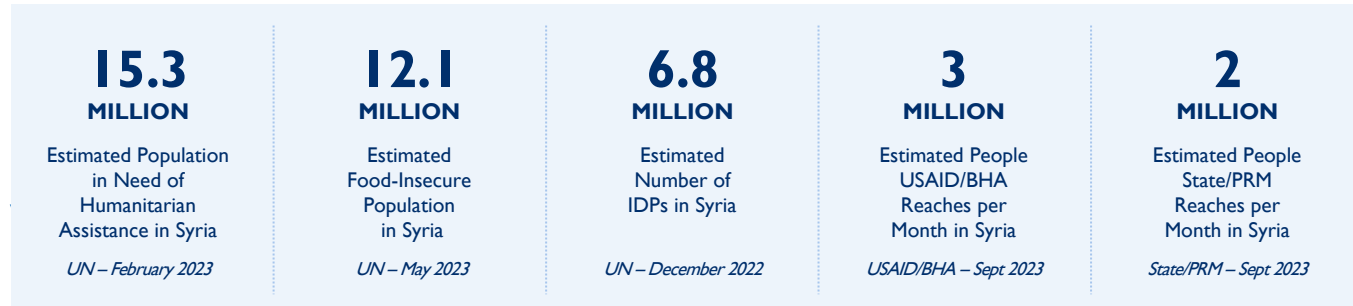


Syria – Complex Emergency

DECEMBER 1, 2023

SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- The UN has sustained access to Bab al-Salama and Al Ra’ee BCPs through February 2024 following SARG approval of a three-month extension for humanitarian access from Türkiye into northwest Syria.
- A recent ACU report indicates more than half of surveyed individuals older than two years of age have disabilities or difficulties performing daily tasks in northern Syria, impeding access to basic services.
- Communities in northwest Syria continued to face elevated protection risks six months after the February earthquakes, according to a Protection Cluster assessment.



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

UN Sustains Access to Bab al-Salama and Al Ra’ee Border Crossings Through February

The Syrian Arab Republic Government (SARG) extended UN access to the Bab al-Salama and Al Ra’ee border crossing points (BCPs) from Türkiye into northwest Syria for three months, until February 13, 2024, the UN announced on November 13. This approval marks the third border access extension since SARG President Bashar al-Asad first agreed to temporarily open the borders for aid into Idlib Governorate following the February 2023 earthquakes in northern Syria and southern Türkiye. Following the resumed transportation of relief commodities via the Bab al-Hawa BCP on September 19, renewed humanitarian access across the three BCPs enables the UN and its partners to continue providing life-saving assistance to approximately 2.5 million people in need each month. Between January and mid-November, more than 4,200 trucks carrying critical UN assistance crossed from Türkiye into northwest Syria.

More Than Half of Surveyed Conflict-Affected Households in Northern Syria Face Disabilities, Impeded Access to Basic Services

Among more than 1,000 surveyed households across northern Syria, an estimated 52 percent of individuals older than two years of age have disabilities—long-term intellectual, mental, or physical impairments affecting full and equal engagement with society—or difficulties performing daily tasks, impeding access to basic services, according to an October Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) report. The highest prevalence is in northern Aleppo, where 63 percent of the total population more than two years of age has difficulty performing daily tasks or a disability, followed by 58 percent in Idlib Governorate. Across all regions included in the study, women and girls experience a higher prevalence of disabilities than their male counterparts.

The report details a variety of impacts for those classified with a disability in northern Syria, such as intense fears and anxiety and educational impacts, including an elevated risk of children with disabilities engaging in child labor and dropping out of formal education. Notably, approximately 85 percent of children with severe disabilities dropped out of school, ACU reports. Households with a person with disabilities often have different priority needs, such as an increased need for multipurpose cash assistance. This heightened need is attributed to the additional expenses associated with caring for family members with disabilities, including health care costs, medication, and transportation. As such, households with members with disabilities are more likely to face economic deprivation due to hindered access to economic inputs or increased health spending. The ACU recommends incorporating individuals with disabilities into the workforce as a strategy to integrate them into their communities, enhance their skill sets, and secure sources of income.

