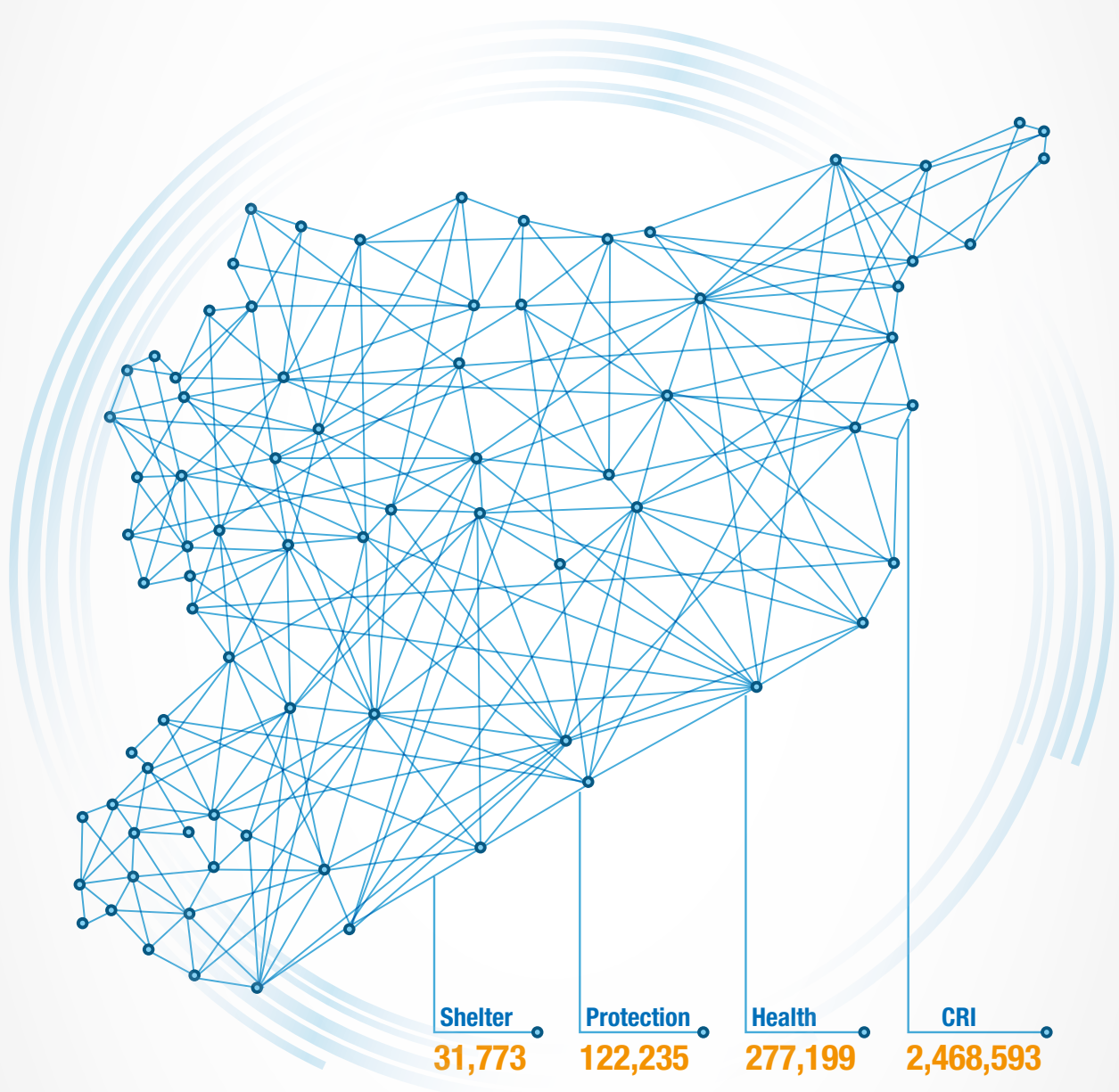


# ACCESSING THE VULNERABLE ACROSS CONFLICT LINES

UNHCR mid-year analysis  
January - June 2014





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# GLOSSARY

<b>ACF</b>	Action Against Hunger
<b>AGDM</b>	Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming
<b>CBI</b>	Community-based Initiatives
<b>CBO</b>	Community-based Organization
<b>CBP</b>	Community-based Programme
<b>CRC</b>	Convention of the Rights of the Child
<b>CRI</b>	Core Relief Item
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugee Council
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GOPA</b>	Greek Orthodox Patriarchy
<b>HR</b>	Human Rights
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IED</b>	Improvised Explosive Device
<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian Law
<b>IMC</b>	International Medical Corps
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization of Migration
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MoLA</b>	Ministry of Local Administration
<b>MoSA</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs
<b>NFI</b>	Non Food Item
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>PSS</b>	Psychological Social Support
<b>PU</b>	Première Urgence
<b>RSD</b>	Refugee Status Determination
<b>SARC</b>	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>SHARP</b>	Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan
<b>SSSD</b>	Syrian Society for Social Development
<b>UASC</b>	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNMAS</b>	United Nations Mine Action Service
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
<b>WASH</b>	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme



# FOREWORD FROM THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE

Dear Reader,

During the first six months of 2014, the crisis in Syria continued with dreadful cost to human life and destruction. It is with a sense of despondence that I noted that Syria has now entered its fourth year of a crisis that often feels without end. Throughout this I have had the opportunity to hear the often untold stories of the Syrians themselves who continue to help each other and who continue to hope that, through a turn of fate, somehow, one day, things will be better. It is these Syrians who pass on this catching feeling that we can, and we have to, continue to help alleviate the suffering of some of the most vulnerable wherever they may be.

**“THE NEEDS ARE MASSIVE AND BEYOND THE OPERATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY OF A SINGLE ENTITY OR APPROACH.”**

Many solutions both political and military continue to be negotiated and fought for, but throughout this, what must be made clear is that no matter how much effort we exert, there will be no humanitarian solution to this conflict. Nonetheless, humanitarian aid remains the best and only way for the time being to meet the urgent and ever increasing needs of some of the most vulnerable people in Syria. The needs are massive and beyond the operational response capacity of a single entity or approach. My last trip to eastern Aleppo brought me face-to-face with some of the results of this conflict; the complete destruction of this part of the city, an area that has not had electricity for almost two years, the absence of food, water, medicines and other essential items was evident on the faces of children that were ridden with skin diseases. The faces of these children will be added to the growing number of mental images of the effects of the crisis in Syria that are simply impossible to forget.



**“UNHCR IS COMMITTED TO DELIVERING IMPARTIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE MOST VULNERABLE”**

With this background in mind, UNHCR will continue to strive to meet the needs of the most vulnerable wherever they may be. We have been regularly asked to provide figures or even percentages as to how much assistance has reached government, opposition, or contested areas. This misses the point, and politicizes the assistance. UNHCR is committed to delivering impartial assistance to the most vulnerable. Questions about the locations where assistance is provided should be based on vulnerability and not politics.

When talking of vulnerable individuals, I would like to highlight an often forgotten fact; there are still refugees in Syria. As mandated, UNHCR will continue to provide assistance to refugees who are some of the most vulnerable individuals in the country. Victims of multiple displacements, they find themselves trapped in yet another conflict and who by virtue of their nationality are not able to have the same access to assistance and livelihoods. For these refugees, the most vulnerable in Syria, there is a solution, in the form of resettlement and I would urge states to provide more slots so as to house those refugees left trapped in Syria.

This assistance is provided under the weight of considerable constraints. The security situation has not improved but continues to decline a bit more every day, I am proud of UNHCR staff, in particular our national staff, who have repeatedly and bravely put themselves at risk to help their compatriots. The reality is that due to a plethora of reasons including, general insecurity, fluid and shifting lines of crisis, ongoing violence and hostilities, a proliferation and fragmentation of armed opposition groups, sophisticated weaponry, indiscriminate attacks in densely populated areas causing civilian casualties, and regular ongoing displacement, no humanitarian actor can claim to have access to all of Syria.

**“AND I WOULD URGE STATES TO PROVIDE MORE SLOTS SO AS TO HOUSE THOSE REFUGEES LEFT TRAPPED IN SYRIA.”**

The actuality of limited access means that there will be certain things that we have to accept. We will not be able to help all of those in need and we will not be able to provide comprehensive, and solid evidence of what is going on in all parts of Syria. Despite this, significant progress has been made so far in 2014, half way through the year UNHCR has reached more than 2.4 million individuals with Core Relief Items in 13 out of 14 governorates, Protection activities have been steadily built in eight of the 14 governorates, and 12 primary health clinics in five governorates have provided more than 170,000 individuals with access to health care. It is important to recognize these successes whilst also noting that much more can and must be done.

**Tarik Kurdi**

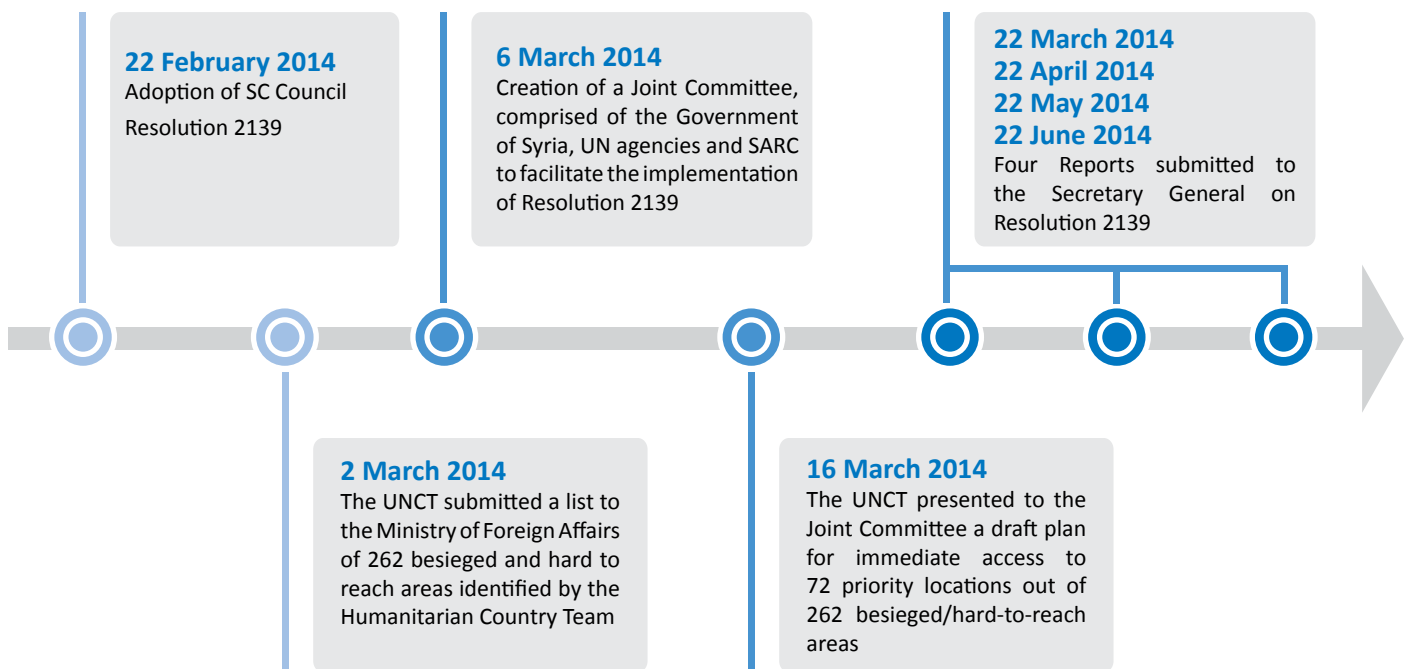
Representative UNHCR Syria



# SECURITY COUNCIL

Security Council Resolution 2139 that came into place in February demands all parties to put an end to all forms of violence and attacks against civilians, to facilitate the expansion of humanitarian relief operations, to lift sieges of populated areas and allow for humanitarian access for humanitarian agencies and partners, including across conflict lines and border, to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches people in need through the most direct routes.

## DEVELOPMENTS AT HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM LEVEL

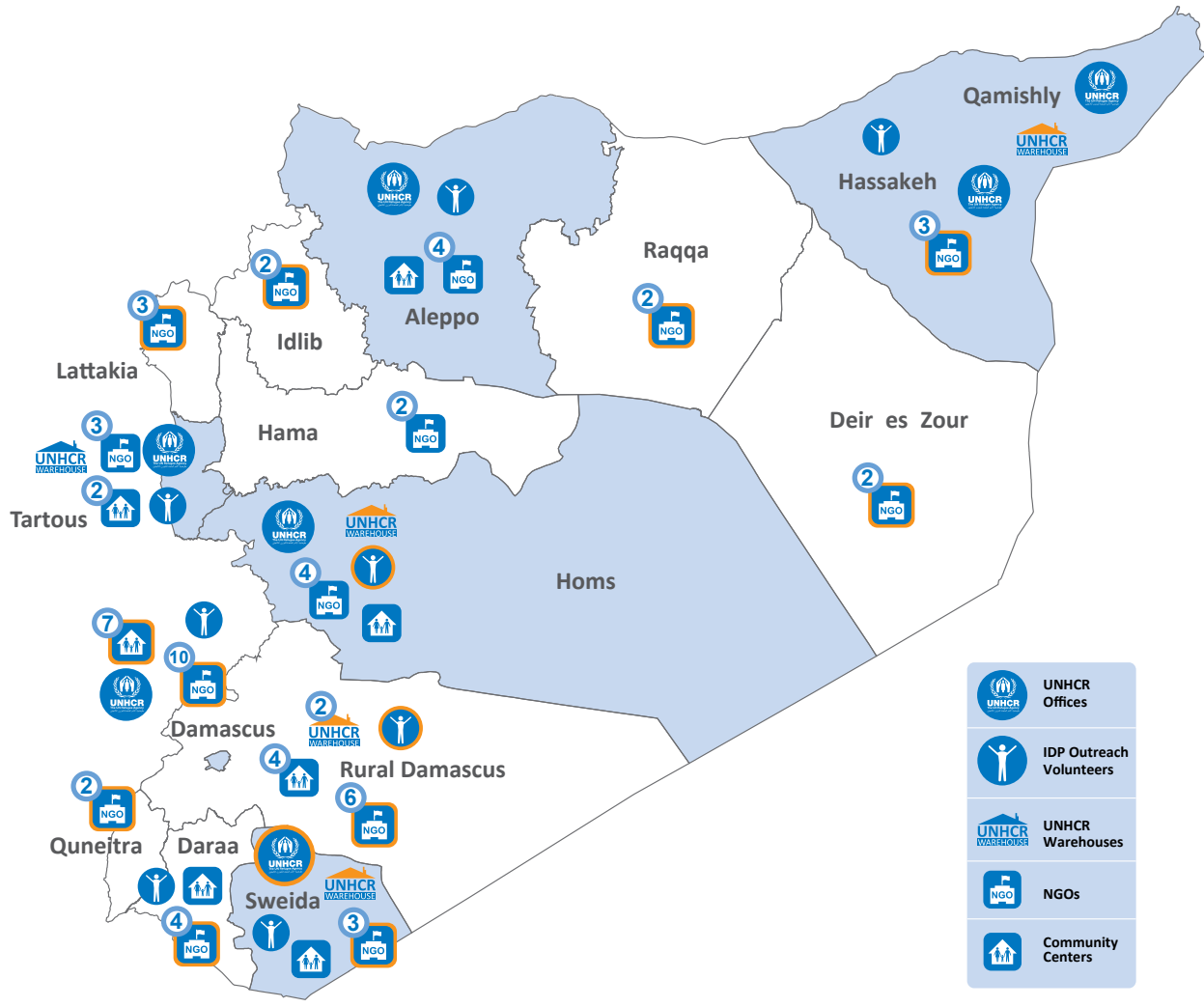


The announcement of the Security Council Resolution 2139 is an important tool in recalling the obligations of all parties under International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights law and provides leverage to negotiate safe and unhindered access to the growing number of internally displaced and civilians in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Core principles of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law underpin humanitarian action, including cross-line and cross-border operations, to ensure continued neutrality, impartiality and independence.

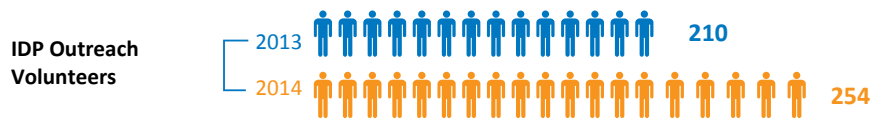
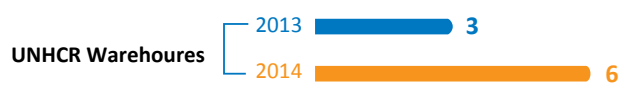
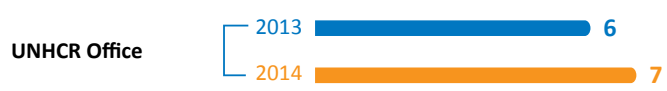
There has been much discussion regarding the legal interpretation of Security Council Resolution 2139, this is an academic exercise that will have little impact on the realities on the ground. Practically speaking, for any operation to be effective, it will require the consent of all parties to the conflict.

**SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2139 IS AN IMPORTANT TOOL IN RECALLING THE OBLIGATIONS OF ALL PARTIES UNDER INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**

# EXPANDING PRESENCE



-  UNHCR Offices
-  IDP Outreach Volunteers
-  UNHCR Warehouses
-  NGOs
-  Community Centers



**IN THE  
FIRST SIX  
MONTHS  
OF THE  
YEAR**

A new office was opened in Sweida

UNHCR now has new implementing partners working in Raqqa, Deir es Zour and Quneitra therefore establishing presence in all 14 Governorates of Syria

