

# INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL RESPONSE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey

11 - 17 April 2013



This update provides a snapshot of the inter-agency regional humanitarian response in full coordination with host Governments and 62 partners across the region. Published weekly on Thursday, the next update will be available on 25 April 2013.

## REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 1.3 million refugees are living in neighbouring countries, stretching the capacity of host governments to accommodate new arrivals.
- The situation has reached a breaking point. Needs are growing exponentially as we reach 120 per cent of the 1.1 million refugee population planning figure for June 2013. Humanitarian partners are expanding operations in response.
- The leaders of five UN humanitarian agencies, namely OCHA, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO, made an [unprecedented, collective appeal](#) for a political solution to the crisis “before hundreds of thousands more people lose their homes and lives and futures”
- The ever-increasing refugee numbers are putting increased stress on already strained public resources and host communities are bearing tremendous economic burdens. Lebanon and Jordan are particularly vulnerable: the population of Lebanon has increased by 10 per cent and Jordan by 6 per cent due to mass refugee influx.
- With the conflict in Syria threatening to spill over into neighboring countries, the relentless outflow of refugees in the absence of adequate international support could become an additional contributing factor to regional instability.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- New arrivals: providing adequate shelter is a pressing challenge, p.2
- Addressing the needs of refugee women and children, p.2
- UNRWA supporting Palestine refugees fleeing Syria, p.3
- Mass immunization campaigns implemented to prevent outbreak, p.3
- Concern for refugees voluntary returning to Syria, p.4

## REGIONAL FIGURES

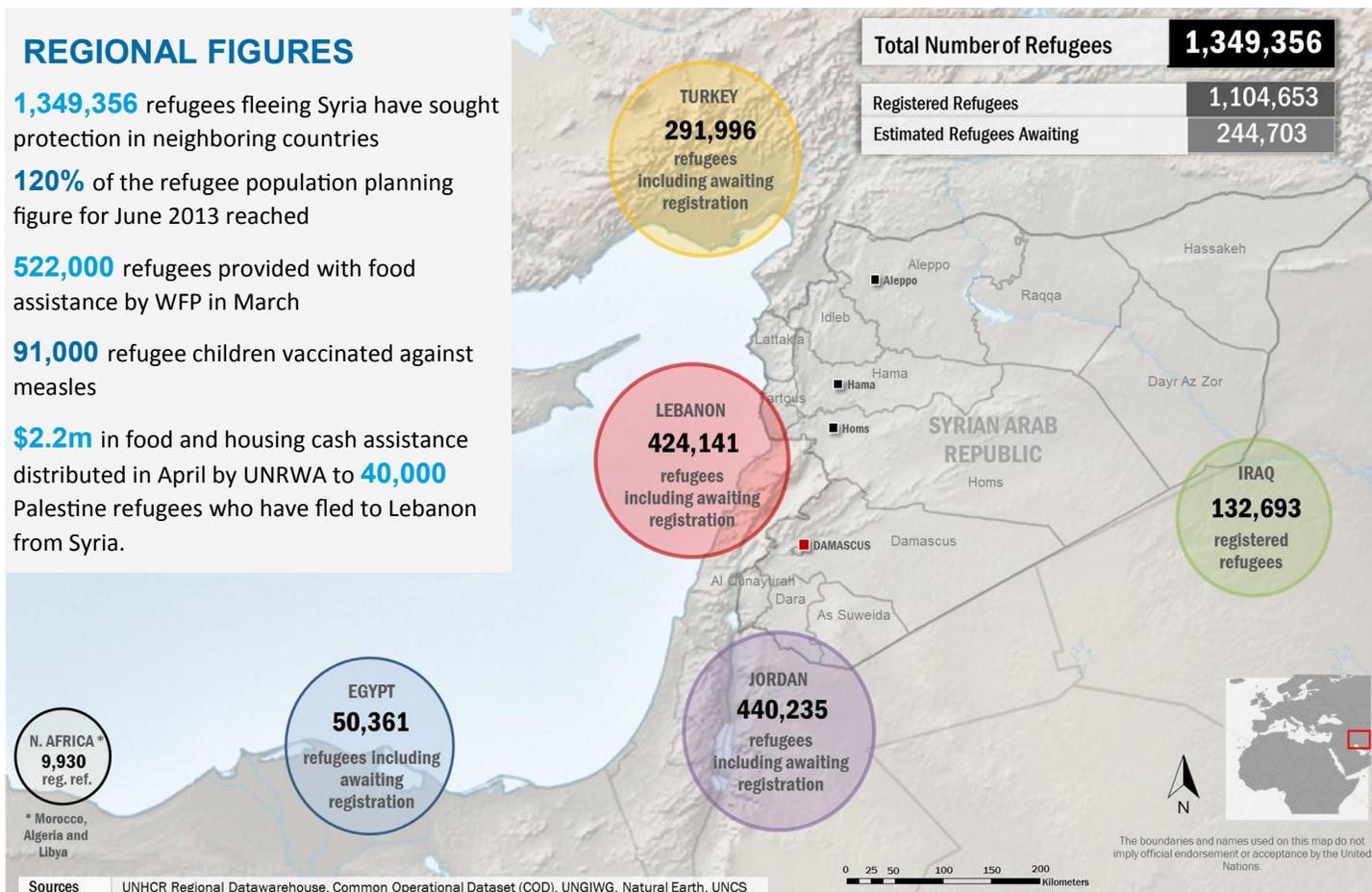
**1,349,356** refugees fleeing Syria have sought protection in neighboring countries

