

# Syrian Arab Republic

August 2021

The decade-long crisis in Syria continues to affect millions of people, with humanitarian needs and protection risks on the rise. In certain areas the security situation is volatile and overall, the socio-economic situation is deteriorating.

According to the 2021 Needs and Response Summary, some **13.4 million** people in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated an already precarious situation.

UNHCR in Syria provides protection and assistance to refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees and stateless people based on identified needs and vulnerabilities.

## KEY INDICATORS

# 4,430

Refugee households received multi-purpose cash grants

# 4,988

People with specific needs received in-kind assistance

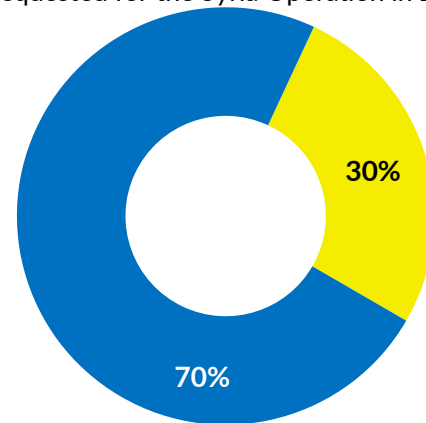
# 1,500

People received agricultural production kits

## FUNDING (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2021)

# USD 628.6 million

requested for the Syria Operation in 2021

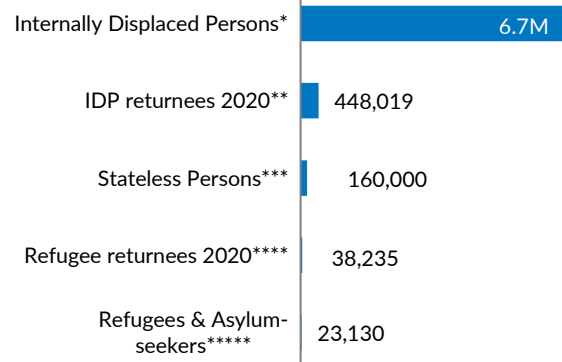


■ Funded ■ Unfunded

## POPULATION OF CONCERN



Women in Agraba Village, Aleppo Governorate in a milk bottling plant supported by UNHCR. UNHCR/H. Maarouf.



\* Source: OCHA, December 2020

\*\* Source: OCHA, 2020

\*\*\* Estimated

\*\*\*\* Source: UNHCR verified returns in 2020

\*\*\*\*\* Source: UNHCR, 28 August 2021

# Operational Context

The 2021 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) puts the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria at over **13.4 million**, including **6.7 million** internally displaced Syrians. Of that number, approximately **5.9 million** are in acute need of humanitarian assistance. UNHCR supports refugees, IDPs and returnees through targeted assistance using a community-based and area-based approach.

