

UNHCR's COVID-19 response covers every region and encompasses the whole spectrum of needs, reflecting the wide ramifications that the pandemic's socioeconomic upheaval has engendered in the lives of forcibly displaced people. At the end of August 2021, the largest areas of unmet needs include a \$74 million shortfall in cash assistance, and smaller but significant gaps in funding to alleviate the pandemic's impact on primary health care, primary education, and services for persons with specific needs.

The overall challenge requires global action, but while the situation persists, even small acts of kindness by individual donors can have a real impact: \$1 is enough to buy sanitizing liquid for a refugee household in Turkey, \$102 could buy a year's worth of Universal Public Health Insurance for an extremely vulnerable refugee in Iran, \$600 can help fund personal protection equipment for 100 health workers in Mbera camp in [Mauritania](#) – home to over 65,000 Malian refugees, and \$800 buys an oxygen concentrator to provide life-saving oxygen therapy when combatting COVID-19.



*With the support of partners and donors, 2,500 sheltered people were vaccinated in Boa Vista, Brazil, until the beginning of August 2021.*  
© UNHCR/Allana Ferreira

# The Iraq and Syria situations

UNHCR estimates that 3.3 million people are in need of critical assistance to help them prepare for the forthcoming winter. This will be the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive winter in displacement for some, and many continue to face increased hardships due to the economic situation and the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the planned interventions will be in the form of cash assistance, with critical funding gaps affecting Syrian and Iraqi refugees, IDPs and returnees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and for cross-border activities from Turkey to northwest Syria. \$88 million is still required for winter needs across the region.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees, IDPs and returnees still need cash assistance to meet their basic needs. UNHCR is seeking \$40 million, including \$12 million in Iraq, \$8 million in Jordan and \$20 million in Lebanon. Without this vital help, vulnerable families may turn to additional negative coping mechanisms or be plunged into deeper

vulnerability. In Lebanon, socioeconomic deterioration accompanied by hyperinflation, declining subsidies and rising insecurity has left people angry and disillusioned. Thefts and clashes over goods – particularly food, medicine and fuel – are increasing. The situation is extremely challenging for everyone as rising numbers of Lebanese are falling into poverty, but it is even worse for Syrian refugees.

The preliminary results of the 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees indicate that 88 per cent of Syrian refugees are in extreme poverty. Cash assistance could reach 170,000 refugee families and prove critical for the survival of many.

Inside Iraq, 6,100 Syrian refugee families, 1,750 refugee and asylum-seeker families of other nationalities, and 6,800 IDPs/returnee families will be unable to meet their basic household needs and mitigate some of the negative socioeconomic impacts of displacement – now compounded by COVID-19, which resulted in many losing their livelihoods.

In Jordan, UNHCR provides 33,000 refugee families with monthly cash assistance. Lack of additional funding would result in the discontinuation of the cash assistance programme which represents a lifeline to vulnerable refugees. COVID-19 has adversely affected refugees. While innovative solutions to ensure long-term resilience of refugees are being pursued, cash assistance is critical in helping refugees meet essential needs. Lack thereof would significantly compromise livelihoods and wellbeing of the most vulnerable refugees.



*Destroyed homes are noticeable in Bardiya village and its outskirts, Iraq, as many people lack sufficient financial means to rebuild their homes.*  
© UNHCR/Firas Al-Khateeb

# Donors make the difference

Underfunded situations are not irredeemable. Donors can have a direct impact, whether their funding is for unrestricted use across UNHCR's operations or targeted at a particular need. In September 2020, the United States of America responded generously to UNHCR's call for help with underfunded situations by making \$100 million available for situations in Africa. \$18.2 million went toward the [Nigeria situation](#) and helped local communities tackle the root causes of gender-based violence, as well as enabling thousands of Cameroonian refugees to buy food, staving off hunger and the risk of exploitation.

The funds also enabled UNHCR's partner in Nigeria, the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement, to provide shelter to more than 33,000 IDPs and to build more than 550 emergency shelters for refugees. In turn, this reduced congestion in camps, a risk factor for the spread of COVID-19. Refugees also received fertilizers and farm tools, bolstering their self-reliance by enabling them to secure their own food on government-provided land or within settlements. In northeast Nigeria, UNHCR was able to boost the provision of core relief items for IDPs, exceeding its planned distribution by 6 per cent, and by 65 per cent for sanitary materials. The donation also helped UNHCR advocate on behalf of people fleeing violence, seeking greater protection and continued access to asylum despite COVID-19-related border closures.

The U.S. donation was not the first or the last, but it illustrates the difference a donor can make to an underfunded situation. It built on funding from other Member States such as France and Canada, and over \$11 million in unearmarked funding from global donors. In 2021, the 10 situations in this report have received a total of \$180 million in unearmarked funding, with Norway, Sweden and España con ACNUR the leading donors. UNHCR is grateful to all its donors, but unearmarked contributions are the most [flexible](#), empowering it to prioritize the most pressing needs at any moment.



