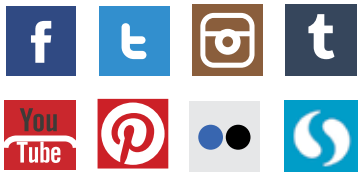


Highlights

- Training Centre For Blind Opens in Homs
- Livelihood Toolkits making a Difference
- Aid Deliveries Continue
- Rehabilitation of Shelter in Daraa
- September Snapshot
- Sewing Success Stories

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Training Centre for the Blind, and Children with Education Difficulties, Opens in Homs

In September a UNHCR supported training centre for the blind and children with education difficulties opened in the Al Nezha area of Homs. Because of the ongoing conflict there has been a huge increase in the number of people with disabilities as well as problems in accessing health services, legal counselling and educational facilities. Blind people often find it difficult to communicate with family members, feel useless to the society with some believing that they are a burden on their families who already face stretched finances.

UNHCR believes it is hugely important to help and support the largest possible number of people with disabilities, and after meeting a number of blind people and hearing their stories decided to assist by supporting a centre for learning and activities. This new centre will train blind people in reading and writing, offer musical sessions, as well as specialized training for family members in how to deal with, and communicate with, the blind.



UNHCR provided practical support by rehabilitating the premises and paying the rent on the building for a number of months as startup support. It also provided furniture, sports equipment, computers with specialized software for the blind, musical instruments and drawing tools to facilitate the training courses.

The aims of the Centre are:

- To improve the livelihoods and social level of the blind.
- Respond to the concerns of people with specific needs and vulnerabilities.
- Facilitate access to psychosocial support services for the blind and activities and link them to available services.
- Continue to build and develop their capacity by providing them with advanced training and life skills courses
- Provide an income for a number of the blind (the teachers and trainers) and enable them to improve people's social life and status in society.
- Support and protect the blind and give them the opportunity to move forward and create a better future.



Adnan: A Vision of a Better Life



Adnan, 62 is an IDP from Palmira who the UNHCR team met at the centre's opening. 'I and thousands of other blind people have little choice but to stay at home doing nothing. This negatively affects us physically and psychologically, losing our remaining limited hopes for life, joy and even a smile day by day. Now that we have this centre we feel we have come back to life and are happy that we can still be of benefit to our society, assist people with the same problems that we have, and at the same time make some income that enables us to help support our families. This feeling is indescribable and cannot be expressed by words' he tells the team.

He goes on to say 'we blind people can see things with our souls that can't be seen by normal functioning eyes. We had lost all hope when suddenly UNHCR came and brought us back to life, giving us a new vision to a new life with our blind eyes. On behalf of all blind people I thank you very much and thank God for sending us agencies like yours to keep us motivated to live and hope for a better future'.

Livelihood Toolkits Make a Difference in Aleppo

Maher Abdel Hadi Attar is a plumber, married with a young girl and was displaced from his home in the Seif Aldawla neighborhood in Aleppo because of the conflict. His house was later destroyed and although he has faced a lot of problems during his displacement he continued working as a plumber to support his family. One year ago he was working in the Al Dabeet hospital in Aleppo when the hospital was hit by a rocket which also damaged his car resulting in the loss of most of his tools and plumbing equipment. Despite this, he remained optimistic and kept on trying to find work with the simple tools he still had.

He received the Plumbing Toolkit from UNHCR in partnership with Nama'a Association as part of UNHCR's livelihoods programme and immediately set to work fixing his car and restarting his plumbing work. When the livelihoods team visited him recently, he told them cheerfully that 'the toolkit is of excellent quality and has helped me gain a lot of work with my income now being up by over 50%'. "I'm so happy I can be independent again and have my own business thanks to UNHCR and the Livelihood Toolkit", he added.



Fighting Fire In Tartous

The past few months have seen a number of fires taking place in some of the IDP shelters in Tartous, due to a number of reasons including some people cooking in their tents. With winter coming it was feared that more of these incidents could occur, so as to mitigate this risk UNHCR, in cooperation with its partner SARC, organized a number of fire-fighting training sessions for IDPs in collective shelters. The training which was both informative and fun also gave people a chance to familiarize themselves with, and use fire fighting equipment.

