

UNHCR Regional Winterization Assistance Plan 2021-2022

August 2021 / Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt

There are over 10 million Syrian and Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. **UNHCR estimates that 3.3 million people are in need of critical assistance to help them prepare for and cope during the forthcoming winter.** This will be the 11th consecutive winter in displacement for some, and many continue to face increased hardships due to the economic situation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNHCR requires USD 193.4 million to provide life-saving winterization assistance for people in need before the onset of the harsh and challenging winter season. As of August 2021, and thanks to timely and generous contributions from donors, these requirements are 56 per cent funded, **leaving a gap of USD 84.2 million** (in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and for cross-border activities from Turkey to north-west Syria).

UNHCR plans on reaching all 3.3 million people in 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 small component of winter items** to be distributed inside Syria.



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



193.4 million³
 Total requirements
 (56% funded as of
 1 August 2021)

Syria situation	Overall	By Country				
 Planned population	2.8 million Syrian IDPs and refugees	 EGYPT 49,000	 IRAQ 227,800	 JORDAN 411,000	 LEBANON 1.2 million	 SYRIA 917,500 ¹
 Budget (USD)	167.1 million	 EGYPT 3.8 M	 IRAQ 22.3 M	 JORDAN 30.0 M	 LEBANON 52.3 M	 SYRIA 58.7 M ²
Iraq situation ³	Overall	By Country				
 Planned population	338,100 Iraqi IDPs and refugees	 EGYPT 2,100	 IRAQ 261,600	 JORDAN 38,600	 LEBANON 8,900	 SYRIA 26,900
 Budget (USD)	18.1 million	 EGYPT 160.9 K	 IRAQ 8.5 M	 JORDAN 5.0 M	 LEBANON 781.8 K	 SYRIA 3.6 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 Turkey cross-border operation.

² This includes USD 56.7 million for operations inside Syria and almost USD 2 million for the Turkey cross-border operation.

³ This includes refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria covered under the Iraq situation. In Iraq and Egypt, **an additional USD 8.3 million is needed to provide winterization assistance to some 86,100 refugees of other nationalities**; the figure is included within the total requirements.

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



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



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



Winterization of shelter including shelter weather-proofing and repairs, improvements to drainage systems and other infrastructure in camps and informal settlements.

- The winterization programme is implemented through UNHCR's own staff, government agencies, partners, and community outreach volunteers in coordination with the broader inter-agency response platforms.
- The provision of seasonal cash assistance does not overlap with the provision of core relief items and shelter assistance for winter.

SYRIA

- UNHCR Syria plans to assist 842,500 individuals (168,500 families) across the country through the distribution of core relief and seasonal items for the winter season. UNHCR's winterization assistance will be distributed to persons in need to enhance their resilience to survive the harsh winter conditions. Items distributed will include winter clothing kits, winter jackets, sleeping bags and plastic sheeting. The assistance will be prioritized for the most vulnerable people, including those recently displaced, new returnees, people living in hard-to-reach or newly accessible areas and in sub-standard shelters, and those who have not received assistance in the past. 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. UNHCR will also keep a contingency stock to respond to any emergency or to people in newly accessible areas. Coordination with partners and relevant Clusters will be key to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of winter assistance in the country. UNHCR and partners will monitor the distribution of winterization assistance. Post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercises are also planned to collect feedback from beneficiaries on the received assistance.
- In addition, UNHCR Syria plans to assist 15,312 refugees (5,500 families) through seasonal cash assistance and 11,539 asylum-seekers (3,259 families) with winter core relief items (CRIs) including winter clothing kits, winter jackets, sleeping bags and additional plastic sheeting. The seasonal cash assistance to refugees consists of an unconditional multi-purpose cash grant to all refugees in urban areas individually registered with UNHCR in Syria. The winter cash grant will support refugee families and prevent a further deterioration of their living conditions in the current challenging economic environment. The cash transfers will be done in one single transfer in November through ATM cards or cash over the counter. 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.
- Cross-border assistance from Gaziantep, Turkey, will include winter CRI kits for 75,000 Syrian IDPs (15,000 families), targeting people in most need in Aleppo and Idlib governorates, north-west Syria. The winter CRI kits will be trans-shipped through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing point and distributed by UNHCR partners to beneficiaries. Distribution will start in October 2021 and is planned to be completed by December 2021. UNHCR will deploy a commercial third-party company for onsite PDM, in addition to partner PDM. All winterization support will be coordinated with the Shelter/Non-Food Item Cluster.

