



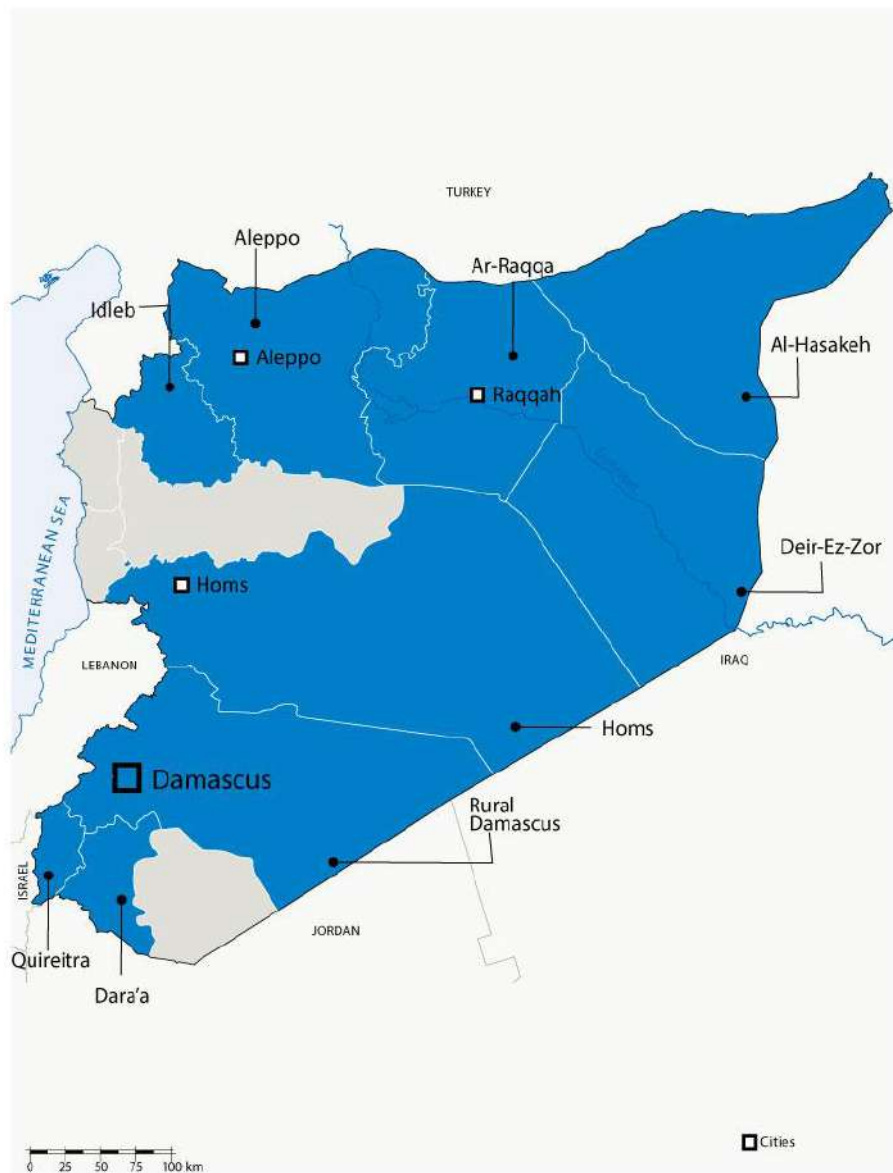
Country Sheet  
**Syria 2023**



# HI's team and areas of intervention

There are 358 people on HI's team in Syria.

## Syrian Arab Republic



# General country data

## a. HI internal classifications of the country context

Level of violence	Operations Director Focus	Health Focus	Positioning Focus	Emergency Focus
	Focus	Yes	Yes	Yes

## b. General data

Country	Syria	Neighbouring country (Jordan)	Neighbouring country (Lebanon)	France
Population	22 125 249 <sup>1</sup>	10 203 140	6 769 151	67 391 582
IHDI	0.567 (HDI) <sup>2</sup>	0.73	0.58 (HDI)	0.9
Gender-related Development Index	0.825	0.875	0.892	0.987
Maternal mortality	30 <sup>3</sup>	46	29	8
GINI Index	37.5 <sup>4</sup>	33.7	31.8	31.6
Population under UNHCR mandate	7,785,363	769 260	868 919	458 919
INFORM index	7.1 <sup>5</sup>	4.4	5.1	2.2
Fragile State Index	107.1.	75.43	91.3	30.48
Public social protection	1.9	8.9	41.3	32.6
Net official development assistance received (M USD)	9690.2	3941.7	1 525.49	N/A

