

### Situation overview

Across Syria, the 2022-2023 winter season is anticipated to be one of the harshest considering the catastrophic fuel and electricity shortages, with approximately 6 million out of the 14.6 million people in need requiring winter assistance. This represents a 33 per cent increase compared to 2021. At least 2.2 million of the 2022 winter caseloads are in the Syria Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) response areas. Temperatures routinely fall below freezing in the elevated, mountainous parts of the country whilst the plains are prone to flooding. Communities residing in high-altitude areas such as Bloudan, Qalamoun and Zabadani areas in Rural Damascus and Al Haffa and Jafra near Lattakia are especially susceptible to the effects of harsh winters. Vulnerable communities, particularly the displaced residing in camps and in temporary settlements face greater risks to their health, and safety. The risks of fires in tented areas due to the improper use of heating and cooking stoves are also heightened during the winter. Lighting and heating in schools become a key challenge, impacting access to education. Additionally increase in incidences, and severity of respiratory tract infections are also usually recorded, while in some parts of the country, major roads are blocked, constraining access to basic services, including referrals for secondary health care and provision of and access to timely and sufficient lifesaving medical supplies to communities isolated during the winter months.

This year, the coping capacity of Syrians have been further undermined by the continued deterioration of the socio-economic situation marred by the devaluation of the Syrian Pound, energy crisis which has led to severe rationing of electricity supply, fuel shortages, high fuel prices and increased costs of other essential commodities. Severe electricity supply rationing is reported in many areas, with hundreds of thousands of people only receiving power for about one hour per day\*. The humanitarian community plan to provide life-saving and life-sustaining assistance in the areas of highest needs through rapid provision of winter response packages of relief items, and services; as well as ensure protection concerns resulting from the winter season are mitigated and addressed. Each of the sectors have prioritized the most urgent activities that addresses the most critical life-saving and life-sustaining needs. As it stands, the capacity of the humanitarian community to provide winterization assistance early in the winter is being undermined by resource constraints even for the most critical programmes. Whilst winterization assistance has been integrated in the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), it is severely underfunded. As we enter the last quarter of the year, the HRP is funded at only 26.6 per cent. The impact of the funding shortfall is felt across all Sectors. The shelter and NFI sector for example has only obtained US \$ 26.1 million of the requested \$140 million and consequently unless the required funding gap is bridged, they will not be able to reach 1.78 million out of the 2.2 million that require winterization assistance. While the food security and agriculture sector urgently need additional funds to support 420,000 people to cultivate wheat during the 2022/2023 winter season, starting in November 2022. This resource shortages cascades across all essential programmes in the education, health, nutrition, WASH, and Protection. Humanitarian organizations are now mobilizing resources to provide assistance in the scale required.

