

Alert note

Syria Protracted Crises, 04/12/2025

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Forum: Syria Forum

Type of emergency: Protracted Crises

Date of emergency (if rapid onset):

Funding Survey

If the forum indicates a plan to launch an appeal, we request funding members to please fill out this [survey form](#) which will help the **Emergency Steering Committee** assess the funding environment for this response. Please respond to this survey *within 24 hours of Alert publication*.

1. The nature of the emergency

Syria is facing a complex, protracted, and multi-dimensional humanitarian emergency that has now entered its fourteenth year. A widespread unrest in 2011 has evolved into a long-term crisis marked by extensive destruction, fragmented governance, mass displacement, and the severe deterioration of essential public services. As of 2025, an estimated 16.5 million people (out of a pre-war population of about 23 million) require humanitarian assistance. Internally, over 7.4 million people remain displaced within the country, while more than 6 million registered refugees live abroad (primarily in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan). By September 2025, 1 million Syrians have returned to their country following the fall of the Bashar al-Assad government on 8 December 2024. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is calling on the international community to scale up its support to end the suffering and displacement of millions of Syrians who were forced to flee their homes in the past 14 years and help the country to rebuild. In addition to those returning from outside Syria, another 1.8 million people who were displaced inside the country have also returned to their areas of origin – a sign of the great hope and high expectations Syrians have following the political transition in the country. ¹ New waves of displacement continue to occur due to insecurity and localised violence, especially in the southern governorates of As-Sweida, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus. In recent months, escalating tensions and intermittent attacks have pushed tens of thousands of people to flee toward urban centres like Jaramana, already strained by years of hosting large displaced populations. Recent escalations have resulted in significant loss of life, and mass displacement of over 190,000 people, primarily within Sweida and across Dara, Damascus, and Rural Damascus governorates.

Syria's crisis today is defined by the convergence of conflict, economic collapse, population displacement, damaged infrastructure, and weakened institutional capacity. These interlinked pressures continue to push people further into vulnerability and reduce their ability to recover. Without sustained humanitarian support and investment in essential services, the situation will continue to deteriorate, deepening humanitarian needs and prolonging the suffering of millions across the country.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency

Syria remains in the grip of a large-scale, multi-sector humanitarian emergency whose scale is both chronic and acutely worsening, making it a large-scale crisis. Years of conflict have left essential services and infrastructure in fragments, and current humanitarian planning estimates that roughly 16.7 million people require assistance across the country in 2025, with more than 15 million in need of health services and some 7.5 million children among those in need. These figures reflect the cumulative effect of protracted hostilities, repeated shocks (including the February 2023 earthquakes), and the ongoing economic collapse that is pushing more households into extreme poverty. ² Needs are widespread and multi-dimensional, and recent spikes in violence and displacement—notably in southern governorates and in urban hotspots—have created acute humanitarian surges that local systems cannot absorb without substantial external support. The depth of needs across health, protection, education, water and sanitation,

¹ (UNHCR. (n.d.). A million Syrians have returned home, but more support needed so millions more can follow. UNHCR US. <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/press-releases/million-syrians-have-returned-home-more-support-needed-so-millions-more-can>)

² OCHA. (2025, November 19). *Syrian arab republic*. Front page. <https://www.unocha.org/syrian-arab-republic>

and livelihoods, combined with severe funding shortfalls and limited access in some areas, justify a scaled, integrated response that bridges immediate life-saving assistance with early recovery and resilience interventions.³

The response will focus on the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Hama, Damascus and Rural Damascus (including Jaramana), Latakia, Tartus, and the southern governorates affected by recent sectarian violence such as As-Sweida and Dar'a. Aleppo bears one of the heaviest burdens, hosting over 1.5 million internally displaced persons and hundreds of thousands of returnees, while overcrowded urban areas like Jaramana in Rural Damascus have seen large, rapid inflows that strain housing, services, and markets. The February 2023 earthquakes continue to compound vulnerabilities in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib and Latakia where damaged housing and public facilities remain unrepaired. In terms of numbers and demographics, the affected population includes millions of internally displaced persons, an estimated 7.4 million IDPs within Syria, large numbers of returnees, and households that have been subjected to repeated shocks.

