Need Assessment Report

Complex Emergency, Syria

Damascus, 10 March 2025

Introduction

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), conducted a Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) between January 15 and February 3, 2025. The assessment covered 52 areas across 13 out of 14 governorates.

The assessment was based on 2,430 surveys collected through interviews with 2,070 key informants.

For more information on the assessment methodology, survey, leading team, and metadata, please visit the following link: :
https://go.ifrc.org/emergencies/7251/additional-info/assessment

The assessment results highlight the growing challenges faced by the population, particularly in the areas of food security, water and sanitation (WASH), and healthcare services. Data from key informants indicate that communities are resorting to negative coping strategies, while large areas suffer from limited access to safe water sources and essential health infrastructure.

Additionally, assessment teams encountered access difficulties in certain areas due to security and operational challenges, underscoring the urgent need for a coordinated humanitarian response. This response should focus on delivering life-saving assistance and promoting sustainable solutions to support the most affected communities.

Overview – Syria: Growing Humanitarian Needs Amid Complex Challenges

After more than a decade of crisis, Syria is experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian emergencies. Basic needs continue to deteriorate due to economic collapse, ongoing displacement, and damaged infrastructure. Millions of Syrians face food insecurity, limited access to water and sanitation,

and a declining healthcare system, necessitating an urgent and coordinated humanitarian response.

Current Humanitarian Situation

- Food Security: According to the Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), 54% of key informants reported that their communities resort to consuming lower-quality food, while 36% have reported reduced meal portions, reflecting the worsening of the food security crisis.
- Water and Sanitation: The SARC MSA data revealed that the majority of areas in Syria lack functional water networks, while 41% of communities rely on wells as their primary water source. This increases the risk of waterborne diseases and directly impacts public health.
- Health: The assessment shows that 50% of health facilities are either partially operational or completely non-functional, significantly limiting communities' access to essential healthcare services, particularly in remote areas and displacement camps.
- Shelter and human settlements: Syria currently hosts 7.2 million internally displaced persons (SARC MSA, 2025), many of whom live in unsafe shelters with inadequate basic services, exacerbating humanitarian challenges and highlighting the urgent need for sustainable shelter solutions.

Challenges to Humanitarian Access

The SARC MSA assessment reveals limited humanitarian access to some areas due to security and logistical constraints, as well as difficulties in reaching certain locations due to ongoing events. These challenges hinder relief efforts and leave the most vulnerable populations without sufficient support.

The Urgent Need for Response

To address these challenges, there is a critical need to enhance food security, improve water and sanitation services, expand healthcare access, and ensure an effective response to protect the most vulnerable populations. Strengthening humanitarian coordination and securing sustainable funding are essential to alleviating suffering and building communities' resilience.



Severity of the Crisis and Humanitarian Priorities in Syria

1. Humanitarian Crisis

Escalating Humanitarian Crisis and Ongoing Displacement

After more than a decade of conflict, Syria is grappling with a worsening humanitarian crisis, with millions in need of essential aid to survive. Currently, 7.2 million people remain internally displaced, while 6.2 million Syrians have sought refuge in neighboring countries, further straining host communities and local infrastructure (UNHCR Global Focus, 2025).

Assessments indicate that several factors are exacerbating the crisis:

- Ongoing hostilities in multiple areas, disrupting humanitarian access and driving further displacement.
- The devastating earthquake in February 2023, which significantly worsened the humanitarian situation, particularly in northern regions.
- Extreme poverty, with 90% of Syrians living below the poverty line, severely limiting their ability to meet basic needs (IRC Emergency Watchlist, 2025).

Impact of the Crisis
Without an urgent humanitarian response, millions face food shortages, lack of healthcare, and loss of safe shelter, underscoring the need for immediate and coordinated international intervention.

2. Security Challenges and Rising Displacement

Security challenges remain a major barrier to delivering humanitarian aid and protecting civilians. The most pressing risks include:

- A threefold increase in unexploded ordnance incidents in December 2024, restricting civilian movement and threatening agricultural activities (OCHA HRP, 2025).

- Escalation of hostilities in late 2024, leading to the displacement of an additional 1 million people, including 155,000 who have been displaced at least twice (World Vision, 2024).
- Overcrowded camps hosting approximately 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), with 800,000 living in deteriorating conditions in tents for prolonged periods, increasing their vulnerability to disease and malnutrition (UNHCR Global Focus, 2025).

The Urgent Need for Intervention

The situation demands a rapid and sustainable response, focusing on protecting displaced populations and expanding humanitarian aid to ensure minimum living standards for those most affected.

3. Economic Collapse and Its Impact on Stability

The deteriorating economic situation is a key driver of the worsening humanitarian crisis. The Syrian pound has lost half its value since 2023, while food prices have surged by 88%, exacerbating food insecurity, with 13 million people now facing food shortages (Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2024).

Negative Coping Strategies:

- 50% of households have been forced to significantly reduce their meals.
- One-third of families are skipping entire meals due to food shortages (SARC MSA, 2025).

Agricultural Sector Decline

- Low rainfall and rising temperatures are disrupting agricultural production, increasing food insecurity (IRC Emergency Watchlist, 2025).
- Shortages of essential agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers and seeds, have led to a decline in local food production.

Implications

Without urgent economic recovery measures and increased humanitarian aid, the economic crisis will continue to fuel hunger, displacement, and instability, further straining already vulnerable communities.

4. Collapse of Basic Services and Its Impact on the Population

The ongoing conflict and economic decline have led to the breakdown of essential services, exacerbating the suffering of affected communities.

Access to Electricity and Safe Drinking Water:

- Electricity is available for less than three hours per day in most areas, affecting livelihoods and healthcare services.

The Healthcare Sector in Crisis

- 50% of health facilities are partially functional or completely non-operational, limiting access to basic medical care.
- Cholera outbreaks have been reported in overcrowded camps due to poor access to clean drinking water and sanitation, posing a serious health risk for children (IRC Emergency Watchlist, 2025).
- Declining vaccination rates are increasing the risk of preventable disease outbreaks (UNICEF Situation Report, 2025).

5. Gaps in Humanitarian Response and Access Challenges

Despite growing humanitarian needs, funding remains insufficient, and several key challenges continue to hinder aid delivery:

- Access restrictions significantly limit humanitarian access to the most vulnerable areas (ACAPS, 2025).
- Increasing numbers of returning refugees, with over 1 million expected to return to Syria in 2025, putting additional strain on resources and essential services (UNHCR Preparedness and Response Plan, 2025).
- According to SARC assessments (2025, MSA SARC), 25% of key informants reported that security concerns are the biggest obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian aid.

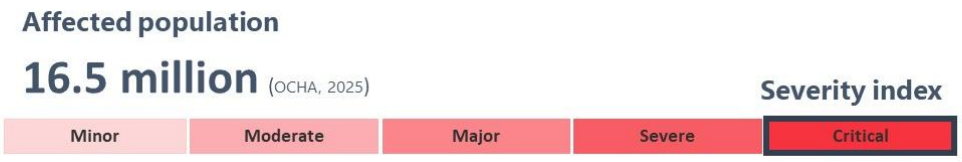
6. The Need for an Urgent and Coordinated Response

Without immediate funding and enhanced coordination among humanitarian actors, the crisis will continue to escalate, leaving millions without essential support. The situation requires:

- Ensuring humanitarian access to the most vulnerable, through strengthened field-level access mechanisms.
- Increasing humanitarian funding to address gaps in food security, healthcare, and water and sanitation services.
- Enhancing coordination among humanitarian organizations to prevent further deterioration and effectively respond to growing needs.

Conclusion

As the conflict and economic crisis persist, Syria remains in a state of humanitarian emergency requiring an urgent and sustainable response. Strengthening Community Resilience and ensuring the continuity of essential services are top priorities to prevent further suffering and save lives.



