

Syria – Complex Emergency

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p>15.3 MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Population in Need of Humanitarian Assistance in Syria</p> <p><i>UN – February 2023</i></p>	<p>12.1 MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Food-Insecure Population in Syria</p> <p><i>UN – May 2023</i></p>	<p>6.8 MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Number of IDPs in Syria</p> <p><i>UN – December 2022</i></p>	<p>3 MILLION</p> <p>Estimated People USAID/BHA Reaches per Month in Syria</p> <p><i>USAID/BHA – Sept 2023</i></p>	<p>2 MILLION</p> <p>Estimated People State/PRM Reaches per Month in Syria</p> <p><i>State/PRM – Sept 2023</i></p>
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- TAF attacks in northeast Syria damaged critical infrastructure and resulted in at least 18 deaths following an October 1 attack on Ankara.
- Clashes between SARG forces and Syrian Salvation Government forces resulted in the displacement of more than 120,000 people across northwest Syria as of October 27.
- An October REACH assessment identified protection concerns and reduced access to basic services as the primary humanitarian concerns for conflict-affected populations in northwest Syria.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Syria Response in FYs 2012–2023	USAID/BHA ¹	\$8,743,977,748
	State/PRM ²	\$8,442,280,455
	Total³	\$17,186,258,203

¹ USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

² U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

³ FY 2024 funding for the Syria Complex Emergency will be included in future products when committed/obligated. For information on the U.S. Government's (USG) funding toward the response in FY 2023, refer to Syria Fact Sheet #9, dated September 30, 2023, available on the USAID website at <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work>.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

TAF Air Strikes Damage Critical Infrastructure in Northeast Syria

Air strikes and attacks by Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) on farms, oil infrastructure and refineries, and power and water stations across northeast Syria from October 4–8 resulted in at least 18 deaths and adversely affected approximately 4.3 million people as of October 16, according to the Northeast Syria Nongovernmental Organization Forum (NES NGO Forum) and the Self Administration of North and East Syria. The Turkish attacks were in response to the Kurdistan Workers' Party bombing in Türkiye's capital city of Ankara on October 1 that resulted in two injuries. The air strikes damaged critical infrastructure, rendering at least 18 water pumping stations and 11 power stations non-operational, severely disrupting access to electricity and safe drinking water for people in conflict-affected areas. Attacks targeting electrical plants—including the Swediyah power station, northeast Syria's sole domestic source of gas and the supplier of electricity for more than 1 million people—had resulted in the closure of the Alouk, Amuda, and Qamishli water stations, affecting an estimated 700,000 individuals as of October 18, according to international media. NES NGO Forum reports that the loss of electricity has resulted in several health care-related challenges, including risky nighttime child births occurring without light, the inability to use laboratory equipment in the evening, and increased security risks which impact beneficiary turnout. Humanitarian actors have raised concerns that a lack of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities in the region could force people to turn to unsafe water sources, increasing water-borne health risks such as cholera. To meet rising humanitarian needs, relief actors are working to supply generators to key areas such as camp settings and health facilities, while engaging with authorities to prioritize the procurement of fuel.

The TAF strikes on civilian infrastructure come amidst a broader increase in insecurity across northern Syria, including in northeast Syria's Al Hasakah Governorate, where communities were already contending with persistent electricity, fuel, and power shortages prior to the escalation of hostilities in early October, according to NES NGO Forum.

Hostilities in Northwest Syria Displace an Estimated 120,000 People as Cross-Border Aid Continues

Hostilities between Syrian Arab Republic Government (SARG) forces and the Syrian Salvation Government—affiliated with the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham armed group—across Aleppo and Idlib governorates in early October displaced more than 120,000 individuals and affected more than 2,300 localities as of October 27, according to the UN. Of the total displaced, 60,000 people had reportedly returned to their areas of origin as of October 18. Additionally, the clashes led to the deaths of at least 70 people—including at least 27 children, representing more than one-third of the total casualties—and injury to nearly 340 others between October 5 and 27. Air strikes and shelling along frontline locations in Aleppo, Idlib, and Latakia governorates from October 9–17 damaged more than 40 health facilities, including maternity and child hospitals and several primary health care centers, nearly 25 schools, and more than 20 water systems across northwest Syria as of October 27, the UN reports.

The UN and its partners continue to respond to growing needs, with more than 42,000 people receiving food assistance, nearly 26,000 people receiving protection and psychosocial support, and 4,000 people receiving shelter assistance across northwest Syria as of October 27. UN partners have also distributed more than 21,500 family hygiene kits to conflict-affected populations as of October 26. Additionally, more than 140 trucks carrying medicines, nutrition supplements, shelter, and WASH items provided by the UN had crossed into northwest Syria via the Bab Al-Hawa and Bab al-Salam border crossing points (BCPs) from October 5–27.

