

IOM FLASH APPEAL FOR SYRIA CRISIS RESPONSE

DECEMBER 2024 – MAY 2025



Mohammad's family is one of 2,900 who received multipurpose cash assistance in December.
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SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 27 November 2024, a significant military offensive by Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) against Syrian Armed Forces led to a major shift in the conflict. The rapid advance, led by Syria's new de facto leader Ahmed Al-Sharaa, resulted in the capture of strategic locations across Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama governorates, as well as central and southern Syria. The conflict culminated with the AOGs taking the capital Damascus and toppling Bashar al-Assad on 8 December, marking a historic and transformative moment in Syrian history. Subsequently, Mohammed al-Bashir was appointed as caretaker Prime Minister on 10 December to lead a transitional government.



This transition has raised hopes for stability and reconstruction in a country devastated by 14 years of civil war. However, the transition faces significant challenges, including potential security vacuums, political fragmentation, and the need for broad-based inclusiveness in governance, as well as a dire economic situation and acute humanitarian needs.

Recent military operations and changes in territorial control have displaced hundreds of thousands of people, further straining an already fragile system. According to OCHA, 7.4 million people were displaced inside Syria prior to the latest developments, with 2.3 million still residing in camps. The economic situation in Syria has worsened over the years. The Syrian pound (SYP) has depreciated against the US dollar (US\$), with the exchange rate in the parallel market averaging around SYP12,500/US\$1 as of January 2025. Inflation has surged, driven by limited access to goods, disrupted supply chains, and rising logistics costs, all of which have significantly increased the prices of daily commodities. The capacity of essential services has drastically declined, with water and sanitation systems deteriorating and public health services under severe strain.

IOM APPEAL

(USD 73,200,000)

(December 2024 – May 2025)

	Needs Assessments and Coordination (DTM) (200 partners)	\$3,000,000
	Shelter, Non-Food Items, and Winterization Support (Individuals targeted: 360,000)	\$25,000,000
	Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) (Individuals targeted: 500,000)	\$10,000,000
	Multi-purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) (Individuals targeted: 60,000)	\$5,500,000
	Protection (Individuals targeted: 20,000)	\$2,000,000
	Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) (Individuals targeted: 80,000)	\$1,200,000
	Health (Individuals targeted: 10,000)	\$1,500,000
	Early Recovery and Livelihood (Individuals targeted: 100,000)	\$25,000,000

TOTAL: \$73,200,000
(Individuals targeted: 1,130,200)

Limited funding and the migration of skilled workers are reducing the quality and availability of these services, putting more people at risk. Frequent disease outbreaks, waterborne illnesses, prolonged drought, water crises, vaccine-preventable diseases, and food insecurity are contributing to rising malnutrition rates.

Over the past 14 years, the civil war has perpetuated cycles of vulnerability, disproportionately affecting those most in need, including individuals with disabilities. The lack of basic services makes people more vulnerable and strains social cohesion. Without immediate and sustained funding, essential services such as water, sanitation, healthcare, electricity, and education will continue to deteriorate, pushing more people into desperate situations, increasing the risk of negative coping mechanisms, and preventing the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, or returnees who are secondarily displaced. Investing in these basic services now is crucial to pave the way for a more sustainable response, prevent new crises and support those already returning ¹.

Protection needs remain acute, for displaced and persons returning to areas previously affected by conflict. These areas often have limited access to essential services, the presence of explosive ordnance, and face civil documentation issues. Additionally, gender-based violence, trafficking, and child protection risks are exacerbated by the current mobility context.

The recent changes have created a unique opportunity for IOM to reestablish a permanent staff presence in Syria, after being forced to shut down its office in Damascus by the Assad regime in 2020. On 15 December 2024, the first IOM surge team arrived in Damascus following swift approval from the transitional government. The IOM Director General visited the country on 16 and 17 December 2024, meeting officials of the caretaker authority who confirmed their welcome of IOM back into the country.

IOM's Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism (MEFM) has already been committed to allow for the establishment of its office in Syria and the provision of essential services to address the critical needs of affected populations.