Illustrative Guide: Humanitarian Crisis Severity Index

Affected Population: 16.5 Million People (OCHA, 2025)

This figure represents the estimated total number of people in Syria who require humanitarian assistance due to ongoing conflict, economic collapse, and infrastructure damage.

Crisis Severity Levels

The humanitarian crisis is categorized into five levels based on impact severity and the urgency of response needed:

- Minor: Limited humanitarian impact; basic services continue to function normally.
- Moderate: Some disruptions in service delivery; affected populations require targeted support.
- Major: Widespread needs; significant disruptions in access to essential services.
- Severe: Critical gaps in humanitarian needs; basic services are heavily compromised.
- Critical: Life-threatening conditions requiring urgent and large-scale humanitarian intervention.

The humanitarian situation in Syria is currently classified as "Critical", highlighting the urgent need for an immediate and coordinated response to prevent further deterioration.

Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2025.

2- Identifying Priority Needs

The joint assessment conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) highlights that food security, water and sanitation (WASH), healthcare services, and energy (fuel and electricity) are the most urgent humanitarian needs in Syria. These critical challenges, identified by affected

communities, require immediate intervention to prevent further deterioration in living conditions.

Priority need #1	Priority need #2	Priority need #3
Food	WASH	Health

Top Priority Need:

Priority Need #1 Food Security and Nutrition – A Worsening Crisis

The Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) conducted by SARC and IFRC confirms that food security remains one of Syria's most pressing humanitarian challenges. The prolonged conflict, severe economic downturn, and soaring food prices have exacerbated hunger and malnutrition, forcing many families to adopt negative coping strategies, such as reducing portion sizes or skipping meals entirely.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food supply stability is now at serious risk, particularly in displacement-affected and economically strained areas. The latest OCHA assessments reveal significant gaps in food aid distribution, with only 65% of food assistance programs reaching displaced populations, underscoring the urgent need to improve distribution mechanisms and strengthen food supply chains.

Key Statistics:

- 67% of the communities assessed confirmed the urgent need for emergency food distribution, reflecting the critical food security situation (OCHA).
- 54% of the assessed communities' resort to purchasing lower-quality and less nutritious food, while 36% of households have reduced meal portions, and 34% have decreased the number of daily meals. (SARC MSA, 2025).
- The average number of daily meals is only 2.10, highlighting the deterioration of the nutritional situation in communities (SARC MSA, 2025).
- Funding shortages and humanitarian access challenges hinder response efforts, further exacerbating the crisis (OCHA – Food Security).



Pillars of Food Security in Syria

1. Availability: Declining Agricultural Production and Increased Market Dependence

The SARC MSA 2025 assessment revealed that 53% of households rely on purchasing food from markets, making them vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply shortages. Additionally:

- 33% of communities reported losing agricultural land, further reducing local food production.
- 39% reported losing livestock and agricultural stocks, exacerbating the local production crisis and limiting food availability.

2. Accessibility: Poverty and Rising Prices Hinder Food Purchases

The SARC MSA 2025 assessment indicated that:

- 41% of key informants reported that their communities buy food on credit, while 8% of households resort to directly borrowing food.
- The Syrian pound has lost half its value since 2023, causing food prices to rise by 88% (WFP), making basic goods unaffordable for many.

3. Utilization: Lack of Clean Water Worsens Malnutrition

- 63% of key informants reported that their communities depend on unsafe water sources, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases and malnutrition, particularly among children and pregnant women.
- UNICEF reports that 261,954 children under five in Syria suffer from malnutrition, underscoring the need for an urgent health response.

And there are other reasons

- Factors like stability significantly impact food security, while conflict and displacement pose serious threats to it. 31% of communities reported difficulties accessing markets and distribution centers.
- 27 % stated that food supplies were insufficient in their areas.
- WFP data confirms that ongoing conflict and repeated displacement disrupt food supply stability, leading to increased dependence on humanitarian assistance.

Impact of the Crisis on Livelihoods

- 72.72% of the population relies on agriculture as their primary income source (FAO), yet a significant proportion of farmland has been damaged by conflict, leading to a sharp decline in agricultural production.
- 39% of key informants reported major losses in agricultural livelihoods, contributing to rising unemployment among farmers and agricultural workers, negatively impacting local food security.

Negative Coping Strategies: Limited Options, Severe Consequences

According to the SARC MSA 2025 assessment, key informants in the surveyed communities indicated 36% reduce meal portions, and 34% skip entire meals to cope with food shortages. The World Food Programme (WFP) confirmed that the continued reliance on these strategies exacerbates the risk of malnutrition and negatively impacts public health.

Recommendations: Toward an Effective and Sustainable Response

- Expand emergency food assistance to reach the most vulnerable households.
- Support agricultural livelihoods by providing farming inputs and rehabilitating damaged land.
- Improve access to clean water and sanitation to reduce malnutrition-related diseases.
- Enhance food supply stability through policies that support local production and market access.

Priority Need #2: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Sector in Syria

The Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) highlights growing challenges in the WASH sector, directly impacting millions of people. It is estimated that 14.4 million people require WASH support.

- 53% of key informants reported that their communities rely on public water networks as the primary source, but frequent disruptions limit reliable access.

- 41% stated that wells, often dependent on functioning pumping systems, serve as their main water sources (SARC MSA, 2025).

Water Access Challenges

- 81% of key informants reported water access issues:
- 30% cited insufficient water availability to meet basic needs.
- 11% pointed to high water costs as a major barrier.
- 9% said communities resort to unsafe water sources due to a lack of alternatives (OCHA, 2025).

Water availability varies widely:

- 34% of communities receive adequate water supplies.
- 31% receive only half their daily needs.
- 18% face severe water shortages (OCHA, 2025).

Sanitation and Waste Management

- 55% of key informants reported that their communities use public sanitation networks.
- 58% indicated that septic tanks are the most common sanitation option in their areas.
- 11% rely on covered pits, while 3% use open pits, posing significant public health risks (SARC MSA, 2025).
- 25% of key informants reported that sanitation networks in their areas require regular cleaning, while 22% stated that the high cost of emptying septic tanks poses a burden on residents (OCHA, 2025).

Regarding waste management:

- 68% of key informants reported that municipalities are responsible for waste collection.
- 25% stated that communities resort to burning waste, while 11% indicated an absence of formal waste disposal systems, exacerbating environmental and public health concerns (SARC MSA, 2025).

Waterborne Disease Outbreaks

Challenges related to water and sanitation, particularly in displacement camps and disaster-affected areas, have contributed to the spread of waterborne diseases. In Syria, 11.9% of suspected cholera cases were recorded over the past year, with the governorates of Al-Hasakah, Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor among the most affected areas (WHO, 2025). Additionally, 15% of key informants reported the unavailability of running water in toilets, while 10% indicated that soap was not available in some communities, increasing the risk of infectious disease transmission (SARC, MSA, 2025).

Recommendations and Urgent Response Measures

To address these challenges, immediate measures are required to ensure access to clean water and safe sanitation, including:

1. Expanding emergency water trucking operations to the most affected areas.
2. Rehabilitating water networks and sanitation infrastructure, including repairing damaged treatment plants and providing additional water storage tanks in water-scarce regions.
3. Strengthening solid waste management by supporting municipal waste collection services and expanding safe disposal solutions in displacement camps and affected communities.
4. Enhancing hygiene promotion by providing hygiene kits (soap, chlorine tablets, etc.) and increasing awareness campaigns on safe hygiene practices.