REACH Identifies Humanitarian Impacts of Conflict Escalation in Northwest Syria

Between October 10 and 11, REACH conducted a rapid needs assessment in Idlib Governorate to identify humanitarian impacts and subsequent needs resulting from the conflict escalation in northwest Syria since October 5. REACH interviewed nearly 200 people across affected communities and identified protection concerns—including family separation and psychological trauma—and reduced access to education and basic services as the primary humanitarian concerns for the assessed population.

REACH reported that the escalation of violence throughout the northwest, and in particular the attacks in Idlib, have led to significant displacement across the governorate, while also negatively affecting households' access to basic services across all sub-districts, including reduced access to education, electricity, health, livelihoods, and markets. These restrictions are largely a result of damage to critical infrastructure, closure of educational and health facilities, and difficulty accessing workplaces due to insecurity. The assessment found that 98 percent of communities reported educational facility closures as of October 18, compared to only nine percent of assessed communities that reported educational facilities having been closed in June. REACH also reports that insecurity in the region has significantly impacted freedom of movement as violence has made traveling to health facilities, schools, and workplaces unsafe, impacting communities' abilities to meet their basic needs. Finally, 25 percent of assessed communities reported that access to humanitarian aid had been heavily disrupted by the escalation in conflict since October 5.

KEY FIGURES



3.5 Million

Syrians and Syrian refugees supported monthly through USG emergency food assistance



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Number of USAID/BHA partners providing health assistance in Syria

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

USAID/BHA supports the UN World Food Program (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and 13 NGOs providing emergency food and nutrition assistance within Syria and to Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. In Syria, USAID/BHA partners provide vulnerable populations with cash transfers for emergency nutritional products, food vouchers, and monthly in-kind food rations, while also distributing wheat flour and yeast to bakeries. USAID/BHA assistance also supports the provision of cash transfers for food and food vouchers for Syrian refugees in the region. WFP and USAID/BHA NGO partners provide monthly food assistance to 3.5 million people inside Syria and to Syrian refugees across Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Türkiye as part of their complex emergency response. State/PRM supports UNICEF to monitor, identify, and respond to cases of malnutrition in Syrian refugee populations throughout Türkiye and to provide awareness campaigns on breastfeeding and best practices to prevent chronic malnutrition.

HEALTH

USAID/BHA funds 11 partners, including the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, and the UN World Health Organization (WHO), to provide critical health assistance in Syria through activities such as community-based health education, direct health services through mobile medical units, the provision of equipment for health facilities, reproductive health services, and

training for Syrian medical workers. UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, and seven NGOs are continuing to deliver critical health services to earthquake-affected populations in Syria, including delivery of medical supplies, deployment of mobile health and nutrition teams to provide health services, and dispatch of mobile medical units and surgical teams to treat trauma injuries and provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) at temporary shelters housing displaced populations.

State/PRM supports the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, WHO, and 20 NGO partners to provide health assistance, including medical consultations, specialized health services, MHPSS, and vaccinations, for refugees in neighboring countries.



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Number of USAID/BHA partners providing critical WASH assistance in Syria

WASH

USAID/BHA supports 12 NGO partners, as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF, to provide WASH assistance in Syria. USAID/BHA partners distribute essential hygiene items to vulnerable populations and enhance WASH facilities by rehabilitating small-scale sanitation and water systems—such as handwashing stations and latrines—in displacement camps and informal settlements. In northern Syria, USAID/BHA partners continue to increase access to safe drinking water through emergency water trucking and the distribution of water storage tanks and water treatment devices. USAID/BHA is also supporting NGOs to strengthen cholera response activities by distributing soap and other WASH commodities, increasing water trucking frequency to internally displaced person (IDP) sites, and providing additional water for handwashing and cleaning. State/PRM also supports partners—including international organizations in Jordan and Lebanon and a partner in Syria—to provide WASH assistance to Syrian refugees, as well as to vulnerable populations inside Syria. With State/PRM support, UNHCR and partners repair WASH networks to improve sanitation services and enable the provision of safe drinking water in northwest Syria.



