

UNHCR Rapidly Responds to Snow Storm Salam



The snowstorm Salam which hit Syria on 07 January caused chaos and further hardship for Syrians throughout the country with roads impassable, intermittent communications, electricity and fuel shortages resulting in many people being unable to heat their homes or warm themselves. This storm also had a significant effect on the humanitarian situation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Syria, especially those who were sleeping in parks and other exposed sites.

Despite the communication and accessibility challenges, UNHCR in cooperation with humanitarian workers from Implementing Partners urgently responded after the snowstorm by distributing mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, winter clothes and plastic sheeting to over **10,000** of the most vulnerable individuals in Damascus and Rural Damascus.

UNHCR had been previously planning for the cold weather throughout Syria. One example was in December in Tartous when, UNHCR in coordination with its Implementing Partner SARC distributed winter clothes for **31,120** individuals in hard to reach areas of Idleb as well as urban and rural Tartous.

Throughout the country during this period, UNHCR dispatched **148,903** Core Relief Items (CRIs) to **40,038** beneficiaries and will continue to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable.



HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR responds to snow storm Salam
- UNHCR distributes its 16 Millionth Core Relief Item since the beginning of the year and distributes winter clothes to over 30,000 people for this winter
- Women and Children Protection unit has been established in Syria
- UNHCR organizes activities on the occasion of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence



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Women and Children Protection Unit has been Established

In line with the 2014 Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) signed on 01 December a framework agreement for the establishment of a Women and Children Protection Unit which aims at developing and implementing Protection strategies, plans and programmes in accordance with the relevant rules of international law.

H.E. the Minister of Social Affairs Kinda Al Shammat stressed the importance of systematic approaches to Protection and underlined the close cooperation with UNHCR and other UN organizations and their support in the relief sector, noting that Protection will be a national priority for 2015. Moreover, The UNHCR Representative Mr. Tarik Kurdi highlighted the importance of the establishment of Women and Children Protection Unit in alleviating the suffering of women and children affected by the crisis in the country.



UNHCR Distributes its 16 Millionth Core Relief Item (CRI)

In December UNHCR reached yet another milestone when it distributed its 16 millionth Core Relief Item. By the end of 2014, **16,342,573** CRIs had been distributed to **4,562,005** beneficiaries.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in Syria



The campaign of “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)” which started on 25 November finished on 10 December. For this campaign UNHCR Syria organized different activities supporting women’s rights and female empowerment throughout Syria. In Damascus, UNHCR in cooperation with its Implementing Partner DRC, supported a three-day event organized by local youth groups using arts for social change. During this event six interactive music concerts and an exhibition of paintings by professional artists took place as well as a bazar displaying handmade products by female IDPs. Also in Damascus, UNHCR in cooperation with its partners Al Nada, SSSD and Tamayouz organized discussions on GBV related topics, role playing and drawing activities for children as well as two introductory lectures about self-defence and women empowerment. Outside Damascus, in Tartous, UNHCR conducted eight awareness sessions on “Violence against Women” addressing 138 men and women in the UNHCR supported community center run by Al Batoul. In Aleppo several theatre plays and puppet shows were presented to IDPs residing in collective shelters to raise their awareness on GBV issues. In Sweida, four interactive awareness sessions were conducted with 27 IDP women at the Rsas collective shelter on GBV related issues. In Homs, UNHCR conducted GBV awareness campaigns in several different areas which benefited 55 women and 22 men. The theme for this year’s campaign was Domestic Violence.

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