

3RP Syria Crisis – Key Messages: Global Refugee Forum (GRF)

3RP Advocacy Working Group, December 2023

Background:

The second Global Refugee Forum (GRF), taking place from 13 to 15 December in Geneva, is the world's largest international gathering on refugees. The GRF presents a critical opportunity to advocate for the continued importance of the Syrian refugee crisis and share the wealth of good practices from the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) to inform other contexts.

Snapshot of the Syria crisis & relevance to the GRF:

- **The Syria crisis is entering its thirteenth year in 2024 and remains one of the largest refugee crises in the world.** In the 3RP countries - Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt - the number of people in need has reached an unprecedented level since the crisis began, as the region grapples with increased vulnerabilities, growing poverty, high unemployment, security and instability, widespread forced displacement, and emerging crises. In 2024, over 21 million people in 3RP countries - Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt – are projected to need some form of assistance. This includes over 6 million Syrian refugees, more than 500,000 refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities and stateless people, and more than 14 million impacted host community members.¹
- **The 3RP is a unique integrated coordination framework, co-led by UNHCR and UNDP, bringing together around 270 partners applying a Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach to address refugees' needs while strengthening resilience capacities of institutions, host communities and refugees.** The 3RP has proven itself as an enabling platform for advancing innovative approaches e.g., through supporting capacities of local and national institutions, serving host communities alongside refugees to mitigate social tensions, introducing climate, environment, and energy considerations in the response, scaling up cash-based interventions, and placing a strong emphasis on self-reliance and economic empowerment efforts for all.
- **The 3RP's innovative humanitarian-development approach was itself an inspiration for the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).** In times of multiple and concurrent crises, the experience of the 3RP shows the importance of linking humanitarian responses to more sustainable resilience-based development for refugees and host communities, which at its base requires minimum protection standards being met for refugees to unlock development opportunities.

Selected 3RP achievements:

- **Employment and Self-Employment:** More than 500,000 individuals were employed or self-employed across the 3RP countries between 2015 and 2022.
- **Support to Public Institutions:** Between 2017 and 2022, over USD 1.7 billion provided in support to public institutions in Lebanon, Jordan, and Türkiye.
- **Training of National Public Institution Staff:** Between January 2022 and end of September 2023, 561,442 staff of national public institutions trained, including frontline workers like nurses and teachers.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Response Services:** 368,232 persons received GBV response services between January 2022 and end of September 2023.
- **Child Protection Services:** Between January 2022 and end of September 2023, 229,706 girls and boys received specialized child protection services.

¹ The Regional Strategic Overview (RSO) for 2024 summary will be available for the GRF, which will include the breakdown of populations in need and targeted, as well as the total appeal data by country and at regional level.

The 3RP partners emphasize the relevance of the 3RP mechanism as a means to draw attention to the protracted Syrian refugee crisis, and the importance of donors and Governments to stay the course in delivering the necessary services to refugees and host communities and prevent tensions that could arise from decreased funding. The 3RP partners draw attention to:

1. The protracted nature of the Syria crisis highlights the centrality of responsibility-sharing, need for innovative and inclusive policies and the importance of pursuing sustainable solutions to crises.

- **While more than half the refugees from Syria hope to return home one day, very few Syrian refugees living in 3RP countries intend to return to Syria in the immediate future.** Syria remains a complex humanitarian crisis, and without clear progress on security, protection and economic obstacles inside Syria, return does not present a viable option for refugees in the short term. Until voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity becomes a viable solution, the international community must maintain and, wherever possible, increase its support to host governments, communities and local civil society to guarantee protection space for Syrian refugees with particular attention to women, girls and persons with disabilities, and support host communities' and refugees' self-reliance and resilience.
- **Support to host governments, at central and local levels, as core partners to the 3RP remains essential. Host countries require firm commitments from the international community, assuring them of support for the foreseeable future.** Host governments, at a national and local level, provide access to public services including housing/ shelter, education, legal systems, healthcare, waste management, water, and sanitation – despite economic challenges and scarce resources. They are under pressure, having shouldered the costs of hosting millions of forcibly displaced for over a decade, while facing the impact of new conflicts in the region, economic and governance challenges, and the compounding climate crisis.
- **Host governments' continued commitment to expanding refugees' access to national systems, legal residency, and the labor market, has been commendable and continues to be critical. However, some legal barriers towards accessing services persist against Syrian refugees in host countries, leading to diminished asylum and protection space.** The 3RP has provided examples of global good practice in fostering refugees' inclusion in public education and healthcare systems, access to labour markets and provision of work permits to different degrees, yet there is a need to further policies across the region to remove barriers to legal, economic, social, and financial inclusion of Syrian refugees. This is critical for refugees to achieve self-reliance and contribute to host countries' economies. Such policies include access to critical civil documentation and inclusion in social protection schemes. The international community must provide diplomatic, political, and financial support to engage host governments in effecting meaningful legal and policy change contributing both to national development goals and refugee resilience.