## c. Humanitarian law instruments ratified by the country

Humanitarian law instruments	Status
Mine Ban Treaty	Not signed
Convention on Cluster Munitions	Not signed

<sup>1</sup> UN estimates 22 125 249 (01/07/2022) versus Syria official estimates 22 137 576 (31/07/2022) - <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/syria-population>

<sup>2</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/inequality-adjusted-human-development-index#/indicities/IHDI>

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT?locations=SY> (latest updates from 2017)

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=SY> (latest update from 2003, pre-crisis, no further update since)

<sup>5</sup> <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Country-Risk-Profile>



UN Convention on the  
Rights of Persons with  
Disabilities

Ratified in 2009

#### d. Geopolitical analysis

The Syrian crisis is entering its 13th year. The humanitarian consequences of the conflict are immense, with half a million deaths and over 12 million refugees and displaced people (6.8 million). Some 15.3 Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance.

The crisis started, which as a civil war in the wake of the violent repression of demonstrations, has since escalated into a widespread conflict involving foreign countries attempting to impose their influence and resulting in the partitioning of Syria.

Currently, Syrian territory is under the control of various armed political actors, each supported by foreign sponsors:

- The government of Syria, led by Bashar Al Assad, dominates most of the territory, extending from the west coast to the south and east to the Euphrates. This control is upheld with the support of the Russian government, the government of Iran and the deployment of Shiite militias.
- The area surrounding the city of Idlib is controlled by the Islamist armed group Hayat Tahir al Sham, with the backing of numerous armed factions and support from the government of Turkey.
- The Syrian National Army, a coalition of armed Syrian opposition groups, governs the Afrin area and a large strip north of Syria along the Turkish border, up to the international road, the M4.
- The Syrian Democratic Forces, supported by the Global Coalition to Defeat the Islamist State Movement, controls the governorates of Hasake, a significant part of Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor east of the Euphrates.

#### Political context

After being isolated for years, the earthquake in February 2023 triggered the normalisation of diplomatic ties between the Assad regime and Saudi Arabia and Syria has re-joined the Arab League. With this renewed membership came non-conditional requests that the regime commit to addressing issues affecting the region, such as the return and reception of Syrian refugees (as the displaced population poses a major challenge for the region), the crackdown on drug trafficking (as Syria is estimated to be the biggest producer of captagon, a synthetic drug), and the limitation of Iran's influence.



For the regime, the return to the Arab League is a political victory, although the US and European countries continue to reject any kind of normalisation, imposing a long series of sanctions.

The lack of progress in implementing the UN Security Council resolution illustrates the political impasse in the Syrian crisis. This resolution recognises the need for an immediate ceasefire and the political resolution of the conflict through the drafting of a new constitution and the establishment of elections involving all parties to the conflict (regime, opposition, civil society).

A trilateral forum sponsored by Russia, Turkey and Iran, and hosted by Kazakhstan in Astana, was launched in 2017. The "Astana talks" ostensibly intended to end the armed conflict in Syria and "jumpstart the convening of the formal political negotiating process." The 20th round of the Astana talks was held at the end of June 2023.

### **Security situation**

The security situation in Syria is highly volatile and presents different challenges, depending on the area.

Despite being defeated in 2019, the Islamic State still has many sleeper cells scattered across Syria that target both authorities and civilians. In the northeast of Syria, there have been numerous attacks on checkpoints held by the Syrian Democratic Forces. In spring 2023, hundreds of civilians lost their lives in attacks by the armed forces and to improvised explosive devices.

Turkey's involvement remains strong, with support to different armed groups in the north and northeast. The Iranian presence, regular Israeli strikes, and the engagement of the international coalition led by the United States are additional factors hindering the resolution of the conflict.

Russian special forces, previously based in Syria, were redeployed to Ukraine in 2022, leading to the deployment of Iranian militia to compensate for the reduction in Russian personnel.

