

## UNHCR provides assistance to vulnerable Yazidis stranded in the mountains

Heavy attacks in Sinjar district of Ninewa in Iraq have led to the population there fleeing to the mountains, with an estimated influx of 95,000 people entering Syria through the Yaroubia crossing, since the 3rd of August. The majority of families streaming into Syria are Yazidis, who are a neutral community most of which speak Kurdish. Whilst most of these families returned into Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the remaining families have either resided in Newroz camp in Malkia or moved to the neighboring villages. They were exposed to extreme conditions, including lack of water, food and shelter. Most seem to travel without transportation some 150 km to reach the Semalka border crossing which could take several days to transit.



An appeal has been made by these families to help their stranded family members. UNHCR has accordingly procured trucks to transport so far 6,315 hungry, thirsty, tired, and, in some cases, injured individuals from the border to Newroz Camp or to any other safe area. As these vulnerable families have left behind most of their belongings, UNHCR has distributed **8,500** core relief items including sleeping mats, mattresses, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, plastic sheets, rechargeable fans, jerry cans and diapers as well as **500** tents to protect them from the harsh weather where temperature could reach more than 55 degrees.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR rapidly responds to massive influx of Yazidis from Iraq
- UNHCR distributed sleeping mats, mattresses, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, plastic sheets, rechargeable fans, jerry cans, diapers and tents to the vulnerable
- Outreach volunteers bring hope for the Future

## UNHCR Syria Mid-Year Report now available



Refworld:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/53df49044.html>

Reliefweb:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/accessing-vulnerable-across-conflict-lines-unhcr-syria-mid-year-analysis>

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Following the regular visits to the camp, an assessment on the ground has been undertaken for the **6,000** individuals residing there. Family separation, unaccompanied minors and lack of documentation have been detected as the most serious protection concerns for necessary response and referral.

UNHCR also has finalized the site planning including demarcation, fencing, tent locations, child friendly spaces and community spaces. An agreement has been made with the partners working on the ground on the land that will be used for the camp expansion in the future.

Moreover, UNHCR has mobilized sister organizations and partners to provide humanitarian assistance which is not within its mandate such as distribution of food and other humanitarian supplies.

The response of UNHCR to the crisis has been mainly organized through UNHCR newly established field office in Qamishly, which is part of UNHCR decentralization strategy in order to become closer to vulnerable people wherever they might be. Since 15 August, a team of 14 extra staff have been also dispatched from Damascus with Protection, registration, logistics and ICT background to support the office in Qamishly in responding effectively and efficiently to the ongoing crisis.



## Seven day old girl starts her journey to Syria

“We escaped to the mountains after we heard that fighters are heading to our village Tel Kasab”, said Sabah, father of five children, one of them is a newborn baby girl.

Sabah’s family is one of many Yazidi families who escaped violence in Ninawa in Iraq through Sinjar Mountains. The majority crossed back to Kurdistan Region in Iraq while the rest sought refuge in the Newroz camp in Malkia area or in neighboring areas such as the villages of Malkia, Qamishly, Amuda and Derbasia.

“It was a very long trip. We stayed two days in the mountains with no food and no water. I could have done anything just to feed my little children. Luckily we found our way out to Ayzi shrine in Shamal area and we stayed three days there. Then we walked a whole day just to reach the Syrian border where we were finally taken to the camp”. Sabah Added.

Sabah has let behind 116 extended family members knowing nothing about them. Hopefully, they can get to the Syrian border to receive assistance...

## A Little Kindness Changes Lives

UNHCR’s 254 Outreach Volunteers working out of eight governorates including Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Tartous, Aleppo, Hassakeh, Daraa and Sweida are doing fantastic work, reaching those in the community who might otherwise be forgotten about. Recently, for example, in Sweida one of the volunteers conducted a visit to an IDP family’s home where she met a young eighteen year old man. The young man suffers from growth problems due to kidney failure, has a hole in his heart and has had one leg amputated. When she first met with him the young man was isolated, self-conscious and rarely talked to people. He refused to interact with people fearing that they would make fun of him due to his appearance and ill health.

**Outreach Volunteers Bring Hope for the Future**

The volunteer visited him regularly and encouraged him to engage in conversations with people. She also, eventually after trust and confidence were built, encouraged him to enroll in a Mobile and Electronics Maintenance Course which is conducted by, UNHCR implementing partner GOPA. Having registered with the course and attended many lessons, the young man became more confident and began to engage with people around him. The man recently wrote a story as a thank you for the encouragement he received from the Outreach Volunteer and the instructors running the course. In the story he described how his life had changed, how he had suffered with depression and how he was afraid to talk or even interact with people. He also wrote about how happy he now was and how he now has hope for the future.



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The young man is still attending the course and is looking forward to participating in other courses and integrating further into society. Sometimes a little care and kindness does indeed change lives.

## UNHCR Syria Does not Stand Still even as Mid-Year Report is Published

The UNHCR Syria mid-term analysis which was published during the first week of August has received international critical acclaim. The report gives an in depth analysis of UNHCR activities for both IDPs and refugees throughout Syria for the first six months of 2014. These include Protection (including monitoring, advocacy, human rights based response, child protection, SGBV and community liaison), the dispatch, distribution and monitoring of Core Relief Items (CRIs) and activities in Shelter, Health and Livelihoods, to name but a few.

It also reports that UNHCR had reached 52 hard-to-reach areas in Hama, Homs, Daraa, Aleppo, Idlib, Raqqa and Rural Damascus; this includes access to three besieged areas in Aleppo and Homs as well as the fact that **2.4 million** beneficiaries had received CRIs such as mattresses, blankets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans and kitchen sets in the first six months of the year. However, UNHCR doesn't stand still! In the short period since the report was compiled this has risen to more than **3 million** beneficiaries who received over **11 million** CRIs. In addition UNHCR also entered the besieged area of Moadamiyeh in Rural Damascus for the first time since October 2012, with CRIs for **20,000** individuals. These developments just further reinforce the significant work being done by UNHCR throughout Syria.

The report also indicates where relief gaps remain, outlines funding shortfalls and describes the negative effects of these on the most vulnerable. For example at present UNHCR activities for 2014 are only 23% funded with only US \$64 million out of a required US \$273 million available. This US \$ 209 funding gap means that UNHCR will be unable to procure winter clothes for over **2,000,000** IDPs, despite temperatures dropping to as low as minus 13°C. It also means that **80,000** IDPs will be deprived of shelter assistance, **100,000** IDPs will not benefit from medical supplies and equipment, **250,000** IDPs will be denied primary health care and **20,000** extremely vulnerable IDPs will not receive cash assistance. Because of this, the report then finishes by making a plea to International donors to dig deeper in their pockets to avoid a humanitarian disaster in Syria in the coming winter months. Let's hope this plea doesn't fall on deaf ears.

**'This report recognizes the great work that all 425 UNHCR staff members in Syria have accomplished and continue to accomplish in extremely difficult and complex working conditions'**

Mr. Tarik Kurdi,  
Representative UNHCR Syria

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