



Syria Country Profile

Urban Context

The conflict in Syria, over 11 years, has deepened humanitarian needs, triggered one of the worst displacement crises and led to the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. It has severely affected all productive, economic and livelihood sectors (agriculture, industry, trade, health, education, housing, WASH, shelter, transportation...etc.). It has led to a lack of basic services that peaks in the areas suffering from disparate levels of damage, areas hosting IDPs and areas witnessing return. The huge pressure on basic services has exhausted municipalities and service providers, which are already suffering from a lack of material and human resources, and a lack of technical expertise. This has negatively affected the quality and sustainability of basic services such as WASH, health, electricity, education, housing, and cadastral services.

The conflict caused devastation to the country's housing stock with an estimated 48% of residential properties uninhabitable in Duma in Rural Damascus Governorate, followed by Deir-Ez-Zor (41%); Dar'a (15%) and Aleppo (14%). Based on the Humanitarian Needs Overview and sectoral analysis, 5.7 million people in Syria are estimated to require shelter support in 2023. The most affected population are IDPs, returnees and hosting communities; more than 2 million IDPs reside in last resort sites. The average period of household displacement is currently in excess of 7 years, with more than three out of ten households being displaced three times or more. 46% of IDPs reported having a written rental arrangement and 9% reported having an oral agreement. This places IDPs at greater risk of eviction. 44% of returnees live in inadequate shelter with nearly 85% stating inability to meet their basic needs.



Syria faces a multitude of challenges that make it one of the world's most complex humanitarian and protection emergencies. Humanitarian and economic indicators continue to deteriorate, basic services are collapsing, and an ongoing cholera outbreak and climatic shocks compound an already dire situation.



Total population is 22.1 million



56% of the population is urban



40% of urban areas are informal



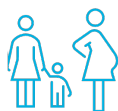
90% of population live in poverty



13.6 million lack access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene



15.3 million are in need of humanitarian assistance



5.3 million are internally displaced



328,000 homes destroyed by the conflict



only 59% of hospitals are fully functional



Over 900 schools damaged by the February 2023 earthquakes

Host communities in subdistricts of Aleppo, Rural Damascus and Homs are overburdened, hosting more IDPs than resident population. Alongside the displaced, nearly 27% of host community households are living in damaged and/or inadequate shelters where repair and rehabilitation is needed alongside a multisectoral response to ensure access and availability to basic services.

Substantial damage has also been sustained by water systems, sewage networks and irrigation canals. In Deir-Ez-Zor city, around 40 % of the entire length of the sewage network has been damaged, with access understood to have reduced by up to 40 % between 2011 and 2020. Similar levels of destruction have been observed in Aleppo and Dar'a cities.

Since 2011, the economy has shrunk by more than 60 % due to a series of massive and successive shocks brought about by the widespread destruction of infrastructure and housing, disruption of trade, transport and production, and loss of lives and human capital. Recent estimates indicate that 90 % of the population now live below the poverty line – up from 80 % a year ago – with two million people living in extreme poverty. In March 2020, the spread of COVID 19 in Syria and quarantine containment measures severely impacted the livelihoods of the population. Numbers of vulnerable have increased, and new categories of vulnerability have emerged. In many cases the severity of vulnerability has also increased. With the security environment remaining somewhat volatile, a continued deterioration in economic conditions and a depreciation of the Syrian Pound, the need for Non- Food Items (NFI) support has further increased. The number of people in need has increased by 15% to 5.7 million (from 4.9M in 2022). Nearly 85% of the overall population reported a deterioration in their ability to meet basic needs, demonstrated through a significant inaccessibility to NFI items, such as clothing, mattresses, and blankets. According to the OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview (2023), 15.3million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. 85% of households are unable to meet their basic needs; average household income covers only 40% of expenses. Over 58% of households reported accessing only three to eight hours of electricity per day, while almost one million people only had access to their primary water source between two and seven days per month in June.