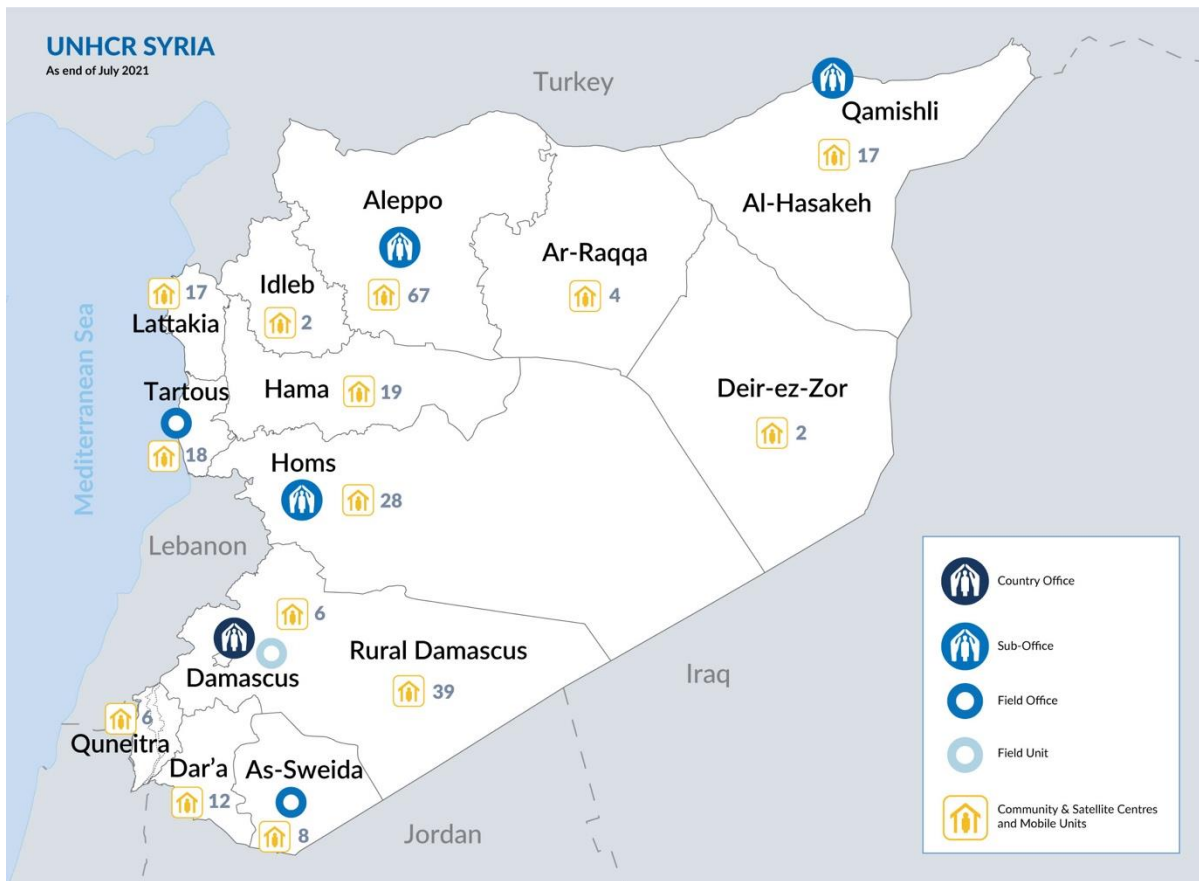
UNHCR works with **28** partners which include **two** government ministries, **six** international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and **20** national NGOs.

# Key Achievements



## Protection

In line with the community-based protection approach, UNHCR is supporting **91** community centres, **35** satellite centres and **119** mobile units, and has engaged **2,674** community outreach volunteers (ORVs) in all **14** governorates.



Community/satellite centers and mobile units in Syria.

The centres provide comprehensive protection-related services such as support to child protection activities, catch up classes for children, and legal assistance benefitting IDPs, returnees, host communities and other crisis-affected individuals across Syrian governorates. At the UNHCR-supported community centres, outreach volunteers also engage with communities to identify and address specific protection concerns by implementing small-scale community-led or livelihood projects.

Between January and August, **57,510** individuals benefited from COVID-19 and protection-related awareness raising and information dissemination activities provided by volunteers.

So far in 2021, **786** community-led initiatives (CLIs) were implemented in all governorates. Identified by the communities themselves, these projects aim to address protection concerns and improve the well-being of vulnerable groups. Some recently concluded initiatives included the rehabilitation of wells to provide safe drinking water to residents of some areas in Rural Damascus and the rehabilitation of a school playground in Aleppo. In Deir-Ez-Zor Governorate, community members produced and distributed liquid soap, and conducted cleaning and sanitization campaigns in public facilities to prevent COVID-19.



Students play football in a recently rehabilitated playground in Aleppo City. The playground was identified for rehabilitation by the community as part of a community-led initiative. UNHCR/H. Maarouf.

UNHCR and its partners conducted online trainings for **50** home-based-rehabilitation (HBR) focal points working for partners in all governorates on how to support families with persons with disabilities. The focal points will use technical skills acquired to also train caregivers who provide support including follow-up actions for persons with disabilities in their families.

### Legal Developments

On 12 August, the Government announced it would exempt Syrians who are re-entering the country for six months from paying custom duties on the import of personal effects provided they are not new and will not be sold in the following three years.

On 15 August, the Government issued a Children's Rights Law aimed at enhancing the role of the state with its various public and private institutions to provide care and protection to children in Syria. The law emphasizes children's rights and tackles the major concerns that affect children including alternative care arrangements and child recruitment. It also imposes sanctions and fines on individuals and groups who violate the rights under the new law. UNHCR will work together with UNICEF and child protection partners to monitor

implementation and advocate for a consistent application of the law in a non-discriminatory manner. UNHCR will also pay particular attention to the children's right to nationality to prevent statelessness.



## Education

An inter-agency initiative coordinated by the Education Sector to enable nearly 15,100 students travel cross-line and cross-border to sit the national certificate exams was concluded. UNHCR provided transport support and core relief items such as mattresses, blankets and personal protective equipment (PPE) kits. UNHCR and its partners also rehabilitated accommodation facilities, provided psycho-social support and remedial classes. Legal partners provided legal counselling to some 3,500 students and supported them to obtain national identification cards for the first time. This support enabled them to proceed with their exams and will facilitate their movement and access to various services.