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Centers through which State/PRM provides protection assistance in Syria

PROTECTION

State/PRM partner UNHCR provides comprehensive protection services—including facilitating community-based protection interventions, identifying protection cases, providing educational services for parents and children, and providing referrals to legal aid services—for conflict-affected and displaced Syrians in both Syria and neighboring countries. UNHCR also supports community-led initiatives that aim to foster better community relations and support the needs of IDPs, returnees, and host communities. State/PRM also supports IOM, UNICEF, and NGO partners to provide protection assistance, including legal documentation and case management services, for Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. Additionally, UNHCR supported 115 community centers and 115 mobile units across the country while adding two mobile units in Ar Raqqa and Dar'a governorates during September. In response to the February earthquakes, UNHCR has

continued to provide protection services, such as access to civil documentation to acquire housing, land, and property, for earthquake-affected individuals.

USAID/BHA funds 13 protection partners, including IOM and UNFPA, to provide case management and referral services, learning and recreational opportunities, and psychosocial support for children at high risk of exploitation and abuse. USAID/BHA also supports safe spaces for women and girls, as well as medical supplies and specialized training for health staff to provide appropriate care for gender-based violence survivors throughout Syria.



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Number of USG partners providing shelter and relief commodities in Syria and neighboring countries

SHELTER AND RELIEF COMMODITIES

USAID/BHA supports nine partners, including IOM, to distribute shelter materials and basic household items and conduct shelter rehabilitation activities in Syria. In northern Syria, USAID/BHA partners distribute emergency shelter items, maintain IDP camps, and rehabilitate existing IDP camps and collective centers. State/PRM partner UNHCR supports the replacement of damaged tents for households in IDP camps in northeast Syria. State/PRM also supports IOM, UNHCR, and five NGO partners to provide shelter and relief commodities to refugees in Syria and neighboring countries. In September, UNHCR provided cash assistance for minor house repairs, supporting nearly 310 households—more than 1,550 individuals—in Aleppo and Latakia governorates affected by the February earthquakes.

Since the February earthquakes, UN agencies—including USG partners—had transported more than 4,160 trucks carrying critical relief commodities from Türkiye to northwestern Syria to support conflict and earthquake-affected populations as of October 18, the UN reports. The total includes more than 3,300 trucks that delivered aid through the Bab al-Hawa BCP, more than 770 trucks that crossed through the Bab al-Salama BCP, and nearly 100 trucks that crossed through the Al Ra'ee BCP, according to the UN. Seven UN agencies—including IOM, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO—transported commodities including in-kind food assistance, pharmaceuticals, and other relief items. State/PRM also supports IOM, UNHCR, and six NGO partners to provide relief and shelter commodities to refugees in neighboring countries.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Following peaceful demonstrations against the SARG in March 2011, SARG President Bashar al-Assad pledged legislative reforms. However, reforms failed to materialize, and SARG forces loyal to President al-Assad responded to demonstrations with violence, leading armed opposition groups to retaliate. The escalation in conflict led to widespread displacement and a humanitarian crisis within Syria and the region. Hostilities continue to date, as shifting frontlines and areas of control force IDPs into smaller and more congested areas, exacerbating humanitarian needs.
- At a November 2012 meeting in Doha, Qatar, Syrian opposition factions formed an umbrella organization, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, also known as the Syrian Coalition. The USG recognized the coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people on December 11, 2012. On March 19, 2013, the Syrian Coalition established the Syrian Interim Government, which opposes the SARG and is based in decentralized locations throughout opposition-held areas of Syria. During 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) captured significant areas of Syria, adding additional complexity to the multi-actor conflict. In March 2019, the Syrian Democratic Forces announced the capture of the last ISIS strongholds in Syria.
- On January 9, 2023, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 2762, reauthorizing UN cross-border delivery of humanitarian aid to conflict-affected populations in Syria for six months. The resolution permitted the UN's use of Türkiye's Bab al-Hawa crossing for the delivery of UN humanitarian assistance into Syria until July 10, 2023. The resolution was a partial renewal of previous cross-border aid resolutions, beginning with UNSCR 2165 on July 14, 2014, which authorized four border crossings from Iraq, Jordan, and Türkiye. In July 2023, the UNSC failed to reauthorize UN cross-border access. The UN and SARG reached an understanding in early August 2023 to resume UN cross-border assistance via the Bab al-Hawa border crossing point with transshipments beginning in September.
- On February 6, 2023, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck central-southern Türkiye—near the border with Syria—at a depth of 11.1 miles. The earthquake and subsequent aftershocks resulted in at least 6,000 deaths and injury to more than 11,200 people in Syria as of March 24, as well as damage to or the destruction of at least 34,000 buildings. On February 13, SARG President Bashar al-Assad granted the UN three months of cross-border access to two additional border crossings—Al Ra'ee and Bab al-Salama—for aid deliveries from Türkiye to northwest Syria. On May 13, access to the two border crossings was extended until August 13, and on August 6, the SARG further extended access until November 13.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse

space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: cidi.org
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at reliefweb.int.

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)