*A Nigerian refugee cradles her baby girl, born soon after she walked all night to flee into Niger, along with thousands of others, from bandits attacking on the town of Rambadawa. © UNHCR/Selim Meddeb Hamrouni*

# How donors can help make the difference

Donors to UNHCR can help women, girls, men and boys who were forced to flee their homes and have left everything behind. Even given the high levels of underfunding at the situational and operational levels, donors can still make a difference in the lives of people forced to flee. Here are a few examples of how donor contributions can make a positive difference to the lives of people caught up in the most underfunded situations:

## COVID-19:

- \$3 could provide protective gear for a health care worker in refugee camps in Iraq. This includes a surgical mask, a pair of gloves, a pair of disposable shoes and a disposable medical gown.
- \$41 could provide a health worker in Burundi with a PPE kit, including a N95 mask, five disposable gowns, 30 powder-free gloves and a pair of goggles.
- \$154 could provide an emergency cash lifeline to a family hit by COVID-19 in Yemen.

To donate towards the COVID-19 situation: [donate.unhcr.org/Coronavirus](https://donate.unhcr.org/Coronavirus)

## Iraq situation:

- \$240 could provide an IDP family in Iraq with a whole set of core relief items, including mattresses, fleece blankets, a kitchen set, jerry cans, a plastic sheet, a sleeping mat and a solar lamp.
- \$313 could help UNHCR support a survivor of gender-based violence in Iraq with psychosocial counselling.

To donate towards the Iraq situation: [donate.unhcr.org/Iraq](https://donate.unhcr.org/Iraq)

## Syria situation:

- \$200 could provide a family of five in Syria with a core relief items kit, including mattresses, fleece blankets, a kitchen set, jerry cans, a plastic sheet, a sleeping mat and a solar lamp.
- \$411 is enough for the monthly incentive of a community health worker volunteer in Jordan.
- \$540 could subsidize lifesaving, emergency or obstetric health care for one patient in Lebanon.

To donate towards the Syria situation: [donate.unhcr.org/Syria](https://donate.unhcr.org/Syria)

## South Sudan situation:

- \$194 could provide learning material for teachers and students in Sudan.
- \$35,000 could rehabilitate 6 classroom structures in refugee and host community schools in Sudan.

To donate towards the South Sudan situation: [donate.unhcr.org/South-Sudan](https://donate.unhcr.org/South-Sudan)

## The Democratic Republic of the Congo situation:

- \$6 could provide a blanket to a displaced child in DRC.
- \$250 could provide 100 sleeping mats to people displaced in DRC.
- \$600 could help provide 100 displaced people with a blanket in DRC.

To donate towards the DRC situation: [donate.unhcr.org/DRC](https://donate.unhcr.org/DRC)

## Nigeria situation:

- \$4 could support UNHCR to enrol a refugee child with special needs in school in Chad.
- \$5 could provide a high thermal fleece blanket to a displaced person for cold winter nights in Niger.

- \$20 is enough to provide a hygiene kit to a refugee girl in Cameroon so she does not miss out on school when she has her period.
- \$100,000 could help construct or improve over 81 educational facilities to support the education of 20,280 students and teachers for six months.

To donate towards the Nigeria situation: [donate.unhcr.org/Nigeria](https://donate.unhcr.org/Nigeria)

#### **Somalia situation:**

- \$3 could cover the cost of a school kit for a refugee child in Kenya, including five exercise books, three pencils, three pens, an eraser, and a small bag.
- \$200 could provide lab supplies, stationery and textbooks for one year for a refugee child attending a secondary school in Kenya.
- \$250 could support a refugee family in Yemen during the COVID-19 pandemic to take care of their medical needs, mitigate the socio-economic impact of the virus, and help them address their most urgent needs.

To donate towards the Somalia situation: [donate.unhcr.org](https://donate.unhcr.org)

#### **Myanmar situation:**

- \$180 could provide a family in Myanmar with emergency shelter and core relief items to meet their domestic needs during displacement.
- \$9,000 could help build houses for 8 families living in camps in Myanmar and protect them from the elements.
- \$50,000 could help rehabilitate or build new community structures like water ponds, roads, and schools to benefit local villages and promote peaceful co-existence between communities in Myanmar.

To donate towards the Myanmar situation: [donate.unhcr.org/Myanmar](https://donate.unhcr.org/Myanmar)

#### **Venezuela situation:**

- \$37 could provide a person with a “cloth kit” (including a bed sheet, two t-shirts and a sweatshirt) in Paraguay.
- \$271 could provide a family in Peru with a special kit for survivors of gender-based violence (including diapers, wet towels, sanitary pads, cereal bars, baby compote, laundry soap, washing powder, bottles of water, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorants, shampoo, soaps, blankets, a portable electric stove, a kitchen set, dried food and milk powder, towels, socks, t-shirts, alcohol gel, masks, gloves and a travelling bag).
- \$400 could provide cash for a family of four or more in Argentina to cover essential needs such as rent and food for one month.

To donate towards the Venezuelan situation: [donate.unhcr.org/Venezuela](https://donate.unhcr.org/Venezuela)

#### **Burundi situation:**

- \$2 could provide a hygiene kit to a refugee woman in Burundi (including a loincloth, underpants, skin cream, slippers and sanitary towels).
- \$47 could provide specialized assistance to single mothers and survivors of gender-based violence in Burundi.

To donate towards the Burundi situation: [donate.unhcr.org/Burundi](https://donate.unhcr.org/Burundi)

# UNHCR'S MOST **UNDERFUNDED** SITUATIONS IN 2021

September 2021



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