

Situation Update

14 - 27 May 2014

SYRIA JORDAN LEBANON **TURKEY** IRAQ EGYPT



HIGHLIGHTS

- Food deliveries begin under two-month aid programme for Syria's Aleppo governorate
- More WFP assistance trucked from Turkey into Al-Hasakeh
- Access to hard-to-reach areas of Homs and Rural Damascus briefly restored
- Review of support to non-camp refugees in Jordan underway
- Egypt voucher programme extended to Tanta city



WFP/Laure Chadraoui

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WFP RESUMES FOOD DELIVERIES TO RURAL ALEPPO

Successful deliveries of food assistance and critical humanitarian supplies to besieged and hard-to-reach villages in rural Aleppo through two consecutive humanitarian convoys have enabled the UN to further widen humanitarian access in areas not reached since July 2013. WFP and other humanitarian actors have developed a two-month plan to deliver more assistance to various locations in the governorate.



WFP/Zenah Elmohandes

The plan aims to provide food and other critical supplies for approximately 800,000 people in the governorate, including 160,000 people in rural Aleppo and eastern Aleppo city. Dispatches under the plan started on 26 May delivering almost 6,000 WFP family food rations – sufficient for 30,000 people for one month – in Manbej, Al Bab and Maskanah. On 29-30 May a further 5,250 WFP rations – for 26,000 people – were delivered via inter-agency convoy to Orem, Afrin, Azaz and Tell Rifat in western rural Aleppo

WATER SHORTAGES IMPACT BREAD PRODUCTION IN THE GOVERNORATE'S MAIN CITY

Disruption of mains water supplies in Aleppo city contributed to a drop in bread production during the reporting period. WFP's support to ten public bakeries ensured continuous production of 39,600 bundles per day, enough for almost 200,000 people. Bread availability is expected to be further constrained by wheat shortages caused by reduced wheat production as a result of drought conditions experienced in various parts of the country. Maintaining road access routes to re-stock bakeries and markets in Aleppo will be crucial for both commercial and humanitarian deliveries in the coming months.

RE-OPENING OF THE NUSAYBEEN BORDER ENABLES WFP TO RE-SUPPLY AL HASAKEH GOVERNORATE

A second delivery of WFP food rations was made possible by the re-opening of Nusaybeen border on 16-17 May when 37 WFP trucks crossed from in Turkey to Qamishly, in Al-Hasakeh governorate, delivering assistance for over 57,000 people, some 25 percent of the monthly target. The quantities delivered will support more than 57,000 people in the governorate, living in contested or opposition controlled areas including Tal Brak, Tel Tamer, Ras Al Ain, Tal Hmis, Shaddada and Margada, as well as areas under Kurdish control such as Al-Malkeyyeh, Qahtaniyeh, Derbassiyeh and Jawadieh. These locations previously received over 70 percent of the governorate's assistance in March and April cycles, when food rations delivered from Turkey in March, as well as those airlifted from Iraq between February and March, were distributed.

SEVERE SHORTAGE OF YEAST PROMPTS URGENT AIRLIFTS FROM DAMASCUS

Acute shortages of yeast sharply curtailed bread production in the governorate, causing a shut-down of major bakeries in Al-Hasakeh city and Ras El-Ein. Overland access continues to be impeded by fighting, making deliveries from within Syria near impossible. As a result, WFP conducted four emergency flights from Damascus between 26 and 29 May to deliver 86 mt of yeast, in addition to other critical non-food items, to Quamishli.. Of this, 40 mt were dispatched to ten bakeries in Al-Hasakeh city and other rural areas of the governorate, improving access to bread for 500,000 people over one month.

