

WFP SYRIA CRISIS RESPONSE

Situation Update

9 — 23 AUGUST 2013

SYRIA **JORDAN** **LEBANON** **TURKEY** **IRAQ** **EGYPT**

Highlights

This week, an estimated 40,000 refugees entered the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. WFP has begun dry ration distributions in response to this massive influx and has dispatched enough food for 185,000 people to the area.

WFP continues to face access constraints when attempting to reach areas of need in Al-Hassakeh governorate.

As a result of insecurity, WFP has delayed its August voucher distributions to Syrian refugees across Egypt.

WFP's August cycle food distributions are targeting a total of 3 million beneficiaries across Syria. By 21 August, WFP had dispatched food for distribution 1,283,845 people in 13 governorates (43 percent of the August target). The pace for dispatches has been severely constrained by intensifying conflict.

Final cooperating partner distribution reports confirm that more than 2.4 million beneficiaries received a monthly food ration during the June cycle, or 97 percent of the target.

Nutrition

In an effort to expand coverage of the blanket supplementary feeding programme, a pilot initiative to distribute Plumpy'doz® to children residing in host communities in Homs and Tartous is now underway. A total of 9 mt of the commodity is ready for dispatch to NGO partners in both governorates, targeting some 7,000 children aged 6-59 months.



Challenges in Access

Access constraints continue to be particularly pronounced in Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Aleppo and Idlib, compromising both the dispatch and distribution of food. As in previous months, it is likely that governorate allocations will remain subject to revision, in accordance with shifting patterns of access on the ground. It is also likely that additional food rations will be reprioritized to locations hosting new IDP outflows, such as Lattakia city, which has received 3,000 newly displaced families from rural areas experiencing violence. WFP has already dispatched 2,000 family food rations, sufficient for 10,000 people, for affected groups.

Al-Hassakeh

Rising needs and increasingly restricted access are complicating the delivery of assistance to Al-Hassakeh. Opposition groups in control of areas in neighbouring Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa provinces, refuse to allow trucks to pass into Al-Hassakeh carrying WFP food. On 17 August, up to 10,000 people originating from Al-Hassakeh, as well as parts of Aleppo, crossed the Syrian border into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, adding to an influx of some 7,000 two days prior. This was one of the largest single refugee waves since the onset of the crisis. Even with this large movement of people out of the governorate the intense conflict over the last two months has seen an increase in the number of people needing WFP assistance. It is estimated that more than 135,000 people from Aleppo, Idlib, Homs and Deir-e-zor have been displaced to Al-Hassakeh. In addition it is estimated that more than 20,000 IDPs have moved from rural Al-Hassakeh into the city. Returnee families, who had left the governorate prior to the conflict in search of employment and have now returned due to the conflict, some 30,000, are believed to require food assistance.

Public transport within the governorate has been severely hampered limiting the movement from Al-Hassakeh to other governorates. Commercial companies are believed to have suspended movement over the last two weeks, and commodity prices are expected to further increase due to dwindling supplies and high transaction costs.

In total some 285,000 people require food assistance, although these are preliminary estimates and could change. WFP is considering all options to urgently meet the needs of the vulnerable in Al-Hassakeh governorate.

Homs

In Homs City and surrounding villages, armed clashes and shelling continue. It is believed that the city's Al Waer neighbourhood, a key flashpoint, is now home to 450,000 people, of which 80 percent are IDPs: a four-fold increase since before the crisis. Amid significantly increased demand and disruption to the supply chain, it is reported that local markets are running out of essential food and non-food items. After the last successful food deliveries into Al Waer in early July (with a total of 6,000 family food rations sufficient for 30,000 people reaching the area), WFP was once again able to secure access on 4 August using small pick-up vehicles (in compliance with an instruction from local security authorities). Since then, 2,810 family food rations sufficient for 14,050 people and 4,100 bags of wheat flour have been delivered into Al-Waer. On 12 August, deliveries were temporarily suspended following a failure to secure necessary government facilitation letters. Efforts are underway to resolve the issue, and to gain approval for the use of larger trucks in order to scale-up deliveries.

Logistics Cluster

Between 3 and 12 August, a series of humanitarian deliveries reached besieged areas of Idlib city, via inter-agency convoys coordinated by the UN hub in Tartous and supported by the WFP-led Logistics Cluster. WFP family food rations sufficient to feed 17,750 people, and enough high energy biscuits for 50,000 beneficiaries were successfully delivered to affected areas.

