

FRESH DISPLACEMENT CHANGING DYNAMICS UNHCR RESPONDS

UNHCR SYRIA 2015
MID-YEAR REPORT



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency
مفوضية الأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين

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GLOSSARY

ACF	Action Against Hunger	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
AGDM	Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming	NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups
CBI	Community-Based Initiative	PBIEDS	Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management	PHC	Primary Health Care
CRI	Core Relief Item	PSS	Psychological Social Support
DRC	Danish Refugee Council	PU	Première Urgence
GBV	Gender Based Violence	SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
GOPA	Greek Orthodox Patriarchy	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
GoS	Government of Syria	SRP	Syria Response Plan
HR	Human Rights	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IED	Improvised Explosive Device	UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
IHL	International Humanitarian Law	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
IMC	International Medical Corps	VBIEDS	Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization	WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
IOM	International Organization of Migration	WoS	Whole of Syria
MoLA	Ministry of Local Administration	WFP	World Food Programme
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs		
NFI	Non-Food Item		

The figures highlighted in this publication are from the period 01 January – 30 June 2015

FOREWORD

FROM THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE

The crisis in Syria entered its fifth year on March 15 and humanitarian needs are staggering, with 12.2 million people in need of life saving aid, over four million refugees fleeing across the borders, 7.6 million internally displaced and more than 212,000 people trapped in besieged areas without access to humanitarian assistance. At present there is huge despair as there is still no end in sight. The impact of the conflict in Syria is complex and wide ranging, as amongst many heartbreaking things it has caused forced displacement, sudden destitution, crumbling infrastructures, the breakup of families and whole communities, as well as the collapse of the normal social structures.



The protection needs of the Syrian population are massive with UNHCR facing huge challenges in terms of access and reach to meet their needs. Despite this, in the first six months UNHCR as the main protection agency, has reached 161,100 individuals with Protection and Community Services interventions including the capacity building of UNHCR partners and outreach volunteers, targeted material assistance, socio-economic activities, recreational activities, psychosocial support (PSS), Legal aid, GBV referral, child protection services, community based initiatives as well as awareness raising sessions on various issues, ranging from residency procedures to prevention of GBV and early marriages in Syria. In addition, in order to provide community services and legal aid and maximize the outreach across key governorates hosting the majority of IDPs, UNHCR signed partnership agreements with 16 partners, including our main partner the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and International and National NGOs.

We have, and will continue to, use every avenue available to provide protection to the most vulnerable people throughout Syria. One such example was the recent roll out of five additional Community Centers in Homs as a pilot scheme for an estimated population of 490,000 IDPs. Now service providers will pool their resources to serve IDPs under one roof and provide standardized services inside these Centers. Once this approach is successfully tested and reviewed, it will be rolled out gradually in other governorates and provide better and more efficient protection to those most in need.

Despite the very difficult, challenging and volatile operating conditions, UNHCR, continues to also provide other types of humanitarian assistance to those in need throughout Syria. At the end of June 2015, UNHCR had dispatched 5,516,886 CRIs to 1,272,920 needy individuals in 12 out of the 14 Governorates, provided cash assistance to 22,731 beneficiaries, ensured 356,962 individuals had access to healthcare and provided shelter assistance to 15,690 beneficiaries. For example, we have responded to the fresh displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, many of them multiple times, due to the escalating conflict, fierce clashes and turmoil in many parts of Syria, like Ariha, Busra Al Sham, Idlib city, Palmyra, Daraa, Aleppo and Hassakeh to name but a few. Throughout these displacements UNHCR and its partners responded quickly, identifying those most in need and prioritizing these for the distribution of CRIs such as blankets, mattresses, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets, hygiene sets and jerry cans. We also dispatched emergency tents for 11,000 people and have ensured that contingency plans for further influxes of people were in place.

We have also continued to deliver assistance in areas that are besieged and very hard to reach. For example on 8th March 2015, in response to the dire humanitarian situation of the population in Eastern Aleppo, we led and undertook successfully yet another cross-line mission with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) within a six hour negotiated humanitarian truce there. Delivery of urgently needed medicines and medical equipment, humanitarian relief items as well as winter clothing for children and food provided by WFP, was carried out. UNHCR took the opportunity to impress on all parties the need to scale up humanitarian assistance there and the continued efforts to provide aid and protection to the vulnerable, not only in Aleppo, but throughout Syria. The determination to deliver assistance to the most in need regardless of the negative impact and high risk to the UNHCR staff, was clearly seen after the hijacking of the first UN Interagency convoy on March 26 to Arrastan, North of Homs, but regardless of this incident, UNHCR participated in further Inter Agency convoys to the area and covered contributions to 10,000 individuals with Core Relief Items, and will continue to deliver as it has always done.

However, despite everything that is happening, there are many heartwarming stories that bring hope, joy, strength and determination with one such example being in Homs Old City. One year after the first people started to return there, UNHCR continues to assist returnees after the two years of conflict which left massive destruction in its wake. A photo exhibition entitled “After One Year” held in Al Hamidiyeh neighborhood was a living memory of life in the old city from when the very first families came back, the renovation of housing, distribution of CRIs by UNHCR, the return of small businesses as well as everyday milestones and other daily life occurrences, that show strength and a determination to go on no matter what.

One thing that never ceases to amaze me is the resilience, pride, dignity and adaptability of the Syrian people especially the Internally Displaced. We, the UNHCR Syria family, firmly resolve that despite the lingering war and its bitter reality, we will continue to strive to reach those in need with our dedicated staff and our partners, regardless of their location and lessen the hardships of the people of Syria. We hope that 2015 will be the last year that this beautiful country and its people see conflict and 2016 will finally, at long last, see peace reign.

Tarik Kurdi
Representative
UNHCR Syria



CHANGING DYNAMICS AND FRESH LARGESCALE DISPLACEMENTS

The first six months of 2015 has seen fresh fighting, changing dynamics and the massive displacement of over 1 million people, some multiple times, throughout Syria.

For example, in February and March fierce clashes in Tal Tamer, located 40 km west of Hassakeh city resulted in the displacement of nearly 15,000 people to Qamishly, Hassakeh city, Amuda, Derbasia and Ras Al Ein. In March, the takeover of Idlib city by NSAGs following fierce fighting, led to the displacement of approximately 230,000 people with many of these fleeing to surrounding rural areas and about 40,000 of



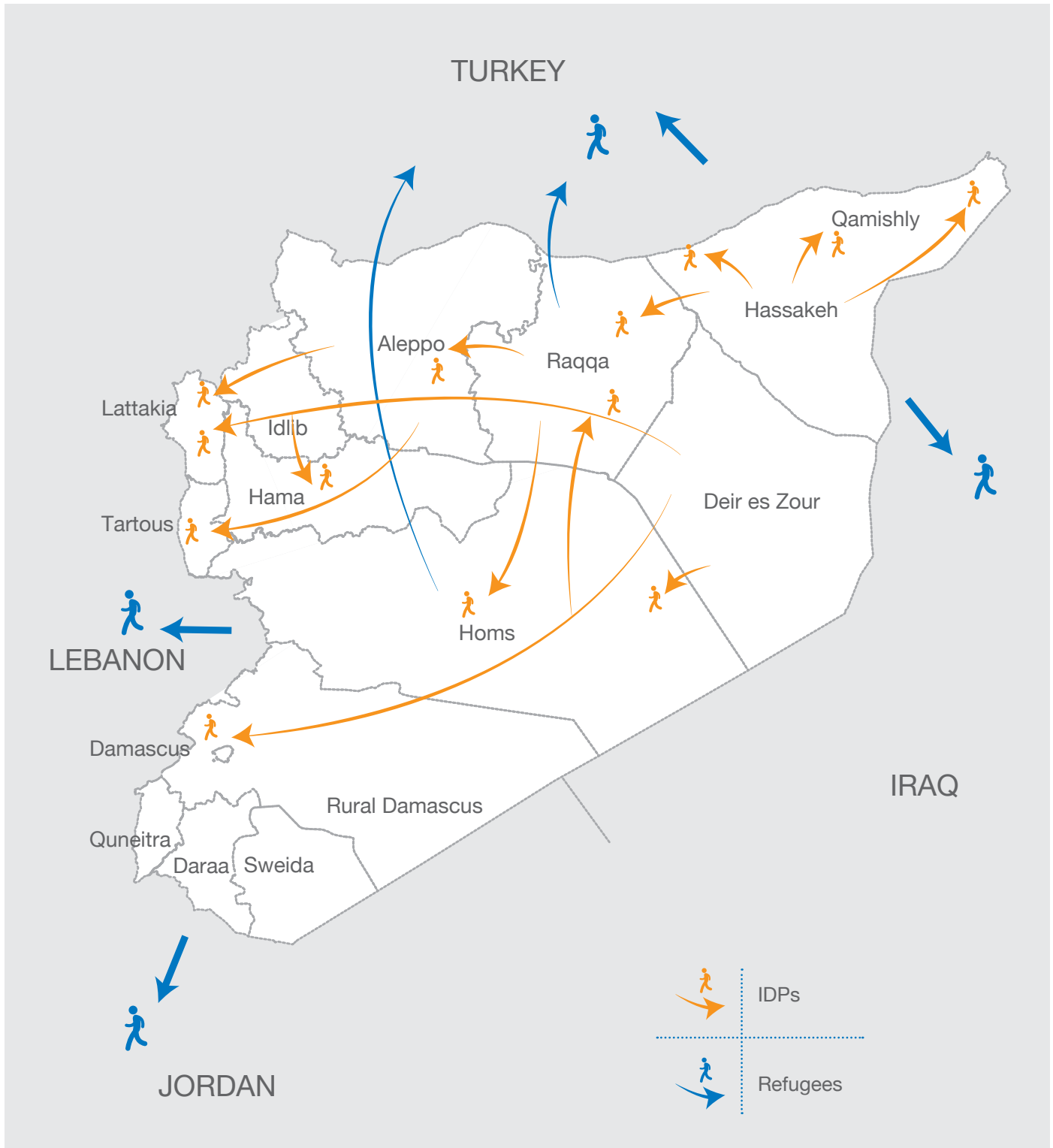
these moving to neighboring governorates such as Hama, Tartous and Lattakia. Also in March, owing to fighting in the Busra Al Sham area of Daraa governorate, approximately 50,000 individuals were forced to flee their homes and seek safety in rural Daraa, Sweida, Rural Damascus and Damascus city.

In May, the city of Palmyra was seized by ISIS causing the displacement of around 10,000 people, many who fled to the Al Quaryiten area south east of Homs. In June 2015, ISIS advanced in the southern areas of Hassakeh City and armed clashes started with the GoS resulting in significant displacement of around 90,000 people to the eastern and northern neighborhoods of the city (Azizyeh, Saleyen and Msharaf), as well as to nearby villages north of the city. An additional 30,000 was estimated to have been displaced to the northern districts of Qamishly, Amuda, Ras Al Ain, Derbasia and Tal Tamer.

Throughout these displacements UNHCR and its partners have responded rapidly, identifying those most in need and prioritizing these for the distribution of CRIs such as blankets, mattresses, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets, hygiene sets and jerry cans. It also dispatched emergency tents for 11,000 people. In addition, UNHCR has led the protection response to these displacements by strengthening its own and its partner's response capacity in Hassakeh, Homs, Tartous, Hama, Lattakia and Rural Damascus, deploying additional protection staff to its Field Offices, liaising with local duty bearers and conducting assessment missions. It has also strengthened its permanent protection capacity in field areas affected by the conflict through the deployment of additional five international staff, including three protection officers, to its Field Offices in Aleppo, Homs, Qamishly and Sweida.

Despite the many challenges and the huge scope of the emergency UNHCR will continue to strive to respond to deliver assistance and protection to the vulnerable in Syria, regardless of where they may be.

FRESH DISPLACEMENTS IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2015



IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF

2015

UNHCR through various means including cross border and cross line missions reached 310,000 beneficiaries in 26 hard-to-reach and besieged areas

Five Million Core Relief Items Distributed to 1.27 million Beneficiaries

The snowstorm Salam which hit Syria on 07 January caused chaos and further hardship for Syrians throughout the country with roads impassable, intermittent communications, electricity and fuel shortages. UNHCR urgently responded by dispatching 150,000 CRIs such as mattresses, thermal blankets, sleeping mats, winter clothes and plastic sheeting to over 40,000 beneficiaries across Syria

UNHCR advised staff to work from home due to large scale Rocket and Mortar Attacks on Damascus in January and February: On 25 January, Damascus city experienced its heaviest attack in over a year with open sources reporting over 90 rocket and mortar strikes throughout the city. On 05 February another, heavier attack took place with open sources this time reporting 135 rocket and mortar attacks. Strikes were reported in the commercial and residential areas close to both hotels where UN staff reside including one direct strike on the Four Seasons Hotel

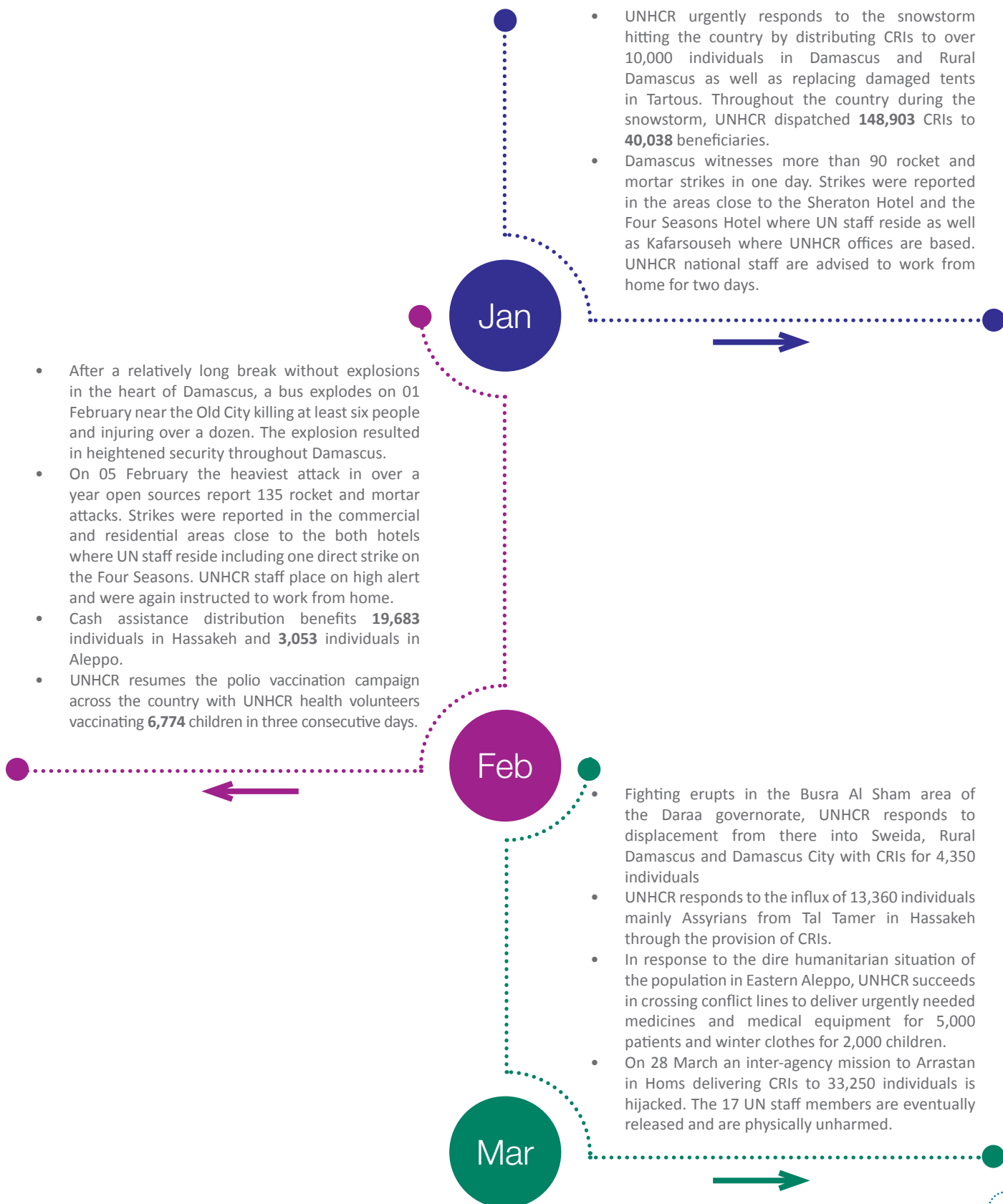
UNHCR responds to huge displacements from people fleeing the fresh fighting in Idlib, Palmyra, Hassakeh and Daraa

One Year on – UNHCR continues to assist returnees in Homs Old City

On 08 March, a UNHCR cross-line mission led by the UNHCR Syria Representative during a negotiated six hour ceasefire accessed the hard-to-reach areas of Bustan Al Qasr, Al Ansari, Al Firdos, Al Sukari and Mwasalat, neighbourhoods of Eastern Aleppo to deliver urgently needed medicines and medical equipment for 5,000 patients to the Al Zarzour hospital in Bustan Al Qasr, and winter clothes for 2,000 children in Jisr Al Haj

In April UNHCR Syria upgraded its registration services by introducing biometrics and issuing secured laminated ID cards

TIMELINE



Apr

- CRI distribution in Daraa to 2,500 individuals is suspended due to a rocket attack.
- Naseeb crossing on the Syria-Jordan border is closed after being captured by AOGs which affects humanitarian aid shipments from Jordan to Syria.
- UNHCR dispatches 2,000 family tents to Tartous for distribution to IDPs fleeing from Idlib through UNHCR implementing partner, SARC.
- UNHCR carries out three cross border movements through the Nusaybeen crossing point between Turkey and Syria resulting in 30 trucks crossing over carrying CRIs for 25,000 people.
- New iris scan and laminated ID cards are launched by UNHCR to upgrade refugees' registration services. As of the end of June 7,532 new secure ID cards were issued and 3,949 individuals enrolled in the system.