Since January 2021, UNHCR and partners have provided non-formal education to some 11,600 children at primary school level. The activities include catch-up classes and homework cafés. They take place in community centres and some selected public schools in all the governorates.

UNHCR provides tertiary education scholarships to young refugee men and women to attend universities in Syria. The scholarship helps to motivate and empower them, particularly female students, 19 of whom (10 females, 9 males) graduated from the universities in Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous, Tishreen, Al-ba'ath, Al-Furat and Hama during the 2019/2020 academic year thanks to scholarships offered by UNHCR and DAFI.

Beneficiaries are selected on the criteria that they must be registered refugees in Syria, not more than 25 years old, and must have resided in the country for not less than a year prior to applying. In addition, Syrian education authorities must certify the high school credentials of applicants to qualify them for consideration. Both scholarship schemes provide beneficiary students with tuition fees and grants for pocket money until they complete their studies.



## Health

UNHCR adopts a community-based health approach and has established 12 health points with clinics in UNHCR-supported community centres where other health care facilities are difficult to access. Staff at these health points provide awareness on good health practices, disease prevention, and support communities to improve their overall well-being. Health workers also provide health counselling at community centres or through outreach volunteers and mobile teams.

With the spread of COVID-19, UNHCR Syria supports the national health system by procuring critical medical equipment such as ventilators, oxygen cylinders, and hospital beds for health facilities across the country.



End-August, about **78** refugees mainly Iraqis, received the COVID-19 vaccine as part of the national vaccination programme. UNHCR trained its medical volunteers in all governorates to assist refugees to electronically register themselves on the Ministry of Health COVID-19 vaccination portal. In August, UNHCR delivered **446,609** respiratory masks (**192,859** N95 and **253,750** KF94) to Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital in Damascus.



## Core Relief Items

UNHCR through its partners supports IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host community families with essential core-relief items. A standard core-relief items kit contains plastic sheets, mattresses, solar lamps, high thermal blankets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, and kitchen sets and is intended for a family of five members. So far in 2021, UNHCR has assisted over **64,400** households in all **14** governorates with core-relief items.

In addition, UNHCR provided items to more than **21,000** households in newly accessible communities located in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor, Idleb, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hama, and Homs governorates.



CRI distribution to IDP and returnee families in Deir Atiyeh, Rural Damascus. UNHCR/Z. Mreyoud.



## Self-reliance and Livelihoods

UNHCR's livelihood programme supports internally displaced and returning Syrians to re-engage in livelihood activities. It includes the provision of small business start-up grants to people who have completed a basic business training and submitted a suitable project proposal. So far in 2021, UNHCR supported almost **650** persons of concern in **13** governorates through business trainings and business support packages. UNHCR also finalized the selection of **34** small start-up livelihood projects in **four** governorates (Damascus, Rural Damascus, Tartous, and Aleppo) and plans to undertake **1,200** projects in all governorates in 2021. The approved projects include groceries, sheep farming, sewing workshops, and blacksmith workshops.

UNHCR distributed greenhouse kits composed of plastic rolls and tomato seeds to **1,500** host community farmers affected by floods, fires, and storms in the coastal areas of Syria. This support allowed the affected farmers to resume their work and increased agricultural production in the affected areas. It also provided work opportunities for many IDPs who reside in the affected areas and rely on daily work to make their living.

UNHCR identified **18** projects to address needs in return communities through the rehabilitation of key economic infrastructure, such as vocational training schools, bakeries, irrigation channels, and markets, expected to benefit more than **185,000** returnees. UNHCR continues to explore partnerships and complementarity with other UN agencies through these projects within the context of its area-based approach.



## Assistance to Refugees

### Registration

Registration and providing documentation are key in ensuring the protection of UNHCR to persons of concern in Syria including access to basic rights such as freedom of movement and assistance.

In August, **1,371** individuals renewed their UNHCR identification cards bringing the total number of refugees and asylum-seekers who have renewed their identification cards this year to **23,074** individuals. These documents provide protection against refoulement, ensure access to basic rights and assistance, and facilitate freedom of movement. End-August, UNHCR registered **14,391** refugees and **8,739** asylum-seekers. Many registered refugees originate from Iraq and live primarily in urban areas in Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous, Homs and Qamishli governorates. Out of the total number of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Syria, a total of **19,496** individuals were biometrically enrolled, representing **87 per cent** of the total registered population above three-years-old who are suitable for iris (biometric) enrolment.

