FACT SHEET
February 2026

NRC's operations in Syria

Humanitarian overview

Syria at a turning point: from protracted crisis to solutions-oriented responses

Since December 2024, Syria has entered a period of rapid and complex change. Increased returns are occurring alongside continued displacement, localised violence, and growing climate-related risks. After nearly 15 years of crisis, humanitarian needs remain severe, and the evolving context demands a shift from predominantly short-term assistance toward solutions-oriented approaches that support self-reliance and lay the foundations for durable solutions. Changing dynamics have opened space to consider scenarios previously viewed as unattainable, yet structural constraints related to safety, livelihoods, housing, and access to rights remain deeply entrenched and vary significantly by region.

Displacement continues to shape Syria's humanitarian landscape. Over seven million people remain uprooted, including approximately 5.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), while an estimated 3.3 million people have reportedly returned to their areas of origin since late 2024, including IDPs and refugees. Localized conflict that has emerged in the south and northern parts of Syria over 2025 and into 2026 have triggered hundreds of thousands of people to find themselves displaced yet again. Returns barriers remain significant and include insecurity, insecurity, extensive housing damage, unresolved property claims, and limited access to basic services and livelihoods.

Camps and informal settlements remain the most visible manifestation of protracted displacement, particularly in the north-west and north-east. Host communities are under increasing strain as they absorb displaced populations and returnees while grappling with depleted resources and overstretched infrastructure. This moment presents an opportunity to pivot toward long-standing international nexus commitments that include responses that meet immediate needs but also enable people to rebuild their lives with safety, dignity, and increasing self-reliance.



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	27
National staff	342

Our areas of operation

- Idleb
- Hama
- Homs
- Aleppo
- Hassakeh
- Raqqa
- Damascus
- Rural Damascus
- Daraa
- As-Sweida
- Quneitra



Our activities in detail

NRC is one of a few INGOs with operations throughout all of Syria, with offices across northern, southern and central regions. We assisted **606,622 individuals** across Syria in 2025.

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.

28,215 people reached in 2025 ▼

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:

- support formal education systems
- 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
- 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 to access income

31,118 people reached in 2025 ▼

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

7,402 + 7,895 (MPC) reached in 2025 ▼

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



696 people reached in 2025 ▼

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 2026, NRC will expand to Protection Monitoring to systematically identify violations of rights and protection risks, using evidence-based analysis to inform humanitarian responses.



112,209 people reached in 2025 ▼

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 per cent of them 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:

- infrastructure recovery of damaged homes and community infrastructure, ensuring housing, land and property legal due diligence
- urban planning and profiling to inform recovery
- assistance such as tents, blankets, winter clothing, and basic essential household items



502,638 people reached in 2025 ▼

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:

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

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 principled access to humanitarian assistance, protection, and paving pathways to durable solutions – including sustainable and cost-effective recovery programming.

In tandem, we strive to uphold and strengthen long-standing localisation policy commitments to make sure they extend beyond mere funding benchmarks to include broader systems strengthening. We also strive to uphold and strengthen long-standing policy commitments on the development-peace nexus by delivering humanitarian and recovery assistance that facilitates adequate handover to respective actors as the context evolves.

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

Our donors

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