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Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoy en route to As-Sweida City on 31 July 2025, delivering essential humanitarian assistance and equipment to support critical services.

Syrian Arab Republic

Humanitarian Flash Update #2

Escalation of hostilities in As-Sweida Governorate

2 August 2025

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Highlights

- Following the escalation of violence between 12 to 19 July, the security situation in As-Sweida Governorate remains tense, with intermittent clashes and restricted mobility—despite recently granted humanitarian access; roadblocks and insecurity continue to hinder aid delivery.
- Nearly 192,000 people are internally displaced since the beginning of clashes, with urgent needs in food, health, WASH, shelter, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). Children face increased protection risks in overcrowded shelters.
- On 31 July, UNICEF participated in the first high-level inter-agency mission to As-Sweida led by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. visiting As-Sweida City, Shahba, and Salkhad to assess needs and deliver humanitarian assistance.
- UNICEF, through SARC and other partners, delivered over 65,000 bottles of drinking water and 3,272 cubic metres of water via trucking, providing safe water access to approximately 30,000 people in Dar'a and As-Sweida Governorates.
- Over 4,000 children and women received life-saving health and nutrition services through UNICEF-supported mobile medical teams operating in the hardest-hit areas since the escalation of hostilities.
- Nearly 1,500 children, including 700 girls, benefited from psychological first aid, recreational activities, and explosive ordnance risk education, helping restore safety, well-being, and a sense of normalcy.

Situation Update

Following the ceasefire on 19 July, overall violence in As-Sweida governorate has decreased, though intermittent clashes continue, leaving the situation tense and unpredictable. Security forces affiliated with the Interim authorities maintain control over key urban areas in the As-Sweida Governorate. In the Shahaba district of the rural area of As-Sweida, sporadic clashes have been reported, particularly around Al-Ariqah and Rimah areas and near Walgha town, potentially violating the ceasefire. Moreover, multiple air strikes were conducted on 29 July in the Rimat Hazem and Al-Thaalah areas of As-Sweida.[1]

Access to public services in As-Sweida remains severely limited. The unavailability of fuel for water pumping stations has critically reduced the water supply. Extensive infrastructure damage across the governorate, especially in As-Sweida City, has caused significant disruptions to electricity, water, telecommunications, and internet services. As a result of power outages, water shortages, and lack of essential supplies, local hospitals are operating below full capacity.[2]

WHO has reported five attacks on healthcare facilities[3] in As-Sweida Governorate, including the tragic deaths of two doctors. These attacks involved the obstruction of medical services, targeting ambulances, and the

[1] Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 4 - Escalation of Hostilities in As-Sweida Governorate (as of 27 July 2025) | OCHA
[2] UNHCR Flash Update #5 on the situation in As-Sweida - 29 July 2025 - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb
[3] Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 4 - Escalation of Hostilities in As-Sweida Governorate (as of 27 July 2025) | OCHA

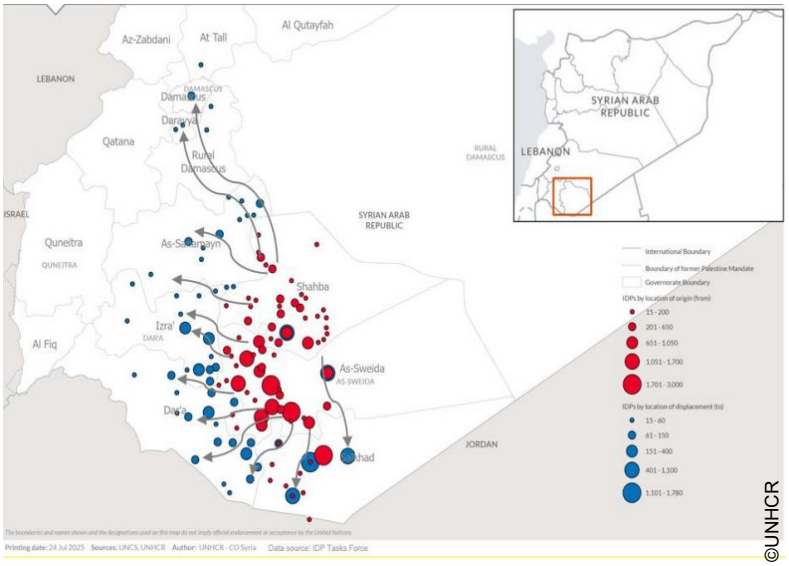
temporary occupation of hospitals. Such incidents severely undermine the delivery of life-saving care and put the lives of children, families, and health workers at grave risk. *UNICEF reiterates that health facilities and personnel must be protected from attacks.*

Despite relative calm, humanitarian access remains severely constrained due to roadblocks, insecurity, and communication challenges, limiting humanitarian partners' ability to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and deliver critical assistance at scale.

