

# REGIONAL WINTER ASSISTANCE 2016-2017

## PROGRESS REPORT - Syria and Iraq situations

As of 30 January 2016



### (Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt)

Snow storms and torrential rain hit the Middle East in January, creating more difficulties for millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Turkey, heavy snowfall and below-freezing temperatures enveloped most parts of the country. In Lebanon, snow storms blanketed the high-altitude towns in the Bekaa valley and northern Lebanon. In Syria and Iraq, the harsh weather conditions created difficulties for the newly-displaced, particularly in Aleppo and Mosul.

UNHCR has provided winter assistance to more than 3.2 million Syrian IDPs and refugees (95% of the planned beneficiaries) and over 670,000 Iraqi IDPs and refugees (59% of the planned beneficiaries) in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Assistance included seasonal cash assistance, core relief items (CRIs) specific to winter, and shelter insulation support, provided in coordination with government agencies, partners, community outreach volunteers, and the broader inter-agency response platforms.



Syrian and Iraqi  
IDPs and refugees

#### Planned beneficiaries

4.52 million<sup>1</sup>



#### Total budget

USD 347 million

#### Beneficiaries reached

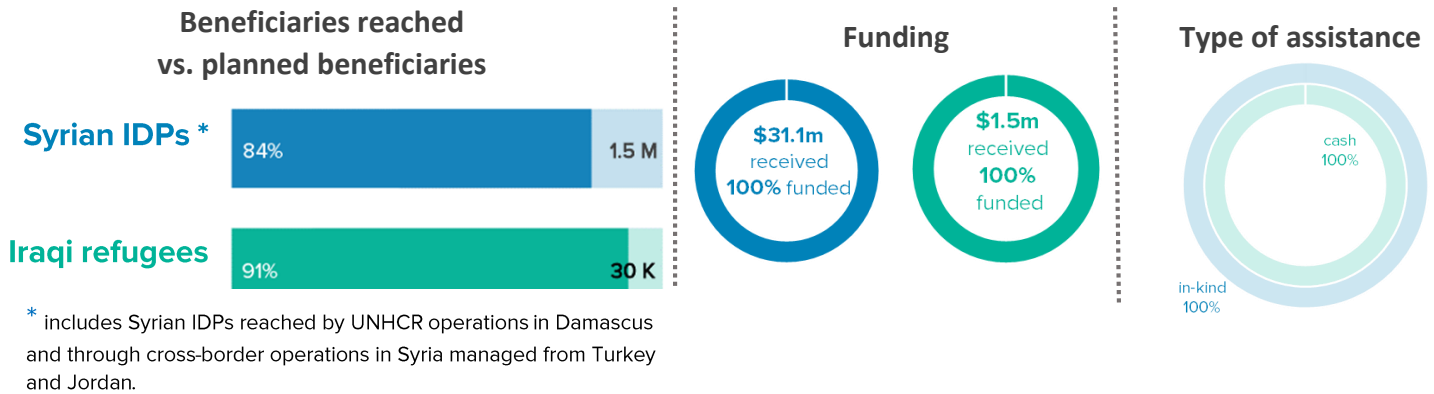
3.9 million (86%)



Haytham and his son collect their core relief items including items specific to winter at Hasansham camp in Iraq. They were recently displaced from western Mosul. © UNHCR/Ivor Prickett

<sup>1</sup> This is slightly reduced from the initial planning figure of 4.72 million as the projected displacement from Iraq (Mosul) is currently less than anticipated to-date.