### **Shelling and bombing**

There is shelling and bombing on all frontlines, including in the northwest around Manbij (Aleppo governorate), between Ain Issa and Tal Tamer (Raqqa and Hasake governorate) in the south near the Turkish border, and elsewhere.

There is also a noticeable increase in clashes among armed groups as well as in inter-tribal conflicts, occurring both in



regions held by the regime and in the northern part of the country.

Criminality is on the increase, with a rise in drug trafficking. Local authorities regularly conduct operations against drug traffickers and reinforce controls at their borders, leading to armed clashes.

### **Economy**

After more than 12 years of war, the economic situation in Syria is catastrophic. The Syrian pound continues to lose value, down 50% since the beginning of 2023. The trade deficit, difficulties in attracting capital due to instability, corruption and international sanctions are all factors in the country's economic collapse. The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019, also known as the Caesar Act, play a crucial role in the situation. Its main objective is to create accountability for war crimes committed by the regime. It aims to discourage foreign investors from working with the Syrian government and directly targets and sanctions members of the Assad regime.

### **Health and sanitation**

The very poor condition of hydraulic infrastructure (approximately two-thirds of water treatment plants, half of pumping stations and a third of water towers have been damaged), along with water retention upstream by the Turkish authorities, is making access to drinkable water extremely challenging and contributed to the spread of a cholera outbreak in September 2022. The earthquake of February 2023 has exacerbated the situation. Vulnerability is heightened by the weakness of the health infrastructure.

There is no accurate information available on the number of COVID cases in Syria. Although vaccination campaigns were conducted throughout the country, only a little over 5 million doses were administered.

### **Humanitarian access**

Following the February 6, 2023 earthquake, two additional crossing points (Bab al-Salam and Bab Al Ra'ee) between Turkey and northwestern Syria were opened, and the Bab al Hawa crossing point remained open. However, humanitarian access remains precarious. In July 2023, the UN Security Council failed to pass a resolution for the renewal of the cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism, jeopardising the Bab al Hawa crossing point, where 85% of aid transits for the 4.1 million people living in the northwest. An agreement between the Syrian government and the United Nations outside the UN Security Council framework to reopen this crossing point faces



strong opposition from the Hayat Tahrir al-Cham (HTS) group, which controls this part of Syrian territory.

The situation remains precarious in northeastern Syria, with an unofficial border with Iraqi Kurdistan at the Semalka crossing point. This crossing point was closed for several weeks between May and June 2023 due to a dispute between the authorities. Humanitarian access within Syria is complex due to the security risks, including bombings, attacks on checkpoints and violent demonstrations blocking roads and limiting movement.

## Summary of HI's presence in the country

HI is not legally registered with the Government of Syria. Since 2012, it has operated via cross-border mechanisms with neighbouring countries:

**Northwest Syria:** HI launched its intervention out of Turkey in November 2012, opening a field base in northern Idlib governorate. A second field base was opened in northern Aleppo governorate in April 2015. Both bases were managed remotely in 2023 by HI local staff via the Amman office and through partnerships with local actors. Since 2023, this Hub has been effectively managing the Turkey earthquake response.

**Central Syria:** HI launched its intervention from Lebanon in March 2013 through remote management of partnerships with local actors. In 2023, three of HI's partners were still active in Rural Damascus, Homs and Aleppo governorate. In Aleppo governorate, activities are currently related to the earthquake emergency response. The Centre hub is referred to as the Beirut office.

**North-East Syria:** HI launched its intervention out of Iraq in December 2016 through direct management of HI expat and local staff. HI works in Hasakeh, Raqqa and Deir ez Zor governorates with projects in health, land release, and inclusion. The programme implements direct interventions and also works through local partners.

HI's volume of activity and humanitarian access in Syria had been increasing since 2012. HI has gradually built a strong position within the humanitarian community by participating in coordination mechanisms and in a major consortium. Since 2020, funding from donors in response to the Syria crisis has been shrinking.

In 2022, after years of trying, the programme renewed its attempts to register with the Government of Syria and obtain authorisation to intervene in areas under its control.



