

# Switzerland's commitment in the face of the migration crisis

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC



Total aid allocated by  
Switzerland to assist the  
victims of the Syrian crisis  
since 2011 reaches CHF  
215 million.

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A variety of factors are driving thousands of people to seek refuge in safe and more stable regions: armed conflicts, human rights violations, deteriorating living conditions and a lack of prospects for the future. In response to these flows of migrants, Switzerland is providing aid at a number of levels. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is focusing its attention on the migrants' countries of origin in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. It is also active in the transit zones in the Mediterranean region and in the Balkans. Switzerland is adopting a coordinated approach to the migration crisis with collaboration between the SDC and the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).

- Since the **Syrian conflict** began in March 2011, the SDC has allocated CHF 178 million with a view to meeting the humanitarian needs identified in the region. Of these funds, 57% serve to assist people in need in Syria and 43% go to the neighbouring countries most affected by the refugee crisis. Following a decision by the Federal Council, an additional CHF 37 million will be spent on providing the goods and services most urgently needed in the region. In light of the number of migrants arriving in a number of Balkan states, the SDC and the SEM are making additional resources available both to Serbia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the migration

partnerships concluded with these two countries some years ago. Furthermore, following an appeal by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) an expert from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) will be sent to Greece.

- In **Morocco and Tunisia**, Switzerland is providing practical support for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who are facing precarious conditions there. At the same time, it is engaging in dialogue with the authorities in both of these countries in a bid to develop a sustainable long-term migration policy. In the **Horn of Africa**, where the SDC, the FDFA's Human Security Division and the SEM are coordinating their efforts, an additional CHF 24 million will be allocated to partner organisations.
- In general, as well as the humanitarian aid deployed on the ground, all the projects supported by the SDC to alleviate poverty and the root causes of conflict in developing countries and/or fragile states contribute to curbing transcontinental migration. In partnership with various units of the FDFA and the SEM, the SDC is also conducting a political dialogue at various levels, in particular through its global "Migration and Development" programme, which has an influence on international debate and rolls out innovative economic migration projects with diaspora communities.

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## Commitment on behalf of victims of the Syrian crisis

The intensity of the humanitarian crisis affecting Syria and its neighbours since the beginning of 2011 shows no signs of abating. For the peoples of the region, the consequences are proving catastrophic. In Syria alone, 12 million people are dependent on humanitarian aid, and more than 4 million Syrians have fled to neighbouring countries.

On 18 September 2015, the Federal Council decided to increase the aid allocated by Switzerland to the victims of the Syrian crisis, bringing the total since 2011 to CHF 215 million. CHF 80 million of humanitarian aid has already been set aside for 2015 alone. The capability of Lebanon and Jordan to receive Syrian refugees has reached its limits, and with winter approaching there is a pressing need to get aid to the region.

On the ground, the SDC prioritises various forms of action.

- It is funding operations run by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a number of UN agencies (UNHCR, World Food Programme)

### THE CRISIS IN SYRIA – FACTS AND FIGURES

- **Out of the 18.2 million Syrians still living within their country's borders, 12.2 million are reliant on humanitarian aid** (7.6 million are internally displaced persons). Another 4 million Syrians have found refuge in neighbouring countries and North Africa.
- **Financial needs expressed by the United Nations and the ICRC:**
  - USD 2.9 billion (Syria Strategic Response Plan 2015), of which 32% is already covered;
  - USD 4.5 billion (Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2015-2016), of which 41% is already covered;
  - USD 164 million (ICRC appeal for Syria), of which 57% is already covered.
- **Switzerland's total budget for humanitarian aid in Syria and the neighbouring countries since the start of the crisis in March 2011** is CHF 215 million.
- **The SDC's presence on the ground**
  - Cooperation office in Amman, Jordan (coordinating all the projects implemented in the region)
  - Programme office in Beirut, Lebanon
  - Local office in Al Qoubaiyat, Lebanon
  - Liaison office in Ankara, Turkey

and national and international NGOs active in Syria and the region as a whole.

- It is also running projects of its own in Lebanon and Jordan. In the field of education, for example, it is renovating schools being attended by Syrian children. By the end of 2015, 84 schools will have been renovated, benefiting 57,000 children.
- The SDC is also sending members of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) to the region. These technical experts, specialising in water and sanitation, protection, construction and assistance in the form of monetary transfers, are working for a number of specialised UN agencies and so far 22 have been deployed.
- In northern Iraq, it has delivered 170 tonnes of equipment to help internally displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees. In total, Switzerland has allocated CHF 20 million in humanitarian aid to the victims of the conflict in Iraq.