JOINT UN ASSESSMENTS IN OPPOSITION-HELD AREAS OF AL HASAKEH REVEAL HIGH LEVELS OF FOOD INSECURITY

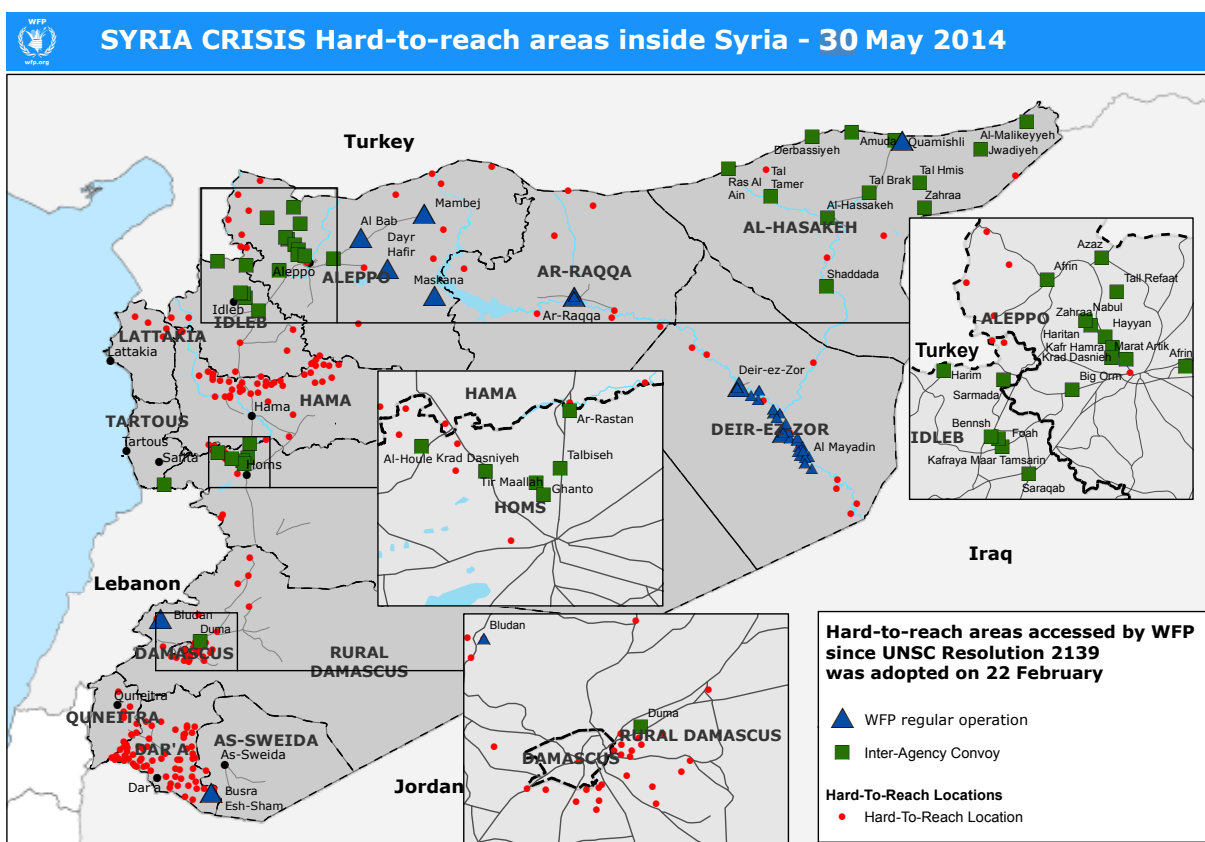
UN assessments conducted during the reporting period in opposition-held areas of Al-Hasakeh that had not been visited for more than six months – Yaroubiyeh, Derbassiyeh and Amouda – found apparently high levels of food insecurity. Most of the families interviewed, and particularly those in Yaroubiyeh, had “borderline” food consumption scores, with many claiming to have eaten little or no meat, vegetables or fruit for several months. They also reported eating less frequent, smaller meal sizes and opting for less preferred and less costly foods. Spending on essentials such as health and education were reduced in order to meet food needs, respondents said. Heavy fighting had evidently disrupted to a considerable degree the agricultural activities that were the economic mainstay of the areas prior to the conflict, a reversal compounded by lack of critical inputs, low rainfall and inability of farmers to access their lands.