In 2023, the major event was the devastating earthquake on the 6<sup>th</sup> February hitting Northwest Syria and Turkey. HI has been responding to the crisis both in northwest Syria and in Gaziantep governorate in Turkey.





# Overview of current projects

Sectors where HI conducts projects and focus on beneficiaries and operational partnerships

Project title and main sector(s) of intervention	Main activities	Beneficiaries	Location	Project start and end dates	Partners	Donors funding the project
<b>Inclusive emergency humanitarian response to the critical health and protection needs of the most vulnerable conflict-affected populations</b>	Providing inclusive emergency humanitarian response to critical health and protection needs in conflict affected areas with a focus on most vulnerable groups and through the implementation of HI's inclusive Disability, Gender and Age (DGA) approach. Activities: 1. Rehabilitation Services 2. Community Based PSS (CBPSS) 3. Inclusion Services	17,889 direct beneficiaries	Ar-Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor, Rural Damascus, and Homs Governorates	2022-04-14 to 2024-03-31	<b>Local Partners</b> Two local partners whose names are not revealed for security reason Ar-Raqqa National Hospital Kasra Hospital Busaira Hospital Sawsan	<b>Global Affairs Canada</b>



<p><b>From Guidelines to Action: Promoting Learning, Localisation and Adaptation of the IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with disabilities (IASC GL) in humanitarian action for disability-inclusive coordination, data collection and programming.</b></p>	<p>Fostering an enhanced understanding of the availability, scope, success factors and challenges of in-country disability inclusive coordination mechanisms with reference to IASC guidelines on enhancing inclusive coordination</p> <p>Providing access to enhanced global tool sets based on existing practices to enhance disability- (and age-) inclusive data collection and programming in food security and protection</p> <p>Improving the confidence, knowledge and skills of Key Food Security and Protection actors in Syria for adapting their organisational data and programming tools to become inclusive of disability data from an intersectional perspective</p>	<p>209,190 direct beneficiaries</p>	<p>Hassakeh, Al-Raqqa, and Deir-Ez-Zor Governorates</p>	<p>2022-04-04 to 2024-03-04</p>	<p>No operational partners on this project</p>	<p><b>European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)</b></p> <p><b>Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP)</b></p>
<p><b>Improving resilience and increasing human security and protection through Humanitarian Mine Action in Northeast Syria</b></p>	<p>Contributing to saving lives and increasing protection to at-risk populations in conflict-affected parts of Syria.</p> <p>Activities: Demining Risk Education Health</p>	<p>30,739 direct beneficiaries</p>	<p>Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates</p>	<p>2022-07-01 to 2024-06-30</p>	<p><b>Local Partners</b> Raqqa National Hospital Tabqa National Hospital Kasra National Hospital Busayra National Hospital Hajin National Hospital</p>	<p><b>German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)</b></p>



<b>Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme 2020-2024</b>	Facilitating access to rehabilitation services, including physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support (PSS) and Prosthetic & Orthotic (PO) services for people with functional limitations. Activities: Demining Risk Education Support to victims and their families: Capacity strengthening of local/national actors	1,280 direct beneficiaries	Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, and Idlib Governorates	2020-09-01 to 2024-08-31	<b>Local Partners</b> Health for All Tabqa National Hospital	<b>Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BUZA)</b>
<b>Provision of life-saving health services in northeast Syria, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups and environmental health</b>	Providing life-saving and specialised health assistance to targeted populations in northeast Syria, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups  Improving sanitation and hygiene in target health care facilities through the provision of comprehensive and safe WASH monitoring and health waste management services, in order to minimize the environmental risks and promote a do no harm approach	84,831 direct beneficiaries	Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates	2023-01-01 to 2023-12-31	<b>Consortium UPP-KRC-HI</b> Consortium: Un Ponte Per (lead) and Kurdish Red Crescent	<b>Centre de Crise et de Soutien</b>



