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Three siblings walk with their father through the rubble of their neighbourhood in Homs.

# SYRIA SITUATION

The Syria situation entered its tenth year in 2020 with more than 5.5 million Syrian refugees hosted by neighbouring countries, of whom 45% are children and 21% are women.

Living conditions are precarious, with more than 60% of Syrian refugees living in poverty. UNHCR and UNDP continue to co-lead the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in response to the Syria crisis (3RP), coordinating the work of more than 270 partners in the five main hosting countries. Inside the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), UNHCR continues to support IDPs through protection activities, core relief items and shelter activities, while also mobilizing emergency responses to new displacement.

UNHCR's overall requirements for the Syria situation in 2020 stand at \$1.991 billion. As of 25 August 2020, \$684.9 million have been received. Flexible and country-level funds received by UNHCR have allowed the organization to allocate an additional \$66.4 million to the Syria situation, raising the current funding level to 38%. These low funding levels have forced UNHCR's operations in neighbouring countries to cut or reduce some programmes. Further cuts are expected in the second half of 2020 if more funding is not received.

## AFFECTED COUNTRIES



## KEY POPULATION DATA (AS OF 30 JUNE 2020)

**5.5 million** Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries

**6.7 million\*** IDPs

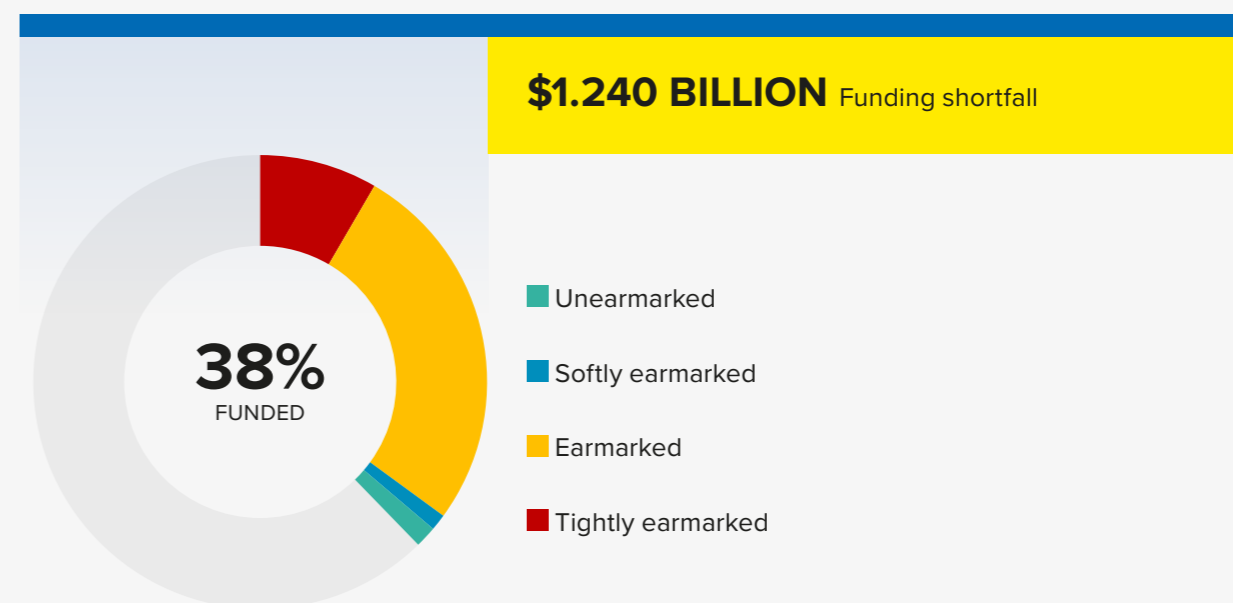
**18,344** refugee returnees to the Syrian Arab Republic (total returnees in 2020)

**160,000** stateless persons

\* Source: OCHA

## \$1.991 BILLION

UNHCR's financial requirements 2020, as of 25 August 2020



## Activities that have already been reduced or cut as a consequence of underfunding



Nine years of conflict weigh heavy on a Syrian refugee. She and her family fled her home in 2013, when fighting broke out in Homs, and sought refuge in Jordan.

