Syria
June 2020

As of end of May 2020, UNHCR Syria provided community-based protection to 351,410 displaced persons, returnees and host community members, including 50,063 individuals provided with legal assistance, 29,918 children with social and recreational activities in community centres, child-friendly spaces, schools and other outreach activities, 1,511 students with remedial classes and catch-up activities, and 53,852 individuals taking part in awareness sessions on Gender Based Violence (GBV).

UNHCR recorded 13,423 Syrian refugees having spontaneously returned as of end of May 2020. Self-organized returns of refugees from neighboring countries stopped as of 23 March when the Government of Syria closed its borders. More recently these returns were resumed, UNHCR together with its national partners is supporting these returnees and have assessed their needs at the border and at the quarantine center in Damascus.

Meanwhile, 351,488 individuals received at least one core-relief item, 15,912 displaced persons, returnees and host community members benefited from UNHCR’s shelter activities, while 14,286 individuals were supported through UNHCR’s community-based health interventions.

HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT

11.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance
13.2 million people in need of protection interventions
11.3 million people in need of health assistance
4.7 million people in need of shelter
4.4 million people in need of core relief items

FUNDING (AS OF 22 JULY 2020)

USD 586.3 million requested for the Syria Operation

UNHCR Representative in Syria visiting refugees in Damascus to check on their needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs)
Internaly displaced persons 6.1 million

Returnees
Spontaneous IDP return movements 184,433*
Syrian refugee returnees 13,423 **

Refugees and Asylum seekers
Current population 23,618***
Total urban refugees 15,320
Total asylum seekers 8,298
Camp population 31,069****

*OCHA, April 2020
** Operational Portal, 31 May 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

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Update on Achievements

Operational Context
In the ninth year of the crisis, the humanitarian needs in Syria remained staggering in terms of scale, severity and complexity, with protection risks persisting in many areas. According to OCHA, 11.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.1 million people that are internally displaced. Some 5 million people are in acute need due to a convergence of vulnerabilities resulting from displacement, exposure to hostilities and limited access to basic goods and services. There are also 1.1 million people in need in hard-to-reach locations.

With the consolidation of government control and changing territorial landscape, there has been an increasing level and pace of return of internally displaced persons and refugees. In 2019, a total of 96,253 refugees returned, although these refugee return figures are likely to be higher. The spontaneous IDP return movements are estimated at 494,000.

Moving UNHCR’s operational focus from emergency response to durable solutions continues to be a key priority for the operation throughout the year. People are returning despite challenging circumstances, and the operation aims to provide initial support to returnees and vulnerable population through an area-based approach. It includes immediate shelter repair, legal aid/documentation, community-based protection, primary health care, livelihoods and education. Increasing needs for support for returnees also require wider and more predictable humanitarian space for all actors.

Working in partnership
UNHCR continues to serve as the lead agency for the Protection, Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) sectors for the response within Syria and continues to coordinate the Whole of Syria response for protection. UNHCR-led sectors include 74 Protection partners, 27 NFI partners and 26 Shelter partners. 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’a/As-Sweida, Homs, Qamishli and Tartous.

As of end of May, UNHCR has partnership agreements with 28 partners including five international NGOs, 20 national NGOs and two government entities; the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE) and Ministry of Higher Education. Out of 19 national partners that have submitted the Partnership Projects with UNHCR for the clearance of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, 14 partners have received the approval so far.

Achievements
UNHCR RESPONSE TO COVID-19:
As a part of UNHCR’s COVID-19 response in Syria, as of 15 July 2020, 121,355 individuals were reached through 860 different virtual groups, 134,923 persons of concern were reached through outreach volunteers and 87,120 persons of concern were reached by UNHCR mass communication campaigns. In addition, 30,466 calls were received by hotline on child protection, gender-based violence, legal, mental health and psychosocial support, health and other related issues, and 43,315 medical consultations were provided. Moreover, 51 professional trainings on COVID-19 were conducted, 72,807 persons of concern benefited from community-led initiatives. In addition, 191,642 examination gloves, 86,774 surgical masks and 6,591 alcohol hand rub gel sanitizers were distributed in community centres, distribution points, emergency team, health facilities, and to outreach volunteers. Furthermore, 30 collective shelters were supported with renovation/rehabilitation, 808 disinfectants were distributed for interior of buildings, 115 tenders for
fumigation, and sterilization of collective shelters are on-going, and 200 emergency shelters were allocated in response to COVID-19.¹

![The outreach volunteers spreading awareness on COVID-19 protective measures in Tartous.](image)

### PROTECTION

**Achievements and Impact**

By end of May 2020, the number of operational UNHCR-funded community centres and satellite centres stands at 89 community centres, 32 satellite centres, supported with a network of 105 mobile units and 2,400 Syrian outreach volunteers who are associated with 18 national partners.