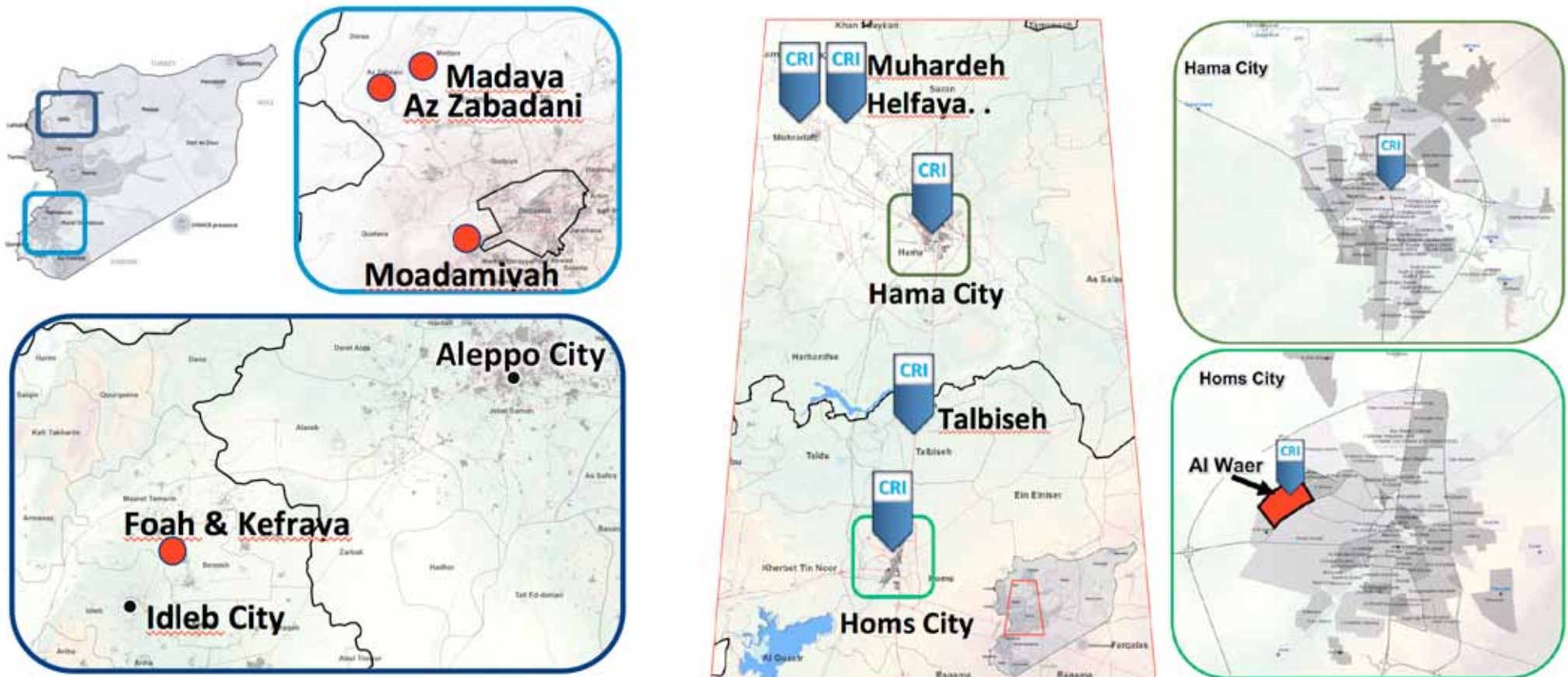


UNHCR Continues to Deliver Assistance throughout Syria

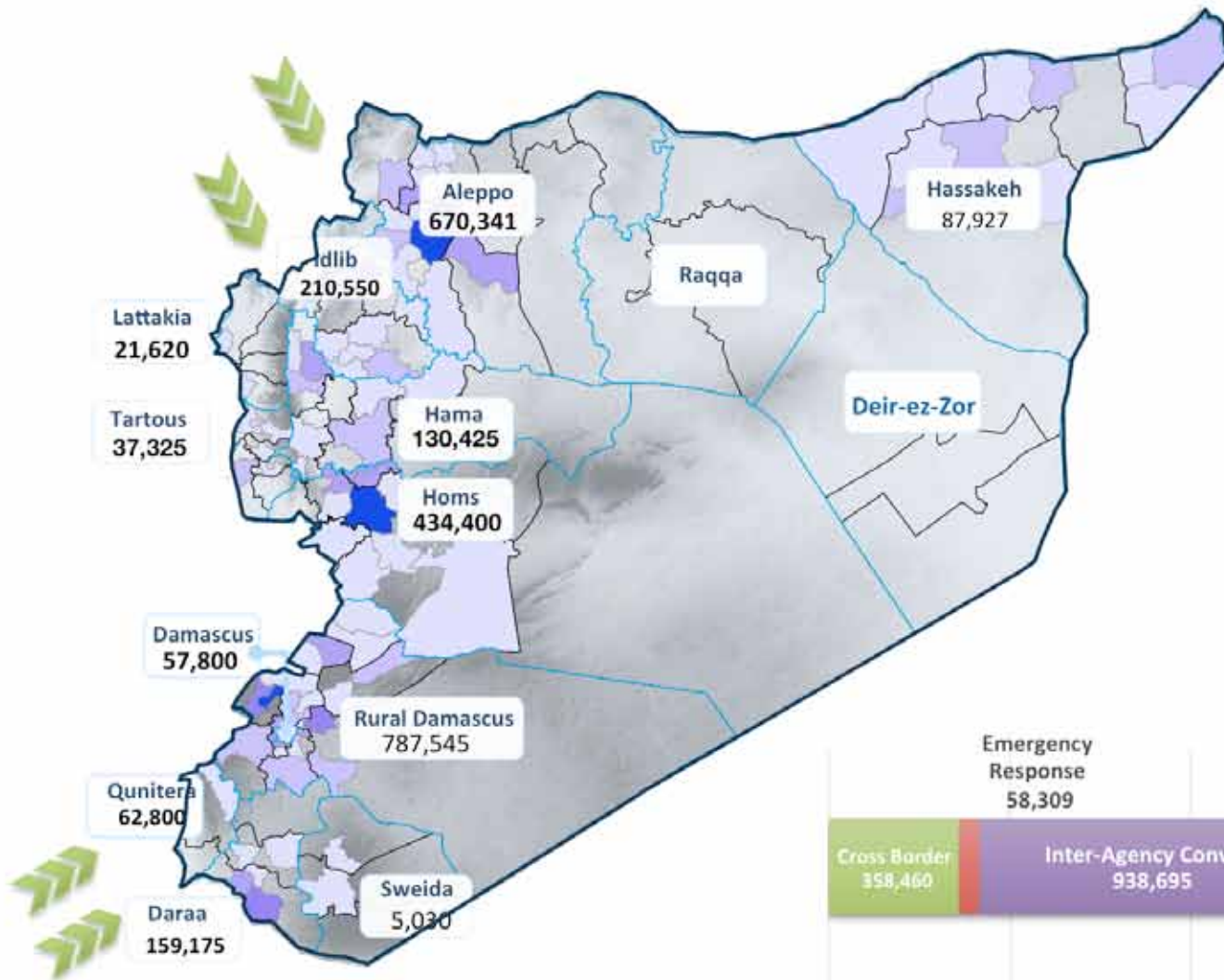
- On 03 September, 650 rechargeable fans in Hama were distributed by UNHCR, through its partner, the Social Care Charity.
- On 04 September, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency convoy to Hama city delivering, inter alia, mattresses, kitchen sets, jerry cans, plastic sheets and sleeping mats for 15,000 individuals/ 3,000 families.
- On 08 September, as part of the response to the displacement in Hama governorate, UNHCR provided humanitarian aid for 1,125 individuals/ 225 families in Muhardeh / Helfaya.
- From 10 to 18 September, UNHCR reached Hama city with core relief items, including 12,910 mattresses, 3,500 kitchen sets, 13,000 jerry cans, 6,500 plastic sheets, 19,500 sleeping mats, 32,500 high thermal blankets, 6,500 solar lamps, 200 sanitary napkins and 1,983 winter clothes.



- On 19 September, an inter-agency convoy to the hard-to-reach Talbiseh took place. UNHCR's contribution consisted of 6,000 blankets, 1,500 kitchen sets, 1,500 plastic sheets, 1,000 mattresses, 6,200 sleeping mats, 1,500 jerry cans, 8,400 winter clothes and 1,500 Solar lamps. As the off-loading took more time than planned, the team was advised to stay overnight in a safe location in order to avoid the risk of night time road movement.
- On 22 September, UNHCR contributed to an inter-agency delivery to Moadamiyah with 2,000 winter clothing kits
- On 24 September, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency humanitarian convoy to the hard-to-reach Al Waer, in Homs. In addition to meeting with the community leaders and conducting a quick assessment of the population's needs and concerns, UNHCR provided 12,000 blankets, 1,500 kitchen sets, 1,500 plastic sheets, 1,500 mattresses, 6,500 sleeping mats, 1,500 jerry cans, 1,500 solar lamps and 7,500 winter clothes.
- On 25 September, UN interagency missions reached the Four Towns of Madaya and Zabadani (Rural Damascus) and Foah and Kefraya (Idleb Governorate) with multi-sectoral assistance for 60,000 people. UNHCR participated in the convoys with non-food items, including 4,000 solar lamps and 2,800 diapers to Madaya and Zabadani, and 2,000 solar lamps and 1,400 diapers to Foah and Kefraya. The Four Towns had been last reached by an inter-agency convoy on 30 April.