**120%** of the refugee population planning figure for June 2013 reached

**522,000** refugees provided with food assistance by WFP in March

**91,000** refugee children vaccinated against measles

**\$2.2m** in food and housing cash assistance distributed in April by UNRWA to **40,000** Palestine refugees who have fled to Lebanon from Syria.



Refugee population as of 17 April 2013, based on available data. For updated figures, please visit <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees>

## New arrivals: providing adequate shelter remains a pressing challenge

- **Lebanon** - The opening of the new registration site in Tyre this week has already doubled the number of people registered on a daily basis from 300 to 600 people. This number is expected to reach 900 by the end of April, further decreasing the waiting period in Tyre.

More than 550 Syrian and Lebanese households received their monthly contribution for cash for rent over the week. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) continues to upgrade and rehabilitate existing homes and buildings, as well as provide heating stoves, fuel coupons and other items to help host communities accommodate refugee families. In the South, SHIELD distributed standardized kits - which include four mattresses, six blankets, one gas heater, one kitchen set and one family hygiene kit - to over 200 newly arrived families over the week.

- **Jordan** - Infrastructure works are progressing well at the newly authorized additional camp in Al-Azraq, which will have the capacity to host up to 60,000 refugees. NRC will be responsible for establishing reception centres, distribution centres, and warehouse facilities. NRC ensures that all new arrivals to Za'atri camp have immediate needs met through provision of non-food items such as tents, mattresses and hygiene articles. In urban areas, NRC is working to design alternative shelter solutions for refugees staying and living with host communities (75 per cent of the refugee population in Jordan). This will include income generation opportunities and substantial support incentives for host communities.

- **Iraq** - A new camp is being built in Erbil governorate, Kurdistan Region, to accommodate up to 12,000 refugees. In urban areas, NRC is working on improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees by upgrading the houses of families that are hosting refugees in Dohuk and Erbil Governorates. This project targets 450 households.

## Addressing the needs of refugee women and children

- Over 48 per cent of the refugee population are under 18 years of age, and 77 per cent are women and children. Relief organizations continue to highlight child protection and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as significant protection issues resulting from the Syria crisis.

- Children at risk of not attending school, separated or unaccompanied minors, child labour, early marriage and other protection concerns are identified, counseled and referred to different agencies for an appropriate follow-up. UNICEF and partners have provided some 55,000 children in camps and host communities with community-based psychosocial activities in **Jordan** and **Lebanon**.