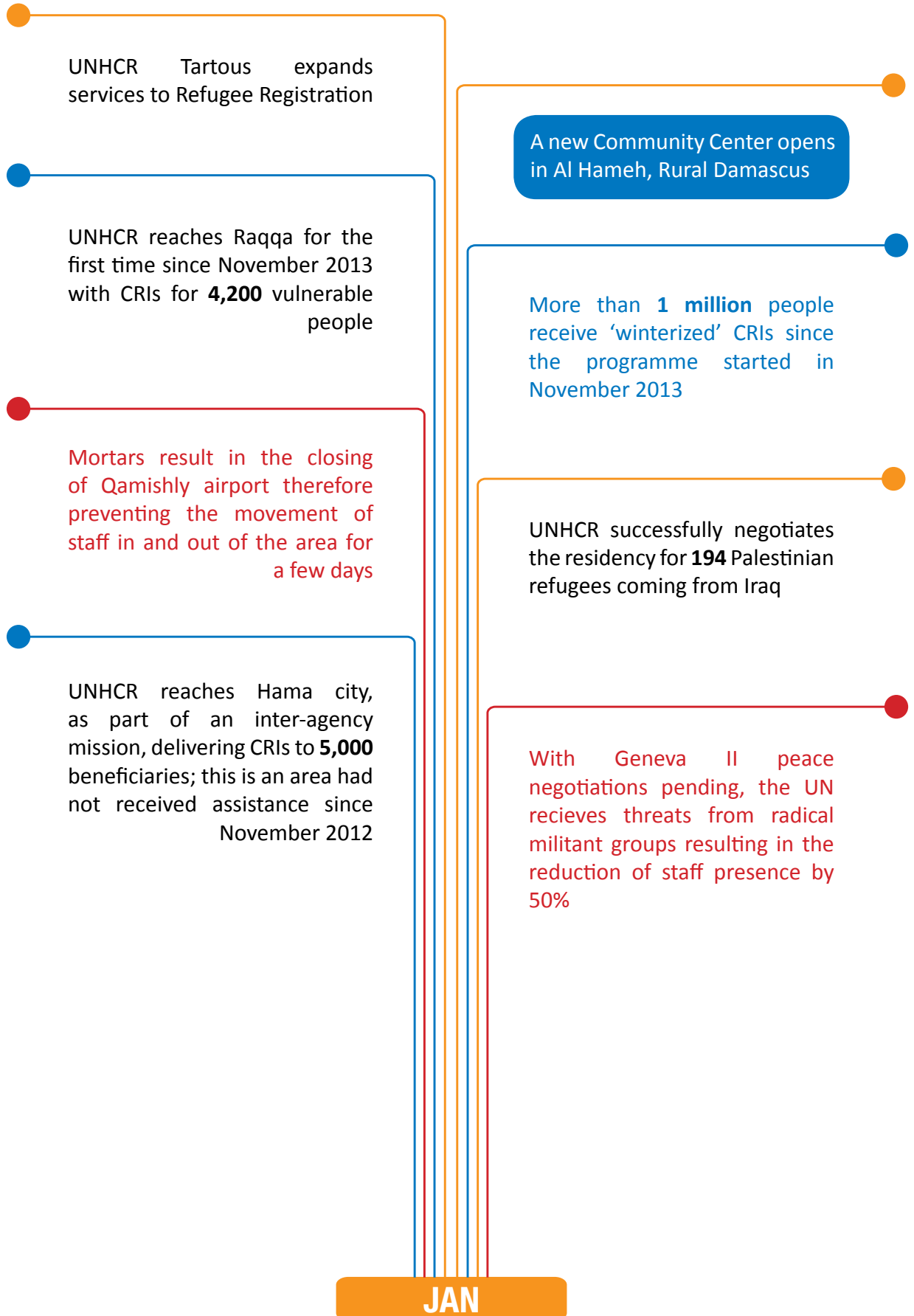
Four new implementing partners

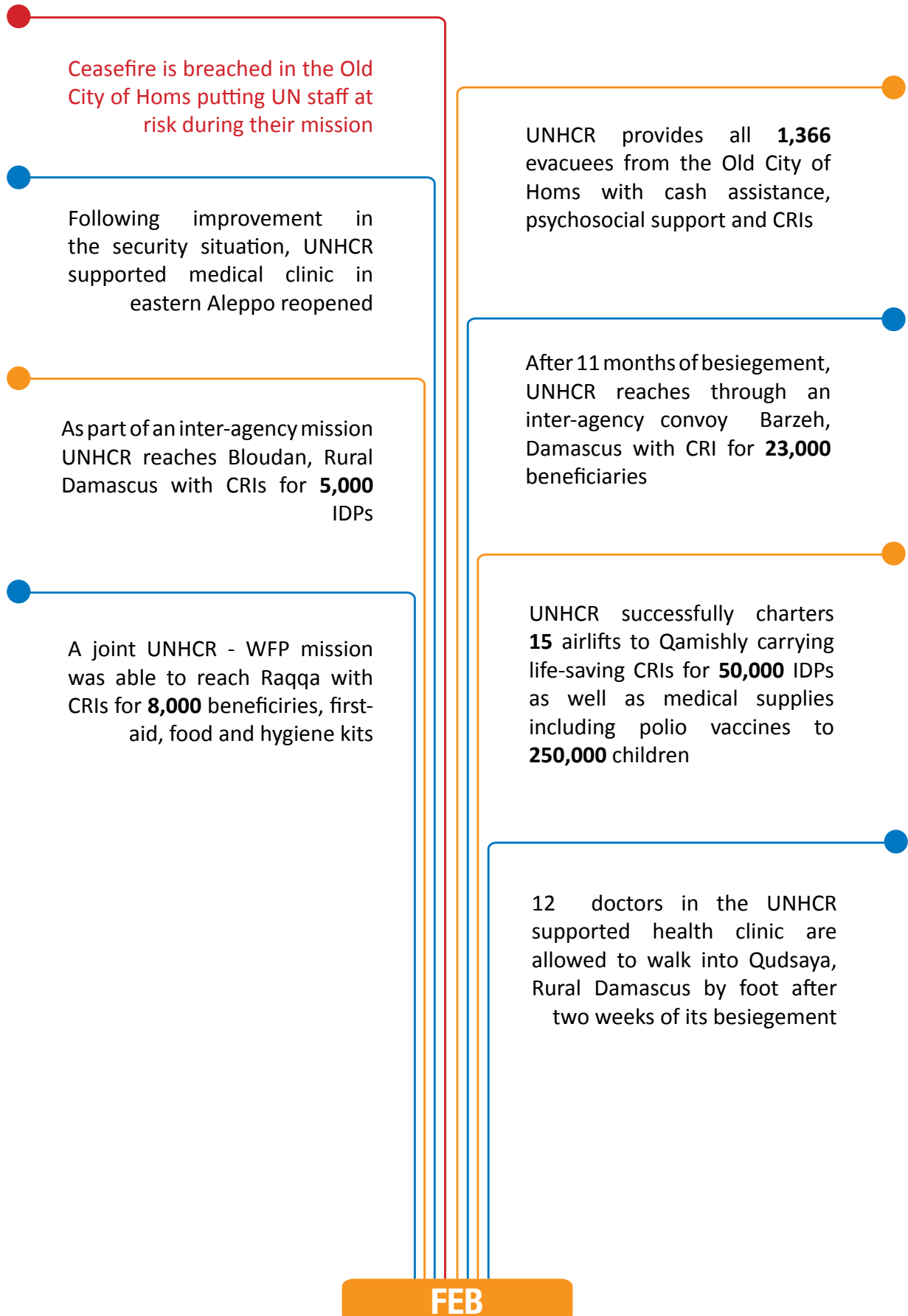
44 more Outreach Volunteers employed and operating out of eight governorates including out of Homs and Hassakeh





# MID 2014 TIMELINE







UNHCR responds with CRIs to the massive displacement of more than 1.7 million IDPs in Aleppo

A mortar explodes in close vicinity to the UN hub in Homs causing some material damage and triggering 50% reduction in staff presence

**1 million** beneficiaries are reached with CRIs in 2014

UNHCR trucks are the first to cross Nousaybeen border in Turkey into Qamishly carrying CRIs to **50,000** IDPs; an area that has been unreachable by road since May 2013

UNHCR Amoured Vehicle is hit by a bullet at a checkpoint whilst on mission in Rural Damascus

An IED goes off 500 meters from the UNHCR office in Qamishly

**223** wheelchairs provided to the most vulnerable in Damascus, Hama, Homs, Tartous and Raqqa

Almost **10,000** IDPs benefit from the UNHCR - UNFPA - SARC project where mobile teams visit people in different shelters to offer psychological support

UNHCR participates in an inter-agency convoy reaching Al Houla, Homs for the first time since March 2013 to deliver CRI for approximately **1,000** households

More than **2 million** vulnerable displaced Syrians receive winterized CRI packages including extra thermal blankets and plastic sheets since the beginning of the programme in November 2013

## MAR

For the first time since March 2011, UNHCR reaches the besieged areas of Nubul and Zahra with 4 trucks of relief items as part of an inter-agency mission

UNHCR staff are trapped in besieged Aleppo for 2 weeks

Missions to Aleppo are suspended after a big explosion close to the city center

A UN inter-agency mission reaches Ras el Ein Hassakeh for the first time since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, where CRIs were distributed for approximately **4,500** IDPs

An IED lands 500 meters away from the Merry Land Hotel in Qamishly where UNHCR staff live and work.

UNHCR and SARC negotiate a four-hour ceasefire with the fighting parties in Aleppo city and managed to cross through Boustan Al Qasr into Eastern Aleppo city, delivering CRIs to 1,500 people

UNHCR reaches Termalla and Ghanto, two opposition-controlled villages in Northern Homs for the first time in 6 months

Homemade rockets land 700 m away from the UNHCR office in Aleppo

**APR**



UNHCR volunteers vaccinate **37,395** children against polio in Hassakeh Governorate since the beginning of 2014

Movement of staff in Damascus is further restricted after a significant increase in mortars landing in the vicinity of UNHCR office in the lead up to the elections

UNHCR launches the legal assistance Programme for IDPs in Tartous to provide legal counseling, legal intervention and awareness-raising on legal issues

UNHCR opens a new logistics hub including an office and warehouse in the southern governorate of Sweida

More than **4,711** children have benefitted through UNHCR implementing partners from community services activities in the governorates of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Tartous, Lattakia, Damascus and Rural Damascus

**2 million** beneficiaries are reached with CRIs in 2014

For the first time since December 2013, UNHCR reaches **8,500** vulnerable individuals from Adra Oumalieh and Yalda, Rural Damascus through an inter-agency convoy with CRIs

More than **1,000** refugees resettled

UNHCR participates another inter-agency mission to the besieged area of Douma, Rural Damascus

UNHCR completes the distribution of items received from the Turkish-Syrian border: **50,000** IDPs reached in Hassakeh, Qamishly, Amuda, Jawadia, Qahtania and Derbasia

UNHCR convoy composed of 9 trucks crosses the border from Jordan and dispatched aid to **25,000** IDPs living in Sweida, Quneitra and Daraa



# OPERATIONS FROM 1 JANUARY TO 30 JUNE 2014



**PROTECTION**



**CORE RELIEF ITEMS**



**SHELTER**



**CASH ASSISTANCE**



**HEALTH**



# PROTECTION



# MONITORING AND ADVOCACY ON PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

There are significant challenges in monitoring and advocating for protection and human rights in a crisis that is marked by violence and the consequent displacement of people. This combined with a deteriorating economic situation exacerbated for many by the fact that many families have lost their breadwinners, a role traditionally assumed by men, has made women and children more vulnerable to exploitation.

UNHCR is committed to strengthening its monitoring and advocacy for human rights and the protection of civilians in its humanitarian response, in order to ensure that protection is mainstreamed across all its activities and protection capacity is strengthened. As such, UNHCR is a member of the Monitoring and Reporting task force attached to the mechanism on Grave Child Rights violations in Syria. Due to serious challenges, members of the task force have not been able to undertake proactive monitoring as of yet. Despite this through UNHCR's extensive presence across the country, through Outreach Volunteers, Community Centers, and collective shelter visits, UNHCR has been in a position to concretely observe the following:

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**FORCED MARRIAGE/ EARLY MARRIAGE**

**TRAFFICKING**

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**UNACCOMPANIED OR SEPERATED CHILDREN**

**CHILD LABOUR**

**CHILD RECRUITMENT**

**DOCUMENTATION ISSUES**

This is no doubt part of a longer list of Protection and human rights concerns that can be observed in Syria.



## PROTECTION MONITORING

In Syria, despite the conflict and lack of access to many areas and populations, UNHCR has systematically monitored the needs and concerns of displaced persons, through

**SEVEN OFFICES**

**11 COMMUNITY CENTRES**

**381 STAFF**

**17 IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS**

**254 OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS**

**DIRECT CONTACT WITH 32,778 REFUGEES**

## SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

SGBV is one of the most challenging human rights violations to identify within Syria as many survivors are reluctant to report or speak out on account of stigmatization, shame or fear.

It is very difficult to measure the extent of SGBV, due to the lack of relevant documented studies and credible reports, especially in relation to rape, sexual assault and trafficking. Furthermore, in certain areas controlled by extremist groups, women are deprived of many rights and face many restrictions that are in contravention of cultural traditions, fundamental freedoms and human rights. Amongst the challenges faced in providing the necessary protection for women there are:

- The confidential nature of the offences and crimes related to women
- The fact that these issues are often considered less urgent than the security situation and basic humanitarian needs on the ground, which also make it difficult to follow-up on these matters
- Conservative communities make it difficult to discuss and shed light on gender-based violations
- Lack of documented studies on the extent of the gender-based violations
- Lack of coordination among concerned authorities to address gender-based violations
- Lack of reporting to the relevant authorities, which leads to offences being repeated in various locations
- The deterioration of the health sector in Syria, which has a negative impact on the provision of necessary medical and psychological support to the victims of abuses

**SGBV IS ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS TO IDENTIFY AS MANY SURVIVORS ARE RELUCTANT TO REPORT OR SPEAK OUT OFTEN ON ACCOUNT OF STIGMATIZATION, SHAME OR FEAR.**

## CHILD PROTECTION

Children in Syria are exposed to the same risks faced by all civilians without distinction or exception including being killed, arrested, poor health conditions, malnutrition and threats to personal safety. In addition, children face specific threats and harms such as recruitment as child soldiers, exploitative child labour practices and child trafficking.

**Child Soldiers:** The phenomenon of recruitment of child soldiers is monitored through refugee protection counseling as well as through information from Outreach Volunteers working within the community.

**Child labour:** Child labour can be widely observed. Even prior to the crisis in Syria children worked to support their families. However, since the beginning of the crisis, the scale and scope increased which has been one of the causes of large scale school drop-outs. The main reason behind children's increased involvement in labour is related to the absence of a carer and financial provider.

**Child Trafficking & Exploitation:** In times of displacement, children face an increasing risk of separation from their caregivers and families which may lead to cases of child trafficking and the risk of sexual exploitation.

### 4 Challenges in relation to monitoring Child Protection concerns:

1. Lack of access to besieged/hard to reach areas
2. Continuing Conflict
3. Lack of reliable sources of information
4. The inability of administrative and education staff to report to work due to violence, checkpoints and blocked roads.

**Legal Documentation:** Most displaced persons, who are compelled to flee their homes due to insecurity, leave their personal status documents behind, or otherwise lose them during their flight. Undocumented individuals, including those who fail to register civil events, are among the most disenfranchised as it leaves them vulnerable to harassment, exploitation, detention and other dangers. In addition, it makes it more difficult for them to access social services such as health and education.

**UN AGENCIES HAVE THE MORAL  
AND SOMETIMES LEGAL OBLIGATION  
TO RAISE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES  
IMPARTIALLY AND CONSISTENTLY**



## THE NEED FOR ADVOCACY: HUMAN RIGHTS.... A HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM?

**“HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ARE A MAJOR FACTOR IN CAUSING THE FLIGHT OF REFUGEES AS WELL AS AN OBSTACLE TO THEIR SAFE AND VOLUNTARY RETURN HOME. SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IS THEREFORE CRITICAL BOTH FOR THE PREVENTION AND FOR THE SOLUTION OF REFUGEE PROBLEMS. RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS ALSO ESSENTIAL FOR THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES IN COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM.”**

**Statement by Mrs Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to the fiftieth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Geneva 9 February 1994**

It is clear that UN agencies as mandated by the international community have the moral and legal obligation to raise human rights issues impartially and consistently.



Following the monitoring of Protection Issues, those concerns are met with, where possible, a human rights based response. This is the subject of the next chapter “Protection and Human Rights based Response”.

# PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS BASED RESPONSE

## CHILD PROTECTION

### 1 CHILD RECRUITMENT

“Recruitment” is a term that entails being involved in armed forces or armed groups obligatorily, coercively or voluntarily. It means taking part directly in combat as well related activities such as reconnaissance, spying, sabotage, being used as decoys and messengers, carrying supplies to the front line or standing at checkpoints which all make children vulnerable to harm.

Internally displaced children especially those separated from their families are at greater risk of recruitment or use in armed conflicts. This involvement in conflicts exposes them to extreme and unacceptable threats to their health and well-being and violates their rights. They are deprived of the opportunity to grow up with their families and to develop physically and emotionally in a familiar or protective environment. Some children involved in the armed conflict are killed in combat, severely injured or permanently disabled.

For many children in Syria, the risk of recruitment increases by the day with lack of economic, educational or other opportunities which can make children more vulnerable to recruitment in armed conflicts. During the crisis *ad hoc* reports have been received about the increasing number of children participation in armed forces/groups.



### SYRIAN LAWS CRIMINALIZING THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN HOSTILITIES

- | Law of Military Service\*: citizens must be 18 years old to partake in the military service.
- | Trafficking in Persons law, issued as per the decree **No. 3** in 2010.
- | Child Recruitment is criminalized as per law **No.11** of 2013

\* Decree No.18 issued in 2003 and decree No. 30 of 2007



### INTERNATIONAL LAWS EMPHASIZING THE PROHIBITION OF RECRUITMENT OF PEOPLE UNDER THE LEGAL AGE

Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibits the recruitment and the participation in conflict for children of less than 15 years of age.

Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflicts adopted in the year 2000 raises the minimum age for direct participation in hostilities and compulsory recruitment to 18 years

ILO Convention **No. 182** on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor refers to forced and compulsory recruitment of children in armed conflict as one of the worst forms of child labor.

Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977 lay down a series of rules according them special protection. Children who take a direct part in hostilities do not lose that special protection.

International criminal law, in particular the Rome Statute adopted in 1998 indicates that conscripting or enlisting children under 15 years into national armed forces or armed groups or using them to participate actively in all kinds of hostilities is a war crime.

UN Security Council Resolutions have repeatedly condemned and called for an end to the unlawful recruitment and use of children.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR Syria has provided activities that could, in certain circumstances, prevent child recruitment:

- Education and forms of alternative education, educational kits and support
- Recreational and PSS activities where children at risk of recruitment can be identified
- Financial assistance for families at risk and families to prevent recruitment caused by the dire financial situation
- Income generating activities for families and vocational training addressing the needs of adolescents



These risks could seriously threaten their well-being and undermine their cognitive, emotional and social development particularly when they are further compounded by weak law enforcement capacity and lack of respect for human rights.

Protection risks increase when labor is forced which makes it one of the worst forms of child labor as IDPs may be particularly vulnerable to traffickers who appear to offer life-saving access to employment opportunities in a period of time when access to education, livelihoods and self-reliance opportunities are limited.



## 2 CHILD LABOR

Child labor is work that children should not be doing because they are too young to work or because it is dangerous or otherwise unsuitable for them.

When fleeing their homes in particular when separated from their families, internally displaced children and children heads-of-households are exposed to a range of risks including child labor such as heavy duty work or dangerous work such as begging and other violations of their rights especially with lack of economic, educational or other opportunities caused by displacement.



### CHILD LABOR IN THE SYRIAN LAW

The Syrian Labor Law **No. 17** for the year 2010 prohibits employment of children before completing their basic education and the age of 15 years. To employ children above 15 years old, working conditions and type of industries must vary according to the age. The maximum working hours for children are 6 hours a day with no more than 3 consecutive working hours as the child must take a break for at least an hour a day. The child must not be assigned additional work after working hours, during breaks or in night shifts. Furthermore, employment of children must not be done without the written approval of their parents or guardians. The only exceptional case in this law is children working in their family business under the supervision of their parents or close relatives.





## CHILD LABOR IN THE INTERNATIONAL LAW

Article **32 (1)** of the Convention of the Rights of the Child highlights the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This Convention is the most endorsed human rights treaty in the world, ratified by all but two countries.

The Minimum Age Convention (**No. 138** of 1973) specifies the minimum age for admission to employment. Countries that ratify this Convention undertake a legal promise to stop child labor and make sure that children below a certain “minimum age” are not employed. The minimum age for work stated in this convention should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling which is generally 15.

Of note Syria has ratified both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Minimum Age Convention.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

As a response to child labor, affected and IDP children have attended the following activities:

- Awareness raising sessions and emergency messages related to consequences of child labor and dropping out of school
- Psychosocial support for victims of child labour

### 3 UNACCOMPANIED/SEPARATED CHILDREN

A **separated child** is any child that has been separated from both parents or from other legal or customary primary caregiver/s but not necessarily from other relatives.

An **unaccompanied child** is any child who has been separated from both parents and other relatives and who is not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom is responsible for doing so.

Families are frequently torn apart as a result of forced displacement pushing them to flee their homes on short notice which affects the most vulnerable family members including children who could become separated or unaccompanied.

The family represents an important source of protection in itself as it unites individuals and provides physical, social, legal, material and emotional stability and support to its members, in particular for children. The unity of the family can prevent exposure to various risks and help minimize the effects of displacement on individuals and communities.

As a result of separation from their families due to forced displacement, children in Syria face a wide range of protection risks including neglect, abuse and exploitation, forced labor, trafficking, limited access to education, and forcible recruitment into armed forces or armed groups.

Reports from UNHCR monitoring visits have highlighted that a growing number of children including infants are unaccompanied and separated from their parents due to internal displacement, death of family members or movements to neighboring countries.





### UNACCOMPANIED/SEPARATED CHILDREN IN THE SYRIAN LAW

A law on alternative care in Syria has been drafted and submitted to the parliament. However, it has not been adopted by the Syrian government till now. Therefore currently Syria does not have a comprehensive law that addresses the issue of alternative care system with a focus on separated/unaccompanied children. Provisions were scattered in various other laws to address other related issues, whose policy and practice were largely influenced by religious ideologies with the focus on orphans and institutional care.

Some directions could be extracted from the personal status law\* which gives custody's priority to the grandmother of the child from the mother's side if the mother and father are not available, then respectively to the grandmother from the father's side, the aunt from the mother side, the aunt from the father's side, the niece of mother, the niece of father, the aunt of mother, the aunt of father and then to the extended relatives from the father's side.

In case all these potential caregivers were available, it is up to the judge to choose the most suitable one for the best benefit of the child.

The modified law no.18 of 2003 requires boys to be 13 and girls to be 15 before they can be without a parental guardian.

maintenance, the exercise of their religion and their education are facilitated in all circumstances. Their education shall, as far as possible, be entrusted to persons of a similar cultural tradition\*\*\*. Moreover, the Convention indicates that each Party to the conflict shall facilitate enquiries made by members of families dispersed owing to the war, with the object of renewing contact with one another and of meeting, if possible\*\*\*\*.

The Syrian Government ratified the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** which urges the State Parties to ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine. In addition, where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, the State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child\*\*\*\*\*

In addition, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, cooperation in any efforts to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason\*\*\*\*\*.



### UNACCOMPANIED/SEPARATED CHILDREN IN THE INTERNATIONAL LAW

The Syrian government ratified the **Geneva Convention (IV)\*\*** which states that parties to the conflict shall take the necessary measures to ensure that children under fifteen, who are orphaned or are separated from their families as a result of the war, are not left to their own resources, and that their

## UNHCR RESPONSE

Following a comprehensive assessment form to verify the separation from the child's caregiver, the children were supported through recreational activities, enrollment in school, health care and cash assistance. Some UNHCR partners implement informal family tracing in the community. To date no comprehensive system of family tracing exists within Syria.