• **One million beneficiaries are reached with CRIs.**

- On 20 May the ancient city of Palmyra was seized by ISIS causing many families to flee to the Al Quarryten area south east of Homs. UNHCR responds with CRIs for 15,000 individuals.
- In May 2015 UNHCR, in partnership with MoLA, commences a new six-month shelter maintenance project which includes community mobilization covering the Lattakia and Tartous governorates.
- On 04 May 2015 UNHCR delivers CRIs for 2,500 people in the hard-to-reach As Safira area in the Aleppo Governorate.
- The Mughambo neighborhood of Aleppo located in close proximity to UNHCR's field office is shelled. More than 40 mortars and rockets landed in the area, including two less than 300 meters from the office. All staff were safe and accounted for with no damage caused to the office.

May

- **Five Million CRIs distributed.**
- Five mortars land in Jaramanah city in Rural Damascus resulting in the death of two civilians and 15 injuries. This attack directly affected the distribution of CRIs there.
- Rockets and mortars hit Sweida City causing an unconfirmed number of casualties. An immediately headcount of UNHCR staff was initiated with all staff accounted for.
- The strongest attacks this year take place in Aleppo, targeting the city on more than five fronts simultaneously, causing many deaths and injuries. UNHCR staff, were all safe and accounted for, however due to insecurity a number of staff had to be temporarily relocated.
- World Refugee Day Celebrated throughout Syria.
- Large Scale clashes in the southern areas of Hassakeh City leads to the displacement of an estimated 120,000 people, UNHCR leads the response.

Jun

HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT



CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS FACED BY UNHCR

General Insecurity: Risk of collateral damage from gunfire, rockets and mortars, IEDs VBIEDs and PBIEDS as well as the increased risk of kidnapping with the expansion of ISIS.

Attacks on UN staff: Both the Sheraton Hotel and the Four Seasons Hotel where UN staff reside have been hit by mortars and rockets on a number of occasions. Another example was in March when an inter-agency cross-line mission comprised of 17 UN staff members was returning from the Arrastan area north of Homs and was hijacked by a group of armed men. They were later released unharmed.



Shifting lines of crisis: Most recently there have been shifts in Idlib, Daraa, Palmyra and Hassakeh resulting in limited/denied access to humanitarian assistance. In addition to these, the capture of the Naseeb crossing with Jordan by NSAGs in April has resulted in the closure of the border seriously impacting on UNHCR's logistic operations.

A proliferation and fragmentation of armed groups: There are now approximately 160 NSAGs now operating in Syria resulting in constantly changing allegiances further complicating operating in this chaotic environment.



Use of sophisticated weaponry, indiscriminate attacks in densely populated areas:

For example, on 25 January, Damascus city experienced its heaviest attack in over a year with open sources reporting over 90 rocket and mortar strikes throughout the city. On 05 February another, even heavier attack took place with open sources this time reporting 135 rocket and mortar attacks. Strikes were reported in the commercial and residential areas close to both hotels where UN staff reside including one direct strike on the Four Seasons. These attacks continue on a regular basis not only in Damascus, but also in Aleppo and Homs.

Outflow of skilled colleagues and potential candidates:

The brain drain abroad of qualified people has led to lack of expertise and capacity in many areas.

Grave violations of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law continue causing casualties and displacement whilst hindering access to key locations within Syria:

Given the constraints in terms of humanitarian access, insecurity, the danger and sensitivities involved in carrying out sustained protection interventions in the midst of conflict, especially in areas controlled by ISIS, and the limited protection capacity on the ground, it is clear that despite best efforts the protection needs of the conflict affected population remain significantly unaddressed.

Bureaucratic hurdles impeding access and delivery:

These include visas for humanitarian staff, granting of facilitation letters for deliveries as well as Notes Verbales for missions throughout Syria.

Decline in funding affecting the scope of UNHCRs response:

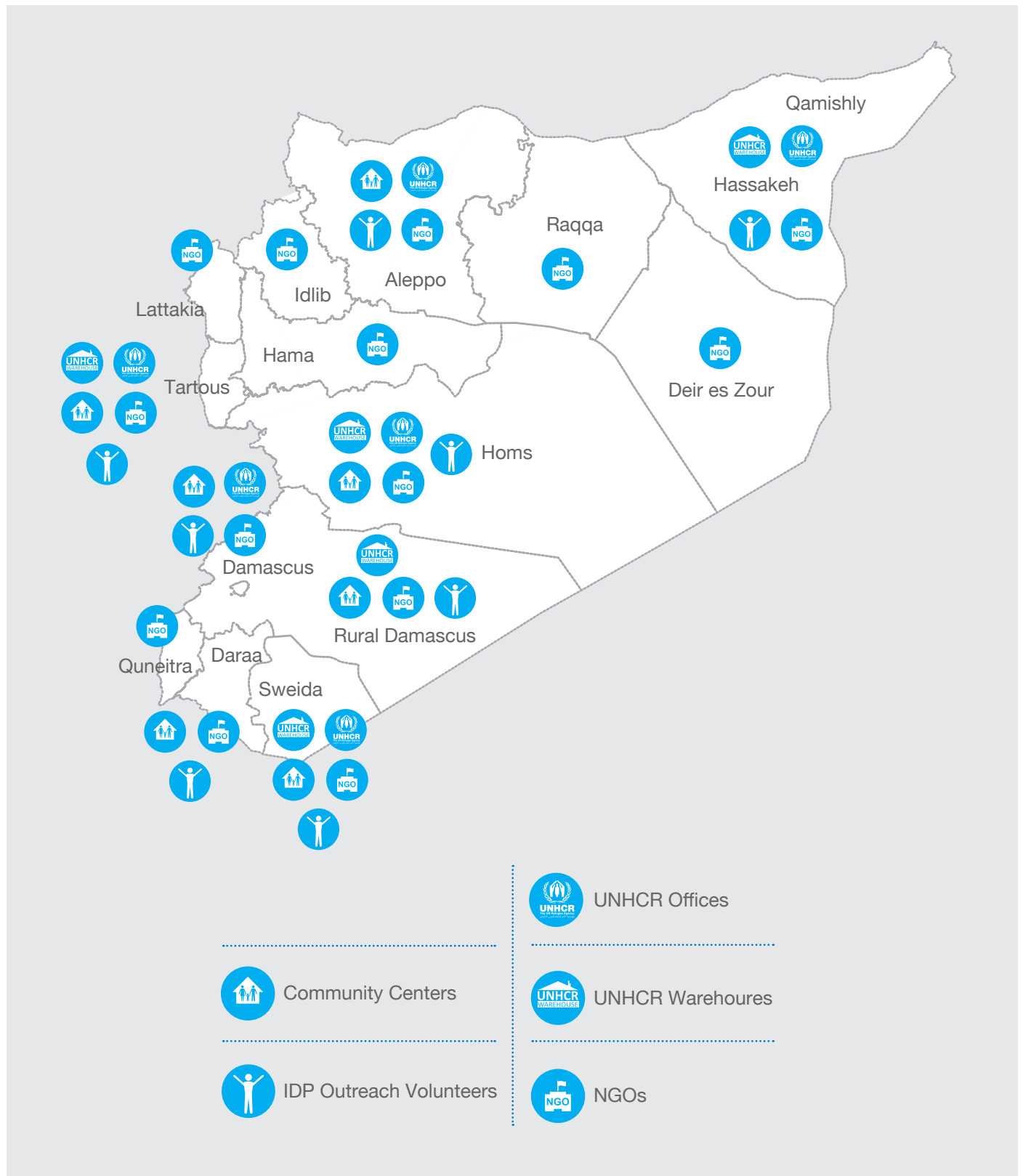
In 2015, UNHCR needs USD 309.7 million to implement its Response Plan for Syria. However in the first six months of 2015, UNHCR Syria Office received a total contribution of USD 71.1 million. This leaves a funding gap of USD 238.6 million and already UNHCR's programmes have been severely affected, leaving millions of people at risk. Already this year, due to lack of funding UNHCR Syria has been forced to significantly reduce the weekly dispatch of CRIs in order to retain the capacity to respond to further emergency displacements.



Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) in car park of Sheraton Hotel

..... DUE TO THE CONSTRAINTS MENTIONED ABOVE, UNHCR HAS REACHED ONLY HALF THE BENEFICIARIES WITH CRIs AND SHELTER SOLUTIONS THAT IT REACHED IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

UNHCR PRESENCE IN SYRIA



WHOLE OF SYRIA APPROACH AND THE 2015 SRP

Since September 2014, humanitarian actors operating inside Syria from Damascus or across the Turkish and Jordanian borders decided to embark on a “Whole of Syria” (WOS) approach in an effort to improve the effectiveness and operational reach of their collective responses. In implementing this plan, humanitarian actors have committed to respecting the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Under the 2015 SRP UNHCR is Sector Lead in Protection and Community Services, CCCM and NFI/Shelter

The humanitarian strategy revolves around five key elements:

- Coordinated action
- Prioritization of needs
- Ensuring access to affected people without discrimination
- Increasing response capacity
- Emergency preparedness.

The 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan includes 11 sectors/clusters, with UNHCR being sector lead in Protection and Community Services, CCCM and NFI/Shelter and has thus responded by deploying dedicated Sector Coordinators and extra staff to ensure an effective response. Humanitarian actors responding inside Syria under the SRP need over US\$2.9 billion to assist up to 12.2 million people in need, setting specific targets for each sector. However, despite the scale-up of the response, critical gaps remain. For example UNHCR needs USD 309.7 million to implement its Response Plan for Syria, but up to 30 June, UNHCR Syria Office received a total contribution of USD 71.1 million, leaving a funding gap of 77% (USD 238.6 million). This gap will negatively impact the humanitarian response in Syria throughout the rest of 2015, particularly given the recent large displacements from Idlib, Daraa, Palmyra and Hassakeh.



UNHCR Syria coordinating with UNHCR Turkey for cross border delivery

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As part of the WoS approach, the 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP) was developed, in consultation with the Syrian Government, as an overarching framework for the humanitarian response inside Syria. It covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015, aiming to address large-scale humanitarian needs throughout all 14 governorates, using the most direct and effective routes to deliver assistance. It also provides the umbrella for coordinated action to prioritize resources for the most affected areas and people in need, increasing access, response capacity and advocating for increased protection. Bringing together humanitarian actors working in Syria or from neighbouring countries for the first time under a single strategic framework, the plan aims to increase the effectiveness of the response by improving the identification of needs and gaps inside Syria and strengthening the harmonization and streamlining of response activities across the different hubs, thus reducing overlap and duplication of efforts and increasing outreach.



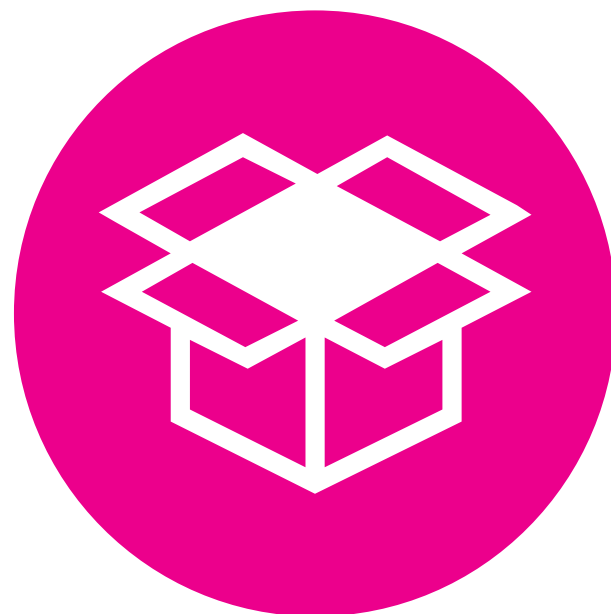
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CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)



In the first half of 2015 UNHCR in Syria reached **1,272,920** vulnerable people with more than **5.5 million** Core Relief Items

Core Relief Items (CRIs) sometimes known as Non Food items (NFIs) are items other than food used in humanitarian contexts, when providing assistance to those affected by natural disasters or war. When people are displaced due to conflict they become vulnerable, often fleeing and losing everything, including their homes and supportive social networks. UNHCR contributes to the physical and psychological health of displaced populations through the provision of Core Relief Items (CRIs) which assists maintaining their dignity and providing for some of their basic needs. In Syria, UNHCR's CRI kits include essential household items such as mattresses, blankets, plastic sheets, containers for water, cooking utensils and hygiene kits. In addition, other items can be added to the kits during times of extra hardship, such as rechargeable fans in very hot summers and portable heaters and winter clothes during the harsh winters in Syria.



To fulfil the growing needs of the displaced throughout Syria who often flee their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs and ensure that UNHCR distributes lifesaving CRIs to as many of the 7.6 million IDPs as possible, UNHCR runs a huge logistical operation involving everything from forecasting, planning, and budgeting to local, regional or even global procurement, especially as many goods are not available in Syria at present because of the limited production capacity due to the crisis.



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UNHCR DISPATCH ACROSS CONFLICT LINES

UNHCR reached in the first half of the year 26 hard-to-reach areas in Hassakeh, Daraa, Homs, Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Quneitra, including one besieged area. These cross-line missions resulted in 310,000 vulnerable beneficiaries receiving CRIs. The access was gained through UNHCR missions, inter-agency missions and regular programmes. For example, on 08 March 2015, a UNHCR cross-line mission led by the UNHCR Syria Representative during a negotiated six-hour ceasefire accessed the hard-to-reach areas of Bustan Al Qasr, Al Ansari, Al Firdos, Al Sukari and Mwasalat, neighbourhoods of Eastern Aleppo to deliver urgently needed medicines and medical equipment for 5,000 patients to the Al Zarzour hospital in Bustan Al Qasr, and winter clothes for 2,000 children in Jisr Al Haj.

The population in the eastern Aleppo is estimated to be around 600,000 people, for whom humanitarian assistance was last delivered in October 2014.

The humanitarian aid items were offloaded from UNHCR trucks stationed at the last crossing point and loaded on 45 small pull-carts and, thereafter, taken to the hard-to-reach areas. With this mission providing some relief to the people in Eastern Aleppo, UNHCR also took the opportunity to impress on all parties the need to scale up humanitarian assistance and promised that it will continue its efforts to provide aid and protection to the vulnerable in Aleppo and throughout Syria.