More generally, Switzerland is working to ensure effective international coordination of the response to the humanitarian crisis in the region and is involved in humanitarian diplomacy to improve access to aid for victims within Syria. It is also making active efforts to find a political solution to the conflict, ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and combat impunity for crimes committed against civilians.

**In the Balkans**, the SDC and the SEM are providing Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with CHF 1.2 million under migration partnerships concluded with these two countries. In response to an appeal by the UNHCR, Switzerland plans to earmark CHF 800,000 for looking after refugees in Macedonia and Greece. It will also send an SHA expert on water and sanitation to Greece.

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## Protecting migrants in North Africa

As part of Switzerland's coordinated action programme in North Africa, the SDC is also operating in Morocco and Tunisia on behalf of the refugees, asylum seekers and migrants staying there, many of whom are in a vulnerable position with no access to essential goods and services. The SDC is working to consolidate their rights by financing the activities of UN agencies (IOM, UNHCR, UN Women) and NGOs on the ground and by establishing a dialogue with the relevant national authorities.

Since 2011, there have been a number of encouraging results.

- More than 150,000 refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and migrants have been given medical care, better access to basic services and, where needed, psychosocial assistance and legal aid. Targeted initiatives have successfully raised the awareness of the authorities and gener-

al public in Morocco as to the needs and rights of the migrants there.

- More than 4,000 people under particular threat in Libya and Morocco (victims of forced labour, the sick, unaccompanied children) were sent back to their country of origin thanks to assistance received under a voluntary return programme.
- In Tunisia, boosting the rescue capabilities of fishermen and local authorities has meant that more than 400 migrants have been saved at sea and ensured that they receive humanitarian aid.
- In Morocco, ongoing efforts by Switzerland and its partners in the areas of human rights and immigration directly contributed to the country's adoption of a new asylum and immigration policy.

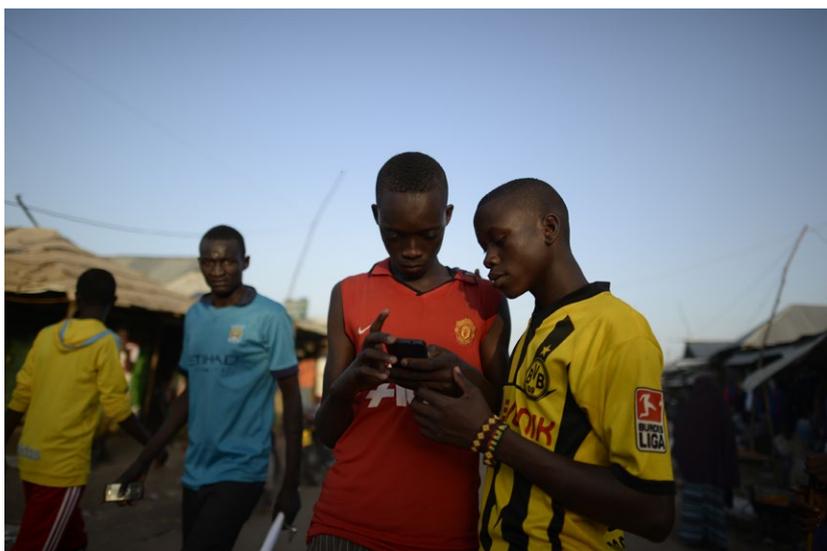
As part of the migration partnership agreed with Tunisia, the SEM has supported this country's integrated border management and funded the voluntary return home of stranded nationals.

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## Horn of Africa: protecting refugees and combating human trafficking

The Horn of Africa has been a priority region in Switzerland's international cooperation since 2013. In parallel with its involvement in the domains of food security, health, good governance and peacebuilding, Switzerland is working to protect vulnerable people in the region. The SDC, the FDFA's Human Security Division and the SEM are jointly providing support for projects devoted to refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. These protective measures, provided on the ground at the earliest opportunity, and the assistance granted to first host countries are intended to reduce the influx of migrants from the Horn of Africa to Europe, a journey that is very often fraught with danger for those involved.

For several years now, Switzerland has been working alongside the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Switzerland is also a stakeholder in the Khartoum Process, a joint initiative by the European Union and countries in the Horn of Africa designed to combat human trafficking. Moreover, it contributes to a European programme designed to boost protection and foster development in the Horn of Africa. Between now and the end of 2015, Switzerland will increase its support for multilateral partner organisations by CHF 19 million and in 2016, it will allocate CHF 5 million to an SDC pilot project to provide vocational training modules for young refugees in north-east Kenya.



In 2016, the SDC will spend CHF 5 million on a pilot project to provide vocational training modules for young refugees in north-east Kenya. © UNHCR/Benjamin Loyseau

### For more information, see:

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