In Qamishli, Hasakeh Governorate, UNHCR reopened the child-friendly space (CFS) at its Registration Centre. These child-friendly spaces are intended for recreation and entertainment and are used to for interactive learning activities.

## Refugee status determination (RSD)

UNHCR uses its refugee status determination procedures to help asylum-seekers realize their rights under international law. UNHCR is piloting the alternative approach to in-person interviews to ensure that access to refugee-status determination procedures for persons of concern continues with COVID-19 preventative measures in place. People of concern's cases are processed remotely with caseworkers and individuals communicating via secured video-conferencing tools in UNHCR premises. Interview rooms are fitted with all the necessary ICT equipment, PPE and disinfectants.

Between January and August, 34 cases comprising 66 individuals were successfully interviewed. The assessment of 24 cases comprising 37 individuals was submitted to reviewers by case workers. To date, 26 cases comprising 53 individuals were recognized as refugees.

## Resettlement

UNHCR provides counselling to refugees through a hotline on the resettlement process and individual resettlement case status. The hotline is open once a week and allows persons of concern to receive updates on their case status. Since January 2021, almost 467 refugees called the hotlines and were counselled.

In August, UNHCR Syria managed the departure arrangements of 11 refugees to Romania including organising COVID-19 tests in collaboration with IOM Lebanon.

## Cash-based interventions (CBI)

UNHCR provides multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG) to the most vulnerable refugee families. UNHCR enrolls families for MPCG assistance on a bi-monthly basis and beneficiaries' continued eligibility is reviewed every two months. Vulnerability is determined either through a scoring system based on demographics, special needs, or a panel review of individual protection risks. UNHCR targets approximately 86 per cent of registered refugee families with the cash grant, which is delivered at banks via a cash-over-the-counter modality. As of July, each family of three received approximately USD 120 a month equivalent to some 299,000 Syrian pounds.

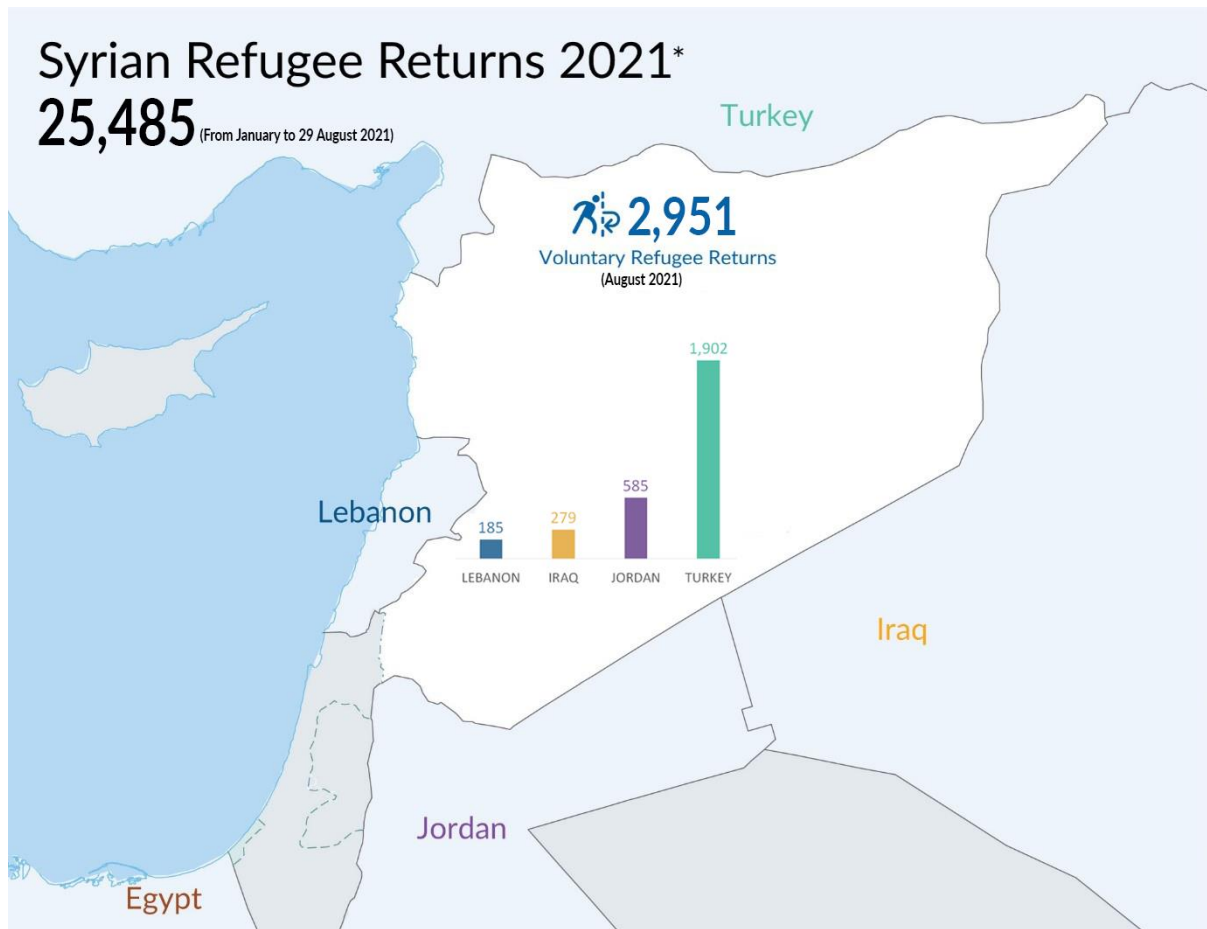
In August, UNHCR also provided cash support to 3,300 refugee families of approximately 9,300 individuals for a two-month period (July-August). UNHCR further provided counselling through the hotline to 954 beneficiary families on issues related to cash grants.



