

INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL RESPONSE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey

2 - 8 May 2013



This update provides a snapshot of the inter-agency regional humanitarian response in full coordination with host Governments and 63 partners across the region. Published weekly on Thursday, the next update will be available on 16 May 2013.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Registration waiting periods have been significantly reduced and is now 30 days or less in all locations across the region save Irbid (Jordan) and South Lebanon, where it is projected that the waiting period will also be reduced to under 30 days by the end of May. Registration is crucial for ensuring protection and delivering assistance.
- Host governments continue to welcome the unrelenting flow of refugees from Syria and on the whole border points and access to protection remains open. However, the Al Qa'im and Al Rabbia border points in Iraq remain closed. As of 28 March, the Al Qa'im border is closed even for family reunification, with some exceptions for females and minors less than 15 years old. Furthermore, an incident on 2 May has reportedly prompted Turkey to officially close the Akcakale border crossing in Sanliurfa province. Violence reportedly broke out among Syrians and Turkish custom officials, and resulted in the death of a Turkish police officer.
- Urban refugees make up 100 per cent of the population in Lebanon and Egypt, some 70 per cent in Jordan and Iraq, and 40 per cent in Turkey. With no camps in the country, the 457,186 refugees in Lebanon are spread across 1,200 locations. Both host and refugee populations across the region are impacted by the increasing pressure placed on the health and education systems, housing employment opportunities and food prices, amongst others.

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REGIONAL FIGURES

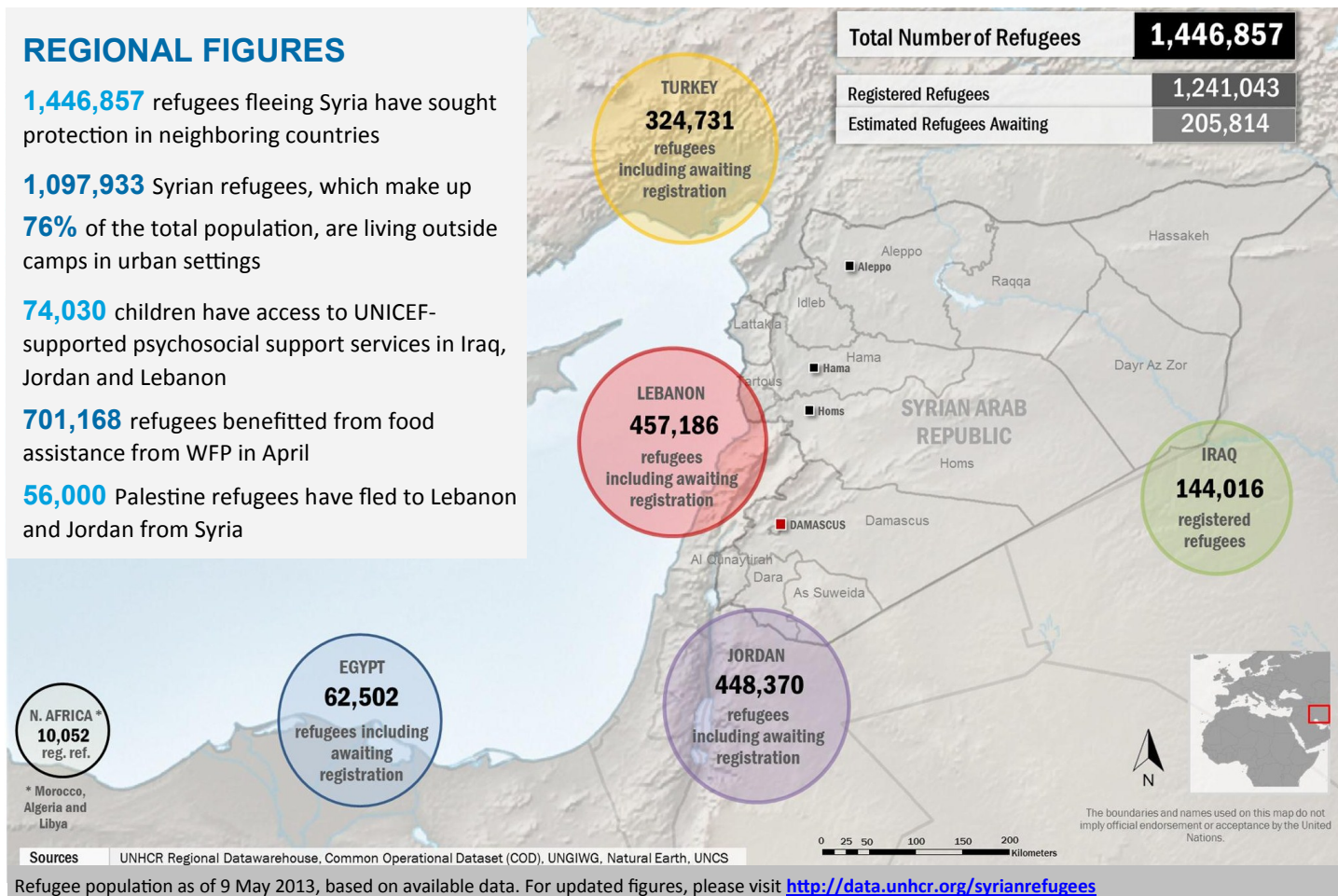
1,446,857 refugees fleeing Syria have sought protection in neighboring countries