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JANUARY

AUGUST

### Health care for Syrians in Egypt



Since the start of 2020, due to lack of funds, health support for Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers has been scaled back and limited to emergency cases. As of October 2020, UNHCR will not be able to support Syrian refugee patients with their access to primary and lifesaving health-care services or with their monthly access to medications. Referrals to secondary and emergency health services will also stop. This will affect the well-being of refugees with treatable medical conditions, creating a risk that they become life-threatening. Primary health care, as the entry point to the health system, will be essential to maintain, particularly in operations with a COVID-19 response.

**Number of impacted beneficiaries:**  
5,500 Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers

**Funding needed:**  
\$1.25 million

### Education for Syrian refugees in Egypt



As of August 2020, UNHCR has had to reduce the size of education grants provided to Syrian refugee children and youth enrolled in public schools in Egypt by 40%. Grants will now only cover a maximum 25% of educational expenses, placing vulnerable low-income refugee and asylum-seeker students at high risk of dropping out of school and exposing them to multiple protection risks. UNHCR has also had to reduce its support to the Ministry of Education for teacher trainings by 90%, potentially impacting educational outcomes. UNHCR provides education grants for each student once a year. The payment of the education grant usually takes place during the last trimester of the calendar year.

**Number of impacted beneficiaries:**  
28,000 Syrian refugee and asylum-seeker students

**Funding needed:**  
\$2 million

## Activities that could be reduced or cut from August 2020

### Winterization assistance in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria)



The winterization programme covers the period from September 2020 to March 2021. Without adequate funds, UNHCR will have to reduce or stop its winterization assistance to vulnerable IDPs in Syria and Syrian refugees in the region, including cash assistance for winter and core relief items specific to winter. Syrian IDP and refugee families will face increased vulnerabilities and protection risks. Household members will be at risk of worsening health conditions, as well as of resorting to negative coping mechanisms to meet their winter needs, such as going into debt to pay for heating or decreasing their food expenditure.

**Number of impacted beneficiaries:**  
3.1 million individuals

**Funding needed:**  
\$182.9 million

### Education support in Turkey



From September 2020, UNHCR will have to reduce education support to Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. Some 85,000 secondary-school aged youth will be unable to commence e-learning for the new academic year, without the necessary tablets and smart devices to access online learning modules – the new modality of teaching in Turkey since the start of the COVID-19 crisis.

**Number of impacted beneficiaries:**  
85,000 students

**Funding needed:**  
\$2.6 million

### Emergency response in Lebanon



As of September 2020, UNHCR will not be able to provide support to vulnerable families affected by the August 2020 explosion in Beirut. Without funding, families will not have means to repair their damaged apartments or to move to another one if their house was completely destroyed. The explosion comes on top of the deepening economic crisis and COVID-19 restrictions, which had affected living conditions for vulnerable refugees and host communities and who will soon be exposed to the upcoming harsh winter. Vulnerable families may be forced to resort to negative coping strategies to meet their needs. Most commonly, this includes decreasing food expenditure and increasing household debts. Families may also reduce expenditure on essential non-food expenses, namely rent, health and education.

**Number of impacted beneficiaries:**  
100,000 people affected by the blast

**Funding needed:**  
\$35 million (including \$32.5 million for shelter interventions and \$2.5 million for protection activities)

