

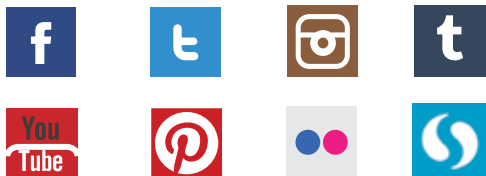
Syria

In Focus

October 2017

- Refugees Receive Education Grants
- Missions of UNHCR Representative
- Winterization Programme Begins in Syria
- Wael will Rebuild Deir es Zour

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UNHCR Distributes Education Grants for Refugees and Asylum Seekers



The crisis in Syria has had a negative impact on refugees' living conditions and socio-economic situation and many find it more difficult to secure minimum levels of financial income. In addition, some refugees have had to relocate from conflict prone areas to safer, relatively more expensive locations. As the schools in these safer areas are often crowded refugee families often face difficulties to enroll their children. Refugee families who remain living in conflict prone are reluctant to send their children to schools due to security concerns. Many families have therefore developed alternative education

systems for their children not necessarily linked to the formal education system such as home schooling, private lessons and education activities provided by charities. Regardless of the education system chosen, back to school time is always an expensive time of year for families, not only in Syria but throughout the world.

To assist with this expense, in September, UNHCR began distribution of the education grant for refugees and asylum seekers' students with a target of over 11,000 registered individuals. The distribution covered vulnerable refugee children whose ages fall between 5-18 years, in addition to asylum-seekers' children. These education grants aim to empower families to maintain the education of their children as a priority during the current crisis.



Visit of UNHCR Representative to Homs, Hama, Tartous and Lattakia

On 18 September, a senior management mission led by the UNHCR Representative visited Soran village in Northern Hama and met with members of the City Council and returnee families to assess the needs of returnees. The mission also participated in the inauguration of a new community centre managed by SSSD in Hama city.





The UNHCR Syria Representative also had a two-day mission to Tartous and Lattakia on 19 and 20 September. The mission included meetings with the Governor of Tartous and the Governor of Lattakia, UNHCR partners as well as Tartous Field staff. It also included visits to Baniyas community centre and the vocational training centre in Lattakia. During the mission, many topics were discussed, including the existing needs in Tartous and Lattakia, especially in terms of education, enhanced coordination with ministries, support to returnees in rural Lattakia, support for early childhood development programmes, the need for better involvement of partner field staff in the design of programmes, the establishment of a UNHCR field unit in Lattakia, livelihood projects, improved linkages to the market and, finally, improvement of communication between the partner and UNHCR field staff.

