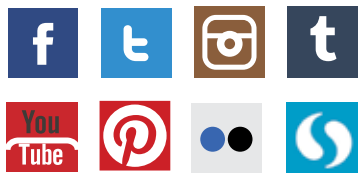


Highlights

- World Refugee Day in Syria
- UNHCR Airlifts 160 Tons of Aid to Qamishly
- Syrian Refugees Compete in the Olympics
- PSS Success stories
- Assistance Continues to be delivered by UNHCR throughout Syria
- UNHCR's report 'Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2015' Released

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World Refugee Day Celebrated in Syria

On World Refugee Day celebrated every year on 20 June, UNHCR this year launched the global campaign #WithRefugee which included a call to action to mobilize civil society to support the refugee cause and help counter intolerance and political rhetoric. The campaign asks the public to sign up a petition to express solidarity for people who were forced to flee.

UNHCR in Syria facilitated several events throughout the country that engaged both the local communities and refugees highlighting the solidarity and acceptance among them. In Damascus for example, UNHCR in cooperation with the Iraqi Cultural Centre created a space for refugees to exhibit their cultural heritage and handicrafts as well as share an Iftar meal with people from the host community and internally displaced people. The refugees were offered the opportunity to prepare and serve their traditional dishes and cuisines from their countries.





©UNHCR / Damascus 2016

Also in Damascus, UNHCR staff marked the day with a friendly football game joining staff from UN agencies in Syria and refugees who fled Somalia, Sudan and Iraq.

In Aleppo, UNHCR conducted activities over three days to celebrate World Refugee Day jointly with its partners Namaa, Al Taalouf and SARC. A celebration was conducted with the outreach volunteers from Namaa at Al Martini community centre addressing refugee, IDP and host communities with various activities including awareness integration sessions, recreational activities, social competitions and an Iftar meal. Also, with the outreach volunteers of Al Taalouf, a theater show, interactive competitions with gifts and a video celebrating different idols from different nationalities in addition to an Iftar event were all organized, again with refugees, IDPs and the host community members participating. Similar activities were conducted with SARC in Al Shahbaa in Aleppo where storytelling and recreational activities for kids were organized along with an Iftar meal, again for all three communities.



©UNHCR / Aleppo 2016

In Sweida, World Refugee Day was celebrated with UNHCR staff participating in an Iftar meal with refugees residing in the governorate. The recreational event welcomed refugees of various ages and genders and introduced the few refugee families living in Sweida to each other. In addition, UNHCR staff had discussions with the refugees about their worries and challenges. Towards the end of the gathering, the refugees together with UNHCR cut a cake celebrating this memorable day.



In Lattakia and Tartous, UNHCR in collaboration with its partners GOPA and Al Batoul conducted a series of activities for families from the refugee, IDP and host communities. The events meant to cook and share traditional food from each country of origin as well as organize an Iftar event for all participants with their families with a traditional storytelling activity.



©UNHCR / Qamishly 2016



©UNHCR / Qamishly 2016

In Qamishly, the World Refugee Day was commemorated with a variety of activities in the presence of refugees and asylum seekers. The activities ranged from puppet theatre, face painting, music, and dance, distributing flowers and plant pots to the neighbors of UNHCR premises and ended by initiating a cleaning campaign in the adjacent public park. Presents such as toys were also distributed. Also, many coexistence-enforcing activities were conducted symbolizing the effort of Syrians and their hospitality in supporting refugees and standing with them.

In Homs UNHCR in coordination with the DRC celebrated the day at DRC Community Centre by organizing recycling activities, story telling, puppets shows and handicrafts activities. In addition, UNHCR distributed sewing kits, boxes of palm dates and sports equipment for children.

Noura Feeling Home Again

Noura is an Iraqi refugee who mentioned that she did not eat Cliga, a traditional Iraqi sweets since she left Iraq in 2008. Like most Iraqis, Noura used to prepare these kinds of sweets with her family before Eid time. With the celebrations of the World Refugee Day, Noura said “I’m very happy that I got the opportunity to participate in preparing this kind of sweets. I really feel like home again”.