2. The need for sustained funding and conducive financing to ensure socio-economic stability in Syrian refugee-hosting countries.

- **International partners must remain committed to sustained funding levels for the Syria crisis. There is no alternative to ensure continued refugees' protection and to support equitable responsibility-sharing for host countries.** The emergence of other emerging crises and disasters makes it crucial to maintain a predictable approach that ensures sustained funding for a protracted situation like the Syria crisis. Despite the generous support provided by donors, there is a concerning trend of decreasing funding for the 3RP in the past five years (since 2019). At this stage, the 2023 3RP is set to have the lowest proportion of identified needs covered since inception, with only 23 per cent of the current total appeal raised as of end-September 2023.

- **Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon and Jordan continue to face high vulnerabilities and require sustained financial resources.** Protracted displacement and exhaustion of available coping mechanisms, coupled with the deepening socio-economic crises in Lebanon and soaring unemployment in Jordan, have pushed many Palestine refugees deeper into poverty. Deteriorating living conditions mean that many more Palestine refugees now have increased humanitarian and protection needs.
- **The decline in funding for the Syria crisis poses a significant risk of exacerbating tensions in several 3RP countries, potentially undermining socio-economic stability.** There has been an increase in anti-refugee rhetoric in certain contexts, while risks remain for heightened poverty levels, a diminished willingness of host countries to pursue inclusive policies due to reduced funding, and potential forced returns.
- **Given the mounting economic challenges faced by 3RP countries, investments in self-reliance initiatives and resilience-building are crucial for creating sustainable solutions.** Supporting livelihoods and enhancing social safety nets and social protection for both host communities and refugees remains a critical priority. The resilience component is currently severely underfunded. In order for 3RP partners to effectively build the capacities of host governments and support the inclusion agenda, there is a need for donors to invest more in earmarked development resources. Without sufficient support to 3RP countries, there is a risk that competition for resources could undermine the hard-won achievements of recent years, particularly in the areas of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence – a trend that is already being observed in some countries.

3. Lessons from the 3RP on the partnerships and alignments across the HDP Nexus.

- **Multilayered crises necessitate responses that are both aligned and harmonized to effectively address complex challenges.** The 3RP has worked to maximize the use of resources and create synergies across humanitarian, development, and peace frameworks. For instance, the 3RP has explored linkages to sustainable development cooperation frameworks utilizing [appraisal tools](#) in several countries. Critically, the 3RP will continue aligning its responses to evolving local and national response and development plans, to ensure coherence and sustainability.
- **Strengthening linkages with IFIs for common objectives:** The 3RP has been proactive in strengthening linkages between its partners and [IFIs](#). Central to the 3RP are inclusive and long-term development solutions, aimed at reducing dependency and ensuring that refugees and host communities have equitable access to national services, social protection, and livelihood opportunities for a dignified life. A key priority should be to strengthen public institutions to provide access to quality basic services, work permits, education and temporary legal residencies, and foster close cooperation with civil society.
- **The strategic and consistent engagement with the private sector has taken on added importance and urgency. The private sector is a key driver to enhance inclusion and positive economic outcomes.** 3RP partners have been engaging with the private sector albeit often at the micro-level through support to training, job matching, set-up and scaling of MSMEs. The private sector is encouraged to support the inclusion of refugee entrepreneurs and refugee-led businesses. To unlock the full potential of refugees and economy in the host countries, an enabling policy and regulatory environment is essential. Refugees face specific barriers to economic inclusion linked to the access to banking sector and finance and excessive administrative procedures, which limit their potential to support the economic growth of host communities.