

NRC's operations in Syria

Humanitarian overview

2025 marks the 14th year of conflict in Syria where a record-level 16.7 million people, over 71% of the population, are in need of humanitarian assistance. Almost half are children. The fall of the former government in December 2024 has sparked hope for the country's future and those in need of aid. However, ongoing conflict, economic collapse and record-high humanitarian needs persist throughout the country, coinciding with unprecedented cuts to humanitarian aid globally at a time where aid resources for Syria were already stretched thin. In 2024, a mere 10% of the required assistance was secured.

Over 90% of Syrians continue to live below the poverty line, and 13 million lack sufficient food. Fourteen years of war have devastated infrastructure. Ongoing hostilities in the north-east have flattened critical water and electricity facilities, while a recent whole-of-Syria assessment found severe needs across most communities, with 86% unable to access humanitarian aid. Food, shelter and livelihoods are top concerns, as job shortages and low wages push many into debt. Access to essential services, including electricity, fuel and clean water, remains severely limited, forcing families to rely on costly alternatives. As many Syrians look to return "home", disputes over land, housing and property are on the rise. School infrastructure as well as curriculums are in dire need of alignment and support. Syria's economic decline remains a key barrier to recovery, with rising costs and limited opportunities driving many into informal labour, increasing risks of exploitation and child labour. The removal of subsidies in some areas has deepened financial instability.



Photo: NRC

Our core activities



Education



Information, counselling
and legal assistance (ICLA)



Livelihoods
and food security



Protection
from violence



Shelter
and settlements



Water, sanitation
and hygiene (WASH)

NRC in Syria

Established	2013
International staff	35
National staff	460

Our areas of operation

- Idleb
- Hama
- Homs
- Aleppo
- Hassakeh
- Raqqa
- Damascus
- Rural Damascus
- Daraa



Our activities in detail

NRC is one of a few INGOs with a unique operating modality and operations throughout all of Syria with offices in Damascus, north-west Syria (NWS), and north-east Syria (NES). We assisted **699,313 individuals** across Syria in 2024.

At a time where funding for humanitarian assistance in Syria is at risk of further reductions due to competing crises globally, and where the number of people targeted for assistance may witness significant reductions, NRC recognises the importance of ensuring assistance is in line with global commitments to deliver emergency life-saving aid, while simultaneously providing longer-term, sustainable solutions that capitalise on investments and reduce aid reliance.



89,881 people reached in 2024 ▼

Education

Almost a quarter of Syria's population is in need of some form of educational assistance – half of them women and girls and almost all, below the age of 17. Repeated attacks on schools, years of protracted conflict, multiple displacements, and lack of access or adequate infrastructure all contribute to the disruption of education leading many children to miss a significant portion of their educational journey.

Where formal or informal schools do exist, quality education remains difficult due to over-stretched or under-resourced systems, physical proximity, inadequate infrastructure, high transport costs and otherwise, coping mechanisms that see families prioritising child labour or marriage in lieu of sending children to school.

NRC works alongside communities to:

- provide access to non-formal education for out-of-school children and youth, supporting their transition into formal education
- support the retention of students at risk of dropout
- provide quality non-formal emergency education, recreation activities, and psychosocial support and training
- support displaced children with emergency education, recreation and psychosocial activities
- equip caregivers with tools and training to better support their children's learning
- support the capacity building and professional development of teachers through the NRC Better Learning Programme and other professional development initiatives
- create welcoming schools through rehabilitation of learning spaces and WASH facilities
- provide skills training, mentorship, job placement and business start-up support for Syrian youth



43,975 people reached in 2024 ▼

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

The protracted crisis in Syria has left an entire generation either undocumented or under-documented, unable to enjoy the right to legal identity and its accompanying rights such as education and freedom of movement. As displacement has become multi-generational, more children risk being born into families who lack proper documentation to access the most basic services including health and clean drinking water, or secure adequate shelter.

NRC's ICLA programmes are implemented in accordance with international humanitarian standards and principles and promoting understanding and respect for the rights of displaced people and obligations of duty-bearers through direct implementation and coordination of all humanitarian legal fora.

NRC supports people via static and mobile teams, to claim and exercise legal identity rights, housing, land and property rights, employment rights and rights to access essential services. ICLA teams also undertake legal research and analysis that combines desk reviews, field research and programmatic evidence to contribute to enhanced understanding of the legal and contextual landscape in Syria.

When and where possible, integrated multi-sectoral responses are prioritised ensuring project participants reached by all competencies are complimented with ICLA services such as:

- housing, land and property rights (HLP), including securing tenure, usage rights, and access to HLP assets
- legal identity, including support obtaining civil and identity documents necessary to access rights and services
- legal stay, through establishment of legal residency in current locations
- legal support for repatriation of Iraqis, including proof of Iraqi citizenship and family reunification
- legal support for internally displaced persons on navigation of registration

- procedures and policies to access rights and services
- securing employment-related benefits including formalization of safe and fair working conditions and peaceful resolution of workplace conflicts
- providing community leaders, local actors, with training and awareness on the importance of legally documenting rights and how best to support Syrians in their communities or with whom they interact to access their rights, including through conflict resolution



82,559 people reached in 2024 ▼

Livelihoods and food security

Approximately 13 million people are estimated to be food insecure across Syria. In 2024, the unemployment rate across the country hit a staggering 88%. Price hikes have ranged from 14% to 66% for some goods across some parts of Syria and a 2024 MSNA indicated 60% of households in the north were buying food on credit and 90% of them unable to pay it back. Income generation remains a significant challenge due to lack of capital, resources, supply chains, or overall livelihood opportunities.