\* Article 139 of the Syrian Personal Status Law  
\*\* Article 24 of Geneva Convention (IV), 1949  
\*\*\* Article 26 of Geneva Convention (IV), 1949  
\*\*\*\* Article No.9 of Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989  
\*\*\*\*\* Article No.22 of Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989



## DOCUMENTATION AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Freedom of movement consists of the right and ability to move and choose one's residence freely and in safety within the territory of the State, regardless of the purpose of the move. It also includes the right to leave any country and to return to one's own country. It is closely related to the right to liberty and security of person, which guarantees freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, and the right to seek asylum in another country.

Detrimental effects of the crisis in Syria on IDPs have entailed loss of access to their houses, lands, livelihood, social network and personal status documentation which have in turn negatively impacted on their ability to enjoy their fundamental rights. Many displaced persons, who are compelled to flee their homes due to insecurity, leave their personal status documents behind, or otherwise lose them during their flight. Undocumented individuals, including those who fail to register civil events, are among the most disenfranchised as it leaves them vulnerable to harassment, exploitation, detention and other dangers. In addition, it makes it more difficult for them to access social services such as health and education.

With 6.4 million displaced in Syria, a significant number of people have inevitably lost their personal status documents, amongst other things and after three years of conflict, more and more children were born in areas where they cannot be registered.

**WITH  
6.4 MILLION  
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DOCUMENTS**



### REPLACING DOCUMENTS HAS PROVED DIFFICULT FOR MANY

Replacement of documentation is often difficult for a variety of reasons, one of which is the complex administrative procedures. Furthermore, some documents can only be obtained from the area in which the person is registered in the civil status record which could be sometimes inaccessible due to the current security situation.

Many IDPs are facing challenges in the birth registration for reasons related to their unawareness about the importance of registration, negligence, lack of proper official documents needed for registration, or their inability to access areas where their civil records are located.

Birth registration and loss of documentation, especially civil status ID and family booklet, are the most common cases that IDPs suffer from. This is mainly because people are reluctant to file police reports required to replace the lost documents, the difficulty they face to access civil status records in some governorates or the absence of parents to apply for the civil status ID and the police report required for birth registration.

**IDPS RIGHTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO PERSONAL STATUS DOCUMENTATION, ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND PROMPT REPLACEMENT OF LOST DOCUMENTS, AND SEEK ASSISTANCE TO ADDRESS VIOLATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL AND NON DEROGABLE RIGHTS**



### PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

The IDPs rights to have access to personal status documentation, ensure effective and prompt replacement of lost documents, and seek assistance to address violations are essential and non-derogable rights. These rights relate to the fundamental and non derogable right to recognition as a person before the law enshrined in:

- The Universal Declaration on Human Rights
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which indicates that ‘Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name’

## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR response in this area is through legal counseling, legal intervention and awareness-raising:

- Legal counseling focuses mainly on administrative procedures on document’s issuance and personal status law through the provision of legal representation
- Legal intervention is provided by the Protection Sector before courts, police stations and the civil registry department which provides legal representation to authenticate personal status
- Legal Awareness Sessions address IDPs in shelters or community centers on issues ranging from the importance to hold personal status documentation to custody, birth registration or women’s rights related issues

**THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT HAS BEEN ENSHRINED IN SYRIAN LAW**

## RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The Right to freedom of movement has been enshrined in Syrian law. For example, article 22 of the Syrian Constitution issued in 2012 stipulates that the Syrian Government shall be responsible for every Syrian citizen and their families in cases of emergency while article 38 states that every citizen has the right to move within the state’s territory or to depart unless forbidden to do so by a competent Court Order or Public Prosecution or in implementation of public health and safety laws. Syria is also party to the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** in which Article 12 stipulates that everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his/her residence and shall be free to leave any country, including his/her own. However, despite this, whole areas have been besieged, preventing people from entering or leaving. This has led to civilians living in deplorable conditions, being killed or maimed by shelling or gunfire, shortages of basic supplies such as food and water, having no access to medical supplies as well as large numbers of children dying from malnutrition.

# SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is one of the largest types of SGBV reported. It includes, but is not limited to rape. Although there is no agreed upon definition of sexual violence, the ones commonly applied encompass any act of a sexual nature, or an attempt to obtain a sexual act, carried out through coercion. Sexual violence also includes physical and psychological violence directed at a person's sexuality, including unwanted comments or advances, or acts such as forced prostitution or sexual slavery. The majority of these incidents took place in hot areas where clashes are known to take place. In addition the risk of exposure to sexual violence has been exacerbated through protracted displacement, lack of basic services and limited support mechanisms.



### SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE SYRIAN LAW

Law **11** (2013) amended Article **489** of the Penal Code:

1. Whomever coerces any person into participating in a sexual act using violence or threat shall be sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour.
2. The offender should be sentenced to death if:
  - a. The victim is under 15 years of age,
  - b. the Sexual assault has been committed at gunpoint.



### SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

'State practice establishes prohibition of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a norm of customary international law' Rule **93** of Chapter **32** of the ICRC Customary International Law Study.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

- Survivors are provided with medical services through governmental hospital or referred to a private gynecologist. The gynecologist is present at the health clinic where they can receive full services. Survivors are usually accompanied there with the help of an Outreach Volunteer (after ensuring them full confidentiality)
- UNHCR continues to run a Shelter/ Safe house in Damascus for survivors. The shelter contains a PSS specialist and social workers in addition to a nurse, who follow up on daily bases with the cases hosted in the shelter
- UNHCR operates hotlines 24 hours a day 7 days a week to answer calls and assess in any urgent matters
- UNHCR supports and encourages relevant authorities to implement laws that address sexual violence
- Raising awareness through implementing partners about sexual violence
- Building the capacity of partner and frontline workers to deal with sexual violence cases
- Providing individual legal counseling/advice
- Providing psychosocial support to survivors



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence remains the most widely reported issue faced by women and children in Syria. The instability and financial difficulties in Syria continue to affect the entire household.

Many men have lost their jobs and cannot afford their families' living expenses. Women and children most often suffer the consequences of these difficulties which usually materialize in violence in the home presumably due to conflict related stress, financial strains and the lack of long-term solutions for their families.

In addition, women are feeling more vulnerable due to the difficult circumstances and more hesitant to take actions to end the violence.



### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

'No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'  
Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE SYRIAN LAW

Although harmful acts are punishable under Syrian Penalty law, there is no specific law addressing domestic violence.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

- Supporting and encouraging relevant authorities to implement laws that address domestic violence
- Raising awareness about domestic abuse
- Building the capacity of partner and frontline workers to deal with domestic abuse cases
- Providing individual legal counseling/advice
- Providing psychosocial support to survivors
- Working to support the establishment of safe-havens for survivors

## FORCED MARRIAGE/ EARLY MARRIAGE

The present crisis, general insecurity and the lack of livelihood opportunities have triggered the need of families to arrange early marriages for their young females to reduce the financial and social burden. Young females living in areas of conflict or in collective shelters are among those who have been largely affected. In the present circumstances, families have reported through protection monitoring visits that early marriages are one of their coping mechanisms to overcome financial hardship and to provide protection for their daughters.



### FORCED MARRIAGE / EARLY MARRIAGE IN SYRIAN LAW

The age of marriage in Syria is 18 for males and 17 for females according to the Article 16 of the Personal Status Law. There could be an exception to decrease the age to 13 according to the Article 18 of the same law under 3 conditions: Puberty, the approval of a judge and the consent of the guardian, father or grandfather.



### FORCED MARRIAGE / EARLY MARRIAGE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

'Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending parties' Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



## UNHCR RESPONSE

- Focus group discussions have been organized by UNHCR and implementing partners to address early/forced marriage in addition to increasing other kinds of assistance such as community-based initiatives, livelihood initiatives and vocational training
- UNHCR conducts awareness campaigns on early marriages through partners and addresses the risks facing children involved
- Supporting and encouraging relevant authorities to implement laws that address early/forced marriage.
- Providing individual legal counseling/advice
- Providing psychosocial support to survivors
- Working to support the establishment of safe-havens for survivors



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Trafficking for exploitation has been reported as an increasing trend. Traffickers often deceive women into some form of unofficial marriage, but in extreme cases, young women and girls have been trafficked with the full knowledge of their families.



### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

'No one shall be held in slavery or servitude' Article 4 of the Universal declaration of Human Rights



### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SYRIAN LAW

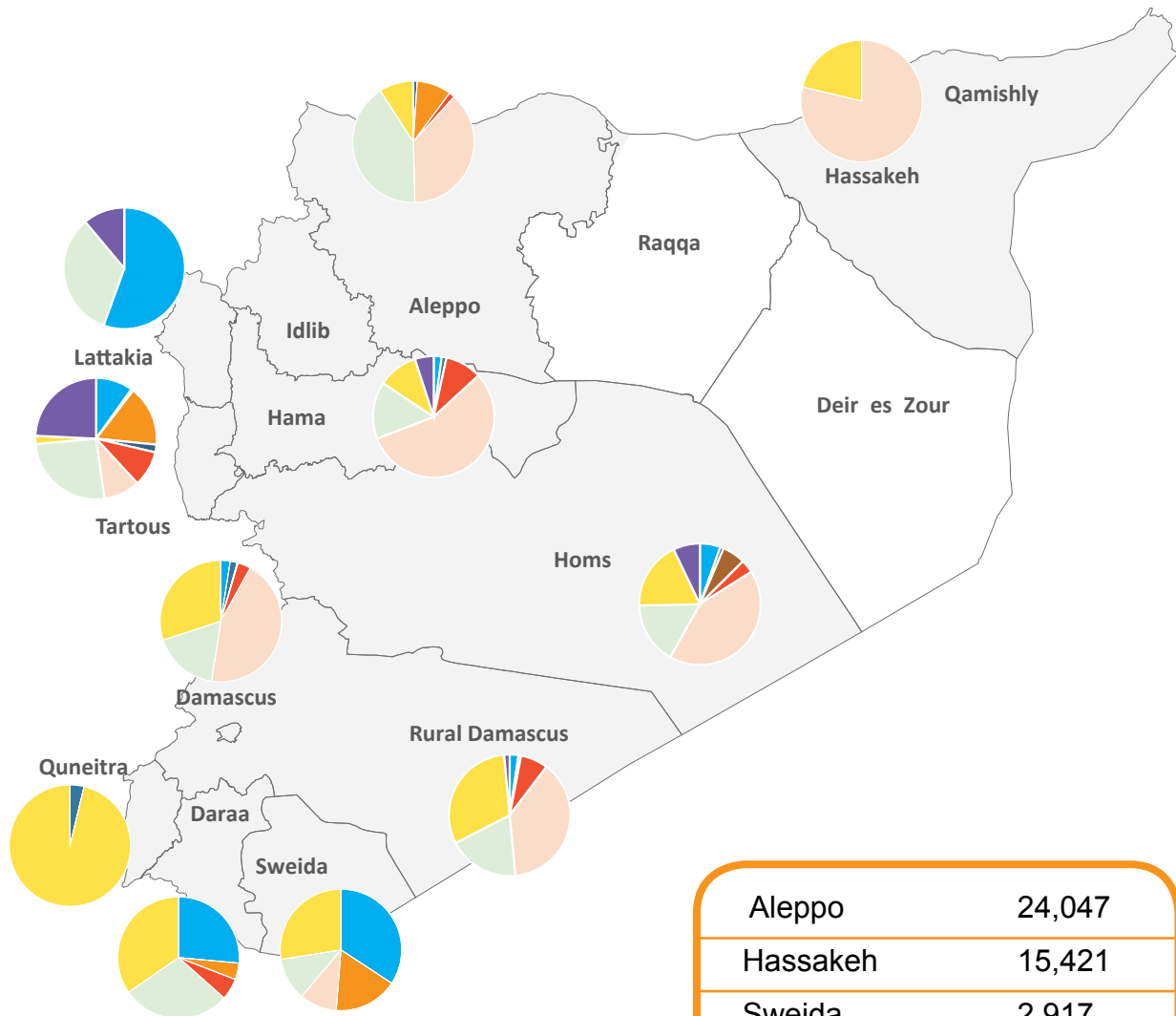
In accordance with Legislative Decree **No. 3** of 2010, the Ministry of the Interior issued Decree No. 505/S of 11 March 2010, establishing the Department to Combat Human Trafficking. The department's functions include making recommendations to the Ministry of Interior on general policies and operational programmes to combat human trafficking and organizing and providing a reference database that can be used to find information, help with investigations and access data, and statistics.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

- Supporting and encouraging relevant authorities to implement laws banning trafficking
- Raising awareness about the dangers of trafficking and exploitation
- Providing individual legal counseling/advice
- Providing psychosocial support to survivors
- Working to support the establishment of safe-havens for survivors



## UNHCR PROTECTION RESPONSE



- Awareness raising
- Capacity building
- Cash Assistance
- Community-based Participation and Assistance
- GBV Referral & Response
- Legal Assistance
- Psychosocial Support (PSS)
- Recreational Activities
- Socioeconomic Activities
- Targeted Material Assistance

Aleppo	24,047
Hassakeh	15,421
Sweida	2,917
Damascus	47,084
Daraa	3,533
Hama	3,220
Homs	17,494
Lattakia	72
Quneitra	2,027
Rural Damascus	42,268
Tartous	14,754
<b>172,837</b> BENEFICIARIES	

# COMMUNITY- BASED PROTECTION

Though the crisis in Syria has had many negative effects on the social structure of the population in the country, various positive local solidarity dynamics have emerged in parallel providing relief to those in need. UNHCR has benefitted from these spontaneous reactions to design some aspects of its Protection response which is based on the communities’ participation.

## COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

The community-based initiatives programme (CBIs) supports initiatives created by self-managed groups from the affected communities and encourage capacity building and more durable solutions by funding ideas originating from within the community.

In the first six months of 2014, UNHCR has supported 41 CBIs aiming at improving the living conditions of the affected population in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Daraa, Sweida, and Homs mainly about farming, water delivery, repairs and maintenance of shelters, vocational courses, recreational activities, sewing mattresses, painting and cleaning shelters, preparing rooms for teaching, establishing a library, producing curtains to create privacy in the shelters, income generating activities and many other initiatives. Real beneficiary numbers are difficult to quantify but what is clear is that these kinds of initiatives are essential to building strength within the community.



## OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

As IDPs in Syria are scattered all the around the country, reaching them has not been easy especially in light of the access challenges to many areas due to security reasons. UNHCR has therefore followed an effective and efficient strategy to involve volunteers in the humanitarian response in order to offer assistance to their local communities.

The Outreach Volunteer programme which was launched in the first place in 2007 addressing refugees in Syria was replicated in 2013 for the benefit of IDPs and the affected populations. 254 volunteers have been selected so far according to age, gender and diversity mainstreaming approach. They follow standard operating procedures that UNHCR developed in consultation with its partners; GOPA, SSSD, Al Nada, Al Batoul and Al Taalouf. These Outreach Volunteers are mainly in charge of care giving to persons with specific needs, information dissemination, awareness-raising, advocacy and provision of specialized services such as medical and psychosocial support.

During the year, the Outreach Volunteers have contributed effectively to various activities including *inter-alia* their participation in the national vaccination campaign, home visits to support GBV survivors in their communities, regular checks on the well-being of individuals who are housed in their own communities as well as many other humanitarian activities.

## COMMUNITY CENTERS

UNHCR has created a network of Community Centers in the country in cooperation with its implementing partners DRC, SSSD, GOPA, SARC and Al Batoul to provide protective and calm spaces and support the psychosocial well-being of the affected population within the host community. These Centers represent important points of access to deal closely with the affected communities, promote their participation and identify and respond to their needs.

All interventions of the Community Centers are designed in line with UNHCR's AGDM, with particular attention given to persons with specific needs, i.e. skills development courses, remedial education, education for persons with learning difficulties, life skills courses, social and recreational activities, vocational training activities, legal counseling, education counseling, mass information campaigns, and health awareness.

UNHCR has supported so far 17 Community Centers in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Daraa, Sweida, Tartous, Homs and Aleppo offering Protection and social services to more than 30,000 affected individuals since the beginning of 2014.

## EMPOWERMENT OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Empowering local organizations and fostering their humanitarian role have proved to be a proper strategy to respond to the needs of communities in the country especially that these organizations are more knowledgeable than others of the needs of the communities within which they operate.

UNHCR therefore has provided grants to qualified local NGOs in the country for implementation of quick impact projects offering assistance to local communities in the field of psychosocial support, education and women empowerment with focus on persons with specific needs. UNHCR together with a core group of implementing partners GOPA, Al Taalouf and SSSD invested in the training of these LNGOs to make the assistance they offer more sustainable.

From January to June 2014, a total of 1,074 capacity building grants for implementation of quick impact projects were granted in Swieda, Daraa, Tartous and Damascus.

### ONE OUTREACH VOLUNTEER MOTIVATED 2,500 IDPS

Al Khaleej Al Hadee is a compound located South of Tartous city, which is inhabited by 2,500 IDPs originating mainly from Aleppo. Through several assessment visits and observations by UNHCR and its implementing partners to the area, poor solid-waste management has been reported as a concern creating health problems among residents.

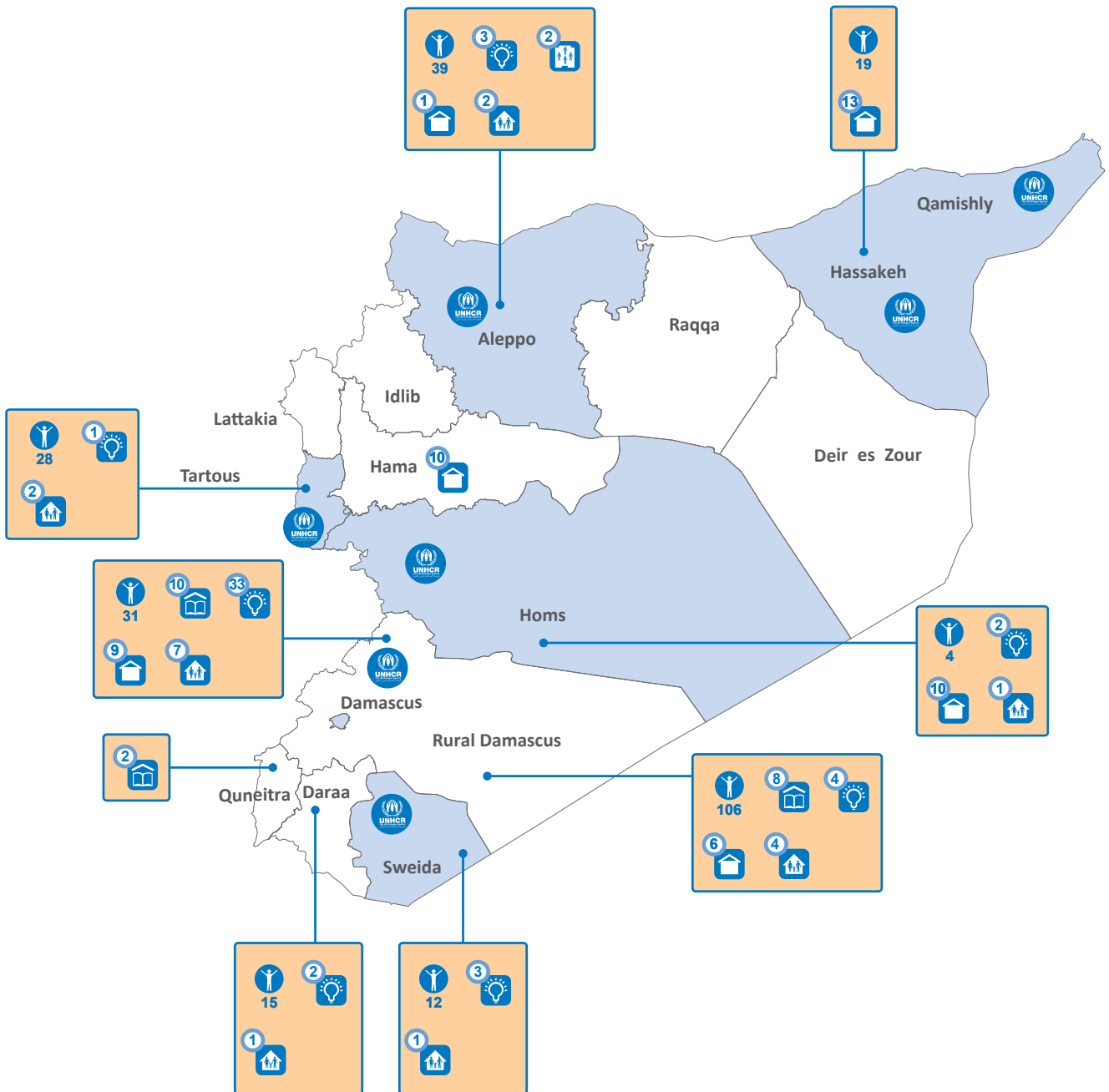
To avoid the spread of contagious diseases such as Lashmaniasis, Hepatitis A, Meningitis, Lice, Scabies and Polio, a UNHCR Outreach Volunteer living in the area took the initiative of gathering the community in the compound and succeeded in mobilizing people to take action through an elected committee responsible for advocating the community needs before the municipality and managing a fund based on families' contributions.