Long-Term Interventions: Toward Sustainable Solutions

Alongside urgent response efforts, sustainable investments are needed to enhance community resilience and preparedness for future crises through:

- Rehabilitating WASH infrastructure to ensure reliable and safe water supplies.
- Improving water resource management, including reuse and waste water treatment technologies, particularly in rural areas and displacement camps.
- Strengthening community awareness on hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Conclusion

The WASH sector remains a top humanitarian priority in Syria, as fragile infrastructure and inadequate hygiene practices continue to exacerbate health risks. Ensuring sustainable access to clean water, improving sanitation services, and promoting hygiene awareness are essential to protecting millions of Syrians from disease outbreaks and public health crises.

Priority Need 3: Syria's Health Crisis – A Critical Humanitarian Challenge

Current Situation and Challenges

Syria's healthcare system continues to deteriorate, leaving 15.9 million people without access to essential health services (OCHA, 2025). Years of conflict, economic collapse, and natural disasters, including the 2023 earthquake, have severely damaged health infrastructure, restricting access to life-saving treatments, maternal care, and routine immunization.

The Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) highlighted a critical gap in healthcare services. The assessment found that 66% of communities reported a lack of medical care for severe illnesses such as cancer and kidney failure, while 61% indicated the unavailability of treatment services for chronic diseases. Additionally, 57% reported a shortage of medications for emergency conditions such as pain and infections, and maternal and child health services were found to be lacking in 48% of cases.

The crisis is exacerbated by:

- Severe shortages of medical supplies and healthcare personnel.
- The disruption of 50% of health facilities, rendering many non-functional.
- The spread of infectious diseases due to poor sanitation and overcrowding in displacement camps.
- Limited access to specialized care, particularly for trauma, cancer treatment, and dialysis (SARC MSA, 2025;).

Immediate Priorities: Life-Saving Interventions

To mitigate the impact of the health crisis, immediate interventions should include:

A. Deployment of mobile medical units to reach underserved populations.
B. Restoring access to essential medicines for chronic diseases and emergency conditions.
C. Expanding immunization campaigns, particularly in displacement camps and high-risk areas.
D. Strengthening maternal and child healthcare services to reduce preventable deaths.

E. Addressing mental health needs, as psychological support services remain severely limited (SARC MSA, 2025).

Long-Term Strategy: Building a More Resilient Health System

Enhancing Syria's healthcare system requires a multi-dimensional approach, including:

- Rehabilitating and equipping damaged hospitals and primary healthcare centers.
- Strengthening health surveillance systems to monitor and respond to disease outbreaks.
- Training and retaining healthcare workers to rebuild service delivery capacity.
- Ensuring sustainable access to essential medicines through improved supply chains.

Key Barriers to Healthcare Access

According to the OCHA's rapid need assessment 2025, communities identified the following obstacles to healthcare access:

- Shortages of medicines and medical supplies (17%), limiting treatment availability.
- Inadequate healthcare facilities (11%), preventing full operational capacity.
- Shortage of qualified medical personnel (11%), leading to gaps in service delivery.
- Distance to the nearest functional healthcare facility (10%), hindering access for displaced and rural populations.
- High treatment costs (6%), particularly for chronic disease management

Impact of the Crisis on Vulnerable Populations

1. Child Health:

- 48% of key informants reported the lack of pediatric healthcare, increasing risks of preventable diseases (SARC MSA, 2025).
- Routine immunization rates have sharply declined, raising concerns over potential outbreaks of measles, polio, and (WHO, 2025).

2. Reproductive Health and Maternal Care:

- 53% of key informants highlighted the shortage of reproductive health services, posing severe health risks for mothers and newborns (SARC MSA, 2025).
- The lack of safe childbirth services and emergency maternal care, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas, has led to rising maternal and infant mortality rates (UNFPA, 2024).

3. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):

- Mental health services remain extremely limited, leaving many trauma survivors without adequate psychological support (UNICEF Child Protection Report, 2024).
- Overcrowding in displacement camps and the prolonged conflict have led to a surge in psychological disorders.

Disease Outbreaks and Epidemic Risks

- Cholera resurgence: Confirmed cases have been reported across several provinces, with high infection rates in Al-Hasakah, Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor (IRC, 2025).
- Malnutrition-related diseases: Increasing, particularly among children under five (WFP, 2025).
- Acute respiratory infections: Spreading in displacement camps due to poor ventilation and inadequate healthcare (UNICEF, 2024).

Urgent Recommendations

To address Syria's escalating health crisis, the humanitarian response must focus on:

 Increasing funding for emergency health responses to sustain essential services.

 Rehabilitating and equipping damaged health facilities in the most affected areas.

 Expanding access to free and subsidized healthcare for the most vulnerable populations.

 Strengthening pharmaceutical supply chains to ensure continuous availability of essential treatments.

 Improving disease prevention and response efforts through enhanced immunization and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure.

Conclusion

The collapse of Syria's healthcare system represents one of the most severe humanitarian crises, threatening millions with a lack of medical care. Without immediate intervention and sustained international support, populations will continue to face preventable deaths, worsening diseases, and deprivation of essential health services. A coordinated and well-funded response is crucial to

preventing further deterioration and building a more inclusive and sustainable healthcare system (SARC MSA, 2025; WHO, 2025; UNICEF Child Protection Report, 2024).

Additional Humanitarian Challenges: Unmet Needs Deepening the Crisis

In addition to urgent priorities in food security, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and healthcare, other critical humanitarian needs remain unmet, further complicating Syria's crisis and increasing the vulnerability of affected populations. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach to ensure an effective long-term response.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs): Severe Gaps in Humanitarian Response

Access to safe and adequate shelter remains a fundamental challenge, particularly in areas affected by displacement and earthquakes. According to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC MSA, 2025):

- **1.1 million people** require emergency shelter. **(UN OCHA)**.
- **208,000 people** live in unsafe and unstable buildings, which directly threatens their safety **(EEFIT)**
- **216,000 households** reside in overcrowded conditions, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks and poor sanitation. **(UNHCR 2024)**.
- **2.3 million people** are in unprepared displacement sites, relying on tents and temporary shelters that lack protection from extreme weather (echo syr, 2025).
- The shortage of NFIs such as blankets, cooking utensils, and winter supplies exacerbates exposure to harsh cold, particularly for children and the elderly (**UNHCR, 2025**).



Livelihoods and Economic Recovery: Income Crisis and Lack of Opportunities

The economic crisis has caused household incomes to plummet to unprecedented levels, with an average monthly income of **900,000 Syrian pounds**, while the cost of basic living exceeds 4 million Syrian pounds (**SARC MSA, 2025**).

According to the to the assessments conducted in 2025 :

- **56%** of households rely on agriculture as their main source of income, but productivity has sharply declined due to water shortages and supply chain disruptions **(SARC MSA, 2025)**.
- **43%** depend on livestock farming, which has been severely affected by drought and rising fodder costs **(SARC MSA, 2025).**
- **29%** engage in traditional crafts and trades, which have suffered due to local market collapse **(ILO, 2025)**.
- **16%** rely on remittances, reflecting the lack of employment opportunities within the country **(OCHA, 2025)**.

With limited job opportunities, many Syrians resort to negative coping mechanisms such as **child labor and early marriage**, exacerbating social crises and human rights violations (**UNICEF, 2025**).

Electricity: An Unmet Essential Need Affecting All Sectors

- The **SARC MSA (2025)** assessment indicates that **70%** of communities experience frequent power outages, hindering access to water, sanitation, livelihoods, and healthcare services **(SARC MSA, 2025).**
- Electricity networks are a **top priority for repair** in most areas, with **13% of communities** identifying it as the biggest challenge to recovery**(SARC MSA, 2025)**.

- Power outages disrupt medical services, particularly in hospitals and primary healthcare facilities, increasing mortality rates due to lack of urgent care (**WHO, 2025**).
- The electricity crisis also hampers economic recovery, with **63% of business owners** reporting that power cuts have negatively impacted operations, leading to job losses and shop closures (**ILO, 2025**).