During the reporting period, three community centres were handed over to UNHCR national partners. The handing over of the centres comes to synergize UNHCR’s efforts in building the capacity of its partners and to ensure the sustainability of the community centres without UNHCR support keeping the same standards and the high integrity. Moreover, eight community centres and three satellite centres were closed as part of UNHCR and partners’ rationalization and relocation plans. These closures come after regular and thorough needs’ assessments by UNHCR and its partners aiming to achieve the best utilization of resources and to offer quality services based on needs. A community centre was relocated to Bab Al-Sibaa neighbourhood from Al-Khider neighbourhood in Homs and became fully operational on 15 March in cooperation with UNHCR partner Child Care Society. Moreover, two satellite centres in Khirbet Ghazaleh, Dar’a and in Harasta, Rural Damascus became operational in collaboration with UNHCR national partner. The new locations are return areas in need of protection interventions.

During May, UNHCR provided non-formal education programmes through remedial classes and catch-up activities to 336 (1,511 January till end May) students at the primary and secondary levels at the community centres.

¹ As of 15 July 2020.
In May 2020, UNHCR partners continued to provide legal assistance to 5,316 displaced persons and returnees in 14 governorates. This includes 1,869 individuals who benefited from legal counselling, 3,438 individuals who benefited from 153 awareness sessions via virtual groups, and nine individuals who benefited from lawyers’ direct interventions before courts and administrative bodies.

Since the beginning of 2020, 50,083 displaced persons, returnees and host community members benefited from UNHCR’s legal aid programme on issues related mainly to personal documentation, authentication of customary marriages, birth registrations, 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 the lawyers’ direct legal interventions, 694 individuals obtained national identity cards, 130 children were registered and obtained birth certificates, 358 individuals succeeded to document their marriage, and 217 individuals obtained family booklets.

In May, UNHCR and its partners identified and supported 316 (602 January till end of May) survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV); applying a multi-sectoral response through the community centres and the survivors were referred to specialized services. Furthermore, 124 (805 January till end of May) awareness sessions were conducted for approximately 1,995 (16,100 January till end of May) individuals in the first quarter of the year. To enhance the role of women in the decision-making process and in designing activities to address their needs, 28 women committees were newly established since the beginning of the year.

As of May 2020, 1,322 awareness-raising sessions on child protection topics were organized at UNHCR’s community centres, shelters, child-friendly spaces, schools and via phone addressing children, caregivers and community members. Through these interventions, UNHCR in collaboration with its national partners identified and assisted 1,830 children at risk among the displaced persons and host communities. The main risks identified were child labour, neglect and lack of documentation. These risks were accompanied by specific needs such as dropout of school. Moreover, by May, UNHCR along with its partners and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education established 56 community-based child protection structures across the country including children clubs and child welfare committees. Additionally, 42,000 children benefited from social and recreational activities organized at the community centres, child friendly spaces, schools, via phone, social media and other outreach activities. Furthermore, UNHCR delivered in January a capacity building training on its Guidelines on Assessing and Determining the Best Interests of Children for 21 relevant staff from all governorates. The training aimed at rolling out the latest Best Interest Procedures (BIP) in order to better understand its legal framework as well as the nexus between child protection and child rights.

Due to the risk of COVID-19, a need emerged which is to focus on the continuity of service provision with a new form of virtual outreach instead of personal contact, except for the urgent cases. Enhancing service delivery by building capacities of partners on remote case management among other services is taking place as well.

As of May, the capacity building plan for 2020 developed by UNHCR in cooperation with its partner, was put on hold until UNHCR receives more information about the current situation in terms of lockdown, gatherings, and about the COVID-19 situation as a whole.