The ways people have been affected are both structural and immediate: homes, health facilities, schools, water and power systems have been destroyed or rendered only partially functional; livelihoods have been fragmented by years of market disruption, loss of assets, drought and damage to agricultural infrastructure; and families face mounting debt, food insecurity, and precarious shelter situations. Short-term consequences for affected populations include urgent needs for emergency shelter, primary and secondary health care, psychosocial support, protection services (including GBV response), safe water, sanitation, winterization, and emergency education catch-up for out-of-school children. In the medium to long term, the erosion of livelihoods, prolonged disruption to education, and damaged public infrastructure threaten to push the population to the brink, increase dependency on aid, widen gender and disability-related inequalities, and undermine social cohesion—making durable recovery and peaceful coexistence far more difficult without sustained investment.⁴

Given the scale and complexity of needs, the Syria Forum emphasizes that an integrated large response is required: emergency health and protection interventions must be paired with education, cash and livelihoods support, rehabilitation of critical public infrastructure, disability-inclusive services, and social cohesion programming to mitigate tensions. Timely, predictable funding and humanitarian access are essential to prevent further deterioration and to protect the coping capacity of the most vulnerable populations across the prioritized governorates.

3. Local and national capacity

Local and national capacities remain strained after years of conflict, with many households relying on negative coping strategies. Community organizations, municipal services, and local committees provide critical but limited support. UN agencies—including OCHA, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, and UNHCR—alongside international NGOs and ICRC, implement HRP priorities in health, protection, WASH, food security, and shelter, but funding gaps and uneven coverage—especially in education and early recovery—limit the scale of response. ACT members coordinate with clusters and local authorities to fill gaps, yet vulnerable households, including female-headed families, persons with disabilities, and newly displaced populations, continue to face major unmet needs.

At the same time, the response capacity remains **insufficient** relative to needs. Funding gaps, infrastructure damage, limited access to remote or conflict-affected areas, and resource constraints mean many of the most vulnerable households — including female-headed households, persons with disabilities, newly displaced families, and returnees — continue to face major gaps in protection, healthcare, livelihoods, education, and social services. Without scaling up support to national and local institutions, and strengthening community-based responses, the resilience of communities remains fragile, coping strategies remain unsustainable, and conditions risk deteriorating further.

4. Key needs and gaps

Syria's humanitarian needs remain severe across all sectors, with major service gaps and chronic underfunding. Only 57% of hospitals and 37% of PHCs are fully operational, while 58% of households report health issues and 62% say their health needs are unmet. Protection and GBV needs are widespread: 65% struggle to access basic services, 54% need psychosocial support, 50% report persistent sadness/anxiety, and 53% of women require permission to seek healthcare. WASH needs affect 14.4 million people, driven by drought, damaged infrastructure, and power shortages, leaving over 2 million IDPs at high risk of waterborne disease. Food insecurity affects 14.5 million people, including 9.1 million acutely food insecure, exacerbated by economic collapse and reduced humanitarian aid. Education support is needed for 7.8 million people, while winterization gaps affect around 10 million who lack adequate heating

³ UNHCR. (2025, November 24). *Regional flash update #54 Syria situation (21 November 2025) - syrian arab republic*. ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/regional-flash-update-54-syria-situation-21-november-2025>

⁴ UNICEF. (n.d.). Reports, Fact Sheets and publications | unicef syrian arab republic. <https://www.unicef.org/syria/reports-fact-sheets-and-publications>

and clothing. Livelihoods remain critically constrained by unemployment, drought, and loss of agricultural land, driving harmful coping strategies such as child labour and early marriage.

National authorities, ACT members, UN agencies (WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, OCHA), ICRC, NGOs and local NGOs provide emergency health care, SRH services, GBV prevention/response, MHPSS and basic assistance. Sectoral members and cluster partners continue rapid response, clinic support, mobile health teams, and cash/food programmes, though coverage is limited by funding (funding clusters covering <50% of needs) and access limitations. ACT Forum members will complement cluster efforts by focusing on protection, social cohesion, MHPSS, maternal/child health and comprehensive health services, WASH, Food Security, Education Rehabilitation, Livelihood.