ACCESS TO DEIR-EZ-ZOR AND AR-RAQQA REMAINS LIMITED BY INTENSIFICATION OF THE CONFLICT

Escalated in-fighting among various groups in Deir-ez-Zor provoked further displacement and continued to severely disrupt humanitarian access. Much of the displacement – tens of thousands of people in the past month – was from war-ravaged eastern rural areas of the governorate southward towards the perceived safety of Al-Mayadeen and surrounding villages. On 27 May, WFP rations for almost 25,000 people reached Al-Mayadeen. However, in May, as in April, deliveries to the governorate as a whole were insufficient to meet the needs, covering only 8 percent of intended recipients. For the same reason, access to and Ar-Raqqa governorate continued to be limited and sporadic. Between 14 and 20 May 11,300 family rations, for 55,500 people, were safely offloaded in Ar Raqqa city. However, this was equivalent to 20 percent of the monthly target for the governorate.

DELIVERIES TO HAMA, HOMS AND RURAL DAMASCUS ALSO CONSTRAINED

An escalation of fighting in eastern rural Hama during the reporting period forced the flight of thousands more families to Hama city, where they sought refuge in public buildings, parks and mosques. WFP responded to the surge in needs by allocating additional rations to partners for distribution. Access to a part of rural Homs that had not been reached since November 2013 was regained on 28 May when 28 WFP trucks, part of an inter-agency convoy, delivered food rations for 60,500 people in Al-Rastan and Akrad Dasnieh townships and neighbouring villages. Another inter-agency convoy reached besieged Douma in Rural Damascus on 24 May, carrying food for 2,000 people. Large-scale displacement caused by the persistence of intense fight in the area over recent weeks is said to have pushed the population of the town up to some 90,000, from an earlier estimate of 50,000 since the previous UN humanitarian convoys in March 2014.



UN VISITS NEWLY ESTABLISHED IDP CAMP ALONG THE IRAQI BORDER

On 22 May 2014, an inter-agency assessment mission was undertaken to the district of Malikeyeh in Al-Hassakeh, to visit a new IDP camp for up to 3,000 displaced families being set up by the Kurdish Relief Committee in Al-Hakamieh, Al-Hasakeh, 15 km from the closed border with Iraq. While a small number of families are currently living there, the camp is expected to host soon up to 600 displaced families originating mainly from Aleppo, Rural Damascus and Deir-ez-Zor and temporarily settled in nearby villages awaiting to be able to cross to border to Iraq. The mission assessed the conditions of the IDPs in the camp and surrounding villages. Cases of moderate malnutrition were observed among children and babies in fragile health. WFP is making arrangements to distribute ready-to-eat rations and Nutributter® for children through a local cooperating partner.

LAUNCH OF VOUCHER PROGRAMME FOR PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN IMMINENT

A voucher-based nutrition support programme to improve the dietary diversity of pregnant and lactating women is scheduled to be launched in mid-June. The vouchers will allow an initial target of 1,500 women in Homs and Lattakia cities to purchase fresh food items such as fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy products to complement basic staples provided through WFP's general food distribution programme. WFP is finalizing agreements with retailers in the targeted locations.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR PARTNERS AGREE ON 2014 SHARP MID-YEAR REVIEW

A Food and Agriculture sector meeting was held on 28 May, where partners endorsed the 2014 SHARP mid-year review sector inputs, which were then shared with the humanitarian community during a OCHA-led workshop held on the following day in Damascus. In occasion of the Mid-Year review, Food and Agriculture partners agreed that needs and vulnerability levels in the country are increasing, as a combined result of the ongoing conflict, the progressive erosion of available resources and unusually low levels of rainfall over the past winter that will reduce crop production in 2014. Preparations are underway for a new country-wide assessment, which will enable partners to quantify the magnitude of the deterioration of the humanitarian condition in Syria and revise their strategy accordingly.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Refugees registered and awaiting registration:
1,092,272*

Reached in April: 715,998
(675,793 vouchers; 40,205 parcels)

Plan for May: 797,682**
(735,632 vouchers; 62,050 parcels)

