

Syrian Arab Republic

Humanitarian Flash Update #3 Escalation of Hostilities in As-Sweida Governorate

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A nutrition worker from a UNICEF-supported mobile team holds 5-month-old Samar, preparing her for a weight check at a shelter in Sayyeda Zeinab, Rural Damascus

SITUATION UPDATE

- Despite a ceasefire agreement end of July, hostilities have continued in As-Sweida Governorate, both in rural and urban areas. This volatile security environment continues to impact civilian safety and access to essential services, and humanitarian access remains constrained due to the closure of main roads, with a recent security incident affecting a humanitarian convoy in Dar'a Governorate.¹ Reports indicate that at least 22 children were killed since the beginning of hostilities, and 21 more were injured due to hostilities.²
- Despite efforts to restore essential services, especially water and electricity, widespread telecommunication and internet outages persist across the As-Sweida Governorate. Key public facilities, including 17 healthcare centres, have suffered extensive damage. Access to water sources remains a key obstacle to the rehabilitation of water facilities, with 98 wells still out of service. Livelihoods are strained, while price volatility is heightened by the lack of access to the area for commercial trucks.³
- Children remain particularly vulnerable due to ongoing conflict, displacement, and limited access to critical protection services. Child protection risks were also observed and reported, including violence against children, injuries, use of children in violence, child marriage, child labour, and lack of official civil documentation. Children observed are reported to be experiencing severe distress with increased mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs.
- Children in As-Sweida have been prevented from sitting for their 12th-grade national exams. Children are at risk of prolonged learning interruptions due to displacement and damage to school infrastructure, and at least 106 schools are continuously being used as shelters in As-Sweida, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus.
- Since the beginning of hostilities on July 12, more than 158,000 people were displaced within As-Sweida Governorate and to Dar'a, Rural Damascus, and Damascus, indicating a slight decrease compared to the previous week. While the majority of internally displaced people (IDPs) are staying with host families, 25 per cent are in emergency shelters and collective centres, increasing their exposure to child protection and gender-based violence risks.⁴ IDPs hosted in shelters are experiencing inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure, while those living outside formal sites are facing insecure housing conditions and eviction risks.⁵

UNICEF IN ACTION

Since the onset of hostilities in July 2025, UNICEF has been delivering services and supplies through its implementing partners and will continue to do so in the coming months in As-Sweida, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus governorates, based on access granted to humanitarians.

¹ OCHA, Flash Update No. 7, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-flash-update-no-7-escalation-hostilities-sweida-governorate-13-august-2025>

² UNICEF Call for Action, 13 August 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/syria/press-releases/urgent-action-needed-humanitarian-needs-children-and-families-sweida-continue-surge>

³ OCHA, Flash Update No. 7, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-flash-update-no-7-escalation-hostilities-sweida-governorate-13-august-2025>

⁴ IOM, Emergency Mobility Tracking, Round 10, [IOM - Emergency Mobility Tracking - As-Sweida](https://www.iom.int/emergency-mobility-tracking-as-sweida)

⁵ OCHA, Flash Update No. 7, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-flash-update-no-7-escalation-hostilities-sweida-governorate-13-august-2025>

Over the next three months, UNICEF is planning to deliver a sequenced, multi-sectoral response to reach 300,000 people, including 132,000 children, with lifesaving and protection services. Immediate priorities include:

- Emergency water supply (trucking and bottled water), fuel for water infrastructure, hygiene kits, and well rehabilitation to restore safe drinking water
- Provision of essential medicines, paediatric supplies, and deployment of mobile health teams
- Provision of preventive nutrition services, with early detection and treatment of children with wasting
- Temporary learning spaces, supplies, remedial classes, and MHPSS for students and teachers
- Psychological First Aid, MHPSS and parenting support, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), case management, and outreach via mobile teams
- Emergency cash assistance for vulnerable families
- Youth-led needs assessments and life skills activities in affected districts
- Community engagement to promote cohesion and prevent disease, access to safe sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) reporting mechanisms, and accountability to the affected population (AAP)

A summary of the actions taken by UNICEF Syria since 12 July 2025, through its partners SARC⁶, and the national NGOs SFPA⁷, Al Birr, Nour, Ghiras and Al Tamyouz, is highlighted below. For additional information on UNICEF's response and interventions, please refer to previous situation reports available [here](#).



Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

- **44,000 litres of fuel** were distributed to the Dar'a and As-Sweida Water Establishments, benefitting 215,529 people, to ensure access to clean and safe water
- **40,000 beneficiaries received bottled water** in Dar'a and As-Sweida Governorates
- 150,000 people benefitted from **7,600 m³ of trucked water** in Dar'a and As-Sweida Governorates
- The **rehabilitation of WASH facilities in ten schools used as shelters** for 4,918 IDPs



Health and Nutrition

- **11,058 children and 2,616 women** gained access to essential health and medical services through 14 mobile health and nutrition teams led by the DoH and NGOs in As-Sweida, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus, receiving consultations, immunizations, midwifery care, and maternal and child health support.
- As part of efforts to ensure prevention and early treatment of malnutrition, UNICEF screened **9,480 children under five and 1,680 Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) for malnutrition**, leading to the enrolment of **59 children for treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)**.
- **1,975 children and 200 pregnant and lactating women** received High Energy Biscuits (HEB); **5,621 children** received Small Quantity Lipid-based Nutrient Supplements; **1,871 children and 1,455 pregnant and lactating women** received micronutrient powders, accompanied by Iron-Folic Acid supplements to reduce the risk of anaemia.
- **3,900 caregivers** received counselling on infant and young child feeding, with an emphasis on exclusive breastfeeding.
- **Health centers and hospitals** were supported with 10 Emergency Health Kits, 46 paediatric kits, 10 midwifery kits, and 5 obstetric kits, ensuring continued access to essential medicines and supplies.



Child Protection

- Provided **Psychological First Aid (PFA) and recreational activities to 4,438 children and 80 women**
- Delivered **Child Protection Awareness sessions** (including Child Labor) to **6,811 children, and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education to 1,520 children and 123 adults**
- **5 children received individual support** through case management services, and **27 children were referred** to specialized services such as psychological services or healthcare providers

⁶ Syrian Arab Red Crescent

⁷ Syrian Family Planning Association

- **50 sport kits, 5 Mine Risk Education kits, 25 parenting kits, and 25 psychosocial support kits** delivered in As-Sweida Governorate
- Distributed **bread and food baskets to 284 families**, and prepared **meals for 2,200 people**



Education

- Continued the **assessment of needs on formal education**, in liaison with the Directorates of Education (DoE), to evaluate the damaged schools in need of rehabilitation and new furniture, and the number of teachers to be trained on Psychosocial Support in view of the upcoming academic year
- Launched an **assessment of Non-Formal Education needs in host communities and shelters** to evaluate and plan for remedial, catch-up classes and recreational activities
- Engaged with the Ministry of Education on **alternative solutions for 12th-grade exams**



Social Behavioural Change (SBC), AAP, and PSEA

- A **rapid needs assessment** was launched in Dar'a and Rural Damascus to identify the information needs of affected populations and their preferred communication channels, covering shelters and host communities
- Conducted a **refresher training for 33 staff from implementing partners on SBC in Emergencies**, with a focus on the role of SBC in engaging with affected communities, key life-saving messages, and the rapid assessment tool
- Engaged communities in Dar'a through **edutainment in shelters**, notably about vaccination promotion
- Delivered **Child Protection Awareness sessions on PSEA to 6,811 children**
- **2,000 posters and cards on protection from SEA** were delivered in As-Sweida Governorate
- Provided a **refresher session on AAP messages and new AAP flyers** to three AAP focal points working for healthcare centers in As-Sweida Governorate, and for 11 volunteers in Dar'a Governorate

HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION

Humanitarian coordination in Syria is anchored in interagency collaboration under the leadership of the United Nations, ensuring timely, needs-based, and principled assistance to affected populations. UNICEF leads the WASH, Education, and Nutrition Sectors and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, working closely with partners to assess needs, plan responses, and deliver critical services. UNICEF's sector leadership has been instrumental in coordinating efforts to ensure that children and families receive life-saving support in a coherent and effective manner in the intersectoral response.

FUNDING NEEDS

In 2025, UNICEF Syria requires US\$ 488 million under its Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal to deliver life-saving assistance and basic services to the most vulnerable Syrians, of which 75% remains underfunded. As of August 2025, UNICEF projects an immediate requirement of US\$ 4.55 million to rapidly scale-up its humanitarian response in As-Sweida, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus Governorates in the coming three months. To date, UNICEF has allocated US\$ 1.3 million towards the response.⁸

UNICEF wishes to extend its thanks to partners who have already contributed flexible resources to its HAC appeal in Syria. Flexible resources enable UNICEF to respond effectively and swiftly to emerging crises, such as the ongoing escalation of hostilities in As-Sweida Governorate.

Without timely funding, UNICEF's ability to provide and sustain emergency support for children will be severely constrained. Immediate investment is essential to maintain humanitarian operations and address urgent needs across priority sectors.

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⁸ Figures are provisional and may be revised to respond to urgent priorities and needs.