

UNHCR Regional Winterization Assistance Plan 2019-2020

September 2019

Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt

There are almost 10 million Syrian and Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. **UNHCR estimates that 3.88 million people need timely and substantial help to properly prepare for the forthcoming winter.** For many, this will be the ninth consecutive winter in displacement.

USD 222 million is needed to ensure that winterization assistance is in place for people in need before the often harsh and challenging winter season starts. The winterization programme covers the period from September 2019 to March 2020.



Ahmed, a Syrian refugee, removes snow outside his home at an informal settlement in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, January 2019
 © UNHCR / Diego Ibarra Sánchez

People assessed to be in need



3.88 million

Syrian and Iraqi IDPs and refugees
 (including refugees of other nationalities)

Financial requirements



USD 222 million

SYRIA SITUATION



Planned Population *

3.12 million
 Syrian IDPs
 & Refugees

by country

Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
87,184	174,500	397,773	860,620	1.6 M



Budget
190 million

Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
3.2 M	17.4 M	29.4 M	74.3 M	65.8 M

IRAQ SITUATION



Planned Population

756,664
 Iraqi IDPs
 & Refugees**

by country

Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
3,934	666,000	55,000	9,000	22,730



Budget
32 million

Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
143 K	23.3 M	5 M	1.7 M	1.9 M

* The beneficiaries for Syria also include those assisted through cross-border operation from Gaziantep, Turkey.

** This includes refugees of other nationalities.

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



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



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



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

- 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

• Lack of funds will result in the significant reduction of winter assistance for the most vulnerable 1.6 million Syrians, exposing them to harsh weather conditions without assistance.

• Under-funding will lead to 22,730 refugees and asylum-seekers being unable to meet basic needs during the winter months and a further deterioration of their living conditions.



A displaced young boy sees his reflection in the rising water at Al-Areesha camp, Syria, December 2018
 © UNHCR / Hisham Arafat

- UNHCR aims to reach 1.6 million Syrian IDPs (320,000 families) with winterization assistance through UNHCR operations inside Syria and its cross-border operation from Gaziantep (Turkey). Starting in September, UNHCR Syria plans to provide winterization assistance to 1.5 million Syrians across the country subject to access for delivery of aid and funding. The assistance will be prioritized for newly displaced vulnerable families (including people displaced multiple times), people living in hard-to-reach areas and in sub-standard shelters, spontaneous returnees, as well as people in newly accessible locations who have not been assisted in the past. Families will receive a standard core relief item (CRI) kit consisting of mattresses, blankets, plastic sheeting, a sleeping mat and additional supplementary items for winter such as a winter clothing kit, jackets, and sleeping bags. A contingency stock will be maintained to respond to any emergency. Monitoring of the programme will be conducted by UNHCR and partners through post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercises and monitoring visits during distributions.
- In addition, UNHCR Syria plans to support all registered refugees and asylum-seekers in the country including from Iraq and other countries. A total of 22,730 refugees and asylum-seekers (7,298 families) will be supported with a one-time cash transfer of USD 82 per person to cover additional expenses during winter, such as for fuel, electricity, blankets and clothing.
- Cross-border assistance from Gaziantep will include CRI kits for 100,000 Syrians IDPs (20,000 families), targeting people in most need in Aleppo and Idlib governorates. The kit consists of high thermal blanket, plastic sheeting, solar lamp, mattress and other items. Beneficiaries will be identified by agreed vulnerability criteria as determined by a Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFI) needs assessment in north-west Syria. The distribution will start in October.



LEBANON

• Under-funding will leave over 860,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees (172,000 families) without the means to cover their survival needs during the winter period.

• For Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities, under-funding will leave 9,000 vulnerable refugees (3,000 families) without the means to cover their survival needs during winter.