* UNHCR registration figures

**Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR manifest where WFP targets approximately 70% of the caseload.

Reconciliation ongoing

EVOLVING NEEDS

During the reporting period, WFP reached 700,153 registered Syrian refugees with assistance through e-cards and over 21,000 Syrians awaiting registration with food parcels. With the World Bank and the Government, WFP continued to work on the expansion of the e-card programme to impoverished Lebanese affected by the Syria crisis through the National Poverty Targeting programme. WFP is currently preparing the necessary legal and internal documents to move forward and has received formal approval from MasterCard on the redesign of a new card for this caseload, which is to begin receiving assistance in June.

Verifying urgent excluded cases

Until a new targeting and verification process is in place, WFP and its partners are available to verify urgent excluded cases identified through various field visits. Excluded cases are those who, based on vulnerability criteria, do not receive WFP food assistance. This process is not request-based, and does not replace the appeal process, but serves as an interim solution for urgent cases. A one-day workshop for WFP and UNHCR field staff was held to clarify and agree on the referral mechanism for these urgent cases. Meetings to better explain this interim set-up are being held with partners in all field locations. WFP has been reviewing cases referred by UNHCR, believed to be vulnerable. So far 148 cases were forwarded and 45 of them were deemed valid.

ASSESSMENTS

2014 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR)

Preparations for the 2014 VASyR continued during the reporting period, with meetings taking place in all five regions of Lebanon to be surveyed. Trainings for team supervisors were held in Beirut and the training of enumerators is underway. Eleven cooperating partners are providing enumerators and supervisors for the exercise, which will consist of data collection during the coming three weeks. Households will be randomly selected in each of the 152 locations that will be visited during the survey and focus groups discussions will be held in 38 locations across the country.

TOWARDS THE ONECARD PLATFORM

An independent consultancy firm reviewed the cash transfer programming's operational set-up in Lebanon and a workshop was held to present the results with a set of suggested options on sharing a common OneCard platform, which would see several agencies providing assistance via a single electronic card. At the workshop and follow-up management meetings, it was recommended that WFP's e-card platform, inclusive of data management, service delivery and implementation, be used. UNHCR expressed interest in joining WFP's e-card platform to form the OneCard platform, with a caseload of 12,000 households being provided with unconditional cash assistance.



OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 593,346*
Reached in April: 533,363
 In Camps: 88,848
 Refugees in communities: 444,515
Plan for May:** 560,706
 In camps: 97,170
 Refugees in communities: 463,536

* UNHCR registration figures

** Planned figures are based on UNHCR manifest which is subject to some inflation due to incomplete departure information and other variables. UNHCR is currently working to address this through an ongoing reregistration process

Reconciliation of figures ongoing.

ASSESSING THE REACH OF WFP'S ASSISTANCE TO NON-CAMP REFUGEES

A review of the shop strategy is underway to determine if there is adequate coverage of WFP's voucher programme for non-camp refugees in Jordan and if more shops should be enlisted. Monitoring data on the distance to shops for beneficiaries and the cost of transport are being triangulated, with data about where they are located and where they redeem vouchers. As the program transitions from paper vouchers to e-cards, it will be necessary for WFP to contract the retailers directly rather than via cooperating partners.

Azraq Camp

WFP began its first general voucher distributions in Azraq camp on 12 May with plans to reach 6,000 individuals from the UNHCR manifest. All refugees received vouchers worth JOD 10 (US\$14) per person for two weeks in addition to dates and daily bread. New arrivals continued to receive a two-week entitlement in the form of two JOD5 vouchers, (JOD10 per person), one-week's in-kind food rations (rice, lentils, bulgur, sugar, oil and salt,) complementary food and dates. Initial records indicate that WFP reached about 75 percent of the camp manifest (just over 4,000 beneficiaries), illustrating that many refugees are already leaving the camp informally, most likely due to the challenging desert conditions. UNHCR has been working to decrease duplication of refugee registration through an ongoing re-verification exercise in Al Za'atri and in communities.