LEBANON

- UNHCR Lebanon plans to assist around 1.2 million Syrian refugees (273,000 families) and 8,900 Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (3,700 families) with winter cash assistance for a period up to five months. The protracted nature of the refugee situation in Lebanon, coupled with the impact of the economic and financial crisis, the COVID-19 situation and the devastating explosion in Beirut port on 4 August 2020 have cumulatively led to an exponential rise in extreme poverty of refugees and further eroded the resilience of people to withstand protection risks. The 2020 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) found that 89 per cent of the Syrian households are living in extreme poverty, an increase from 55 per cent the year before. Similarly, 73 per cent of Iraqis and refugees of other nationalities were living under the poverty threshold in 2020, rising from 55 per cent in 2019. In addition, around 23 per cent of Lebanese households are estimated to have fallen below the extreme poverty line in 2020. UNHCR's winter cash assistance will aim to support severely and highly vulnerable refugee families, who are already struggling to meet their basic needs, to cover additional expenses incurred during the winter months (such as heaters purchase/replacement, heating fuel, electricity, and warmer clothes).
- The 2021-2022 winter cash assistance programme in Lebanon plans to provide winter cash assistance covering five months (USD 275 per family in total) for families classified as highly vulnerable or severely vulnerable and not receiving monthly multi-purpose or food cash assistance; families receiving monthly multi-purpose and/or food cash assistance will receive assistance covering three months (USD 165 per family in total). The winter cash assistance will be provided as a one-off transfer between October and December 2021 through the LOUISE Common Card. UNHCR will organize cards and PINs distribution in October and November 2021 for targeted families who are not in possession of cards, as well as card validation for families who are already in possession of cards, to ensure that each family has the correct card prior to the remittance of assistance. A dedicated PDM exercise for the winter assistance programme will be undertaken through household interviews in early 2022.
- To plan the winter assistance programme, UNHCR will continue using updated data and findings of the VASyR and Vulnerability Assessment of Refugees of Other Nationalities (VARON). Furthermore, UNHCR Lebanon will follow the updated 2021 Targeting Framework and scoring of refugee families for basic needs, which will be finalised by September 2021.
- Among other challenges, Lebanon is facing an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. To account for price inflation, UNHCR together with the Basic Assistance Working Group are continually monitoring prices and the availability of commodities, including fuel, to adjust the Survival and Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) value and cash assistance value accordingly. In addition, the financial crisis, compounded by the dramatic increase in the number of recipients regularly receiving cash assistance through the LOUISE common cards, could lead to risks of overcrowding and long queues at ATMs. As a mitigation measure, LOUISE agencies are coordinating their payment plans and staggering payments over multiple days within each month, in addition to working with the financial service providers to install new ATMs in underserved or crowded areas.



A Syrian refugee removes snow from his shelter at an informal tented settlement in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon during a blizzard in February 2021. Photo: © UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sánchez

JORDAN

- UNHCR aims to reach 410,954 Syrians refugees (97,852 families) in Jordan with winter assistance in the form of cash assistance. This includes around 114,134 individuals (23,647 families) in the refugee camps of Azraq and Zaatari and around 296,820 individuals (74,205 families) in urban areas. This forthcoming winter, assistance is also needed for 38,635 vulnerable Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (17,500 families). Jordan hosts refugees of several different nationalities such as Iraqis, Yemenis, Somalis, Sudanese and others. The provision of winter assistance is scheduled to start in October 2021 before cold weather conditions begin. The planned assistance for refugees living in the camps is around USD 70 per person, while the planned assistance for refugees living in urban areas is around USD 90. However, the assistance package is being revised based on ongoing assessments and is subject to change.
- Winter assistance for refugees in urban areas will include a combination of virtual accounts and mobile wallets. The Winterization Taskforce, which is part of the Basic Needs Working Group and includes members from UN agencies, NGOs and INGOs, will develop the targeting criteria to identify the prioritized list of the most vulnerable population in need of assistance as well as the assistance package. Winterization assistance will be staggered to reduce crowds at ATMs and promote physical distancing. All members of the Winterization Taskforce, including UNHCR, will carry out PDMs for the winterization assistance to document and analyse modalities, and assess the effectiveness of the assistance.
- UNHCR's winter assistance will provide critical support to vulnerable refugees who are already facing increasing challenges and hardships. Like many other countries in the region, the Jordanian economy has been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges are not anticipated to impact the actual delivery of the winterization cash programme in Jordan.



*A Syrian refugee queues up to collect her winter cash assistance in Azraq refugee camp, Jordan.
Photo by © UNHCR/Mohammad Hawari*

IRAQ

- UNHCR aims to assist 261,595 Iraqi IDPs and returnees (52,319 families), 227,765 Syrian refugees (68,398 families) as well as 37,087 refugees of other nationalities (13,736 families) with winterization assistance. During the winter months, vulnerable families are usually faced with increased stresses and expenditures due to extreme weather conditions. UNHCR winter assistance, which will consist of a one-off cash grant, will help people of concern to meet their essential winter needs. Distribution of winter cash assistance is expected to commence in October 2021.
- Syrian refugees as well as refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities, will receive winter cash assistance of IQD 480,000 (approximately USD 327) per household. The selection of refugee families will be based on socio-economic vulnerability criteria. Refugees will be informed of their eligibility for winter assistance by SMS from the financial service provider. The distribution of assistance will be conducted through IrisGuard biometric (EyePay) authentication systems, ensuring accuracy and efficiency. In addition to Syrian refugees, the winterization programme includes refugees from Iran, Turkey, and other nationalities.
- Out of the total 261,595 Iraqis targeted with winter assistance, 173,385 IDPs (34,677 families) are in camps, 43,890 IDPs (8,778 families) are in urban areas, and 44,320 are IDP returnees (8,864 families). As part of UNHCR's winter programme, IDPs/returnees will receive IQD 240,000 (approximately USD 163) in winter cash assistance per household. This complements the foreseen kerosene distribution by the Iraqi government. The selection of targeted beneficiaries will be based on a comprehensive household assessment tool and scoring methodology as well as enrolment in ASSIST, UNHCR's assistance tracking tool. Beneficiary information will be updated to ensure that all are informed through messages on their mobile phones. Cash assistance will be delivered through mobile money transfers using e-wallets, allowing vulnerable families, including those in hard-to-reach areas, to quickly and efficiently cash-out their assistance.
- UNHCR Iraq regularly conducts PDM through phone surveys. In addition to the standard household interviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews will be used as part of UNHCR's PDM to improve the quality of service delivery and to ensure accountability to people of concern. UNHCR will also monitor assistance delivery, maintain a support line for those facing challenges, and follow-up on cases when needed. The overall situation in Iraq remains challenging, with widespread power outages in recent weeks due to attacks on power grids. Such occurrences and the overall security situation could potentially disrupt the distribution of winter cash assistance. UNHCR will continue to monitor events and take action as needed.



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