NRC's livelihood and food security (LFS) programmes build the economic resilience of communities by supporting access to sustainable livelihood opportunities that include:

- providing emergency cash and supplementary food vouchers for families to cover immediate basic needs including food and basic non-food needs
- creation of short-term job opportunities for vulnerable households via cash-for-work and rehabilitation of communal infrastructure
- supporting individuals with training and skills development to access labour markets for their income and employment through vocational training and apprenticeship
- providing support to individuals for start-ups through financial, training and technical support
- financial support to small-medium enterprises to create jobs for youths through the scale-up of their businesses

- job placement of unemployed youths and adults in the private sector
- supporting agriculture and the food sector through rehabilitation of irrigation systems, and the provision of cash support and livestock vaccination to small scale farmers
- responding to climate change in agriculture and food sector by supporting farmers with climate smart trainings and establishing Field Farmer Schools
- market access support to improve new markets/clients and increase sales through product exhibition
- supporting women's economic empowerment through training in agro-processing, cooperative creations and agri-business management trainings



134 people reached in 2024 ▼

Protection from violence

In 2024, NRC established PfV as a core competency, establishing it as a critical intervention for individuals facing heightened protection risks. The programme delivers direct, targeted support to those at risk of violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation, aiming to prevent further harm and mitigate these risks.

Through specialised services, NRC empowers individuals to recover from violations and build resilience against ongoing threats. In 2024, NRC implemented protection case management across Syria ensuring increased capacity to address urgent protection risks. By integrating protection responses in parallel with legal support, NRC strives to ensure legal protection outcomes that extend beyond mere harm reduction for those facing acute protection risks and ensure legal rights are upheld.

- NRC has provided critical Protection Case Management services at increased risk of protection violations. This includes Individual Protection Assistance to individuals facing acute protection risks.
- In 2025, NRC will expand to Protection Monitoring to systematically identify violations of rights and protection risks, using evidence-based analysis to inform humanitarian responses.



102,376 people reached in 2024 ▼

Shelter and settlements

Shelter needs across Syria saw an increase of almost 20% in 2024. Across northern Syria, over two million people reside in formal and informal settlement sites – 80% of them are women and children.

NRC's shelter response includes both emergency and transitional solutions and seeks to provide the full range of shelter activities including legal assistance and due diligence. Where possible, we aim to use an area-based, joint-programming approach to ensure integrated, joined up programming through:

- delivery of emergency assistance such as tents, blankets, winter clothing, and basic essential household items
- rehabilitation of damaged homes and community infrastructure, ensuring housing, land and property legal due diligence
- provision of dignified and safe transitional shelter for people living in displacement



490,877 people reached in 2024 ▼

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

The combination of years of conflict, displacement, and economic decline have all devastated WASH infrastructure across Syria. Droughts have diminished both quality and quantity of fresh water, and economic decline continues to threaten technical and financial capacity to operate and maintain systems where they do exist. Poor hygiene due to inadequate sanitation has increased communicable diseases such as cholera, leishmaniosis and other public health risks.

NRC teams support improving access to safe and sufficient WASH services by:

- providing emergency basic services including water trucking and distribution of household water storage tanks

- rehabilitating damaged and sub-standard water supply infrastructures including boreholes and water supply networks
- installing solar power systems to ensure continuous, economic, and environmentally friendly functioning of rehabilitated water systems
- rehabilitating damaged and sub-standard sanitation infrastructures, including sewage networks, and supporting municipality solid waste management through distribution of community level waste bins and tractors, waste collection, and safe disposal
- distributing hygiene kits, which include soap, washing powder and sanitary items
- advocating for more sustainable and cost-effective WASH modalities and governance systems in line with global commitments to meet immediate needs while also working toward longer term resilience

Advocacy and policy

Advocacy and policy development is a critical mandate for NRC given the responsibility to promote and defend the rights and dignity of those affected by conflict and displacement.

Drawing from programmatic evidence and lessons-learned, we advocate across a number of issues anchored in the broader themes of access to humanitarian assistance, protection, and durable solutions – including sustainable and cost-effective early recovery programming.

Advocacy targets and initiatives include a wide range of decision-makers and policymakers. At minimum, we aim to contribute to and move the dial forward on key policy issues at country, regional or global levels – all in an effort to improve the way humanitarian aid is delivered both inside Syria and elsewhere.

Advocacy is often conducted with other NGOs, UN agencies, and INGO forums operating in and outside of Syria to ensure consolidated, coordinated, messaging and approaches.

Our donors

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