

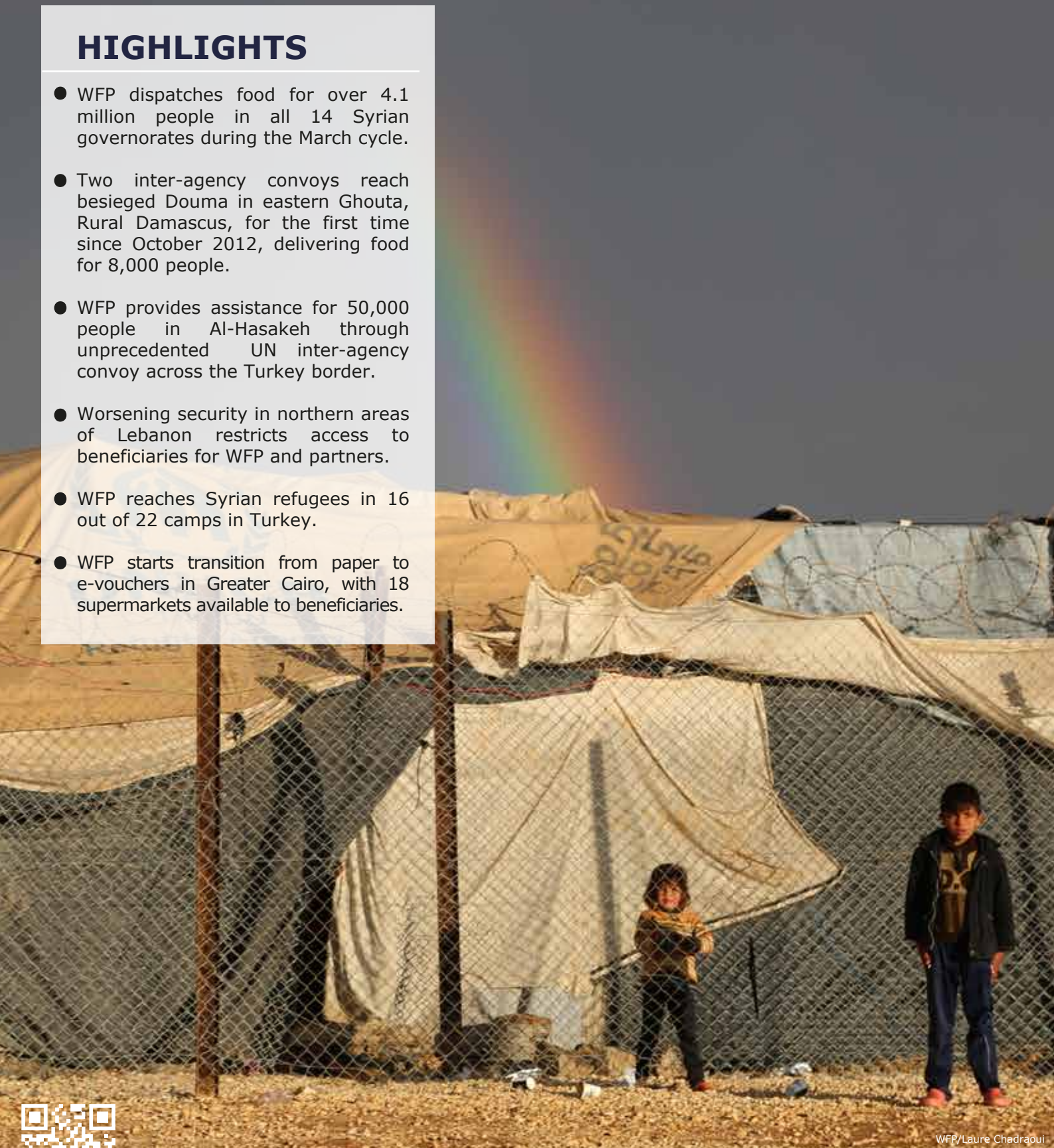
Situation Update

19 March - 1 April 2014

SYRIA JORDAN LEBANON TURKEY IRAQ EGYPT

HIGHLIGHTS

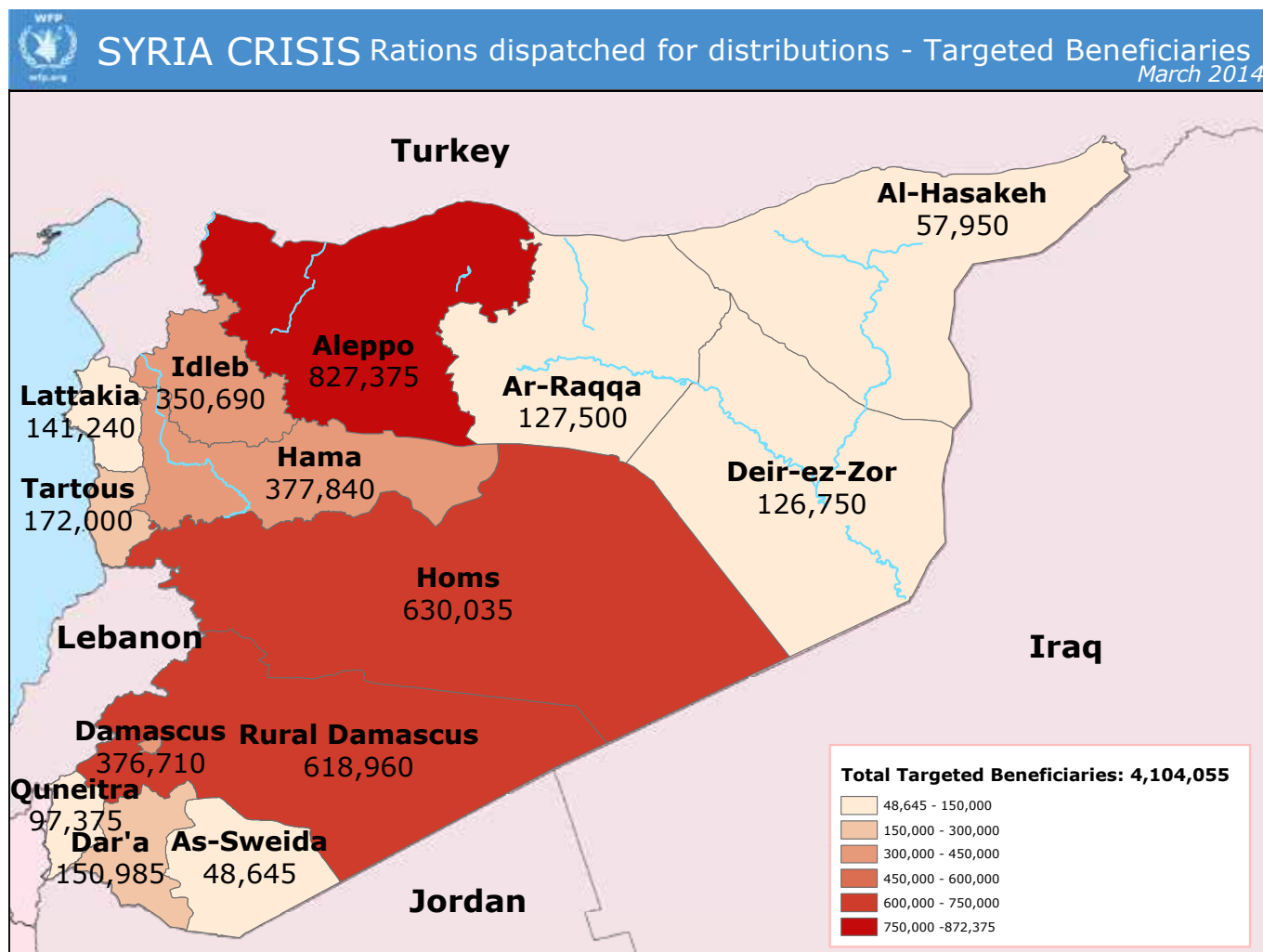
- WFP dispatches food for over 4.1 million people in all 14 Syrian governorates during the March cycle.
- Two inter-agency convoys reach besieged Douma in eastern Ghouta, Rural Damascus, for the first time since October 2012, delivering food for 8,000 people.
- WFP provides assistance for 50,000 people in Al-Hasakeh through unprecedented UN inter-agency convoy across the Turkey border.
- Worsening security in northern areas of Lebanon restricts access to beneficiaries for WFP and partners.
- WFP reaches Syrian refugees in 16 out of 22 camps in Turkey.
- WFP starts transition from paper to e-vouchers in Greater Cairo, with 18 supermarkets available to beneficiaries.