The committee reached an agreement with the municipality to receive a truck on a daily basis with two cleaners to collect the garbage from the compound in specific hours of the day. Each family is provided with garbage bags purchased from the fund to take their trash out. Anyone who throws garbage out of the allocated hours shall pay a fine set by the Municipality. The cleaners and the truck driver are receiving incentives from the community through the fund.

The Outreach Volunteers started to promote the successful idea amongst residents in the other six compounds hosting around 20,000 IDPs who have been suffering from the same problem.







 <b>UNHCR Offices</b>	<b>7</b>	 <b>Activities in Schools</b>	<b>20</b>	 <b>CBOs</b>	<b>2</b>
 <b>IDP Outreach Volunteers</b>	<b>254</b>	 <b>CBP Activities Collective Shelters</b>	<b>52</b>		
 <b>Community Centers</b>	<b>17</b>	 <b>CBIs</b>	<b>48</b>		

# CAPACITY BUILDING



Supporting the capacities of humanitarian workers is critical. It is an integral element of enabling these people to provide proper protection to IDPs and affected communities following a community-based approach, which is fundamental to effective protection.

UNHCR Capacity building inside Syria aims to promote a Protection response that conforms to international standards and addresses the Protections risks faced by IDPs. It is aiming at making the humanitarian intervention in the field of Protection more sustainable in order to create a long-lasting response to the existing humanitarian crisis.

Since the beginning of the year, UNHCR organized more than 300 training sessions on various Protection issues benefitting more than 700 participants from national and international partners in the governorates of Idlib, Homs, Aleppo, Hama, Tartous, Hassakeh, Daraa, Sweida and Damascus.

The training sessions covered key topics; Gender Based Violence (GBV), Child Protection and Psycho-social Support, Legal Framework on Protection for IDPs and Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Workers who have regular access and contact with the affected populations.

Whilst end beneficiary numbers for capacity building is difficult to obtain, the participants from the different governorates will now have the capacity to train others on Protection and identify serious protection concerns on the ground.

This capacity building is part of a myriad of activities currently taking place in Syria under the UNHCR-led Protection Sector.

## CORE RELIEF ITEMS





# CORE RELIEF ITEMS

To fulfill the growing needs of IDPs all over Syria who usually flee their homes with nothing to survive with, UNHCR has run a huge logistical operation going through various different stages from forecasting, planning, and budgeting to local, regional or global procurement especially that some goods are not anymore available in the country for many reasons including the limited production capacity due to the crisis.

A contribution to 1 displaced family's warmth, hot meal, clean water, hygiene, protection and dignity.

1 Kit = \$275 1 Family

### CRI Family Kit

3 Mattresses	5 Blankets
3 Sleeping mats	1 Jerry can
Baby and adult diapers	Sanitary napkins
1 Kitchen Set	1 Hygiene Kit
1 Plastic Sheet	
Summer: 1 rechargeable fan	
Winter: 5 high thermal blankets instead of regular blankets + 1 extra plastic sheet	
Quantities are adjusted to family size	

## IMPORT

Import procedures have been subject to many changes by the government. The mechanism has been standardized to ease the administrative procedures of the humanitarian assistance movement such as standardizing facilitation letters, transporting goods from the official border points, list of warehouses and forms of the weekly loading. Nevertheless, some bureaucratic requirements from the official authorities need time to be met depending on the type of items imported and the endorsement from each concerned ministry and the security, which might all cause delay in the whole import process preventing the timely delivery of assistance, a key element in relief work. Negotiations are still ongoing with the relevant official authorities to further facilitate the import procedures in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable beneficiaries in the country.

## STAGES REQUIRED TO IMPORT ITEMS TO SYRIA

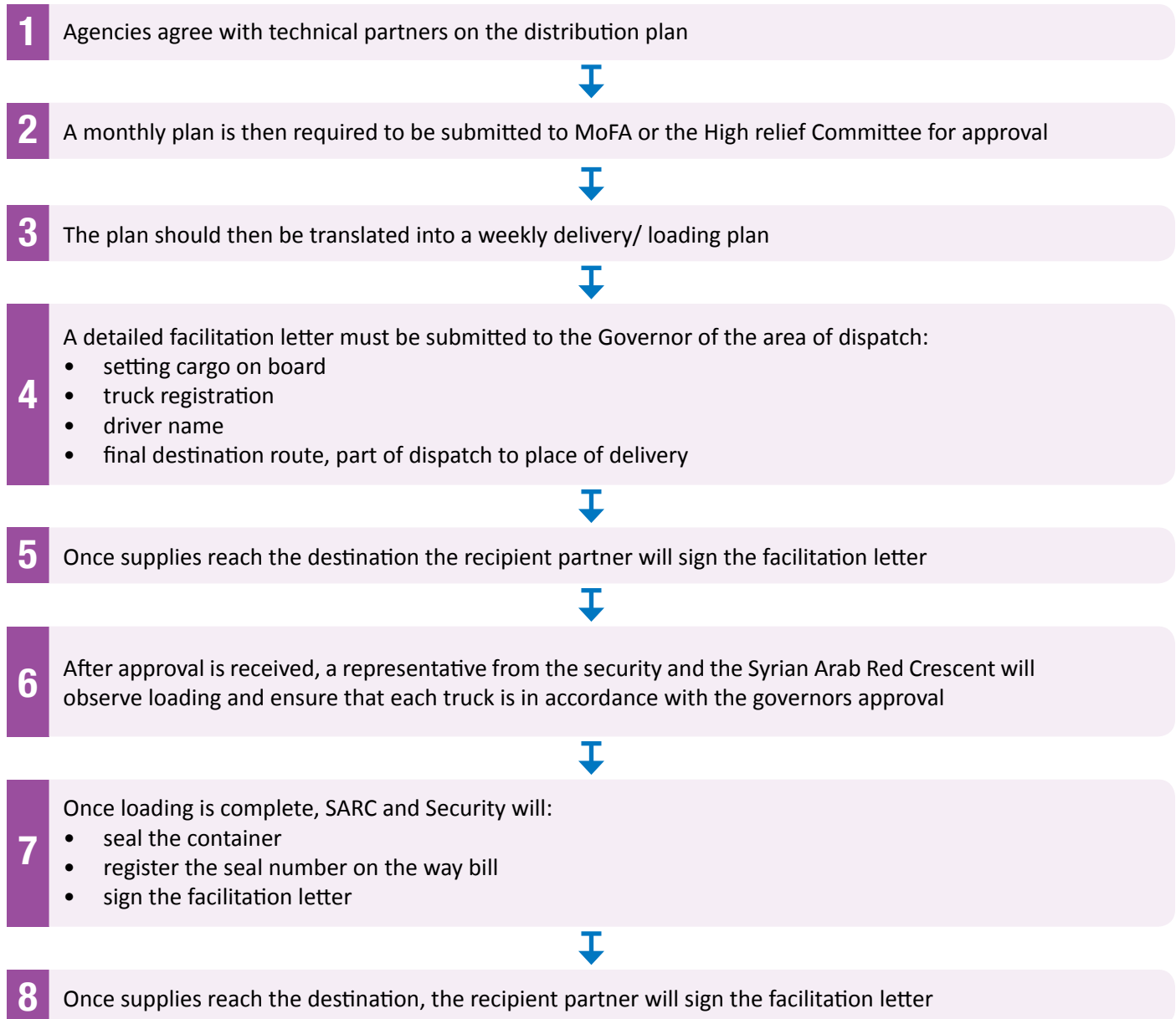
- 1 UNHCR submits a consolidated monthly report to MoFA
- 2 UNHCR submits an exemption letter per shipment to MoFA subject to approval by relevant authorities
- 3 Once approved, UNHCR submits the exemption letter to customs through the clearing agent to finalize the clearance formalities
- 4 Once clearance is granted, UNHCR sets a date for shipment withdrawal from the port of entry through its transporter
- 5 UNHCR is required to submit details by truck to the receiving governorate, including the drivers name and cargo details at the port of entry for facilitation.
- 6 All trucks coming from abroad are sealed. They are screened by customs and security at bonded warehouses
- 7 Trucks proceed sealed to the receiving warehouse

## DISPATCH

Once goods have entered into the country, they currently go through a eight-stage process to reach their destination. Problems have occurred when this procedure has been delayed which can leave UNHCR to pay extra charges, lose truck capacity or repeat the cycle again. Further, when monitoring the sealing-off of trucks, which is supposed to ensure smooth passages through checkpoints, does not happen when the two representatives (from SARC and Security Personnel) do not show up.



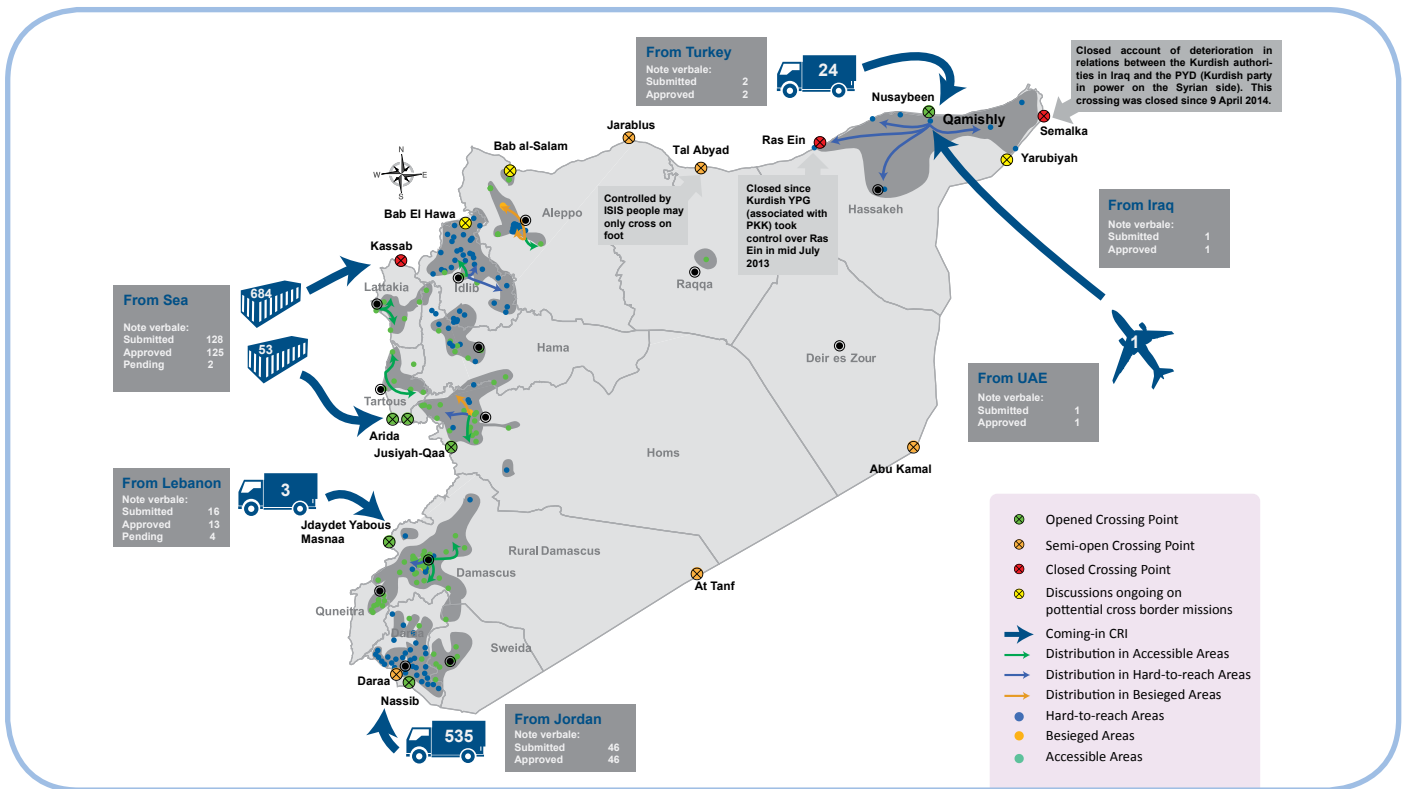
## STAGES REQUIRED TO MOVE ITEMS INSIDE SYRIA



## UNHCR DISPATCH ACROSS BORDERS

Approved requests in the first six months of 2014 have resulted in 535 trucks entering Syria from Jordan, three trucks entering Syria from Lebanon and 24 trucks entering Syria from Turkey. On a related note, items coming Lebanon are less voluminous (medicines, IT equipment and security equipment) and often do not require individual trucks but enter the country via courier service. Although the import permit to bring items in from Iraq was granted, it was issued under the condition that the government takes control of the Yaroubia crossing; and as this never materialized, CRIs could not be brought into Syria by road from Iraq.

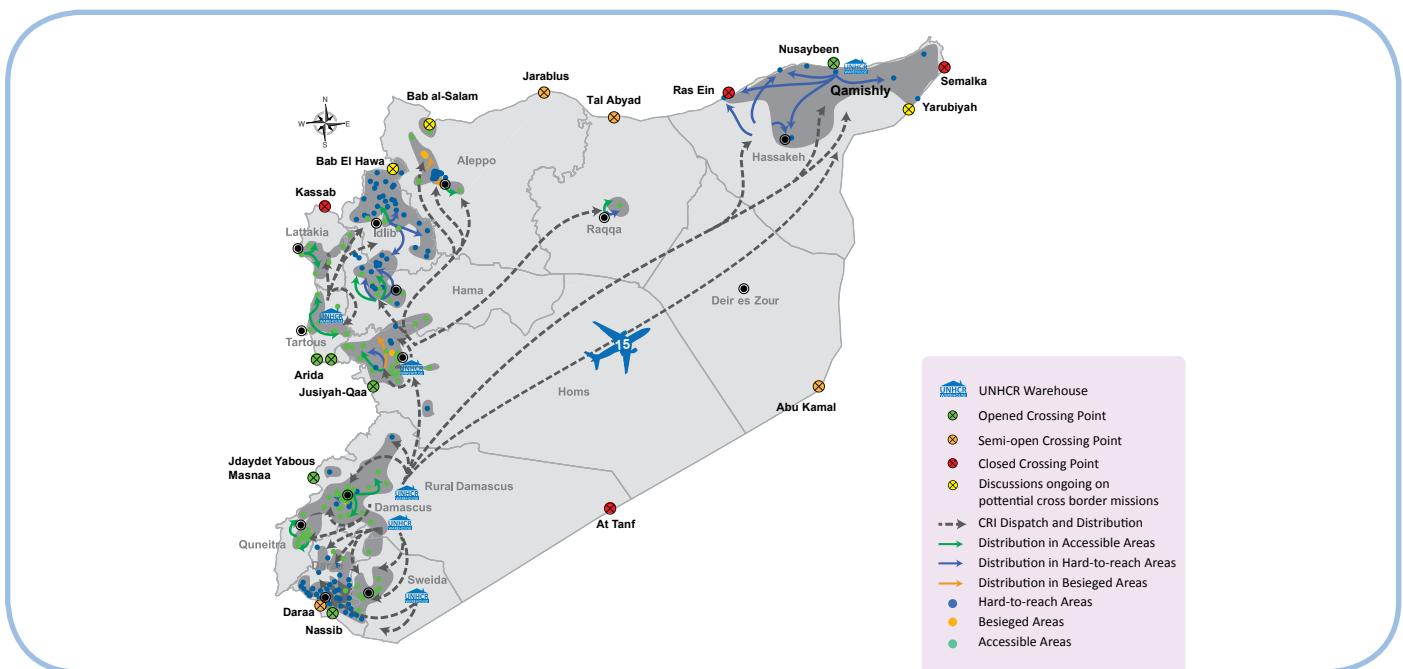
On 24 June, following the opening of the new UNHCR office and logistics hub in Sweida, South of Syria, UNHCR CRIs for 5,000 beneficiaries were dispatched directly from the Jordanian border through to Sweida and then to hard-to-reach areas in Daraa Governorate, without needing to pass through Damascus. Following further assessment of the needs, more dispatches straight from the Jordanian border to areas in the south-east, are planned so as to more quickly meet the urgent needs of vulnerable people residing in those areas.



## UNHCR DISPATCH ACROSS CONFLICT LINES

Through UNHCR missions, inter-agency missions, and regular programmes, UNHCR has reached 52 hard-to-reach areas in Hama, Homs, Daraa, Aleppo, Idlib, Raqqa and Rural Damascus, this includes access to three besieged areas in Aleppo and Homs. It is estimated that as many as 337,220 vulnerable beneficiaries have received CRIs in the first six months of the year.

In June, UNHCR faced considerable obstacles on account of the new procedures requiring additional government approvals that were not given. This affected as many as 162,500 beneficiaries in hard-to-reach areas.



Despite the obstacles, through UNHCR's regular programme, more than 2.4 million beneficiaries were reached in 13 out of 14 governorates.

## MONITORING

Monitoring of humanitarian aid provided by UNHCR is done based on the reports and observations of UNHCR implementing partners and through regular and direct observation and ongoing assessments by UNHCR. Monitoring activities are carried out at various levels by agencies implementing sub-projects including UNHCR Branch Office, Sub Office and Field Offices in all countries covered by the proposed action as well as by UNHCR Regional Office based in Amman.

The main challenge of monitoring the operation is the restrictions placed by the on-going hostilities in large parts of the country. These constraints limit movements, and as a result UNHCR is monitoring the distribution of aid through:

- Joint missions with partners to assess the needs of IDPs in each location as well as joint distribution exercises and post-distribution monitoring missions to ensure that aid reaches the most in need.
- Spot-checking by UNHCR staff during distribution in areas where it has concrete presence as well as reports provided by partners in areas where UNHCR does not have a field office.
- Outreach volunteers who provide information on the distribution of CRIs.
- Decentralized office structure that allows checking of reports received from implementing partners against dispatch data to ensure consistency. This decentralized approach enables UNHCR to be closer to the beneficiaries and enhance the monitoring capacity geographically.
- NFI sectorial working group chaired and coordinated by UNHCR to ensure feedback from several sources and identify potential gaps or misuse.
- UNHCR Field Offices engaged in post-distribution monitoring exercise mainly in collective shelters, community centers and distribution points.
- Information from the NFI Working Group which complements other agencies' efforts on ensuring that the assistance is reaching the people in need.

UNHCR has recently improved the quality of reporting from its implementing partners. Currently, the process is that upon receipt of the distribution report, UNHCR Field Office checks the distribution data versus the dispatched figures.

Efforts are made constantly to ensure the data accuracy. Once this step is completed, data are uploaded on the Project Tracking Database (PTD) which is a tool developed in the context of remotely managed operation aiming to report on core activities implemented by UNHCR and/or its implementing partners.



This database is utilized to provide key information on CRI distribution in each governorates and districts. As such it requires a thorough follow-up on implementing partners' reports and a strong presence of staff on the field to illustrate the activities performed.

Despite all arduous bureaucratic challenges, UNHCR has been working hard to maintain the urgent nature of the response and have access to new hard-to-reach and besieged areas. Overall UNHCR has reached from January to June 2014 more than 2,460,593 beneficiaries with 8,920,667 CRIs in cooperation with its implementing partners in 13 out of 14 Governorates of Syria.



# SHELTER



# SHELTER

Due to the continuous clashes in Syria, 1.2 million houses have been damaged, out of which 400,000 have been totally destroyed causing millions of people to flee to official collective shelters such as schools, public buildings, tower buildings, hospitals, basements and mosques or to host families mostly from the local communities in other areas. With 9,500 people a day or one family every 60 seconds being displaced inside Syria, the country remains the largest and fastest evolving displacement crisis in the world. Collective shelter inhabitants include women, children, the elderly and the disabled. Most of them face trauma, distress or a great deal of suffering due to the conflict. They reside in poor living conditions due to the lack of basic services such as food, water, electricity and garbage solutions, which in some cases have resulted in the outbreak of diseases.

**IN SYRIA,  
ONE FAMILY IS DISPLACED  
EVERY 60 SECONDS**



## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR continued to respond to the emergency shelter need and as lead of the Shelter Working Group worked very closely with its implementing partners, the Ministry of Local Administration, Première Urgence, Syrian Society for Social Development, The Syria Trust for Development, Secours Islamique France, Danish Refugee Council and UN-Habitat to provide appropriate and equitable shelter to affected populations in order to save lives, reduce suffering and manage vulnerability. Emergency shelter interventions are formed in the rehabilitation of collective shelters, private shelter upgrade, the provision of individual housing units and the provision of tents. In addition, winterization measures were applied in the shelter intervention which helped people overcome the harsh winter months.