Through this revised Flash Appeal ², IOM aims to mobilize USD 73.2 million over six months (December 2024 to May 2025) to assist over 1.1 million affected individuals in Syria, in line with IOM's broader Syrian Arab Republic Crisis Response Plan. The appeal will enable IOM to reestablish a strong team inside Syria, across all key UN hubs, and provide immediate and continued humanitarian assistance to the most at-risk and vulnerable, including displaced and returning groups. It will also empower communities through initial investments in housing, infrastructure rehabilitation, and livelihoods through a protection lens.

RESPONSE STRATEGY AND COORDINATION

As one of the key actors in providing humanitarian aid in Northwest Syria (NWS), IOM aims to leverage its extensive presence and logistics pipelines in Türkiye, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon to scale up emergency and transitional response and to address new and emerging needs resulting from significant shifts, including IDP movements and returns in all fourteen governorates identified by IOM's needs assessments.

With protection at the center of the response; IOM will prioritize supporting people on the move including those who prepare to move to another location, those in transit/movement, and those who newly arrived at a new community through multi-sectoral assistance. This includes providing critical winter supplies, multi-purpose cash, essential non-food items, shelter and protection assistance, camp coordination and camp management (CCCM), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health services, early recovery and livelihood, as well as initial transitional justice support through its expertise in housing land and property (HLP) rights.

IOM will collaborate with all clusters to ensure its approach aligns with recommended guidelines, given the dynamic situation and resulting displacement and returns. Additionally, IOM will support information provision and critical coordination functions by contributing to the 2025 Humanitarian Planning Cycle (through multi-sector needs assessments).

¹ In Northwest Syria alone, as of 2 January 2025, the UN reported over 500,000 returns, mostly to Aleppo and Hama governorates. ² This revised Appeal replaces: 'IOM Flash Appeal for Northwest Syria: First Phase Humanitarian Response (December 2024 - March 2025)' launched on 10 December 2024.



IOM visited camps in Idlib Governorate to monitor the distribution of hygiene kits and other emergency WASH activities, with partner Watan Foundation.
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NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AND COORDINATION

To support senior humanitarian and development coordination, policy and decision-making forum on issues related to advocacy, access, humanitarian programming and response, IOM will support inter-agency data collection efforts through the roll out of its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) for Syria, building on the assessment networks managed by IOM on behalf of the UN from 2015 to 2022. IOM plans to reactivate its Mobility Tracking and Incident or Onset Displacement Tracking tools, as well as its Area of Return Monitoring. These tools will support the 2025 Humanitarian Programme Cycle led by the Syria Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, managed by the Humanitarian Country Team in coordination with the clusters, providing critical information to inform the next humanitarian and development plans. Data will be gathered through a network of field-based enumerators and shared with other donors and humanitarian agencies to help inform the response.

Funding required
USD 3 million

Target
200 Partners



SHELTER, NON-FOOD ITEMS AND WINTERIZATION SUPPORT

IOM will distribute essential relief items such as blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, solar lamps, diapers to IDPs and host communities prioritizing high-return areas such as Aleppo and Hama to address immediate needs effectively. In light of the winter response, in line with cluster standards, IOM will have flexibility to provide non-food item (NFI) kits or a more comprehensive winter kit, as relevant, to ensure ability to withstand the challenges of the current harsh conditions. IOM adopts a 'quick release' mechanism which would allow prepositioned items to be dispatched from partners' warehouses inside Syria, enabling a rapid response. Additionally, IOM will provide both emergency shelter items for reception centers and areas hosting newly arrived IDPs, while expanding its provision of dignified shelters and the rehabilitation of shelters.

Funding required
USD 25 million

Target
360,000 individuals



EMERGENCY WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

IOM will provide a package of emergency WASH interventions and support enhanced WASH capacity for sites and communities hosting new arrivals. IOM will enhance sanitation facilities, conduct vector control, utilize unconventional water sources, support rehabilitation of sanitation, water networks and solid waste systems while supporting water supply and storage. Emergency WASH interventions will target sites with sudden increases in population, ensuring access to safe water through water trucking, distribution of hygiene kits, installation of prefabricated latrines and solid waste management (collecting garbage, desludging and repairs of sewage networks). IOM will also mainstream a disaster risk reduction lens, introducing more sustainable approaches, including through use of solarization where possible.