WFP/Laure Chadraoui



SYRIA



Successful access negotiations and an improved supply chain enabled WFP in March to dispatch food for a record 4.1m people in all 14 governorates. In terms of the anticipated number of recipients, this represented an 11% increase on the 3.7m reached in February. It was the first time in six months that there were dispatches to all governorates.

Unprecedented since the beginning of the crisis, the Syrian and Turkish authorities allowed UN agencies to deliver humanitarian assistance through the Nusaybeen border crossing point. In late March, a series of inter-agency convoys totaling 78 trucks transported humanitarian assistance to the governorate of Al-Hasakeh, to which there had been no overland access for six months. WFP moved one-month rations for 50,000 people, 22 percent of the vulnerable population targeted in the governorate. This followed the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2139 urging all parties to grant unhindered humanitarian access to conflict-affected population in Syria.

Two cross-line inter-agency convoys enabled WFP to access hard-to-reach areas in Idleb and Rural Damascus, providing assistance to 22,500 of the approximately 110,000 people estimated to be living in Sarmada camps and Douma. Furthermore, following successful negotiations WFP rations reached Deir-ez-Zor governorate for only the second time since October last year, as well as the town of Bludan in Rural Damascus, which has been under siege since June 2013. In spite of these advances, sustained and predictable humanitarian access to all in need has yet to be achieved. Across the country, an estimated three million people, whose needs remain to be assessed, live in areas where access remains severely restricted.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

	Planned*	Dispatched	Distributed
JANUARY CYCLE			
General Food Rations	4,250,000	3,670,835	3,651,545
Wheat Flour	1,504,000	1,193,600	720,995
Supplementary Feeding Programme	240,000**	91,471	85,005
FEBRUARY CYCLE			
General Food Rations	4,250,000	3,713,730	3,653,165
Wheat Flour***	1,504,000	1,946,680	1,160,200
Supplementary Feeding Programme	240,000**	94,909	127,498****
MARCH CYCLE			
General Food Rations	4,250,000	4,104,055	Ongoing
Wheat Flour	1,504,000	2,224,925	Ongoing
Supplementary Feeding Programme	240,000**	59,400	Ongoing

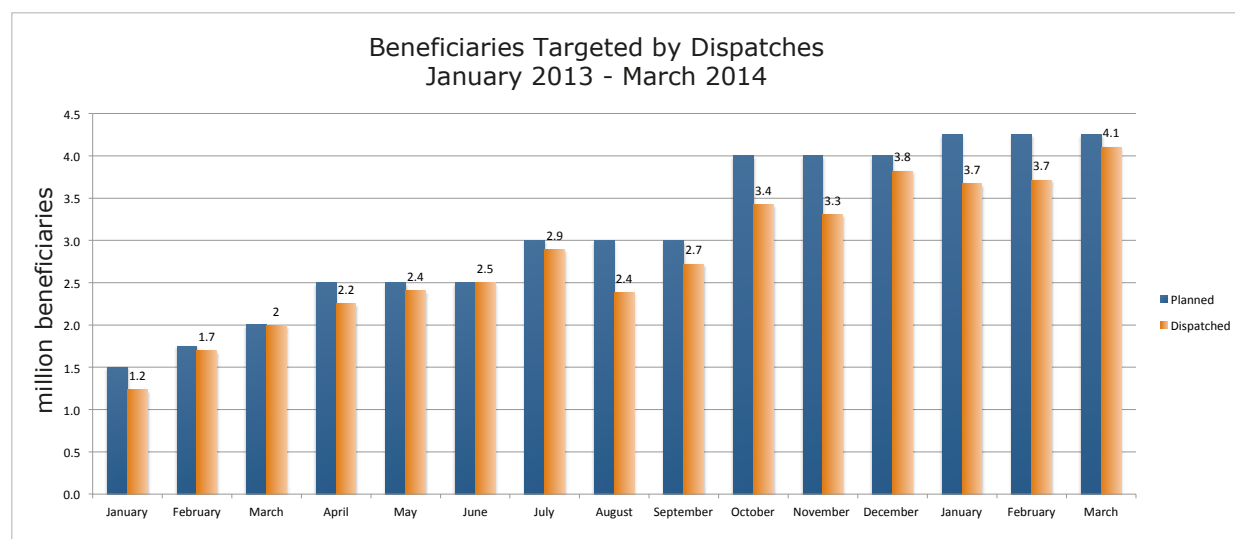
*WFP adopts a flexible operational approach in order to maximise the efficiency of its response to the fast evolving conditions on the ground. As such, it takes into account population movements and access challenges, redirecting assistance to accessible populations in need as required. As a result, more than 100% of targets may be met in areas where actual needs exceed the original plan.

**The planning figures for the Supplementary Feeding Programme apply to the entire year, while a lower number of beneficiaries is currently being targeted on a monthly basis. The programme includes distribution of Plumpy'Doz® in the central and Southern governorates and Nutributter in the north-eastern governorates and Aleppo.

*** The current monthly ration of wheat flour per family is 12.5 Kg. At present, households receive a 25 Kg bag of wheat flour every two months.

****February distributions of Plumpy'Doz® and Nutributter® exceeded targets, as some quantities of Plumpy'Doz® dispatched in January were distributed only in February. Additionally, the Ministry of Health took advantage of the on-going national polio vaccination campaign to increase coverage of the blanket feeding programme in Rural Damascus.

Food Dispatches: Successful negotiations, combined with the approval for cross-border deliveries from Turkey, allowed WFP to increase the coverage of its assistance within the country, reaching all 14 Syrian governorates for the first time in six months. As a result, during this cycle WFP achieved 97 percent of its plan for the cycle, dispatching enough food to assist over 4.1 million people across the entire country, an 11 percent increase compared to the February cycle. In addition, 5,562 mt of wheat flour, or 80 percent of the March plan, were dispatched to nine governorates, targeting approximately 2.2 million people living in areas where shortages of bread were reported by partners. The significantly improved dispatch rate for March as compared to previous months was also due to an enhanced supply chain that allowed all commodities to be available prior to the start of the cycle.



Food Distributions: The February distribution cycle concluded with 3.65 million people, or 86 percent of the number planned, reached in 13 of the 14 governorates. Due to persistent insecurity along transport routes, food distributions in Ar-Raqqa, targeting over 284,000 people, could not take place for the fourth consecutive month. Wheat flour was distributed to over 1.1 million people in nine governorates, excluding Tartous and Lattakia, not targeted by wheat flour distribution, and the northeastern governorates, where access constraints limit truck movement for humanitarian deliveries.

WFP partners are currently distributing the rations received as part of the March cycle, targeting over 4.1 million beneficiaries in all Syrian governorates.