In addition UNHCR gained access to several other hard-to-reach areas bringing much needed assistance to 14,500 individuals in Qudsaya, 10,000 individuals in Ghizlaniyyeh, 2,500 individuals in Maloula, 5,000 individuals in Bloudan, 5,000 individuals in Al Nabek, 26,000 in Yalda, Babella and Beit Sahm and 25,000 individuals in Deir Atyieh in Rural Damascus as well as 11,250 individuals in Yarmouk in Damascus.



DIMINISHED BORDER CROSSINGS...

The recent takeover by Non State Armed Groups of the Naseeb border crossing between Syria and Jordan leading to its closure on 02 April, continues to have a significant negative effect on UNHCR humanitarian operations in Southern Syria. To mitigate this, UNHCR is scaling up its cross border movements through the Lebanese and Turkish borders as well as assistance coming through the ports in Tartous and Lattakia. For instance, several cross border movements were closely coordinated through the Nusaybeen crossing between UNHCR Turkey and UNHCR Syria in the Hassakeh governorate starting from 16 April which resulted in 30 trucks crossing over carrying CRIs for 25,000 people and were moved to the UNHCR warehouse in Qamishly and unloaded as contingency stock.

As of the 30 June, a total of 237 trucks from UNHCR have entered Syria through Lebanon, Turkey and through Jordan (before the closure of Naseeb border crossing). These were organized as part of UNHCR regular programmes and do not include the cross border operations taking place pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2165.



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CROSS BORDER PURSUANT TO UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 2139, 2165 AND 2191

Security Council Resolution 2165, passed on 14 July 2014 asserts that United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners could, with notification to the Syrian authorities, use the border crossings at Bab Al Salam, Bab Al Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al Ramtha in addition to those already in use, 'to ensure that assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, reached people in need throughout Syria through the most direct routes'. This builds on an earlier resolution UNSC 2139 that came into place on 22 February 2014 which demanded that all parties put an end to all forms of violence and attacks against civilians and facilitate the expansion of humanitarian relief operations. In addition, Security Council Resolution 2191 was adopted unanimously on 17 December 2014 and decided that United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners could continue with notification to the Syrian authorities, to use these crossings until 10 January 2016.

Security Council Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 are

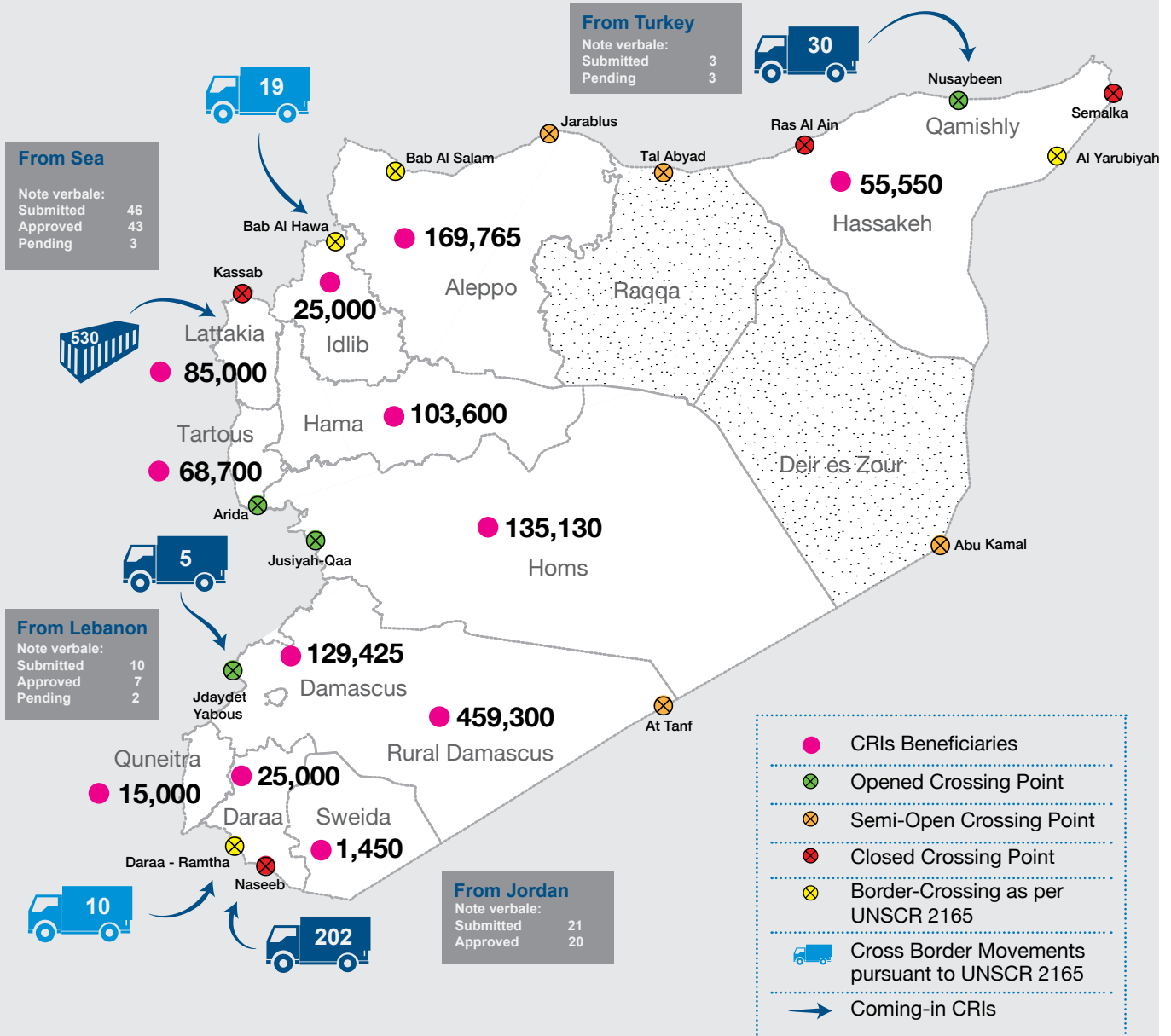
important tools in recalling the obligations of all parties under International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law and provide leverage to negotiate safe and unhindered access to the growing number of internally displaced and civilians in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Core principles 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. However, practically speaking, for any operation to be effective, it will require the consent of all parties to the conflict.

In the first six months of 2015 a total of 29 cross-border convoys took place: 19 through the Bab Al Hawa crossing in Turkey and 10 through the Ramtha crossing in Jordan. These missions provided CRIs for 235,000 individuals in the Daraa, Quneitra, Hama, Idlib and Aleppo governorates.



1,272,920

BENEFICIARIES OF CRIs BY LOCATION



5,516,886 CRIs DISPATCHED BY UNHCR

CRI FAMILY KIT



1 KIT



250 \$



1 FAMILY

3 Mattresses

3 Sleeping Mats

1 Kitchen set

1 Plastic Sheet

5 Blankets

1 Jerry Can

1 Hygiene kit

WINTERIZED CRI FAMILY KIT



1 KIT



300 \$



1 FAMILY

3 Mattresses

3 Sleeping Mats

1 Kitchen set

2 Plastic Sheets

* 5 High Thermal Blankets
(instead of Regular blankets)

* Winter Clothing

1 Jerry Can

1 Hygiene kit

CHALLENGES

01

LIMITED FUNDING

Affecting the quantity of CRIs distributed

02

SECURITY

Hindering delivery of emergency assistance to some areas in need

03

SHIFTING LINES OF CRISIS

Preventing delivery of timely, needs-based assistance

04

NGO's LIMITED NUMBER AND CAPACITY

Affecting the distribution of CRIs

05

INSUFFICIENT DATA ON IDPs AND HOST COMMUNITIES

Hampering effective planning and advocacy

06

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Causing delays in both the import of CRIs and dispatch procedures

07

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SANCTIONS

Impeding procurement of essential humanitarian supplies from outside Syria

08

INFLATION OF PRICES ON BOTH CRIs AND FUEL

Having negative impact on the displaced population

WINTERIZATION

The winter conditions during the beginning of the year have caused great suffering to many Syrians, especially in contested and hard-to reach areas. Temperatures in January 2014 fell as low as minus 13 degrees centigrade in many areas in the country. The snowstorm Salam which hit Syria on 07 January 2015 caused chaos and further hardship for Syrians throughout the country with roads impassable, intermittent communications, electricity and fuel shortages resulting in many people being unable to heat their homes or themselves. This storm also had a significant effect on the humanitarian situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Syria, especially those who were sleeping in parks and other exposed sites.

UNHCR urgently responded in cooperation with humanitarian workers from Implementing Partners by dispatching 150,000 CRIs such as mattresses, thermal blankets, sleeping mats, winter clothes and plastic sheeting to over 40,000 beneficiaries across Syria.

UNHCR began planning for the cold weather throughout the country in mid-2014 and as a result, close to 1.5 million individuals were protected by UNHCR's winterized package for which distribution started in November 2013.



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©UNHCR/SARC 2015



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 these the vulnerable are more at risk of serious harm or even death. UNHCR's preparation for the upcoming winter is ongoing to respond to one million beneficiaries and as such is appealing to donors to help in order to alleviate suffering and save lives of the most vulnerable people in Syria.



©UNHCR/SARC 2015



SHELTER

With **7.6 Million** People Displaced in Syria, many of them multiple times, the shelter needs are STAGGERING



Due to the continuous clashes in Syria, Over one 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, unfinished buildings, hospitals, basements and mosques or to host families mostly from the local communities in other areas.

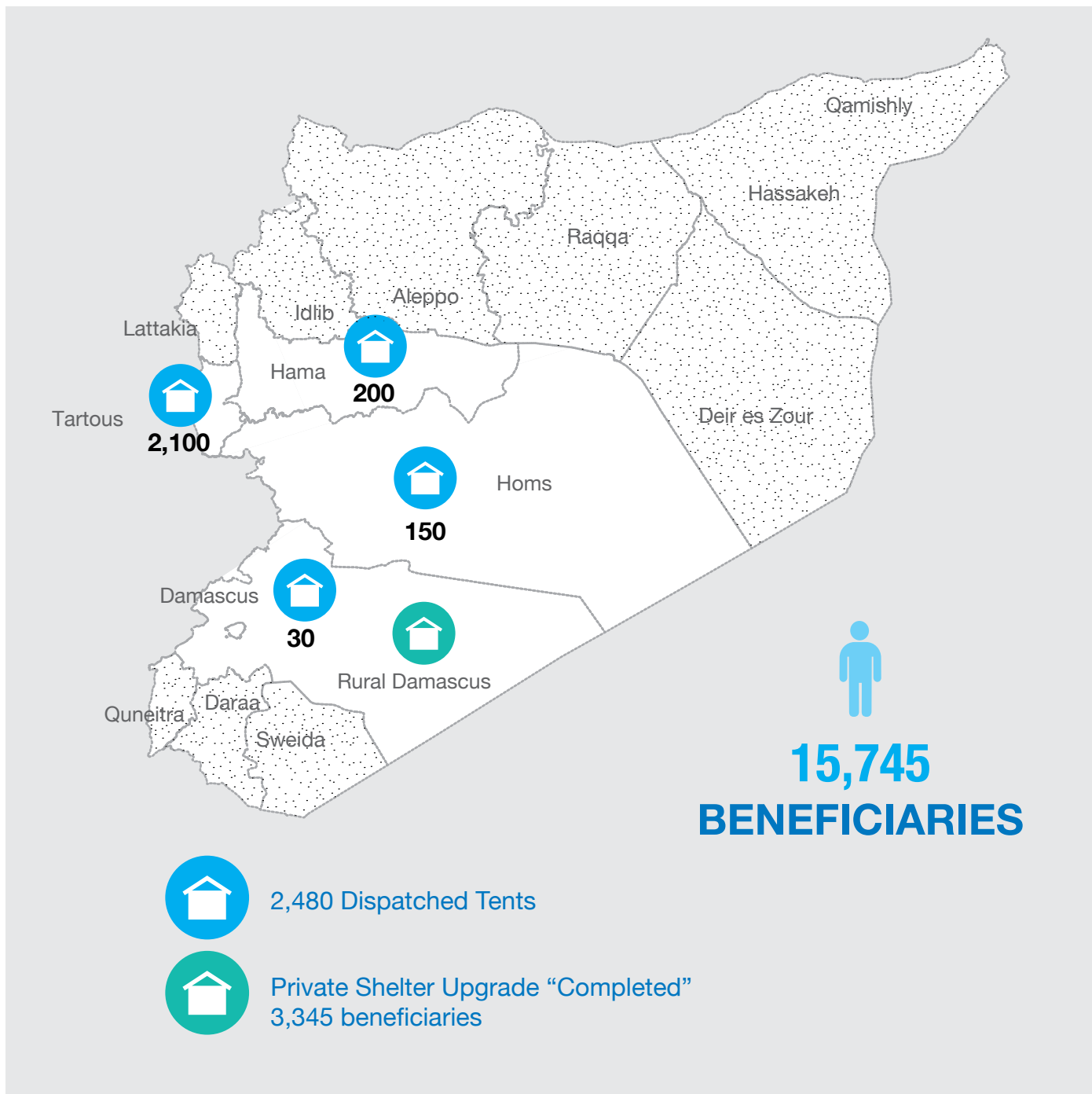
Collective shelter inhabitants include women, children, the elderly and the disabled. Most of them face trauma, distress or a great deal of suffering due to the conflict. They often reside in poor living conditions in such places as unfinished buildings, suffering from the lack of basic services such as food, water, electricity and garbage solutions, which in some cases have resulted in the outbreak of diseases.



©UNHCR / V.Tou'meh 2015

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, 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 upgrades and the provision of tents. In addition, winterization measures are applied in the shelter interventions which is helping 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 which UNHCR leads to guide agencies and ensure that all required facilities were available in collective shelters. UNHCR and implementing partners conducted detailed technical assessments of the needs for 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 in corridors, toilets and bathrooms.



PRIVATE SHELTER UPGRADE

UNHCR continues to implement Private Shelter Upgrades 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.



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. One noticeable example this year was in April when UNHCR dispatched 2,200 family tents to assist 11,000 displaced people fleeing the heavy fighting in Idlib.



CHALLENGES

The major challenges in shelter programming in Syria are security concerns in a volatile context, cumbersome administrative requirements and procedures, funding shortfall and donors' reluctance to invest in shelter response within Syria, complicated interaction between stakeholders in the WoS framework, sudden imposed emergencies, forcing partners to develop immediate response impacting agencies' capacity, funding and other resources as well as unpredictability of the political and social context in Syria and the greater regional context. In addition, the 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. In 2015, UNHCR has engaged with other sectors to address the many cross cutting issues associated with shelter.





PROTECTION

The objective of UNHCR's work with IDPs is to promote protection, focusing on those protection issues and needs that directly relate to displacement.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and find solutions to refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. UNHCR started its operations in Syria with the first Iraqi war in 1991 and expanded its operation exponentially with the massive influx of Iraqi refugees in the middle of the last decade. However, in 2012 due to the escalating conflict and based on the UN Guidelines on Internal Displacement, UNHCR expanded its operations to support the increasing number of internally displaced people in Syria. The objective of UNHCR's work with IDPs is to promote the protection of their human rights on an equal footing with other citizens, focusing on those protection issues and needs that directly relate to displacement. In situations of armed conflicts, all parties have the responsibility to respect the rights of all civilians, including the fundamental guarantees provided for under international humanitarian and human rights laws. Impartiality, confidentiality and neutrality are core protection principles that have been mainstreamed in all UNHCR programmes.



In the first half of the year, UNHCR worked with IDPs to promote their protection focusing on their issues and needs which relate to displacement and reached 161,100 beneficiaries directly and through partners with various protection services. In order to provide community services and legal aid and maximize the outreach across key governorates hosting the majority of IDPs, UNHCR signed partnership agreements with 16 partners, including SARC and International and National NGOs. The Protection services included assessments, capacity building of UNHCR partners and outreach volunteers, targeted material assistance, socio-economic activities, recreational activities, psychosocial support (PSS), Legal aid, GBV referral and response, community-based initiatives as well as awareness raising sessions on various issues, ranging from residency procedures to prevention of GBV and early marriages in Syria.



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LEGAL AID

With 7.6 million displaced in Syria, more and more children have been born in areas where they cannot access to be registered with huge numbers of displaced people also having lost their personal status documents such as birth certificates and identification cards. This easily makes people subject to harassment, extortion, exploitation and loss of access to basic services such as education and health. UNHCR provides these people with legal aid as many of them are not aware of the procedures involved in obtaining new documents or registering their children.

