

2019-2020 Regional winterization programme progress report

January 2020

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

As of 31 January, nearly 2.6 million Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees have been reached with winterization assistance in the region, mainly in the form of cash payments, winter specific core relief items and shelter materials.

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions received for its winterization programme which have facilitated early provision of assistance across the region, allowing vulnerable Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees to be prepared for the harsh winter season.

The winterization programme covers the period from September 2019 to March 2020.

In January, as part of the inter-agency efforts, UNHCR continued to provide emergency winterization assistance to thousands of people displaced in north-west and north-east Syria.



4 million vulnerable people assessed to be in need of winterization assistance¹

including

3.3 million
Syrians



746,130 Iraqis including
refugees of other nationalities



2.6 million people reached with winterization assistance as of 31 January (64%)

¹ Due to the scale of needs in the region, UNHCR revised the total number of people in need of winterization assistance from 3.88 million people (September 2019 UNHCR Regional Winterization Assistance Plan) to 4 million people

Funding requested
USD 222 million
(100% funded)

UNHCR is pleased to announce that its 2019-2020 Winter Programme is fully funded. Thank you to all the donors and supporters who have made this possible.



During the distribution of seasonal core-relief items through to the displaced populations in Damascus. ©UNHCR/Ola Kabalan

UNHCR's winterization strategy focuses on three broad areas of intervention:



Provision of core relief items specific to winter such as high thermal blankets, plastic sheets and winter clothes



Winterization of shelter including shelter weather-proofing and repairs, and improvements to drainage systems and other infrastructure in camps and informal settlements



Provision of seasonal cash assistance for vulnerable families to meet their additional needs during the winter months

- The winterization programme is implemented through UNHCR's own staff, government agencies, partners, and community outreach volunteers in coordination with the broader inter-agency response platforms.
- The provision of seasonal cash assistance does not overlap with the provision of core relief items and shelter assistance for winter.

SYRIA

PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(as of 31 JANUARY)

SYRIANS

Individuals

1.6 million individuals targeted*
679,151 individuals reached (**42%**)

Type of Assistance

In-kind: 100%

*Includes 1.5 million Syrian IDPs planned to be reached by UNHCR operations inside Syria and 100,000 IDPs through cross-border operation from Gaziantep (Turkey).

IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

Individuals

15,010 individuals targeted*
15,010 individuals reached (**100%**)

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100%

*The number of planned beneficiaries decreased from the initial winterization plan due to the revised cash grant amount provided to the beneficiaries.

- In Syria, UNHCR's winterization campaign started at the beginning of September, and has already made significant progress. As of end-January, UNHCR Syria provided winterization assistance to 629,151 individuals (137,484 families), including high thermal blankets, additional plastic sheeting, sleeping bags, winter jackets and winter clothes kits in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Tartous, Latakia, Dar'a, As-Sweida, Quneitra, Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates. This winter, UNHCR Syria is planning to reach 1.5 million individuals (300,000 families) throughout the country.
- UNHCR completed the provision of winterization assistance to all out-of-camp refugees and asylum seekers in Syria in December. During December, 5,043 refugees (2,119 families) received cash grants, bringing the total number of assisted refugees in November and December to 15,010 individuals (5,338 families). UNHCR delivered winterization grants to people who were eligible for multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG) through ATM cards and to those who were not eligible for MPCG (non-ATM cardholders) through vouchers.
- UNHCR and partners continued to distribute core relief and seasonal items to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees with an emphasis on those in areas with a high severity of needs and people with specific needs and vulnerabilities. Inside Syria, monitoring and verification mechanisms are ongoing. UNHCR field staff members regularly attend distribution activities, meet beneficiaries and collect feedback on the winterization response.
- As part of the UN cross-border operation from Turkey, UNHCR provided winterized non-food item (NFI) kits to some 50,000 people (10,000 families) through partners in north-west Syria. All winterization assistance was coordinated with the Shelter/NFI Cluster. A post distribution monitoring (PDM) of the winterization assistance was conducted by partners during November and December. The PDM included over 2,000 beneficiaries from 35 communities and camps. While all respondents indicated that they were satisfied with

the assistance received, 99.5 per cent requested additional items such as winter clothing, heating items and fuel. A similar PDM by a UNHCR contracted third-party service provider was conducted during November and December including 350 beneficiaries in seven distribution sites. All interviewees considered the selection process as fair. Ninety-four per cent of respondents indicated that they were still using the items from the kit.