Bread distribution: In Idleb and Aleppo, wheat flour is channelled through public bakeries, which provide bread to beneficiaries. In western Aleppo city the number of public bakeries supplied with fortified wheat flour rose from four to ten, allowing bread production to increase by over 40 percent, with up to 65,000 bundles produced every day. In Idleb, nine bakeries are producing bread for approximately 700 beneficiaries on a daily basis, while in Al-Hasakeh, yeast airlifted from Damascus is being provided to ten public bakeries in Al-Hasakeh city, Quamishli, and rural areas along the border with Turkey.

Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme: In 2014, WFP plans to reach a total of 240,000 children aged 6-23 months with support to prevent malnutrition in northern, central and southern governorates. Currently providing specialised nutrition support to almost 130,000 children, WFP is gradually scaling up the programme to reach the full caseload by the end of the year. Access constraints in the north-east and a shortage of technical partners have hindered a rapid scale up of the intervention.

In March, 55mt of specialised food were dispatched to both collective shelters and host communities in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Tartous, Homs and Hama to prevent acute malnutrition among over 42,000 vulnerable children. In addition, 48 mt of supplementary feeding product, sufficient to address micronutrient deficiencies in 17,400 children, were airlifted to Al-Hasakeh governorate from Damascus. Distributions in the targeted areas are ongoing.

Northeastern Syria

Al-Hasakeh

WFP continues to face major access challenges in Al-Hasakeh governorate, where the closure of the main access points from inside Syria is posing significant difficulties in reaching over 227,000 vulnerable conflict affected people targeted for WFP food assistance. Significant waves of displacement have occurred in recent weeks, mainly towards Quamishli and rural areas surrounding Al-Hasakeh city. Further population displacements were reported south of Al-Hasakeh, precipitated by fighting and deteriorating security conditions. While dull details are not yet available, WFP partners registered 250 newly displaced people from the town of Margada. They are being assisted with WFP food rations.

WFP continues to seek alternative routes to deliver humanitarian assistance to the governorate to overcome restrictions on overland deliveries from central and southern Syria. Following approval from Turkish and Syrian authorities, a UN inter-agency convoy was allowed to deliver humanitarian items to the governorate through the Nusaybeen crossing point along the border with Turkey between 20 and 25 March. WFP participated in the convoy, transporting 651 mt of food items consisting of 10,000 family food rations, including rice and fortified wheat flour.



WFP trucks waiting at Nusaybeen crossing point in Turkey

Additionally, 48 mt of Nutributter for the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme were delivered to Al-Hasakeh. Coupled with the rations delivered from Turkey, this assistance will cover the need of about 55,000 people in the governorate, including 17,400 young children targeted with specialized nutrition support, close to 25 percent of the planned beneficiaries. Furthermore, WFP delivered 40mt of yeast to be distributed to 10 public bakeries in Al-Hasakeh city, Quamishli and rural areas in the north of the governorate, which will increase production capacity thus improving access to subsidized bread for over 480,000 people over a 40 day period.

Deir-ez-Zor

After four months of interrupted access, due to widespread insecurity along access routes, successful negotiations allowed WFP to resume deliveries to Deir-ez-Zor at the end of February, albeit on a limited scale. Worsening security conditions forced a temporarily suspension of food deliveries in early March. However, the route than partially re-opened, enabling WFP to deliver approximately 11,650 family food rations for 60,000 people in Deir-ez-Zor city and Al Mayadin, in the southeast of the governorate. A further 12,700 rations are currently en route to the governorate, which will provide support to an additional 63,500 vulnerable people. While representing a breakthrough in access after months of interrupted deliveries, this assistance will allow WFP to reach just over 40 percent of the targeted beneficiaries in Deir-ez-Zor.

Northern Syria

Aleppo

WFP continues to provide assistance to over 750,000 vulnerable conflict-affected people in western Aleppo, where an extraordinary influx of IDPs fleeing violence in other parts of the governorate caused a rapid escalation of the humanitarian needs in the in recent weeks. While able to scale-up and consistently deliver assistance to respond to the growing demand for humanitarian support in the western neighbourhoods of Aleppo city, WFP is still unable to reach populations in need in the eastern part of the city, and in rural areas of the governorate. While access restrictions impede reliable needs assessments, local partners estimate that over one million people live in those areas.

UN mission to Aleppo

For the first time since July 2013, a UN mission visited western Aleppo city from 18 to 22 March. A rapid assessment found markets generally well supplied and functioning, with prices relatively stable. Bread was found to be generally available in areas where WFP partners are providing public bakeries with wheat flour, allowing them to produce over 65,000 bread bundles per day. However, concerns were raised regarding the dire humanitarian conditions in eastern districts of the city and rural areas, with reports of food shortages and soaring inflation. Consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2319, the mission met with local authorities and partners to discuss the provision of much needed assistance to inaccessible areas, including to an estimated 35,000 people in Nabul and Zahraa, who have not received WFP food since August 2013.

Idleb

Amid escalating fighting and growing numbers of IDPs seeking refuge in relatively safer areas, humanitarian conditions in Idleb are rapidly deteriorating. To meet increased needs, WFP reached approximately 420,000 people in February, increasing by 65 percent the assistance originally allocated to the governorate. While consistently delivering increasing amounts of assistance to meet the needs of over 400,000 people believed to be in urgent need of assistance, WFP remains unable to reach some 160,000 people in areas where access that have been inaccessible for up to two years.

A estimated 60,000 people are living in 36 IDP camps north of Idleb, where WFP has had no direct access until March 2014. Following a first interagency convoy that reached eight camps in Harim area in early March, on 27 March a second convoy provided humanitarian assistance to 13 IDP camps in the area of Sarmada. Through both convoys, WFP dispatched a total of 7,000 family food rations, sufficient to meet the needs of approximately 35,000 people, close to 60 percent of the 60,000 IDP residing in 36 IDP camps in northern Idleb.

Southern Syria

Rural Damascus

An escalation of fighting affected the Qudsaia during the second half of March, forced an undetermined number of families to flee southeast towards Damascus city. However, some 200,000 people are believed to be still besieged, cut off from humanitarian assistance.

In February, over 460,000 people received WFP assistance in Rural Damascus. However, more than 300,000 individuals live in areas that are largely beyond the reach of such aid.

During the reporting period, WFP delivered assistance to support 12,500 people living in two hard-to-reach areas in Rural Damascus. On 20 and 29 March, inter-agency convoys reached Douma, in Eastern Ghouta, the first such access since October 2012, allowing the delivery of food for 8,000 people - 16 percent of the 50,000 people besieged there - for one month. On 27 March, three WFP trucks offloaded 900 family food rations to Bludan, northwest of Damascus city, enough for just 4,500 of its estimated 50,000 residents. It was only the second time since the siege began in June 2013 that food assistance reached Bludan.