- Targeted support to women is one of the best ways to ensure the health, security and well-being of displaced and refugee families and communities.

UNHCR and partners are working to increase the availability of critical services to survivors of sexual violence by building capacity of medical personnel and other service providers on SGBV, its consequences and treatment. In addition, UNFPA is working closely with partners across the region to ensure refugee access to reproductive health services in camps and host communities.

- **Jordan** - UNFPA opened a third space for women and girls in Za'atri camp, offering comprehensive access to reproductive health services and SGBV and youth-friendly initiatives.

- **Lebanon** - UNFPA started the distribution of rape kits to primary Health care clinics in North Lebanon.

- **Iraq** - The number of daily beneficiaries seeking antenatal care and family planning services at the reproductive health care clinic in Domiz camp is increasing steadily.

- **Egypt** - UNFPA is developing programmes that build on the existing partnership with the Ministry of Health to provide access to reproductive health services for Syrians refugees living in Egypt.

- **Turkey** - 40,000 dignity kits have been distributed to refugees in camps. UNFPA plans to deliver an additional 20,000 kits. which contain sanitary napkins, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and other essential items to help refugees maintain daily hygiene routines under the harsh conditions of camp life.



UNHCR Field Officer Huda Al-Shabsogh holding Oday, a Syrian refugee in Irbid, Jordan. UNHCR | A. Purvis

## UNRWA: supporting Palestine refugees fleeing Syria

- Palestine refugees remain a particularly vulnerable group with limited external flight options and again displacing Palestine refugees caught up in the conflict inside Syria. Some 40,000 Palestine refugees have fled to Lebanon and are being provided humanitarian assistance there, and a further 5,000 are now in Jordan, receiving health, education and relief services.
- UNHCR and partners are assisting Palestine refugees who have fled Syria to Egypt, Iraq and Turkey, which are outside UNRWA's areas of operation.
- Lebanon - UNRWA distributed a new round of cash assistance for housing and food in April. The cash for housing assistance was distributed per family size with 160,000 LBP (USD 103) given to a family of 1-3 members and 220,000 LBP (USD 146) for a family of 4 and above. Each family member received 30,000 LBP (USD 20) for food assistance. Out of the 12,229 families and 42,657 total persons who are registered with UNRWA, 11,182 families showed up at the distribution and received housing assistance while 39,721 Palestine refugees from Syria received food assistance, representing 91.44 per cent of recorded families and 93.12 per cent of individuals. A grand total of 3,319,690,000 LBP (USD 2.2 million) was distributed.
- Jordan - the majority of Palestine refugee families from Syria live in abject poverty in host communities. Most are unable to meet their basic nutritional needs, and thus qualify for UNRWA's poverty support. In addition to material assistance, UNRWA provides essential services through existing programs in primary health care, hospitalization, education, relief and emergency assistance, and a range of protection services.