<p><b>Life-saving and life-sustaining inclusive humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people in the northwest Syria, with an emphasis on people with injuries and people with disabilities</b></p>	<p>Health System Support Basic Primary Health support Psychosocial Support Services Support to humanitarian actors in improving the inclusiveness of their response Risk Education component</p>	<p>83,628 direct beneficiaries</p>	<p>Idleb and Aleppo Governorates</p>	<p>2022-01-10 to 2024-09-30</p>	<p><b>Local Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aqrabat Hospital</li> <li>- Idleb Specialistic Surgical Hospital</li> <li>- Al Rahmeh center and hospital</li> <li>- Maraas Misreen Hospital</li> <li>- Salqeen Hospital</li> <li>- Happy Steps</li> <li>- Al Kinanh Hospital</li> <li>- Bab Al Hawa Hospital</li> <li>- Al-Amal Specialized Hospital</li> <li>- Al-Hidaya Hospital</li> <li>- Harem General Hospital</li> <li>- Shmarin Specialized Hospital</li> <li>- Azaz National Hospital</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance</b></p>
<p><b>Emergency protective and resilient response to specific needs of conflict affected populations inside Syria</b></p>	<p>Increasing resilience for affected population at community level and improving access to victim assistance services for persons with functional limitations and their caregivers. Activities: Risk Education Multi-disciplinary rehabilitation services Inclusion Community-based PSS</p>	<p>72,250 direct beneficiaries</p>	<p>Idleb, Aleppo, and Ar-Raqqa Governorates</p>	<p>2022-10-01 to 2024-05-30</p>	<p><b>Local Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Happy Steps</li> <li>Idleb Specialised Surgical Hospital</li> <li>Aqrabat Hospital</li> </ul>	<p><b>Swiss Development Cooperation</b></p>



<p><b>Humanitarian Mine Action Response in northeast Syria</b></p>	<p>Providing a comprehensive and integrated HMA response to conflict affected communities in northeast Syria            Activities:            EO clearance            EO RE            Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Risk Education            Capacity building support</p>	<p>HI is counting the communities targeted, rather than direct beneficiaries</p>	<p>Raqqa Governorate</p>	<p>2023-01-01 to 2022-12-31</p>	<p><b>FPI Consortium</b>            Consortium: immAP (lead), DanChurchAid, ITF Enhancing Human Security, MAG</p>	<p><b>European Commission</b></p>
<p><b>Earthquake Emergency response in northwest Syria</b></p>	<p>Activities:            - Multi-disciplinary rehabilitation services with an emphasis on people injured after the earthquake (fractures, crush syndrome, etc.)            - Case management of people with disabilities to access essential humanitarian services            - MHPSS: Psychoeducation and recreational activities            - Explosive Ordnance Risk Education</p>	<p>The number of beneficiaries shall be reported at the end of the project</p>	<p>Idleb and North Aleppo Governorates</p>	<p>2023-02-11 to 2025-02-10</p>	<p><b>Local Partners</b>            Happy Steps            Idleb Specialised Surgical Hospital            Aqrabat Hospital</p>	<p><b>Ensemble Pour Sauver Plus De Vies - Consortium 1212</b></p>
<p><b>Integrated and inclusive life-saving response to the critical protection needs of the most vulnerable groups for conflict affected populations in northwest of Syria.</b></p>	<p>The project aims to provide an inclusive lifesaving emergency response to the critical health needs of the affected population and improve the protection of the targeted population through community-based and individually targeted protection interventions.</p>	<p>3,760 beneficiaries</p>	<p>Idleb and North Aleppo Governorates</p>	<p>2023-01-10 to 2023-09-30</p>	<p>No partners</p>	<p><b>OCHA: Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF)</b></p>



<b>Inclusive humanitarian response to improve access to rehabilitation and mental health services for the earthquake and conflict-affected population in Aleppo and Idlib, Syria</b>	Improving the functional and psychosocial well-being of earthquake and conflict-affected people with injuries, people with disabilities and their caregivers in Aleppo and Idlib governorates, through the provision of inclusive multi-disciplinary rehabilitation and community-based psychosocial support.	7,961 beneficiaries	Aleppo Governorate, (Government of Syria area)  Idlib Governorate, (North West Syria area)	2023-07-10 to 2024-07-09	La Congrégation des Sœurs des Saints-Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie (SSCC)  Health For All (HFA) in Idlib	<b>Centre de Crise et de Soutien</b>
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## Donors

Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance - BHA



Center for Disaster Philanthropy



Center for Disaster Philanthropy

Consortium 12-12



Centre de crise et de soutien

Avec la participation de



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