Legal aid response

UNHCR faced difficulties in signing agreements with qualified implementing partners this year, therefore the provision of legal aid to IDPs started in April. Currently, legal aid is being provided mainly in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Aleppo through Al Taalouf, The Syria Trust for Development and Danish Refugee Council (DRC). In the first half of the year, 861 IDPs benefited from legal assistance which is provided either through legal counseling, legal intervention (before courts, Civil Registry Department, or other administrative bodies) or by legal awareness sessions. Birth registration, documentation and personal status were major issues for IDPs seeking legal aid.



SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Teenage Girls in a UNHCR organized Focus Group Discussion in the Mazzeh Al Muhadatseh Shelter in May 2015

©UNHCR/ S.Othman 2015

Due to the escalation of the conflict in Syria, norms regulating social behavior have been weakened and traditional social systems have broken down which has led to increased levels of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). While some forms of SGBV such as sexual violence are still very much underreported due to the reluctance of many survivors to report the abuse due to stigmatization, shame or fear, social acceptance and impunity of perpetrators, other forms of SGBV have been commonly observed by UNHCR and local partners including child marriage and domestic violence. Moreover, a large number of female-headed households struggle to afford their children's basic needs.

UNHCR has integrated SGBV prevention and response activities through all its partnerships and programmes. Special attention is given to mainstreaming SGBV programmes inside Community Centers which provide an ideal access point to survivors of SGBV as well as women and girls most at risk. At present, UNHCR is engaged in agreement with 16 partners providing different services in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Daraa, Sweida, Homs, Hama, Tartous, Aleppo and Lattakia. Moreover, 19 Community Spaces are operational through which different SGBV prevention or response activities are introduced. UNHCR's SGBV activities have focused on three areas of intervention: enhancing the identification of survivors of SGBV through Community ORVs and SGBV focal points, enhancing services in response to SGBV through UNHCR partners as well as SGBV prevention and women empowerment programmes.

So far this year, 358 NGO staff and volunteers have received training on SGBV, 1,315 women have benefited from PSS counseling, 7,385 individuals have benefited from specialized PSS services, 660 women have benefited from legal aid services and 47 SGBV cases were identified and supported.

CHILD PROTECTION

Children's protection concerns are ever increasing with the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria. Children from different age groups are exposed to various protection concerns such as separation of families, unaccompanied children, and children with disabilities, school drop-outs, child labor, exploitation and child recruitment. In addition, the ongoing violence further exacerbates the vulnerability of children and increases their exposure to physical injury, harassment, violence, exploitation, recruitment into armed groups, the worst forms of child labor and child marriage.



In response to this UNHCR has launched community-based Child Protection through the establishment of child protection structures in collective shelters and selected schools for IDP and refugee children. This concept is aimed at building community capacity to identify and address child protection issues. The primary function of these structures is to identify and refer child protection issues to UNHCR and its partners, as well as to sensitize and raise awareness of communities. The new community-based child protection approach seeks community involvement in addressing the most pertinent issues such as child labour, child abuse and domestic violence within families and the lack of documentation.

Approximately 54,265 IDP children benefited from services provided by UNHCR through its implementing partners in the first half of the year. Services included Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs), activities in community shelters, mobile CFSs and recreational activities. IDP children were also provided with assistance and individual assessment including follow up on abandoned children. 185 cases of child protection and protection interventions and assistance are ongoing. Six child friendly spaces are currently operational and providing services to approximately 9,000 refugee, IDP children and children of the host community.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

Community participation for UNHCR has proved to be an effective tool in providing proper Protection to affected communities. It puts the capacities, rights and dignity of affected individuals at the centre of programming and contributes to a Protection response in Syria which is sustainable and tailored to the real needs of the affected communities. Inspired by the Syrian tradition of solidarity and social collaboration, UNHCR has designed several programmes to protect and empower local communities including the Community Centers, Community-Based Initiatives, Outreach Volunteers and Empowerment of Local Organizations.



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Outreach Volunteers

UNHCR designed the Outreach Volunteer Programme for IDPs in order to assist in protecting them wherever they are scattered in the country. The role of UNHCR volunteers is not limited to reaching the IDP population, but also to support them, ensure their participation, identify their vulnerabilities, advocate for their right to have access to humanitarian services, explore the local capacities and provide them with the proper support including care giving to persons with specific needs, information dissemination and awareness. These teams are effective in addressing alarming trends, identifying community needs and suggesting responses.

In the first half of the year, UNHCR was still struggling to offset the operational impact across all of its activities caused by the loss of one of its biggest partners and its large ORV's workforce. However, at the end of June, the outreach workforce stood at 400 ORVs from different age groups working in six governorates (Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Sweida, Tartous and Homs) with five partners (Al Nada, GOPA, Al Taalouf, The Syria Trust for Development and Al Batoul).

Community Centers

Community Centers promote social mobilization and ensure better access to vulnerable populations, while providing them with social and protection services and supporting their psychosocial well-being. These Centres are a fundamental tool to support and expand UNHCR response in legal aid, SGBV, PSS and livelihood and are also an important venue for regular interaction with the population where insight into the needs and protection concerns of affected communities is gained and subsequent linkages with service providers and specialists are organized. To ensure compliance with international standards, UNHCR has compiled and implemented Standard Operational Procedures for all the activities implemented in the Centers. In addition, the interventions of Community Centers are all designed in line with the Age Gender Diversity Mainstreaming approach (AGDM), with special attention given to persons with specific needs.

UNHCR currently has 17 Centres operating through eight partners (GOPA, SARC, Al Batoul, Al Taalouf, Social Care and Al Nada) in eight governorates; Damascus, Rural Damascus, Daara, Sweida, Tartous, Homs, Hama and Aleppo and it is aiming to increase the number to improve service delivery by bringing the operation closer to vulnerable beneficiaries. Moreover, UNHCR is strengthening its Protection delivery capacity at the field level in 10 Governorates, by increasing the number of Community Centres, most of which are managed by national NGOs to serve the affected host community. Each centre benefits an average of 20,000 persons with a wide range of services, including legal counseling, PSS, child protection, and services for SGBV survivors.

At the end of June alone, five additional Community Centres were piloted in Homs for an estimated 490,000 IDP population. Service providers will pool their resources to serve IDPs under one roof and provide standardized services inside these Centres. Once this approach is successfully tested and reviewed, it will be rolled out gradually in other governorates. In addition, the services at the Al Nabek Community Centre in Rural Damascus were expanded to cover areas with large populations in the Al Qalamoun Mountain area by establishing another community centre point in Al Qutayfeh and mobile teams based in Ara, Deir Atteyeh and Yabroud. So far 15,000 IDPs have benefited so far from the expansion exercise.



©UNHCR/SSSD

In the first six months of 2015, the network of Community Centres provided services to nearly 50,000 beneficiaries while covering a wide range of needs for the most vulnerable groups among the displaced and affected community, including persons with specific needs as well as promoting peaceful coexistence and community participation.

Community-Based Initiatives



©UNHCR

The UNHCR supported Community-Based Initiatives (CBIs) programme encourages the affected communities to design and implement, in a participatory manner, direct impact initiatives to improve their living conditions. It encourages them to implement natural- support solutions to meet their own needs while recognizing their capacities and skills. The CBIs have included self-managed kindergartens, community garbage management systems, clean-up campaigns, collective food conservation initiatives, improvement of living conditions in collective shelters, peer support groups, home schooling, recreational activities for children and many other initiatives.

These CBIs were carried out by strengthening the focus on community-based interventions ensuring the engagement of youth volunteers in the programme, encouraging IDPs to take an active part in the leadership and decision-making process, and carrying out regular consultations with partners on the CBIs plan. In addition, with the support of the network of IDP ORVs, the CBI programme has assisted IDPs and affected communities to build mutual respect and trust and to create a sense of ownership and self-reliance.

In the first half of 2015 the main issue affecting CBI activities was the limited funding which significantly delayed their identification and implementation. Despite this, in the first half of the year, UNHCR managed to support 12 community-based initiatives within shelters which are related to hygiene, education, nutrition, and recreational activities. Approximately more than 3,000 individuals directly benefited from these activities in Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Sweida.

Empowerment of Local Organizations

UNHCR provides grants to qualified local NGOs in the country for implementation of quick impact projects offering assistance to local communities in the field of health, education and women empowerment with focus on persons with specific needs. These grants aims to empower local organizations and foster their humanitarian role which proved to be a proper strategy to respond to the needs of the local communities in the country. So far in 2015, UNHCR supported 5,604 beneficiaries with local organization grants.

During the first six month of the year, UNHCR developed implementation guidelines for this programme and provided humanitarian assistance and services to the most affected population in Syria. For example, UNHCR, in cooperation with GOPA, worked together on building the capacity of 20 local NGOs in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Sweida by providing them with an orientation workshops and specialized training about the basics of Project Management prior to the provision of the grant. This training addressed several topics including needs assessment, project identification, design, planning, drafting proposal, and framing of the project to help the NGOs apply for the programme.

Cash-Based Assistance

With 7.6 million individuals displaced due to insecurity and damage of dwellings and services in their areas, the need for flexible support for their various needs is paramount and a key life-saving element.

UNHCR benefited from its operational experience with refugees and began in 2012 to assist vulnerable Internally Displaced Persons in Syria with cash in order to foster their coping mechanisms, protect them from exploitation or engagement in harmful practices and cover their basic needs.

This unconditional one-time cash grant complements the UNHCR CRI 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.



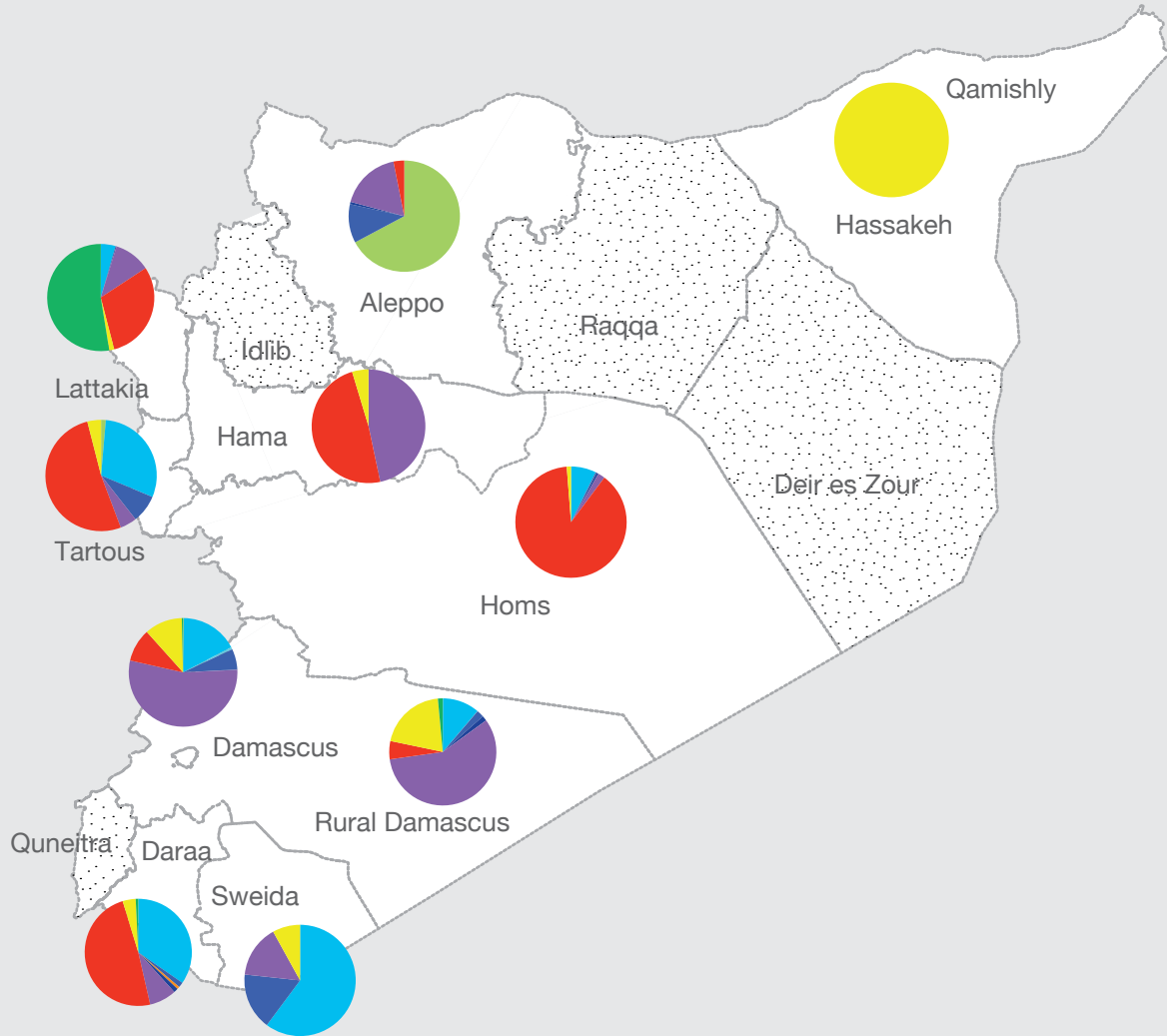
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Based on UNHCR vulnerability criteria, beneficiaries are usually selected and provided with a grant equivalent to \$200 to cover their most critical needs issued by cheques to be cashed at the bank or at the distribution centre by the bank staff. From January to June 2015, UNHCR distributed cash to 22,731 beneficiaries in Aleppo and Hassakeh governorates.

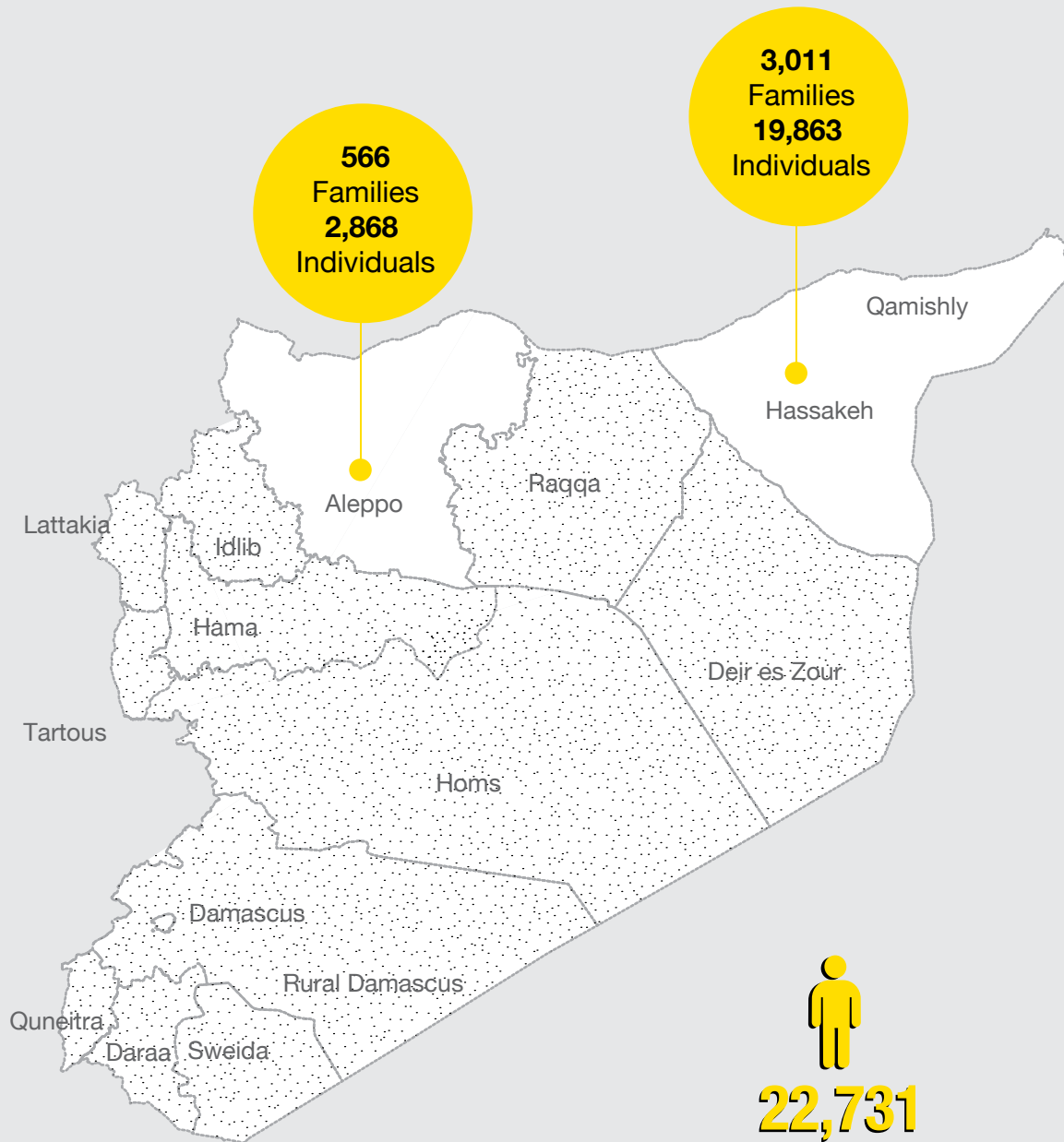


161,100

INDIVIDUALS BENEFITED FROM PROTECTION ASSISTANCE



- Assessment
- Awareness Raising
- Capacity Building
- Community-based Participation and Assistance
- GBV Referral and Response
- Legal Assistance
- Psychosocial Support (PSS)
- Recreational Activities
- Socioeconomic Activities
- Targeted Material Assistance



**BENEFICIARIES RECEIVED
CASH ASSISTANCE**



APPROXIMATELY \$200 PER FAMILY



HEALTH

The conflict in Syria has resulted in limited access to health clinics, delayed access to health care, discontinuation of treatment and follow up, limited access to clean water and sanitation as well as interrupted vaccination programmes



The impact of the current crisis on the populations' health and well-being is complicated and far reaching. It includes permanent disabilities, potential risk of women delivering without being able to reach clinics and/or receive postnatal care, complications and high rate of mortality in patients with chronic diseases, epidemic outbreaks of water and food-borne diseases, outbreaks of vaccines-preventable diseases, psychological trauma and mental health problems.