People reached in Syria Jan - Sep 2,664,938 Beneficiaries



Row Labels	BSG	HTR	Grand Total
Aleppo		67,040	67,040
Al-Hasakeh		35,506	35,506
Dar'a		10,825	10,825
Hama		32,000	32,000
Homs	77,665	265,380	343,045
Idleb	65,800	2,500	68,300
Rural Damascus	285,650	158,280	443,930
Grand Total	429,115	571,531	1,000,646



UNHCR Makes a Difference in the Daraa Governorate

'My father was an agricultural engineer before we were displaced and we lost everything' Mohamad Fahd al Hamad tells us. Mohamad is a university student who lives with his parents and his three sisters in the Al Jabareen shelter in Izraa after they were displaced from their town of al Sheliah in the Daraa countryside due to conflict. He goes on "we used to live in a beautiful home but then all of a sudden our lives were shattered: I try to earn extra money by doing research but what I earn is too little to pay for an apartment and to buy food and water, so we have had to live in a shelter with such a hard life here."



The shelter Mohamad and his family live in an unfinished building where it is freezing cold in winter and suffers from water shortages. He tells the team 'Last winter we didn't have doors or windows and used to put plastic sheets to cover the openings in order to try keep out the snow and have some privacy'.

After carrying out the assessment on the shelter UNHCR's partner GOPA rehabilitated it, carrying out electricity work, installing a sanitation system, water heater as well as also installing aluminium windows and wooden doors. 'These improvements have eased the burden on people here in the shelter and we are delighted, thank you UNHCR and thank you GOPA' Mohamad added.

In addition to rehabilitating shelters in Izraa, GOPA also rehabilitated a shelter in Daraa city's Al Balad neighbourhood where the team met Adel Ali Abu Khadour who used to work in the Syrian Sports Union but lost his job when he was displaced. Adel, a father for four daughters between 5-18 years old told the team that the displacement has affected their study badly, especially as they did not settle down in one place directly but moved from one relative's home to another before finally moving to the shelter. 'I can't pay for an apartment since the rental fees are so expensive, and what I earn is hardly enough to buy food for my family', said Adel. 'To live in a shelter is so hard and tiring, last winter it was freezing here and there was not enough water to shower or clean the place...we felt that we had no privacy at all' Adel added.

GOPA supported by UNHCR installed new electrical wiring, a sanitation system, aluminium windows, wooden doors, sinks and an electrical heater in the shelter. 'With the support from GOPA and UNHCR our situation has gotten much better and we feel much more comfortable now. My daughters used to often become sad and spend time crying, however, now that we have a well rehabilitated shelter, they feel better' Adel tells the shelter team.

Provided legal assistance through its partners Syria Trust, SARC, DRC, and Al Taalouf to 13,794 IDPs in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Hassakeh, Qamishly, Homs, Hama, Sweida, Tartous, Daraa, Quneitra and Lattakia. This included legal counselling to 5,443 IDPs and 257 awareness sessions attended by 5,376 IDPs on various legal issues. Furthermore, 2,975 IDPs benefited from lawyers' direct interventions before courts and administrative bodies.

Launched a new community centre in Al Sabboura, Rural Damascus through its partner Al Nada, bringing the total number of operational community centres to 56.



In September 2016 UNHCR

Recruited 93 new Out-Reach Volunteers (ORVs) bringing the total number of ORVs to 1,441 operating in 10 governorates.

Reached a total of 518,579 individuals with CRIs, including 146,582 in hard to reach and besieged areas, while 100,000 individuals were reached by cross border deliveries pursuant to UNSC resolution 2165.

Completed nine new Community Based Initiatives (CBIs). With 90 CBIs already in the implementation phase, the total of such initiatives has reached 207, benefiting 31,050 people in 10 governorates.

Sewing Success Stories: Helping Women Support Families and Communities

Um Yousef ... A Ghezlaniah Success Story

Um Yousef is a mother of five children in her forties who is displaced from Ghouta in Rural Damascus. For nearly five years Um Yousef attended the UNHCR supported Community centre in Ghezlaniah run by partner Al Nada where she took part in regular activities like handicrafts and needle work. She has been involved in many training courses in various fields including sewing, first aid, and hair dressing. Through these workshops, she learnt many skills such as spinning handloom, needlework and she has finished a number of handmade pieces.