Between 24 and 28 July, OCHA led two Inter-Agency missions with UN agencies and NGOs to assess the humanitarian situation of displaced populations in Rural Damascus and Dar'a Governorates, especially regarding Child Protection, WASH, and Health & Nutrition.

On 29 July, following 16 days of hostilities, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs granted access to UN agencies and humanitarian partners to **As-Sweida Governorate**. The Ministry urged a scale-up of humanitarian efforts in **As-Sweida and Dar'a**, highlighting urgent needs in **food security, health, education, WASH, shelter**, and **MHPSS**.

On 31 July, the first United Nations-led humanitarian convoy to As-Sweida Governorate—facilitated by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and accompanied with the interagency mission—delivered essential humanitarian assistance to As-Sweida City. The convoy, comprising 40 trucks, was the largest ever sent to the city. The convoy included food, medical supplies including insulin, fuel, clean water, hygiene kits, shelter materials, and equipment to support hospitals, bakeries, and electricity infrastructure, aiming to restore essential services and support the resilience of affected populations. The team carried out a field visit to As-Sweida City and the districts of Shahba and Salkhad, engaging with local community representatives and partners to strengthen collaboration and gather insights. The visit also included site assessments at displacement locations and reception centres.



The **UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Adam Abdelmoula**, has issued a statement thanking the interim Government, stating that the United Nations remains committed to working with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the sustained, principled delivery of humanitarian assistance to all communities in need and to scale up further the response in As-Sweida and throughout Syria, where humanitarian needs remain severe.

Population Movement and Humanitarian Needs

As of 28 July, the IDP Task Force reports over **191,700 displacement movements** across As-Sweida, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus since mid-July—an increase of **15,700** since 24 July. Of these, **153,000** are first-time displacements, while **38,700** are secondary or repeated displacements.[4]

As-Sweida Governorate remains the epicentre of displacement, with **130,900 movements** within the governorate and **58,000** toward Dar'a. Returns remained minimal, with only **120 individuals** returning, to the Salkhad District.[5]

Approximately **90 per cent of displaced families** are hosted by local communities, placing immense strain on already limited resources. In Dar'a, over **25,000 individuals** are sheltering in **63 temporary collective sites**,

[4] Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 5 - Escalation of Hostilities in As-Sweida Governorate (as of 31 July 2025) - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb
[5] Ibid.

mostly schools, where humanitarian partners are providing urgent support.[6]

In **Dar'a,** the growing displacement and the absence of a formal decision on the relocation of internally displaced persons have added complexity to the response. Displaced families remain in school-based shelters or informal tents, pending a planned relocation to designated centres in Tel Shihab.

Tensions in overcrowded shelters have led to incidents of peer violence, also among children, worsened by the absence of safe spaces and MHPSS. Despite efforts to scale up the response, access challenges, limited mobility, and resource gaps continue to hinder timely assistance.

Equally critical is the maintenance of wells and pumping stations, particularly in displacement-affected areas of the eastern part of rural areas of As-Sweida Governorate, Salkhad, Shahba, and the still-functioning parts of As-Sweida City. Without timely support, the continuity of water services for vulnerable populations remains at serious risk.

In Sayyeda Zeinab, 750 families are sheltered in hotels, facing trauma, loss of documentation, and limited healthcare access. Local efforts, including a collective kitchen and volunteer aid, are supporting the response but face sustainability challenges. In Dar'a, authorities expanded the number of shelter sites from 13 to 63, with agencies assessing Tal Shihab as a potential IDP site.