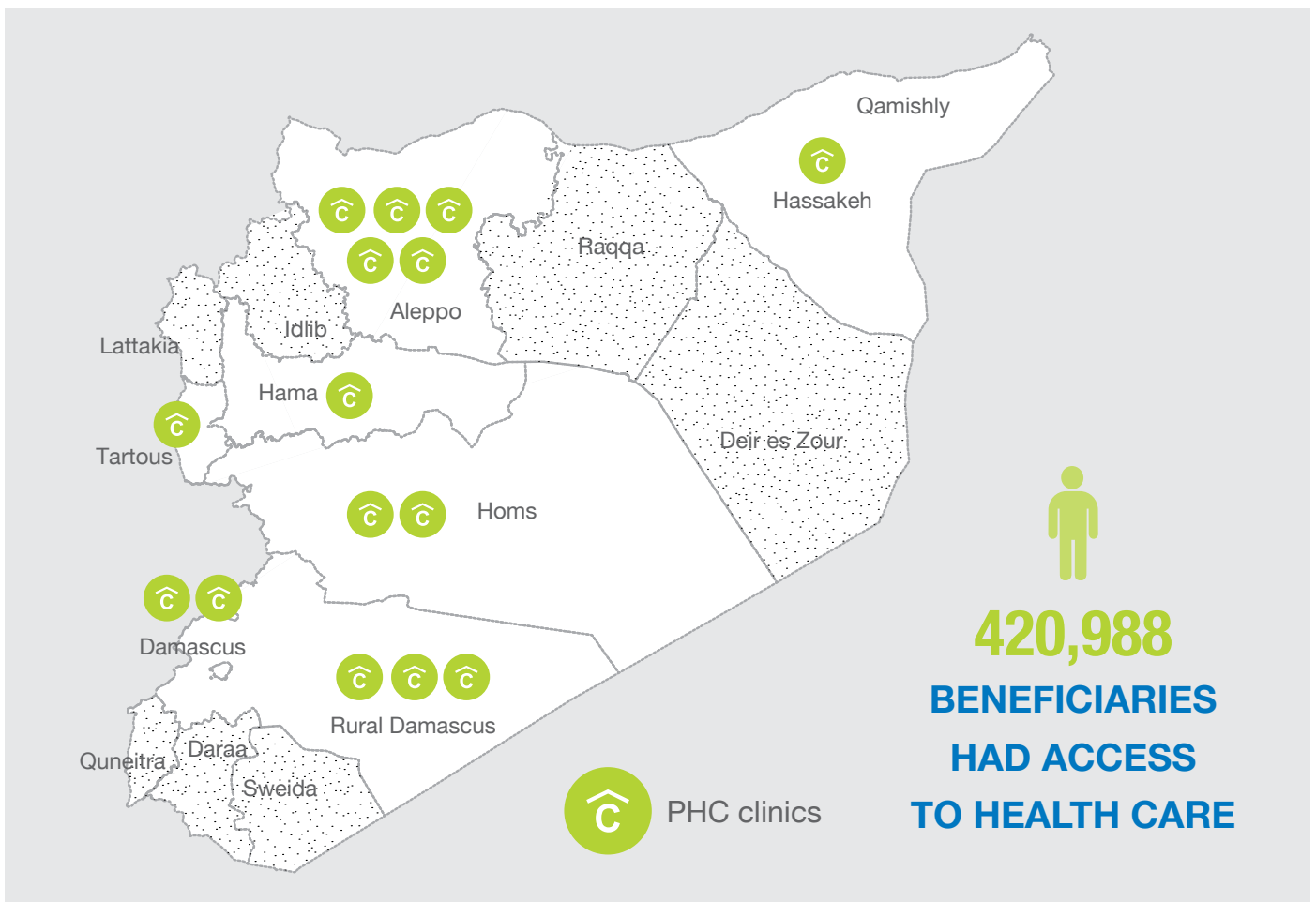
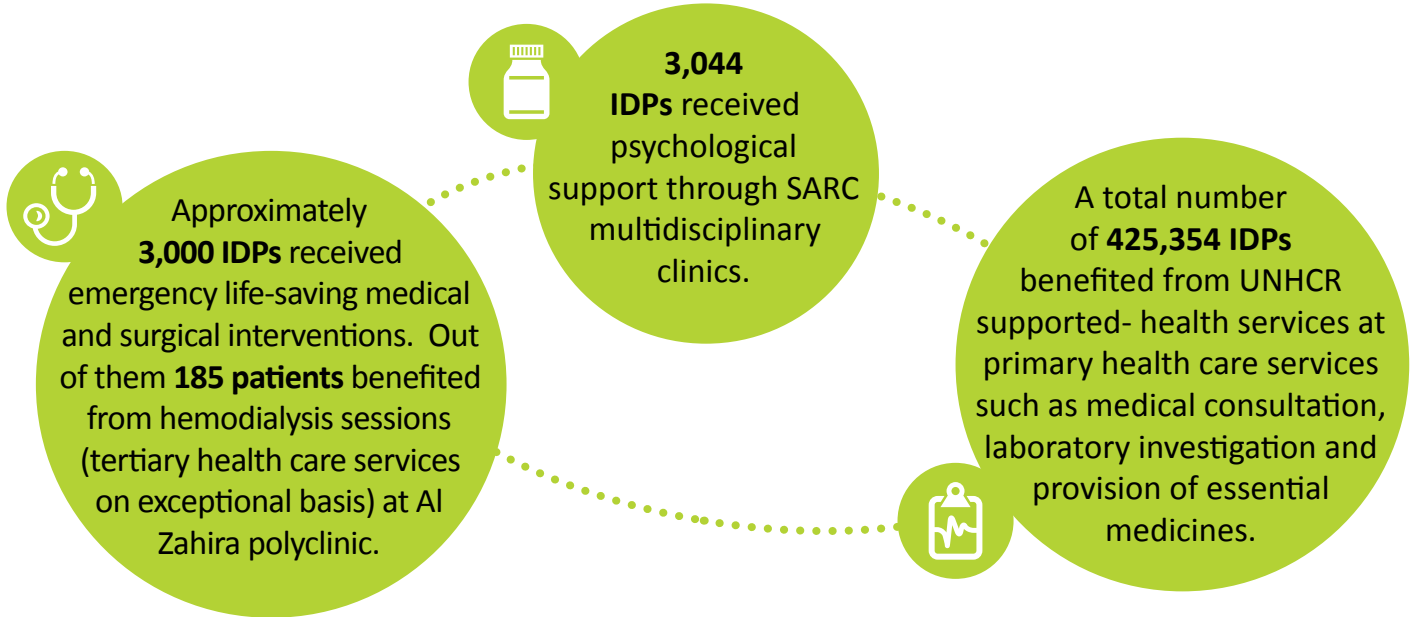


UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR continues to provide primary health care services and emergency life-saving medical and surgical interventions to respond to the population's health needs through its implementing partners including SARC, Hama Social Care and Al Taalouf charity association as well as national authorities, national associations and international partners to reduce suffering and minimize mortality rate in Syria. In addition UNHCR Outreach Volunteers continue to carry out hygiene awareness campaigns as well as vaccination campaigns.



IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2015



FIELD OFFICES



ALEPPO COVERING THE NORTH WEST



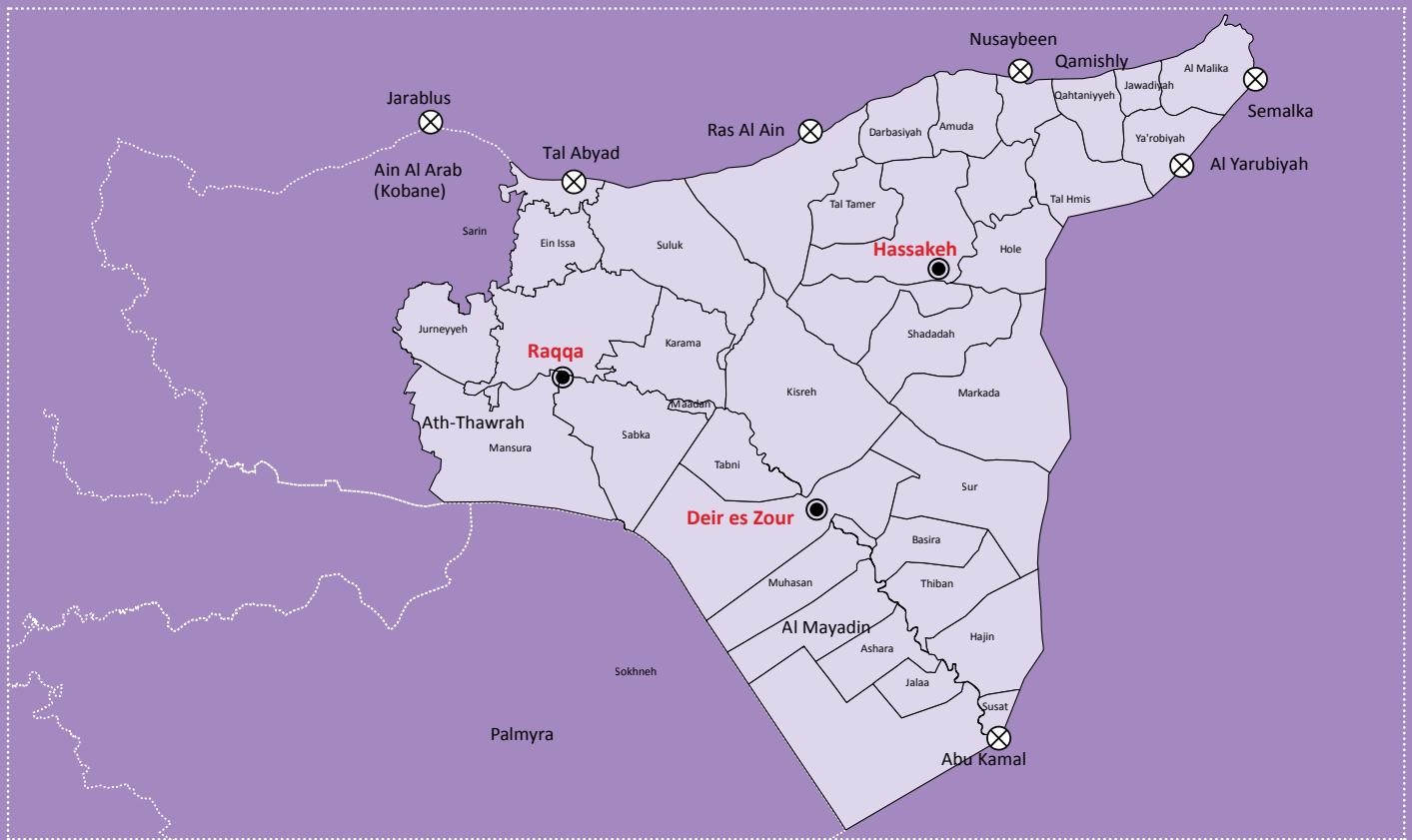
The conflict in Aleppo has significantly intensified during the first six months of 2015 with attacks targeting the city on more than five fronts simultaneously reported and dozens of rocket and mortar attacks causing many deaths and injuries. In addition, rockets have landed within 100 meters of the UNHCR field office there, luckily, with no injuries amongst staff. The security situation has negatively affected UNHCR operations in Aleppo, and in June alone three staff members had to be temporarily relocated to insecurity. Despite this, UNHCR continued to cover and respond to the emergencies and needs of IDPs in Aleppo. For instance:

- In the first six months of 2015, UNHCR Aleppo dispatched CRIs for 178,700 displaced people in the Aleppo governorate.
- A UNHCR cross-line mission led by the UNHCR Syria Representative during a negotiated six-hour ceasefire to access the hard-to-reach areas of Bustan Al Qasr, Al Ansari, Al Firdos, Al Sukari and Mwasalat, neighbourhoods of Eastern Aleppo delivered urgently needed medicines and medical equipment for 5,000 patients to the Al Zarzour hospital in Bustan Al Qasr and winter clothes for 2,000 children in Jisir Al Haj.
- UNHCR participated in inter-agency missions to the hard-to-reach Big Orem in Western rural Aleppo benefiting around 10,000 individuals, to Kafr Hamra and Maaret Al Artiq in northern rural Aleppo with Core Relief Items for 15,000 individuals and to Eastern Aleppo with CRIs, including Solar Lamps for more than 10,000 individuals residing in 42 different neighborhoods there.
- UNHCR provided health services to 132,313 individuals in its supported medical centres. Medical support was also enhanced by introducing new specialties such as Orthopaedic medicine, Otolaryngology, Neurology and Gastrointestinal. A new panorama dental device was also installed in Al Akarmieh PHC medical centers.





HASSAKEH COVERING THE NORTH EAST



The Hassakeh Governorate still suffers from insecurity and access challenges due to the ongoing armed conflict. The first half of 2015 witnessed largescale displacement, most recently in the last week in June when ISIS advanced in the southern areas of Hassakeh City and armed clashes started. It is estimated that around 90,000 people have been displaced to the eastern and northern neighborhoods of the city (Azizyeh, Saleyen and Msheraf), as well as to nearby villages north of the city. An additional 30,000 are estimated to have been displaced to the northern districts of Qamishly, Amuda, Ras Al Ain, Derbasia and Tal Tamer. UNHCR is continuing its response to this latest emergency by providing CRIs, shelter and protection to the most vulnerable IDPs. In addition to this, in the first six months of 2015:

- UNHCR assisted 3,012 families (over 15,000 individuals) with cash. Families were selected among the most vulnerable in the governorate according to eligibility criteria.
- All inhabitants of the Newroz Refugee camp have been assisted by CRIs.
- Three border operations through the Nusaybeen crossing border were conducted by UNHCR where CRI kits for 25,000 individuals were received in coordination with UNHCR Turkey.
- UNHCR dispatched 14,665 full kits of CRIs for 73,325 individuals to eight locations in the Hassakeh governorate.
- UNHCR carried out identification in Roj camp to accommodate IDPs from Tal Hamees area where clashes were ongoing as well as coordinating joint UN distribution of food, CRIs, and hygiene items.
- Due to insecurity and unrest, many shelters' residents in the Governorate moved to other shelters. UNHCR supported 32 collective shelters hosting over 3,500 individuals in Hassakeh, whereas around 1,500 individuals were accommodated in unfinished buildings.