UN-Habitat in Syria



Since establishing a presence in Syria in 2013, UN-Habitat has implemented numerous projects from its office in Damascus and hubs in Aleppo, Homs and Deir Ezzor:

Quick Impact Projects

- Rehabilitation of wastewater networks in Homs, Hama, Latakia and Aleppo 2016 to 2019
- Removal of debris from collapsed buildings and shops, cleaning (sterilization) and rodent control of area contaminated by sewerage water and improving the solid waste management in the Neighbourhoods of Homs, 2016 to 2018
- Cleaning Al Assi (Orintess) corridor for better social cohesion in Hama, 2017
- Support to solid waste workers and provision of equipment for restore solid waste management, Homs 2017 and Aleppo 2018
- Street Solar lighting Projects, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Tartus and Deir Ezzor 2016 to 2019

COVID19- Projects

- Mitigation measure to limit the spread of COVID19- in Syrian cities, Homs and Hama, 2020
- Support mitigation measures in Syrian cities in responding to COVID19- pandemic in 6 Municipalities / Rural Damascus 2021

Area-Based Multisectoral Projects

- Rehabilitation of wastewater networks and solid waste management system in Souran, Hama & Arbin, Rural Damascus, 2021
- Rehabilitation of critical WASH services and Shelter in Kallaseh neighbourhood, Aleppo
- Rehabilitation and improvement of infrastructure and services in Rastan & Talbiseh, Homs, 2020
- Debris removal, cleaning and rehabilitation of common spaces in damaged buildings in Harasta / Rural Damascus

Early Recovery Projects

- Improving safe access to school and rehabilitation of open spaces in Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus 2021-2019
- Early recovery in Aleppo (rehabilitation of essential traffic infrastructure, solid waste management, rehabilitation of public spaces, restoration of wastewater networks) 2021-2019
- Early recovery in Daraa (solid waste management, rehabilitation of public spaces, restoration of wastewater networks) 2021-2020
- Early recovery in Deir Ez Zor (solid waste management, restoration of wastewater networks)

US\$ 24,000,000

Total Value of Ongoing Projects

6

Number of Active Projects in 2023

Other Projects

- City profiles with city level damage assessments, Costing of infrastructure units in 9 neighborhoods
- Aleppo Recovery Action Plan
- Implementation of Action Plan (7 packages)
- Urban Recovery in Palestine Camp in Darra which currently hosts about 4,500 Palestine refugees

STORY FROM THE FIELD



“ My family has owned this building since 1924. I decided to return and renovate my house after I heard of the on-going debris removal work in the neighborhood. ”

In 2011, Osama was among many residents who left their homes in al-Hadaeq neighborhood, Harasta city. The neighborhood was severely affected during the Syrian crisis, making the houses unsafe and even inaccessible. In January 2022, UN-Habitat in Syria started the implementation of the “Safer Access to Houses” project, supported by the Syria Humanitarian Fund, in Harasta city, because it was one of the heavily impacted areas in Rural Damascus and was also receiving returnees. The project, through urban recovery, including the removal of debris from around and inside buildings and filling in tunnels that pose a threat to residential buildings, contributed to encouraging more than 1000 families to return to their homes. UN-Habitat aims at ensuring the resilience of the Syrian people who live in the areas most affected by the crisis and the vulnerable, including women-headed households, which underwent successive crises. The latest was the COVID-19 pandemic that hit after eleven years of lack of peace, displacement, and migration. Within this light, UN-Habitat adopted the Urban Recovery Framework, an enabling institutional and policy framework to support resilient urban recovery at scale and renewal of social cohesion in the context of conflict. Now Osama’s house is one of many that are safely accessible again, and he is enthusiastic to return to his life in al-Hadaeq neighborhood.

PROMOTING A RETURN ENVIRONMENT FOR CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE IMPROVEMENT OF HOUSING AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE



24 months



US\$ 5,000,000



Rural Damascus, Deir Ezzor, Aleppo, Dara'a and Homs



Ministry of Local Administration and Environment



500,000 individuals in the targeted cities

Purpose

The long-standing needs of an estimated 6.9 million IDPs remain staggering, particularly for the over 2 million people in 1,760 informal settlements and planned camps, often hosted in inadequate shelters and with limited access to basic services. Further, the needs of overstretched host communities and those who have returned to their often destroyed places of origin continue to face inadequate living standards. These needs require a more comprehensive, longer-term response, including through non humanitarian instruments.