## SHELTER REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation has been undertaken at official collective shelters in order to improve the physical condition of the buildings including water sanitation facilities. The minimum standards were agreed upon by the Shelter Working Group to guide agencies and ensure that all required facilities were available in collective shelters. UNHCR and its implementing partners conducted detailed technical assessments on the needs of each collective shelter, including minimum protection standards that all shelter interventions should consider such as collective spaces for women and children, locks on doors for private family space, lighting in private and collective areas, including corridors, toilets and bathrooms. During the reporting period UNHCR and its partners have provided assistance to **28,366** people who benefitted from rehabilitated collective shelters

**UNHCR**

**INSISTS ON THE MINIMUM  
PROTECTION STANDARDS THAT  
ALL SHELTER REHABILITATION  
WORKS SHOULD REACH**

## PRIVATE SHELTER UPGRADE

UNHCR continues to implement Private Shelter Upgrade with the Implementing Partners as one of its main shelter response options assisting IDPs who live outside official collective shelters. Through closure of the openings and creating WASH facilities. The project has successfully improved the physical conditions of private shelters, mostly unfinished buildings, by sealing open windows, fixing doors and setting partitions in open spaces to provide privacy to families. During the reporting period **29,487** people benefitted from the upgrade of private shelters.



## HOUSING UNITS

In 2013, UNHCR, MoLA and SSSD signed an agreement for the construction of 200 housing units in Rural Damascus to serve as temporary housing centres for IDPs who are accommodating in educational facilities. This will help provide shelter as well as returning schools to their original functions. However to date, there has been no progress in this area.



## TENTS

Tents are provided when other options are not available due to conditions in the area such as a lack of buildings that can serve as shelters or due to an urgent need to find a secure place for IDPs. In 2014, to respond to urgent needs UNHCR provided 200 tents to IDPs in Rural Damascus. UNHCR stands ready to respond to such requests in the future.

## SHELTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Given that the needs of shelter vary considerably due to the security situation, coping mechanisms, local needs and available shelter options it has been acknowledged that a variety of shelter response activities are necessary to address the current and future shelter needs for IDPs. In response to this, UNHCR and its partners, in particular UN-Habitat, have carried out four shelter needs assessments in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama and Lattakia with a view to providing more options for shelter/housing interventions. This has resulted in the production of a comprehensive shelter information map based on the outcomes of these needs assessments.

## CHALLENGES

The major challenge in shelter programming in the humanitarian operation in Syria after the security concerns and the complicated procedures is that it cannot be considered in isolation and needs to be part of a holistic package of multi-sectorial support to the affected populations. Shelter activities need to be planned in union with other sectors such as WASH, Protection, Education, Health, Early Recovery and Livelihoods. UNHCR will aim to further engage with other sectors to address the many cross cutting issues associated with Shelter.



# CASH ASSISTANCE



# CASH ASSISTANCE

With 6.4 million individuals displaced due to insecurity and damage of dwellings and services in many areas in the country, the need for flexible support for their various needs is paramount and a key life-saving element.

UNHCR built on its operational experience with the refugees to launch its Financial Assistance programme in August 2012 in order to foster coping mechanisms for vulnerable Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). This unconditional one-time cash grant is part of the Protection response and complements the UNHCR Core Relief Items and Shelter assistance, gives IDP families the possibility to invest in their priority needs in a dignified way and maximizes the impact on beneficiaries' welfare by doing away with the logistical costs, lengthy procurement procedures and security constraints normally associated with other types of assistance. Based on UNHCR vulnerability criteria, the selected IDPs are usually provided with a grant equivalent to \$150 to cover their most critical needs issued by cheques to be cashed at the bank or at the distribution center by the bank staff.

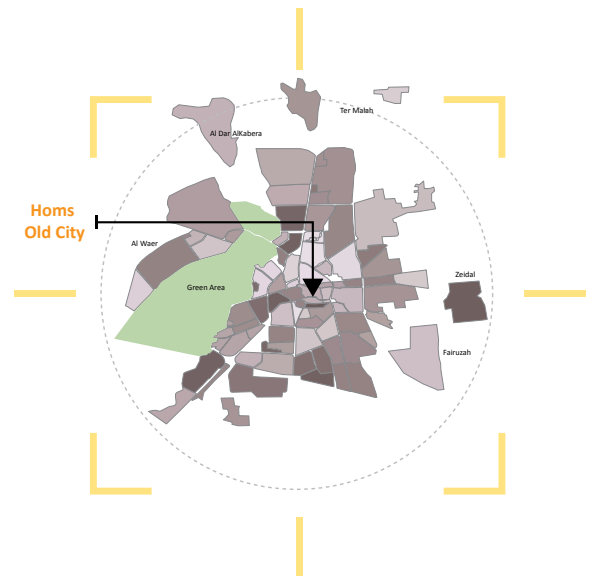
## UNHCR GIVES PRIORITY FOR CASH ASSISTANCE TO:

- Families supporting unaccompanied children
- Females heading households
- Families that have members with specific needs
- The elderly
- Families with a member suffering from chronic or incurable diseases

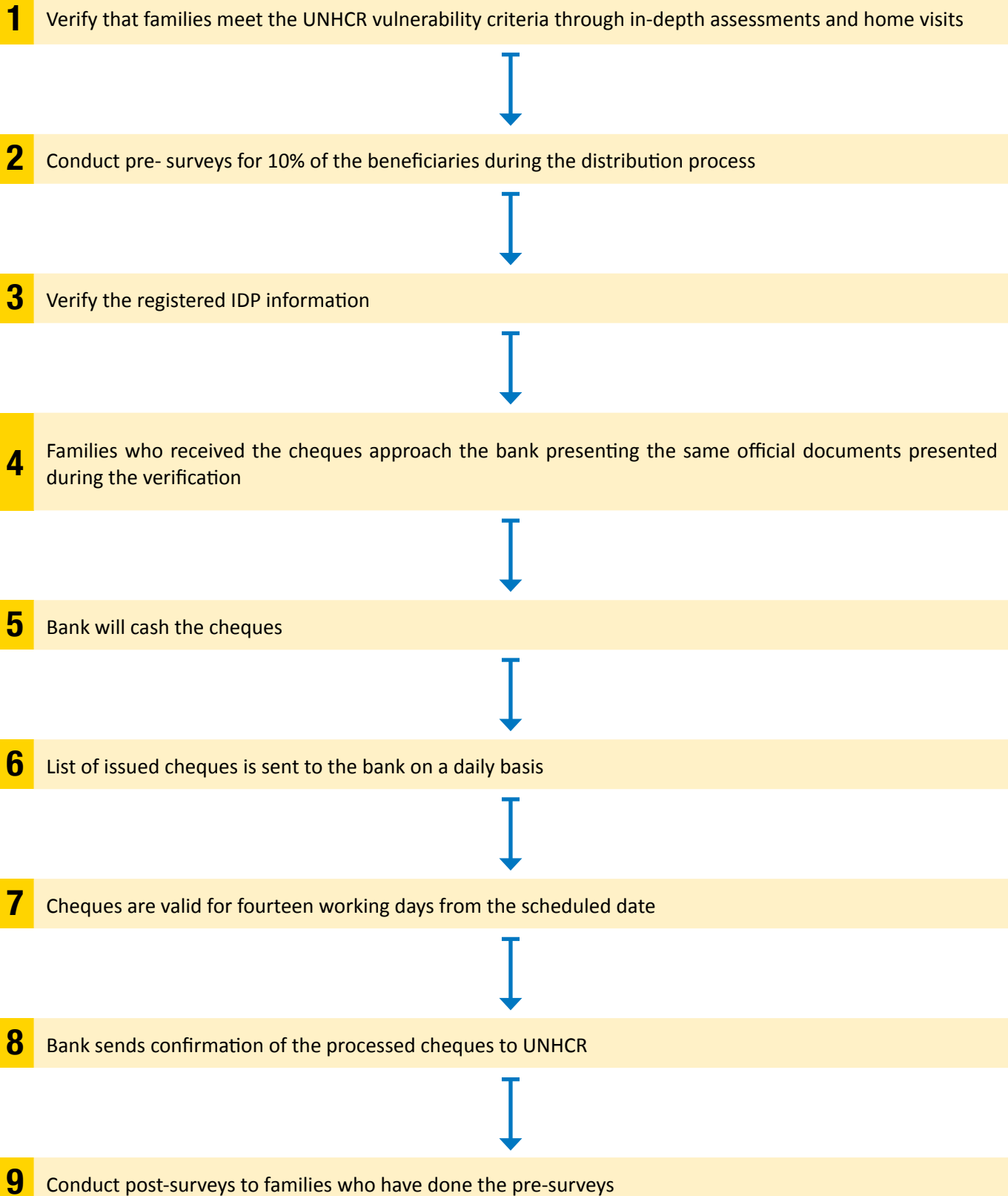
Monitoring of the cash assistance programme is regularly undertaken through different methods including direct follow up with the banks, pre-distribution verification of the validity of the lists, presence in cash assistance distributions, home visits and surveys. The assessment of cash assistance's impact on life of beneficiaries showed that they usually use the cash provided to fulfill multiple needs ranging from food, to relief items, shelter needs, medical bills and other basic needs.

Cash assistance is not of course without its challenges such as insecurity, availability of functioning banks, complexity in gaining authorization to access the field, the increasing inflation rate and currency devaluation, depletion of stocks in the market, difficulties in reaching out the beneficiaries due to instability of telecommunications, and the increased numbers of people with specific needs especially women and children at risk.

The main focus during the year was on the evacuees from the Old City of Homs who were residing in this besieged area in inappropriate living conditions. In view of their needs, cash assistance was identified as one of the most needed and urgent types of assistance which will help those people meet their basic needs and find safety elsewhere. As the evacuation was initially limited to women, children and the elderly, UNHCR decided to extend the cash assistance to all families departing from the Old City of Homs including single males and male heads of households because of the high protection risks. Since the beginning of the year so far, UNHCR provided cash assistance amongst other things to **1,046** individuals.



## PROCESS OF DELIVERING CASH ASSISTANCE





# HEALTH



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency  
مفوضية الأمم المتحدة للاجئين

**mediprema**



# HEALTH

The Syrian crisis has contributed to increased morbidity and mortality, increased risk of the spread of diseases, heightened vulnerability to mental health and psychosocial distress and malnourished children. All public and private health services have been overwhelmed with demands, particularly with over 53% of Syria's public hospitals, damaged or out of service due to the crisis. Over 80,000 medical staff have left the country resulting in shortages of qualified health personnel and pharmaceutical production which has been heavily impacted due to the destruction of pharmaceutical plants. Damage to the water and sanitation infrastructure coupled with extensive power supply losses and lack of fuel has resulted in the drastic reduction of safe drinking water, a fact that will greatly increase incidences of water borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhea.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR has built upon its existing refugee health programme to form its IDP response by providing free access to primary healthcare, including medical consultations, laboratory investigations, provision of essential medicines and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). In addition, it has enabled access to primary healthcare through outreach facilities as well as support to health facilities through the provision of life-saving medicines, medical equipment and medical devices. UNHCR-supported health services continued to be delivered through SARC polyclinics in Al zahira, Al Akram, Masakin Barza, Qudsaya, Sayda Zainab, Al Nabek, Homs and Tartous. Aleppo also has a polyclinic that is run through its implementing partner Al Talaouf charity association. During the reporting period, healthcare and medical support have been provided to **277,199** IDPs and **10,200** refugees.



**AN AVERAGE OF 10,000 INDIVIDUALS IN SYRIA REACHED ARE PROVIDED WITH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE EACH WEEK**

## PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

UNHCR supports 11 primary health clinics in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hassakeh, Aleppo and Homs where it receives an average of **10,000** individuals per week and provides a comprehensive package of primary health including medicines for acute and chronic diseases. UNHCR's intervention has increased its capacity to reach more individuals in need and has also allowed longer functional hours in all clinics and the availability of additional medicines. In January for example UNHCR provided access to primary healthcare services in Aleppo for **6,454** individuals while in April it supported the reopening of the SARC-run primary healthcare polyclinic in Sayda Zainab, Rural Damascus which was closed for over a year and a half due to insecurity.



## OUTREACH SERVICES

The most vulnerable patients are often unable to reach the health facilities available. In order to assist them, UNHCR's outreach volunteers conduct regular checks on the well-being of individuals who are housed in their own communities. During the reporting period health outreach services provided counseling, health awareness and case management to IDPs and refugees in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Hassakeh.



## PROVISION OF MEDICINES

UNHCR has primarily provided medicines for chronic and acute diseases, but on several occasions has also provided life-saving medicines at the secondary and tertiary healthcare levels. In addition, medicines procured by UNHCR have been supplied to allow for continued availability of medicines in functioning health centres. UNHCR also supports associated hospitals in the treatment of emergency referrals for medical, surgical and obstetrics care.



## PROVISION OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

UNHCR supports various health facilities with medical equipment, including ventilators, incubators, anaesthesia machines, haemodialysis machines, surgical kits and X-ray machines. In April for example, UNHCR responded to the need for haemodialysis machines and sessions through the provision of lifesaving support to **300** patients in Rural Damascus, Hassakeh, Daraa, Sweida and Homs.

**UNHCR PROVIDES LIFESAVING HAEMODIALYSIS MACHINES AND SESSIONS TO 300 PATIENTS IN RURAL DAMASCUS, HASSAKEH, DARAA, SWEIDA AND HOMS**

## PROVISION OF MEDICAL DEVICES

UNHCR has provided, amongst other things, wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, oxygen cylinders and masks. Vulnerable men, women and children, both from the refugees and IDP communities, who had lost limbs have been provided with artificial limbs and rehabilitation in the Al Amin center in Rural Damascus, a former recipient of UNHCR support. In addition, in March, **223** wheelchairs were provided to the most vulnerable in Damascus, Hama, Homs, Tartous and Raqqa.

## PROVISION OF VACCINES

The large number of Syrians displaced by the crisis and living in close quarters, with deterioration in environmental health conditions, has increased vulnerability to communicable diseases. During the reporting period UNHCR delivered tens of thousands of vaccines against meningitis, tuberculosis, MMR, and tetanus and Polio. In January for example UNHCR volunteers vaccinated **37,395** children against polio in Hassakeh while in February UNHCR airlifted **250,000** shots of Polio vaccines to Qamishly.



**UNHCR VOLUNTEERS VACCINATE 67,250 CHILDREN AGAINST POLIO IN HASSAKEH GOVERNORATE**



## AWARENESS RAISING.....PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

In order to respond to the prevailing psychosocial concerns, UNHCR has helped communities protect themselves by raising awareness of health and hygiene. Prior to the crisis, non-communicable diseases were already the leading causes of mortality. The ongoing crisis has resulted in limited access to health facilities and drugs. This is made worse by the substandard living conditions and improper nutrition. UNHCR has held regular sessions on diabetes, nutrition and general health awareness in order to try to reduce infection rates.

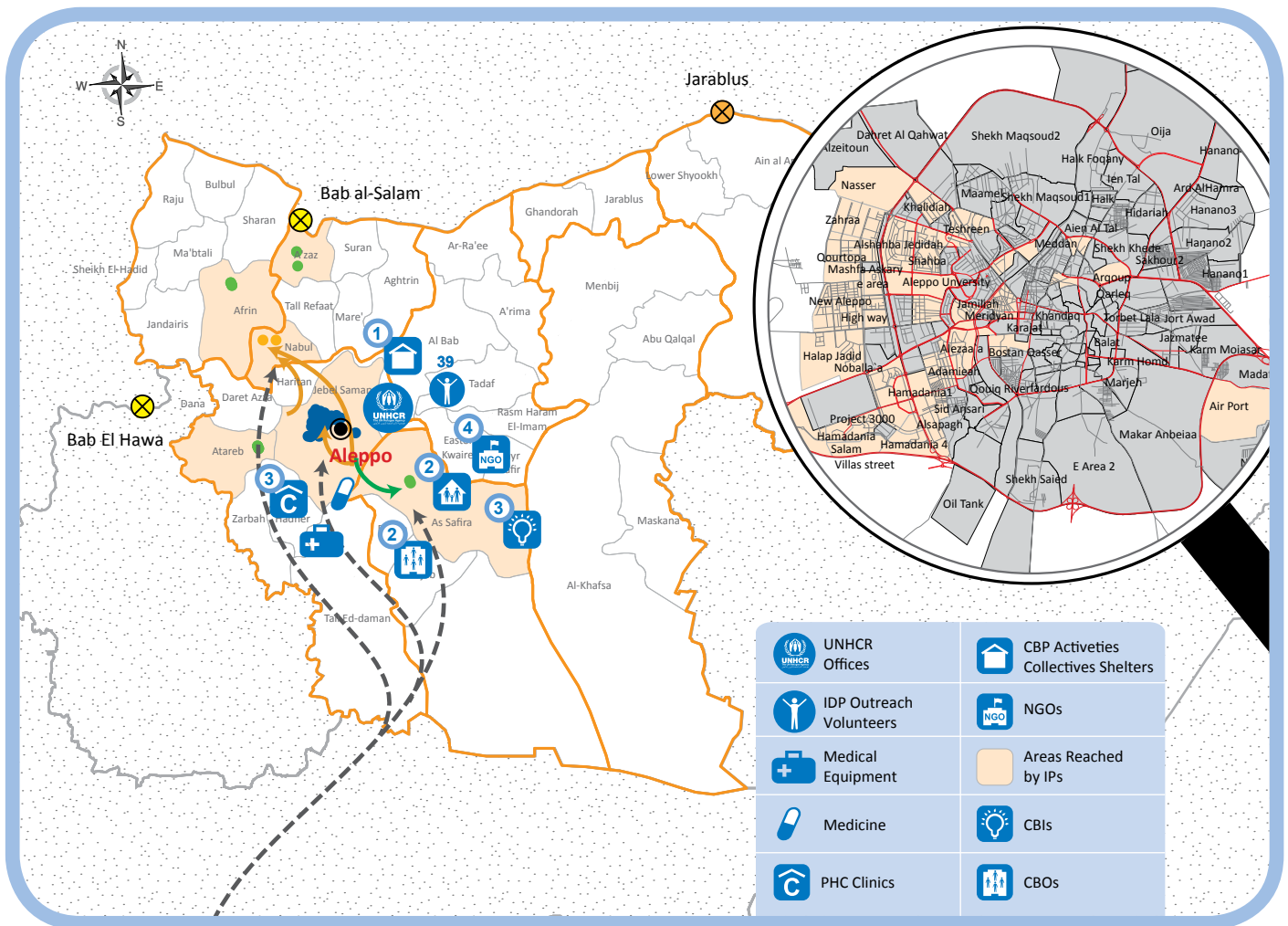
# FIELD OFFICES

## MAP FOR THE OPERATIONS





# ALEPPO - COVERING THE NORTH EAST



## HIGHLIGHTS

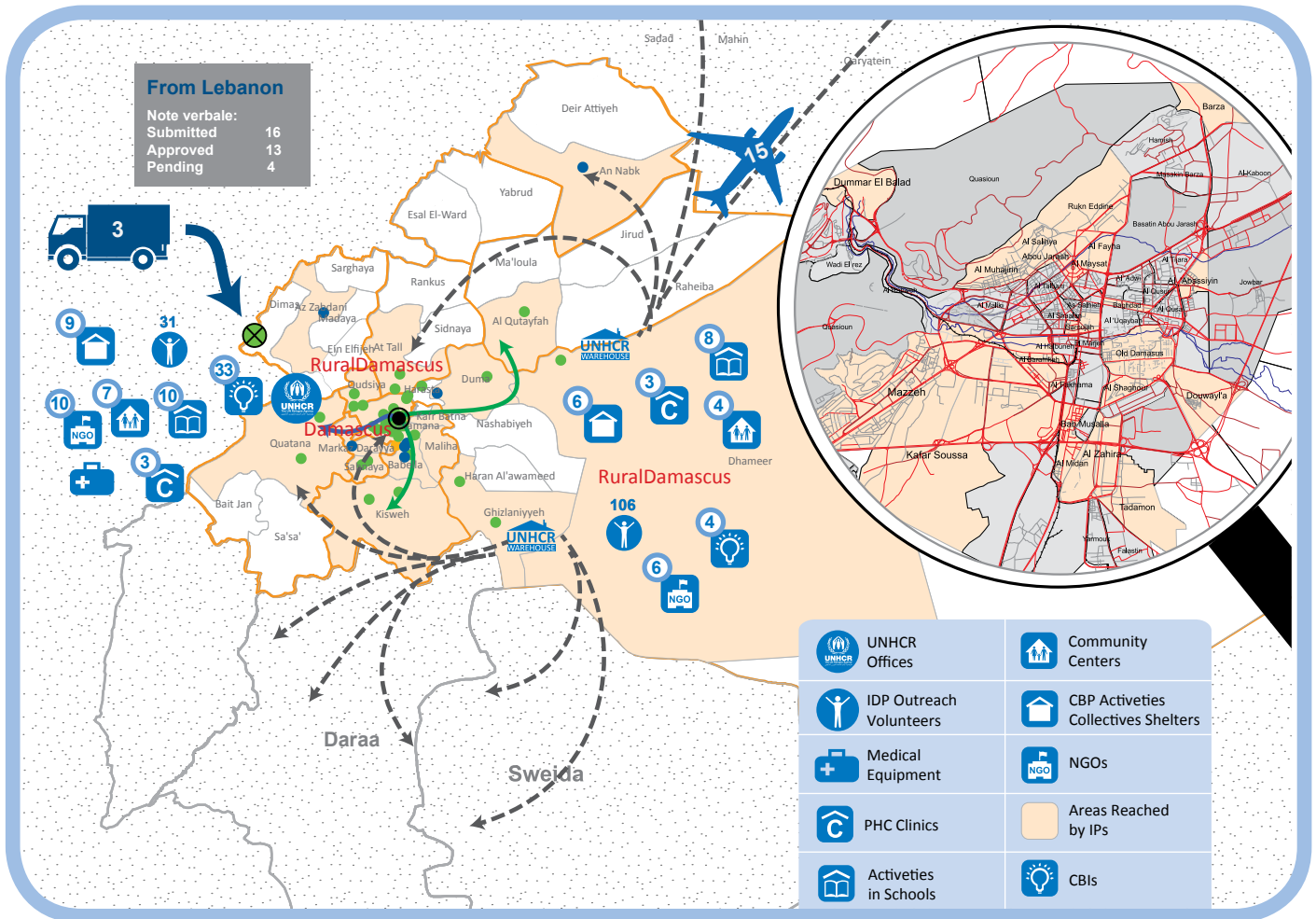
**Major threats in Aleppo include the constant barrage of mortars by all parties, shelling, multiple displacements owing to ever changing demarcation lines and blockades on food supplies. Nonetheless:**

1. UNHCR and SARC negotiated a four-hour ceasefire with fighting parties in Aleppo city and managed to cross through Bustan Al Qusar into eastern Aleppo city delivering CRIs for **1,500** people. Shortly after, through an inter-agency convoy, UNHCR gained access to the besieged villages of Nubul and Zahra with CRIs for **5,000** beneficiaries.
2. Core Relief items were distributed to **1,365,800** individuals
3. In response to the government decision to evacuate IDPs from schools used as shelters, UNHCR has upgraded **106** buildings in order to meet the needs of **3,000** individuals affected by this secondary displacement
4. UNHCR supported Health Volunteers and five health facilities in eastern and western Aleppo as well as responding to the spread of diseases such as Gastroenteritis, Salmonella poisoning and Hepatitis by facilitating the access of **82,384** individuals to primary health care and medicines there.
5. More than **7,000** IDPs received support through protection responses such as women empowerment projects, remedial classes, vocational training, child friendly spaces, psycho-social support and peer to peer support.