Though a cash grant she received from Al Nada with UNHCR support Um Yousef bought an Aghabani machine (specialized sewing machine) and now embroiders table and bed sheets which she sells to the local markets. She tells us that she 'hopes that the extra money she makes will help her family throughout these hard times'.

The Al Nada Community Centre in Ghezlaniah, first opened in 2006 to help residents of the area. Now, while it still supports residents, the centre has seen a big increase of fleeing displaced people needing help. Women attending the centre can learn valuable vocational skills while participating in the classes in Information Technology, English language and handicrafts. UNHCR supports the Al Nada community centre with operational expenses for training courses including handloom and silk painting in addition to first aid training courses. The centre is constantly adapting its services to the new challenges brought by the crisis and plans to increase the range of services available there in the future.



Reem has hope for the Future

Reem is a mother of three who is also caring for a sick husband who has been displaced from her home in Darayya, Rural Damascus. Before the conflict she used to work at UNHCR partner Al Nada's tailoring shop in Darayya and owned two sewing machines, one for hemming and the other for sewing which she used to support the family. However, the crisis forced her and the family to abandon their home leaving everything behind.

Determined not to give up or lose hope, Reem made contact with Al Nada again in Mezzeh, Damascus City again and enrolled in the Advanced Sewing course in their community centre, one of the UNHCR supported vocational training courses there, to improve her skills and to refresh her memory. Reem began taking on extra tailoring work to earn extra money, sewing by hand until she was eventually able to save enough money to buy a sewing machine. Business has been so good that Reem has now upgraded her sewing machine to an industrial one and is now planning to buy a hemming machine that will help her improve her business and increase her income further. "Thanks to the help of Al Nada and UNHCR my family's situation has improved and we now have hope for the future" Reem says.



Communities Sewing Clothes for Children in Qamishly



In the Zaitonya area of Qamishly, 22 women from both the IDP and local community came together under a UNHCR supported Community Based Initiative (CBI) to make clothes for all 200 children living in the area for the Eid Al Adha celebrations. The women using their own sewing machines made the clothes with materials provided by UNHCR through its partner the SSSD.

This CBI resulted in a reduced financial burden on families there in buying new clothes for their children at Eid, especially in light of the increasing prices throughout Syria. When completed the clothes were distributed to the children at a party amid celebrations, games and fun.

Assisting the Vulnerable Through Art in Rural Damascus

In the Al Nada community centre in Al Saboura Rural Damascus, a new youth group composed of 20 art students was recently formed and supported through the UNHCR Group Community-Based Initiative program by UNHCR partner Al Nada. Their aim was to create a safe and peaceful space for vulnerable children from both the host and IDP communities and conduct Psycho Social Support (PSS) activities using their art.

After receiving the necessary Protection training by UNHCR and Al Nada, the group targeted more than 80 children with PSS support to help them express themselves and their feelings through art. The sessions and activities also helped the children make friends in their new surroundings and develop routines to help them cope with stress.

The initiative has been very successful and at the end of September the group organized an event at Damascus University to attract more young students who are interested in volunteering and supporting vulnerable children. The event included a play to reflect the suffering of the children caught up in the conflict, and an exhibition of paintings that the children drew themselves. The volunteers were also presented with Certificates of Appreciation from UNHCR/Al Nada to thank them for their great work.



Further Reading

August 2016 Emergency Shelter Factsheet in both English and Arabic available at <http://reliefweb.int/node/1715051>

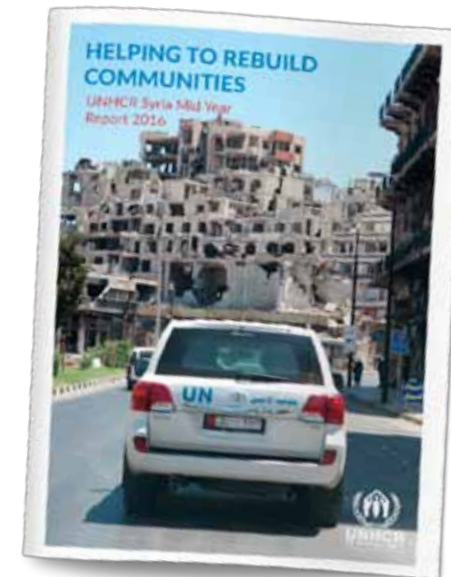
UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syria IDP Operations October 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57f4ecb04.html>



UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Helping to Save Lives and Rebuild Communities Mid Year Report 2016

available at:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/57c6dccc4.html>



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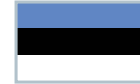
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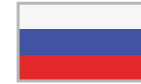
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