1,097,933 Syrian refugees, which make up **76%** of the total population, are living outside camps in urban settings

74,030 children have access to UNICEF-supported psychosocial support services in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon

701,168 refugees benefitted from food assistance from WFP in April

56,000 Palestine refugees have fled to Lebanon and Jordan from Syria



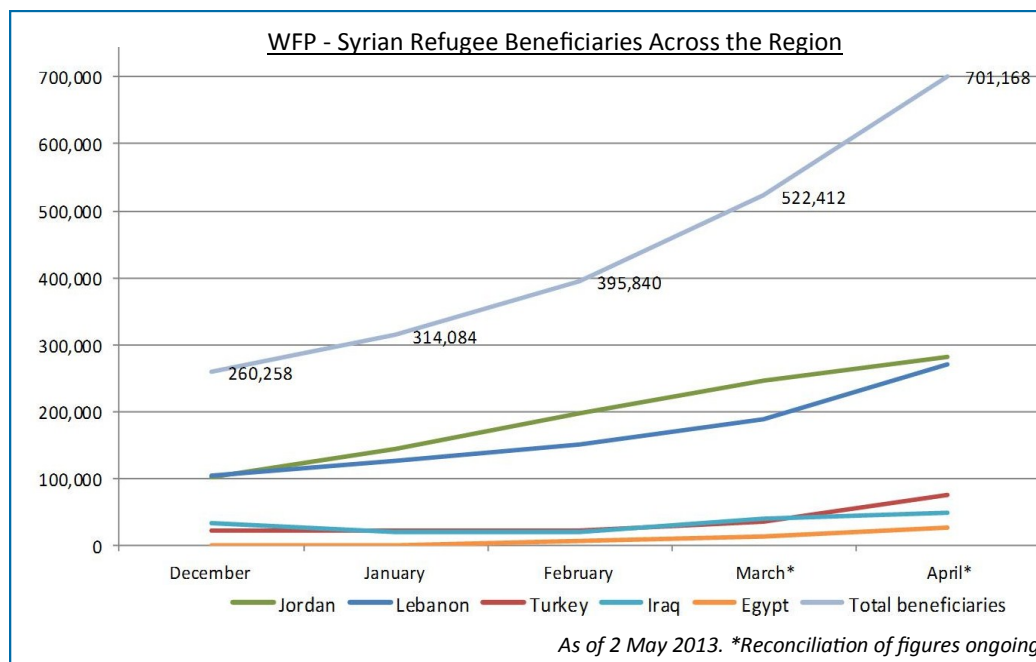
Over 90,000 refugees registered in Lebanon in April

- **Lebanon** - A marked increase in registration capacity saw over 90,000 Syrian refugees registered in April. Given the rural spread of the refugee population (across over 1,200 villages) UNHCR's registration operation in Lebanon is one of the largest and most complex urban registration programmes in the world, making this high rate of registration an especially notable achievement.
- Waiting periods for registration have also decreased significantly through the opening of the new registration centre, using enhanced registration mechanisms, maintaining individual protection interviews, providing transportation assistance and introducing evening and weekend shifts. The average waiting time now ranges between 16-30 days throughout the country, except in south Lebanon where the registration centre just became operational.
- Registration remains the key mechanism through which persons of concern are identified, protected and assisted. Vulnerable new arrivals with specific needs, including people with disabilities, female headed households, the elderly, unaccompanied minors and separated children continue to be prioritized for assistance.
- Despite increased capacity, there has been a rise in the number of refugees who failed to show up to their registration appointments. Assessments indicate security concerns and scarce financial means for transport as key reasons behind this phenomenon. Discussions between agencies on possible transport support (either through reimbursement or actual transportation) to vulnerable refugees are underway.

WFP: Food vouchers giving refugees greater control and choice

- WFP is progressively transitioning from food distributions to food vouchers and upgrading existing food voucher programmes to an electronic card system. Food vouchers provide a more dignified and dietary-diverse modality of assistance to refugees by enabling beneficiaries to purchase the food items of their choice and prepare their own meals. Expenditure through food vouchers also has a positive impact on local businesses and the local economy.