LEBANON

PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(as of 31 JANUARY)

SYRIANS



1.1 million individuals targeted
 Over **900,000** individuals reached

Type of Assistance

Cash and In-kind

IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES



10,713 individuals targeted
7,800 individuals reached (**73 %**)

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100%

- In Lebanon, the delivery of winter cash assistance began in November and was completed in January. Implementation continued to be impacted by the exceptional circumstances prevailing in the country and the deteriorating financial situation. The operation continued to witness a higher impact on programmes due to the reduced liquidity and availability of cash, increased pressure on banking services, and an unstable exchange rate at non-official markets.
- UNHCR continued to deliver its cash assistance programme through the staggered loading of assistance over several days. The aim being to reduce pressure on the ATMs and avoid large queues which can generate tensions with the host community. The Office also increased the capacity and working hours of the call centre to maintain and strengthen communication with refugees.
- The operation also continued implementing the winter campaign for host communities aimed at providing relief in a context of the increasingly deteriorating economic situation. UNHCR's three-pronged approach targeted individuals, communities and institutions. Within this programme, poor Lebanese families received one-off cash grants or fuel vouchers of a value of USD 200 per family, while support to communities consisted of procurement of fire-fighting trucks, cleaning of the canals and provision of bins for solid waste management. Support with fuel and medicines was also provided to local hospitals.
- In total, close to one million people including Syrian refugee families, refugee families of other nationalities and vulnerable Lebanese received winter cash assistance since the beginning of the winter assistance programme.
- UNHCR also focused on leading the response to the harsh weather conditions that hit Lebanon at the beginning of the year. Rapid needs assessments were conducted to assess the overall situation (including shelter needs) in 450 informal settlements hosting 9,301 individuals (1,860 vulnerable families) that were reported to be affected by the floods, damaged shelters, and fire. Of these, 874 vulnerable families were assisted by UNHCR with the distribution of new shelter kits to reinforce or build up their shelters. Dozens of families temporarily relocated until access to their sites and shelters becomes permissible.
- Data collection for post distribution and outcome monitoring began in January. A total of 1,060 Syrian families were assessed through household visits. An additional 300 families of other nationalities were also visited, the data collection for which is currently on-going. Results from this exercise are expected to be finalized in February. For the winter campaign targeting poor Lebanese families, in addition to continuous monitoring of the distribution/transfer activities, a PDM exercise will be conducted after the completion of implementation mid-February.

JORDAN

PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(as of 31 JANUARY)

SYRIANS

Individuals

343,129 individuals targeted*
343,129 individuals reached (**100 %**)

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100 %

IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

Individuals

29,473 individuals targeted*
 29,473 individuals reached (**100 %**)

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100 %

* The number of planned beneficiaries decreased from the initial winterization plan due to the smaller family sizes of the most vulnerable Syrians and non-Syrians targeted.

- In Jordan, UNHCR has completed its winter assistance programme. During the months of November and December 2019, UNHCR provided cash-based winterization assistance to approximately 400,000 individuals (more than 90,000 families) including over 70,000 refugee households in urban areas and over 22,000 households in the refugee camps of Zaatari and Azraq. Families received cash grants totalling JOD 241 (approximately USD 340), to cover the cost of a gas heater, a gas cannister, gas refills for four months, and blankets for each family member.
- UNHCR adheres to a 'one refugee' approach (not discriminating against different nationalities/origins) and continues to assist non-Syrian refugees in Jordan, including Iraqis, Yemenis, Sudanese and Somalis among other nationalities. Winterization assistance included approximately 15,000 non-Syrian families in urban areas from the total of 90,000 families supported in winter. Special attention has been given to female-headed households, the elderly, people with disabilities, children who are alone or otherwise at risk, and people with medical needs as well as survivors of violence or torture. The multi-agency Winterization Task Force, co-chaired by UNHCR, coordinated winter interventions in urban areas. Strong collaboration between members of the task force ensured uniform criteria for selection of beneficiaries, standard assistance packages for transparency and fairness, and avoidance of duplication of assistance.
- Post Distribution Monitoring was undertaken in January 2020, with the Post Distribution Monitoring Report due to be published early March 2020. The survey covered a sample of over 550 beneficiaries of all nationalities. Preliminary findings note that 94 per cent of respondents felt that winterization support had made their lives better during the winter months.