## SYRIA

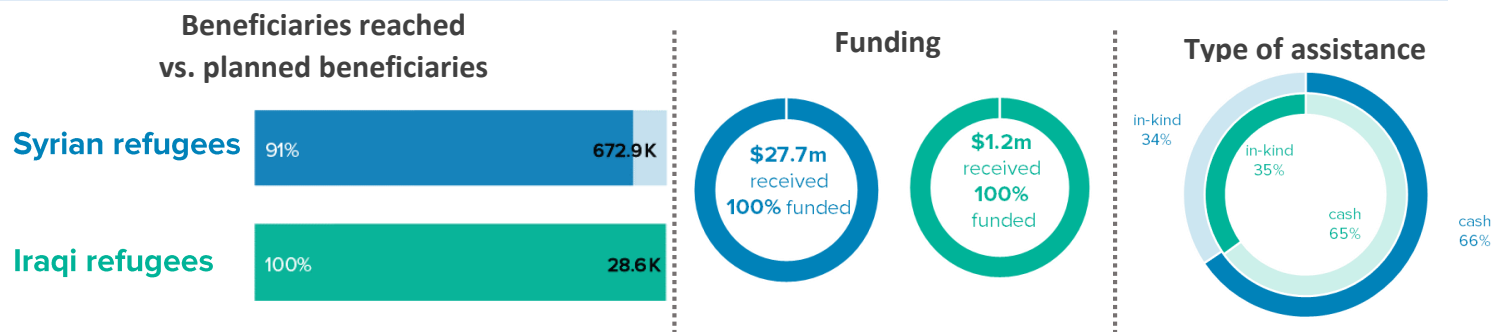


The winter programme in Syria started in September 2016 and as of 30 January 2017, a total of 1,092,057 Syrian IDPs (109% of the initial planned beneficiaries) living in Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, As-Sweida, Damascus, Dar'a, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Quneitra, Rural Damascus, and Tartous governorates were provided with winter assistance including high thermal blankets, plastic sheets and a set of winter clothing. Furthermore, 195,000 IDPs were reached with winter assistance through cross-border operations in Syria managed from Turkey and Jordan.

Though UNHCR has exceeded the initial targets, additional winter response continued in January due to the emerging urgent needs particularly in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, and Al-Hassakeh governorates. In January, UNHCR provided emergency winter assistance to over 22,000 IDPs in Aleppo including those returning to their homes in eastern Aleppo. In Jibreen collective shelter, which accommodates over 5,000 displaced families from eastern Aleppo, insulation of doors and windows was completed, and carpets and stoves were provided. UNHCR also provided winter assistance to around 8,500 individuals (1,700 families) displaced due to the fighting in the Barada valley (Rural Damascus). Tents destroyed by the storms in Tartous have been repaired or replaced.

For the newly arrived Iraqi refugees and Syrian IDPs in the Al-Hol camp in Al-Hassakeh Governorate, winter items such as blankets, carpets, sleeping bags, plastic sheets, underpants, winter clothes, and winter jackets were provided. Furthermore, UNHCR has provided over 27,000 Iraqi refugees with a one-off winter cash assistance of around USD 48 per person to cover specific needs, such as winter clothing and fuel for heating.

## TURKEY



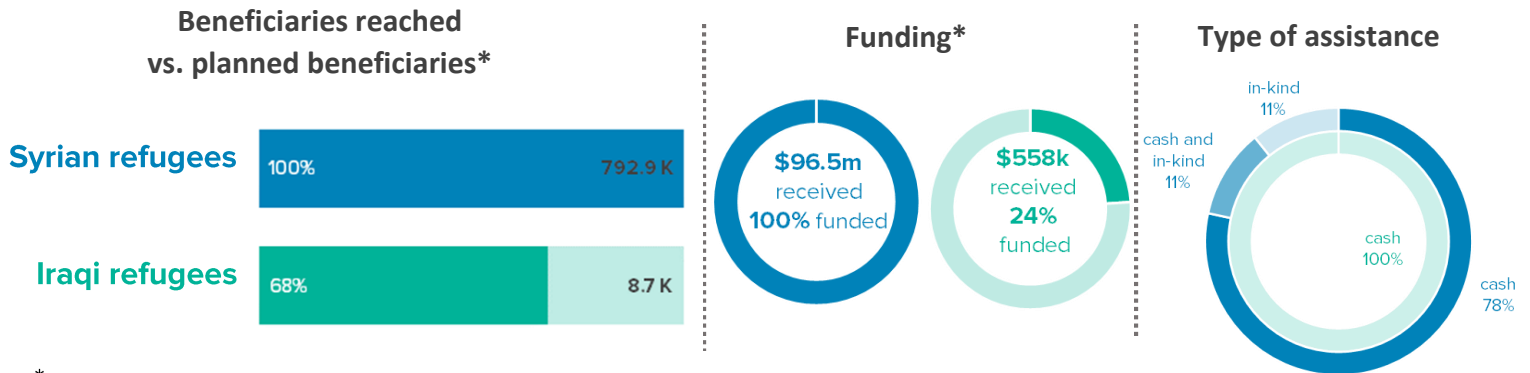
UNHCR has so far provided cash assistance to over 400,000 Syrian refugees and more than 18,000 Iraqi refugees living in urban areas through the one-off cash assistance programme via debit cards issued by the Turkish postal service (PTT). The equivalent of USD 20 million has been delivered through cash assistance to date. The programme is covering 73 out of Turkey's 81 provinces hosting the largest number of refugees and which are more severely affected by winter conditions. In order to inform and communicate with refugees who will benefit from the winter support programme, a fully automated SMS system, a dedicated website and call centres are being administered by UNHCR partners.