## Refugee Returns

In August, UNHCR verified the return to Syria of 2,951 individual refugees from neighbouring asylum countries, bringing the total number of refugee returnees from these countries since January to 25,485 individuals. Most returns in 2021 took place from Turkey, followed by Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon. In 2020, UNHCR verified the return of 38,235 individual refugees from neighbouring asylum countries, with most returns taking place from Turkey, Iraq, and Lebanon.

In August, UNHCR and UNDP co-chaired a meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) of the Return and Reintegration Working Group (RRWG) as part of continued efforts to support IDP and refugee returnees, and measures to strengthen collaboration.





# Financial Information

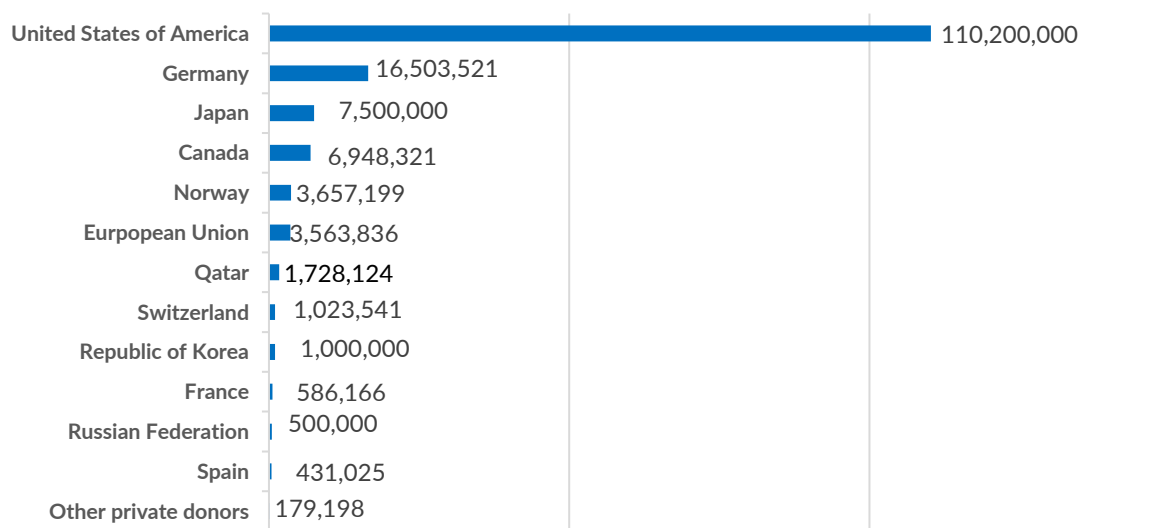
As of 31 August 2021

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

## EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 188,821,297**

as of 31 August 2021



## OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

United States of America 22.1 million | Denmark 8 million | Private donors Australia 6.2 million | Finland 6 million | Private donors Germany 5.7 million | Sweden 5.4 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 3.1 million | Japan 2.9 million

## UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Private donors Spain 49.7 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | United Kingdom 28.4 million | Germany 26 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 25 million | Japan 23.4 million | Private donors Japan 20.7 million | France 20.2 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Private donors Italy 12.3 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Private donors Sweden 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million

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## LINKS

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