©UNHCR / Tartous 2016

UNHCR Carries Out Successful Cross Border Airlift Operations



©UNHCR / Qamishly 2016

Because of the closure of the Nusaybeen border crossing and the inaccessibility of the Hassakeh governorate by road UNHCR emergency stocks there were dangerously low. After lengthy approval procedures, landing approval for Air Operations to Qamishly carrying humanitarian assistance from Amman, Jordan was finally granted on 31 May. As a result UNHCR organized successful airlift operations on 01, 02, 03 and 04 June with over 160 tons of blankets, plastic sheets and kitchen sets. This is following on from an initial airlift to Qamishly which took place on 26 May carrying blankets for 13,000 people.

Syrian Refugees Compete in the Olympics

Since the modern Olympics began in 1896, over 200 national teams have vied for glory at the Summer and Winter Games. Now, for the first time in history, a team of refugees will compete as well.

In June, the International Olympic Committee announced the selection of 10 refugees who will compete this August in Rio de Janeiro, forming the first-ever Refugee Olympic Athletes team. The initiative comes at a time when nearly 60 million people are being forced to flee their homes to escape conflict and persecution. This number, if it was a country would be the world's 25th most populated. The squad representing these people in Rio hopes to give the world a glimpse of their resilience and untapped talent.

"Their participation in the Olympics is a tribute to the courage and perseverance of all refugees in overcoming adversity and building a better future for themselves and their families," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. "UNHCR stands with them and with all refugees."

They include, two judokas from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a marathoner from Ethiopia, five middle-distance runners from South Sudan and two swimmers Rami Anis and Yusra Mardini from Syria.

Yusra Mardini, an 18 year old from Damascus is a swimmer since she was very young, even representing Syria at the FINA World Swimming Championships in 2012. In 2015 when making the crossing from Turkey to Greece, she put these skills to use when the flimsy vessel she and 20 others were travelling in started taking on water. She jumped into the water with her sister, Sarah, and began pushing the boat towards Greece. "It would have been shameful if the people on our boat had drowned. I wasn't going to sit there leave that happen." After arriving on the Greek island of Lesbos, she travelled north with a group of asylum-seekers, eventually reaching Germany where she began training with a swimming club in Berlin. Now one year later she is competing in the 200-metre freestyle race in the Olympics. "I want to represent all refugees because I want to show everyone that, after the pain, after the storm, comes calm days," she says. "I want to inspire them to do something good in their lives."



Yara Regains Her Self-Confidence

Being displaced by conflict inevitably causes adverse effects on the psychological, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of people. In recognition of the need for this special type of assistance UNHCR have developed mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) projects and programmes; activities that are used both to treat mental disorders and improve the well-being of individuals and communities in their conflict or disaster affected environments. This range of activities includes approaches designed to address the psychological and social impacts of conflict and displacement.

Yara is a ten-year old girl who fled from the Deir es Zour governorate three years ago to Qamishly in Hassakeh along with her parents, two sisters and two brothers due to the ongoing clashes. Yara used to attend recreational and educational activities as well as awareness raising sessions organized by UNHCR's partner the Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD) on a regular basis.

However, recently, Yara's mother decided to cut her daughter's hair very short to avoid lice infections which was spreading among children in the area. Yara started wearing a cap and refused to take it off as she felt that she looked like a boy. She also refused to attend SSSD activities anymore.

Social workers from SSSD maintained the contact with Yara and convinced her that she looked great with the new haircut. Finally Yara resumed her attendance and participated in a performance where she played the role of a pretty girl. Gradually, Yara regained her self-confidence and removed her cap. Like Yara, thousands of children in Hassakeh Governorate still need psycho-social interventions in order to overcome their emotional difficulties following the traumatic displacements they went through.

In Syria MHPSS services continue to be integrated through the UNHCR supported network of community centres as well as its partner run Primary Health Care (PHC) clinics. So far in 2016, over 100,000 people have benefited from Protection and Community Services Interventions.