A post-distribution monitoring exercise will be conducted by partners after completion of the activities, and tools for the exercise will be harmonized with those developed under the relevant inter-agency forum. For refugees living in camps, winter packages consisting of winter clothes, high thermal blankets and heaters were provided to more than to



200,000 Syrian refugees and 10,000 Iraq refugees. The Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) is ensuring the distribution of winter items across the 23 camps in south-eastern Turkey and UNHCR is monitoring these distributions in collaboration with AFAD.

## LEBANON



\* UNHCR has reached 792,855 Syrian refugees with the 2016 contributions which was fully funded. UNHCR continues to strive to implement 2017 additional winter cash assistance for an additional 22,675 Syrian refugees until the end of winter, requiring USD 10 million.

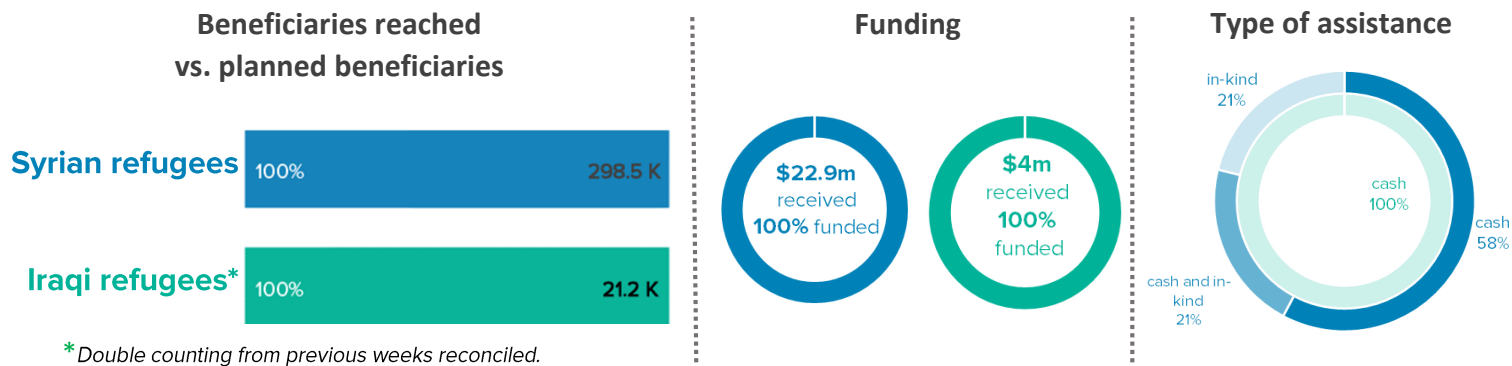
Thanks to the generous contributions of donors, UNHCR has been able to reach 825,470 refugees (including 100% of the planned beneficiaries for 2016 and a number of 2017 planned beneficiaries) so far this winter. With more than 70 per cent of refugees living below the poverty line in Lebanon, UNHCR continues to advocate for continued funding for its winter support in 2017 in order to help refugees survive the cold. UNHCR's winter/cash call centre received a daily average of 2,000 calls. Queries mainly related to eligibility and card status for winter assistance (56%) and food assistance (30%). The World Food Programme (WFP) joined UNHCR's winter/cash call centre as of 1 January. The capacity of the call centre has been temporarily scaled up to accommodate the increased volume of calls and requirements including in relation to winter.

