

WFP's Response Inside Syria and in Neighbouring Countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt

Reporting Period:
03 – 18 April 2013



Syria

"We ask that they use their collective influence to insist on a political solution to this horrendous crisis before hundreds of thousands more people lose their homes and lives and futures—in a region that is already at the tipping point... The needs are growing while our capacity to do more is diminishing, due to security and other practical limitations within Syria as well as funding constraints. We are precariously close, perhaps within weeks, to suspending some humanitarian support."

Heads of UN Agencies of WFP, WHO, UNHCR and UNICEF joined the Emergency Relief Coordinator for a special Appeal for Syria.



WFP/Matthew Hollingworth

WFP staff accompanied the Operations Director of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), John Ging, during a three-day visit to Aleppo. After passing through over 50 checkpoints, WFP and John Ging visited a Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) warehouse where, among other items, WFP food rations are stored prior to distribution. From the visit, it was clear that WFP food is reaching people in government and non-government controlled areas, but that the amount of food is less than the intended food basket. Moreover, the needs in Aleppo, and across the country, far outweigh the level of support WFP is providing.

Many SARC volunteers and NGO partners noted that each family ration that WFP dispatches to Aleppo governorate is normally divided by least three times into smaller rations as needs are large. Moreover, challenges facing WFP partnerships, as well as modifications to the mechanisms for truck dispatch clearances, could seriously jeopardize the operation.

Security Despite increased incidents on the roads, including the detention of vehicles and drivers, and a worsening security situation, WFP continues its work to reach those in need. Accessibility into and around Damascus is becoming increasingly challenging and affecting all WFP activities. Repeated mortar rounds continue to fall around the city centre, many in close proximity to the Four Seasons Hotel, where all UN agencies and staff are located. IED explosions and car bombs are also repeatedly reported in the capital. With a reduction of the international staff presence in the past weeks, security measures have been strengthened in the Four Seasons Hotel, where the UN presence is located. Therefore, in line with other agencies, WFP has now begun allowing some staff members to return on the basis of strict operational criticality.

Reduced Rations

This month, due to delays in the arrival of some commodities and the inability to purchase these commodities locally, WFP has reduced the amount of lentils and canned pulses for distribution to Syrian families. WFP is currently assessing the size of May's food rations based on the availability of commodities and resources.

Monitoring

Security permitting, WFP was able to monitor distributions and cooperating partners in several locations in the Damascus area during the reporting period. For the most part, the majority of beneficiaries are IDPs from Rural Damascus, who have fled to Damascus proper. Many of these IDPs are living in collective centers or with host families. While WFP can only monitor a small number of the final distribution points reached by cooperating partners, it is clear that the response continues to be much lower than the perceived needs.



WFP/Syria

Logistics Cluster

A Joint Humanitarian Convoy to Aleppo supported by the Cluster, departed Damascus on 13 April. The convoy transported WASH, hygiene and medical items on behalf of UNICEF, UNRWA, UNHCR, IOM, UNFPA and WHO. All ten trucks made reached Aleppo by 15 April. On 18 April, the Cluster also published a Syria fuel price analysis (January–March 2013) on their website: www.logcluster.org/opps/syr12a.

Jordan

The situation in Al Za'atri camp is becoming more volatile as incidents involving small arms have been increasing in the past weeks. In response to heightened insecurity, a new military police unit has been dispatched by the Government of Jordan to provide access control into and out of Al Za'atri, escorts for humanitarian actors where needed, and quick response to violent demonstrations and outbreaks.

Syrians in Jordan
UNHCR Registered: 372,445
Awaiting Registration: 67,790
Total: 440,235

In March, WFP assisted almost 190,000 Syrians seeking refuge in Jordan. WFP food assistance included dry rations to refugees in Al Za'atri camp, daily bread distribution for the entire camp



WFP/Dina El-Kassaby

population, daily fortified date bars for children in Al Za'atri schools, welcome meals to newly arrived refugees and voucher assistance to thousands of refugees across Jordanian communities.

On 11 April, WFP agreed to provide 10,000 welcome meals for Syrians arriving from the eastern border route, an increasingly common point into Jordan for refugees. Most refugees using this route are arriving from Homs, Hama and Damascus, and often travel for days in harsh, inhospitable desert conditions before reaching Jordan and Al Za'atri camp.