- UNHCR intends to provide winterization assistance to 860,620 Syrian refugees (172,124 families) and 9,000 Iraqi refugees (3,000 families) living below the poverty line. Over half of Syrian refugee families (51%) in Lebanon live below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) of USD 2.90 per person per day, and hence they are unable to meet survival needs such as food, health and shelter. As a consequence, protection risks and susceptibility to negative coping mechanisms increases and nearly nine out of ten households are indebted, clearly indicating that Syrian refugee families continue to lack enough resources to cover their essential needs. During winter, their situation is exacerbated by economic shocks associated with harsh weather conditions and the reduction of income generating opportunities. In addition, many families will face additional health risks due to inability to stay warm, flooding and already limited access to health care.
- Based on UNHCR's analysis of data from a series of household visits, a refugee family's winter expenditure increases somewhere between USD 75 and 150 per month. Due to overwhelming needs and limited resources available because of lack of funding, the package for the last two winter programmes was limited to USD 75 per month only, for all vulnerable populations assisted. Considering the deteriorating protection situation and dwindling financial resources of the refugee population, resources for the upcoming winterization programme will be allocated based on vulnerabilities. UNHCR is planning to distribute USD 375 to those refugee families who benefit from multipurpose cash (MCAP) and/or food assistance programmes. The transfer is calculated as a top up of USD 75 per family per month to cover a period of five months from November 2019 to March 2020. For vulnerable refugee families who do not receive MCAP or food assistance, UNHCR is planning to distribute USD 735 (USD 147 per family for a cumulative period of five months).
- The targeting methodology for winter cash assistance continues to be reviewed and refined in a consultative process among all actors at the Basic Assistance Working Group composed of UN agencies, NGOs and the Government. Implementation is through the LOUISE (Lebanon One Unified Inter-Operational System of e-Cards) multi-agency framework. The PDM will be conducted in early 2020 in line with the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, established for cash-based interventions.

Years of displacement have left their marks on the face of this elderly Syrian refugee in Aarsal, so did the cold and snow. Lebanon, January 2019 © UNHCR / Diego Ibarra Sánchez



JORDAN

• Without funding, nearly 397,773 Syrian refugees (96,269 families) in urban areas and camps will be unable to meet their increased needs during the winter season, driving vulnerable households to take on debt to meet urgent needs and thereby drastically worsening their economic vulnerability.

• As there are few avenues for support available to non-Syrian refugees, it is unlikely another organisation will be in the position to assist those that UNHCR cannot support due to a lack of funding, leaving 55,000 vulnerable Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (17,500 families) without any means of assistance during the winter season.

- UNHCR aims to reach 397,773 Syrians (96,269 families) in the refugee camps and in urban areas with winterization assistance, starting October. In Azraq and Zaatari camps, a total of 113,773 Syrians (25,269 families) will be supported with a one-time winter cash assistance through the Common Humanitarian Cash Distribution facilities and will receive cash for gas for heating. In urban areas, UNHCR has identified 85,000 families in need of assistance, and plans to assist more than 80 per cent of this population (71,000 families and 284,000 individuals) with a one-time package that covers the cost of a heater, a gas cannister, gas refills for four months and blankets for each family member.
- Families who are eligible for regular monthly cash assistance but are on the waiting list due to lack of funds will be prioritized for the winter package. Families who are identified as living below the poverty line, but not eligible for cash assistance will be included if additional funding is made available. Special attention will also be given to female-headed households, the elderly, people with disabilities, children who are alone or otherwise at risk, people with medical needs as well as survivors of violence or torture. The inter-agency Winterization Task Force, co-chaired by UNHCR coordinates winter interventions in urban areas, ensuring uniform selection of beneficiaries, the establishment of standard assistance and avoidance of duplication of assistance.

Partners of the winterization taskforce will undertake joint PDM and subsequent reporting at the end of the implementation period.

- Jordan's non-Syrian population group includes several different nationalities including: Iraqis, Yemenis, Somalis, Sudanese and others. UNHCR adheres to a one-refugee approach policy and plans to include all vulnerable refugee groups in the winterization assistance. For the forthcoming winter, assistance is also needed for 55,000 Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (17,500 families), identified by the same selection criteria as Syrians. Payments will be made in the form of a one-off cash distribution through the Common Cash Facility. As humanitarian support is limited and few may obtain work permits, the majority of Iraqi and other non-Syrian refugees are in particular need of winter assistance. Beneficiaries include families already part of UNHCR's regular cash assistance programme and on the waiting list. UNHCR remains one of the few agencies that continues to provide assistance to non-Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Syrian refugee men in Zaatari Camp cycle through the mud and rain to go to work. 2018, Jordan, UNHCR / L.Carliste





IRAQ

• UNHCR's winterization assistance programme in Iraq remains vital to ensure that around 666,000 IDPs (111,000 families), 157,700 Syrian refugees (38,300 families), and 16,800 refugees of other nationalities (4,200 families) are well equipped with the necessary resources to survive winter's harsh conditions.