# DAMASCUS - COVERING THE CAPITAL AND SURROUNDINGS

## Damascus, Rural Damascus



### HIGHLIGHTS

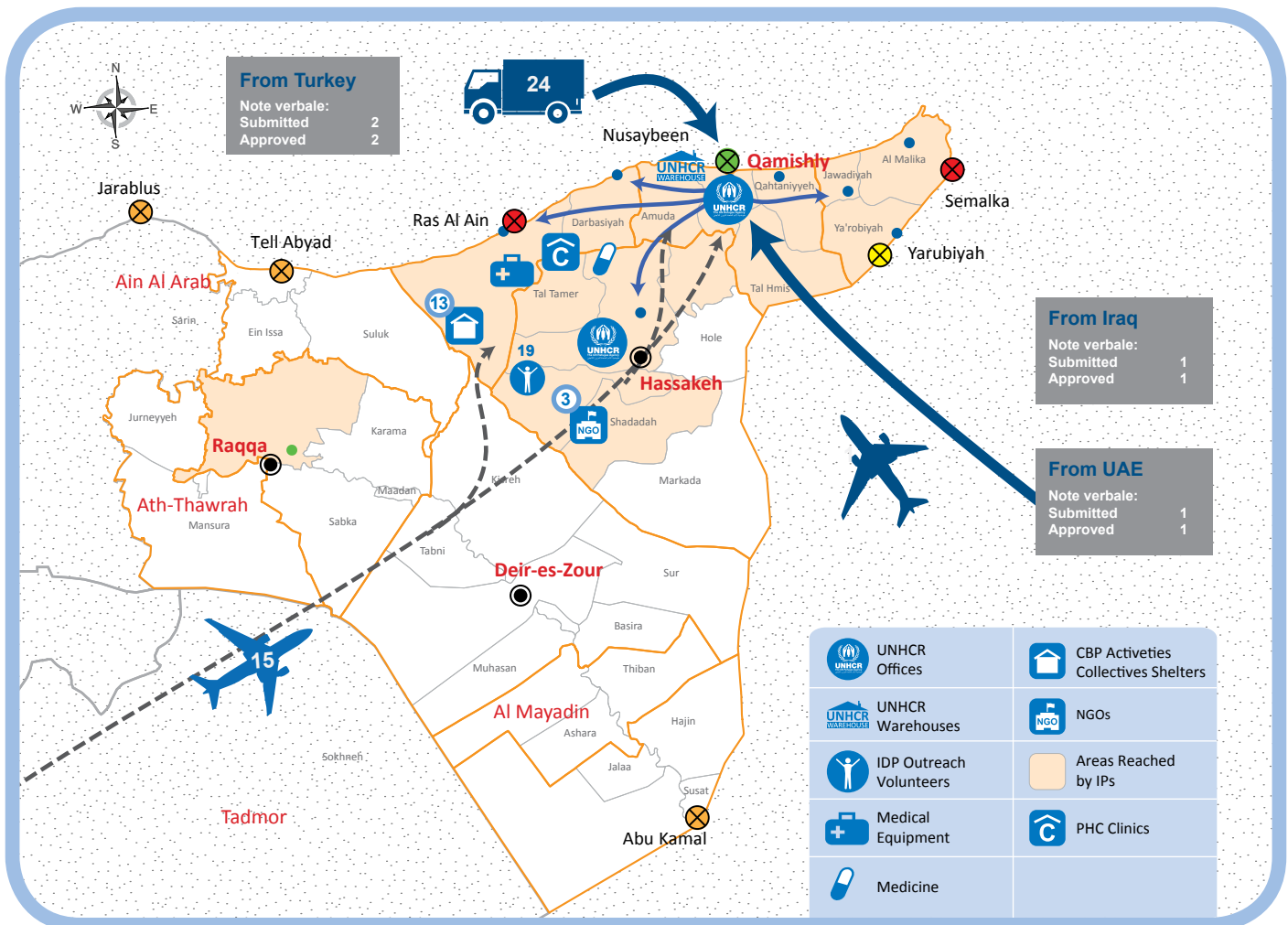
Damascus and Rural Damascus have a geo-social importance. The security situation in certain areas is exposing people to risks, nonetheless:

1. **270,000** individuals in Damascus and **958,000** individuals in Rural Damascus have been assisted with CRIs in the first six months of the year.
2. After 11 months of besiegement, UNHCR finally accessed Barzeh, a hard-to-reach area in Damascus and provided humanitarian aid for the benefit of **23,000** people following a cease fire agreement between the fighting parties.
3. A new Community Center in Al Hameh in Rural Damascus was opened providing support to the population as part of UNHCR's Community-based approach
4. Through a UN inter-agency mission, UNHCR assisted the besieged in Douma with CRIs as well as conducting rapid protection assessments for the population there.
5. Out of the 26 collective centres to be rehabilitated in Rural Damascus by the Shelter Sector, **20** collective shelters have been rehabilitated, benefitting **9,701** individuals



# HASSAKEH - COVERING THE NORTH WEST

## Hassakeh, Deir es Zour and Raqqa



### HIGHLIGHTS

There are significant challenges in telecommunication, socio-economic infrastructure and transport owing to the ongoing armed conflict. In addition, the road to the north-eastern part of Syria from Damascus has remained inaccessible for the first six months of 2014. Nonetheless:

1. **150,000** vulnerable persons were assisted with CRIs through airlifts and crossing the Turkish border
2. **Seven** collective shelters were rehabilitated; **five** ongoing and **three** initiated in May 2014
3. A polyclinic health center supported with medicines, staff and basic rehabilitation
4. The new office in Qamishly will officially open in August for additional coverage of the north-eastern region. A new warehouse was opened in April, received CRIs for **50,000** IDPs and is being prepared to receive more CRIs for an additional **50,000** beneficiaries, through a planned airlift.
5. More than **4,400** IDPs received Psycho Social Support through two of UNHCR's implementing partners in Hassakeh/ Qamishly.

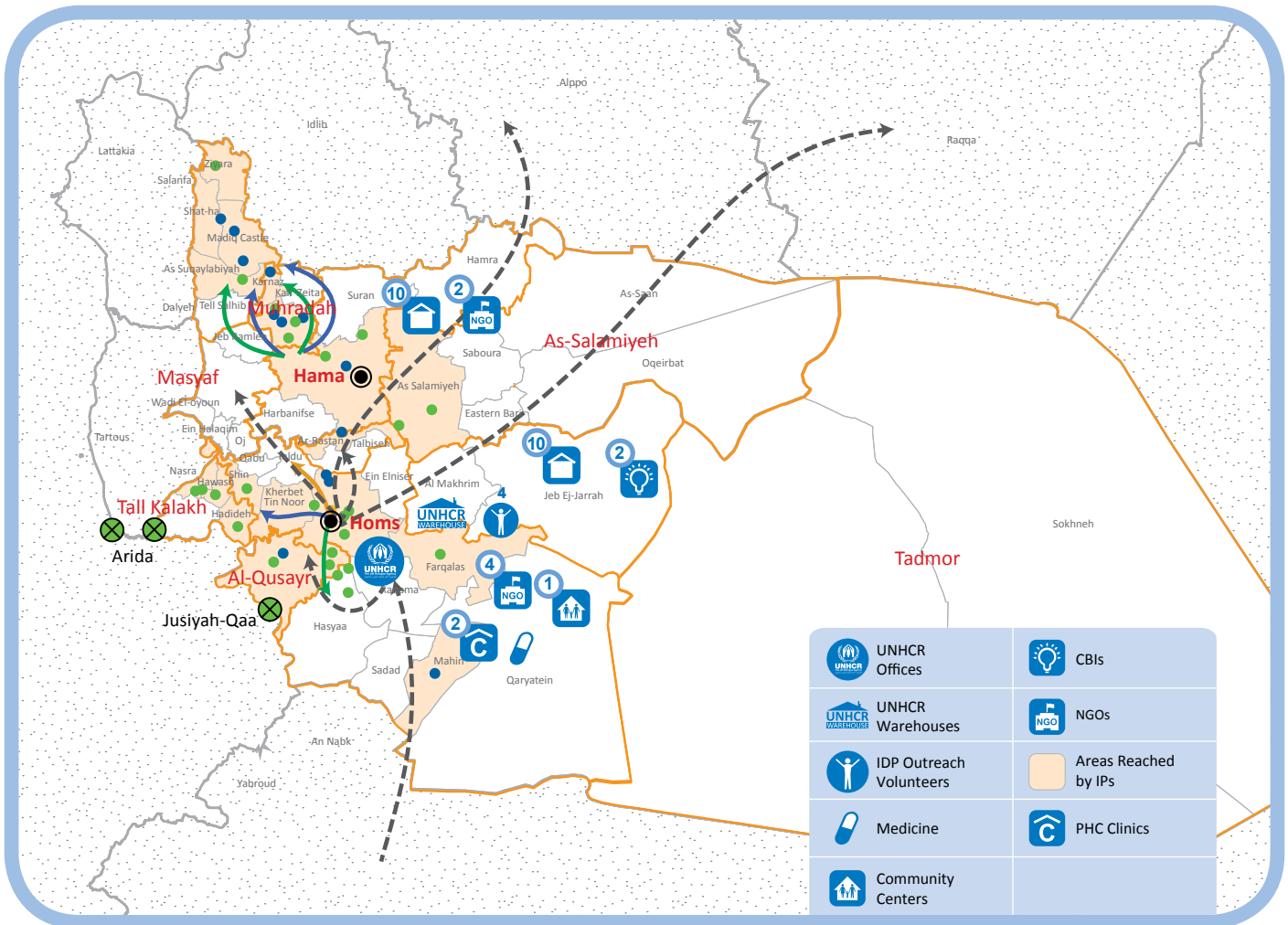
The office responded to the first phase of arrivals from Iraqi border and is preparing for potential mass influx in case the situation escalates.





# HOMS - COVERING CENTRAL SYRIA

## Homs and Hama



## HIGHLIGHTS

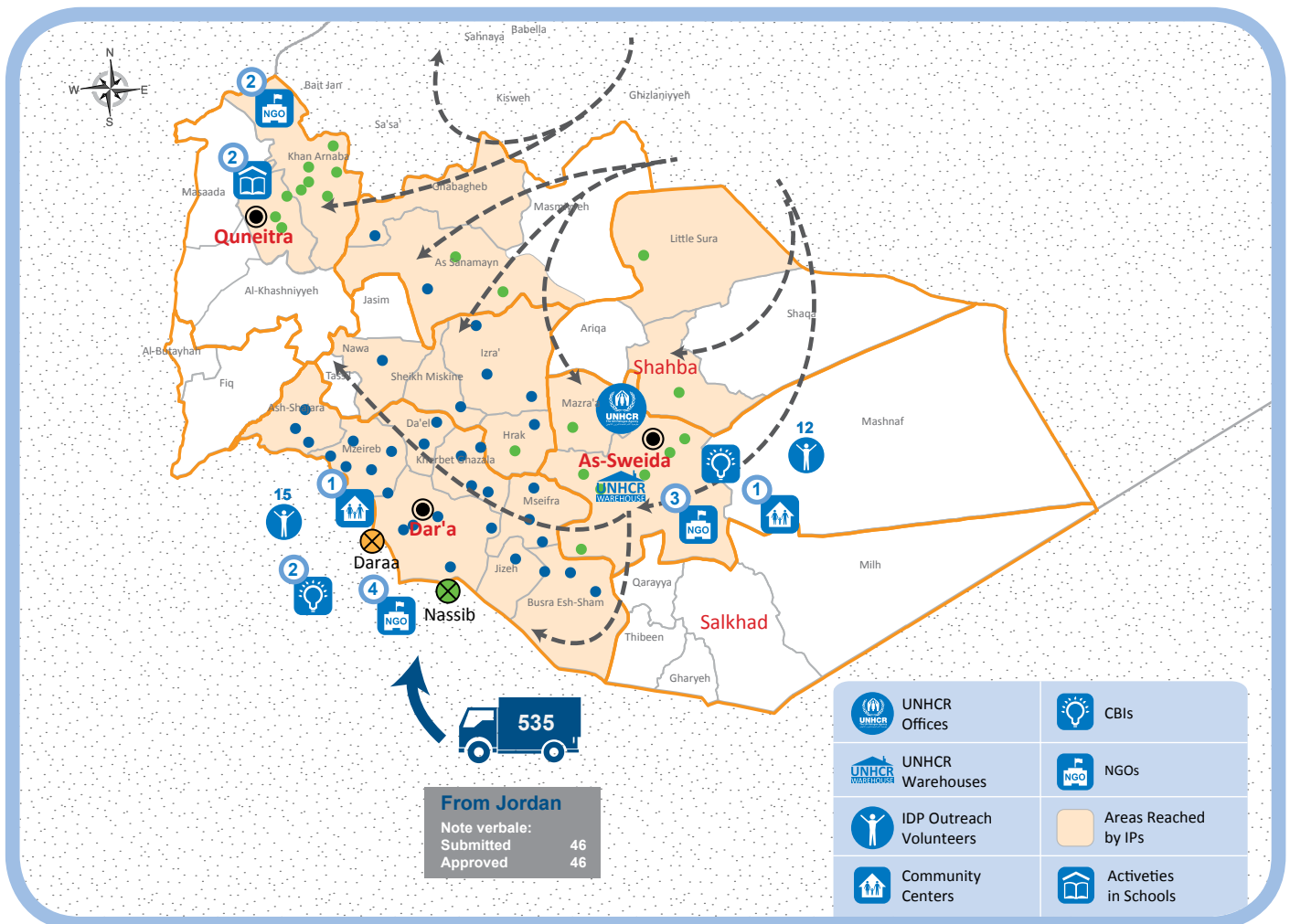
Most parts of Homs remain unstable and volatile except the areas under government control. However, access to other parts of the city remains a challenge due to bureaucracy, checkpoints, mechanically unsound trucks and drivers refusing to go to certain locations. Nonetheless:

1. **502,032** individuals in Hama and Homs were assisted with CRIs, including 86,760 individuals who were reached through six inter-agency convoys
2. The Andalus facility was established following the evacuation of civilians from the Old City of Homs to offer protection services to the vulnerable evacuees
3. Emergency assistance was provided to **2,000** evacuees from the Old City of Homs following the agreement between the two conflicting parties
4. In Rural Homs, **4,091** IDP children aged between 2 and 14 years old received pajamas to protect them from the cold weather in winter
5. A shipment of medicines reached Homs which benefitted **2,500** individuals. These included medicines for chronic diseases such as hypertension, coronary diseases and asthma as well as medicines for acute diseases such as upper respiratory infections, flu, digestive problems and other diseases.



# SWEIDA - SERVING SOUTH WESTERN SYRIA

## Sweida, Daraa and Quneitra



## HIGHLIGHTS

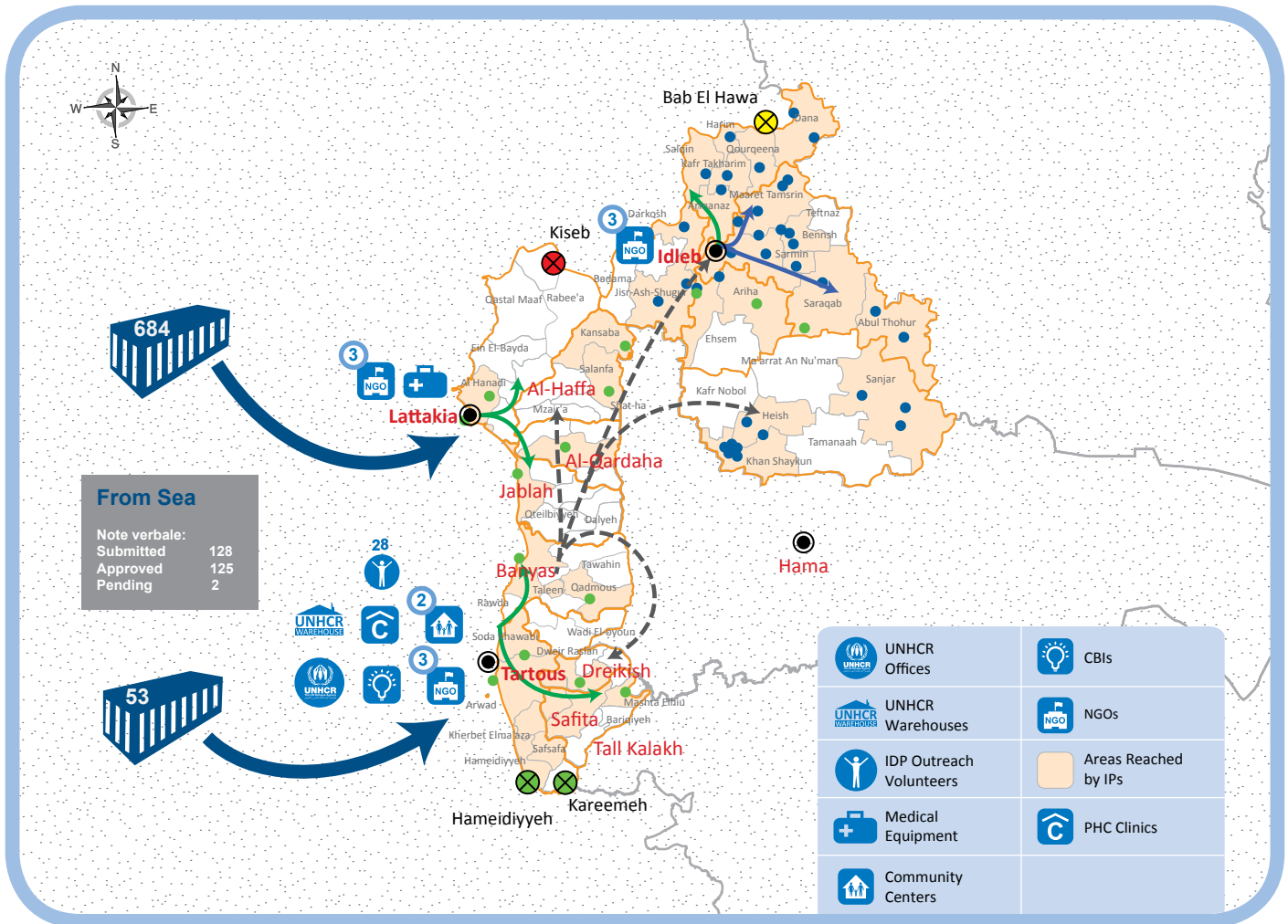
Intense fighting has been taking place in both Daraa and Quneitra during the first six months of the year. Nonetheless:

1. A new UNHCR office and logistics hub was opened in Sweida, South of Syria
2. **80,862** IDPs were assisted with urgently needed Core Relief Items in Daraa, Sweida and Quneitra
3. Core Relief Items for **5,000** beneficiaries were dispatched directly from the Jordanian border through to Sweida, without the need to go through Damascus. The distribution of these items in hard to reach Daraa is currently under way.
4. Protection activities are continuing emphasizing importance of presence
5. UNHCR has managed to get Core relief items to **37** hard to reach areas in Daraa



# TARTOUS - COVERING WESTERN SYRIA

## Tartous, Lattakia and Idlib



### HIGHLIGHTS

Tartous has largely remained unscathed by the armed conflict with security conditions there generally stable. UN operations here enjoy the closest to ideal conditions of delivery which in the first six months of 2014 have resulted in:

1. **680** containers of CRIs entered Syria through Lattakia and Tartous port
2. Emergency assistance reaching more than **4,000** IDPs following the mass displacement from Kassab in Lattakia.
3. The UNHCR legal aid assistance programme being launched in Tartous with two lawyers as a pilot.
4. Concrete bases for **100** tents established to provide shelter from flooding for IDPs from Al Karnak, Tartous.
5. More than **30,000** individuals receiving humanitarian assistance through eight inter-agency convoys to seven different locations in Rural Idlib.