Protection and Psychosocial Support: Major Gaps in Services

Syria faces significant challenges in the protection sector, with data indicating that security risks remain a concern in many communities. Field reports also highlight increasing risks related to gender-based violence and child

exploitation, underscoring the need to strengthen preventive interventions and support services in this area.

- **87% of communities** lack mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, exacerbating trauma, particularly among children and displaced populations **(SARC,MSA,2025)**
- **43% of key informants** reported unaccompanied or separated children, making them highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse **(SARC MSA 2025)**
- **97% of communities** reported the absence of elderly support programs, leaving older individuals at risk of isolation, neglect, and inadequate healthcare (OCHA, 2025) **(SARC MSA 2025)**

Response Recommendations: A Comprehensive Recovery Approach

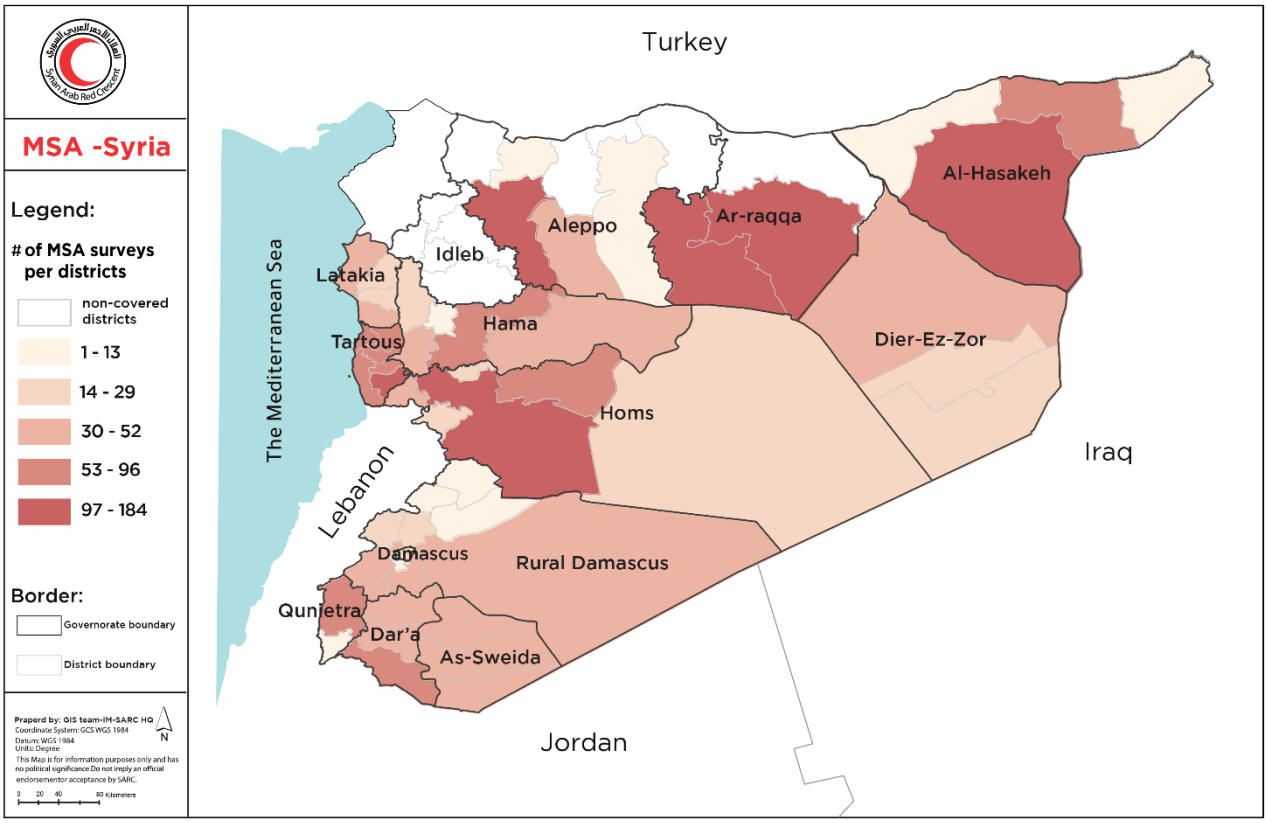
To address these challenges, a multi-sectoral response should include:

- **Investment in sustainable livelihoods** through vocational training programs and support for small enterprises.
- **Enhancing electricity services** to ensure stable supply and improve essential service delivery.
- **Expanding mental health and protection services**, particularly for children and the elderly .
- **Improving market infrastructure and productive sectors** to support long-term economic recovery.

Conclusion: The Need for Urgent and Sustained Intervention

Without immediate action, deteriorating living conditions will lead to further displacement, escalating protection risks, and increasing poverty. The situation demands a coordinated international response to address urgent needs and support long-term recovery.

3. Geographic Areas



1 - Map of the covered areas by the MSA conducted by SARC (produced by SARC IM Team)

***Syria's** humanitarian crisis has deeply impacted all governorates**, but** Aleppo, Deir-Ez-Zor, and Ar-Raqqa **are experiencing** particularly severe conditions**, with** critical shortages of food, shelter, medical assistance, and essential services**. Findings from the** 2025 SARC Assessment **—which surveyed** 52 out of 62 districts across 13 governorates— **highlight** widespread vulnerabilities **and the** urgent need for immediate intervention **in these Governorates (SARC MSA, 2025**).*

Priority area #1	Priority area #2	Priority area #3
Aleppo Governorate	Deir-Ez-Zor Governorate	Ar-Raqqa Governorate

Aleppo Governorate

Aleppo remains one of the most affected governorates, where severe food insecurity, critical shelter shortages, and the collapse of basic infrastructure continue to drive worsening humanitarian conditions. The escalation of hostilities in late 2024 has led to mass displacement, forcing tens of thousands to flee Aleppo City and surrounding districts (CDP, 2024). As of January 2025, the region recorded 225,000 IDP returnees in December 2024 alone, placing further strain on limited resources (UNICEF Sit Rep1, 2025).

According to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Assessment the key humanitarian concerns in Aleppo are:

- Food insecurity remains one of the most pressing challenges. Disrupted market access, damaged supply chains, and soaring prices have made basic staples unaffordable for many families. Households are resorting to harmful coping mechanisms, such as reducing meal intake and relying on external assistance (SARC MSA, 2025).

- Severe damage to water and electricity infrastructure has left large portions of the population without reliable access to clean water or electricity. Water pumping stations and electricity grids remain non-functional, worsening living conditions, particularly for IDPs and low-income households (OCHA Humanitarian Needs Report, 2025).

Overcrowded displacement sites, deteriorating infrastructure, and ongoing insecurity underscore the urgent need for sustained humanitarian assistance to restore essential services, support food security interventions, and improve living conditions for vulnerable populations.

Deir-Ez-Zor Governorate

The humanitarian situation in Deir-Ez-Zor Governorate is critical, with widespread water shortages, infrastructure destruction, and an overwhelmed health system. The destruction of key water facilities has left over 80% of residents reliant on unsafe water sources or emergency water trucking, drastically increasing the risk of disease outbreaks (SARC MSA, 2025).

The flow of the Euphrates River has declined by over 65%, compounding water shortages, particularly in rural areas where alternative sources are limited (SARC MSA, 2025; OCHA Humanitarian Needs Report, 2025). Access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities has deteriorated, leading to a rise in waterborne diseases, including outbreaks of diarrhoea and cholera in districts such as Al-Bukamal and Al-Mayadin (WHO Flash Appeal, 2025).

According to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Assessment the key humanitarian concerns in Deir-Ez-Zor are:

- The health system has effectively collapsed, leaving thousands without access to critical medical care. Hospitals lack essential medicines, specialized treatments, and trained personnel, severely limiting their ability to respond to ongoing medical emergencies and disease outbreaks (WHO Flash Appeal, 2025).