This area-based housing project builds on the experience gained from previous shelter projects:

- Restoration of services and infrastructure, alongside rehabilitation work, is a key factor in reviving the affected neighborhoods and improving stability.
- Community (and municipality) involvement in project identification and planning processes is vital to mitigate tensions arising from perceived or real discrimination in selection processes.
- Tenure documentation is an important prerequisite for sustainable returns.
- Returnees are exposed to safety risks from damage and military operations, making safe access to housing an essential first step prior to rehabilitation work.

With this approach, UN-Habitat aims to boost sustainable access to housing through mitigation of safety hazards, restoration of community infrastructure, and support returnees and affected families with housing-related services for a later rehabilitation phase in Rural Damascus, Daraa, Deir-Ezzor, Homs and Aleppo.

Project Description

In order to build back better, it is vital to apply improved building standards and introduce stronger governance systems. Basing on UN-Habitat's program of local recovery planning, which is a participatory process including representatives from the local community, local and national

authorities, line ministries and, where applicable, international organizations, the project aims to facilitate access to housing and basic services through a combination of integrated activities including:

- Debris removal and management.
- Light rehabilitation and maintenance of sewage pipes and potable water network.
- Rehabilitation of house connections to main public networks.
- Light rehabilitation of roads and sidewalks.
- Repair, rehabilitation, and operational support to solid waste management systems.
- Fill in underground tunnels that were dug during military operations beneath residential buildings.
- Removal of dangerous, hanging and falling parts of damaged buildings.
- Rehabilitation of common spaces in damaged buildings including the entrance & staircases.
- Installation of solar street lighting.
- Support returning families with identified HLP needs, by applying tools such as the Social Tenure Domain Model.

Specific activities for each target location will be identified through consultation with the local communities and other stakeholders.

Project Strategy

Assessment of the needs and priorities in target locations will be performed in two main phases:

- Firstly, with participation of communities and various stakeholders, early recovery plans are produced that identify priority needs and prioritized neighborhoods, based on damage and functionality assessments of housing and basic services.
- Secondly, a UN-Habitat technical team conducts detailed studies to further develop these plans.

The team will also consult with relevant humanitarian actors and other stakeholders, in turn producing a project design with Bill of Quantities, maps, and technical specifications. The assessment takes into account conflict sensitivity, impact on other areas and sectors, durability of assistance, complementarity with other projects by UN-Habitat and other humanitarian actors working in the same area, target beneficiary groups, gender considerations, access, and the security situation. Under this project UN-Habitat will work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, as well as the relevant governorates and municipalities. Capacity building of the counterparts is also an essential component of the project.

Main Expected Accomplishments

- Local recovery plans in target locations are updated/developed to meet community priorities.
- Access to housing in target neighborhoods is improved and contributes to the subsequent rehabilitation phase.
- Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights are restored where property and ownership documents are lost, to ensure that HLP rights of returnees are addressed.
- Targeted neighborhoods have restored basic services and revived the rehabilitation activities for conflict-affected families.

PROMOTING A RETURN ENVIRONMENT FOR CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES THROUGH RESTORATION OF MINIMUM FUNCTIONALITY OF SERVICES AND ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY AND SOCIAL COHESION



36 months



US\$ 10,000,000



Rural Damascus, Deir Ezzor, Aleppo, Dara'a and Homs



Ministry of Local Administration and Environment



2,000,000 individuals in the targeted cities



Purpose

In addition to humanitarian interventions, the current situation in Syria necessitates a longer-term approach to resilience that restores service functionality, supports economic recovery, enhances social cohesion and puts in place better conditions for IDP and refugee return. UN-Habitat has played a central role in the emerging policy debate on Early Recovery in Syria. While some actors allude to the risks associated with a shift toward recovery interventions, many argue that this shift is now necessary, following 12 years of protracted crisis that has left vast swathes of the Syrian population hungry and without livelihoods or a means to demand accountability from Syrian Government institutions. A careful and considered approach to Early Recovery will not only result in greater and more cost-effective outcomes, it will also help to reduce the propensity for violence and monopolistic political market relations, in favour of peaceful outcomes of the conflict and other stabilization gains.