The specific needs of older persons were addressed through the home-based training programme and older persons clubs, through which 404 older persons benefited from the programme. UNHCR continued to support children with developmental difficulties through its partners by implementing a special home-based rehabilitation programme designed to meet their specific needs and where 53 children were assisted during the first five months of 2020.

Due to the prevailing extensive stress factors linked to the crisis and its effects, the psychological needs of the people of concern continued to rise. During the reporting period, a total of 189 individuals received Psycho-Social Support (PSS) services through community centres and outreach volunteers, out of whom 84 were referred to specialized
mental health services. A total of 19,400 individuals participated in 970 social and recreational events including awareness raising sessions. These activities aimed at assisting people in finding relief from their inner tension, increasing their ability to deal with different types of reactions especially hyper vigilance, isolation and aggression, in addition to increasing their awareness on personal identity issues and individual characteristics, and building positive self-esteem. Different types of general and medical in-kind assistance were provided to 1,477 vulnerable individuals in order to help them meet their various basic needs.

**SHELTER AND NFIS**

**Achievements and Impact**

UNHCR provided 39,593 individuals with at least one core relief and supplementary items during May, bringing the total assisted individuals to 351,478 between January and May 2020.

In the first quarter of the year, UNHCR continued its 2019/2020 winterization program in Syria. Between 01 September 2019 and March 2020, UNHCR provided 2,475,658 winterized items for 811,833 individuals/ 173,366 families, including high thermal blankets, additional plastic sheets, sleeping bags, winter jackets and winter clothes kits in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Tartous, Lattakia, Dar’a, As-Sweida, Quneitra, Al-Hasakeh, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa governorates.

*Distribution of core relief items taking into consideration COVID-19 preventive measures by organizing crowded queues, distributing masks and sterilization.*

UNHCR continued to provide lifesaving and life-sustaining impact solutions. As of end of May, UNHCR supported 15,912 individuals who benefitted from the shelter and infrastructure assistance with the installation of 504 shelter kits in Aleppo supporting 3,868 individuals. In addition, 2,598 tents were distributed in Al-Hol, Areesha, Mahmoudli, Newroz, Roj, and Abu Kashab camps in North East of Syria. Operation and maintenance in the camps have also been provided through infrastructure upgrade to meet the existing and new displacements’ needs. Furthermore, 1,081 damaged houses out of 2,543 planned for the year, are under technical assessment in Aleppo, Homs, Rural Damascus, Lattakia, and Dar’a. As of end of May, 7,100 shelter packages, including doors, windows, WASH/electrical items, were under technical assessment in Homs, Hama, Dar’a, Quneitra, Aleppo, and Deir-ez-Zor.

As response to the COVID-19 emergency, 75 collective shelter units were installed to support 375 individuals, and 47 collective shelters are under technical assessment in Hama. The remaining 192 collective shelter units in Damascus and Lattakia were submitted to the Government’s approval. The work in 75 collective shelter in Al-Hasakeh has been cancelled recently due to the Government decision that partitioning would not be allowed in schools.

Tendering is ongoing to support nine formal and informal camps in North East of Syria through camp fumigation and sterilization for the benefit of 104,491 individuals/ 27,528
families as well as 75 collective shelters in Al-Hasakeh for the benefit of 14,800 individuals/1,700 families.

Moreover, works are ongoing in two isolation centres in the camps in North East of Syria, in addition to one isolation centre that was completed in Al-Hol camp in Al-Hasakeh. The role of UNHCR is in the technical design i.e. providing big size and family-size tents, and coordinating with WHO, other UN agencies, and other INGOs to prepare isolation areas in the camps.

HEALTH
Achievements and Impact

As of end of May, UNHCR assisted 87,835 displaced persons with Primary Health Care (PHC) services through 11 PHC clinics. This includes 2,347 IDPs who were provided with Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services through SARC clinics in Damascus and Rural Damascus.

Moreover, 14,286 individuals were reached by the community-based health activities through the health points in the community centres. A total of 3,181 individuals received basic medical consultation in the clinics of the health points and 11,105 individuals participated in and benefited from the health promotion and disease prevention activities conducted by the community-health workers inside and outside the community centres. Currently 17 health points are functional in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, rural Aleppo, rural Hama, rural Homs, Tartous, rural Tartous, Quneitra, rural Dar’a, and Al-Hasakeh.