In January, UNHCR anticipated temperatures to reach temperatures below freezing. To ensure readiness, weatherproofing shelter kits consisting of timber, plywood, plastic sheeting, insulation foam and a toolbox have been delivered and installed in substandard buildings and informal settlements. In the Bekaa Valley, given the particularly harsh winter conditions, UNHCR has initiated an assessment of all settlements. Post-distribution monitoring in relation to winter assistance is currently being conducted, with focus group discussions and individual interviews occurring throughout the country. Preliminary results are expected to be available by the end of March 2017.



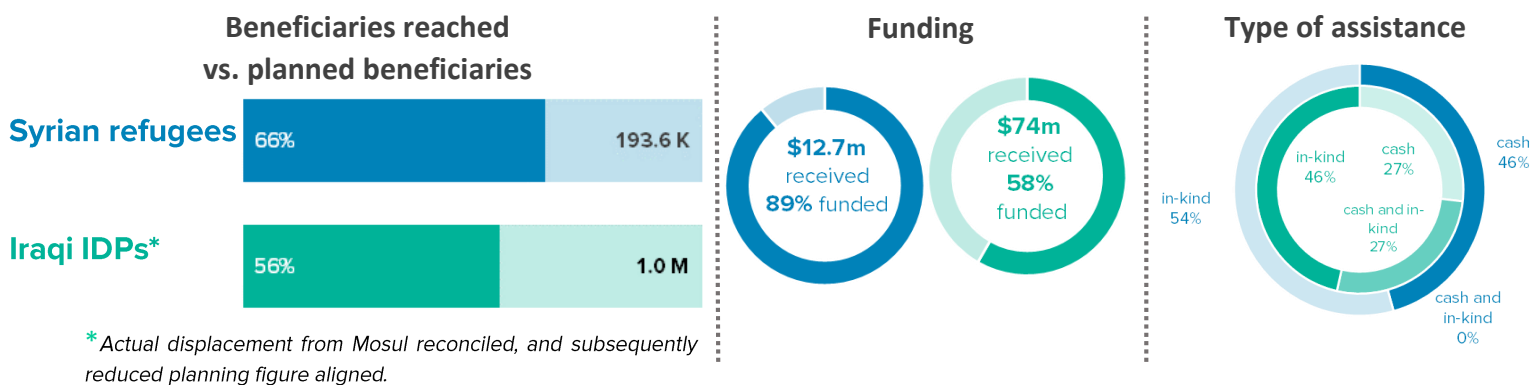
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visits an informal settlement in Zahle, Bekaa Valley. In mountainous regions and the Bekaa Valley snow and sub-zero conditions are common. This can have a huge impact on vulnerable refugee communities, many of whom live in ill-equipped and poorly heated settlements. © UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sánchez

## JORDAN



Most of the major activities for the winter programme both for Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Jordan were completed by end December 2016. In January, UNHCR mobile help desks specific to winter visited higher elevations areas, and identified and provided support to the vulnerable households. Outreach teams also monitored the situation of vulnerable families in informal settlements across the country. The inter-agency Winterization Task Force chaired by UNHCR designed guidelines and procedures for harsh weather conditions, including a harsh weather alert system, in order to strengthen partners' coordination and a more efficient use of resources. A public awareness campaign was launched on the dangers and risks of harsh weather conditions and a minimum emergency stock of 150 high thermal blankets was maintained in community centres in urban areas to be distributed to vulnerable refugees and local communities. Due to extensive preparatory works undertaken, the rainstorm that hit Jordan in January did not cause severe flooding in the Zaatari and Azraq camps. Gas distribution for heating in Azraq camp for about 7,080 families continued in January (and will continue until the end of March).

## IRAQ



In January, UNHCR and its partners continued to respond to the urgent needs among the newly displaced people particularly from Mosul and surrounding areas, Hawiga (Kirkuk Governorate) and Anbar Governorate. For families in camps, full tent insulation kit, CRIs specific to winter, and kerosene for heating (in-kind/cash) have been provided, while for those living in host communities, assistance have been provided through cash assistance and kerosene. Till date, over 585,930 IDPs and 127,255 Syrian refugees in camps and out-of-camp settings have received winter assistance.