FOCUS ON DOUMA

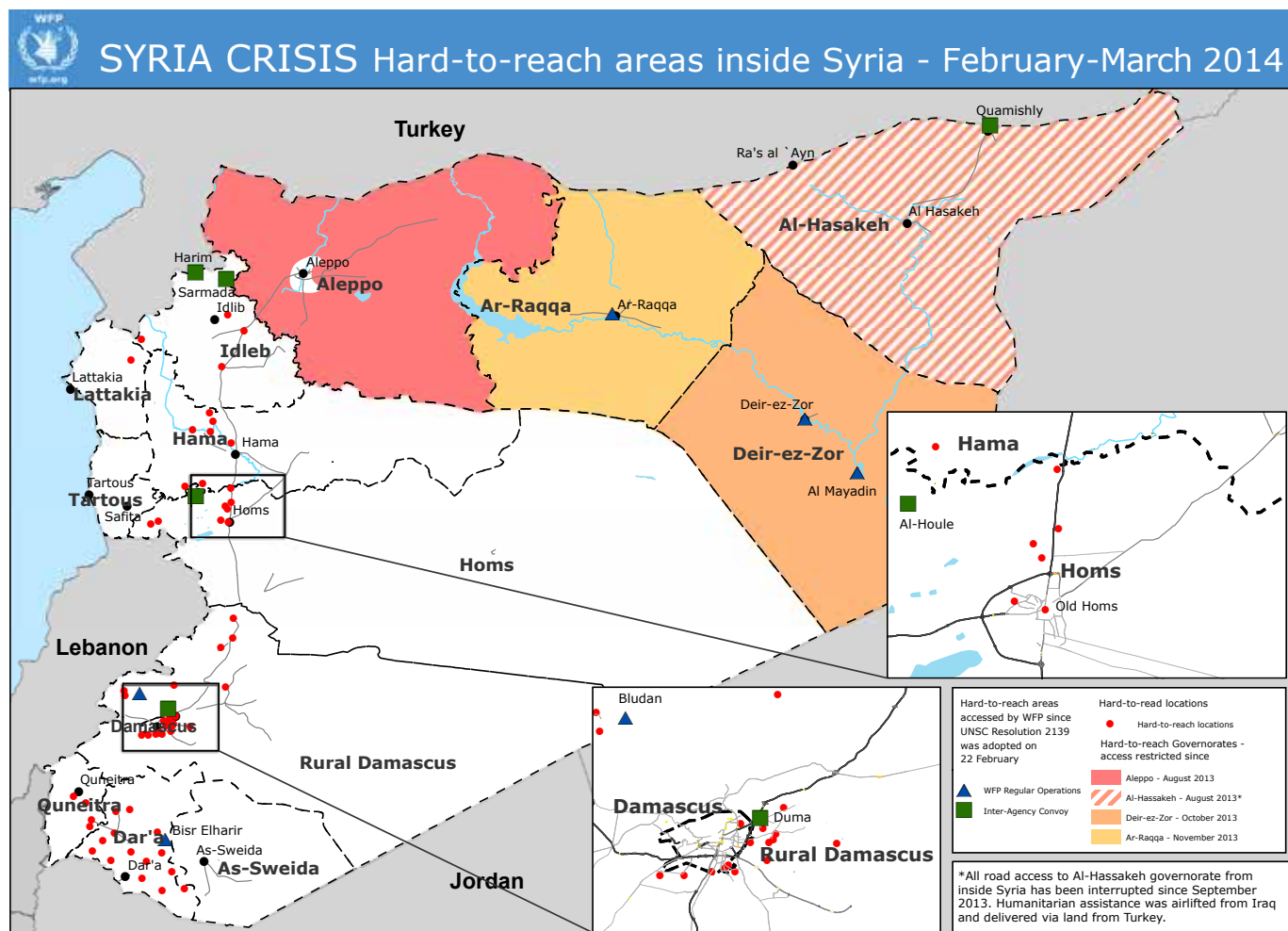
Almost two years of siege and fighting in Douma have caused widespread damage to infrastructure, shortages of basic supplies and the disruption of livelihoods, leaving its 50,000 people trapped residents in dire humanitarian conditions. Heavy fighting has reduced all hospitals to rubble and only 33 of its 117 schools are still functioning, according to a UN team that reached there on 20 March. The team also reported shortages of medicines, food and other essential items, and also observed widespread malnutrition and high levels of stress disorder.

Upper respiratory infections, dehydration, typhoid fever, and hepatitis were said to be widespread. In markets, food was scarce and prices exorbitant. Bread prices, for example, were said to be 80 times higher than pre-conflict levels and sugar prices 6 times higher than in other areas of Rural Damascus. An almost complete lack of income/earning opportunities was contributing to widespread poverty and the adoption of negative coping strategies, such as the withdrawal of children from school. With fighting in Douma continuing, its humanitarian crisis is expected to worsen if access restrictions persist..

Dar'a

Deteriorating security conditions continue to negatively affect the people of Dar'a, particularly along the border with Quneitra, aggravating its humanitarian crisis. In February, WFP reached about 65,000 people in the governorate, just 40 percent of the number planned for the month. With humanitarian access to the cities of Dara'a and Sanameen restricted, poor rural families are exposed to greater security risks because they travel long distances to reach the two cities in hope of assistance. In spite of such challenges, 2,000 WFP family rations reached the hard-to-access north-eastern town of Bistr Elharir, enough food for all 10,000 people in the area. It was only the second time they had received food assistance in nearly 18 months.





MARKET ANALYSIS

An increase in imports of goods contributed to relative commodity price stability compared to early March. This trend was observed in markets along border areas, a function of increased trade with neighboring countries, merchants said. It was particularly pronounced in As-Sweida and Al-Hasakeh, and Damascus. However, high prices continued to be registered in more remote markets, such as Dar'a and Ar-Raqqa, where widespread insecurity, longer travel times and high transport costs continued to fuel inflation. Indeed, high price volatility and inflation continued to be observed in markets where persistent insecurity imposed additional costs for the movement of commodities

The recent increase in the quantity of wheat flour supplied to both public and private bakeries resulted in a greater stability, or even a decline in some cases, of bread prices. In Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, for instance, the price of a bundle of bread dropped by 17 percent compared to levels registered during the first week of March. In eastern Aleppo city, however, where heavy clashes continued disrupting supplies, acute shortages of flour resulted in bread being sold at as much as six times higher than the standard subsidized price.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Refugees registered and awaiting registration:
990,133*

Reached in March: 671,567**
643,395 vouchers (96% of operational plan***)
28,172 parcels (44% of operational plan***)

Plan for April*:** 766,399
704,349 Vouchers
62,050 Parcels

* UNHCR registration numbers:

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

** Reconciliation ongoing

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

As refugees from Syria continue to arrive into Lebanon, the Bekaa valley on the eastern border area with Syria has been particularly affected by recent influxes. In the border town of Aarsal, approximately 400 families (approximately 2,000 people) arrived around mid-March following heavy fighting at the Syrian side of the border. Following similar inflows in November 2013 and February 2014, this marks the third influx witnessed in Aarsal in a short amount of time, resulting in the total refugee population now exceeding the number of resident Lebanese.

While hundreds of thousands of Syrians have sought refuge across the region, including in Jordan, Turkey and elsewhere, the largest concentration of Syrian refugees (now close to 1 million people) is found in Lebanon, increasing the population of the tiny country by about a quarter.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

During the reporting period, the worsening security situation in northern areas of the country, in particular in northern Bekaa Valley, affected WFP and partners' operations. The main challenges included restrictions on movements and limited access to beneficiaries in certain areas. As a result, while all distributions and monitoring visits were eventually completed, some took place later than planned.

With March distributions completed, WFP has reached 671,567 beneficiaries through either e-cards or food parcels. The majority of the beneficiaries simply had their e-card automatically uploaded in early March, while newly arrived refugees are being assisted with one-off food parcels. In April, WFP is planning to assist over 750,000 beneficiaries.

The high number of refugees is also having an impact on the social, public and economic infrastructure of the country, while the government is simultaneously forced to cope with an economic slowdown. The World Bank estimated that by the end of the year unemployment may double, an additional 170,000 Lebanese may be pushed into poverty, while the cost of the Syria crisis to the country could reach US\$7.5 billion.