In total, during the reporting period, the Logistics Cluster transported a total of 1,226m³ of health, WASH, food, education and shelter items on behalf of UNFPA, UNICEF, ACF, Premiere Urgence, IMC and IOM from Damascus and Tartous to various other locations inside Syria. Free-to-user storage was also provided to UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO for 621m³ of health, WASH, food and shelter items at common facilities in Damascus and Tartous.

FEATURED UPDATE

Monitoring and Evaluation

Syria

On 13 August, a tender for the contract of a third party WFP monitoring partner closed. Once the procurement process has concluded, the selected partner will conduct monitoring activities at a minimum of 70 locations each month in addition to WFP's direct coverage. It is expected that this will increase monitoring coverage to at least 30 percent of all main WFP final distribution points. Areas that are designated "no go" to UN staff will be prioritised. WFP hopes to commence third party monitoring in September.

Harmonized Regional Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of concerted effort to streamline monitoring and evaluation (M&E) across WFP's regional refugee response, country offices have reviewed their previous monitoring tools and agreed on a minimum set of standards, tools and indicators. In addition, WFP is currently setting up a regional database and data analysis services, which will ensure the establishment of an increasingly harmonized regional monitoring and evaluation system. All countries in the region will collect data through these recently standardized set of M&E tools which includes post-distribution household level questionnaires that monitor coping strategies, access to assistance and food consumption, as well as distribution monitoring and shop monitoring questionnaires and checklists (in order to check whether activities in these sites are taking place according to WFP standards). In Jordan and Lebanon, shop monitoring activities are currently complemented with price monitoring activities, in order to ensure that shops are not overpricing beneficiaries.

At the moment, only Jordan is currently in the process of inputting the collected data from post-distribution monitoring forms into the regional M&E database. Iraq and Egypt have thus far collected two months' worth of M&E data. The forms for Turkey are currently under revision whereas Lebanon will wait for its transition to the electronic voucher before adopting the harmonized set of tools. In addition, Lebanon will also pilot test the use of mobile devices in order to facilitate the data collection process.

JORDAN

UN and Jordanian officials have accelerated efforts to build and expand refugee facilities in anticipation of a possible large refugee influx after this week's alleged chemical attacks near Damascus. WFP is ready to respond as needed and all preparedness measures are in place.

WFP will begin the transition to food voucher assistance in Jordan's largest refugee camp and fifth largest city, Al Za'atri camp. The expansion of the voucher programme in Al Za'atri camp will start with every refugee in the camp receiving individual vouchers worth JOD 6/month/person or USD 8.5/month/person. These vouchers will replace the distribution of oil, as well as leave beneficiaries with a small amount to purchase other food commodities.

Currently, 16 local community based shops in the camp will support the voucher programme until larger supermarkets are in place. Thereafter, WFP will progressively increase the voucher value while reducing the dry ration commodities in the food basket until the camp is assisted entirely through food vouchers.

The sensitization for the transition to vouchers in Al Za'atri camp began on 17 August with a communication campaign rolled out in food distribution points with posters and brochures displaying the key messages and dates for the implementation of the vouchers in Al Za'atri camp.

The paper vouchers for Al Za'atri camp are currently being printed and will differ in design and colour from vouchers distributed in Jordanian communities.

Electronic Voucher Assistance

WFP is working to transition from paper vouchers to e-vouchers. The e-voucher will function like a pre-paid debit card that beneficiaries can use to purchase food from shops, while simultaneously allowing other agencies to assist beneficiaries using the same card through cash assistance and/or e-vouchers.

E-vouchers will give beneficiaries greater flexibility in purchasing food products and negate the need for them to come to distribution sites as the card will be automatically recharged monthly through the partner bank. Beneficiaries will also be able to spend the balance of their e-voucher in multiple visits, unlike paper vouchers which require beneficiaries to spend the entire balance in one visit.

WFP is currently in the process of selecting pilot locations based on the following criteria: urban/provincial locations, wealthier/poorer areas, and camp/non-camp settings.. The partner bank and WFP have agreed on a timeframe and workplan for the e-vouchers, with the pilot planned to begin during the month of September.

Azraq Camp

WFP is prepared for the opening of Azraq camp, scheduled for 1 September. Following a recent decision by the Government of Jordan, only retailers based in Azraq will be able to open shops in Azraq camp. Depending on when Azraq-based retailers are able to establish shops in the camp, WFP may start operations with the distribution of in-kind dry rations for the first two weeks of the camp's opening before moving to food voucher assistance.

Monitoring



WFP/Dina El-Kassaby

During the reporting period, WFP monitored 10 distributions and conducted 70 household post-distribution monitoring surveys in Al Za'atri camp. In Jordanian communities, WFP visited eight partner shops, seven distributions, and conducted 60 post-distribution monitoring surveys. In addition, WFP monitors the voucher hotline on a daily basis as it is the most direct beneficiary feedback mechanism connecting beneficiaries with the WFP programme team.

