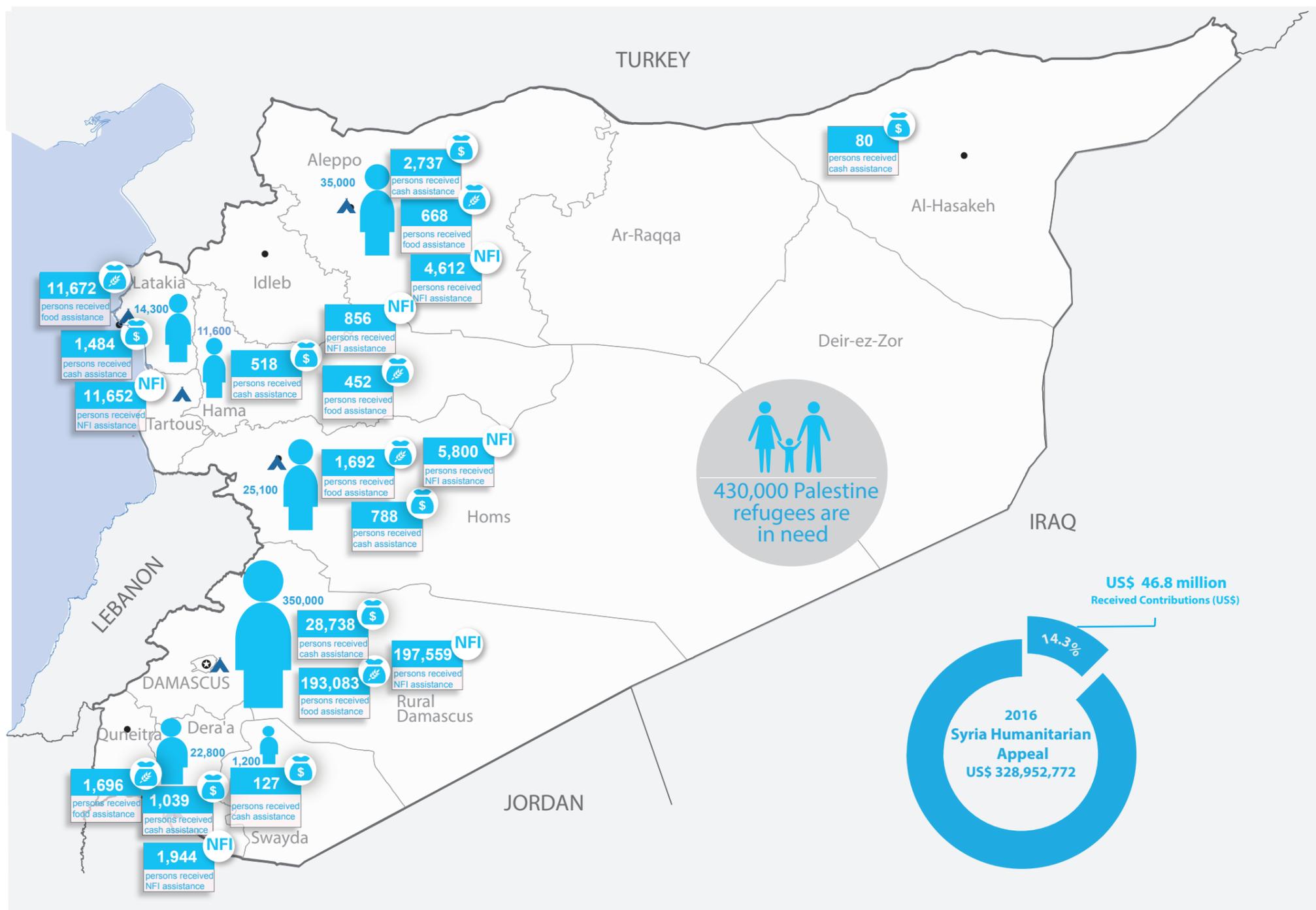


International Women's Day: UNRWA celebrated the resilience of Palestine refugee women in Syria through staged performances at the Damascus Opera House on 23 March. The evening presented three acts including a dance performance expressing the equality of roles women and men have in society. The second act featured a short documentary 'Enough is Enough', with stories from three gender-based violence survivors who found safety and advice thanks to UNRWA Family Support Officers. The third act, a monologue titled 'I have a voice' highlighted the need to end gender based violence and the disempowering practice of early marriage. "Women are critical to finding solutions to societal challenges" said the performer.



