

UNHCR Regional Winterization Assistance Plan 2022-2023

September 2022 / Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt

There are over 10 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. **UNHCR estimates that 3.4 million people are in need of critical assistance to help them prepare for and cope during the forthcoming winter.**

This will be the 12th consecutive winter in displacement for some, and many continue to face increased hardships particularly food insecurity, increased cost of living and loss of employment opportunities due to the

economic situation and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Jordan for instance, over 36% of Syrian urban refugees have accumulated debt in 2021 compared to just 11% in 2018. In Egypt, a 7.4% year-on-year increase in housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel costs has been recorded in May.

UNHCR requires USD 250 million to provide life-saving winterization assistance for people in need before the onset of the harsh and

challenging winter season. As of September 2022, those requirements are only 0.5% funded as opposed to 56% at this time last year.

UNHCR plans on reaching all 3.4 million people in dire need with winterization assistance. Implementation will be prioritized based on funding received. **Most of the planned interventions will be in the form of cash assistance, with a component of winter items** to be distributed inside Lebanon and Syria.



3.4 million

Syrian and Iraqi refugees and IDPs (including refugees of other nationalities) assessed to be in need of winterization support



\$250 million

Total requirements

UNHCR's winterization strategy focuses on three broad areas of intervention:



Provision of seasonal cash assistance for vulnerable families to meet additional needs arising during the winter months.



Provision of core relief items specific to winter such as high thermal blankets, plastic sheets, sleeping bags and winter clothes.



Shelter weather-proofing and repairs, improvements to drainage systems and other infrastructure in camps and informal settlements in preparation for winter.

The winterization programme is implemented through UNHCR's own staff, government agencies, partners, and community outreach volunteers in coordination with broader inter-agency response platforms.

Syria situation



Planned population

Overall

3 million Syrian refugees and IDPs

By Country

SYRIA
917,500¹

LEBANON
1.4 million

JORDAN
391,400

IRAQ
232,400

EGYPT
62,000



Budget (USD)

223.7 million

SYRIA
67.6 M¹

LEBANON
86.7 M

JORDAN
40.9 M

IRAQ
23.5 M

EGYPT
5 M

Iraq situation²



Planned population

Overall

395,200² Iraqi refugees and IDPs

By Country

SYRIA
14,100

LEBANON
10,400

JORDAN
26,000

IRAQ
281,700

EGYPT
63,000



Budget (USD)

26.3 million

SYRIA
3.2 M

LEBANON
1.2 M

JORDAN
5 M

IRAQ
11.8 M

EGYPT
5.1 M

¹ This includes 842,500 people to be reached with assistance from inside Syria and around 75,000 people in north-west Syria to be reached through the cross-border operation from Türkiye.

² This also includes refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities: around 5,900 in Lebanon, 62,000 in Egypt, 9,620 in Jordan and 25,800 in Iraq.