HOMS COVERING CENTRAL SYRIA



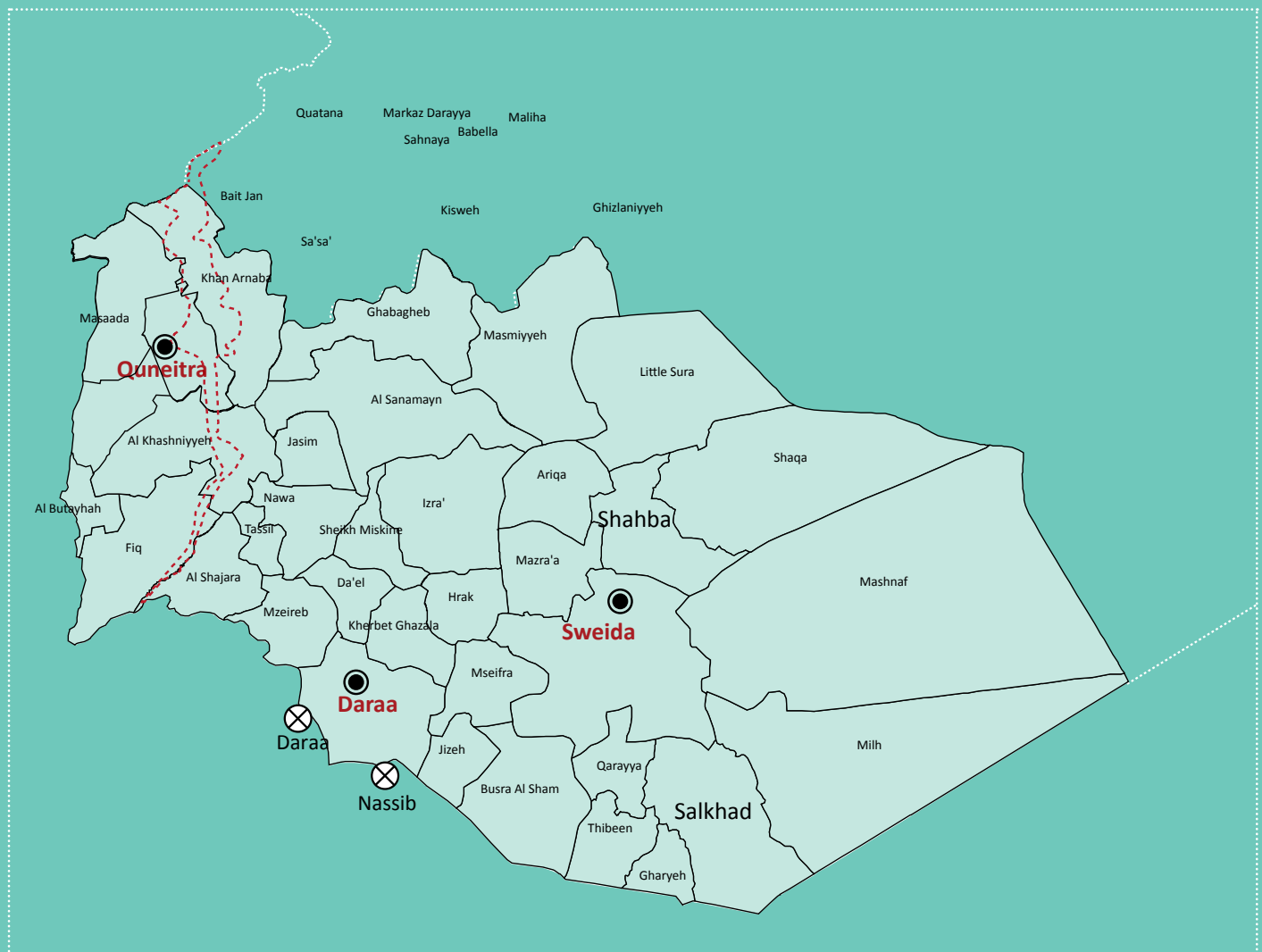
The past six months has seen an increase in rocket, mortar and both VBIED and IED attacks in Homs city, with these attacks negatively affecting UNHCR field visits across neighborhoods of Homs city and outside. Despite this, UNHCR Homs continues to respond quickly to displacement as well as engaging in a wide scope of protection and legal activities and community based initiatives.

- During the reporting period, UNHCR has conducted 41 missions to rural Homs and other locations that encompassed the following areas: Alrabwa, Alshamas, Alzarzoria, Alwaer, Hassia, Altawzee, Alijbari, Alhosn castle, Aldablan, Alhwash, Hama city, Arrastan, Tal Kalakh, Bab Alsibaa, Shin, Alarbeen. The missions provided CRIs to 238,730 displaced people as well as conducted needs and protection assessments of the IDP populations in the areas.
- In the first six months of 2015 UNHCR has participated in six interagency cross-line missions, two to besieged Al Waer in Homs City, three to the Arrastan and one to Talbisa, north of Homs. UNHCR's contribution was CRIs, including diapers, winter clothes, sanitary napkins, hygiene kits, jerry cans, education kits, plastic sheets and blankets for 82,375 needy beneficiaries.
- While the first inter-agency mission to Arrastan on 28 March was returning to base, they were hijacked at gunpoint and held for a number of hours. The 17 UN staff members were eventually released and although very shaken, were physically unharmed.
- UNHCR continues to respond in rapid manner to the recent large displacements caused by the violent conflicts in Idlib, Jisr Alshougour, Areeha and Palmyra with CRIs for over 20,000 people.
- UNHCR through its partners has assisted 25,500 individuals access healthcare.
- UNHCR has successfully negotiated with the civil registry in Homs a system to ensure the provision of documentation to IDPs in Homs governorate, including related legal concerns of IDPs such as birth and marriage registration and court affidavits.



SWEIDA

SERVING SOUTH WESTERN SYRIA



The Sweida Field Office is UNHCR Syria's newest field office and covers the southern governorates of Syria; Sweida, Daraa and Quneitra. During the first half of the year, fighting escalated in Quneitra, Daraa and Sweida leading to significant displacement. In addition, Non State Armed Groups took over the Naseeb border crossing between Syria and Jordan leading to its closure, cutting off one of the few remaining supply routes for UNHCR to import humanitarian assistance, negatively affecting UNHCR operations in the area. Despite this:

- 41,450 beneficiaries in Sweida, Daraa and Quneitra received CRIs including 2,200 beneficiaries living in hard-to-reach areas in Daraa and 5,500 beneficiaries living in hard-to-reach areas in Quneitra.
- UNHCR responded to the displacement of families from Busra Al Sham in Daraa to Sweida in March through the urgent distribution of CRIs for 2,000 beneficiaries.
- Two attorneys in law were recruited through UNHCR to provide legal assistance/Counseling to people of concern in Sweida governorate.
- Together with its implementing partner GOPA, UNHCR approved grants to a number of beneficiaries to start up their own small businesses.

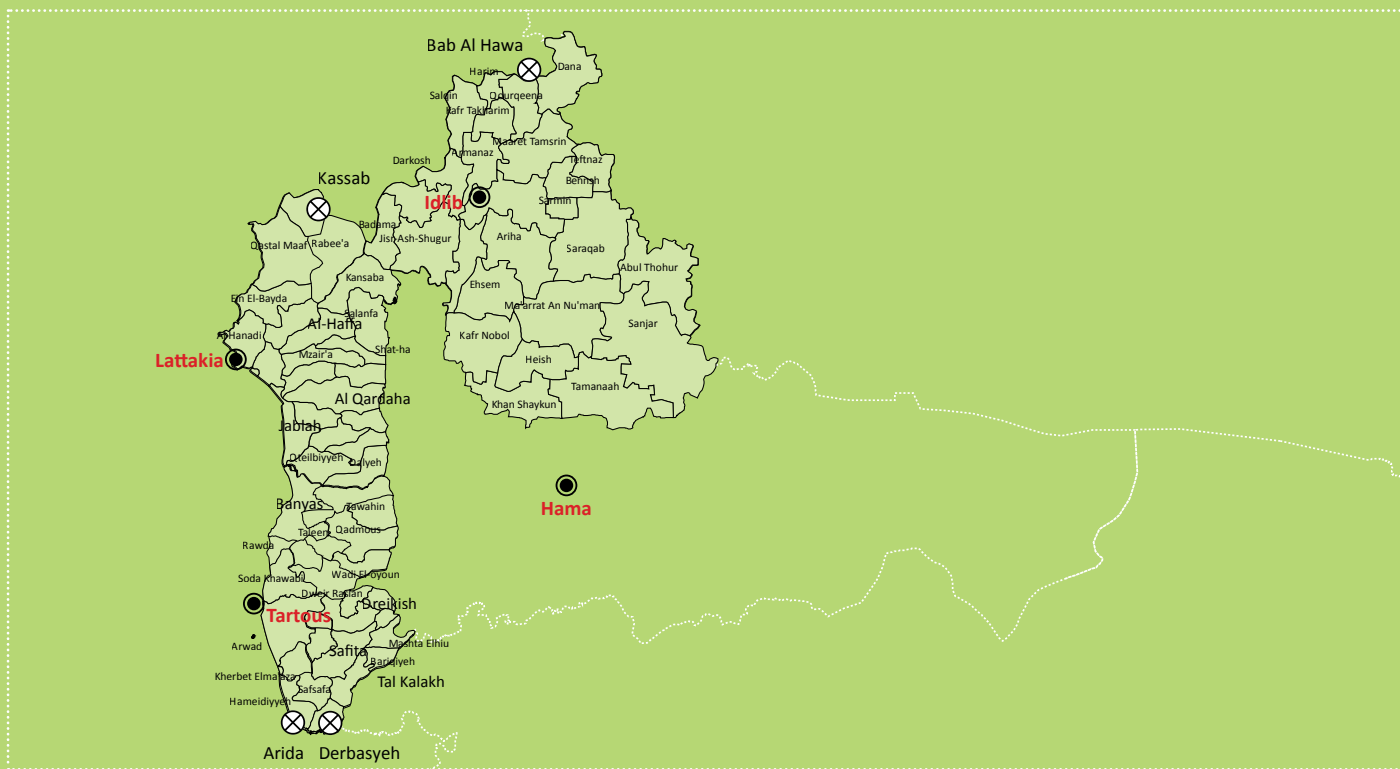


UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

الوكالة الدولية للاجئين
UNHCR - THE UN REFUGEE AGENCY

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TARTOUS COVERING WESTERN SYRIA



Tartous remains one of the few relatively stable areas in Syria and because of this it hosts a large number of IDPs. Therefore:

- In the first six months of 2015, UNHCR dispatched CRIs for 178,700 displaced people in the Tartous, Idlib and Latakia governorates.
- UNHCR presence in Latakia was increased in the first half of this year. Protection and Community Services expanded to reach wider number of IDPs residents in Latakia through establishment of new community mobile teams with GOPA in Latakia and Jableh.
- As a result of the storm which hit Syria in January, UNHCR relocated the affected families in Al Karnak Camp to nearby schools, distributed emergency kits of blankets, mattresses and extra plastic sheets and dispatched family tents in order to improve the living conditions of the IDPs in the governorate.
- After the takeover of Idlib city by AOGs at the end of March and the fierce fighting, UNHCR quickly responded to the influx of families to surrounding rural areas and neighboring governorates by dispatching CRI kits to Ariha in Rural Idlib for 5,000 beneficiaries, to Sqelbieh for 2,500 individuals and to Hama city for 2,500 individuals. In addition 2,000 family tents for 10,000 individual were dispatched to its Partner SARC. UNHCR also led the emergency response of Protection with all involved NGOs and UN agencies for the displacement from Ariha and the coastal areas and started to strengthen partner's response capacity through continual monitoring.
- UNHCR donated speech lab as well as audiology equipment to the Aamal NGO in order to support refugee and IDP children in their audiology centre, speech lab centers and various hearing scan centers in rural Latakia and Tartous. More than 100 children on a monthly basis are benefiting from the UNHCR assistance.
- In partnership with the Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), UNHCR commenced a six-month shelter maintenance project which included community mobilization covering the Latakia and Tartous governorates.

#WHATDOESITTAKE CAMPAIGN



In 2013, the heads of UN agencies sent a message saying “ENOUGH” to the crisis in Syria. But the crisis continues, having now entering its fifth year on 15 March 2015. Currently 12.2 million people in Syria are in need of life-saving aid, 4 million refugees have fled across borders, 7.6 million are displaced within Syria and more than 212,000 people are trapped in besieged areas without access to humanitarian assistance. With no end in sight, the United Nations is asking ‘what does it take’ for those with political influence to end the senseless suffering of Syrians once and for all?

On 13 March UN leaders including Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon launched the #WhatDoesItTake social media campaign, in an attempt to allow the global community to “express frustration about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria, and send a message of solidarity to the people of Syria.” As part of this global campaign UNHCR staff in every field office throughout Syria who on a daily basis, experience firsthand the devastating effects of the conflict added their voice and support to this initiative.

If you want to participate and spread the message you can upload a picture of yourself holding a paper with the #WhatDoesItTake message on the following website: <http://www.syria-whatdoesittake.org/>

RETURNEES AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



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The ongoing conflict in Syria has caused major destruction, displacement and misery, however amongst this chaos some people have begun hoping and working for a better future. In some areas of the country where the fighting has stopped people have begun returning to what's left of their homes in order to start rebuilding not only their homes but their lives and their communities. UNHCR and its partners are supporting these people with not only Core Relief Items and shelter solutions such as sealing off kits but also practical protection and community services such as vocational training and small business start-up grants.

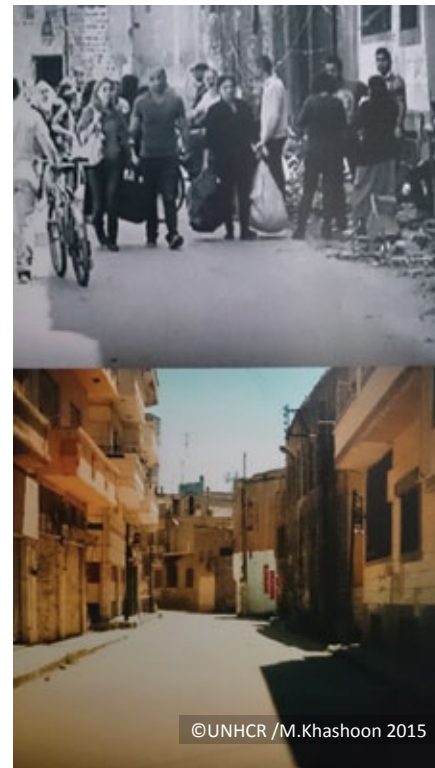


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Homs Old City – One Year On



In May 2014, a hundred or so inhabitants of Homs Old City began returning after two years of conflict which left massive destruction in its wake. One year on, assisted by UNHCR and its partners this number has increased to over 2,000 people. Clean up operations, reconstruction and refurbishment can be seen throughout. There are even a number of small businesses opening up as the community works hard to rebuild their lives.

The Story of Rana and Fadi

Rana 27 is a university graduate who studied e-marketing and was the recipient of a UNHCR funded small business start-up grant in 2014. She and other beneficiaries initially had to enroll in an advanced business training course at the end of which they submitted business start-up proposals which were then assessed successfully for feasibility.

With the grant Rana opened what was originally a small coffee shop in the Al Hamidiyeh neighbourhood of Homs Old City. However, due to her hard work and the return of people to the area, business was good enough for her to turn it into a mini market within six months with the coffee shop incorporated.



During the business course, she also met her fiancé Fadi and when UNHCR visited their shop on a monitoring visit in May they indicated that due to the success of the business they were now planning to get married. As she said in May “I have been very lucky to get the grant, thank you UNHCR for giving me this chance to help me and Fadi”.

But their story doesn't end there. A few weeks after UNHCR visited them in their shop in Homs old city, Rama and Fadi finally got married and insisted on doing so amongst their local community, despite the large scale damage to their local chapel.