Gaps remain in up-to-date, governorate-level disaggregated data on service functionality, SRH coverage, and community-level protection indicators. Current data limitations impede evidence-based planning and prioritization. Rapid multi-sector and health facility assessments are ongoing but uneven; WHO and cluster bulletins call for continued targeted assessments. Data shortfalls expected to be partially addressed during project inception phase (baseline assessments and joint community planning) and through ongoing implementation and scheduled appeal revisions based on needs. SW data sharing and coordination with other actors to avoid overlap and ensure complementarity; coupled with baseline assessments to measure the level of needs collaboration with community committees and clusters and quarterly MEAL reviews under the ACT Forum framework to analyse emerging data, refine targeting.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	X

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

5. Forum Capacity and members intention to respond

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise and experience
LWF	Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Idleb, Tartus, and Latakia,	Protection, Social Cohesion, Mental Health, and Health
HEKS/EPE R (Swiss Church Aid)	Aleppo, Hama and Rural Damascus	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Food Security, Agriculture and Livelihoods (FSAL)
EPDC	Rural Damascus	Food Security, Agriculture and Livelihoods (FSAL), WASH and Health
MECC	Damascus, Rural Damascus, Daraa, Sweida, Homs, Hama, Coastal area, Aleppo	Health, Education, MPCA, Livelihood (MSME)
GOPA-DERD	Idlib, Homs and Daraa	Education and Protection with Social Cohesion as an approach through both sectors
FCA	Aleppo, Lattakia, and Homs	Education in Emergencies (EiE), Non-Formal Education (NFE), Teacher Capacity Building, Disability Inclusion, and Education for Peace / Social Cohesion Livelihood (agriculture grants and training)
NCA	Rural Damascus, As Sweida	GBV, Food Security, WASH Emergency Preparedness and Response, MPCA, CVA

6. Potential responses

ACT Syria Forum members will coordinate closely to avoid overlap and deliver a multi-sectoral response across protection, health, education, WASH, livelihoods, and cash support.

LWF will prioritize protection, MHPSS, and women's health through training of community committees, capacity building, and expanded maternal/sexual health services in Aleppo. Cross-cutting measures include safeguarding, PSEA, and accountability.

HEKS/EPER will focus on WASH and food security, including rehabilitation of one major water pumping station, hygiene promotion, Cash-for-Work for agricultural infrastructure, agricultural inputs and climate-smart training, and rehabilitation of a public bakery to boost bread supply.

EPDC will support livelihoods in Jaramana through market assessment, business training for and micro-grants5 entrepreneurs. EPDC will also open a Primary Health Care center serving ~800 patients monthly, and implement a CFW waste-management project to improve community health.

MECC will support highly vulnerable cancer patients with medication, tests, and consultations, provide MSME grants, and subsidize school tuition fees for vulnerable families. MECC will apply a Nexus/peacebuilding approach through social cohesion activities.

GOPA-DERD will rehabilitate 5 schools for more than 500 students across Idlib, Homs, and Daraa, based on severe access gaps. They will also deliver social cohesion workshops for 60 teachers/caregivers and support 25 community-led initiatives benefiting ~500 people.

FCA will support 1,800 out-of-school children through NFE catch-up classes, school kits, heaters, and desk provision. FCA will train 60 teachers, run peace education and social-cohesion activities for 3,600 adults/children, and provide grants and training to 150 farmers. FCA will also lead a national disability-inclusion study with UNDP/UNICEF.

NCA will support crisis-affected families from As-Sweida with multipurpose cash, GBV awareness, hygiene promotion, and WASH services for households in 23 hotels in Sayyeda Zeinab. In later phases, NCA will rehabilitate boreholes and provide agricultural inputs, irrigation repairs, and income-generation support for returning farmers.

ACT Syria Forum members need coordinated support to align with sectoral working groups, share best practices, and avoid duplication in interventions. Adequate funding and logistical support are essential to cover operational costs, staff, and supplies for timely implementation. Joint capacity-building initiatives on communications, safeguarding, and CHS compliance will strengthen partner organizations and enhance response quality.