LIVELIHOODS AND SELF RELIANCE
Achievements and Impact

During May, UNHCR partners resumed the implementation of entrepreneurship training as a preparatory step for selecting beneficiaries of the start-up small business grants programme. UNHCR also assessed and approved a number of agriculture projects identified in return areas in Homs, Hama and Aleppo. In addition, UNHCR identified 14 socio-economic infrastructure facilities to be rehabilitated as part of this year's target in Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Lattakia, Al-Hasakeh, Dar’a, and Rural Damascus. The assessed infrastructure includes rehabilitation of bakeries, vocational training schools, training/development centres, and a rural market.

Entrepreneurship training at Muhardeh community centre in Hama governorate.
Achievements and Impact

In 2020, UNHCR continued to provide multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG) to the most vulnerable refugee families, including Cash for Food (C4F) for asylum seekers. The eligibility criteria for MPCG assistance was updated late 2019 following consultations and a comprehensive market assessment incorporated into the planning for the provision of MPCG in 2020 along with stronger linkages with protection case management and complaints/feedback mechanisms. The Cash-based interventions standard operating procedures were also revised, and the updated version was endorsed and implemented starting from March 2020.

In May, UNHCR continued the ATM cards distribution to eligible refugees, assisting a total of 12,922 individuals/4,542 refugee households with MPCGs. Since January, a total of 13,496 individuals/4,691 refugee households received MPCGs at least once. UNHCR also provided cash related counselling to 257 families, as well as hotline support to 611 families during May 2020.

To mitigate the restrictions and financial hardship caused by COVID-19 response, UNHCR continued transferring MPCG upfront to cover two months (May and June) to eligible families who have their ATM cards in custody.

During May, UNHCR provided a one-time emergency cash grant to all refugees not receiving MPCG through cash over the counter modality to mitigate loss of income due to COVID-19 preventive measures except for refugees residing in Saeyda Zainab who were under complete lockdown where WFP assisted all refugees with food baskets end of May following coordination and service level agreement with UNHCR. A total of 1,155 individuals/511 families out of 642 families collected the one-time blanket cash grant.

It is estimated that there are currently 1,900 refugees in need of resettlement in Syria. So far, a quota of 110 individuals has been allocated to the operation, for submission to the United Kingdom, while a target of 150 individual submissions has been set for the year. Resettlement interviews remain suspended due to COVID-19 related restrictions. UNHCR Syria is however preparing for a small-scale resumption of activities and has therefore assessed and modified its reception and interviewing structures in accordance with public health safeguards. In March 2020, the UK requested that resettlement submissions from Syria be put on hold until further notice, leading to the fact that no cases have been sent so far this year. Following UNHCR’s continued advocacy, the resettlement country agreed to receive submissions, and referrals from Syria to MENA PS thus started on 30 June. Following the suspension of departures since December 2019 as a result of difficulties faced by IOM, UNHCR was informed on 24 June that the IOM office in Syria would close on 30 June 2020. As a result, UNHCR Syria will from now facilitate departures from Damascus to the Lebanese border, and is preparing a new procedural framework to this effect.

During May, UNHCR provided non-formal education programmes through remedial classes and catch-up activities to 336 (1,511 January till end May) students at the primary and secondary levels in the community centres.

Currently, two community centres are functional in Al-Hasakeh governorate providing wide range of protection services to refugees including child protection, GBV prevention, services for persons with specific needs, community mobilization, and livelihoods.

As of end of May, the number of refugee outreach volunteers stands at 121 representing the refugee communities of Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Chad, Guinea and Eritrea who continued to support their communities in four governorates; Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh.
By end of May, a total of 31 GBV survivors were identified and a work plan was established by the survivor and the case manager. The survivors were assisted with the needed services, 25 referrals were made, and survivors were linked to the outreach volunteers to ensure the support network within their communities. Additionally, 24 awareness sessions on GBV took place to raise the awareness on psychological violence, deprivation of resources, opportunities and services, early marriage, sexual harassment, and physical violence with the participation of 465 individuals in Al-Hasakeh governorate (Tal Hamis and Al-Hol camp), where most refugee communities are located with mostly adolescent females and adult women.