- Power outages continue to disrupt healthcare services, affecting emergency care, surgical operations, and water treatment facilities, preventing hospitals from operating effectively (WHO Flash Appeal, 2025).

With limited access to safe water and healthcare, the risk of cholera, malnutrition, and preventable deaths is rapidly increasing. Urgent WASH and medical interventions are needed to prevent further deterioration and mitigate the humanitarian crisis.

The 2025 Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) reveals that the community in Deir ez-Zor faces significant challenges in accessing clean water and healthcare services. 91% of the population struggles with financial constraints that make medications unaffordable, while 57% report that most types of medicines are unavailable in the market.

According to the 2025 Rapid Needs Assessment by OCHA:

67% of the population does not have access to essential nutrition services, such as micronutrient supplements or treatment for acute malnutrition.

99% of communities reported that infant formula is unavailable in their areas.

These statistics highlight the urgent need for comprehensive humanitarian interventions to improve food security and healthcare access for the most vulnerable populations in the governorate.

Ar-Raqqa Governorate

Displacement and deteriorating shelter conditions remain key concerns in Ar-Raqqa Governorate, where thousands of families live in unsafe, makeshift housing or overcrowded collective shelters. The harsh winter months have further exposed displaced populations to extreme temperatures, with many IDPs lacking heating and essential winterization supplies (OCHA Flash Update No. 12, 2025).

Health services across Ar-Raqqa are also critically under strain, as funding shortfalls and logistical challenges continue to disrupt medical care. Many healthcare facilities remain non-functional or critically under-resourced, leaving thousands of people without access to basic healthcare services (WHO Flash Appeal, 2025).

According to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Assessment the key humanitarian concerns in Ar-Raqqa are:

Overcrowded displacement sites and inadequate shelter options have left thousands exposed to extreme weather and unsafe living conditions. IDPs residing in makeshift shelters, abandoned buildings, or informal settlements struggle to access basic hygiene, healthcare, and protection services (SARC MSA, 2025).

Returning populations in Ar-Raqqa City face immense difficulties accessing healthcare, as damaged infrastructure and limited medical resources hinder essential services (IMC Situation Report, 2025).

Destruction of Infrastructure in 2017: Military attacks led to the destruction of more than 80% of the city's infrastructure, making the rehabilitation of essential services challenging and time-consuming (Humanity and Inclusion, 2024).

With the continued increase in the number of displaced persons and the deterioration of essential services, there is an urgent need to invest in shelter rehabilitation, improve healthcare services, and provide winter assistance to alleviate the suffering of the population.

According to the Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC):

- 25% of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Raqqa live in inadequate shelters, such as temporary tents or unfinished buildings.
- Only 18% of skilled labor is available to support rehabilitation efforts.

This exposes displaced populations to harsh weather conditions and increases health risks.

The urgent need for coordinated humanitarian action

The humanitarian crisis in the governorates of Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, and Raqqa continues to escalate, with millions of people facing deteriorating conditions due to mass displacement, infrastructure destruction, and limited access to food, water, and healthcare. These worsening circumstances threaten the lives of millions of Syrians, and the situation grows more challenging each day due to the lack of essential resources and critical services.



Key Challenges:

- Ongoing Displacement: Large numbers of people are forced to leave their homes due to worsening security conditions, leading to overcrowding in displacement areas and increasing health and social risks.

- Infrastructure Destruction: Water, electricity, and healthcare networks have been severely damaged, further complicating the situation and making it difficult to meet basic needs.
- Limited Access to Food, Water, and Healthcare: People are experiencing severe shortages of food and clean water, along with a deteriorating health situation due to inadequate access to medical care.

Future Risks:

If immediate and coordinated actions are not taken, the situation is expected to worsen significantly. Key concerns include:

- Rising waterborne disease rates
- Increased malnutrition outbreaks
- Higher mortality rates due to the lack of basic medical care
- A sharp decline in living standards, leading to greater dependence on humanitarian aid and further strain on already limited resources

Required Humanitarian Response:

A coordinated, multi-sectoral approach is essential, including:

- Enhancing food security by ensuring sustainable food distribution and strengthening local agricultural production.
- Restoring essential services, with a focus on rehabilitating damaged water, electricity, and healthcare infrastructure to provide a safer living environment.
- Expanding healthcare services by strengthening emergency medical care and ensuring the availability of essential treatment in affected areas.

An effective humanitarian response requires collaboration between local and international actors and significant investment in improving living conditions and providing critical support to the most affected populations.

Without urgent action, conditions will continue to deteriorate rapidly, deepening civilian suffering and further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

4. Priority Affected Groups

Most Affected Groups

The humanitarian crisis in Syria continues to disproportionately impact the most vulnerable populations, exacerbating their suffering and exposing them to multiple risks. The most affected groups include:

1. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):

Syria faces a severe displacement crisis, with 6.8 million IDPs, including 882,000 newly displaced individuals due to escalations in December (731,400 newly displaced and 150,500 secondary displacements) (WHO Flash Appeal, 2024). Those in informal settlements and protracted displacement experience the worst conditions, with limited access to aid, food insecurity, and economic vulnerability (UNHCR Needs Overview, 2024).

- IDPs in informal settlements endure dire living conditions, lacking basic services such as healthcare, education, clean water, and shelter. The situation worsens in areas with severe humanitarian aid shortages, making them highly vulnerable to infectious diseases, malnutrition, and other health risks.

2. Female-Headed Households:

- These households struggle with limited social support networks and restricted access to essential resources. Additionally, women face challenges in accessing employment, healthcare, and education, increasing their families' exposure to economic and social risks.

3. Displaced Children:

- Displaced children face multiple protection threats, including child labor, early marriage, and violence. Many also lack access to education, exposing them to an uncertain future and worsening social and economic conditions.

Common Challenges Faced by These Groups:

- Food Insecurity: These groups struggle to access sufficient and nutritious food, leading to higher rates of malnutrition and disease.
- Economic Collapse: The lack of employment opportunities and rising unemployment have made these groups more dependent on humanitarian aid.
- Health Crises: Due to weakened healthcare infrastructure, children and women, in particular, lack essential medical services.
- Security Threats: IDPs, female-headed households, and children face ongoing security risks due to armed conflict and deteriorating humanitarian conditions.

Their suffering is further exacerbated by unequal access to humanitarian aid, which is often determined by geographic location, displacement status, and availability of essential services (UNHCR Flash Update, 2025).

Affected group #1	Affected group #2	Affected group #3
Internally Displaced People	Female-Headed Households with different levels of vulnerabilities	Unaccompanied minors, children in informal settlements, and out-of-school children

Internally Displaced Persons in Informal Settlements:

IDPs in informal settlements live under precarious conditions, suffering from limited essential resources and lack of legal protection. Due to protracted displacement—lasting over five years for some families—many have become chronically dependent on humanitarian aid for survival.

Key Challenges Facing IDPs:

1. Severe Food Insecurity:
    - Cuts in humanitarian funding have worsened food insecurity in these settlements, reducing emergency food distributions. This decline has led to increased malnutrition rates, forcing households to adopt harmful coping strategies such as reducing meal portions, child labor, and early marriage (WFP Syria Situation Report, 2024).
2. Poor Living Conditions:
    - Overcrowding in settlements, unsafe shelters, and deteriorating sanitation services have significantly contributed to the spread of infectious diseases. Outbreaks of cholera and respiratory infections have become more frequent due to these harsh living conditions (WHO Syria Health Update, 2024).
3. Limited Access to Humanitarian Aid:
    - The informal legal status of many settlements prevents humanitarian organizations from providing basic services such as clean drinking water, food, sanitation, and healthcare. These legal barriers have led to a lack of medical care and essential support services, further deepening the suffering of displaced populations (OCHA Humanitarian Access Report, 2024).