To respond to vast and complex challenges on the ground, UN-Habitat has incrementally developed the Urban Recovery Framework (URF), an approach that identifies and addresses immediate and medium-term interventions while laying the foundations for longer-term resilience strategies after the conflict. URF responds to the need to formulate common positions/principles by:

- Increasing aid effectiveness by integrating stand-alone tools into one common approach.
- Understanding of urban infrastructure/services and governance structures.
- Promoting increased sensitivity to local conflict dynamics including granular stakeholder and context analysis in advance of project design.
- Supporting the development of integrated, program-level actions, prioritization, and sequencing at different response phases.

- Leveraging data sources, such as damage assessments, urban functionality, spatial inequality as baselines and to monitor progress.
- Framing policy debates across the 7 pillars of URF (housing, economy, services/ infrastructure, governance, civil society, environment, heritage) that are critical to urban recovery.

Project Description

The project will build on UN-Habitat's participatory local recovery planning approach and support conflict-affected communities to build resilience and advance towards recovery through the identification and implementation of rehabilitation interventions targeting the minimum functionality of prioritized basic services. The project will include the development of Recovery Plans for specific locations to be agreed with the donor. This will involve community and local authority consultation processes, with the possibility to include physical damage assessments that verify the accuracy or remote sensing damage data held on UN-Habitat's geodatabase. The recovery planning process will result in recommendations for an integrated package of interventions to be implemented within the project.

Priority interventions are expected to focus on the critical infrastructural service needs of the most vulnerable populations in the target area, as well as projects focusing on economic recovery, social cohesion and return preparedness. Targets of project interventions may include water and wastewater networks and connections, solid waste management systems, public spaces and gardens, access to education facilities, roads, microbus stations, sidewalks, solar street lighting, commercial areas, housing support, removal of debris and dangerous parts of damaged buildings, housing unit rehabilitation, and HLP/cadastral archiving services.

Project Strategy

Assessment of the needs and priorities in target locations will be done through two main phases. With the participation of communities and various stakeholders, the recovery plans identify priority needs and prioritized neighborhoods based on damage and functionality assessments of basic services. Then, UN-Habitat technical teams conduct detailed studies on prioritized areas and activities. The team will also consult with stakeholders in or from the target locations and qualify needed data. Accordingly, the team completes project design with Bill of Quantities, maps, and technical specifications. The assessment considers conflict sensitivity, impact on other areas and sectors, durability of assistance, complementary with other projects by UN-Habitat and other humanitarian actors working in the same area, target beneficiary groups, gender considerations, access, and the security situation. UN-Habitat will work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment as well as the relevant governorates and municipalities throughout the project.

Main Expected Accomplishments

- Recovery plans in target locations are updated/developed to meet community priorities.
- Implementation of multifaceted projects focusing on restoration of service functionality, economic recovery, social cohesion and return preparedness.
- HLP rights are restored where property and ownership documents are lost to ensure that HLP rights of returnees are addressed.
- Targeted neighborhoods have restored basic services and revived the rehabilitation activities for conflict-affected families.