In line with the above, WFP together with the World Bank and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), is in the process of developing an e-card food assistance project, specifically targeting vulnerable Lebanese. As part of the Government of Lebanon's National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), this food assistance project aims to help vulnerable host communities cope with the effects of the Syrian crisis and relieve tensions between Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities. During the last week of March the World Bank, MoSA and WFP conducted meetings with donors to gauge their interest in the project.

Safety Net Assistance

WFP continued collecting requests for safety net assistance from cooperating partners (CPs) in order to begin distributions in April. Vulnerable individuals who can benefit from this assistance include pregnant and lactating women, children under 2 years of age, elderly over 60 years of age, and non-autonomous individuals. Eligible vulnerable individuals will receive an individual ration through the e-card for as long as their proven vulnerability persists.

In order to determine eligibility, people must bring their UNHCR registration papers to confirm their ages (children under the age of two and people over the age of 60), or a certificate from a licenced clinic for pregnant women and non-autonomous individuals. So far, approximately 5,000 requests have been received and verified, of which 3,300 have been validated and will soon be receiving assistance. In addition, a separate data management system has been finalized in order to produce the first Safety Net beneficiary list in March for the planned April distributions. With WFP's cooperating partners operating the programme in different parts of the country, this will help avoid any possible duplication in requests and assistance across Lebanon.

Security challenges

Security remains a major concern for WFP's operations in Lebanon. Clashes have continued to occur during the reporting period, especially in the north of the country, affecting WFP's operations. As a result, planned distributions and monitoring visits were postponed.

In addition, as WFP provides food to Syria through its Lebanon logistics corridor, the worsening security situation is also a risk for WFP operations within Syria. During the reporting period, the international highway leading to the Lebanon and Syria Al Arida Border Crossing in the north of the country has faced intermittent closures due to insecurity. This directly affects the transport of cargo coming from Beirut to Lattakia and Tartous in Syria. With WFP so far not affected as it mainly uses the Beirut – Damascus corridor, others organizations using this route have had their operations more significantly impacted.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The fourth Price Monitoring Report, covering the period from August until December 2013, was consolidated and officially released during the reporting period. With the value of the WFP food basket found to be US\$31.54 as of December 2013, the total price of the basket had increased by four percent as compared to a year earlier. Overall, commodity prices remained stable across Lebanon over the reporting period, with some specific exceptions: white beans (+15 percent), canned tuna (+8 percent) and canned meat (+8 percent). However, no significant price variations were recorded between shops in the same region.



OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 588,979
Reached in March: 527,701 (93% of plan)
 In Za'atri: 98,974 (85% of plan)
 Refugees in communities: 428,727 (97% of plan)
Plan for April*: 565,284
 In camps: 100,822
 Refugees in communities: 464,462

While preparations for the opening of Arzaq camp by the end of April continue, March distributions of in-kind food, paper and electronic vouchers in Al Za'atri and communities have just been finalised, reaching a total of 527,701 refugees throughout the country. In Al Za'atri, the age-appropriate nutrition programme to address concerns of malnutrition was launched on 30 March, targeting a total of 6,000 children. In communities, the third phase of the transition from paper to e-vouchers in communities will be fully completed by early April, while discussions on the inter-agency vulnerability /targeting exercise with partners continue.

**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 the ongoing reregistration process.*

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

Camps

Al Za'atri camp

During the first cycle of March in-kind dry rations and partial vouchers, WFP reached 98,974 beneficiaries of the planned 115,639 individuals on the UNHCR manifest with food assistance. Following the completed transition from in-kind to voucher assistance in the camp, the second cycle in March reached 90,763 out of the planned 98,973 individuals from the UNHCR manifest with food vouchers valued at 10JD/person. In addition to new arrivals, the discrepancy between cycle figures can be attributed to the difference in the received UNHCR database information. While UNHCR is working to reconcile the two databases, voucher distributions are currently based on UNHCR's ProGres database, which reflects the ongoing reverification activities, whereas in-kind food is based on the UNHCR's RAIS database. So far, the ongoing reregistration has processed some 32,000 individuals, leading to the deactivation of 17 percent of cases. In addition to dates and date bars distributed to every camp resident, WFP will be continuing the daily distribution of 22.5 mt of bread to all refugees, until the bread value has been included in the vouchers in the near future.

With plans to reach some 6,000 children, Save the Children Jordan began age appropriate blanket distributions of SuperCereal Plus, a specialized nutritional product, to all children between 6-24 months of age in Za'atri camp on 30 March. In addition, 13,064 children attending school were reached with date bars on a daily basis, the highest figure reached to date.

Based on a recent assessment of the processing time spent during the registration process, the distribution of welcome meals has been shifted from Al Za'atri camp to Rabat Sarhan in Mafrq governorate where all Syrian refugees informally crossing the border are processed, registered and transported to Al Za'atri. Special needs cases will still be able to receive welcome meals from the new arrival centre in the camp. More than 6,100 welcome meals were distributed to new arrivals during the reporting period.



Distribution of SuperCereal Plus to children in Al Za'atri camp.

Azraq camp

With the opening of Azraq set for 30 April, WFP continues to prepare for the implementation of its voucher programme in the camp. The selected supermarket Sameh Mall has begun construction with plans to finish by 25 April, while the voucher distribution point will be completed in the next week. The camp will be able to house up to 130,000 people once all shelters have been constructed.

Communities

Following the ongoing transition from paper to e-vouchers, some 346,303 refugees in Jordanian communities were reached with paper vouchers in March, while the second tranche of e-voucher distributions was completed in Ma'an, Tafila, Karak, Balqa governorates, as well as Ramtha district in Irbid, reaching some 82,424 individuals with e-cards. Distributions for the third tranche are ongoing in the Tabrbour district of Amman, planned to conclude mid-April, while the fourth tranche of e-card distributions will begin on 2 April in Mafraq and Zarqa governorates. The final tranche of distributions targeting the rest of Amman and Irbid districts and Aqaba governorate will begin thereafter.

WFP cooperating partners Medair and Save the Children Jordan continue to implement the targeted nutrition programme for the treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) through the Jordan Health Aid Society clinics. While final figures for March are not yet available, WFP planned to reach 185 Syrian boys and girls under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women with MAM with SuperCereal Plus rations by the end of month.

More than 300,000 Syrian refugees have so far been processed by UNHCR as part of the retina scan reregistration in communities.

Inter-agency targeting exercise

The interagency steering committee with members from WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWomen, Handicap International, Danish Refugee Council and ACTED is continuing its effort to develop a common vulnerability framework, which will ensure a coordinated approach to material assistance and case management and form the basis for targeting the most vulnerable refugees in Jordanian communities. With assistance from the World Bank, the group is developing a statistical model based on the economic vulnerabilities of refugees to inform the targeting process. Agencies plan to start pilot testing the sector approved indicators in May.

MONITORING

In Al Za'atri camp, field monitors have found some community based organisation shops to be offering free non-food items to beneficiaries who spend their vouchers in the shops. While not unlawful, WFP continues to monitor shops and supermarkets to ensure full compliance with rules and regulations. Meanwhile, partner organisation Save the Children Jordan conducted SuperCereal Plus tasting sessions and distributed leaflets to teach beneficiaries the best way to prepare the specialised nutritional product.

In communities, Medair has been providing nutrition information sessions to every beneficiary with MAM to prevent them from relapsing back into a malnourished state. Harsh weather conditions led to fewer beneficiaries attending the distribution of SuperCereal Plus than planned, while also highlighting the need for more waiting areas and sufficient shading at one Amman distribution site.