Funding required
USD 10 million

Target
500,000 individuals



MULTI-PURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE (MPCA)

Where markets are functioning and cash-based interventions are feasible, IOM will provide multi-purpose cash assistance, to ensure displaced populations, returnees and local affected communities have the flexibility to prioritize their needs. IOM will distribute cash through engagement of financial service provider(s) or implementing partner(s) depending on the availability and contextual requirements. While being able to provide emergency short-term assistance, in line with cluster guidelines of one-off or up to three rounds. IOM will also transition, as relevant, to longer-term repeat assistance for populations at risk of re-displacement.

Funding required
USD 5.5 million

Target
60,000 individuals



PROTECTION

IOM will provide protection needs-based assistance that includes individual protection assistance, case management and specialized gender-based violence (GBV) services, as well as child protection (CP) and legal services to the most at-risk groups, including persons with disabilities, older persons, single female-headed households and persons with chronic illnesses, including those newly arrived in communities/sites.

IOM will provide information and referrals to specialized services where referral pathways are active or establish new pathways as relevant, while promoting an integrated protection approach throughout its interventions, to ensure cross-team referrals as needed, in coordination with the cluster. IOM will provide capacity strengthening activities, including on handling disclosures in safe and ethical way and GBV risk mitigation in coordination with different sectors. HLP due diligence will be mainstreamed to ensure rights of affected populations are protected, and where possible, increase access to rights for vulnerable groups. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) will be provided through awareness raising on mine contamination and the development of risk prevention strategies.