WFP's celebrity partner, Sami Yusuf, an internationally acclaimed British singer and composer, toured Al Za'atri camp on 10 April and witnessed some of WFP's efforts in the camp. During his visit, Yusuf met with several families and toured the food distribution site where he spoke with Syrians receiving WFP food assistance. He also sang with students and distributed nutritional snacks as part of the school feeding programme.



WFP/Dina El-Kassaby

In the camp, WFP concluded the first round of food distribution for April through its partner Save the Children International. During this round of distribution, WFP also handed out 15,000 ECHO funded shopping bags. These eco-friendly reusable bags will allow families to carry bread and other items without the added waste of plastic bags.

During the reporting period, WFP and Save the Children International also added two new shops to the voucher retailers in Amman to accommodate the large influx of refugees in the area and reduce expenditure on transportation for beneficiaries.

"It's hard for an urban man like me to get accustomed to living like a refugee even though I have lived here for 11 months. I get a voucher every month and can go to the supermarket whenever I want to buy food for my children and wife. This is the most normal activity in my life here." Mohammad from Dar'a, King Abdullah Park.

School Feeding

WFP continues its school feeding programme in both schools in Al Za'atri camp. The programme currently provides more than 5,000 students with daily fortified date bars, helping to improve school attendance and concentration. According to teachers, before the start of the programme, some students could not concentrate and would leave school early because of hunger. The mid-day snack provided by WFP now helps students stay alert in class until school is dismissed.

Monitoring

WFP regularly conducts monitoring exercises during and after food and voucher distribution in order to better understand the needs of families receiving food assistance. During recent visits, WFP observed that daily bread distribution at Al Za'atri camp has improved as a result of increased distribution points and earlier distribution times. Furthermore, new waiting rails installed at the dry ration distribution point are ensuring greater order when families receive food. Field monitors also observed that the distribution of daily snacks as part of the school feeding programme has improved. WFP is meeting with principals, teachers and partners to enhance coordination to further improve the programme. Some individuals interviewed as part of WFP's monitoring complained about the poor condition of communal kitchens and the quality of drinking water in the camp. WFP is working with its partners to tackle such issues.



WFP/Dina El-Kassaby

"I want to be a math teacher when I grow up. Today we got biscuits in school and I ate three pieces in class and one on my way home from school." Eman, grade one student in Al Za'atri camp.



Lebanon



WFP/Rein Skallerud

WFP has begun its April food assistance in Lebanon and is distributing reduced summer vouchers in all areas. The voucher value was originally increased to allow for the purchase of extra calories during the cold winter months. With the coming of spring, the winter component of the vouchers is being deducted and the voucher value is now US\$27. Individuals receiving voucher assistance were notified of the reduction in value through WFP's cooperating partners. The format of the voucher has also changed

in order to discourage any attempts to make counterfeit vouchers. Vouchers are now smaller so that they can fit into counting machines for the reconciliation process.

Challenges

An influx of Syrians seeking refuge in Lebanon is leading to a large increase in the number of people WFP plans to assist and is straining the operation's already overstretched budget. The exponential increase of new arrivals is also causing increased tensions between refugees and host communities. Tourism, a mainstay of the Lebanese economy, has been impacted significantly.

Syrians in Lebanon
UNHCR Registered: 293,836
Awaiting Registration: 130,305
Total: 424,141

According to a new United Nations report, about 400,000 Syrians have registered as refugees across Lebanon, but many more are undocumented. More than 95,000 refugees are in the Bekaa Valley alone, straining the resources of local communities. Syrians mostly rent accommodation or are taken in by Lebanese families; however, with the flow of refugees rising rapidly, make-shift tented camps are beginning to emerge.

Turkey

WFP and the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) expanded the Food e-Card electronic voucher programme to four new camps on 16 April. With the expansion, WFP and TRC are now supporting 80,000 people in 11 out of the total of 17 camps, doubling WFP's number of beneficiaries; 80,000 refugees represent 40 percent of the total camp population.