SYRIA

- UNHCR plans to assist 917,500 Syrian individuals across Syria through the distribution of life-sustaining core-relief items (CRIs) for the winter season. 842,500 individuals (168,500 families including 67,400 IDP, 97,730 returnee and 3,370 host community families) will be reached from within Syria and 75,000 Syrian IDPs (15,000 families) will be reached through the cross-border operation from Türkiye, targeting people in most need in Aleppo and Idlib governorates in north-west Syria.
- Regarding individuals reached from within Syria, winterization assistance will be distributed to persons in need to enhance their resilience to survive the harsh winter conditions. Assistance will be prioritized for the most vulnerable, including those recently displaced, newly returned, living in hard-to-reach or newly accessible areas and in sub-standard shelters. Persons with specific needs and vulnerabilities (including unaccompanied minors or elders, female headed households, persons with disabilities or mental health issues, and persons with serious medical conditions or chronic diseases) will also be prioritized. Families will receive items including winter clothing kits, winter jackets, sleeping bags and plastic sheeting. Distribution is planned to start as early as possible in September 2022 and to be completed in February 2023. Procurement will be conducted by UNHCR, distribution by partners and geographical targeting will follow the prioritization of the NFI Sector and division of locations among NFI Sector partners. UNHCR distribution partners will conduct beneficiary selection through standard selection assessments, aligned with NFI Sector criteria. Winter support is closely coordinated with relevant central and local government authorities, as well as partners and relevant Clusters. UNHCR and partners will monitor the distribution of winterization assistance and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercises are also planned to collect feedback from beneficiaries on the received support.
- In north-west Syria, CRI kits will be trans-shipped through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing and distributed by UNHCR partners to beneficiaries. As the UN security resolution allowing the cross-border assistance from Türkiye to north-west Syria will expire by 10 January 2023, distribution will start in October 2022 with completion planned by the end of December 2022. UNHCR will deploy a commercial third-party operator for onsite PDM.
- Additionally, UNHCR plans to support all registered refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Winter support for refugees and asylum seekers is planned to be implemented through cash assistance. The assistance rate (Syrian Pound equivalent of USD 449) is aligned with the actual amount disbursed during the 2021-2022 winter which is the value of the winterization items included in the NFI kit plus fuel cost. The cash assistance will support families thus preventing a further deterioration of their living conditions in the current challenging economic environment. Implementation period will run from September 2022 to March 2023. Refugees (excluding Palestinian refugees) and asylum seekers do not receive any support from the Syrian government nor any other aid agencies. The winter cash grant will support refugee families and prevent a further deterioration of their living conditions in the current challenging economic environment. PDM exercises will take place after the distribution of cash grants to refugees. Meanwhile, given the current economic situation, UNHCR is closely monitoring challenges related to liquidity at bank branches and daily withdrawal limits.



UNHCR staff distributes winter items, such as high-thermal blankets and plastic sheets to displaced families in Syria.
Photo by © UNHCR/Hazem Al Jaber Abo Fakher

LEBANON

- UNHCR aims to assist around 1.4 million Syrian refugees (273,000 families) and 10,365 Iraqi and refugees of other nationalities (3,839 families) with winterization cash assistance for a period of up to four months. The protracted nature of the refugee situation, coupled in recent years with the impact of the economic and financial crisis and COVID-19 have led to an exponential rise in extreme poverty and increased protection risks amongst all population groups. Lebanon's economic woes have been further exacerbated by the Ukraine crisis with a resultant rise in food insecurity, shortages in fuel and possible reduction in humanitarian aid to Lebanon in the medium term. The aforementioned have severely impacted all aspects of refugees' lives leading to intensified harmful coping mechanisms, increased competition over scarce resources as well as intra- and inter-communal tensions. Findings of the 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) indicated that nine out of ten Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty, pushing them to reduce food consumption, suspend seeking medical care and fall further into debt to cover basic needs.



Refugees struggle after snow blankets informal settlements in Bekaa Valley. Lebanon endured one of the harshest winters in a decade in 2022. Refugees and Lebanese families struggled in sub-zero temperatures. In mid-January nearly 4,000 refugee families needed assistance.
Photo: © UNHCR/Theresa Fraiha