The Child Protection Sector reported that children are among the most vulnerable, facing increased risks of violence, recruitment, child marriage, child labour, and loss of civil documentation due to displacement.

UNICEF Emergency Response Strategy

Since the onset of the crisis and over the next three months, based on access granted for United Agencies and humanitarian organizations to As-Sweida Governorate, UNICEF, through its partners, will deliver a sequenced, multi-sectoral response to reach 300,000 people, including 132,000 children, with life-saving and protection services. Immediate priorities include:

- **Health and Nutrition** – Provision of essential medicines, paediatric supplies, nutrition commodities (including RUTF and micronutrients), and deployment of mobile health and nutrition teams.
- **WASH** – Emergency water supply through trucking and bottled water distribution, fuel for water infrastructure, hygiene kits, and well rehabilitation to restore safe drinking water for over 100,000 people.
- **Education** – Temporary learning spaces, supplies, remedial classes, and MHPSS for students and teachers.
- **Child Protection** – Psychological first aid, MHPSS and parenting support, GBV prevention, EORE, case management, and outreach via mobile teams.
- **Social Protection** – Emergency cash assistance for 1,500 vulnerable families.
- **SBC, PSEA, and AAP** – Community engagement to promote cohesion, prevent disease. Ensure accessible, safe sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) reporting mechanisms. And accountability to the affected population (AAP).
- **Adolescent Development and Participation** – Youth-led needs assessments and life skills activities in affected districts.

Medium-term interventions will focus on rehabilitation of infrastructure, expansion of services, and strengthening community resilience as access and security improve.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

UNICEF has activated an immediate humanitarian response to ensure affected populations, particularly women and children, can access essential, life-saving services. UNICEF, in coordination with SARC, supported humanitarian convoys to deliver bottled water, medicine, nutrition supplies, and other emergency items to affected communities.

[6] Ibid.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) UNICEF, in collaboration with SARC, continued to respond to urgent WASH needs in **Dar'a and As-Sweida** Governorates. A total of **65,584 bottles (1.5 litres) of drinking water** have been dispatched so far—**25,584 bottles** to Dar'a and **40,000 bottles** to As-Sweida. Water trucking operations are also underway, with **1,377** cubic metres delivered in **Dar'a** and **1,895 cubic metres** in **As-Sweida** Governorate, supporting around 30,000 people**.** To support the continued operation of water infrastructure, **10,000 litres of diesel fuel** were delivered on 30 July to each of the Water Establishments in Dar'a and As-Sweida to support the operations of wells that rely on electric generators.

In **As-Sweida City**, initial fuel deliveries of 10,000 litres have enabled limited water pumping from several key wells, including those in As-Sweida City (Hospital, Al-Jalaa, and Al-Khreej), Salkhad (Tal Sbar, Amtan, and Majdal Al-Shour), and Shahba (Salkhad, Al-Breika, and Al-Jneineh). However, the current fuel supply remains insufficient to sustain operations. Additional diesel is urgently required to keep generators running and maintain access to safe water.

Health and Nutrition

In **Dar'a Governorate**, five UNICEF-supported mobile medical teams from the Directorate of Health (DoH), the Syrian Family Planning Association (SFPA), and the Charity and Social Services Society (CSSS) continued delivering life-saving health and nutrition services to the internally displaced children and women in shelters and host communities. A total of **1,284 children** (661 girls) and **706 women** received medical consultations.

Nutrition support reached **1,382 children under five** (694 girls) and **640 women**, including pregnant and lactating women (PLWs), through malnutrition screening and provision of high-energy biscuits (HEBs), micronutrient powders (MNPs), and iron and folic acid (IFA). In addition, **922 caregivers**, including PLWs, received infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling. One case of severe wasting was identified and treated with ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF).

In **Rural Damascus**, six mobile teams of four UNICEF partners (DoH, SFPA, Al-Tamayoz, Ghiras) are operating at Sayyeda Zeinab shelter, supporting internally displaced persons from As-Sweida. **992 children** (496 girls) and **289 women** received medical consultations. Nutrition services reached **679 children under five** (350 girls) and **118 women**, including PLWs. Five severe wasting cases were identified and treated with RUTF. **438 caregivers**, including PLWs, received IYCF counselling. UNICEF is supporting the DoH to establish a fixed health point within the shelter.