IRAQ

PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(as of 31 JANUARY)

SYRIANS

Individuals

191,500 individuals targeted
 158,670 individuals reached (**83 %**)

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100 %

IRAQIS AND REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

Individuals

687,000 individuals targeted
 279,828 individuals reached (**41 %**)

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100 %

- In Iraq, the implementation of cash assistance remained affected by the exceptional circumstances prevailing in the country, particularly by general strikes and mass protests. During the reporting period, calls for general strikes resulted in the regular blockade of telecommunication, banking, and transportation systems, which directly impacted the implementation of cash-based interventions across the country. The

lack of liquidity and availability of cash further increased pressure on mobile money service providers and on banking services. In order to avoid tensions within the host community and to ease the pressure on service providers, UNHCR adopted a phased approach for the disbursement of cash along with additional distributions during the weekends.

- Since the beginning of the winterization programme, over 438,000 individuals (79,036 families) have received winter cash assistance. During January, 16,000 Syrian individuals (3,200 families) received winter cash assistance through the EyePay system using iris authentication. Female-headed households accounted for 26 per cent of the assistance recipients. Each household received IQD 480,000 (USD 400). In addition, 410 non-Syrian refugees (82 families) also received winter cash assistance equivalent to IQD 480,000 (USD 400).
- As part of the IDP response, financial service providers continued to open e-wallets for beneficiaries residing across 25 IDP camps (25,056 families). During January, a total of 12,024 IDPs (2,004 families) residing in camps received winter cash assistance. Each household received IQD 240,000 (USD 200). UNHCR continues to coordinate closely with the Shelter and NFI Clusters, as well as with the Cash Working Group, to ensure the smooth and timely implementation of the winterization programme.
- Financial service providers have fully dedicated call centres available to receive generic and specific queries related to e-wallet and cash-out issues. UNHCR partners also accept calls related to other issues and refer the cases to UNHCR for follow-up. Meanwhile, UNHCR's partner has started collecting data related to PDM for winter assistance.

EGYPT

PERSONS OF CONCERN PLANNED VS REACHED

(as of 31 JANUARY)

SYRIANS

Individuals

87,184 individuals targeted
 55,448 individuals reached **(64%)**

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100%

IRAQIS

Individuals

3,934 individuals targeted
 263 individuals reached **(7%)**

Type of Assistance

Cash: 100%

- In Egypt, the distribution of winter assistance started in December and continued through January. As of 31 January, 55,448 Syrian refugees and 263 Iraqi refugees were supported with winterization assistance. In addition, UNHCR supported 44,764 refugees of other nationalities including Sudanese, South Sudanese, Ethiopians and Eritreans with winterization assistance as of 31 January.
- Overall, UNHCR remained the primary actor providing winter assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt. UNHCR also provided direct winter assistance to unaccompanied and separated children through a local partner. A total of 2,872 children were supported by the end of January.
- UNHCR plans to conduct post-distribution monitoring in March for all collected transactions after the end of the winter distribution programme in February.



As the Syrian crisis has entered its ninth consecutive year, the needs of the people across the country are immense. Enaam is a 65 year- old Syrian woman living in Dummar -Damascus suburb, she is raising three orphan children, their mother passed away and their father is missing. “You see winter here is difficult, it is too cold. We have no heating sources. If there is electricity, we turn on the heater. If not, we cover them with blankets”. UNHCR supported Enaam and the children with thermal blankets, plastic sheets, winter clothing kit and sleeping mats in order to protect her and the children and keep them warm during this very harsh winter here in Syria.
 Photo © UNHCR/Ola Kabalan



Mohammad al Mufleh (Abo Bassam); a 72 years old living with his wife Om Bassam, 63 years old who is also taking care of his son who suffers from a mental disability. They have married sons and daughters inside Syria, some are in Europe and one married son in Jordan. During times of displacement, older people have urgent rights and needs. They can be particularly vulnerable during conflict or natural disasters, when a lack of mobility, weakened vision and chronic illnesses can make access to support difficult. Photo © UNHCR /Mohammad Hawari

Donors:

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to the winterization programme for the Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees with unearmarked and earmarked funds as well as those who have contributed directly to the operations.

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For more details, please contact UNHCR MENA Regional Office in Amman (Jordan) at: MENAreporting@unhcr.org