Date Distribution

WFP received another batch of 824 mt of dates from Saudi Arabia and is distributing them in Al Za'atri and Azraq camps as well as providing them to refugees at the border through ICRC, and to new arrivals at Rabat Sahan through IOM. The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization and voucher partners are carrying out similar distributions in communities.

Nutrition

WFP cooperating partners Medair and Save the Children Jordan continue to implement a targeted nutrition programme for the treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) for refugees in host communities and in Al Za'atri camp, in addition to the blanket distribution of SuperCereal Plus to all children under the age of five in Al Za'atri camp.

In Al Za'atri camp, WFP increased the age range for distributions from 6-24 months to 6-59 months following beneficiary requests for the fortified commodity. In Azraq, ACTED will in early June begin the blanket distribution of SuperCereal Plus to all children under the age of five as well as pregnant women and nursing mothers. In May, WFP planned to reach more than 13,000 beneficiaries with MAM. Partners reported difficulties in locating those with MAM in communities and expanded outreach programmes to improve identification.

E-cards

In Jordanian communities, WFP is transitioning from assisting Syrian refugees with paper vouchers to e-cards, giving beneficiaries the ability to shop as often as they want and visit any partner shop. The automatic crediting by WFP's partner bank of every household's voucher each month eliminates the need to attend actual food distributions. WFP completed e-card distributions in Zarqa and Aqaba governorates during the reporting period. Distributions are ongoing in Mafrq and Jabal al Hussein in Amman. WFP expects to complete the initial rollout by the end of July.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Azraq Camp

WFP began initial monitoring activities with the Pre-Assistance Baseline (PAB) and has extended monitoring to the Sameh Mall supermarket. The PAB will be used to compare and show the impact of food assistance by measuring specific food security indicators of new arrivals before they receive WFP assistance and beneficiaries after they receive assistance. Initial monitoring has shown that food prices are comparable to shops outside the camp. WFP is working to improve the efficiency of the supermarket as well as beneficiaries' understanding of the voucher programme through an updated communications campaign.

Non-Camp Refugees

Some shop owners complain of long processing time for e-card transactions in stores, averaging 2-3 minutes per customer, causing long queues. WFP is working with Middle East Payment Services (MEPS) and MasterCard to ensure a faster connection and processing time.



OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

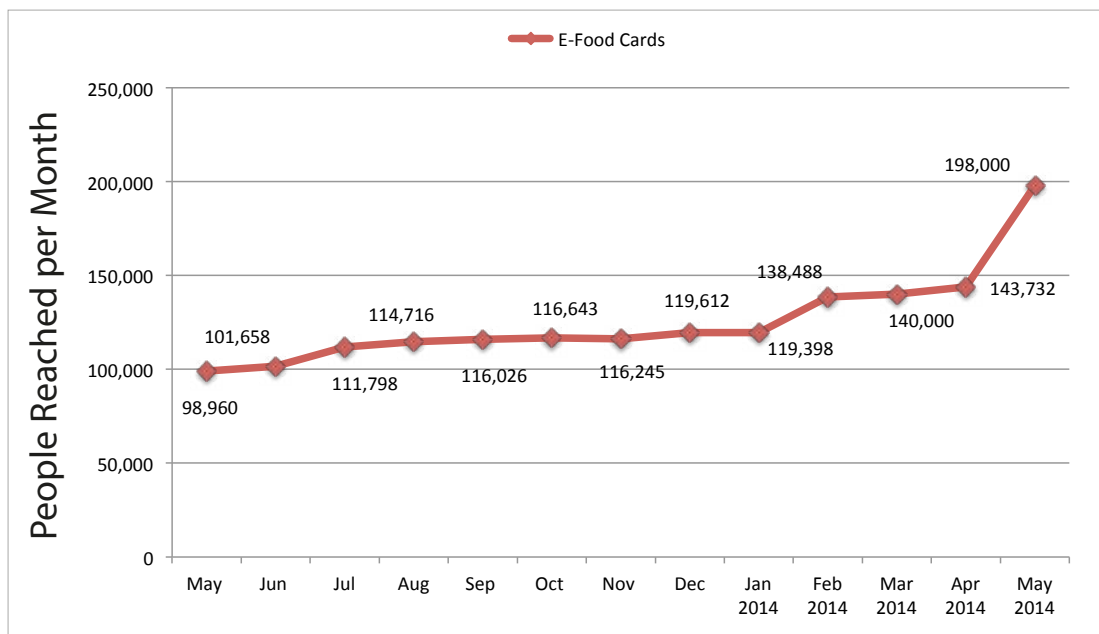
Registered refugees: 761,674*
Reached in April: 143,732
Plan for May: 200,000 people in camps

