



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PRESS RELEASE

Japan contributes USD 5.5 million for upgrading informal settlements in Syria

Nairobi, 12 August 2025 — As Syria begins to rebuild after 14 years of conflict and recent political transition, the Government of Japan has contributed nearly USD 5.5 million (JPY 813 million) to support urgent recovery efforts in Aleppo and Homs, two of the cities hardest hit by the crisis.

The funding will support a two-year project by UN-Habitat, the UN entity responsible for cities and human settlements. It is aimed at improving living conditions in informal settlements – communities that were home to an estimated 40 per cent of Syria’s urban population before the crisis and have since faced widespread destruction.

The contribution agreement was signed today in Nairobi by Mr. Hiroshi Matsuura, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Nairobi, and Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

The project, titled “Improving Living Conditions in Informal Settlements to Promote Return,” will directly benefit more than 81,000 individuals, including returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The numbers are expected to grow as more Syrians return to their cities. As of 31 July 2025, more than 746,000 Syrians have returned from neighbouring countries, and over 1.5 million IDPs have returned home.

Following the collapse of the previous regime in December 2024 and the devastating earthquakes of February 2023, Syria’s cities have been left with shattered infrastructure, collapsing services, and mounting humanitarian needs. Informal settlements in Aleppo and Homs are particularly vulnerable, lacking access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation and safe housing.

UN-Habitat emphasizes a rights-based, inclusive approach focused on rehabilitating urban functions and securing housing, land and property rights. This approach will help safeguard vulnerable populations and avoid potential human rights violations.

Through this partnership, UN-Habitat plans to:

- Develop participatory recovery plans with local communities, including disaster risk reduction strategies;
- Support tenure security, housing, land and property rights for returnees and vulnerable groups;
- Restore essential urban services including water and sanitation systems, electricity, roads, waste management and public spaces.

The Government of Japan is a longstanding partner of UN-Habitat and a leading donor to humanitarian recovery efforts in Syria. Since 2022, Japan has contributed more than USD 21 million in support of UN-Habitat projects aiding vulnerable communities in Syria.

For further information, please contact:

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About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance and collaborative action. To know more, visit www.unhabitat.org or follow us on social media @UNHABITAT.