POST-EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING IN ALEPPO



24 months



US\$ 3,000,000



Targeted earthquake-affected communities in Aleppo



Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, Aleppo Municipality, Aleppo Governorate, Syndicate of Engineers, Water Establishment



Targeted vulnerable and earthquake-affected communities in Aleppo

Purpose

A major earthquake of magnitude 7.8 struck south-eastern Türkiye and northern Syria on 6 February 2023, causing widespread damage across the Syrian governorates of Aleppo, Hama, Latakia, Tartous, and Idlib. According to UNOCHA report “Syria earthquake Needs and Response Overview” dated March 15, 2023, over 5,900 deaths had been reported in Syria, while the Syrian Ministry of Health has confirmed 1,414 deaths in government-controlled areas. Another 6.3-magnitude earthquake occurred on 20 February, with its epicenter only 52km from west Idlib, further exacerbating the damage and suffering in the region. As a result of the earthquakes, more than 2,260 buildings were destroyed. In addition, 1,800 schools sustained damage at varying levels, and water supplies in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia are compromised. The earthquakes also caused great fear and distress among the population, forcing 97,400 households to flee their homes and take shelter in collective centers or within the community.

The ongoing 12-year Syrian conflict had already left many buildings and large swathes of infrastructure destroyed or damaged even before the earthquakes struck. UN-Habitat has been actively involved in conflict-affected areas since 2014, conducting damage assessments, producing urban profiles and developing participatory, area-based urban recovery plans. The recent earthquakes have in many cases worsened existing damage and exacerbated the risk of collapse of buildings and failure of infrastructure. The earthquakes have also caused damage to previously unaffected areas, necessitating a review of the recovery needs and priorities previously identified as part of UN-Habitat’s urban recovery processes.

Aleppo is one of the cities that has been most severely affected by both the conflict and the earthquakes. As of the 23 March, 37,234 people remained in 70 collective shelters in Aleppo, unable to safely return to their homes. According to the latest rapid earthquake damage assessments, 624 buildings in the city were fully damaged or destroyed, 1,912 buildings were moderately damaged, and 2,453 buildings were partially damaged. UN-Habitat has previously supported the Municipality of Aleppo to elaborate a City Recovery Plan using an area-based participatory approach. It is now necessary to update the in-depth damage assessments as well as the recovery plan to reflect the impact of the earthquakes. Carrying out prioritized

interventions on buildings and infrastructure would also allow the safe return of displaced residents and kickstart the recovery and resilience-building process.

Project Description

The proposed project will address the priority needs of the targeted communities in Aleppo and enhance the resilience of those communities through an area-based recovery. The project is designed to be implemented as three intersecting components:

- Completion of in-depth damage assessments of buildings and infrastructure
- Support to participatory recovery planning processes in targeted communities
- Implementation of prioritized recovery and rehabilitation projects identified in recovery plans, potentially including water and sanitation infrastructure, solid waste management (SWM) systems and public spaces (green areas, parks, pedestrian paths, etc.).

UN-Habitat's Syria Programme has committed to a rights-based, people-centric approach to resilience and recovery interventions. The integrated area-based model upon which all UN-Habitat interventions are organized ensures a collective and balanced method to addressing priority needs, appropriate to the conditions at the timing of the intervention. The area-based approach also ensures that prioritized activities are grounded within a strong evidence base and informed by a participatory process of determining criticality.

Project Strategy

The project will benefit from UN-Habitat's extensive track record in supporting Syrian communities. UN-Habitat has supported the Municipality of Aleppo to elaborate a City Recovery Plan using an area-based participatory approach. The plan, making use of urban information analysis, outlines initial priorities for the recovery of the City, including enhancing social cohesion; rehabilitation of critical infrastructure and services; steps to return displaced populations.

The specific locations (i.e. neighborhoods) for interventions will be selected based on consideration of the following.

- Populated areas with high damage to infrastructure and basic services
- Areas with moderate-to-high level of damage to residential buildings which led to displacement of households
- Vulnerability of target populations in terms of poverty, needs, disabilities, lack of support, and other aspects of international vulnerability criteria.

Main Expected Accomplishments

- Completed in-depth damage assessments of buildings and infrastructure in targeted areas
- Participatory recovery processes completed with targeted communities and all relevant stakeholders, ensuring the representation of vulnerable groups
- Basic rehabilitation projects completed, based on priorities identified through participatory recovery planning processes
- Increased resilience of communities affected by poverty, conflict and the recent earthquakes in Aleppo