Syrians in Turkey
UNHCR Registered: 258,388
Awaiting Registration: 33,608
Total: 291,996

Since it launched its Electronic Food Card programme in Turkey in October 2012, WFP has provided food assistance to Syrians in Kilis camp, four camps in Hatay, one camp in Sanliurfa and one camp in Gaziantep. In line with the Government of Turkey's request for WFP to provide food assistance to all Syrians in camps in Turkey, with this expansion, WFP and TRC started the distribution of Electronic Food Cards in the camps of Adana, Islahiye, Karkamis and Nizipi.

Prior to the expansion, over US\$4 million had been disbursed to beneficiaries through the programme in 2013, a figure that is expected to increase exponentially with the addition of the four new camps.



The Government has requested that WFP scale up to cover all camps in the country; however, WFP currently has sufficient funding to assist less than half of the camp population until mid-May.

The Electronic Food Card works like a typical credit card and is pre-loaded with 80 Turkish Liras (US\$45) per family member per month. This is enough to purchase sufficient food items for a basic nutritious diet.

Iraq



WFP/Dina El-Kassaby

This month's voucher distributions in Domiz camp started on 7 April. Another shop opened in the camp, giving Syrian refugees two shops in which to redeem their vouchers. In March, WFP reached almost 40,000 Syrians in Iraq with food and voucher assistance and provided over US\$1 million worth of vouchers to Syrian refugees. In Al Qaim, where WFP distributes food parcels, a total of over 3,600 parcels were distributed from 1-6 April.

Challenges

In Domiz camp, current funds are only sufficient to meet requirements for April. Urgent additional funding is required to avoid a pipeline break in May.

WFP is following up with UNHCR to provide the lists of newly registered refugees who are staying with other families in Domiz camp without their own tents. These refugees are a burden on some families living in the camp as they share their hosts' rations.

Syrians in Iraq

UNHCR Registered: 132,693

The population in Al Qaim camp continues to decline with over 5,600 Syrians in the camp in February and less than 4,400 by the end of the March. The camp is experiencing a weekly departure rate ranging from 200-300 persons.

"The food voucher turned us from beggars to shoppers." Syrian mother from Qamishly, Domiz camp.

Egypt

Starting this month, WFP is increasing the voucher value from US\$26.30 to US\$30 due to rising inflation rate and high food prices in Egypt.

This week, WFP started the April voucher distribution and has so far reached 2,752 refugees in Damietta. Thanks to the SMS technology which facilitated distribution schedule information dissemination, 99.6 percent of planned beneficiaries reached the site. WFP is also using its SMS technology to inform refugees so that distribution is staggered and large crowds do not congregate in the streets of Egyptian cities.

Syrians Egypt

UNHCR Registered: 37,361

Awaiting Registration: 13,000

Total: 50,361

For April, WFP will continue to distribute paper and magnetic-based vouchers for up to 20,000 refugees. Preparations for voucher distribution are being finalized and as has been the case previously, Syrian refugee communities are assisting WFP in reaching out and informing refugees about the distribution schedules. During the reporting period, WFP awarded certificates of appreciation to refugee committees who are significantly contributing to the voucher planning and implementation.



Assessments

In response to complaints by a small group of refugees about high prices in a WFP-partner supermarket, WFP completed a rapid price survey in Al Obour and 6th October both in WFP-partner and non-partner supermarkets for comparison. The results show that WFP's partner supermarket is offering average prices; most of the commodities it offers are cheaper than those in other shops but it also offers more expensive commodities, especially imported items. On 15 April WFP shared the results of the assessment with the refugee groups.

Challenges

The number of UNHCR registered Syrian refugees in Egypt is growing rapidly; however, not all Syrian refugees are in need of food assistance. So far, WFP has been targeting those who live in poorer neighbourhoods of Cairo and others residing in Alexandria and Damietta. WFP and UNHCR have now agreed to reach only vulnerable refugees—assessed by Caritas and the Islamic Relief Worldwide—will receive food assistance. WFP and UNHCR will jointly conduct community meetings to raise awareness about the importance of targeting, including the roles of UNHCR and WFP.