Significant Protection Risks Persisted in Northwest Syria Six Months After Earthquakes

Six months after the February earthquakes, relief actors continued to report elevated protection risks among affected communities in northwest Syria, according to a late October assessment by the Protection Cluster, the coordinating body for humanitarian protection activities, comprising UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders. As of October 31, more than 2 million people faced catastrophic protection risks, the most severe level of risk on a three-tiered scale, while more than 1.6 million people faced extreme risk, the second most severe tier of risk, the Cluster reports. Emergency needs caused by the earthquakes compounded prior conflict-related humanitarian needs, widening already significant protection gaps—including the lack of access to legal identification documents, displacement, family separation, gender-based violence (GBV), and human trafficking—across Syria. Critical gaps in the provision of protection assistance have also persisted, with the loss of personal

identification documentation following the earthquakes prompting significant obstacles to accessing humanitarian aid and leaving vulnerable and displaced populations without access to humanitarian benefits or legal avenues to navigate registering for humanitarian assistance, the assessment reports.

In addition, the lack of consistent governance, increased exposure to exploitation, and limited freedom of movement due to checkpoint requirements have exacerbated existing protection challenges for women and children. Notably, approximately 40 percent of the more than 1,500 respondents to a separate mid-year Protection Cluster assessment identified family separation as one of the top protection risks affecting children, as children experiencing displacement from conflict or the earthquakes are more vulnerable to exploitation, human trafficking, and recruitment into armed groups. Moreover, the average number of monthly GBV cases reportedly increased by nearly 30 percent after the earthquakes, as women and girls experienced an increased risk of GBV, particularly abuse, harassment, intimate partner violence, and sexual exploitation, the Cluster reports. In response to the persistent protection concerns across Syria, the Protection Cluster recommends that relief actors target the provision of protection services to frontline communities where the Cluster has reduced or no presence; increase focus on legal services, such as support for domestic violence incidents; and engage in the demarcation of areas containing unexploded ordnance or damage from conflict-related activities, the February earthquakes, or climatic shocks. USAID/BHA continues to fund 17 protection partners to provide case management and referral services, among other forms of assistance, and State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also provides comprehensive protection services for conflict-affected and displaced Syrians.

KEY FIGURES



3.5 Million

Syrians and Syrian refugees supported monthly through USG emergency food assistance



12

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 approximately 3.5 million people inside Syria and to Syrian refugees across Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Türkiye as part of their complex emergency response. In addition, 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 12 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 nine NGOs continue to deliver critical health assistance to earthquake-affected populations in Syria, including the delivery of medical supplies, deployment of mobile health and nutrition teams to hard-to-reach areas, and dispatching of mobile medical units and surgical teams to treat trauma injuries and provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services at temporary shelters housing displaced populations.

State/PRM supports UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, and 20 NGO partners to provide health assistance—including medical consultations, specialized health services, MHPSS services, and vaccinations—for refugees in neighboring countries. In October, more than 17,000 individuals benefited from the community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities at 38 health points at UNHCR-supported community centers in Syria. Additionally, from September 1 to October 31, UNICEF and a local NGO partner supported more than 1,600 Syrian and Turkish families of young children with counseling on child development, immunization, and nutrition in earthquake-affected communities in Türkiye's Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, and Malatya provinces.



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

WASH

USAID/BHA supports 13 NGO partners, as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF, to provide water, sanitation, and hygiene (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 its partners repair WASH networks to improve sanitation services and enable the provision of safe drinking water in northwest Syria.

PROTECTION

USAID/BHA funds 17 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



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Centers through which
State/PRM provides
protection assistance
in Syria

to provide appropriate care for GBV survivors throughout Syria.

Furthermore, 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 additionally supports IOM, UNICEF, and NGO partners to provide protection assistance, including legal documentation and case management services, for Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. In October, a UNHCR partner provided legal services, primarily for civil documentation, to more than 30,000 IDPs in the Talee and Tweina camps in Al Hasakah Governorate. During the same period, UNHCR and one of its partners provided legal support in more than 1,100 court and administrative legal hearings, including for birth registrations, marriage licenses, and personal documentation, for IDPs affected by hostilities in Dayr az Zawr Governorate.



15

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. In addition, 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 October, UNHCR provided cash assistance for minor house repairs to more than 450 households adversely affected by the February earthquakes in Aleppo and Latakia governorates.

Seven UN agencies—including IOM, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO—transported in-kind food assistance, pharmaceuticals, and other relief items to northwestern Syria in support of dually conflict- and earthquake-affected communities.

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. The SARG extended UN access for a third time to Bab al-Salama and Al Ra'ee BCPs through February 13, 2024, the UN announced 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)