- **Jordan** - WFP with partner Save the Children International completed the second April distribution of dry food rations and UNHCR complementary food



packages in Za'atri camp on 27 April to 126,312 beneficiaries. WFP plans to transition from dry rations to the voucher programme in Za'atri camp and is currently tendering large scale commercial shops. Vouchers are already used as the modality for food assistance to refugees living in Jordanian communities as well as King Abdullah Park and Cyber City.

- **Lebanon** - WFP plans to transition to e-vouchers, which function like a debit card and allows Syrian families to purchase selected commodities. The paperless vouchers will simultaneously allow other agencies to reach beneficiaries with different forms of non-food assistance using the same card. Nine agreements between WFP and NGO partners to distribute food vouchers and food parcels to Syrian refugees have also been finalized, further strengthening WFP's capacity to provide food assistance.

- **Turkey** - Following the recent expansion of the electronic food card programme to four new camps, WFP and the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) are now supporting almost 80,000 people through the e-voucher modality. On May 15 the programme will expand into another three camps to reach a total of 110,000 Syrian refugees, covering around 60 per cent of the total population of Syrians living in camps in Turkey.

- **Iraq** - voucher distribution to 45,000 people in Domiz camp and food parcel distribution to almost 3,500 people in Al Qa'im started on 7 May.

- **Egypt** - WFP reached 26,250 refugees in April, which makes up 96.4 per cent of the 27,234 refugees targeted. A high turnout rate was achieved using SMS technology to notify beneficiaries of the voucher distribution.

Support to host communities prioritized as tensions rise

- Ongoing pressure on limited resources and stretched services, steep increases in the cost of rental accommodation, competition over jobs and rising food prices are some factors that are exacerbating tensions between local and refugee populations, in particular in Lebanon and Jordan who are together hosting more than 900,000 refugees fleeing Syria. Efforts continue to be directed to increasing support to hosting communities to ease tensions and lighten the burden on these communities.
- Lebanon - The Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) continues to support over 1,400 Lebanese families hosting Syrian refugees in Wadi Khaled and Akroum with a regular cash compensation and livelihood support. Similarly, the Polish Centre for International Aid and SHEILD assisted 95 and 80 host families respectively with cash for renovations in April. UNICEF's campaign vaccinated nearly 128,000 children against measles in its second phase, of which 107,000 are non-Syrian. More than 31,000 children under 5 have received polio vaccinations and 129,000 vitamin A supplementation. This is in addition to the 214,000 children immunized across ten provinces in February. In addition, NRC is provided learning support, life skills trainings, awareness sessions and recreational activities to more than 1100 Syrian and host community children in community centres across Lebanon.
- Jordan - UNICEF and partner Madrasati Initiative are leading an initiative to provide remedial education classes in 20 centres in 11 directorates, which currently benefits 3,231 of both Syrian and Jordanian school children (approximately 50 per cent each). Two new centres, each with the capacity to host around 200 students, are expected to open shortly in North West Badyeh and Zarqa. In addition, UNICEF and Japan Emergency NGO (JEN) are assessing WASH facilities in 465 public schools in five governorates (Mafraq, Irbid, Zarqa, Ma'an and Amman). Once the assessment is complete, JEN will start rehabilitating the 150 schools in most need to benefit Jordanian and Syrian school children.

The IRC: Providing a holistic approach to aiding Syrians in need

- The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is currently responding to the Syrian refugee situation in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Much of the IRC's programming focuses on women and children, populations that have specific needs and are often underserved in the burgeoning urban refugee community.
- Jordan - Two IRC primary care clinics opened in Ramtha and Mafraq a year ago and have since provided urban refugees with health care, subsidized prescriptions and close to 15,000 consultations. Case management and psychosocial counseling are provided to survivors of gender-based violence as well. The IRC is also partnering with UNICEF and to date has helped reunify or safely place more than 100 unaccompanied refugee children. The IRC is launching a cash assistance programme on 9 May for 1,800 urban refugee families. The programme is aimed at ensuring that economically strapped Syrians and Jordanians in host communities can live without resorting to negative coping strategies.
- Lebanon - The IRC with a local partner has opened three of a planned four women's centres in north Lebanon and the Bekaa valley. Close to 70 per cent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon have settled in these regions. The centres have benefitted hundreds of women and girls to date. The IRC is also providing close to 1,000 refugee and Lebanese host community families with financial support to pay for rent, food, health care and other essentials through the cash assistance bankcard programme. Some 6,000 arrival kits for women and girls comprised of clothing, flashlights, and hygiene items have also been distributed.
- Iraq - The IRC works in Domiz camp to identify and respond to the most pressing protection issues facing children, including the provision of disability-accessible latrines, hygiene kits, and mobility equipment. The IRC also works on women's protection issues, specifically to respond to and prevent violence and has partnered with UNFPA to construct and furnish a women's social centre and youth centre. In February, an IRC-supported women's Listening Centre opened and provides psychosocial care and case management to vulnerable women and survivors of violence. The IRC intends to begin providing case management and psycho-social support to women and girls at the camp shortly.