Funding required
USD 2 million

Target
20,000 individuals

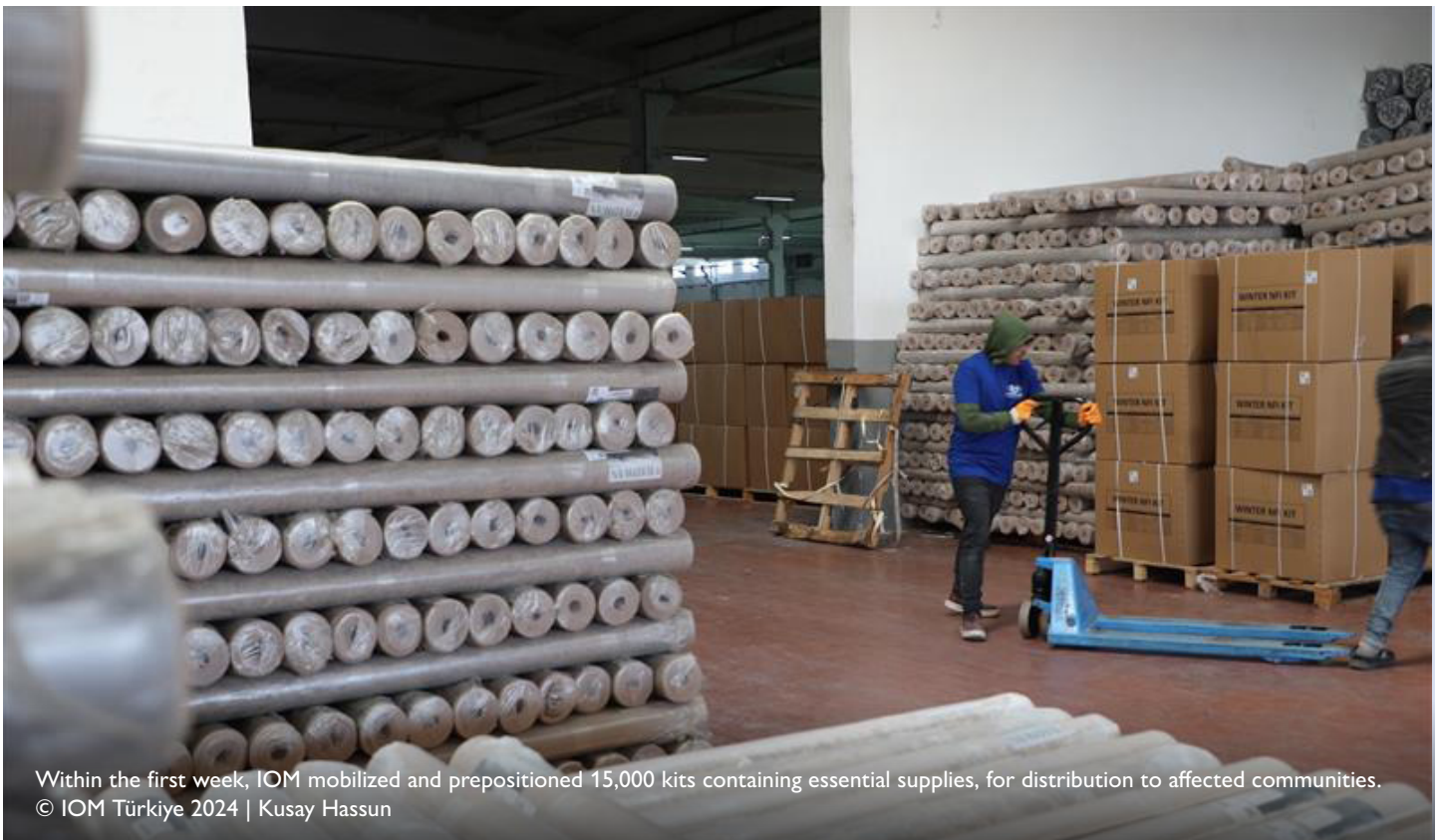


CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)

In collaboration with the cluster, IOM will continue to implement area-based mobile CCCM activities in sites receiving new arrivals while also expanding in locations with newly established sites and areas of returns. IOM will work closely with local authorities, humanitarian partners, and community members to support the transition towards the safe closure of camps by ensuring displaced families are engaged in the process and have access to relevant and accurate information on housing and services in the areas of return. This will involve establishing community resource centers (CRCs) in return areas, which will serve as hubs for social cohesion, access to services, and information sharing. Additionally, light infrastructure improvements will be conducted, such as rehabilitating communal spaces and addressing shared needs including lighting and waste management in areas of return. Participatory community planning will be facilitated to empower local committees, promote inclusivity, and ensure the voices of women and marginalized groups are heard in decision-making. Furthermore, local governance will be strengthened through capacity-building on CCCM principles and minimum standards and disaster risk reduction.

Funding required
USD 1.2 million

Target
80,000 individuals



Within the first week, IOM mobilized and prepositioned 15,000 kits containing essential supplies, for distribution to affected communities.
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HEALTH

The delivery of essential healthcare services in Syria has been severely impacted by attacks on healthcare facilities and widespread disruptions over the last 14 years of civil war. This has further strained already overburdened health systems, increasing the risk of communicable disease outbreaks. IOM plans to continue the work it started in 2017 with the Global Fund and WHO in Syria, supporting national Tuberculosis (TB) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) programs with essential supplies, including HIV rapid test kits, prevention packages, antiretroviral (ARV), and TB diagnostics. As IOM's health capacities expand inside Syria, the organization aims to work through partners to support access to healthcare for affected populations through referrals to functional facilities, deployment of mobile clinics, provision of mental health and psychosocial support services as well as public health education and outreach in communities.

Funding required
USD 1.5 million

Target
10,000 individuals



EARLY RECOVERY AND LIVELIHOODS (ERL)

The overthrow of the Assad regime in Syria presents emerging opportunities to support recovery as well as durable solutions, particularly regarding the sustainable reintegration of returning Syrians. Although the situation remains fragile, with a range of potential scenarios emerging, early interventions to improve stability and address conflict drivers and risks can lay foundations for the establishment of resilient, peaceful communities.

IOM early recovery and livelihoods (ERL) interventions will address immediate needs and lay the foundations for long-term recovery. Utilizing a nuanced Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN) approach, IOM will integrate targeted ERL activities, such as cash-for-work programmes, market revitalization, and sustainable livelihoods support, to reduce aid dependency and foster resilience in areas of return. Localized, gender-sensitive strategies will prioritize the restoration of critical infrastructure, market access, and economic opportunities for displaced persons and host communities, prioritizing areas of return. By emphasizing localization and implementing context-specific interventions, building on IOM's co-funding, small grant and community-based planning models, IOM aims to support long-term recovery, resilience and social change. This approach is critical in complex emergencies like Syria, where long-term recovery must go hand in hand with immediate relief efforts and support sustainable, gender-responsive and context-sensitive priorities.