WFP monitoring found that in Jordanian communities, distributions went smoothly in almost every site visited, while two distributions took longer than planned due to issues of overcrowding. WFP is addressing this issue with the distributing partner to expand the number of distribution sites to decrease waiting times and lower transportation costs for beneficiaries.

In Ma'an, WFP added two shops to the voucher programme in order to accommodate the increasing number of beneficiaries in the voucher programme and prevent monopolistic tendencies of the prior shop.

LEBANON

On 15 August, a large VBIED exploded in the vicinity of Martyrs' Square in South Beirut killing 30 and wounding as many as 280. The blast is the second in just over a month to hit one of Hezbollah's bastions of support. Insecurity is on the rise throughout the country; while a significant percentage of beneficiaries reside in some of the worst affected areas, food voucher distributions have only experienced minor delays.

In the month of August, WFP plans to reach approximately 567,000 beneficiaries with food vouchers and an additional 56,500 thousand with food parcels.



WFP/Rein Skallerud

Targeting

Due to the increasing number of refugees and funding constraints, WFP Lebanon sees the need for increasingly targeted assistance. A Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) is nearing completion, which will define targeting criteria. Accordingly, WFP and UNHCR launched the first phase of their mass information campaign to raise awareness among beneficiaries of the need for targeted food assistance. Help desks have been established in

waiting areas where beneficiaries are briefed during distributions.

A nutrition survey led by UNICEF will take place in September 2013 and address the needs of both Syrian refugees and host populations. WFP, along with WHO, UNHCR, and the Ministry of Health, will form part of the technical advisory committee.

Monitoring

Monitoring activities in the Bekka Valley were delayed due to additional commitments related to the aforementioned mass information campaign on upcoming targeting.

A new sampling strategy for post-distribution interviews was implemented for the first time during the July monitoring cycle. 80 randomly selected households per sub-office will be monitored every month for a total of 240 households.

TURKEY

Clashes between PKK-linked PYD and Al-Nusra Front opposition forces persist along the Syrian border. Various casualties sustained on the Turkish side have galvanized demonstrations in protest of those incidents and the government's policy toward Syria.

The Government estimates that there are between 500,000-600,000 Syrians in Turkey. This figure includes those registered, awaiting registration, and living in camps and also unregistered seeking asylum in Turkey.

On 12 August, local and national media reported that a large influx of around 3,000 Syrians approached the border in Akçakale and were admitted following bombings in the city of Tel-Abyad in the Raqqqa province in northern Syria, about 90 kilometers from the border. Taking into account the deterioration in security over the past week, further large inflows of refugees could occur.

WFP is currently operating in 14 of the 20 camps in Turkey, and has capped its beneficiaries at 115,000 due to funding constraints. Should funding be secured, WFP will scale up its response to meet the target in BR 10 of 185,000 people by December 2013. WFP and UNHCR are participating in joint-discussions with the Government about the potential to provide assistance outside the camps, yet are constrained by paucity of sustainable financing.

Monitoring

The monitoring and evaluation system has been reviewed and strengthened, in-line with a regional initiative of harmonizing M&E data-collection and reporting. In Hatay, there is a rising concern that some beneficiaries are sharing their rations with family members living outside of the camps. Beneficiaries in Hatay have access to markets outside of the camps, and many have family members who are living in nearby communities and are facing increasing financial stress. WFP is currently working with all markets involved in the program to ensure standard ID verification practices are upheld.