WFP hotline

A total of 870 calls were received during the reporting period, 44 percent of which pertained to paper vouchers and 56 percent to e-cards. In relation to paper vouchers, callers requested information on shop and distribution locations and schedules, some newly registered households informed that they had not yet received the vouchers (will be included in next month's distribution cycle); while others provided updated contact details. Of the calls pertaining to e-cards, callers requested information regarding e-card balances, transactions and distribution dates and asked to reset their Personal Identification Numbers.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 649,302

Reached in March: Approximately

140,000* people in camps

Plan for April: 145,000 people in camps

**Reconciliation of figures still ongoing*

Operations are continuing as usual with heightened security measures and awareness being taken by all staff in the area.

Meanwhile, pre-programme expansion activities in Midyat camp in the city of Mardin have been ongoing during the reporting period. The e-card was distributed to the camp's households (which make up approximately 3,250 persons) and credit was uploaded onto cards on 1 April. WFP has injected over US\$261.5 million into the Turkish economy since October 2012, not only through its e-Food Card Programme but also through extensive procurement in support of WFP global operations.

E-Food Card Programme

In March, WFP and TRC completed the assessment of an additional five camps as part of plans for the second expansion phase of the e-Food Card Programme, aiming to cover 84,000 additional Syrian refugees. With a total camp population of 53,696 people, the five camps of Malatya (Beydagi), Midyat, Akcakale, Viransehir and Nusaybin were visited by both TRC and WFP teams as part of the assessment.

As per the findings, only Midyat camp met the pre-requisites of the program in terms of having acceptable prices and infrastructure in place. Moreover, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of the Government of Turkey (AFAD) card had already been distributed to the beneficiaries in this camp. This allows an immediate implementation of the new cost-sharing modality, whereby WFP/TRC contribute 60 Turkish liras (roughly equivalent to US\$30) and AFAD 20 Turkish liras (roughly equivalent to US\$10) to the monthly food entitlement. In preparation of the launch of the e-food card in the camp on 1 April, WFP field

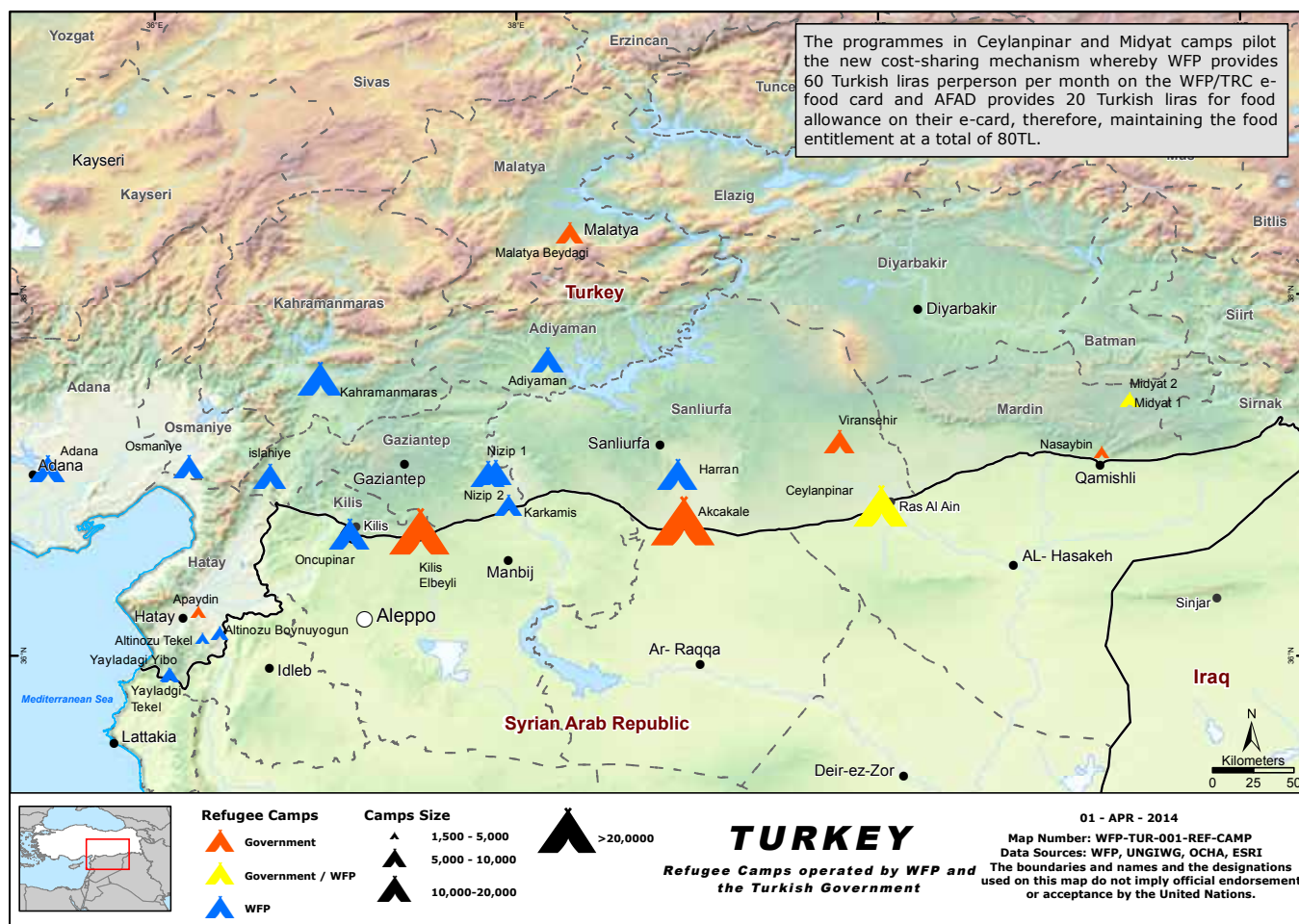


monitors joined TRC staff to conduct an e-card training session prior to the distribution of cards to all beneficiaries in the camp on 31 March. Staff are also present in the camp over the first few days of the launch to ensure a smooth transition to the new modality and to assist the resolution of any difficulties experienced, as beneficiaries shop with the e-food card in camp markets for the first time.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

WFP field staff attended a meeting of the new price monitoring committees in both Adiyaman and Kahranmanmaras camps. The committees include representatives from WFP, TRC, AFAD, the retail shops in the camps and some beneficiaries. The feedback from both meetings was positive with all parties committed to ensuring that food prices are monitored and maintained at reasonable levels. Some beneficiaries in Osmaniye and Islahiye camps thanked WFP field monitors for their presence in the camps and for the recent decreases in prices of some items in the camp markets, demonstrating not only the successful negotiations conducted by WFP field monitors and programme staff with market owners to reduce high prices, but also beneficiaries' acknowledgement of the work WFP is doing and their understanding of WFP's role in the e-Food Card Programme.

Adana camp management is planning to build two bakeries adjacent to the camp markets to provide baking facilities for beneficiaries. This is an extremely positive initiative to address a principal complaint amongst beneficiaries regarding the expense of bread as well as to mitigate the dangers involved in individuals baking with electric hot plates (sacs) in camp accommodation. Some camp managers have banned the use of sacs in the camps owing to the demand on electrical supply and associated dangers of overloading the circuits. WFP is advocating with AFAD and the Coordinating Governor to replicate the bakeries in other camps and to source wheat flour donations from the government and private sector.



IRAQ

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 219,579
(as of 30 March)

Reached in March: 99,029*
(90% of the operational plan).

Plan for April*: 106,000

* March distributions ongoing.