- The 2022-2023 winterization cash assistance programme in Lebanon plans to provide cash support for families classified as highly vulnerable or severely vulnerable. Assistance will be provided as multiple instalment transfers between October 2022 and February 2023, through the LOUISE Common Card. Most of the targeted families currently benefit from multi-purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) and/or Food assistance and thus are already in possession of cards. For the targeted families not in possession of cards, UNHCR will organize cards and PINs distribution in October and November 2022. Targeted families already in possession of cards will also be invited to card validation, to ensure that the right family is with the right card prior to the remittance of assistance. To complement the cash assistance programme and further support refugees living in harsh climatic conditions with high precipitation and accumulation of snow, UNHCR will support approximately 10,000 families with core relief items, through a needs-based approach.
- In addition, UNHCR Lebanon is planning to pilot a new, innovative approach of supporting a maximum of 5,000 families with biomass fuel briquettes or pellets. As almost all Syrian refugees are now living in extreme poverty, their dependency on energy is aggravated by the economic conditions and erratic access to fossil fuel-produced electricity. As a consequence, refugees are increasingly resorting to harmful coping mechanisms to keep themselves warm, including burning of waste and other harmful combustibles such as plastic and rubber – or even harvesting illegal firewood – impacting both their health and the environment. As an alternative, the use of biomass briquettes made of vegetable waste offers an opportunity to produce environmentally friendly solid fuel for stoves used by refugees, while simultaneously tackling the issue of the disposal of tremendous quantities of vegetable waste. UNHCR will support a holistic approach aimed to eventually cover the full value chain, by launching pilot projects to develop the production capacity for biomass fuel, setting up production lines and assisting existing ones with the installation of solar panels necessary to run machinery.
- To plan the assistance programme for winter months, UNHCR will continue using updated data and findings of VASyR and Refugees of Other Nationalities (VARON) 2022. The targeting methodology for winterization support is reviewed in a consultative process among all actors at the Basic Assistance Working Group. By using the UNHCR targeting System, cash actors coordinate the delivery of assistance to avoid duplication and looking into efficiency to respond during the seasonal period. The Ministry of Social Affairs continues co-chairing the Basic Assistance Working Group ensuring full alignment to national winter response processes. A dedicated PDM exercise will be undertaken through household interviews.

JORDAN

- UNHCR plans to assist 391,400 Syrians refugees (106,622 families) in Jordan with winterization cash assistance. This includes around 121,420 individuals (26,622 families) in the refugee camps of Azraq and Zaatari and around 270,000 individuals (80,000 families) in urban areas. This forthcoming winter, assistance is also needed for 26,000 vulnerable Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (13,000 families), including Yemenis, Somalis, Sudanese and others. The provision of winter assistance is scheduled to start in October 2022 before cold weather begins. UNHCR plans to increase the value of the 2022-2023 winterization cash assistance given inflation and other price increases to the Jordanian Dinar equivalent of around USD 380 per family.
- The Jordanian economy has also been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which came on top of slow economic growth and high unemployment. The Ukraine crisis, the global economic slowdown, and the restructuring of Jordan's debt is putting additional pressure on the economy, and on the country's refugee populations as well as vulnerable Jordanians. The removal of electricity subsidies has resulted in dramatic increases (approximately 150%) in electricity costs for consumers. Such increases in the cost of living in Jordan are exacerbating economic inequalities, while further reducing refugee coping capacities, and negatively impacting refugees' income generation opportunities. Moreover, longer and harsher winter conditions in Jordan along with hotter and dryer summers, have further aggravated refugee vulnerabilities.
- Assistance for winter months will be delivered to refugees both in camps and out of camp settings, which will be provided through refugee-owned mobile wallets, and biometric-linked virtual accounts. In camps, all registered refugees will benefit from winterization through blanket assistance. Out of camps, winterization will be coordinated through the Winterization Task Force, under the Basic Needs Working Group, to determine the profiles of the families eligible for winterization assistance, the support package and non-duplication measures. The task force will be led by UNHCR and include representatives from other UN-Agencies, INGOs and local NGOs to identify the prioritized list of the most vulnerable population in need of assistance as well as the assistance package. All members of the task force will carry out their own PDM exercises.