IDPs in these conditions are among the most at-risk groups and require urgent humanitarian intervention and adequate resources to meet their minimum essential needs. Without immediate action, their vulnerability will continue to increase, further worsening Syria's humanitarian crisis.

Internal Displaced People in Formal Camps

IDPs in formal camps receive relatively organized relief services, which help cover their basic needs, such as food, healthcare, and education. However, despite the availability of services, IDPs in formal camps remain entirely dependent on external aid.

Key Challenges Faced by IDPs in Formal Camps:

1. Reduced Food Assistance:
    - Due to funding shortages, food assistance has been significantly reduced, increasing hunger levels among camp residents who are fully dependent on aid. This has weakened their ability to meet basic nutritional needs, further exacerbating their hardship (WFP Syria Emergency Update, 2024).

2. Movement Restrictions and Lack of Livelihood Opportunities:
    - Restrictions on movement and limited job opportunities in most camps prevent IDPs from achieving self-sufficiency. As a result, many households are forced to adopt unsustainable coping mechanisms, such as borrowing money or reducing food portions, further deteriorating their living conditions (OCHA Syria Displacement Analysis, 2024).
3. Protection Risks:
    - Despite the better infrastructure in formal camps, protection risks persist, including gender-based violence (GBV), child labor, and exploitation. These risks are particularly severe for female-headed households and adolescents, who face challenging conditions that threaten their safety and well-being (UNFPA Gender-Based Violence Assessment, 2024).

Conclusion:

IDPs in Syria remain among the most vulnerable populations, whether in informal settlements or formal camps. Despite the availability of aid in formal camps, they continue to face challenges related to food security, economic opportunities, and protection. A coordinated and expanded humanitarian response is urgently needed to improve living conditions, provide sustainable livelihood opportunities, and ensure the protection of the most at-risk groups.

Female-Headed Households (FHHs) in Syria

Female-headed households in Syria experience varying levels of vulnerability due to several factors, including geographical location, displacement status, family composition, and economic opportunities. While some of these households can meet their basic needs, others—particularly those in displacement settings—suffer from severe food insecurity, lack of income, and heightened protection risks.

Most At-Risk Female-Headed Households:

1. Widowed and Newly Displaced Women in Informal Settlements:
    - Lack of social support networks: Widowed or newly displaced women are often isolated from community support, exacerbating their hardships.
    - Complete dependence on humanitarian aid: These households rely entirely on external assistance to meet their basic needs.
    - High risk of gender-based violence (GBV): Widowed and displaced women face a greater risk of violence and exploitation, especially in informal settlements.

- Lack of official documentation: The absence of legal documents worsens their situation, limiting access to essential services. *(Source: UNHCR Protection Monitoring Report, 2024)*

2. Female-Headed Households in Rural Areas:
   - Limited access to humanitarian aid: Rural households receive less support, leading to increased poverty and food insecurity.
   - Collapse of the agricultural sector: Due to conflict and insecurity, subsistence farming has become unviable, making it difficult for these households to secure a sustainable income. *(Source: FAO Syria Agricultural Report, 2024)*
3. Female-Headed Households with Young Daughters:
   - Early marriage and child labor: Many female-headed households resort to negative coping mechanisms such as early marriage and child labor, increasing social risks for children.
   - Barriers to education: Economic and social constraints limit children's access to education, hindering their long-term economic stability. *(Source: UNICEF Syria Child Protection Report, 2024)*

Conclusion:

Female-headed households remain among the most vulnerable groups in Syria, facing severe challenges in accessing resources and opportunities. It is essential to provide integrated support, particularly in displacement settings and rural areas, to mitigate protection risks and enhance their resilience and stability.

Children Facing Critical Risks in Syria

Among the 7.5 million children in need of assistance in Syria, the most vulnerable groups include unaccompanied children, children in informal settlements, and out-of-school children.

1. Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC):

- Severe risks: These children are exposed to dangers such as child labor and forced recruitment.
- Limited access to care: Many lack access to healthcare and essential protection services.
  (Source: UNICEF, 2024)

2. Children in Informal Settlements:

- Significant challenges: Living conditions in these areas are poor, exposing children to malnutrition and high mortality rates due to preventable diseases.
- Education and nutrition concerns: Children in informal settlements have limited access to education and are more vulnerable to the negative impacts of unsafe livingconditions.
  (Source: OCHA Syria Humanitarian Response Plan, 2024)

3. Out-of-School Children:

- School dropout crisis: Around 2.4 million children in Syria do not have access to education, with another 1.6 million at risk of dropping out.
- Social consequences: Lack of education increases the likelihood of child labor and exploitation, reducing their chances for future stability. *(Source: UNICEF Education in Emergencies Report, 2024)*

Conclusion:

Children in Syria—especially those in informal settlements, unaccompanied children, and out-of-school children—are among the most at risk. Urgent and expanded humanitarian interventions are essential to ensure their access to food, education, and protection services. By addressing these needs, a safer and more stable future can be secured for them.

Supporting the Most Affected Groups in Syria

As the humanitarian crisis in Syria continues to worsen, the most affected groups, including newly displaced persons, protracted IDPs in informal settlements, female-headed households, and children at heightened risk, require urgent and targeted interventions tailored to their specific needs.

Priority Actions:

1. Enhancing Shelter Solutions and Expanding Protection Measures:
    - Improving living conditions in camps, collective shelters, and urban settlements.
    - Supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs) to ensure safe and dignified living conditions through adequate shelter provision and rehabilitation of damaged housing.
2. Strengthening Livelihood Opportunities and Social Support for Female-Headed Households:
    - Supporting female-headed households, particularly those lacking financial independence or access to essential services, through vocational training and job opportunities to promote economic self-sufficiency.
3. Removing Legal and Administrative Barriers:
    - Facilitating access to official documentation for displaced persons and marginalized communities, including identification papers and property rights, enabling them to access civil services.
4. Improving Access to Maternal Healthcare Services:
    - Expanding gender-based violence (GBV) prevention efforts, with a focus on protecting female-headed households in displacement settings.
5. Expanding Access to Education and Child Protection Services:
    - Ensuring educational opportunities for children in camps and conflict-affected areas to prevent school dropout, child labor, early marriage, and exploitation.

6. Enhancing Psychosocial Support Services for Children:
    - Providing psychosocial support for children experiencing toxic stress and trauma due to violence and displacement, helping improve their emotional well-being.

Conclusion:

These highly vulnerable groups require a comprehensive and integrated humanitarian response to ensure safe shelter, livelihood opportunities, protection, healthcare, and education. Targeted support will help reduce risks and create meaningful improvements in their lives, contributing to stability and future opportunities despite the ongoing crisis.

Consequences of Inaction:

Without sustained humanitarian intervention, vulnerable populations in Syria will continue to face deteriorating conditions, heightened protection risks, and long-term developmental challenges. Failure to address their urgent needs will result in:

- Worsening the humanitarian crisis, endangering millions of civilians.
- Deepening cycles of displacement and poverty, forcing more people to leave their homes due to unlivable conditions.
- Increasing exploitation and violence, particularly against the most vulnerable, such as women and children.
- Rising social tensions, as host communities struggle to accommodate the most affected populations without adequate support.

Other At-Risk Groups in Syria

In addition to the priority groups previously identified, returning refugees, persons with disabilities, and the elderly face increasing levels of vulnerability. Targeted support is crucial to ensure they are not marginalized in the humanitarian response.

Returning Refugees to Syria

With 270,000 refugees returning to Syria in late 2024, reintegration challenges have become a critical humanitarian issue. Many returnees are settling in areas with damaged infrastructure, high unemployment rates, and limited access to essential services, exacerbating their vulnerability.