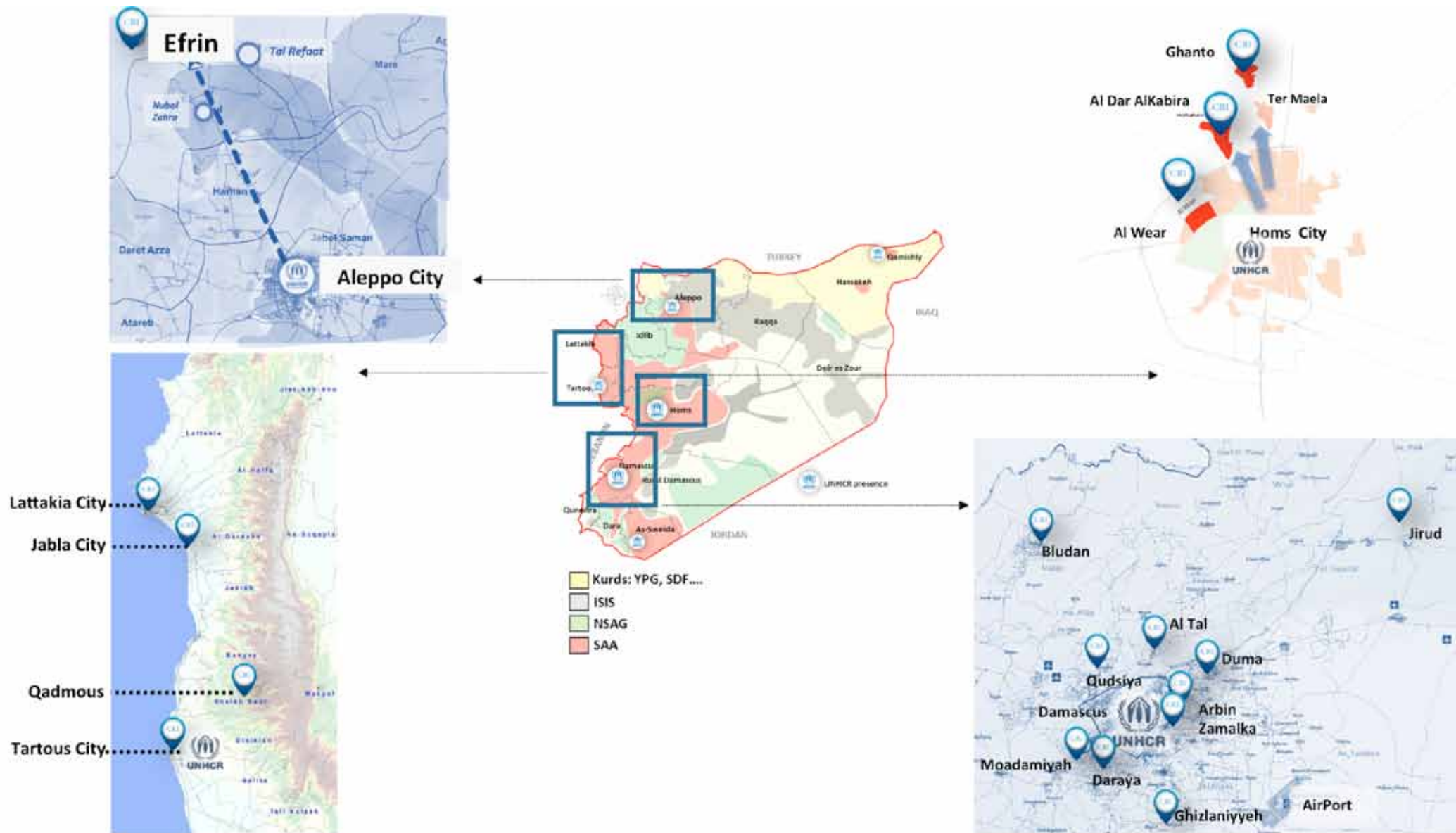


UNHCR Continues to Deliver Assistance Throughout Syria

In June 2016, UNHCR Syria reached a total of 274,372 individuals with core relief items. Of these 166,451 were in hard to reach and besieged areas. These include:

- On 01 June, UNHCR participated in two inter-agency convoys delivering humanitarian assistance to two besieged towns, Darayya and Moadamiyah, in Rural Damascus. This is the first time that the UN has been able to deliver aid to Darayya since November 2012. The Darayya convoy delivered medicine, nutritional items for children and vaccines, while the Moadamiyah convoy is the first of three planned convoys, bringing food for half of those in need. Technical teams also assessed needs on the ground for future deliveries and interventions.
- On 04 June, UNHCR delivered core relief items to 6,250 individuals/1,250 families in the hard-to-reach Al Tal in Rural Damascus. The assistance included mattresses, blankets, baby and adult diapers, sanitary napkins, kitchen sets, jerry cans, plastic sheets and sleeping mats.
- Also on 04 June, UNHCR delivered solar lamps to 30,000 individuals in Jableh in Latakia governorate, 15,000 individuals in Al Qadmous and 15,000 individuals in Al Karnak in Tartous governorate.
- On 09 June UNHCR participated in an inter-agency humanitarian convoy carrying basic needs items, such as plastic sheets, jerry cans and kitchen sets, for 2,400 civilians in Darayya city, Rural Damascus.
- Also on 09 June, through another inter-agency convoy, UNHCR dispatched humanitarian assistance, including plastic sheets, jerry cans, kitchen sets and solar lamps, to Douma city in Rural Damascus for the benefit of 12,000 individuals/2,400 families.
- On 13 June, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency cross-line mission to the AOGs controlled Al Dar Al Kabira and Al Ghantoo towns in the northern countryside of the Homs governorate. UNHCR's contribution consisted in the provision of core relief items, including mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans, plastic sheets and sleeping mats for 6,000 civilians/1,200 families.
- On 16 June UNHCR dispatched mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, plastic sheets, jerry cans and solar lamps for 6,000 displaced persons in Afrin, Rural Aleppo.
- On 16 June, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency mission to the hard-to-reach Al Waer, in Homs which was last reached in March 2016. The mission provided humanitarian assistance, including 2,700 mattresses, 4,200 blankets, 900 plastic sheets, 900 kitchen sets, 2,700 sleeping mats, 900 jerry cans and 2,178 solar lamps to some 4,500 individuals/900 families in the area.
- On 19 June, UNHCR, in cooperation with its partner SARC, delivered mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans, plastic sheets, sleeping mats and solar lamps for 7,500 individuals/1,500 families residing in the hard-to-reach Ghuzlaniyah in Rural Damascus.
- On 21 June, as part of an IA convoy, UNHCR delivered 7,000 solar lamps to the hard-to-reach Bloudan in Rural Damascus.
- On 22 June, UNHCR reached Jerud, Rural Damascus delivering 4,500 jerry cans, 4,500 plastic sheets, 2,500 sleeping mats and 4,500 solar lamps.
- On 26 June UNHCR delivered kitchen sets, hygiene kits, jerry cans, plastic sheets and sleeping mats for 2,500 individuals/500 families to Qudssaya in Rural Damascus.
- On 29 June delivered 1,000 plastic sheets, 1,000 kitchen sets and 4,000 jerry cans through an inter-agency mission to the towns of Zamalka and Arbin





Majida: From Outreach Volunteer to PSS Supervisor to Community Centre Coordinator

Majida was an Outreach Volunteer (ORV) who had previously studied in the University of Aleppo's Faculty of Education. Because of the conflict she lost everything including her house and her father, but one thing she did not lose was her hope for the future. She tells us that "It all started when I was invited to a UNHCR workshop for recruiting ORVs to work in the community. I'll never forget that day because I was so excited when I was accepted in the as a volunteer. After that with my friends and supervisors encouragement I started developing my skills, which assisted me to be a leader in the community and help people."