Syrian refugees continued to enter the country during the reporting period, reaching the Kurdistan Region of Iraq through its border with Al-Hasakeh governorate in Syria. Of the over 220,000 refugees registered by UNHCR, almost 60 percent cite Al-Hasakeh as their place of origin, while 18 percent originate from Aleppo and 10 percent from Damascus. Of all registered refugees, 43 percent reside in ten camps, nine of which are located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. As per government policy, WFP currently provides assistance to all refugees accommodated in camp settings.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

Erbil

In March, the distribution of 16.29 kg individual food rations was delayed in all camps in Erbil governorate due to the late arrival of commodities. Despite the delay, by the end of the month, WFP and its cooperating partner ACTED conducted distributions in Basirma, Kawr Gosk and Qushtapa camps, reaching almost 17,000 people. The distribution of commodities in a Dara Shakran camp, which hosts approximately 7,400 refugees, is scheduled for the first days of April. During the period in which WFP food parcels were not available in Dara Shakran camp, ACTED collaborated with the Barzani Charity Foundation to distribute temporary food parcels.

Dohuk

Over 800 Syrians were admitted into Kurdistan Region of Iraq via the Peshkhabour crossing point on 27 March. This group of Syrian asylum seekers (displaced mostly from Aleppo (81 percent), Afrin (6 percent) and Ar-Raqqa (4 percent) areas) are temporarily being accommodated at Bajet Qandela Transit Centre where they will undergo registration prior to being relocated. Over 50 percent of the new arrivals are children. Currently, approximately 1,100 people are currently being accommodated in Bajet Qandela. Pre-positioned A29 bars were distributed to the new arrivals by the Development and Modification Centre (DMC). WFP also distributed enough individual food parcels to all refugees accommodated in Bajet Qandela to last for two weeks, given that refugees are now staying longer at the border. Another distribution may be foreseen for mid-April.

Elsewhere in the governorate, the monthly distribution of food vouchers targeting 76,000 Syrian refugees registered in Domiz camp started on 2 March. 73,172 individuals were reached with vouchers, injecting over US\$2.2 million into the local economy.

Anbar

The ongoing conflict in Anbar province continues to present challenges, including access to the refugees in Al Obady camp and IDPs in Anbar. Damage to and destruction of bridges on the main supply routes could make the delivery of WFP commodities problematic as transporters must use secondary roads requiring more distance and time. WFP has dispatched 6,000 individual food parcels to Al Obady camp (which currently hosts approximately 1,800 people) to ensure that food stocks are maintained.

As a result of ongoing violence in Anbar governorate, an increase in food prices has been observed. The prices of beef, rice and vegetable oil have been particularly affected, while the highest price increases were recorded for wheat flour and tomatoes, whose price doubled in two months. A prolonged crisis spreading over the next planting season could further impact food prices. Furthermore, it was observed that due to the crisis in Anbar, the influx of IDPs and subsequent increased needs in the governorate, Syrian refugees did not receive vegetables, fruits or any other form of food assistance from organisations other than WFP (with the exception of US\$15/person/month provided by UNHCR to Al Obady camp refugees as complementary food).

ASSESSMENTS

Data collection for the UNHCR/ACTED-REACH multi-sectoral needs assessments has commenced in Suleimaniyah and Erbil governorates and will move to Dohuk in the coming week. With preliminary results expected to be available in 3-4 weeks, the assessment will allow agencies to determine needs and assistance gaps in non-camp refugee populations across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) is scheduled to commence at the end of April. WFP is working closely with UNHCR to ensure that all necessary preparations are underway prior to the start of the assessment. The JAM will allow WFP to assess the food security and nutrition needs of refugees in the Kurdistan Region.



OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 135,684*

Reached in March: approximately 75,000**
(73% of operational plan)***

Plan for April*:** 102,800

* UNHCR data:

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=8>

** Distributions still ongoing

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

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

With refugee numbers continuing to increase during the reporting period, over 135,000 refugees have been registered in Egypt as of 1 April. Due to some delays in signing the new supermarket contract in Greater Cairo, WFP March voucher distributions started on 24 March and are currently ongoing. The cycle is expected to be completed by 8 April, reaching a total of 97,500 Syrian refugees and 5,300 Palestinian refugees from Syria.

E-voucher Transition

Pending the launch of the 'OneCard' common assistance platform across Egypt, WFP has started transitioning from paper to e-vouchers in Greater Cairo through the Carrefour supermarket chain. Greater Cairo, including the 6 of October and Obour areas, hosts almost 60 percent of WFP's current caseload, amounting to 59,000 beneficiaries.

Following the agreement with the new partner supermarket Carrefour, beneficiaries are now able to shop at any of the 18 supermarkets across Greater Cairo using their Carrefour prepaid e-voucher. Allowing greater flexibility and freedom of choice in their purchase of groceries, the e-vouchers enable refugees the opportunity of buying daily fresh produce, as vouchers can be redeemed multiple times over the month. In addition, with the e-vouchers automatically uploaded each month,

beneficiaries no longer need to attend large scale monthly distributions, reducing both transportation time and cost. Finally, as reported from other countries where the programme is implemented, e-vouchers can help return a sense of dignity and normalcy to the lives of refugees.

To better understand what has gone well and what could be improved during the e-voucher transition process, an additional beneficiary feedback mechanism has been set up at the Carrefour supermarkets to collect any feedback, through interviews with beneficiaries. While the transition in Greater Cairo is underway, recently arrived beneficiaries in this area will continue to use paper vouchers until their e-vouchers are printed and ready. With the printing of e-vouchers taking up to three weeks, beneficiaries will be able to use their paper vouchers at the partner supermarket at Fathallah. Extensive messaging on the changes to the programme continues to be provided to beneficiaries.



WFP/ Moatassem Fahim

OneCard System

WFP and UNHCR have continued discussions regarding the introduction of a common assistance platform in Egypt, better known as the OneCard. With the platform expected to be implemented in May ahead of a full scale roll out, consultations with the selected service provider are currently underway.