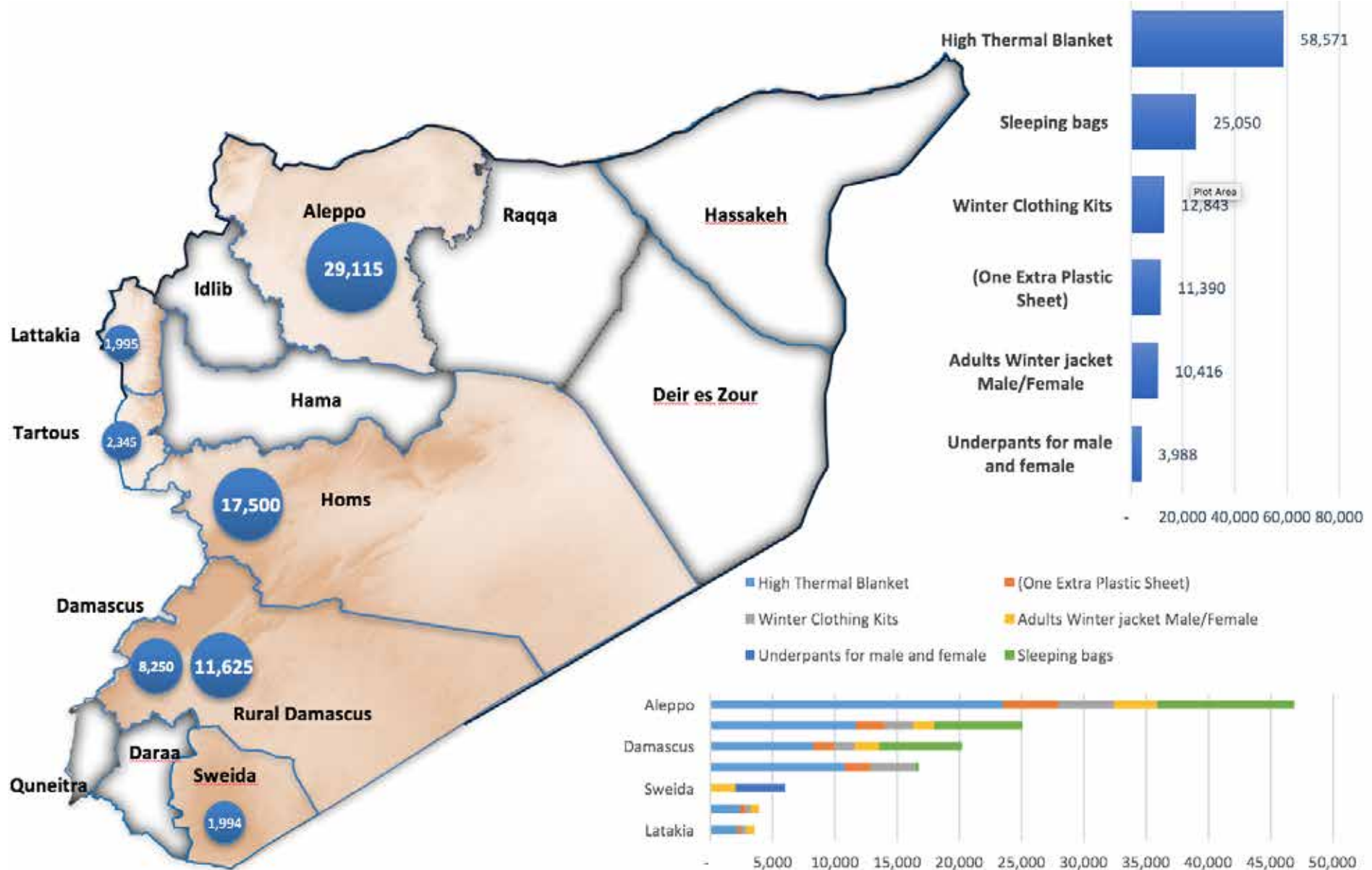
Winterized Assistance Dispatched Across Syria

In February 2017 UNHCR concluded its Winterization Programme which supported 1,239,249 individuals, exceeding its target by 24%. The programme provides humanitarian assistance for the harsh winter season throughout Syria with the aim of reaching those who are most vulnerable such as the newly displaced, people in hard-to-reach areas and people with specific needs and vulnerabilities such as unaccompanied minors, the elderly, female headed households, persons with disabilities or mental health problems, and individuals suffering from serious health conditions and chronic diseases.

In September, UNHCR began its important 2017/2018 winterization programme, so far distributing 122,258 winterized items, including high thermal blankets, extra plastic sheeting, and winter clothes kits to 72,824 individuals/15,150 families in Homs, Aleppo, Sweida, Lattakia, Tartous, Damascus and Rural Damascus. UNHCR is planning to reach 1,000,000 internally displaced persons throughout the country, this winter.



2017/2018 UNHCR Winterization Programme 72,824 Beneficiaries assisted With 122,258 items



Little Yasser Gets the Medical Assistance He Needs

Yasser Hussein is an 11 year-old child who was living with his father in a van in the Sheikh Saad area in Damascus after being displaced from Jobar. One day, a SARC employee observed Yasser and asked his father about his situation. "Yasser has paralysis as a result of Meningitis", his father said. Consequently, they were asked to register in the Al Zahera centre supported by UNHCR in order to receive proper medical assistance.

Yasser was then checked by health professionals in the centre, he entered the clinic and received the necessary medicines and the medical in-kind-assistance, including a wheelchair. "I am so happy with the wheelchair that you gave me, without it, I would have never gone to school nor to the therapy sessions", Yasser told both UNHCR and SARC with a big smile.