WFP and SMS Technology

WFP Egypt is maximizing its voucher distributions to Syrian refugees living in urban settings using a simple and cost-effective software technology: SMS.

WFP collects/updates accurate telephone numbers of the refugees (often during voucher distributions). The updated telephone numbers are then uploaded into the software system, which is developed in partnership with Vodafone, a local network provider. Then, WFP writes a clear SMS message about the distribution schedule, time and exact location of the site. The messaging takes up to three hours to reach all the beneficiaries concerned and is usually sent a few days before the voucher distribution.

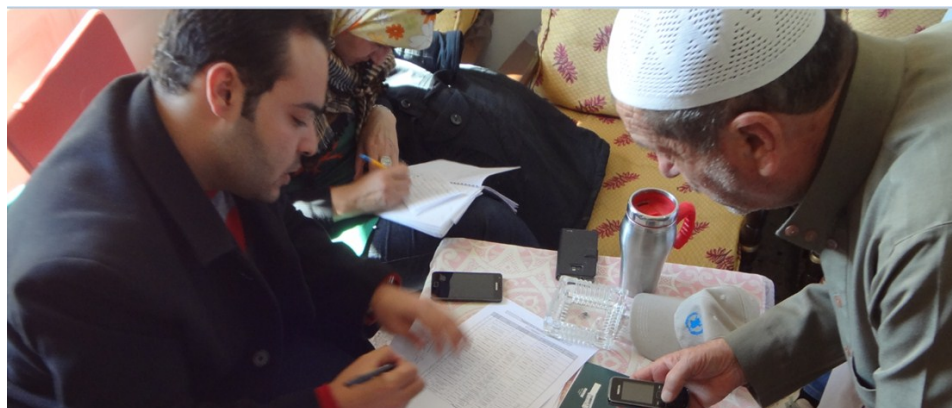
Benefits: In urban settings like Cairo and Alexandria, where the refugees are residing in a very diverse and vast geographic area, delivering information to refugees is difficult. With SMS technology, WFP is now able to inform the refugees easily about voucher distribution schedules. Since the start of this method, the success rate of refugees coming to the distribution has increased significantly. In a distribution last week in Damietta in the Delta, **99.6*** percent of the refugees who received the SMS came to

برجاء الحضور الي 2 شارع شاكر خياط جمعية ضحي الايمان من يوم الجمعة 15/3/2013 الي الاحد 17/3/2013 من الساعة 12 حتي الساعة 5 لاستلام قسائم الدعم الغذائي الخاصة بالامم المتحدة يجب احضار البطاقات الصفراء

An example of an SMS message: Please come to 2- Shaker Khayyat Street, Doha Al Iman Society from Friday 13/3/2013 till Sunday 17/3/2013 between 12 and 5 to pick your UN food vouchers. You should bring your yellow cards with you.

receive their vouchers, as opposed to 86 percent in the previous months without the SMS messaging. Feedback from the refugees about the SMS system has been very positive.

*The 0.4 percent of refugees who did not attend distribution may have left Egypt entirely.



WFP/Abraham Abatneh

Funding & Shortfalls

With the heightened conflict, an increasing number of Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance. Immediate unmet funding needs amount to US\$80 million to provide vital food assistance from April to June 2013 to vulnerable people inside Syria and Syrians seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. WFP requires some US\$19 million per week.

Within Syria, where WFP is scaling up to reach 2.5 million beneficiaries, WFP requires US\$111.4 million from April to June 2013 (equivalent to US\$9.3 million per week), of which US\$16.3 million remain unfunded.

For Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries, WFP requires US\$109.6 million from April to June 2013 (equivalent to US\$9.1 million per week), of which US\$63.8 million remain unfunded.

In addition, WFP calls on its partners to strengthen their support for Logistics/ETC Special Operation, which provides logistical and telecommunications support to the entire humanitarian community in Syria. Currently, the Operation is only half-funded, requiring some US\$8.5 million until the end of the year.

WFP is grateful for the critical support provided by multilaterals donors in response to the Syria crisis, as well as of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, 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, Spain, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Russia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, the United States and private donors.



WFP/Omar Al-Homse





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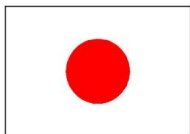
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