Key Challenges Faced by Returning Refugees:

1. Limited Access to Shelter and Basic Services:
    - Many returnees lack adequate housing, healthcare, and sanitation services, forcing them to live in overcrowded areas or damaged buildings with insufficient infrastructure.
2. Economic Hardships:
    - Returnees face high unemployment rates and economic instability, making it difficult to secure a stable income and increasing their financial struggles.
3. Lack of Legal Documentation and Protection Risks:
    - Many returnees do not have official documentation, property rights, or civil records, which prevents them from accessing essential services and exposes them to risks such as extortion and property disputes.
4. Barriers to Education and Healthcare:
    - A significant number of returnee children lack access to schools, while healthcare facilities in return areas are overwhelmed due to the sudden influx of returnees.

Consequences of the Lack of Reintegration Support

Without targeted reintegration assistance, returnees risk falling into cycles of repeated displacement and prolonged economic hardship, increasing their long-term dependence on humanitarian aid. To prevent this, an urgent multi-sectoral response is required, including:

- Expanding shelter solutions to ensure access to safe housing.
- Enhancing livelihoods and economic opportunities for returnees.

- Improving access to essential services, such as healthcare and education, to facilitate long-term stability and reintegration.

Conclusion

Without sustained humanitarian support, Syria's vulnerable populations—including returning refugees, persons with disabilities, and the elderly—will continue to face worsening humanitarian conditions. Providing livelihood support, improved living conditions, and economic opportunities is essential to break cycles of poverty and displacement, ensuring a more stable and dignified future for these groups.

People with Disabilities and Elderly Populations in Syria

-People with Disabilities

People with disabilities in Syria face significant challenges due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. An estimated 28% of Syrians live with some form of disability, a rate significantly higher than the global average (CDP, 2024). Despite accounting for 6% of the displaced population, they remain among the most marginalized groups in the humanitarian response (WHO Flash Appeal, 2025).

Key Challenges Faced by People with Disabilities:

1. Lack of Assistance and Assistive Devices:
    - Children with disabilities struggle to access wheelchairs, hearing aids, and other essential assistive devices, limiting their ability to receive humanitarian assistance.
    - These challenges worsen during sudden displacement or attacks (CDP, 2024).
2. Prolonged Crisis and Rising Disability Rates:
    - The conflict has led to an increase in disability cases due to war-related injuries.
    - The collapse of healthcare infrastructure and disruption of social inclusion programs further exacerbate their struggles (OCHA Syria Humanitarian Response Plan, 2024).
3. Limited Access to Essential Services:
    - 96% of communities report an absence of disability support programs, leaving many without rehabilitation services or specialized healthcare (SARC MSA, 2025; IOM Flash Appeal, 2025).
    - Displacement camps lack disability-friendly facilities, making access to healthcare, education, and sanitation services extremely difficult (IOM Flash Appeal, 2025).
4. Education and Social Inclusion Barriers:

- Most schools are not equipped to accommodate children with disabilities, and there is a shortage of trained teachers and inclusive curricula (UNICEF Syria Humanitarian Situation Report, 2025).
- Children with disabilities in displacement camps and earthquake-affected areas are among those least likely to attend school, limiting their future opportunities (IOM Flash Appeal, 2025).

Elderly Populations

Elderly individuals make up approximately 5% of Syria's population and are among the most at risk due to the prolonged humanitarian crisis. Conflict and economic collapse have left many isolated and deprived of essential care (UNHCR Flash Update, 2025).

Key Challenges Faced by Elderly Populations:

1. Healthcare System Collapse:
   - Many elderly individuals struggle to access regular treatment for chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease.
   - Severe shortages of medicine and rising healthcare costs have made treatment increasingly difficult, exacerbating their vulnerability (WHO Flash Appeal, 2025).
2. Limited Mobility and Access to Services in Displacement Settings:
   - Collective shelters and displacement camps lack elderly-friendly infrastructure, making mobility challenging, especially without access to assistive devices such as crutches and wheelchairs (IOM Flash Appeal, 2025).
   - A significant portion of the elderly population relies on humanitarian aid, yet many relief programs fail to meet their specific needs (OCHA, 2025).
3. Psychosocial and Social Isolation Challenges:
   - Many elderly individuals suffer from depression, anxiety, and social isolation, but mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs remain inadequate (UNHCR MHPSS, 2023).
   - Those living alone or in displacement settings are at greater risk of neglect and abuse, highlighting the urgent need for dedicated protection programs.

Conclusion

Both people with disabilities and the elderly in Syria face severe barriers to accessing essential services, healthcare, and protection. Without targeted humanitarian interventions, these groups will continue to experience marginalization, worsening health conditions, and limited opportunities for social inclusion. Strengthening inclusive humanitarian responses, improving disability-friendly infrastructure, and expanding elderly care services are essential to prevent further deterioration of their well-being and ensure their dignity and safety.

Necessity of a Comprehensive Humanitarian Response

To meet the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive humanitarian response that considers the specific challenges faced by each group. Efforts must be intensified to provide specialized healthcare, improve access to education and essential services, and ensure social justice and inclusion in communities to bring about real improvements in their lives.

A comprehensive response requires:

- Improving infrastructure in camps to be accessible and suitable for the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- Providing psychosocial support to enhance the mental health and well-being of older individuals and persons with disabilities.
- Developing training programs for educators and healthcare workers to effectively support these groups.
- Expanding access to treatment and rehabilitation services, including assistive devices and specialized medical care for persons with disabilities.

A comprehensive and sustainable humanitarian response is the only solution to alleviating the suffering of these vulnerable groups and ensuring their fundamental rights to security, care, and equal opportunities.



Ensuring an Inclusive and Equitable Humanitarian Response

To guarantee an effective humanitarian response, targeted interventions must be implemented to address the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities and the elderly:

For Persons with Disabilities:

- Investing in rehabilitation services and expanding social protection programs that promote their empowerment.
- Strengthening inclusive education by providing suitable curricula and facilities for all children with disabilities.
- Expanding disability-friendly infrastructure in displacement sites and host communities, ensuring appropriate mobility and healthcare services.
- Ensuring sustainable access to specialized healthcare, including the provision of necessary assistive devices.

For the Elderly:

- Enhancing access to healthcare by providing essential and routine treatment for chronic diseases.
- Strengthening social support programs, including psychosocial support, to reduce the isolation experienced by older individuals.
- Expanding protection programs to safeguard older persons from neglect or abuse in displacement settings and shelters.
- Promoting community-based care to preserve their dignity and well-being.

Without urgent and sustainable interventions, persons with disabilities and the elderly will continue to face marginalization, increasing their vulnerability and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

The Humanitarian Crisis in Syria: Scope and Magnitude

The Humanitarian Landscape: Escalating Needs Amid Growing Challenges

The humanitarian crisis in Syria continues to intensify, driven by food insecurity, mass displacement, and the collapse of essential services, further increasing vulnerability and limiting people's ability to meet their basic needs (SARC MSA, 2025).

According to the Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC, 2025), 15.3 million people require humanitarian assistance, with risks escalating due to security restrictions, inflation, and lack of essential services. The rapid economic decline, marked by a depreciating Syrian pound and an 88% inflation rate, has forced 51% of households to reduce meal sizes, while 28% reported going entire days without food, highlighting the worsening food security crisis (SARC MSA, 2025).

Mass Displacement and Strained Resources

Mass displacement is placing severe pressure on resources, with 270,000 refugees returning to Syria, further straining already underserved host communities. Projections indicate that up to one million additional returns may occur in 2025, requiring urgent interventions in shelter, water, and reintegration services (UNHCR, 2025).

Public Services Breakdown

Electricity: 84% of communities receive less than three hours of electricity per day, impacting hospitals, schools, and water supplies (SARC MSA, 2025).

Water Access: 69% of households rely on unsafe water sources, increasing risks of disease outbreaks and malnutrition (SARC MSA, 2025).