From Raqqa to Lattakia: Eida Al Ali's story

Eida Al Ali and her family fled Raqqa to Lattakia after it became controlled by ISIS. They left with barely the clothes on their backs. After long search, they were able to find a small house with an aluminum ceiling to accommodate the family. Her husband worked as a daily casual worker but the income was tiny and did not cover their needs. Eida and her son soon started suffering health because of the poor hygiene of their house so she began to look for a job to try improve conditions, but because of her limited experience no one would hire her. After hearing about the UNHCR Small Startup Business Grant Programme (SSBGP) from staff of partner MSJM, she approached the centre, applied to have her own project, a grocery store, and submitted her feasibility study. At the interview panel stage, Eida and her family were assessed to be vulnerable and it was decided that the project would be an effective protection and livelihoods strategy to improve the situation of the family. With the grant, Eida opened a grocery shop which is making a good income. "This project has helped lift my family out of poverty and has given us hope for the future, we can't thank UNHCR and MSJM enough", she says smiling.



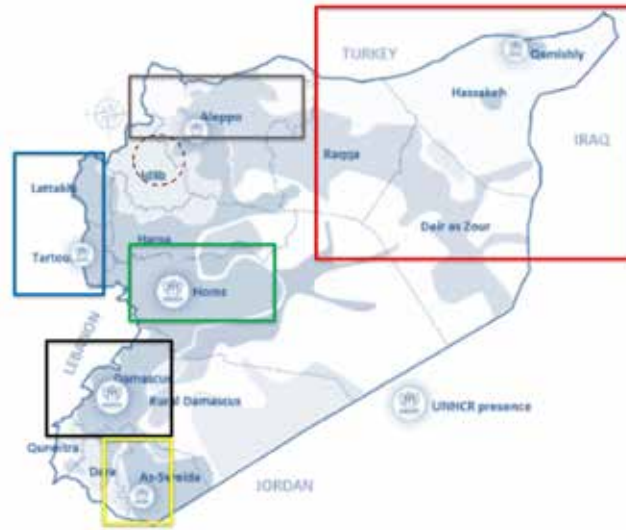
UNHCR Missions in September

In addition to UNHCR regular programme which saw CRIs distributed to 191,631 individuals, the following missions also took place during September:

- On 06 September, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency convoy to the besieged Kafraya and Fouaa, in Idlib governorate, and contributed 1,400 solar lamps to the population there.
- On 07 September, despite the security developments on the ground, an inter-agency humanitarian aid convoy entered Al Yarmouk Camp, Damascus. UNHCR contributed 2,000 blankets, 400 kitchen sets, 400 jerry cans, 400 plastic sheets, 1,200 sleeping mats and 400 solar lamps.
- On 13 September, a UNHCR convoy headed towards the newly accessible Deir es Zour, carrying humanitarian assistance, including solar lamps, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and plastic sheets for 30,000 individuals/6,000 families.
- On 27 September, a second inter-agency convoy reached Deir es Zour with 21 trucks covering the needs of 10,000 families. UNHCR contribution was 10,000 mattresses, 20,000 high thermal blankets, 9,000 kitchen sets, 9,000 plastic sheets, 9,000 solar lamps and 10,000 winter clothes.
- On 13, 14 and 26 September, cross border missions from Turkey took place reaching 25,000 individuals with CRIs in Aleppo and Idlib.



Areas Accessed During September



Wael: Determined to Rebuild Deir es Zour

Wael (15) and his family was displaced six years ago from Deir es Zour and are now living in the Safar Zahki Collective Shelter in Hassakeh. His father was injured fleeing Der es Zour preventing him from working and his 21 year old brother disappeared while on his way to Lebanon looking for work.

“With my older brother gone and my father being unable to work, I had to step in and become the sole breadwinner of the family,” explained Wael.

Wael was only 14 years old when he started working in a Falafel shop, however, only one month after he began working, he got injured while using the cutting machine and lost two fingers on his right hand. The shop owner covered the cost of the operation, however, he did not pay any compensation.