Majida eventually progressed from a volunteer to a position as the supervisor of the Psychosocial Services team of Al Taalouf association and then onwards to Coordinator at one of their Community Centres. As she says "the experience that I gained from working as an ORV qualified me to get this position and continue helping even more people in the community."



"Thank you UNHCR and thank you Al Taalouf which supported us in developing the skills of the people who work and volunteer with it", she adds.

UNHCR ORVs are essential in reaching the IDP population, supporting them, ensuring their participation in the community, identifying their vulnerabilities, advocating for their right to have access to humanitarian services, exploring local capacities and providing proper support including care giving to persons with specific needs, information dissemination and awareness. So far in 2016, UNHCR and its partners GOPA, Al Nada, SSSD, Tamayouz, The Syria Trust, Al Batoul, Al Taalouf, Nama'a, Social Care, Al Birr, Aoun and Child Care, have recruited over 500 new ORVs, bringing the cumulative total number of ORVs to 1,177 operating in 10 governorates. This is well on track towards UNHCR's 2016 target of 2,000 ORVs.

UNHCR Assists Suha Emerge from Isolation



Suha is a 50 year old woman who used to work as a hairdresser until she was forced to flee her home in Aleppo. After the death of her two sons due to the conflict she became severely traumatized. However as she became responsible for four grandsons she had little time to grieve and using a sewing machine she bought, began producing clothing items to sell in order to support her family.

One day, Suha learnt about the services UNHCR provided in a nearby Community Centre in the Al Riyadh area in Aleppo city. She approached the centre and along with her daughter, enrolled in a number of awareness raising sessions and handicraft courses which gave them hope for the future. Suha went on to become a volunteer with UNHCR and then was selected as a trainer in the vocational training section, which helped her earn money to support her dependents.

"The community Centre helped me and my daughter get out of isolation and depression. I can now provide my grandchildren with what they need and dream of as their fathers used to do. I am really grateful to UNHCR and Namaa for their support which gave me the boost I was in need of", Suha says with a smile on her face.

65.3 million: Highest Number of Displaced People in History

In June UNHCR's report '*Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2015*' was released and made for disturbing reading with the figure for displaced people now standing at the highest level in history.

The report presents and analyses the statistical trends of 2015 in regard to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons and other persons of concern to UNHCR. At the end of 2015, 65.3 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, an all-time high, including 21.3 million refugees (16.1 million under UNHCR's mandate and 5.2 million Palestinian refugees registered by UNRWA); 40.8 million IDPs; and 3.2 million asylum-seekers awaiting a decision on their applications.

Some of the key statistics for 2015:

- **11.9 million Syrians were displaced by end of 2015**, either seeking protection within Syria or abroad. Other nationalities with over 2 million people displaced by end-2015 included Afghans, Colombians, Congolese, Iraqis, Nigerians, Somalis, Sudanese, South Sudanese and Yemenis.
- **54 percent of all refugees globally came from three countries:** Syrian Arab Republic (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million) and Somalia (1.1 million).
- Over **2.0 million applications for asylum** were submitted by people seeking international protection in 2015. Of this number, 98,400 applications were lodged by unaccompanied or separated children.
- On average, **24 people were newly displaced per minute** in 2015, compared to 30 people per minute in 2014.
- During the year, **201,400 refugees were able to voluntarily return home**, 107,100 were resettled to third countries and 32,000 refugees were naturalized.
- **Turkey hosted 2.5 million refugees**, the largest number globally, followed by Pakistan (1.6 million), Lebanon (1.1 million), Islamic Republic of Iran (979,400), Ethiopia (736,100) and Jordan (664,100).

The report may be accessed at the following link: <http://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-2015.html>

Further Reading

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syria - Emergency NFI Sector Factsheet, 2016 May, May 2016, available at:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/5770cbe44.html>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syria Protection and Community Services Sector Factsheet, 2016 May, May 2016, available at:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/577a39f64.html>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syria Emergency Shelter Sector Factsheet, 2016 May, May 2016, available at:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/577647f24.html>

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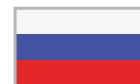
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