A young Syrian refugee receives his first checkup at an IRC primary care clinic in Mafraq, Jordan. IRC | N. Colt

Promoting refugee participation to enhance community ownership

- Humanitarian partners aim to engage refugees in planning and decision making to ensure a participatory approach, encourage community ownership and empower people to manage their own environment. Refugee preferences are acknowledged and included to form an important part of the response.
- **Lebanon** - Inter-agency efforts to provide refugees with access to shelter increasingly involve refugee participation as well as collective accommodation. During the past week, over 200 refugees were engaged by DRC in constructing temporary shelters so as to lessen dependent on aid. Rehabilitation work on two collective centres in Rama and Monseh in the North has been completed this week by DRC. However, UNHCR and partners continue to struggle to identify enough suitable buildings to meet the needs.
- **Jordan** - Community leaders in Za'atri are consulted on site planning, WASH and other matters, including the relocation process as refugees are progressively moved from tent to caravan accommodation in an effort to improve living conditions. To verify findings, UNHCR also organized three focus group discussions in Za'atri targeting women and girls, in particular female heads of households, with the support of IMC and UNFPA.

UNICEF and partners continue to hand over WASH blocks to WASH refugee committees in Za'atri and provide cleaning kits to ownership committees, which take on the responsibility of cleaning and maintaining their own blocks (without payment or incentive). To date, approximately 30 per cent of all WASH blocks in Za'atri have been handed over to committees. The remaining blocks should be handed over by end of May. UNICEF and ACTED hygiene promotion teams conducted a mass hygiene campaign in Za'atri to mobilize WASH committees and disseminate key hygiene messages through songs, games, and other activities. As a result of this campaign, the community came together and organized the cleaning of WASH blocks. Oxfam GB facilitates tile painting sessions with children in Za'atri. The tiles which the children paint are mounted within their respective WASH block to promote ownership over the facilities.

Oxfam: Giving a Voice to Syrian refugees in Za'atri camp

- **Jordan** - Oxfam GB with local partner ARDD-Legal Aid are implementing the [Voice project](#) to give a platform for Syrian refugees to tell their stories in their own words and express their needs, concerns and aspirations. The project is documenting history through storytelling, and at the same time engaging national, regional and international actors to meet the needs of Syrian refugees and listen to their concerns. The Voice team established men's and women's groups in the camp to share experiences. The project also trained women as 'citizen journalists' to gather stories in their own communities.

Ghada, a woman living in Jordan's Za'atri camp, has twice suffered displacement - an experience that is unfortunately not unique amongst refugees. Ghada is of Syrian origin but was living in Libya with her family: a husband and four children the oldest of whom is 28. When the uprisings began in Libya last year the family opted for returning home to Syria but the violence seemed to have followed them there. As told to the Voice team, Ghada's eldest son was taken into custody and she has not heard from him in many months. All she has is a picture of him on her mobile phone. which she showed the Voice team with pride, stroking his face as if he was in front of her. Her eyes started to tear up as she was telling the Voice team about all the young men in the prisons; their families don't even know if they are dead or alive.

Visit <http://voicemiddleeast.wordpress.com> for more information



Ghada in Za'atri camp. ARRD | Voice

The regional response for refugees fleeing Syria is the coordinated effort of 65 participating agencies:

ACF | ACTED | AMEL | Arab Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights | ARRD-Legal Aid | Association of Volunteers International | CARE International | CARITAS | Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre | Centre for Victims of Torture | CHF International | CISP/RI | Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services | DRC | FCA/ACT Alliance | GVC/Muslim Aid | HAI | Handicap International | ICMC | IMC | IOM | International Orthodox Christian Charities | IRD | IRC | Internews | Intersos | Islamic Relief Worldwide | JEN | JHCO | JHAS | JRF | Madrasati Initiative | Medair | Médecins du Monde | Mercy Corps | Movement for Peace | NRC | Oxfam GB | People in Need | PU-AMI | Psychosocial Training Institute in Cairo | Questscope | Relief International | Restart | Save the Children Jordan | Save the Children International | Saudi National Campaign | ShelterBox | Terres des Hommes | THW | UAE Red Crescent | Un ponte Per | UNDP | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHABITAT | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNOPS | UNRWA | UNWOMEN | War Child Holland | WFP | WHO | World Vision International

Humanitarian response partners are invited to contribute to this report. For more information or to be added to the distribution list, please contact [Anna King](#), UNHCR Regional Reporting Officer | kinga@unhcr.org