* Emergency and Disaster Management Presidency of Turkey (AFAD) registration numbers

Reconciliation of figures ongoing.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

WFP assistance reached almost 200,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey during the reporting period – a record – thanks to the extension of the e-Food Card Programme to three additional camps – Malatya Beydagi, Kilis Elbeyli and Akçakale – which raised the number of camps covered to 19 and the overall caseload by some 55,000, or about 25 percent. The total cost of such support for May was US\$6.7 million.



WFP plans to extend the e-card programme to two more camps in June, and stands ready to provide technical support to the Turkish government to assess the food and nutritional needs of the far larger number of Syrian refugees who live outside of camps.

Since WFP operations for Syrian refugees began in October 2012, WFP has invested over US\$310 million in the local economy: direct transfers of US\$70 million to beneficiaries of the e-card programme; and the procurement of US\$240 million worth of Turkish commodities for our operations worldwide.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The opening during the reporting period of new bakeries in Saricam Kahramanmaraş and Altinozu Boynuyogun camps, and advocacy by WFP staff, contributed to a 20 percent reduction in the market price of bread in those locations. So too, in Nizip 2 and Osmaniye camps, did the establishment of price monitoring committees, consisting of WFP, TRC and AFAD staff and refugee representatives. Moves are afoot to set up a similar grouping in Karkamis camp.

While the purchase of NFIs with food entitlements is not allowed, compliance with the rule remains a challenge in some camps. During the reporting period, two shops were warned that their contracts would be terminated if non-adherence to programme rules were to continue.

The region-wide drought conditions evident since late 2013 are forecast to yield a Turkish wheat harvest this year of less than 19 million mt, against last year's output of 22.1 million mt, presaging significantly higher domestic food prices over the coming months.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 223,113*

Reached in April: 107,004

Plan for May:** 106,000

* UNHCR registration figures

**Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR manifest
Reconciliation of figures ongoing.

Peshkabour border crossing point between Dohuk governorate in Iraq and Al-Hasakeh in Syria reopened in Iraq, but remained closed on the Syrian side. Families are waiting to cross in both directions, with an estimated 800 – 1,000 Syrians awaiting entry into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq since April. Those awaiting entry into Iraq have reportedly fled from the villages of Gerbalat, Sherekeh and Ali Gamesh, with little or no access to humanitarian assistance inside Syria. WFP has stockpiled enough food to provide immediate food assistance to new arrivals for at least ten days.



WFP/Magnus Rasmussen

Food assistance to Syrian refugees in all ten camps across Iraq was completed for the May cycle. This included voucher distribution in Domiz camp, where WFP and its partner, Islamic Relief Worldwide-Iraq, provide refugees with monthly food vouchers redeemable at three participating shops. In the other nine camps, WFP and its partners ACTED and INTERSOS reached Syrian refugees with individual food parcels providing 2,100kcal/person/day.

WFP works to transition in-kind food assistance to vouchers

WFP continued efforts to transition in-kind food assistance to voucher assistance, notifying selected retailers for Darashakran and Kawergosk camps of their inclusion in the voucher programme. Discussions with the governorate-level official body responsible for refugees, the Erbil Refugee Council (ERC), are still in progress to finalize the Memoranda of Understanding and other necessary legal instruments between WFP, ERC and retailers.