• In some mountainous areas of Iraq, especially in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) where 99 per cent of Syrian refugees reside, temperatures can drop to below freezing during winter months. The majority of people rely heavily on winterization assistance, which addresses the basic needs of IDPs and refugees to survive through the severe winter conditions.

- UNHCR in Iraq aims to provide winterization assistance to around 666,000 IDPs (111,000 families), 157,700 Syrian refugees (38,300 families), and 16,800 refugees of other nationalities (4,200 families). Winterization assistance of USD 400 will be provided to refugee families as a one-time cash grant through two financial service providers (Asia Hawala and Zain Cash). In addition, a one-off winterization assistance payment of USD 200 per family will be provided to IDP families. For IDPs, this complements the foreseen kerosene distribution by the Iraqi government. Cash assistance will be delivered through mobile wallets created by the financial service providers upon registering beneficiaries. Beneficiary information will be updated to ensure that they receive all relevant messages on their mobile phones.
- As part of the efforts to enhance the efficiency of cash assistance delivery, for the 2019-2020 winterization assistance distribution UNHCR plans to roll out a new biometric payment authentication system. The introduction of biometric/iris technology for payment of cash assistance will improve identification accuracy, efficiency, and speed. Hotlines will be available to allow beneficiaries to seek assistance or report any complaints or challenges encountered.
- Beneficiaries are identified based on vulnerability assessments conducted with partners and community representatives, with priority placed on socio-economic vulnerabilities and persons of concern living in the coldest geographical areas. UNHCR coordinates with relevant Cluster actors, particularly the Shelter and NFI clusters and the Cash Working Group. UNHCR also continues to coordinate with the Government of Iraq, to establish and maintain communication channels and manage reputational risks, access and delivery of assistance. UNHCR staff and partners will monitor cash distributions in the field to ensure accountability by confirming that intended beneficiaries receive correct amounts of cash assistance through spot checks during distribution site visits. The PDM will be conducted through mobile field teams, focus group discussions and telephone interviews through a random sampling method, alongside household visits.

*Internally displaced Iraqi families trudge through mud and rain to arrive at a camp after fleeing fighting in Mosul.
Iraq, UNHCR / Caroline Gluck*



EGYPT

• The required funds will cover the needs of 87,184 Syrian refugees (29,244 families) and 3,934 Iraqi refugees and refugees of other nationalities (1,659 families). Failure to provide winter assistance will impair the ability of vulnerable households to cope with lower temperatures resulting in high risk of harm to their physical and psychological well-being and/or causing them to resort to other harmful coping strategies.

- UNHCR Egypt plans to provide 87,184 Syrian refugees (29,244 families) and 3,934 Iraqi refugees (1,659 families) with one-off cash assistance of USD 36 per person. Despite the inflation and rising costs which resulted in the inability of refugees to fully meet their pressing needs last winter (as reported in PDM), the limited availability of funds means that an increase in the cash transfer value would result in a reduction in the number of beneficiaries, so UNHCR plans to maintain the same amount of assistance as last year.
- The assistance will be distributed through Egypt Post offices beginning in November and will be primarily concentrated in the three governorates of Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta. UNHCR will monitor the provision of winter assistance through regular meetings with Basic Needs and Cash working group partners as well as by conducting PDM using a standardized template and sampling framework.

Amira, a Syrian refugee from Raqqa, removes snow from outside her home at an informal settlement in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, January 2019 © UNHCR / Diego Ibarra Sánchez



For more details, please contact UNHCR MENA Director's Office in Amman (Jordan) at: DOIAreporting@unhcr.org