Despite the ongoing conflict in Syria it is clear that one year after the first people returned to the old city of Homs that with the resilience and determination of people like Rana and Fadi and a little help from UNHCR and its partners there is fresh hope in not only Homs, but other areas throughout Syria which are experiencing returns, rebuilding and resilience.



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR UNHCR PARTNERS

UNHCR Syria believes that capacity building is an integral part of its humanitarian response because during displacement, existing traditional support mechanisms within a community, such as families, friends, neighbors or other social networks often breakdown, leading to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) being exposed to greater protection risks during conflict. Many affected people in Syria are not aware of their rights and often do not receive the necessary protection support for many reasons, including the inadequate capacity of stakeholders in fulfilling their protection duties for many reasons including the lack of expertise, inadequate planning and preparedness, the brain drain of qualified people as well as lack of training.



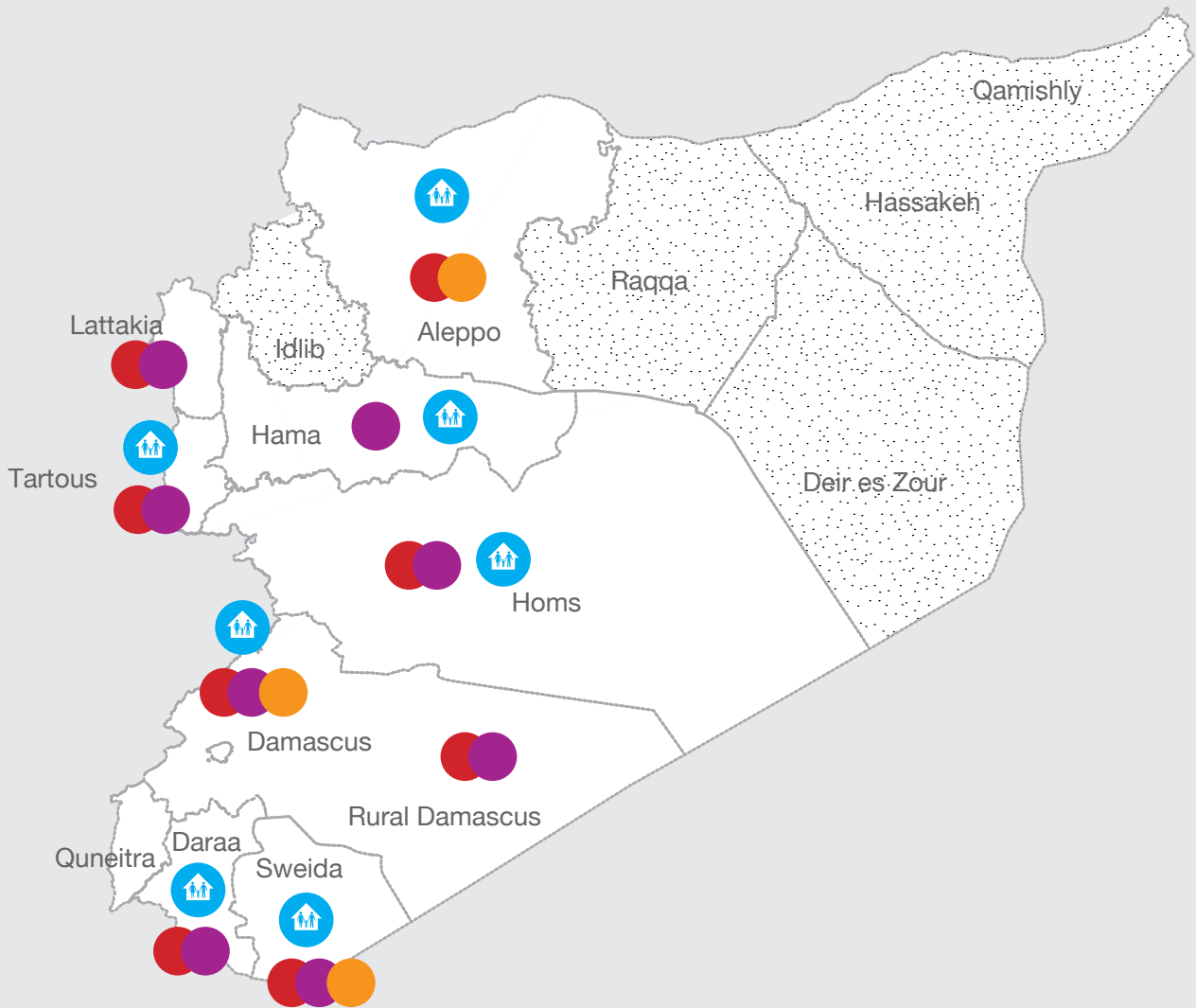
In order to ensure partners provide appropriate protection services to affected communities, UNHCR invests in the capacity building of protection service providers in Syria to provide proper assistance to vulnerable people especially those affected by displacement. UNHCR capacity building promotes Protection mainstreaming mainly in the field of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Legal Awareness, Child Protection, Community Mobilization, Psychosocial Support (PSS), Code of Conduct as well as professional skills needed by humanitarian workers which would improve standards of work provided in the field.



In the first half of the year, UNHCR organized training sessions for 1,511 Protection responders in the country such as national authorities, humanitarian agencies, local and international NGOs, humanitarian workers and outreach volunteers.

Some of these sessions included a three-day training course on Counseling techniques for 22 staff and volunteers directly engaged in PSS and SGBV case management, a two-day workshop on Child Friendly Interviewing techniques, Best Interest Assessment (BIA) and Best Interest Determination (BID) for 32 UNHCR staff from Damascus and the Field Offices in Hassakeh, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous and Sweida as well as a three-day orientation workshop on child protection, psychosocial support and GBV for 20 programme coordinators and managers from national NGO partners.

In addition, training for partners was also organized by UNHCR in the areas of Reporting, Information Management, Photography and Public Information and Communications in Damascus, Qamishly, Homs and Tartous as part of a series of training courses planned for all field locations and UNHCR partners throughout Syria in 2015.



Community Centers



Community-based Initiatives grants

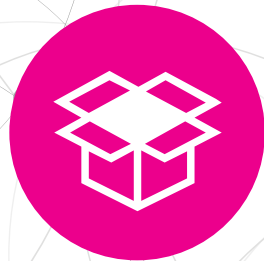


Out reached Volunteers Programs



Support to local organization grants

SECTOR APPROACH



U NHCR is the lead of two sectors in Syria: the Protection/Community Services Sector and the Shelter/ Non-Food Item (NFI) Sector, is also an active member of the health and education sectors and has contributed significantly to the 2015 Strategic Response Plan.



PROTECTION SECTOR

The Protection Sector led in the country by UNHCR comprises of 19 partners including NGOs and sister organizations such as UNICEF, UNFPA, UNRWA, UNMAS, DRC, IOM, IMC and SARC. The Sector defines Protection as “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)” which is based on the concept endorsed by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

The Protection Sector works to mainstream Protection considerations such as age and gender throughout the humanitarian response in order to multiply and maximize effective protection outcomes. The work of the sector is guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and the humanitarian principle of ‘Do

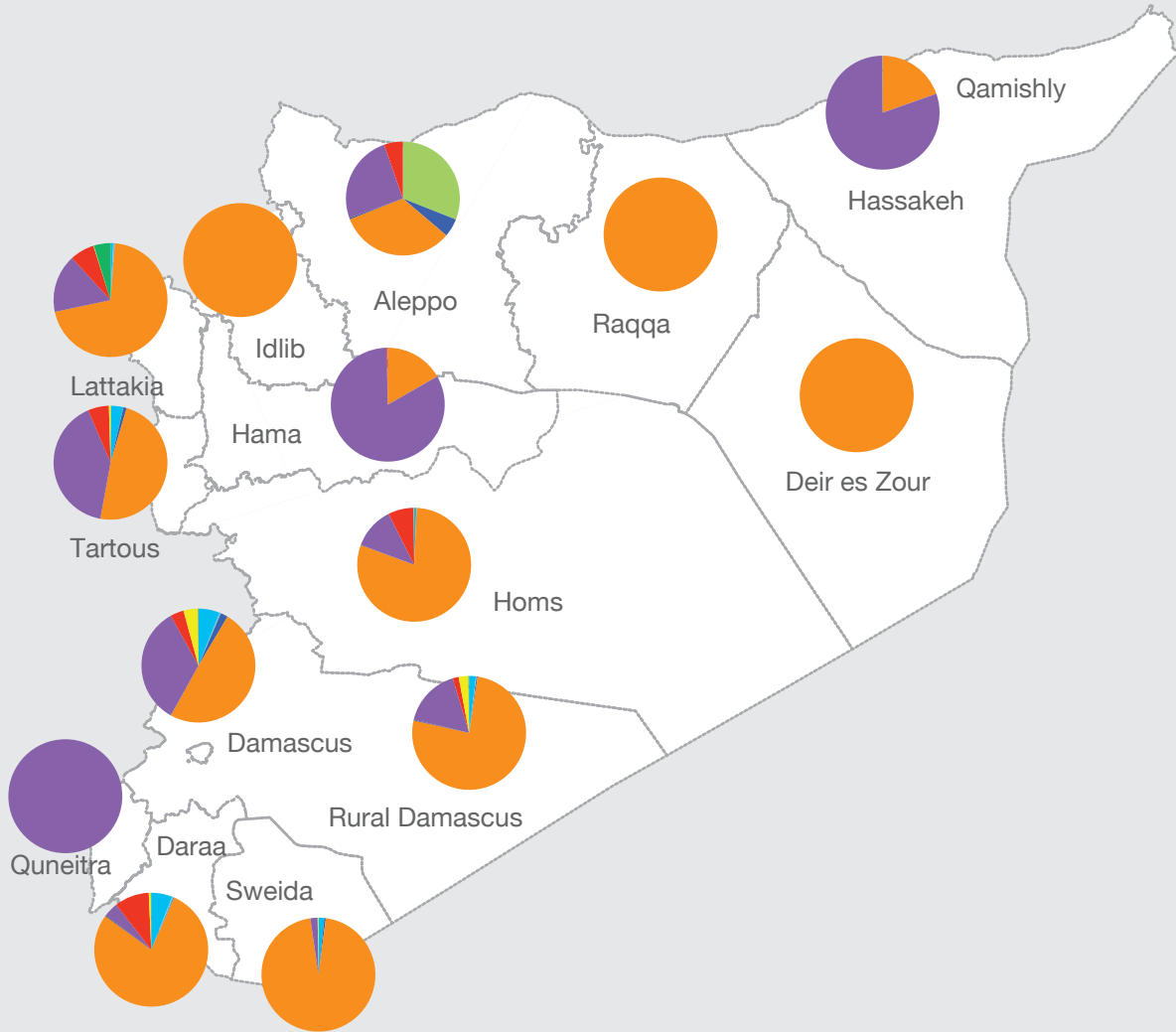
no harm’. It supports the affected population, including IDPs and the host community, in addition to reducing the adverse effects of displacement through a diverse range of protection and community services activities. These include social, legal and psychosocial counseling, recreational, educational 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, advocacy and provide protection services in collaboration with partners.

In the first six months of the year, more than 863,646 individuals benefited from the Protection services provided by the Sector.



2,187,296

BENEFICIARIES BENEFITED FROM PROTECTION ASSISTANCE



- Assessment
- Awareness Raising
- Capacity Building
- Community-Based Participation and Assistance
- GBV Referral and Response
- Evacuation and Relocation
- Legal Assistance
- Psychosocial Support
- Recreational Activities
- Socioeconomic Activities
- Targeted Material Assistance

SHELTER AND NFI SECTOR

NON- FOOD ITEM (NFI) WORKING GROUP

UNHCR is the lead agency for the NFI Working Group which includes UNICEF, UNDP, UNRWA, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, IOM, DRC, PU and SIF, GOPA, Terre des Hommes, Mercy Corps, Intersos and ACF. This group works together with SARC, MoSA, the MoLA and the General Authority for Palestinian Refugees in Syria to respond to new displacements. In 2015, the Sector delivered 7,223,489 Core Relief Items to 2,187,296 vulnerable people in Syria, including hard-to-reach areas. Many of these benefited 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.



SHELTER WORKING GROUP

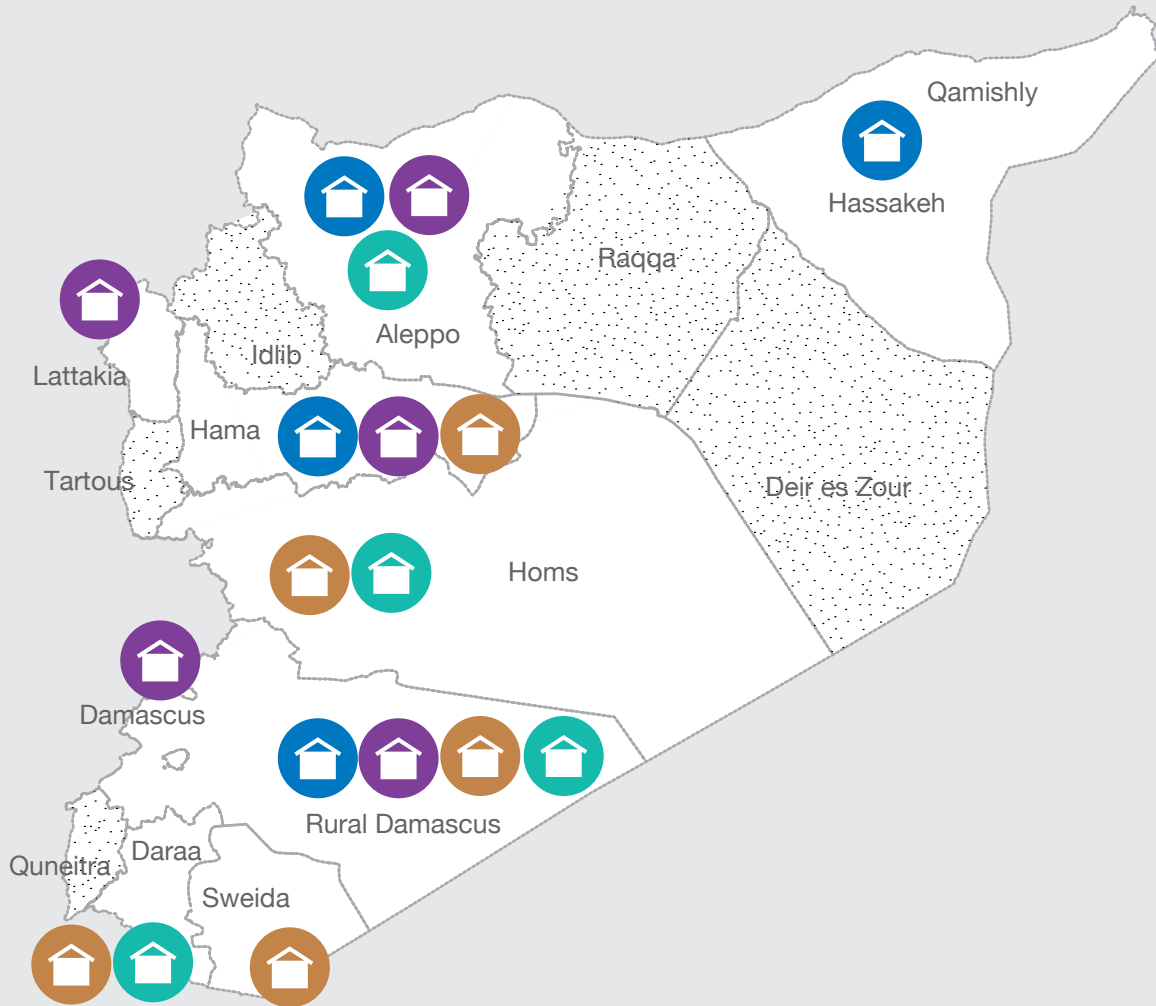
UNHCR is also the lead of the Shelter Working Group together with MoLA which includes UNRWA, Première Urgence, UN Habitat, DRC and IOM. This group works together with MoLA and the General Authority for Palestinian Refugees in Syria to map the needs in the country and provide a comprehensive response to the extent possible. In the first half of 2015, the working group assisted 67,426 individuals through upgrading public and private collective shelters for 21,621 IDPs and distributing shelter kits and materials for 33,008 individuals, in addition to supporting the management and maintenance of shelters which accommodate 12,797 Palestinian refugees.