Identifying the needs of non-camp refugees

In addition to the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted recently by REACH to determine the situation of non-camp refugees as well as the WFP/UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), which included focus group discussions with refugees living in host communities, the Dohuk Modification Centre (DMC) has begun mapping the location of refugees in Dohuk governorate. Initial findings indicate that more than 85 percent of non-camp refugees are receiving WFP food assistance, especially through the voucher programme in Domiz camp. This is not surprising as many refugees with Domiz registration identification do not reside in the overcrowded camp. Results from DMC's assessment as well as the MSNA and the JAM will help identify the food needs of non-camp refugees, providing a clearer picture of vulnerability and helping WFP and UNHCR to better address the needs.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 137,454*

Reached in April: 96,290

Plan for May:** 117,043

* UNHCR registration figures

**Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR and UNWRA manifest.

Reconciliation of figures ongoing.

figures from greater Cairo and Alexandria are still being collected. WFP planned to reach over 117,000 refugees in May, including 4,500 Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS).

WFP extended its voucher programme to Tanta city, Gharbia governorate in May and initial feedback from beneficiaries and WFP staff indicates that distribution proceeded well, with 160 paper vouchers distributed to 486 vulnerable beneficiaries.

WFP plans to open another distribution site in the governorate of Matrouh, in northern Egypt, in order to improve the food assistance process for Syrian refugees residing in Marsa Matrough. WFP will assess other potential voucher distribution sites in the coming days.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

The May voucher distribution cycle started on 17 May and concluded on 22 May, earlier than normal, due to the presidential elections on 26 – 27 May. Beneficiaries have until the end of the month to redeem their vouchers in participating shops. According to initial distribution figures, WFP reached 14,492 refugees in Damietta and Tanta; beneficiary

VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Preparations for the joint WFP/UNHCR multi-sector household-level vulnerability assessment, which will inform the shift from geographical targeting to vulnerability targeting, are ongoing. The assessment methodology has been discussed and the household questionnaire is scheduled to be tested next week.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During the reporting period, WFP received April consumption statistics from Carrefour supermarket. Data included the top 100 food items by sales value that beneficiaries purchased with the e-voucher in greater Cairo. The data covered a period of ten days where a total of over US\$500,000 was spent.

Over 42 percent of the total was spent on meat, fish and poultry (including canned products). Within this category, beef and poultry constituted over 60 percent of the funds spent. The second most popular food group was dairy products, with cheese alone accounting for over 50 percent of dairy expenditures. Oil and fats represented the third largest expenditure group, with cooking oil constituting 93 percent of all oil and fat purchases, and butter seven percent. The top four categories combined accounted for 85 percent of monies spent. The remaining 15 percent was used to buy tea/coffee, eggs, sweets, wheat flour, rice, sauces and pasta. Purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables accounted one percent of the total.