# SECTOR APPROACH



# SECTOR APPROACH

## SECTOR APPROACH IN BRIEF

UNHCR is the sector lead of two sectors: the Protection/Community Services sector and the Shelter/Non-Food Item (NFI) sector and works closely with other UN sister organizations, NGOs, and government bodies. UNHCR is also an active member of the health and education sectors and contributed significantly to the 2014 Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP).

**UNHCR AIMS TO ENSURE INCLUSIVENESS WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS IN ORDER TO COMPLEMENT THE PROVISION OF GOODS AND SERVICES WITH TRAINING AND GUIDANCE**

### THE PROTECTION/COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR



UNHCR is lead of the Protection Sector working closely with 19 partners which includes UNICEF, UNFPA, UNMAS, DRC, IOM, IMC, SARC and SSSD. The definition of Protection used to guide the work of the Sector is the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) endorsed concept of “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. HR law, IHL, refugee law).”

The Protection Sector works to mainstream protection considerations throughout the humanitarian response in order to multiply and maximize effective protection outcomes. Age, gender and diversity considerations are mainstreamed across all activities of the sector as a cross-cutting issue with the sector providing guidance and support to other sectors to ensure that a rights and gender based approach is fully integrated in all planning, preparedness, response and recovery efforts. The work

of the sector is guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and the humanitarian principle of ‘Do no harm’.

It supports the affected population, including IDPs and the host community, in addition to reducing the adverse effects of displacement through a diverse range of protection and community services activities such as social, legal and psychosocial counseling, recreational, educational and vocational activities provided in collective shelters and community centers as well as material and non-material assistance for persons with specific needs. The sector also aims to monitor/assess the needs of the affected population and use the available information to inform the protection strategy and advocacy.

**PROTECTION'S INCLUSION IN THE SHARP HAS ENSURED THAT IT IS AN INTEGRAL PART IN THE OVERALL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN SYRIA**



## ACTIVITIES

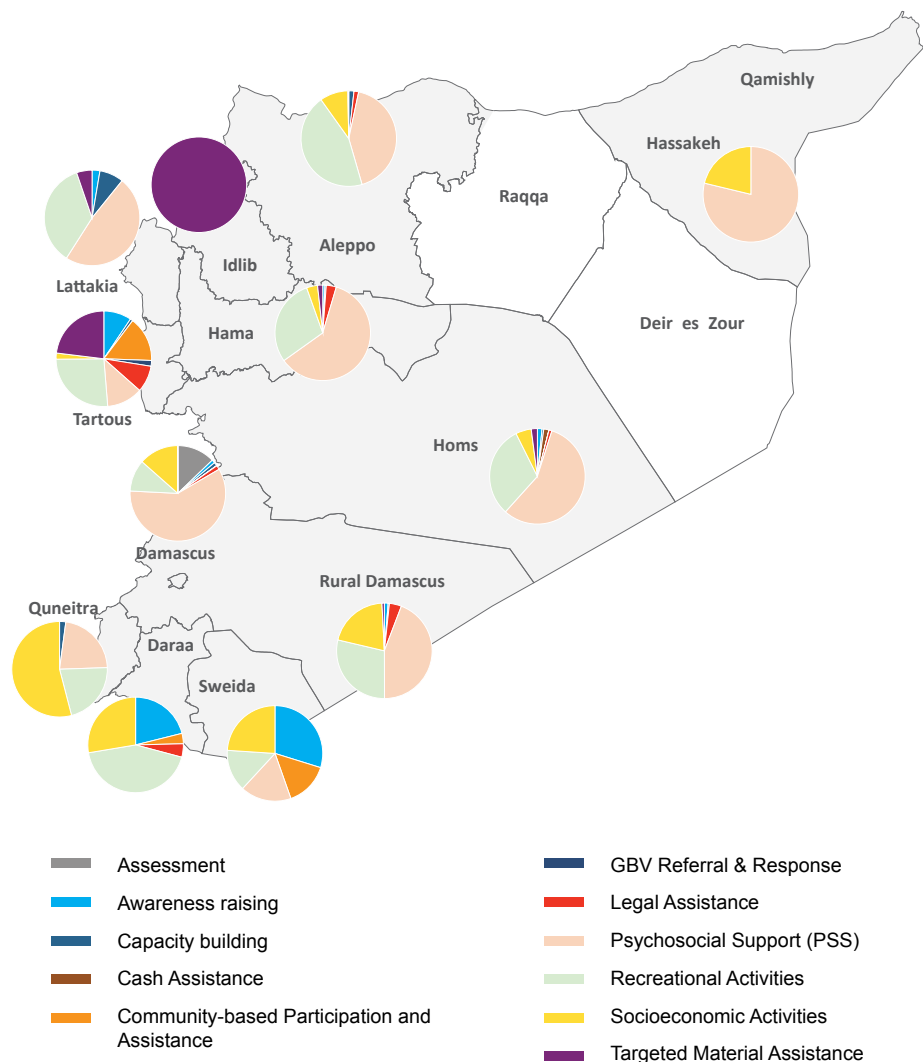
9.3 million in Syria are in need of assistance and since the start of the year, 303,450 (3.2% of those in need) have been reached, benefitting from activities relating to psychosocial support aimed at providing sector essential protection or community empowerment.

**THE NUMBERS OF DIRECT BENEFICIARIES OF PROTECTION ACTIVITIES ARE ALWAYS LOW; HOWEVER IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE SCALE OF THE IMPACT OF THESE ACTIVITIES ON WHOLE COMMUNITIES. THE KEY WITH THE PROTECTION SECTOR APPROACH IS THE INDIRECT BENEFICIARY FIGURE – A NUMBER THAT IS CURRENTLY DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE**

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE PROTECTION SECTOR

- Access to affected populations
- Due to lack of authorization and security concerns the sector has been unable to undertake any large-scale or systematic needs assessments

**331,601**  
BENEFICIARIES



## NON-FOOD ITEM (NFI) WORKING GROUP

UNHCR is lead of the NFI Working Group which includes UNICEF, UNDP, UNRWA, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, IOM, DRC, PU and SIF, GOPA, TdH, Mercy Corps, Intersos, ACF. This group works together with SARC, MoSA, the MoLA and the General Authority for Palestinian Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic to respond to new displacements.

Since the beginning of 2014, there has been 10,268,072 individual Core Relief Items delivered to 3,266,432 vulnerable people in 14 out of the 14 Governorates of Syria, including hard-to-reach areas. More than three million of these benefitted from winterization support which was essential during the cold weather. These winter support kits included high thermal blankets, one extra plastic sheet, winter clothing including woolen sweaters, jackets, underwear, socks, hats, boots, and for infants, a full baby clothing set including a hat.

**THROUGH UNHCR LEADERSHIP  
3,266,432 VULNERABLE  
BENEFICIARIES WERE  
ASSISTED BY THE UN  
AND PARTNERS IN ALL 14  
GOVERNORATES OF SYRIA**

## CHALLENGES

- Security situations on the road and at destinations
- Funding shortfall, leading to delay in procurement
- Lack of comprehensive needs assessment
- New Government Procedures lead to further delay in the delivery of NFIs

The working group has managed to employ flexible processes, including rapid assessments and secondary data review, to ensure coordinated and harmonized procedures to obtain reliable primary assessment data for the humanitarian response and assistance delivery.

## SHELTER WORKING GROUP

UNHCR is lead of the Shelter Working Group together with MoLA. The Shelter Working Group includes UNRWA, Première Urgence, UN Habitat, DRC and IOM. This group works together with the Ministry of Local Administration and the General Authority for Palestinian Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic to map the needs in the country and provide a comprehensive response to the extent possible.



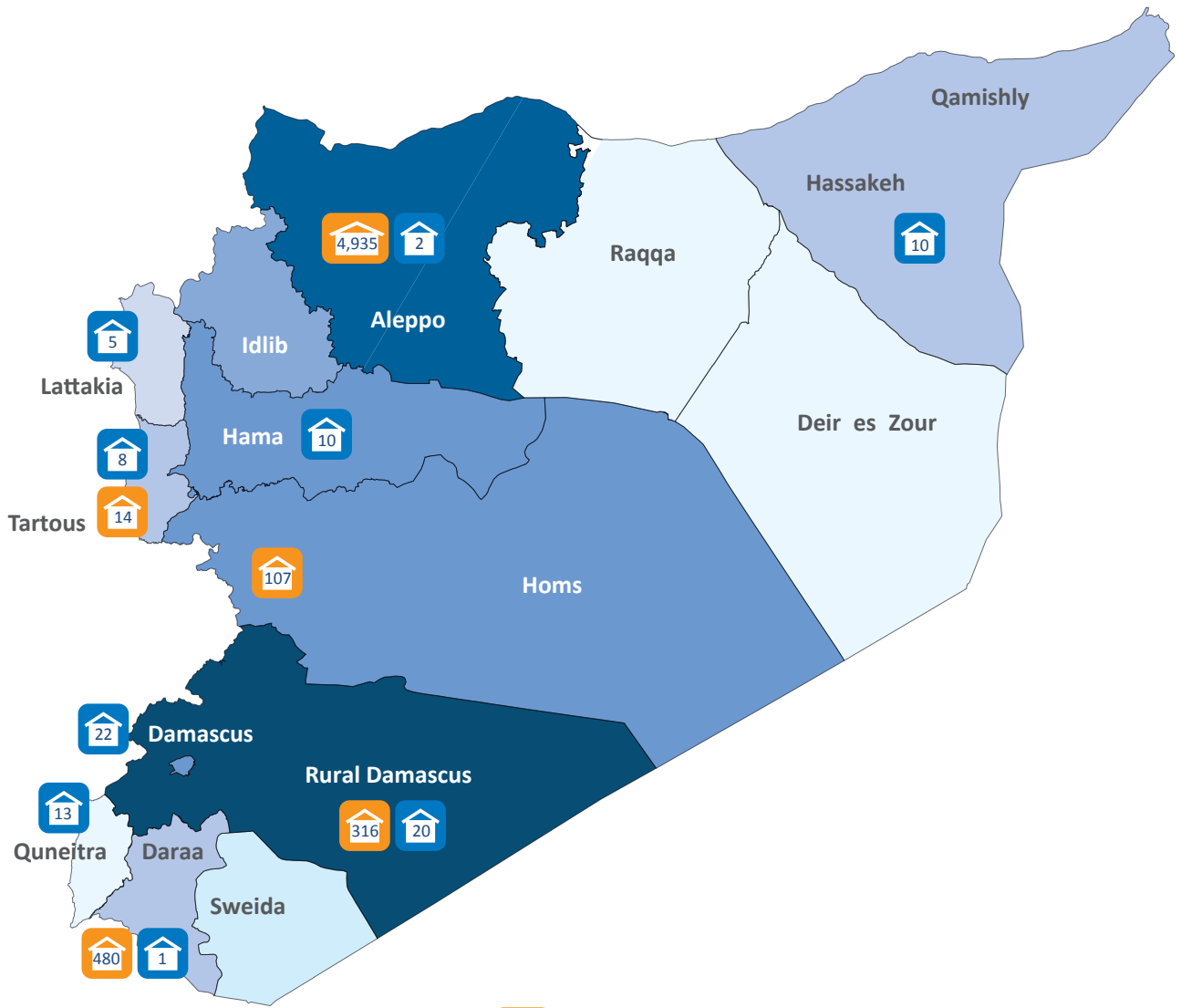
## ACTIVITIES

The working group has during the reporting period, assisted 28,793 people who benefitted from rehabilitated collective shelters and 29,487 people who benefitted from the upgrade of private shelters. Despite this, unfortunately there remains a major gap in the upgrading of private shelters with only 23.8% of the target reached and no progress at all in the construction of individual transitional housing units or private sector based shelter projects.

In general the two main shelter response options are not sufficient to efficiently respond to the needs of IDPs. The Shelter Working Group is developing additional response options, however until now these are not finalized and endorsed.

## CHALLENGE

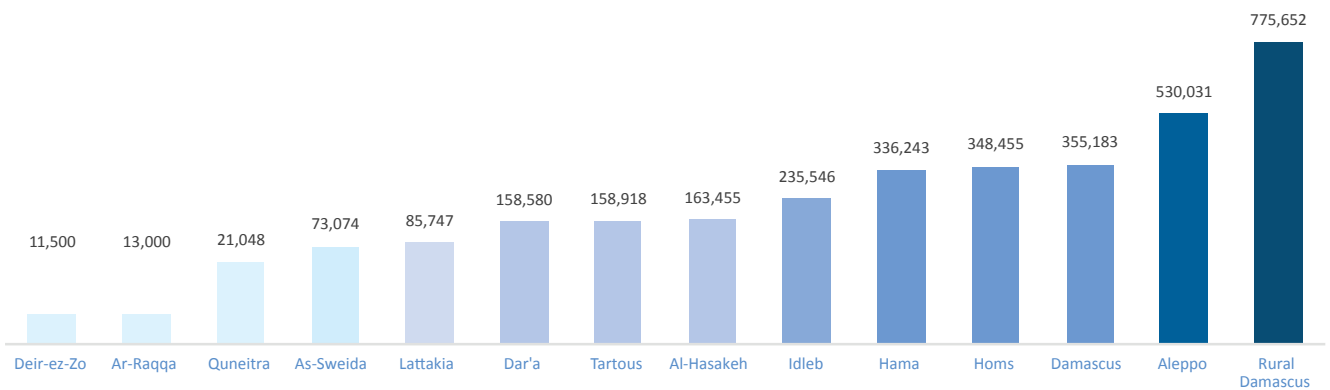
The major challenge in shelter programming in Syria are security concerns in a volatile context, cumbersome administrative requirements and procedures, and the fact that shelter response cannot be considered in isolation and needs to be part of a holistic package of multi-sectorial support to the affected populations. Shelter activities need to be planned in union with other sectors such as WASH, Protection, Education, Health, Early Recovery and Livelihoods. Shelter sector will aim to further engage with other sectors to address the many cross cutting issues associated with shelter.



5,852 Private Shelter upgrade completed  
29,487 beneficiaries

91 Collective Shelter Rehabilitation completed  
28,793 beneficiaries

**3,266,432** beneficiaries **10,268,072** CRIs



# REFUGEE PROGRAMME



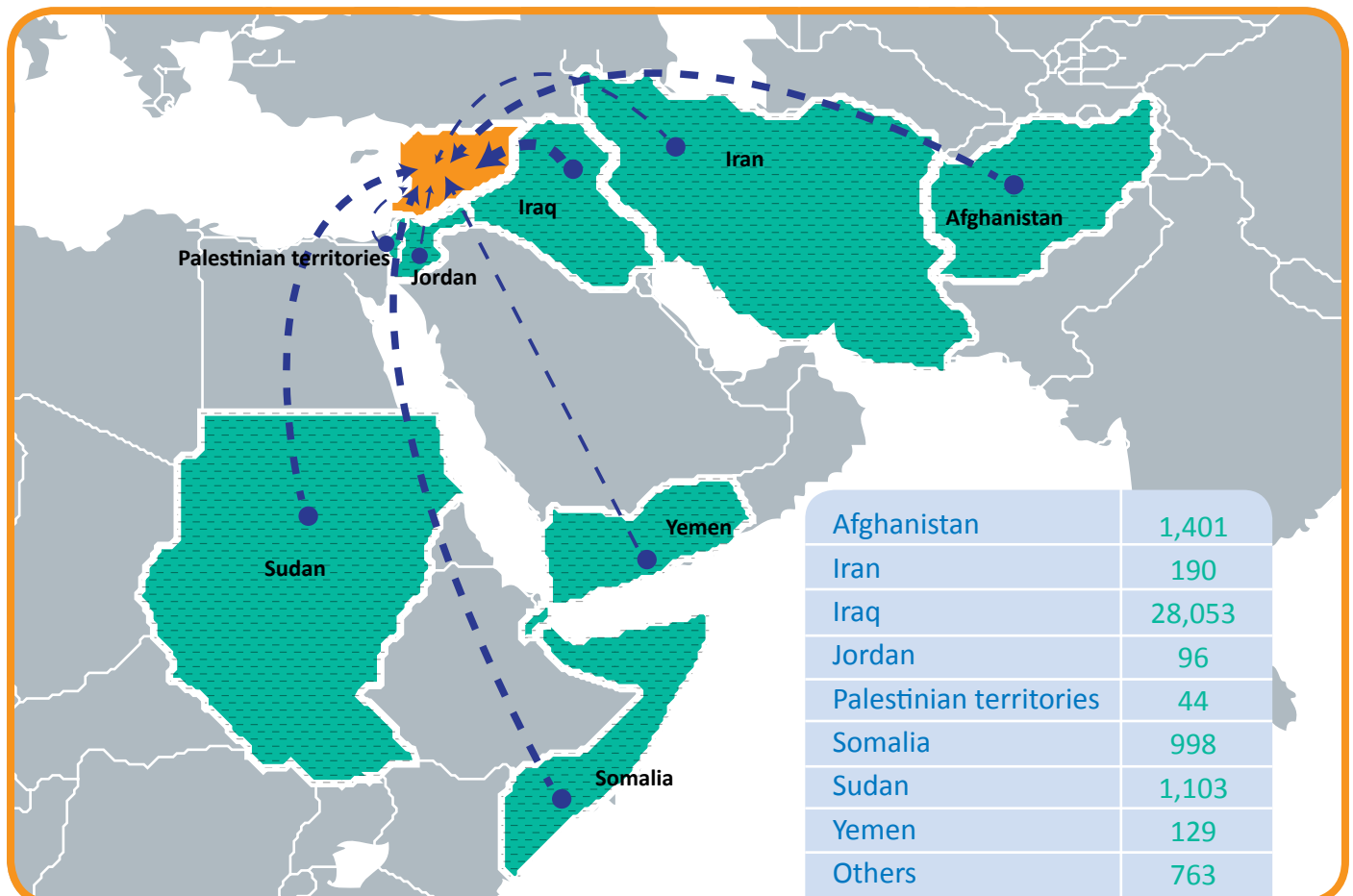
# REFUGEE PROGRAMME

## REFUGEE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

**SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS DUE TO THE MASSIVE DISPLACEMENT OF SYRIANS AND THE ENORMOUS STRAIN ON PUBLIC SERVICES AND FINANCES, ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES HAS BEEN AFFECTED**

### REFUGEE SITUATION IN SYRIA

Before the crisis Syria hosted large numbers of refugees and had a very good track record of alleviating their suffering and safeguarding their fundamental human rights. Indeed pre-crisis refugees accounted for 12 % of the Syrian population. However, since the beginning of the Syrian crisis assistance to refugees has been affected due to insecurity, dwindling resources and large numbers of Syrian IDPs. As a result the total number of refugees in Syria has decreased due to the volatile security situation in the country. However, with the aggravating crisis in Iraq this may change in the future. In the first six months of 2014, **1,022** new asylum seekers registered with UNHCR. Currently there are approximately **32,778** asylum seekers and refugees registered.





Because of the crisis, refugees in Syria are a particularly vulnerable group because they are in an unfamiliar country, lacking the family, social and community supports that one would normally have in their own country. Some go missing, many get detained, they are often trapped in areas, impossible to get out either because of security or they lack the proper documents to access basic services, which is why UNHCR provides them with additional support. Given the recent developments in Iraq, UNHCR is also preparing for an additional influx of asylum seekers from that area. Recent estimates indicate that as many as 3,000 Iraqis have crossed into Syria from Iraq at the end of June.

## UNHCR SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

**MORE MEASURES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE TO ACCESS REFUGEES WHO FACE CHALLENGES MOVING AROUND THE COUNTRY.**

### 1 RECEPTION AND REGISTRATION

The first point of access for assistance from UNHCR facilities is through reception. During the reception process, dedicated staff assesses the individual needs of each person and amongst other things, appointments are issued, documents are collected, registration and renewal forms are provided and referrals are made to specific units for advice and assistance in such areas as protection, community services and education. Reception and Registration facilities have been traditionally available in Damascus, Aleppo and Hassakeh.

The first six months of 2014 also saw UNHCR building up the reception capacities in the UNHCR offices of Tartous and Homs. This is important at a time where many undocumented refugees struggle to move around the country because of lack of documentation. In addition, refugees have reported that they refrain from approaching the office as they fear harassment on checkpoints as well as the rising transportation costs that have made commuting difficult.