## Mass immunization campaigns implemented as preventative measure against potential outbreaks

- Given the reduced capacity of Syria's health system, relief organizations have highlighted concerns about potential disease outbreaks. In coordination with host Governments, humanitarian partners are responding by enhancing the vaccination response through schools, primary healthcare centres and through mobile teams at UNHCR registration points, in remote areas without easy access to primary healthcare centres and in informal tented settlements.
- Jordan - Five cases of measles have been confirmed in Za'atri camp in new arrivals. There has been no evidence of intra-camp transmission. A mass measles campaign by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF/UNHCR/WHO started on the 13 April targeting all persons between 6 months and 30 years. Polio vaccine will also be provided to those under five years of age and vitamin A supplements to refugees aged 6 - 59 months. More than 12,000 people were vaccinated against measles in the first two days of the campaign, 4,334 against polio and 3,917 given vitamin A supplementation.
- Lebanon - More than 60,000 children have so far been vaccinated against measles and received vitamin A supplements in the second phase of UNICEF's vaccination campaign, and over 23,000 have been vaccinated against polio to date. UNICEF has also provided UNRWA with 32,000 doses of measles vaccine, 10,000 doses of polio vaccine and 42,000 vitamin A capsules. UNRWA will start vaccinations in Palestinian camps in April, where there have been four confirmed cases of measles this year.
- Iraq - UNICEF in coordination with MSF is supporting the Department of Health Dohuk for a mass immunization campaign to vaccinate the refugees in Domiz camp with measles and meningitis vaccines. Three vaccination sites have been established by the Department of Health Dohuk in the camp to target 30,000 refugees, from 6 months to 15 years for measles and 2 years to 30 years for meningitis.
- Egypt - the Ministry of Health is leading an Expanded Program for Immunization for polio in April for the Greater Cairo area, using several locations including primary health care facilities, certain identified clubs, mosques and churches and mobile vaccination for households. The campaign is targeting Egyptian children under 5 and non-Egyptian children under 15.



*A doctor examines a sick Syrian refugee girl while her younger brother looks on at a health clinic in Domiz Refugee Camp in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq. UNHCR | B. Sokol*

## Concerns for refugees voluntarily returning to Syria

- UNHCR is concerned for refugees who have elected to return to Syria, where the security remains volatile in many regions and are blighted by shortages of food, fuel, electricity and limited services including health care and education.

- UNHCR does not promote or facilitate these returns but is counselling refugees who wish to return to ensure they make an informed decision and understand the possible consequences of their return.

- UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation and works with government authorities to ensure that all refugees have access to their documentation should they make the decision to return to Syria.

- Jordan - UNHCR has seen an increase in the number of refugees spontaneously opting to return to Syria from Jordan throughout April 2013. During this period, an

average of three hundred people, the vast majority of whom are families, have been each day to return to villages close to the border in the governorate of Daraa. New arrivals to Jordan continue to outpace this limited number of spontaneous returns: the total number of Syrian refugees who have spontaneously returned is less than one per cent of the total arrivals. UNRWA has also reported a growing trend of voluntary return to Syria among Palestine refugees residing in Cyber City, a transit facility for refugees. To date, 23 refugees have requested permission to return to Syria. The reasons for returning are varied, including improved security in a number of border villages, safeguarding their property, reuniting with family members who remained in Syria, or travelling to collect and bring back vulnerable family members to Jordan.

- Iraq - Nearly 4,000 Syrians have returned home in the past year, mainly from Al Qa'im camp in Anbar Governorate to Abu Kamal in Syria, where the situation is volatile. The main reasons given by refugees for returning are lack of freedom of movement in Al Qa'im, limited livelihood opportunities and encouraging reports from their home areas regarding security. UNHCR is requesting to the Government to grant Syrian refugees freedom of movement outside the camp, thus allowing refugees to sustain themselves and cease to be fully dependent on international assistance. UNHCR is also urging the Government to re-activate the family sponsorship programme and expand it beyond first and second kin relatives.

- Turkey - according to the Prime Minister's Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate (AFAD), over 97,000 Syrians have returned since March 2011. UNHCR provides regular technical support in the voluntary repatriations from Turkey through observation of the interviews conducted by designated Turkish authorities to safeguard the voluntary nature of return. Roughly half of those returning said they were going back to Syria temporarily to check on their homes or to attend funerals. Some said that they were returning due to reports of an improvement in the security situation in their home areas.



*An elderly Syrian woman becomes emotional when talking about Syria and her new life as a refugee in the Akcakale camp, southern Turkey, which provides shelter to almost 10,000 Syrian refugees. UNHCR | A. Branthwaite*

The regional response for refugees fleeing Syria is the coordinated effort of 62 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 | 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 | SCI | ShelterBox | Terres des Hommes | THW | 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](mailto:kinga@unhcr.org), UNHCR Regional Reporting Officer | [kinga@unhcr.org](mailto:kinga@unhcr.org)