Figure 1: Breakdown of money spent in Carrefour stores over a ten day period

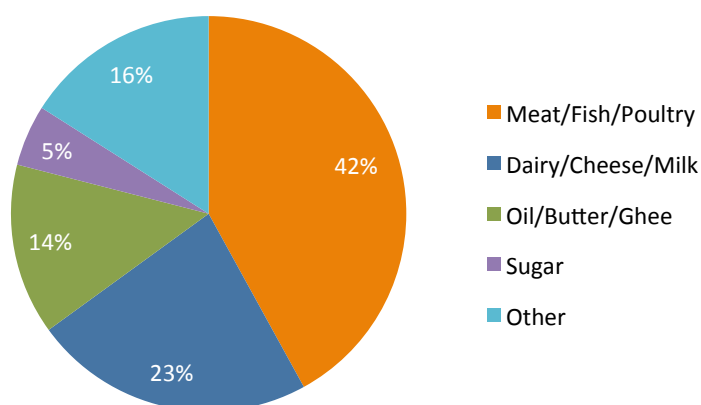
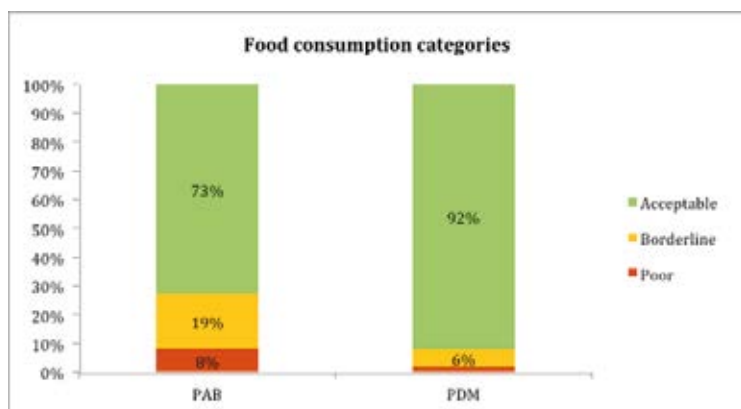
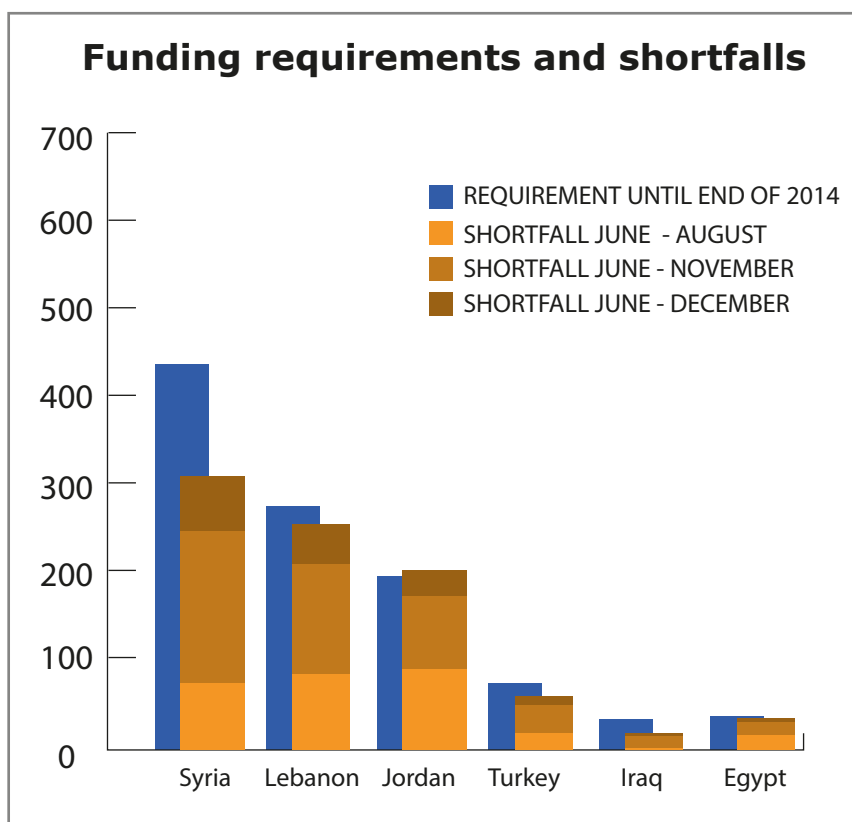


Figure 2: Food consumption categories before and after assistance



Comparative analysis of February and March Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) versus Pre-Assistance Baseline (PAB) data indicate an overall improvement in the food consumption of beneficiaries after WFP assistance was received. The number of refugees with a poor food consumption score declined by six percent and those with a borderline food consumption score fell by 13 percent; the number of beneficiaries with an acceptable food consumption score rose by 19 percent.

FUNDING AND SHORTFALLS



WFP currently needs **US\$286 million** to fund its operations in support of 4.25 million people in Syria and 2.48 million people in the neighbouring countries for the next three months (June – August 2014). Of this, US\$75 million is required to support operations in Syria, and US\$211 for operations in the region. A total of US\$880 million is required to support operations until the end of the year.

WFP is grateful for the critical support provided by multilateral donors in response to the Syria crisis, as well as that of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, the United States and private donors.



Donors are represented in alphabetical order.

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