CASH ASSISTANCE: The first round of cash assistance for 2016 ran from 17 January to 22 March. During March, UNRWA distributed a total of USD **2,237,193** to **35,511** Palestine refugees (9,334 families) in Damascus, Aleppo, Qamishli, Dera'a, Swayda, Homs, Latakia and Hama. Cash assistance is a core element of UNRWA's humanitarian intervention in Syria. It complements UNRWA's diverse range of services and improves Palestinian refugees' resilience in this protracted conflict. **430,000** conflict affected Palestine refugees in Syria rely on UNRWA's assistance to meet their essential food and livelihood needs. UNRWA prioritised intervention through cash grants as a way of addressing the most pressing needs in a context of fast accelerating devaluation of the SYP which continues to erode the purchasing power of refugees in Syria. **1,169** Special Hardship Cases also received cash assistance in March benefiting **343** families.

FOOD ASSISTANCE: The Agency's first round of food assistance commenced on 2 February. In March, UNRWA distributed a total of **52,322** family food parcels benefiting up to **209,263** individuals via 7 collective shelters and 15 distribution centres in the Damascus area as well as in Hama, Homs, Latakia, Aleppo and Dera'a.

NFI SHELTER/NFI ASSISTANCE: The number of residents in shelters has continued to decline during 2016. In March, UNRWA hosted **3,408** Palestine refugees (1,010 families) in 12 collective shelters, located in various UNRWA installations, schools and training centres in the Damascus area and in two non-UNRWA facilities in Khan Dunoun camp. The Agency provided **313** food parcels to 301 families in 7 collective shelters in Rukn Eddin and Qaboun in Damascus as well as in Khan Dunoun in rural Damascus.

HEALTH: In March, UNRWA provided health consultations to approximately **77,489** patients, of which 32,780 were men and 44,709 were women. UNRWA also provided **5,690** dental consultations and dispensed medicines to 61,181 beneficiaries. A total of 13,557 children under the age of five were immunized as part of a polio campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. The **'Healthy Life Style'** campaign was launched by UNRWA's Education and Health departments with the participation of UNICEF.

EDUCATION: In total **44,186** students (22,367 boys and 21,819 girls), attended **99** schools, of which 44 are UNRWA schools and 55 are hosted in government schools. Currently 90 percent of all schools operate on double shifts and 5 percent of schools (one school in Khan Dunoun) conducted triple shift classes to ensure all students have access to basic and preparatory education. Twelve new psychosocial supporters were appointed in March and placed in schools in Husseinieh, Qabr Essit and Khan Dunoun. Support classes in basic subjects and preparation for experimental exams for the ninth grade were provided. **Musical instruments** were distributed to UNRWA schools in Damascus. A training on the usage of **self-learning materials** was provided to teachers and School Principals.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE: In the effort to mitigate the risk of diseases, UNRWA provides regular garbage collection, rehabilitation of sewage systems infrastructure, supply of chemicals for water treatment and fuel to camps and host communities. This month, maintenance work to water wells and to sewer lines in Ramadan was undertaken. In addition, the common area of the Jaramana collective shelter was cleaned. UNRWA also distributed a total of **59,293** blankets, **59,336** hygiene kits and **5,481** mattresses for Palestine refugees from distribution centres. In collective shelters, **1,123** hygiene kits and **1,181** packs of baby diapers were also distributed to displaced refugees.