Furthermore, as of end of May 2020, 6,027 refugees and asylum seekers received free-of-charge comprehensive primary health care services through ten UNHCR-supported primary health care clinics. Out of those, 395 refugees and asylum seekers received mental health services through SARC clinics in Damascus and Rural Damascus. Secondary and tertiary health care was provided to 930 refugees and asylum seekers through designated public, charitable and private contracted hospitals in Syria.

**SUPPORT TO SPONTANEOUS RETURNS**

Self-organized returns of refugees from neighboring countries stopped as of 23 March when the Government of Syria closed its borders. More recently these returns were resumed, UNHCR together with its national partners is supporting these returnees and have assessed their needs at the border and at the quarantine center in Damascus.

Regional UNHCR figures reported 13,423 verified refugee returnees to Syria at the end of May 2020. The spontaneous IDP return movements are estimated at 184,433.

To date, UNHCR and its partners have gathered information at the community level to produce/update over 100 sub-district profiles in areas of returns. These profiles provide a snapshot of gaps in infrastructure and services and highlight the key needs of the population. The top three key concerns identified by returnees included destroyed homes, lack of livelihood opportunities and lack of civil status documentation.

During May, UNHCR provided non-formal education programmes through remedial classes and catch-up activities to 1,018 (1,060 January – May) students at the primary and secondary levels in the community centres. Out of which 13 children were out-of-school.

By end of May, UNHCR and partners identified and supported 607 survivors of Gender-Based Violence; applying a multi-sectoral response through the community centres the survivors were referred to specialized services. Furthermore, during the reporting period, 584 awareness sessions were conducted for approximately 11,680 individuals. To enhance the role of women in the decision-making process and in designing activities to address their needs, a total of 29 women committees have been established since the beginning of the year.

By end of May 2020 UNHCR supported 198,983 individuals (approx. 39,796 returnee families) with core relief items and seasonal items.
UNHCR conducts daily missions to the field in Al-Hasakeh, Lattakia, Aleppo, Tartous, Homs, Hama, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Idleb, and Ar-Raqqa. During the COVID19 crisis between March – May UNHCR continued to conduct missions when possible to the field taking into consideration COVID19 precautionary measures. The missions took place through multi-functional teams, including colleagues from Protection, Shelter, NFI, Health and Livelihood units. The purpose of the missions was to follow up on the work of the partners and the outreach volunteers on the ground, visit high returns areas to meet with returnees and produce sub-district profiles, monitor NFI distributions and assess the overall needs in the different sectors. As of end of May 2020, UNHCR conducted missions to 253 sub-districts across Syria.
Financial Information***

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors that have contributed to this operation as well as those that have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD
Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some US$ 134,600,413

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<th>Country</th>
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BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD
Germany 95 million | United States of America 26.4 million | United Kingdom 24.8 million | Denmark 14.6 million | Canada 8.7 million | Private donors USA 8.3 million | Sweden 6.1 million | Finland 5.5 million | Private donors Australia 5.1 million | Private donors Germany 4.3 million | Private donors Japan 3.9 million | Private donors United Kingdom 3.9 million | Spain 3.4 million | Ireland 3.3 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 2.6 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD
Sweden 76.4 million | Norway 41.4 million | Private donors Spain 39.8 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | United Kingdom 31.7 million | Germany 25.9 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 20.5 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | France 14 million | Private donors Japan 12 million

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LINKS
www.unhcr.org/sy
https://twitter.com/UNHCRinSYRIA/status/1118150319341436928

***As of 22 July 2020, please find attached more details in Annex 1.
Annexes

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

Annex 2
UNHCR main activities as of end of May 2020
$586.3 million
UNHCR's financial requirements 2020  

23% funded  

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
as of 22 July 2020

FUNDING UPDATE | 2020

Notes:
1. The financial requirements for Syrian Arab Republic include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency, Iraq Situation Response and the Syria Situation Response.
2. The percentage funded (23%) and total funding amount ($134,600,413) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of $451,673,299 representing 77% of the financial requirements.
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.
5. 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.