Funding required
USD 25 million

Target
100,000 individuals

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Protection Centrality: IOM places **protection at the core of its operational work**, recognizing the increased risk of violence, neglect, deliberate deprivation, discrimination, abuse and exploitation faced by displaced populations and host communities. IOM will mainstream protection principles across all interventions to ensure safety, dignity, and non-discriminatory access to assistance for all those in need. This will include the **prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**, as well as GBV risk mitigation, disability inclusion, child safeguarding, and an inclusive response across all sectors. These efforts will be closely coordinated with the Protection sector and its AoRs.

Accountability to affected populations (AAP) is integrated across IOM's response in coordination with local implementing partners, ensuring that communities can access existing complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFM), participate meaningfully in decision-making, and receive relevant information on how to access services to make informed choices. IOM provides information on how to safely access existing reporting mechanisms to communities through a number of formats and channels – including a hotline, face-to-face, and printed IEC materials. The CFM is managed through a Dialogue, Information and Participation System (DIPS), a two-way communication system used to disseminate information and receive feedback. Feedback collected through implementing partner feedback channels is systematized and shared with IOM for learning and planning purposes, including improved programming.

Conflict Sensitivity is a key component of IOM's work in addressing migration-related crises, particularly in conflict-affected and fragile contexts like Syria. IOM is committed to integrating conflict sensitivity throughout its crisis response, to ensure that interventions effectively respond to needs and vulnerabilities while mitigating risks. This includes tailoring operations and programming to avoid exacerbating social divisions; enhancing community cohesion through inclusive engagement and aligning efforts with local conflict dynamics, stakeholders, and context. This approach contributes towards a more risk-sensitive, rights-based, and inclusive response that integrates gender and youth considerations. Conflict sensitivity also complements and reinforces other frameworks, including the Principles of Humanitarian Action. By embedding conflict sensitivity into its operations, IOM strengthens its commitment to inclusive, transparent, and responsive interventions that align with these standards, ultimately enhancing the impact and sustainability of its programmes.

IOM integrates a robust **risk management and compliance capacity** into its operational response, ensuring that risk assessments are a core component of planning and decision-making, in collaboration with implementing partners. This framework involves reviewing and monitoring key risk indicators, maintaining up-to-date risk registers, and implementing effective risk treatment plans. Guided by its established Risk Management Framework and Policy (IN/213 Rev.1), IOM employs comprehensive procedures and tools to identify, analyze, prioritize, monitor and address risks through proactive prevention and timely detection. These risk management practices ensure the achievement of objectives, the effective delivery of aid to intended beneficiaries – evidenced by beneficiary verification mechanisms and third-party monitoring – and the availability of established complaints and feedback tools. This approach fosters a strong internal control environment, ensures compliance with IOM's rules and regulations, and donor requirements, and supports operational efficiency.

IOM's **Localization** Framework focuses on effective partnerships, capacity strengthening, participation and coordination with local and national actors. IOM recognizes that meaningful localization requires creating the space for partner inputs and support in project design given local expertise and local knowledge. IOM will continue to work collaboratively with its partners to design, review and monitor programmes, as an ongoing capacity strengthening opportunity, as well as to ensure that programming is appropriate and relevant. IOM recognizes its duty of care to its partners and works collaboratively to review risks, while striving to reach populations in need.

IOM CAPACITY

IOM's operations in Northwest Syria started in July 2014 with the approval of the first UN Security Council Resolution 2165. IOM has been able to establish a robust presence in Aleppo and Idlib governorates with regular field visits from Türkiye to the project sites and partner offices to ensure quality programming, accountability to affected populations and protection mainstreaming. IOM has been operating for over ten years providing shelter and NFIs; CCCM support; cash-based interventions (CBI); WASH; health; early recovery and livelihoods; and protection services. IOM has a pool of twenty-one partners and three partner warehouses inside NWS, while also operating a rapid response mechanism to address emerging needs swiftly and effectively.

As IOM reestablishes its presence in Damascus, it aims to progressively integrate the management of its NWS operations inside Syria, including through the UN hub in Aleppo. IOM plans to maintain its logistics capacities in Türkiye and other neighboring countries and retain cross-border capacities as long as it is operationally effective and cost-efficient to do so, reaching as many beneficiaries as possible. IOM's established partners are now in the process of registering with the Humanitarian Access and Coordination team in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Damascus and are expected to continue their collaboration with IOM as they expand their capacities to operate across the country.



The escalation of hostilities, leading to the fall of the Assad government, has displaced hundreds of thousands of people.
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