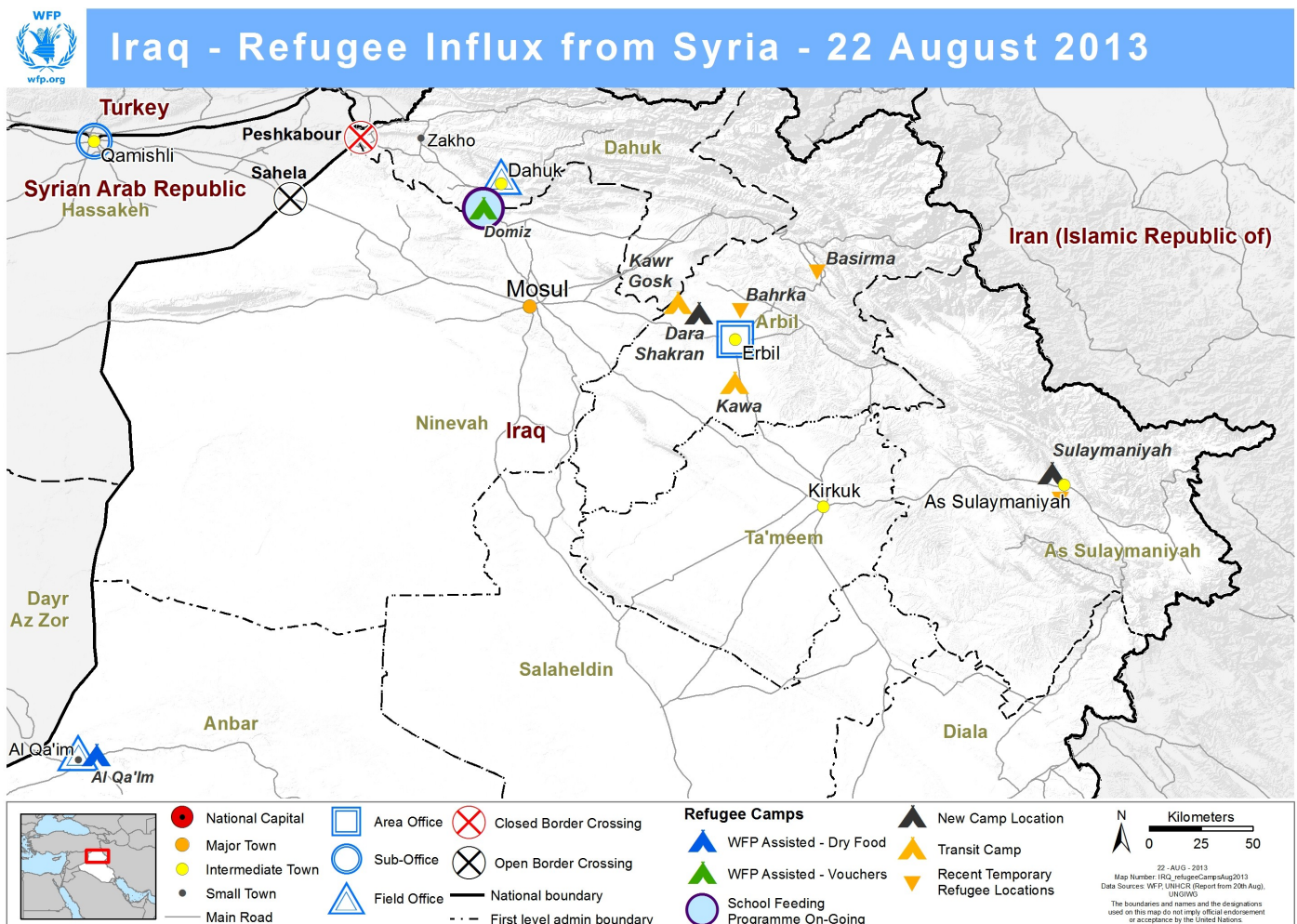
IRAQ

On 15 August, Iraqi Kurdish Regional authorities opened access to the Peshkabour pontoon bridge, allowing thousands of Syrians fleeing from the current conflict to enter the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq; an estimated 40,000 refugees have since crossed the border. Population movements during the first two days took place across the Peshkabour border crossing. The Government is currently accepting Syrian refugees through the Sahela border crossing, south of Peshkabour. Meanwhile, the Al Qa'im border crossing in Anbar governorate (central Iraq) remains closed for Syrian refugees.

This is the first time Syrian nationals have been given free passage into Iraq's Kurdistan Region since the Government's move in mid-May to close the border to all persons, except medical cases and family reunification. Prior to the influx, almost 155,000 Syrian refugees were registered in Iraq, over 95 percent of who were seeking refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Transit sites and temporary shelters have been established in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates to accommodate the large influx of refugees. The temporary site at Kawergosk in the Khabat district of Erbil is currently hosting some 15,000 new arrivals with plans to expand to 20,000 people. Kurdish authorities have also provided access to a warehouse in Bahrka, Erbil governorate, where 3,000 new arrivals are being sheltered. An estimated 14,000 people are also living with host families or are residing in mosques in Erbil. Refugees in the governorate are expected to be moved to Dara Shakran camp, which was under construction prior to the influx, in the coming weeks.

In Sulaymaniyah governorate, 4,000 people are being accommodated in schools while a transit site is established in Arbat.