Health System Collapse

The health system is on the verge of collapse, with damaged infrastructure and resource shortages limiting access to medical care. Estimates show that:

52% of communities lack child healthcare services

66% of key informants report the absence of basic medical care (OCHA, 2025).

Climate Shocks and Food Insecurity

Climate shocks have exacerbated vulnerabilities, with drought and desertification reducing agricultural production and worsening food insecurity. The lack of early warning systems further leaves communities unprepared for extreme weather events (IOM, 2025).

Key Factors Contributing to the Crisis

1. Security Constraints and Humanitarian Access Challenges

- 75% of communities identify insecurity as a major obstacle to aid distribution, hindering relief efforts and restricting access to the most vulnerable populations (SARC MSA, 2025).
- The presence of unexploded ordnance in contested areas limits access to many affected regions (Humanity and Inclusion, 2024).
- Insufficient funding and weak logistical infrastructure further obstruct the effective distribution of humanitarian aid (ACAPS, 2025).

2. Infrastructure Damage and Lack of Essential Services

- 84% of communities receive less than three hours of electricity per day, affecting livelihoods and hospital operations (SARC MSA, 2025).
- 69% of households depend on unsafe water sources, increasing the likelihood of disease outbreaks and malnutrition (SARC MSA, 2025; WHO, 2025).
- Damaged roads and disrupted transportation networks hinder relief operations and slow emergency response efforts in high-need areas (OCHA, 2025).

3. Climate Change Impacts on Food Security and Displacement

- Agricultural production declines due to drought and desertification have increased reliance on food aid (SARC MSA, 2025).
- The absence of early warning systems and disaster preparedness planning leaves communities unable to adapt to extreme climate events (IOM, 2025).
- Drought and desertification have reduced agricultural output, increasing reliance on food aid and exacerbating food insecurity (SARC MSA, 2025; IOM, 2025).
- Lack of early warning systems and disaster preparedness planning leaves communities vulnerable to extreme climate events, potentially leading to further displacement (IOM, 2025).
- Below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures expected in early 2025 may further disrupt food production and limit access to clean water (SARC MSA, 2025).
- Projections indicate a 20% decrease in Syria's total water supply by 2050, threatening long-term food security and increasing the risk of climate-induced displacement (OCHA, 2025).

Operational Constraints Hindering Humanitarian Aid Delivery

Despite growing humanitarian needs, several operational challenges are impeding the effective delivery of aid:

1. Security Risks and Access Restrictions

- 14 million civilians are at risk due to unexploded ordnance, making many areas unsafe for humanitarian workers (Humanity and Inclusion, 2024).
- Escalating violence and conflict make it increasingly difficult for relief teams to reach affected communities (OCHA, 2025).

2. Bureaucratic Barriers and Resource Shortages

- Administrative delays and prolonged approval processes for aid shipments are slowing the humanitarian response (ACAPS, 2025).
- Funding shortfalls have led to a decline in relief programs, as shifting global priorities have reduced support for food security and health initiatives (OCHA, 2025).

Recommendations: The Urgent Need for Action

To ensure effective and efficient aid delivery, a coordinated approach must be implemented, including:

Strengthening security coordination to facilitate aid delivery and protect humanitarian personnel

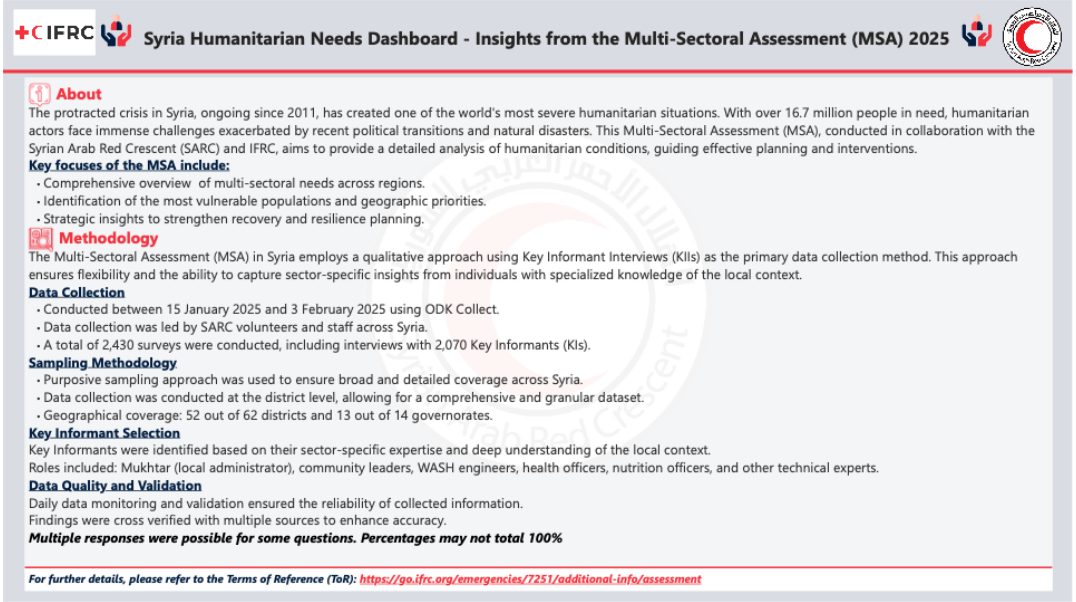
Accelerating procedures and simplifying approval processes for humanitarian aid

Increasing humanitarian funding to support food security, healthcare, and shelter programs

Enhancing resource management and ensuring the sustainability of essential services such as electricity, water, and sanitation

Conclusion: Toward an Effective and Sustainable Humanitarian Response

Without urgent action, Syria's humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate, leading to rising hunger, increased displacement, and the collapse of essential services. This crisis demands a well-coordinated international response to ensure the delivery of life-saving aid and to strengthen resilience, with a focus on sustainable solutions that reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance and enhance community stability



IFRC Syria Humanitarian Needs Dashboard - Insights from the Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) 2025

About

The protracted crisis in Syria, ongoing since 2011, has created one of the world's most severe humanitarian situations. With over 16.7 million people in need, humanitarian actors face immense challenges exacerbated by recent political transitions and natural disasters. This Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA), conducted in collaboration with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and IFRC, aims to provide a detailed analysis of humanitarian conditions, guiding effective planning and interventions.

Key focuses of the MSA include:

- Comprehensive overview of multi-sectoral needs across regions.
- Identification of the most vulnerable populations and geographic priorities.
- Strategic insights to strengthen recovery and resilience planning.

Methodology

The Multi-Sectoral Assessment (MSA) in Syria employs a qualitative approach using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) as the primary data collection method. This approach ensures flexibility and the ability to capture sector-specific insights from individuals with specialized knowledge of the local context.

Data Collection

- Conducted between 15 January 2025 and 3 February 2025 using ODK Collect.
- Data collection was led by SARC volunteers and staff across Syria.
- A total of 2,430 surveys were conducted, including interviews with 2,070 Key Informants (KIs).

Sampling Methodology

- Purposive sampling approach was used to ensure broad and detailed coverage across Syria.
- Data collection was conducted at the district level, allowing for a comprehensive and granular dataset.
- Geographical coverage: 52 out of 62 districts and 13 out of 14 governorates.

Key Informant Selection

Key Informants were identified based on their sector-specific expertise and deep understanding of the local context.
Roles included: Mukhtar (local administrator), community leaders, WASH engineers, health officers, nutrition officers, and other technical experts.

Data Quality and Validation

Daily data monitoring and validation ensured the reliability of collected information.
Findings were cross verified with multiple sources to enhance accuracy.

Multiple responses were possible for some questions. Percentages may not total 100%

For further details, please refer to the Terms of Reference (ToR): https://go.ifrc.org/emergencies/7251/additional-info/assessment

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