UNHCR, through partners SSSD and SARC, have two community centres running in Hassakeh City with mobile teams and Outreach Volunteers (ORVs) conducting various protection activities in collective shelters in both Hassakeh and Qamishli. During one of these activities carried out by UNHCR’s partner SARC, they noticed that Wael always left whenever he saw people coming. While talking with his mother she explained that “Ever since he got injured, he is too embarrassed to see people. He has even dropped out of school, even though he’s only in the ninth grade.”

The Psychosocial Support (PSS) team began working with him in order to build his trust and bring him out of his isolation. After that, they worked on his writing in order to get him back to school. Although he found writing difficult due to his injury with the persistent encouragement of the PSS team he was confident enough to go back. In addition to going back to school he also enrolled in the education remedial classes provided in UNHCR Community Centers to catch up on what he had missed.

When UNHCR met Wael, he was coming back from his new safer job selling bread, however with limited working hours as he was determined to pursue his studies. The team discussed alternative solutions for his family members that could be provided through the livelihood programme services, including vocational training opportunities for his sisters, and help for his mother’s documentation through the legal aid team.

Finally, when Wael was asked about his thoughts for the future, he tells UNHCR “I’m going to study hard in order to become an architect and rebuild Deir es Zour,” with fierce determination.



September Snapshot



In September UNHCR Syria:

- Provided legal assistance through its 164 lawyers to 12,697 IDPs in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Sweida, Daraa, Tartous, Latakia, Hassakeh, Homs, Hama, and Quneitra. This included legal counselling to 4,737 IDPs and 222 awareness sessions attended by 6,080 IDPs on various legal issues. 1,880 IDPs also benefited from lawyers' direct intervention before courts and administrative bodies.
- Increased the number of operating community centres to 74 in 11 governorates, supported by 35 mobile units. All centres provide an integrated basket of services in relation to education, child protection, SGBV and PSS targeting persons with protection concerns and persons with specific needs.
- Increased the number of outreach volunteers to 1,640 including thematic volunteers in the areas of legal, psychosocial support, SGBV and child protection.
- Implemented 22 Community-based initiatives in Aleppo, Damascus and Tartous through partners Namaa, The Syria Trust, SSSD, Al Batool and Al Nada.
- Began working with partner PU on the removal of 50,000 m³ of debris in the neediest neighborhoods of Aleppo city. Seven neighborhoods were identified so far in Bab Al Neirab in cooperation with governorate engineers.
- Reached a total of 225,631 individuals with CRIs for the first time, including 9,000 in hard-to-reach and besieged areas, while 25,000 individuals were reached by cross-border deliveries pursuant to UNSC resolution 2332.

Sally Jumps High

Sally, 12 years and her family were forced in 2014 to leave their home in the Dumar Balad area and settled in the town of Deir Atiyah in rural Damascus. When she arrived first she was nervous and used to isolate herself. However, eventually Sally heard about the remedial classes UNHCR and partner PU were providing in Deir Atiya and decided to enroll herself in educational activities, the children clubs and sports activities.

She proved herself a committed participant of all activities, contributing effectively to the Children's Club and attending sports activities. She was nominated to participate in the schools athletics championship held in the town of Deir Atiyah and she won the second prize in the high jump competition.

"The UNHCR and PU courses contributed in enhancing my self-confidence, I had the opportunity to participate in the children's club and to spread awareness among the children about their rights. I also had the chance to show my talent and improve while at the same time improve my educational level," she tells UNHCR.



From a Street Vendor to a Businesswoman: UNHCR Empowers Samia

Samia from Lattakia, is the only breadwinner to her all-female family including her mother, widowed sisters and their 12 children. Since the age of ten, she used to support her family selling vegetables on a cart around the streets when her father became paralyzed. She did this for three years until her father passed away.

At the age of thirteen, she became a vendor and when possible, she used to work in a pastry shop. After she heard about UNHCR partner MSJM's Vocational Training Center in Lattakia, she went there to explore the assistance available. Subsequently she applied for a Small Startup Business Grant. Based on her expertise, vulnerability, and the feasibility study of the project, Samia was approved to receive a grant to establish her own pastry business, to support herself and her family. "I can now see that all my hard work paid off. I have a decent job that I like and I can support my family. I have my own business, I couldn't be happier!" Samia said joyfully.



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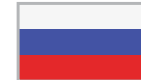
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