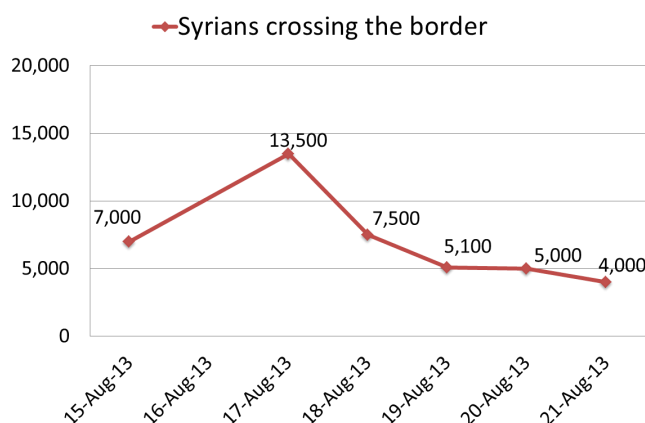
New arrivals mainly consist of families coming from areas of Aleppo, Efrin, Al-Hassakeh and Qamishli due to recent clashes between Kurds and members of the Al-Nusra Front and increasing socio-economic hardships. A number of this caseload is reported to have members of their family already living in the Kurdish Region of Iraq.

WFP Response

During the first hours and days of the influx, the Kurdish Regional Government assisted new arrivals through the distribution of sandwiches and meal. Since the rapid establishment of transit sites and the distribution of UNHCR cooking sets, WFP has begun its food assistance with plans to scale-up stocks to reach the increasing number of refugees. 1500 in-kind food rations, which include oil, lentils, rice and sugar have thus far been distributed per tent at the Kawergosk transit site. WFP is visiting all other temporary sites to assess the feasibility and scale of distributions.

37,000 family food rations, sufficient to feed 185,000 people, have been dispatched from Turkey to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. A portion of these rations should arrive via land early next week. WFP is also considering airlifting the remaining rations directly to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. WFP is also planning to dispatch high energy biscuits and supplementary food for children to help prevent micronutrient deficiencies in young new arrivals.

WFP is increasing its staffing levels, including bringing experienced international staff on temporary duty to Iraq, in order to effectively and rapidly respond to the large influx of refugees.



EGYPT

On 14 August, the Government began forcibly removing pro-Morsi sit-ins in Greater Cairo, leaving hundreds dead and thousands wounded in its wake. In response, a state of emergency has been declared and curfews put in place across select governorates from 7 PM – 6 AM, encompassing all areas where WFP plans to distribute food vouchers (greater Cairo area, Alexandria and Damietta). In the past few weeks, following the political turmoil in the country, there has been a shift in perceptions and the level of sympathy afforded to the Syrian community who have been reported to have participated in Egyptian political rallies. The Government of Egypt announced temporary measures on 8 July requiring Syrians coming to Egypt to obtain a visa and prior security approval.

WFP is planning to distribute vouchers to 50,000 Syrian refugees in the month of August in Cairo, Alexandria, and Damietta. Amid wide-spread violence across the country, WFP staff worked from home most of last week and with travel restrictions, thereby delaying the August voucher distributions towards the end of the month. WFP hopes to resume this month's food vouchers as soon as the security situation allows. New voucher distribution sites are also currently being arranged, and WFP is prepared to provide private security at all sites. Given increased concentration of Syrian refugees in the 6 of October area in Cairo, WFP has extended geographic targeting to the sub-district level to prioritize the most food-insecure refugees. WFP is also prepared to reach 6,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria in September pending final lists and identification cards from UNRWA.

Funding & Shortfalls


Resourcing

Until the end of 2013, WFP operations in Syria and the region will cost US\$763 million, of which US\$562 million remain unfunded.

Given the escalating conflict, and heightened demands for the humanitarian response, WFP operations cost US\$30 million per week to meet the needs of vulnerable people inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.

Pipeline Breaks

Timeline for pipeline breaks by country

2013	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2014
							
Syria	General Food Distribution (GFD)			WFP Syria EMOP will be running out of food by the 3rd week of September. Without internal advances the operation would have had significant reduction in rations from June.			
Jordan	GFD & Vouchers			Complete pipeline break: End of August, without internal advances operation would have run out of funds in July/Aug.			
Lebanon	GFD & Vouchers			Complete pipeline break: 1st week of September, without internal advances operation would have run out of funds in July/Aug.			
Turkey	Vouchers			Complete pipeline break: Second week of September, without internal advances operation would have run out of funds in July/Aug.			
Iraq	GFD & Vouchers			Complete pipeline break: End of August, without internal advances operation would have run out of funds in July/Aug.			
Egypt	Vouchers			Complete pipeline break: 1st week of September, without internal advances operation would have run out of funds in July/Aug.			

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, 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, Norway, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Russia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, the United States and private donors.



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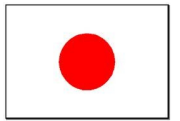
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