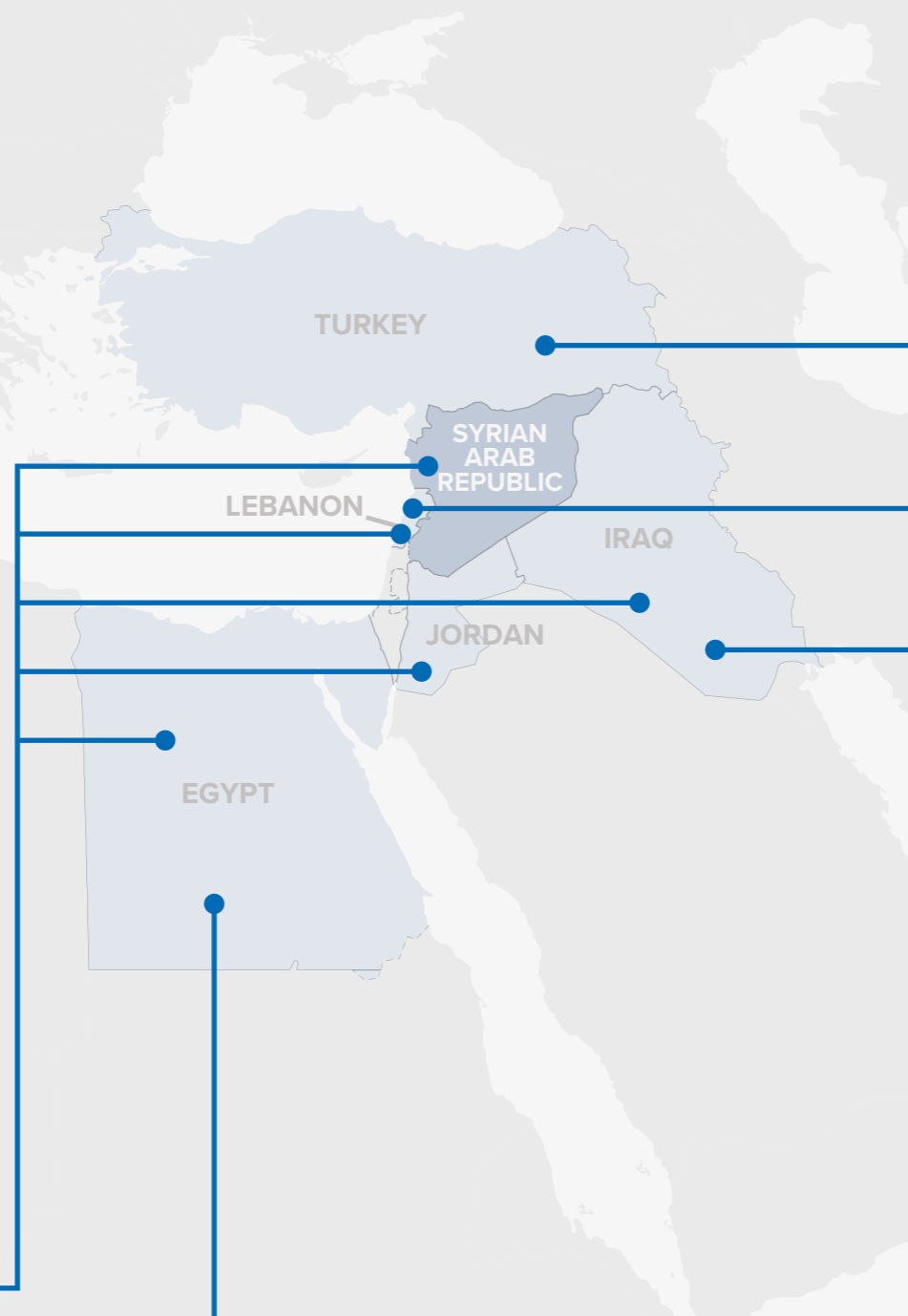
### Multi-purpose cash assistance in Egypt and Iraq



From September 2020, provision of multi-purpose cash assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees will have to be reduced. Without funding in the final quarter of 2020, nearly 11,000 Syrian refugee families will be unable to meet their daily basic needs, pay rent and maintain access to essential services. Due to mobility restrictions and other measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, vulnerabilities of Syrian households have been exacerbated, as many have lost their jobs or regular sources of income. Highly vulnerable refugee households may resort to negative coping mechanisms to meet their basic needs.

**Number of impacted beneficiaries:**  
10,956 households

**Funding needed:**  
\$14.5 million



## SPOTLIGHT: BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Falak Selo knows what the sudden loss of home, country and loved ones can do to a person's mental wellbeing. She was studying philosophy at the University of Damascus in 2013 when the civil war reached the area where her mother and sister were living. She abandoned her studies to flee with them to the town of Akre in northern Iraq, which now shelters over 1,000 Syrian refugees. Accommodation is cramped, with little natural light, but Falak has learned skills to help her cope, and, since 2017 she has been sharing them with other refugees at Akre through her role as a community worker with UNHCR's mental health and psychosocial support unit. Funding shortfalls may force UNHCR to reduce or stop its multi-purpose cash assistance to refugees in Iraq come September 2020, which was programmed to help families mitigate the negative socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. These factors are major contributors to alarming reports that UNHCR has been receiving of a surge in mental health issues among refugees and forcibly displaced people across the Middle East region, and beyond, since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and that trained community workers – many of them refugees themselves like Falak – are trying to address.

*"It's a place where you see a lot of pain in people. It gives me a feeling of fulfillment when I see that people are trusting me and coming back for my support."*

*- Falak Selo*

Community worker Falak Selo (right) talks to a fellow Syrian refugee about the mental health services available at Al-Qalaa (the Citadel) camp in Akre, northern Iraq