67,426

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES REACHED



Collective Shelter Rehabilitation



Management & Maintenance Collective Shelter (Palestinian Refugees)



Distribution of Sealing-off Kits or Shelter Materials



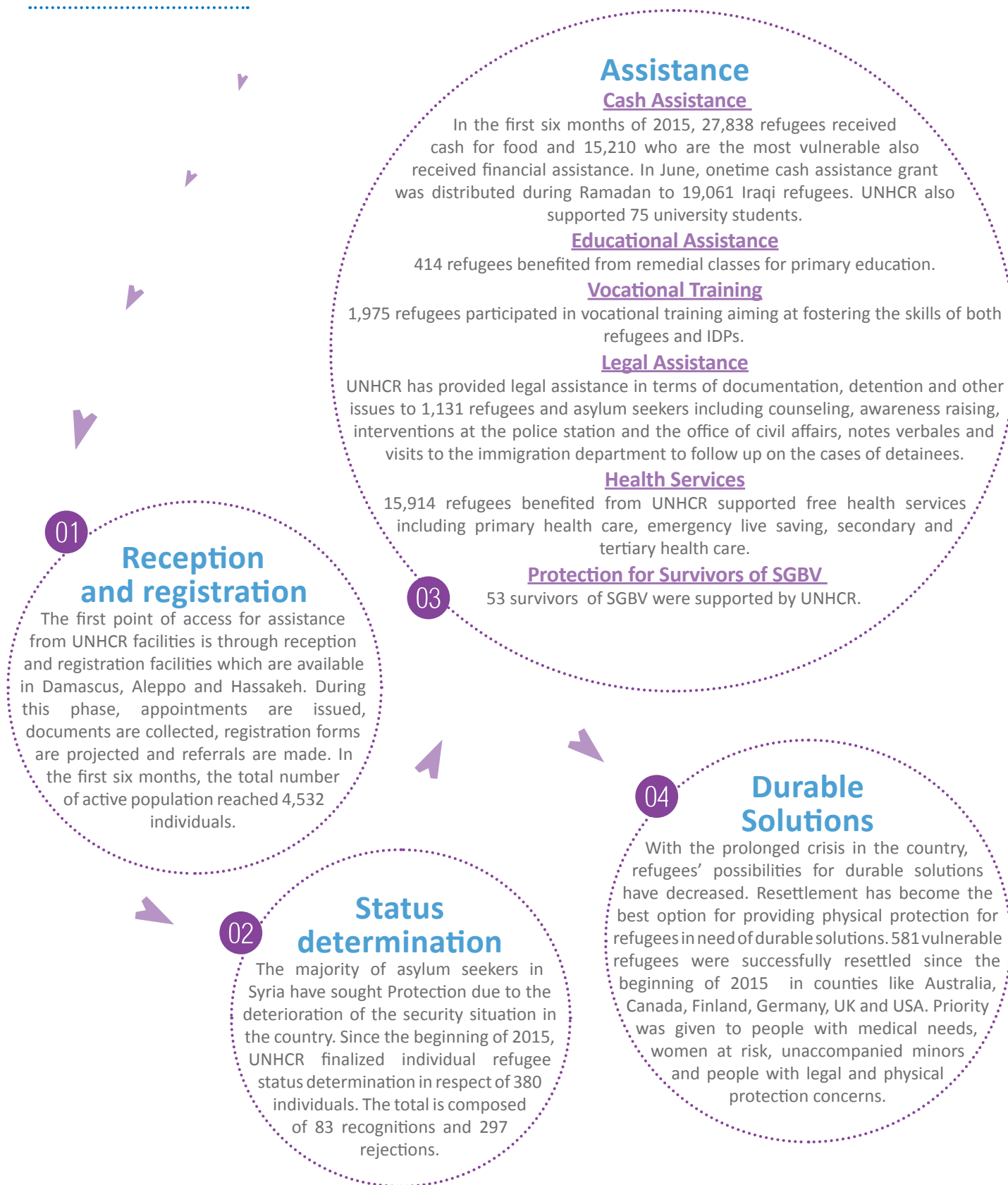
Private Shelter Upgrade

REFUGEES PROGRAMME

Before the crisis, Syria used to host large numbers of refugees which accounted for 12% of the Syrian population. These numbers have decreased dramatically after the crisis due to the insecurity and the limited resources in the country. At the end of June 2015 the number of asylum seekers and refugees currently registered in the country was 28,292. Like most Syrians, refugees residing in the country have been suffering from the adverse effect of the crisis in addition to other difficulties such as documentation issues, detention and lack of social networks to receive the necessary support.



©UNHCR/ Sh.Shekfeh 2015



UNHCR Syria Introduces Cutting Edge Technology to Assist Refugees

In April this year UNHCR Syria upgraded its registration services by introducing biometrics and issuing secured laminated ID cards. The new biometric system verifies the identity of the persons of concern to UNHCR with an Iris scan, a feature that is completely unique to the individual and stays unchanged for lifetime. Then it records the collected data on special secured application providing a high level of protection and credibility for the registration system, which prevents any attempts of fraud, deception or cheat. The new system will eliminate problems caused by lost Identity Cards and prevents unauthorized use of lost, stolen or abuse of someone else's ID cards. More than 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers are currently registered with UNHCR inside Syria and will benefit from this protection and security which will assist them to live with dignity and safety and to access all their rights as asylum seekers and refugees in Syria. Since the introduction of biometrics in April, 7,343 new secure ID cards have been issued and 5,411 individuals enrolled in the system.



World Refugee Day 2015 in Syria

In the past for years, many countries and regions held their own Refugee Days and even Weeks. One of the most widespread was Africa Refugee Day, which was in the past celebrated on 20 June in several countries. However, in 2000 in recognition of the international significance of Global Displacement and the importance of the issue of Refugees, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 5576 where it noted that 2001 marked the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had agreed to have International Refugee Day coincide with Africa Refugee Day on 20 June. The General Assembly therefore decided that 20 June would be celebrated as World Refugee Day.

Each year since then on June 20th UNHCR, sister UN agencies, INGOs and countless civic groups around the world host World Refugee Day events in order to draw the public's attention to the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, conflict and persecution.



The annual commemoration is marked by a variety of events across the globe, involving government officials, humanitarian aid workers, celebrities, civilians and the forcibly displaced themselves. World Refugee Day 2015 was marked in a number of locations throughout Syria with the theme this year highlighting individual refugee stories and bringing them closer to the public and to the media, raising awareness and gathering support for them.



In Damascus, the celebration brought together journalists, UNHCR partners and UN agencies and refugees, who, in their own words told their stories, their plight, their hopes and dreams for the future. In Aleppo UNHCR celebrated by conducting two recreational events where both refugees and IDP children participated in a number of activities including interactive theatre at Al Shahbaa Social Club as well as playtime for refugees and IDPs at the SARC centre. In Tartous, the celebration targeted refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and was also open to the public to participate in the many activities including theatrical performances, singing, acting, comic sketches and sports. In Lattakia, a celebration was held where 180 refugees, IDP and host community children enjoyed activities designed to introduce the children to different cultures and traditions.

Yazidi Refugees in Newroz Camp



The massive influx of Yazidi Iraqis to Syria which started in August 2014 following a heavy attack by ISIS in the Ninwa district of Iraq led to over thousands of people fleeing their homes into the remote Sinjar Mountains in Iraq. Over the next few days an estimated 95,000 people entered Syria. These people were exposed to extreme conditions, including no water, food and shelter. Most seem to have fled with little more than the clothes that they were wearing and many even without shoes. Some of them traveled 150 km to reach the Semalka border crossing which can take few days to transit. A large majority of the Iraqi families were women and children who arrived in very poor condition, exhausted, dehydrated, and hungry, many with untreated wounds. Whilst the majority of these people returned back into Iraq approximately 3,000 have remained in the Newroz camp in Hassakeh. Since then UNHCR has been providing protection and assistance such as standard CRI kits, heaters, rechargeable fans, tents and wheelchairs to the population. In addition, UNHCR has also provided medicine to residents through local NGOs.

In a stark contrast to the terrible scenes in August 2014, this year on April 15, UNHCR, on invitation from the camp management and refugee leaders, visited the Newroz Refugee camp in order to celebrate the Yazidi festival of 'Red Wednesday' a celebration similar to Easter. UNHCR, in a show of respect to the Yazidi traditions, distributed sweets to the children in camp and attended the official celebration, which included both refugee and host community participants in cultural dress performing traditional dance and songs.

PARTNERS IN 2015



AL BATOUL CHARITY



MINISTRY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION



AL NADA



NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL



AL TAALOUF CHARITY ASSOCIATION



PREMIÈRE URGENCE



AL TAMAYOUZ



SECOURS ISLAMIQUE FRANCE



DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL



SYRIAN ARAB RED CRESCENT



GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE & ALL THE EAST



THE SYRIA TRUST FOR DEVELOPMENT



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS



THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND



MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF PROJECT SERVICES

UNHCR URGENTLY NEEDS YOUR HELP

- **With a funding gap of USD 238.6 million, UNHCR Syria's programmes have already been seriously affected, leaving millions of people at risk**

In the Syrian Arab Republic, UNHCR is committed to working under the framework of the Syria Response Plan as sector lead for Protection and Community Services, Non-Food Items and Shelter in order to continue to seize opportunities to reach those IDPs in dire need of humanitarian assistance. In 2015, UNHCR needs USD 309.7 million to implement its Response Plan for Syria. However, in the first six months of 2015, UNHCR Syria Office received a total contribution of USD 71.1 million. This leaves a funding gap as of the 30 June 2015, of USD 238.6 million, with UNHCR's programmes already severely affected, leaving millions of people at risk.

- **Due to lack of funding UNHCR Syria has been forced to significantly reduce the weekly dispatch of CRIs in order to retain the capacity to respond to further emergency displacements**

For example in the first six months of 2014, UNHCR delivered 8,920,667 individual Core Relief Items to 2,468,593 IDPs in 12 out of the 14 Governorates of Syria. As a result of the lack of funding UNHCR Syria has been forced to reduce the weekly dispatch in order to retain the capacity to respond to further emergency displacements and new arrivals. As a result, in the first six months of 2015, UNHCR was only able to reach 1,272,920 beneficiaries with 5,516, 886 individual Core Relief Items: approximately half the number of vulnerable people reached in the same period last year. In addition, in the first six months of 2014 UNHCR provided shelter solutions for 31,773 people, but again due to both access and funding constraints, so far in 2015, it has only been able to assist 15,745 individuals. All this during which UNHCR is struggling to respond to huge displacements from people fleeing the fresh fighting in Idlib, Palmyra, Hassakeh and Daraa.

- **Due to constraints such as lack of funding UNHCR Syria has only been able to assist half the number of vulnerable people with CRIs and Shelter reached in the same period of 2014**

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 as experienced across the country in January 2015 with the snowstorm Salam. While every single project and programme is important, one of the most pressing needs presently is the procurement of Winterized Core Relief Items such as high thermal blankets and winter clothes for both children and adults in order to effectively plan for the coming harsh winter, to alleviate suffering and save lives. UNHCR is presently planning to provide winterized kits to 1 million people, but in order to do this it needs much more funding.

- **With temperatures dropping to as low as minus 13°C, UNHCR will be unable to procure winter clothes for over 1,000,000 IDPs due to lack of funding**

Over the past five years UNHCR's donors have helped save countless lives and alleviate suffering throughout Syria. With the support of donors, UNHCR has in the first six months of 2015, assisted nearly 1.3 million people with CRIs in 12 out of Syria's 14 governorates. However, we are now appealing for donors to assist further. 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, can take up to three 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 **Coming Syrian Winter**

THANKS TO OUR DONORS



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Canada



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Poland



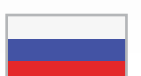
Portugal



Qatar



Republic of Korea



Russia



Slovenia



Spain



Sweden



Switzerland



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UKaid



United States

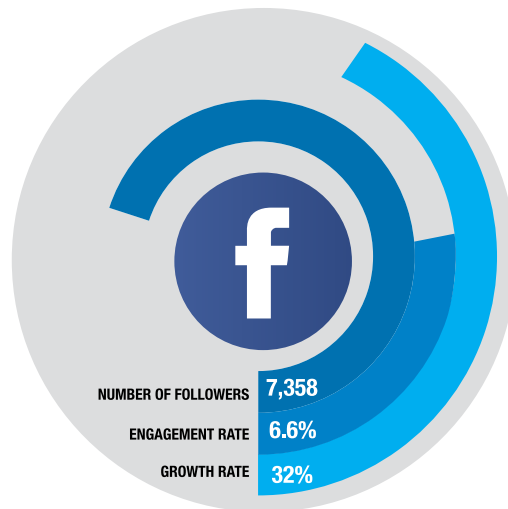
GLOBAL REACH

OVER 3.5 MILLION PEOPLE REACHED GLOBALLY IN 52 COUNTRIES.

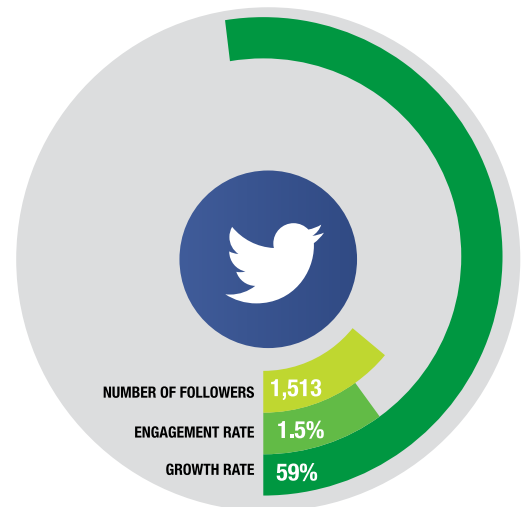
There is a significant need to educate the global audience, provide information about the Syrian crisis and to raise awareness about the 12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria. Communication is an integral part of any humanitarian operation, whether it is relaying news, transmitting a message or reaching out to donors. It is important therefore that efforts be made to ensure global media coverage and show UNHCR's leadership roles in protection and assistance as well as advocating for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

In the past six months UNHCR Syria upscaled its communication efforts by all means possible including both traditional media outlets and a significant penetration by all major social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr and Pinterest and Google+. This resulted in over 3.5 million people being reached in 52 countries and despite the many challenges faced by UNHCR in Syria we plan to double this in the next six months.

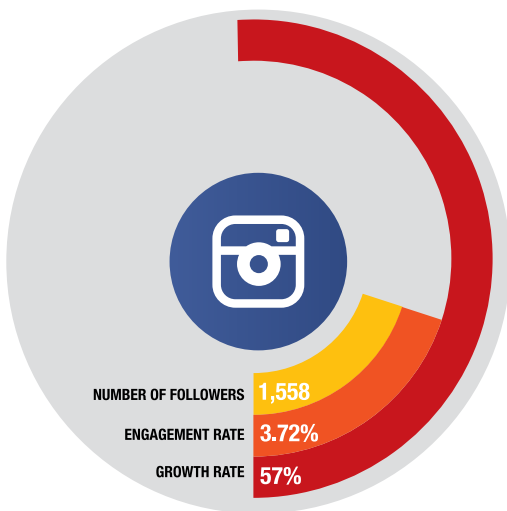
FACEBOOK



TWITTER



TOP 3 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



INSTAGRAM

**1,500,000
PEOPLE
REACHED**

**IN 2015 THROUGH UNHCR SYRIA
FACEBOOK & TWITTER ACCOUNTS**

INTERACTION WITH THE MEDIA

**OVER 1000 MEDIA VEHICLES FROM OVER 52 COUNTRIES PICKED UP
NEWS FROM UNHCR SYRIA, MEDIA VEHICLES INCLUDED:**

**NEWS AGENCIES / NEWSPAPERS / TVS AND RADIOS / NEWS WEBSITES /
UNHCR REPORTS AND UPDATES / BLOGS / SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

ENGAGEMENT OF PUBLIC THROUGH:

SHARING THE NEWS / QUOTING / DIRECT CONTACT / INTERVIEWS / INQUIRIES

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The UN Refugee Agency
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