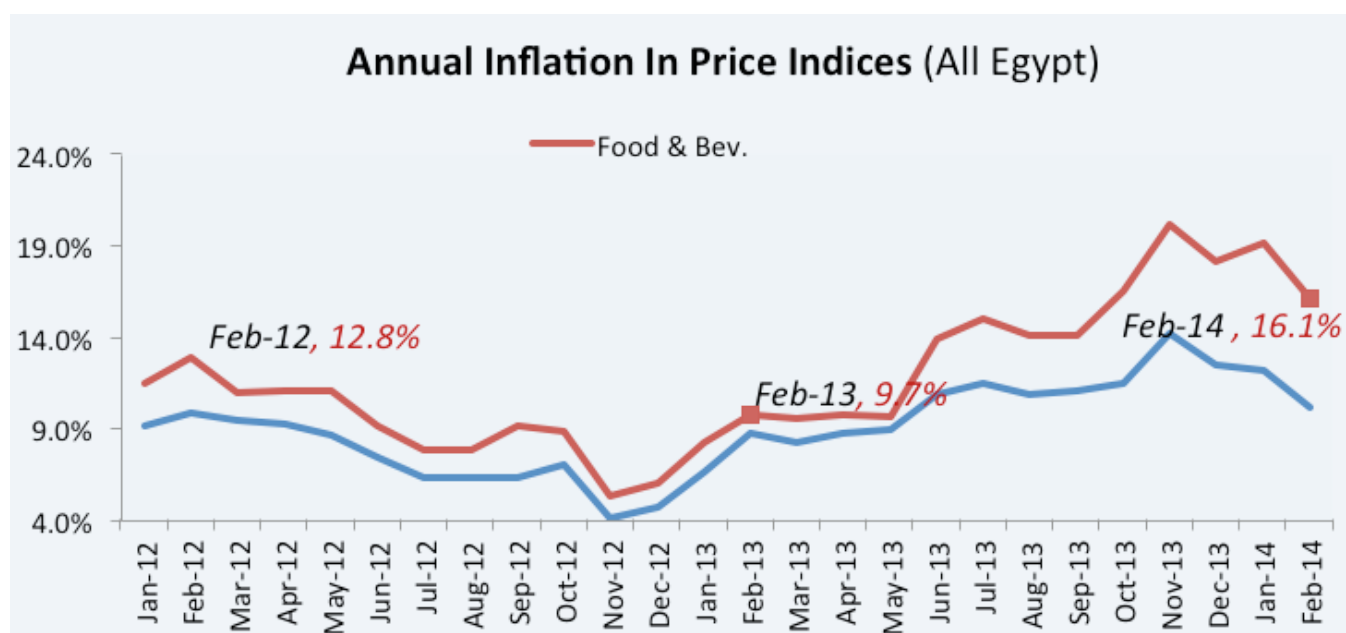
Targeting

As WFP and partners seek to shift from geographic to vulnerability targeting, WFP in cooperation with UNHCR is finalizing the concept note for a joint targeting exercise, expected to take place in the coming weeks. The questionnaire and methodology to determine a household's vulnerability are currently under discussion, while WFP is continuing consultations with NGOs that can potentially be involved in data collection and analyses.

MARKET ANALYSIS

WFP monitors food prices in order to ensure that WFP's voucher value correctly represents market prices. Consumer price indices published by the government's statistical agency CAPMAS indicate that annual inflation rates in the consumer price index, including the food price index, have decreased during February. Reports for the month show that annual inflation in 'food and beverages' decreased to 16.1 percent compared to 19.1 percent the previous month, mainly due to the decline in the inflation rates of "vegetables", "dairy & eggs" and "meat & poultry" food groups. Also, the month-on-month inflation rate in food prices declined to 0.2 percent compared to 3.6 percent in January.

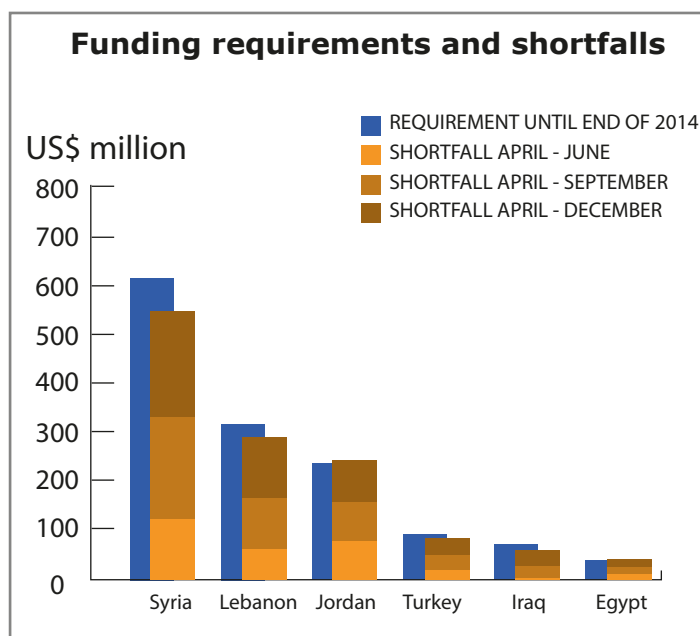
It is important to note, however, that despite the sudden decline in inflation rates during February overall inflation rates and food prices remain high, making it very difficult for vulnerable households to cope and meet their essential dietary needs. As illustrated by the chart below, the gap between the overall Consumer Price Index (CPI) and food and beverages has been widening since June 2013.



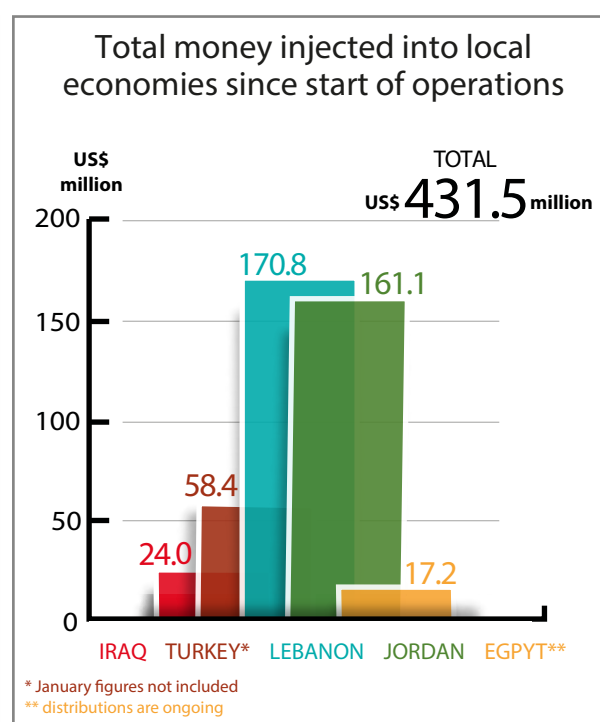
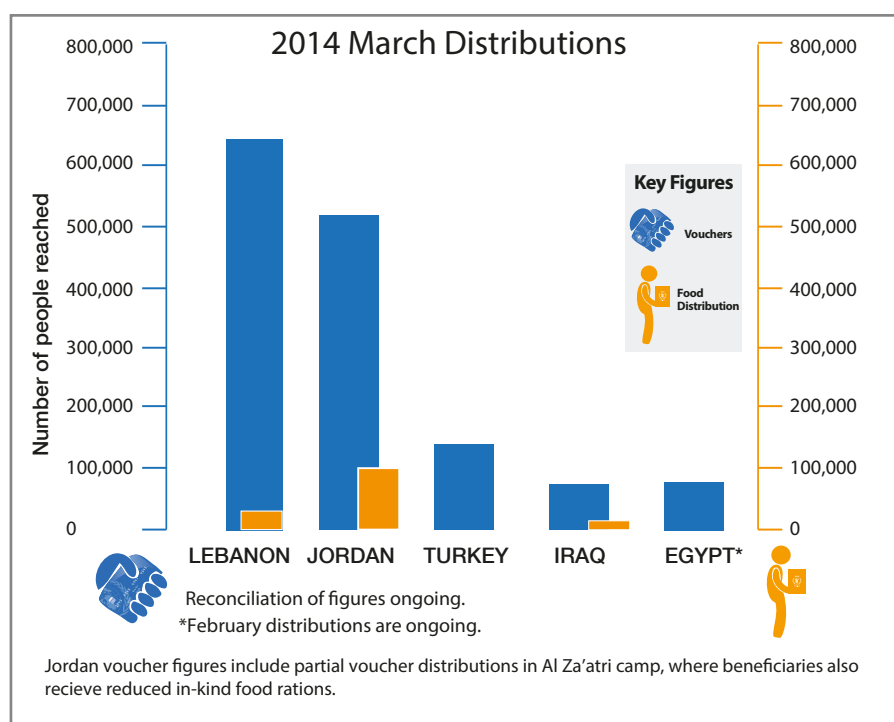
FUNDING AND SHORTFALLS

WFP urgently requires **US\$306 million** to support 4.25 million people in Syria and 2.68 million people in the neighbouring countries for the next three months (April – June 2014). Of these, US\$125 million are required to support operations in Syria, while US\$181 are required for operations in the region.

In the absence of immediately forthcoming contributions, WFP's ability to provide food assistance to those in need will be severely affected. A total of US\$1.26 billion are required to support operations until the end of the year.



REGIONAL OPERATIONS OVERVIEW



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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