UNHCR has responded to these issues by using Outreach Volunteers and visiting refugees where they are staying as well as operating Hotlines for Refugees that could not make it to the office.

UNHCR has 26 hotlines, four of them operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mobile and support registration missions are organized when needed to other governorates to reach the population unable to approach UNHCR Damascus for registration purposes.

### 2 REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION

In spite of the current crisis in Syria, UNHCR continues to receive a significant number of new registrations from asylum seekers requesting UNHCR's protection and assistance. The majority of these asylum seekers are not recent arrivals in Syria but have rather been present here for a number of years and are now seeking protection and/or assistance due to the continuing deterioration of the security situation in Syria.

The new asylum seekers originate predominantly from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran and Egypt. In addition to new registrations, UNHCR is also now receiving a significant number of requests to re-open previously rejected cases. These requests are primarily from citizens of South Sudan who were originally assessed as citizens of Sudan but who have now lost that nationality following the emergence of South Sudan as an independent state and the recently introduced nationality laws of Sudan. In light of the change in circumstances - including not only the loss of Sudanese nationality and new found eligibility for South Sudanese nationality for such individuals but





also the significant deterioration in the security situation in the new state of South Sudan - these asylum seekers will now have their cases reconsidered.

UNHCR continues to receive a significant number of new registrations from asylum seekers who have no claims related to the Refugees Convention and whose motives for leaving their countries and not wishing to return are primarily economic in nature and/or relate to their marriage to Syrian citizens. In order to deal with the large volume of such cases, special procedures have been introduced in which asylum seekers not articulating genuine claims at registration are thoroughly counselled on the refugee definition and their eligibility for UNHCR's protection and assistance along with alternative options available to them and, where they still wish to pursue their claim, are then assessed through an accelerated RSD process.

In the first six months of the year, UNHCR recognized 156 individuals as refugees under the 1951 Convention or pursuant to the extended mandate. Of these 44% were from Afghanistan, 30% were from Iraq and 20% were from Sudan with the remaining 6% composed of nationals from various other countries. In this same period, UNHCR rejected 162 individuals from various different countries who were found neither to meet the refugee definition nor to be eligible for recognition under the extended mandate.

## IN SPITE OF THE CURRENT CRISIS IN SYRIA, UNHCR HAS CONTINUED TO RECEIVE ASYLUM SEEKERS

### 3 ASSISTANCE

#### FINANCIAL, LEGAL, EDUCATIONAL, VOCATIONAL AND HEALTH

**CASH ASSISTANCE:** With the deterioration of the economic situation in Syria it was inevitable that refugees would be disproportionately affected. UNHCR has responded by scaling up on cash assistance (Cash for food and financial assistance) for this group with an allocation of US\$1,537,389 announced in January. All refugees, are entitled to cash for food and the most vulnerable, are entitled to financial assistance. During the reporting period, **25,418** refugees received cash for food and **13,967** refugees received financial assistance on at least one occasion.

Education assistance was not yet provided this year to children (in September), only scholarship grants for 93 students, of 45,000 SYP per student. In 2013 Education assistance was provided to **9,164** students at both primary and secondary levels.

Winterization assistance provided to all refugees and asylum seekers benefitting from the cash for food assistance with the amount of 30,000 SYP per family.

**EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE:** During the reporting period more than **702** beneficiaries benefitted from remedial classes for primary education in all subjects taught in public schools and for preparatory lessons to obtain secondary education certificates.

Remedial Classes took place in private institutes, community centres and collective shelters hosting refugees in Damascus and Rural Damascus. UNHCR implemented its remedial classes through GOPA and Al Nada in one collective shelter, one community center and three institutes. Moreover, 180 children aged between 10 and 16 years old benefitted from the summer camp programme implemented in one public school in Rural Damascus.

**UNHCR THROUGH ITS PARTNERS PROVIDES PRACTICAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING COURSES IN THE AREAS OF SEWING, KNITTING, VIDEO FILMING, ACCESSORIES, JAVA SCRIPT, HAIRDRESSING, COSMETICS AND ARABIC LANGUAGE TO NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS**

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING:** During the reporting period, a total of **1,876** individuals participated in Vocational Training courses offered by UNHCR through implementing partner Al Nada. Vocational Training Courses included sewing, knitting, hairdressing, cosmetics, video filming, Accessories, JAVA script, and Arabic language to non-native speakers among other subjects. All vocational training courses, that historically have targeted refugees, were also opened to Syrian affected populations with a significant percentage of beneficiaries of the vocational training in Damascus now being Syrians.

**LIVELIHOOD TRAINING:** During the reporting period, a total of 18 beneficiaries benefitted from livelihood programs to help most affected refugee women start up a small business grant program and it was implemented through Al Nada UNHCR implementing partner.

**Awareness Raising:** During the reporting period, more than **2,400** beneficiaries benefitted from awareness raising sessions targeting refugees on several different subjects including nutrition, basic hygiene, injury prevention, children’s safety and reaching humanitarian agencies, through UNHCR implementing partners Al Nada and GOPA.

**LEGAL ASSISTANCE:** UNHCR also provides legal assistance to refugees requiring assistance in matters relating to documentation, detention and other legal relevant issues. In the first six months of the year UNHCR has provided legal assistance for **1,071** refugees and asylum seekers, including counseling, awareness raising, and interventions including at police station and in the office of civil affairs. More than 69 note verbales were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and conducted 49 visits to the Immigration Department to follow up on cases of people in detention and to counsel persons of concern. On occasion, refugees have also been provided with legal representation before the courts whenever required.

**HEALTH SERVICES:** During the reporting period **10,200** refugees benefitted from UNHCR-supported health services between January and June of 2014. Refugees have free access not only to primary health care and emergency life-saving but secondary and tertiary health care such as cardiac surgical interventions and cancer treatment

**PROTECTION FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV):** In the first six months of the year UNHCR interviewed 33 refugees who had been victims of SGBV. The trends unfortunately remained the same with domestic violence, early marriage and sexual harassment as some of the most common trends.



**PROTECTION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN:** Refugee children are also assessed on a case by case basis where the focus is on the identification of children at risk including unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), assessing the best interests of these children (with the assistance of a panel) the provision of targeted cash assistance to families hosting UASC, recreational activities and emergency awareness activities. Of notable concern **since the beginning of the year is that there has been an increase in harassment and bullying of refugee children, both at school and on the streets.**



The most common explanation for that harassment is because they are not Syrians. Further a quarter of newly received cases of children with protection concerns approaching the office were without birth certificates. At a time where Syrians themselves are struggling to obtain birth certificates refugee children face additional hurdles. As of June 2014, UNHCR are actively following up on the individual cases of **132** vulnerable refugee children who have demonstrated child protection concerns.

## **4 DURABLE SOLUTIONS**

There are three solutions open to refugees where UNHCR can help: voluntary repatriation; local integration; or resettlement to a third country in situations where it is impossible for a person to go back home or remain in the host country. After three years of crisis, it is clear that those refugees who remain in Syria do not have the option to voluntarily repatriate. The current developments in Iraq have made that even more impossible for many. At a time when local resources are depleted, with massive displacement, the previous generosity given to refugees has been stretched to its limit. There are also legal limitations to local integration. Although, UNHCR still continues to assist with local integration activities it cannot be said to be a realistic or durable option. The only durable solution for the extremely vulnerable refugees who remain is resettlement.

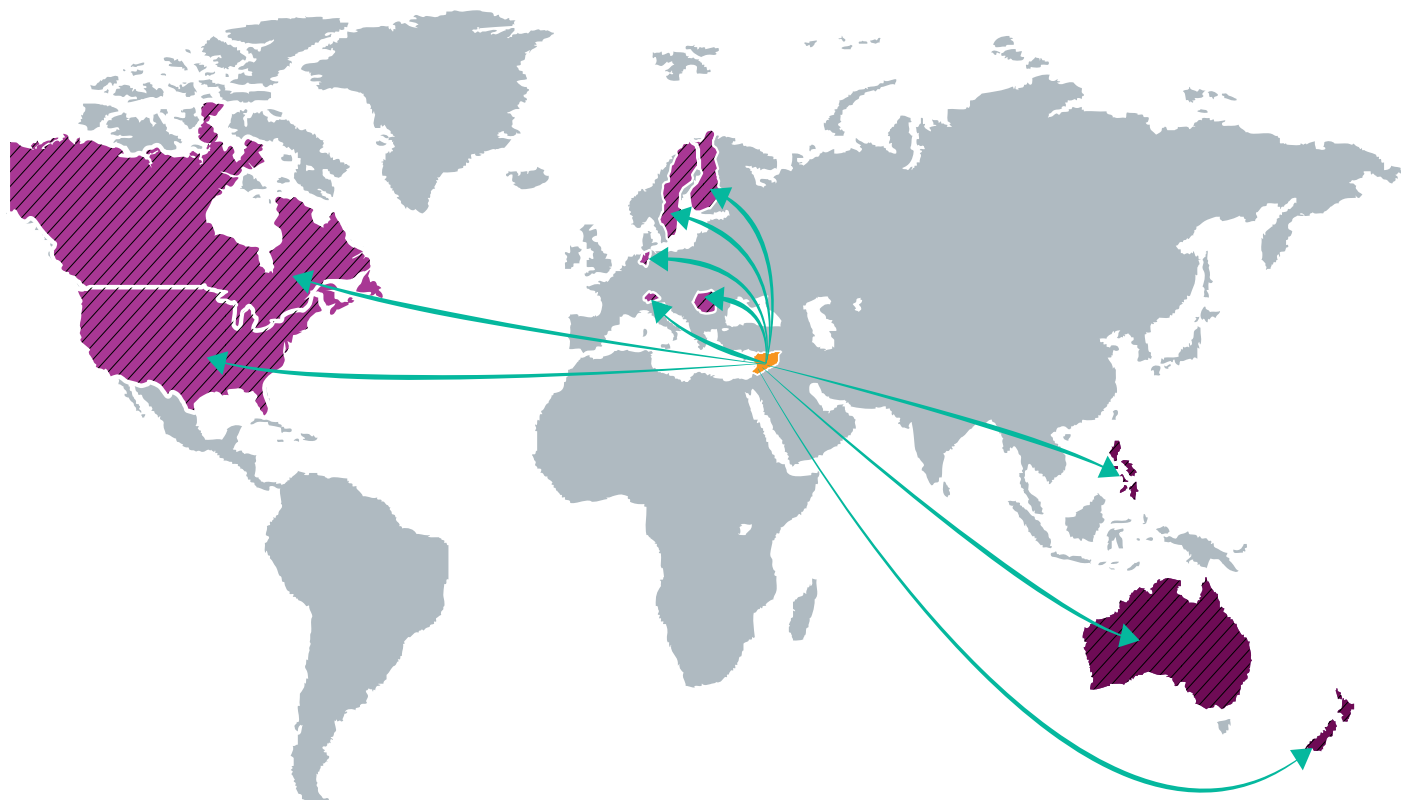
**RESETTLEMENT:** Resettlement processing out of Damascus is considered by UNHCR as one of the few remaining possibilities for providing physical protection for refugees in need of a durable solution in Syria.

Given the limited slots available, UNHCR gives priority to cases eligible for resettlement such as people with medical needs, women-at-risk, unaccompanied minors, and people with legal and physical protection concerns. The resettlement process faces many challenges such as the fact that resettlement-country access to refugees is limited to video conferencing and dossier processing, there has been less interest among resettlement countries, and there are also technical and logistical challenges. The resettlement countries for the reporting period included Australia, Canada, Finland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and USA with 982 vulnerable refugees (all nationalities) successfully resettled.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

The above-mentioned figure does not include sponsorship and family reunification cases that were not submitted by UNHCR. However, the office facilitated their interviews via Digital Video Conference and also assisted with the departure formalities. Cumulative departures including sponsorship and family reunification cases from the beginning of 2014 until 30 June: **1,320** refugees. Out of this number, 982 were submitted by UNHCR.

## REFUGEES DEPARTED FOR RESETTLEMENT, (includes also family reunification and sponsorship cases)



<b>CANADA:</b>	<b>433</b>
<b>USA:</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA:</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>ROMANIA:</b>	<b>98</b> [transfer to Emergency Transit Centre in Romania]
<b>NETHERLANDS:</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>SWITZERLAND:</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>FINLAND:</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PHILIPPINES:</b>	<b>10</b> [transfer to Evacuation Transit Mechanism in Philippines for onward resettlement to New Zealand]
<b>SWEDEN:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND:</b>	<b>4</b>

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**TOTAL:** **1,320 INDIVIDUALS.**

**STATES ARE URGED TO PROVIDE MORE SLOTS TO THOSE  
REFUGEES WHO REMAIN TRAPPED IN SYRIA**



# PARTNERS IN 2014



**AL BASSEL INSTITUTE**



**AL BATOUL CHARITY**



**AL NADA**



**AL TAALOUF CHARITY ASSOCIATION**



**DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL (DRC)**



**GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE FOR ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST**



**INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS**



**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**



**MINISTRY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION**



**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR OF HASSAKEH**



**PREMIÈRE URGENCE**



**SECOURS ISLAMIQUE FRANCE**



**SYRIAN ARAB RED CRESCENT**



**SYRIAN SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**



**THE SYRIA TRUST FOR DEVELOPMENT**

# **DONORS AND THE FUNDING LEVEL**



**NEEDS ARE GROWING BY THE  
DAY AND WINTER IS COMING...**



# UNHCR URGENTLY NEEDS YOUR HELP

In the Syrian Arab Republic, UNHCR is committed to working under the framework of the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) as sector lead for protection and community services, Non Food Items and shelter, to continue to seek and seize opportunities to reach those Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in dire need of humanitarian assistance. UNHCR needs US\$ 273 million to implement the response plan for 2014. As of 8 July, UNHCR had mobilized only 18% (US\$ 49 million) of the requirements. With a funding gap of over US\$ 224 million for the response in Syria, UNHCR's programme there will be severely affected, leaving millions of people at risk. While every single project and programme is important, one of the most pressing needs presently is the procurement of Core Relief Items (CRIs) kits which comprises 75% of the funding needs.

**WITH A FUNDING GAP OF OVER US\$ 224 MILLION FOR THE RESPONSE IN SYRIA, UNHCR'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME WILL BE SEVERELY AFFECTED, LEAVING MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AT RISK**

In Syria, in addition to conflict, displacement, lack of adequate shelter as well as basic commodities and services, IDPs have to fight for their survival without even the most basic amenities that would allow them to gather water, cook food, maintain minimum hygiene, or protect themselves from the extreme weather in summer and winter where it can go beyond 50°C in some locations and as far down as minus 13°C.

**WITH TEMPERATURES DROPPING TO AS LOW AS MINUS 13°C, UNHCR WILL BE UNABLE TO PROCURE WINTER CLOTHES FOR OVER 2,000,000 IDPS DUE TO LACK OF FUNDING**

The negative impact of lack of funds will affect other crucial activities. Without sufficient and urgent funds:

- **80,000** IDPs will be deprived of shelter assistance
- **100,000** IDPs will not benefit from medical supplies and equipment
- **250,000** IDPs will be denied primary health care
- **20,000** extremely vulnerable IDPs will not receive cash assistance

UNHCR's donors have helped save countless lives and alleviate suffering throughout Syria. With the support of donors, UNHCR has to date assisted over 2.5 million people with CRIs in 13 out of Syria's 14 governorates. However, we are now appealing for donors to dig a little bit deeper in their pockets. Timely funding is vital to plan for the most economical means of sourcing and transport and to ensure an uninterrupted supply of lifesaving CRIs as the international procurement of items, which are no longer produced in Syria, takes up to 3 months. It is therefore imperative that the process begins NOW before the onset of winter, when an already dire situation for many Syrians becomes even worse.

# DONATE TODAY TO HELP SAVE LIVES AND PREVENT SUFFERING DURING THE SYRIAN WINTER

**THANKS TO OUR  
DONORS**



Andorra



Australia



Austria



Big Heart  
Campaign for Syrian Refugee Relief



Bahrain



Belgium



Brazil



Canada



CERF



Chile



China



Czech Republic



Denmark



ERF



Estonia



European Union



Finland



France



Germany



Greece



Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection



Hungary



Iceland



Iraq



Ireland



Italy



From the People of Japan



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Kuwait



Latvia



Lithuania



Luxembourg



Malta



Netherlands



New Zealand



Norway



Oman



Poland



Portugal



Qatar



Republic of Korea



Russia



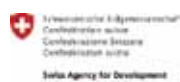
Slovenia



Spain



Sweden



Switzerland



UAE



UKaid



United States



# FUTURE OUTLOOK



# FUTURE OUTLOOK

The rate of deterioration of the humanitarian crisis in Syria has been staggering. As the crisis is in its fourth year, the needs and vulnerabilities are increasing by the day. Around 6.4 million people are internally displaced and 9.3 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance across the country. Affected people have fled their homes and lost almost everything. They have sought safety in collective shelters and unfinished buildings and are in dire need of basic items to survive. Without a political solution in sight, the needs will keep growing. UNHCR has every intention to continue to be present and delivering in Syria but there are significant challenges ahead.

**DESPITE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES AHEAD UNHCR HAS EVERY INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO BE PRESENT AND DELIVERING ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION IN SYRIA**

Violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights continue to be widespread. The consequences for civilians' protection and their access to assistance are overwhelming. Thousands of civilians have been killed as result of the crisis, while many more have suffered injuries and even disability due to the violence. UNHCR is committed to strengthening its advocacy for the protection of civilians in its humanitarian response, in order to ensure that protection is mainstreamed across all its activities and protection capacity is strengthened.

## STRENGTHENING ITS ADVOCACY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

There are also significant challenges in telecommunication, socio-economic infrastructure and transport owing to the ongoing armed conflict. Access to areas including whole governorates such as Deir es Zour and Raqqqa remains a challenge. Amongst other things, excessive bureaucracy, mortars, and regular use of IEDs and VBIEDs continues to make operating in Syria challenging. UN staff are directly affected, for example, between March and May alone in Damascus and Rural Damascus, there were 11 shooting incidents and 27 arrests/detentions involving UN staff.

Another challenge has emerged with the unrest in Iraq. It is estimated that 3,000 Iraqi refugees have fled to Syria as the borders have been removed between the two countries. More humanitarian burden has been put on the organization to register the new vulnerable Iraqi arrivals and provide the affected and vulnerable people with urgent humanitarian assistance.

**DUE TO INCREASED CONFLICT IN IRAQ, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS THERE IS A REAL CONCERN THAT THERE MAY BE AN INFLUX OF REFUGEES FLEEING VIOLENCE**

Despite these challenges, in the first six months of 2014, UNHCR has delivered **8,920,667** individual Core Relief Items to **2,468,593** IDPs in 13 out of the 14 Governorates of Syria, including in hard-to-reach areas. Close to 2 million individuals were protected by UNHCR's winterized package for which distribution started in November 2013.

Winter is again coming and UNHCR is already planning for the procurement, delivery and distribution of more winterization kits. However, all this takes money and with a substantial shortfall in funding, if present trends continue, many people will not get blankets or warm clothes, and without blankets the vulnerable are more at risk of serious harm. UNHCR will continue to actively engage with donors to secure further funding in order to alleviate suffering and save lives.

**WITH THE HARSH WINTER ON THE WAY UNHCR IS ALREADY PLANNING FOR WINTERIZATION KITS. HOWEVER, THIS TAKES MONEY AND WITH A SUBSTANTIAL SHORTFALL IN FUNDING, MANY PEOPLE WILL NOT GET BLANKETS OR WARM CLOTHES, AND WITHOUT BLANKETS THE VULNERABLE ARE MORE AT RISK OF SERIOUS HARM**

Also to address the importance of reliable information in order to direct assistance where it is needed, UNHCR will work to strengthen its assessments, monitoring and information management system so as to present reliable information on population movements, the root causes of displacement, immediate humanitarian needs and the options for solutions.

**UNHCR WILL WORK TO STRENGTHEN ITS ASSESSMENTS, MONITORING AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SO AS TO PRESENT RELIABLE INFORMATION ON POPULATION MOVEMENTS,**

With the opening in June of its office in Sweida, UNHCR continued to expand its presence on the ground to get closer to persons of concern and will strive to secure further donor funding to ensure the smooth and continuous flow of humanitarian assistance to people in need. UNHCR will also continue to conduct missions to hard-to-reach areas, to build more capacity amongst NGOs and further expand the Community Based Approach. Through this approach and others, UNHCR will continue to mainstream protection in all sectors, increase material assistance to especially vulnerable groups and increase the response to gender based violence. All of this will be done with one goal in mind: to reach the most vulnerable in Syria wherever they may be.



**UNHCR WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS PRESENCE IN SYRIA**

**ALL UNHCR ACTIVITIES  
ARE UNDERTAKEN WITH ONE GOAL IN MIND:**

**TO REACH THE MOST  
VULNERABLE IN SYRIA  
WHEREVER THEY MAY BE**

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**UNHCR**

**The UN Refugee Agency**

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