UNHCR has expanded its distribution of winter assistance in the newly accessible areas in eastern Mosul. Over the past two months, UNHCR and its partners have distributed nearly 28,000 blankets and 28,000 quilts to almost 9,000 families in newly-accessible areas, including returnee families and members of the host community. With snowfall and freezing temperatures in northern Iraq, UNHCR and partners provided life-saving protection and winter assistance to refugees and IDPs in camps in the mountainous areas of Dahuk Governorate. UNHCR also distributed kerosene to over 8,000 refugee families and more than 7,500 IDP families in Dahuk with each family receiving 200 litres.

UNHCR has increased the number of beneficiaries to be targeted since initial planning in September 2016, in response to the evolving situation and pressing needs of persons fleeing Mosul and other locations. Meanwhile, UNHCR continues to face challenges and constraints with the implementation of the winter programme despite the continued and urgent needs, including difficulties transporting CRIs and kerosene due to the complicated security procedures at checkpoints and limited hours of distribution time due to the security situation and curfews in several locations including in Salah al-Din Governorate. UNHCR has been conducting regular post distribution monitoring (PDM) in the centre south

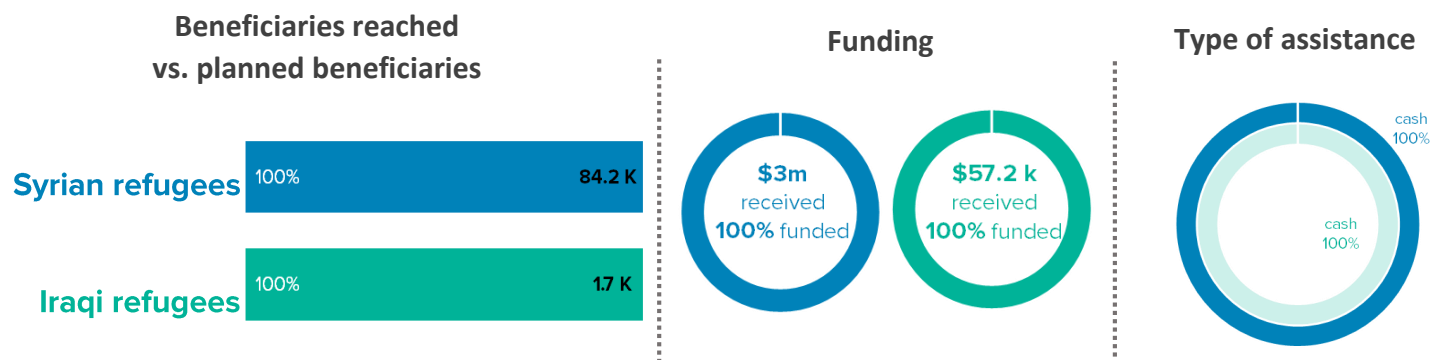


and Kurdistan Region of Iraq through phone call to beneficiaries and onsite visits to confirm quality assurance, that families had indeed received the allocated assistance, and whether they had kept and were using the assistance. Generally, beneficiaries have retained and used kerosene, while a few have resorted to selling some of the CRIs to purchase essential items such as medicines and food.



Children playing in winter snow in Bersive-2 IDP camp in Dahuk Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. UNHCR and partners have so far provided over 585,000 IDPs with winter assistance in Iraq. © UNHCR/BRHA/ Mahir Choli

## EGYPT



This winter, UNHCR provided 84,249 Syrian refugees and 1,695 Iraqi refugees in Egypt with a one-time cash payment of USD 38 per person. For Syrian refugees this was distributed through the Post Offices across the country, while for Iraqi refugees and other nationalities, it was provided through ATM cards. UNHCR closely monitored the distribution through regular meetings with partners as well as by conducting a post distribution monitoring (PDM) exercise in January. The PDM exercise was based on a survey with a sample 1,242 beneficiaries of cash assistance. It showed that over 97 per cent of the refugees succeeded to collect the cash assistance amount provided by UNHCR through the dedicated post offices as planned. The main expenditures were clothes, blankets and food/water.

**UNHCR is grateful to the Governments, charities and other organizations for their contributions that have helped significantly increase the number of people UNHCR will be able to reach with winter assistance in 2016-2017.**

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