In **As-Sweida City**, since 28 July, three SFPA teams provided services to **78 children** (44 girls) and **28 women**. Nutrition support reached **40 children under five** (24 girls) and **28 women**, including PLWs, through screening and provision of HEBs, preventive butter, and MNPs. **72 caregivers**, including PLWs, received IYCF counselling. The second batch of health kits for normal and surgical deliveries was also delivered to the DoH via the SARC convoy. Additional preventive nutrition supplies are being prepared for dispatch to the DoHs in Dar'a and Rural Damascus in the upcoming week.

Child Protection

In **Rural Damascus**, **283 children** (155 girls) received **Psychological First Aid (PFA)** to help them cope with distress and strengthen their emotional resilience. Additionally, **257 children** (142 girls) participated in **structured recreational activities**, providing them with safe spaces to play, express themselves, and regain a sense of normalcy.

In Sayyeda Zaineb Shelter, **35 women** took part in **Parenting Care sessions** aimed at enhancing positive parenting practices and strengthening family support systems. Furthermore, **93 women** received **PFA**, addressing immediate emotional needs and promoting mental wellbeing. To reduce the risks posed by explosive remnants of

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UNICEF Partner NFRD is engaging children in recreational activities at a shelter in Dar'a governorate on 24 July as part of ongoing humanitarian response for internally displaced persons from As-Sweida.

war, **Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)** sessions were conducted for **32 children**, including **15 girls**, equipping them with life-saving knowledge and skills to stay safe in contaminated areas. In **Dar'a**, UNICEF-supported teams provided **PFA to 414 children** (238 girls), facilitated **recreational activities for 508 children** (288 girls), and distributed recreational materials to **45 children** (25 girls). In addition, **294 children** (174 girls) participated in EORE sessions.

In **As-Sweida,**[7] **60 children** (33 girls) benefited from PFA and recreational activities, while **38 women** received psychological first aid. UNICEF also supported the distribution of bread and food baskets to 184 **families** and collaborated with the local community to prepare and distribute **1,500 hot meals** to children and their families.

UNICEF dispatched **50 sport kits**, **5 Explosive Ordnance risk education kits**, **25 parenting kits**, **25 psychosocial support kits** for service providers and emergency teams, along with **1,000 printed posters** and **1,000 awareness stickers** on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse through an inter-agency convoy on 31 July 2025.

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 key sectors and Areas of Responsibility (AoRs), including WASH, Education, Child Protection, and Nutrition, working closely with partners to assess needs, plan responses, and deliver critical services. In the As-Sweida response, 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.

On 28 July, an inter-sectoral assessment mission led by OCHA visited Harjal shelter in Kisweh sub-district**, Rural Damascus.** The shelter is currently hosting approximately 200 families displaced from northern Syria—the mission aimed to evaluate the site's suitability for accommodating internally displaced families from As-Sweida Governorate.

Ibid.

[7] One of the UNICEF Child Protection partners was on ground to provide child protection services in As-Sweida City since 28 July.

Preliminary Funding Requirements[8]

UNICEF Syria urgently requires US$4.6 million to deliver life-saving assistance and rapidly scale up critical services for affected populations. Till mid-October, UNICEF aims to reach 300,000 people, including 132,000 children, prioritising urgent needs in the most affected areas. 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.

Sector	Requirements	Funds available		Funding Gap	
		Humanitarian resources received in 2025	Other Resources Used in 2025	$	%
WASH	$2,500,000		$285,000	$2,215,000	11%
Child Protection	$200,000				
Health & Nutrition	$400,000		$25,000	$375,000	6%
Education	$600,000				
Social Protection	$600,000				
ADAP	$100,000				
PSEA, SBC, and AAP	$150,000				
Total	**$4,550,000**		**$310,000**	**$4,240,000**	**7%**

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[8] The current needs and funding estimates are preliminary and subject to change following the rapid needs assessment. UNICEF will prioritise the use of flexible funding to address immediate requirements and will actively seek additional resources as the humanitarian situation evolves. US$ 50,000 has been added as an additional need PSEA which were not included in the Flash Update No.1.