Fandiá, 74, receives winter cash assistance from UNHCR during distributions in Zaatari refugee Camp, Jordan.
Photo by © UNHCR/Yousef Alhariri

IRAQ



Young boy shovels snow next to their shelter to prevent water from leaking into it. Essian IDP camp near Duhok, Iraq.
Photo by © UNHCR/Rasheed Hussein Rasheed

- UNHCR aims to assist 255,950 Iraqi IDPs and returnees (51,190 families), 232,374 Syrian refugees (69,782 families) as well as 25,774 refugees of other nationalities (9,617 families) with winterization assistance. This will consist of a one-off cash grant, which will help individuals meet their essential winter needs amid increased stresses and expenditures due to extreme weather conditions. In line with the transition from a humanitarian response to recovery and development interventions, the Office will target only the most vulnerable categories in each of the population groups. Distribution of winter cash assistance is expected to commence in October 2022.
- Support to Syrian refugees as well as refugees of other nationalities will be provided as a one-time grant in the Iraqi Dinar equivalent of USD 330 per family and delivered through mobile money using biometric (EyePay) authentication systems, ensuring accuracy and efficiency. The identification of families will be based on socio-economic vulnerability criteria and assistance will be provided to refugees residing in the camps and urban areas.
- UNHCR will support IDPs living in camps (32,334 families) and urban areas (18,856). Targeting for urban families will be based on the household assessment data in line with the methodology adopted by the Cash Working Group. Cash for IDPs will be provided as a one-time grant of approximately USD 165 per family as Government-led programmes complement humanitarian assistance. To avoid duplication, only beneficiaries registered in UNHCR's databases, ProGres and ASSIST, will be targeted under the programme.
- UNHCR is a member of several coordination fora, including the UN cash coordination group and Humanitarian Cash Working Group, which ensures methodologies are aligned and duplication avoided between participating organizations. PDM will be conducted to ensure that assistance has reached beneficiaries and was delivered in compliance with the plan and established procedures, as well as to observe how assistance was spent and whether amounts were sufficient. UNHCR will also continue its advocacy efforts with Iraqi authorities regarding civil documentation, since one of the main challenges for IDPs accessing cash assistance is the lack of documentation to register a mobile wallet.

EGYPT

- UNHCR plans to provide 62,000 Syrian refugees (20,670 families), 950 Iraqi refugees (500 families), and 62,050 refugees of other nationalities (32,670 families) with one-off cash assistance of the local equivalent of USD 80 per person. The assistance will be distributed through Egypt Post offices over biometric (EyePay) authentication systems (for those who have iris registration and reside near Egypt Post iris-enabled offices) or over the counter (for those who do not have iris registration or live far from Egypt Post iris-enabled offices).
- Continued fluctuations in local and global prices have also become a major challenge in Egypt, as an overall inflation rate of 15% was witnessed two months after the start of the Ukraine crisis. UNHCR will ensure continuous monitoring of local prices to adjust the cash transfer value of winterization assistance and/or the multipurpose cash assistance if needed and when funds allow.
- The winterization assistance will allow vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers to pay for basic goods including clothing, heating and blankets, as well as services such as electricity to cope with lower temperatures during the winter season. Additionally, blanket cash assistance will be provided to newly arriving refugees and asylum seekers who have no access to MPCA. Priority will be given to the most vulnerable refugees and those on the waiting list for UNHCR's MPCA. Extremely vulnerable cases who have access to UNHCR MPCA but have not yet been added to WFP's cash-for-food programme will also receive cash assistance.
- UNHCR continues to participate in the Basic Needs and Cash Working Group (CWG), the main forum for planning, coordination, and information sharing. PDM will be conducted to collect information on the efficiency of the cash distribution process, the top expenditure items, and the short-term and long-term outcomes of the assistance.



Esmat Abdel Rahman, a refugee from Ethiopia, receives Financial assistance through Caritas, a NGO and UNHCR partner in Cairo, Egypt.
Photo by © UNHCR/Pedro Costa Gomes

Additional resources:

For information on the 2021-2022 UNHCR Winterization Assistance Programme and its impact, please refer to the final report – [UNHCR 2021-2022 Regional Winterization Programme - Final Report](#)

For more information, please contact the UNHCR MENA Regional Office in Amman (Jordan) at: MENAreporting@unhcr.org