

Situation Update

23 JULY - 5 AUGUST 2014

SYRIA LEBANON JORDAN TURKEY IRAQ EGYPT

HIGHLIGHTS

- Syria food dispatches up again in July
- First cross-border deliveries under Security Council Resolution 2165
- Airlifts to Al-Hasakeh continue
- Fighting in Lebanon's Arsal disrupts WFP operation
- Half of Jordan's community-based refugees food secure
- Islamic State advances affect Iraq refugee programme



WFP/Dina Elkassaby



Volume of food dispatches up again in July -

WFP dispatched food for 3.66 million people in 13 of Syria's 14 governorates in July, or 86 percent of the 4.25 million intended recipients. This compared to dispatches for 3.42 million people in June (81 percent of the target) and 3.27 million in May (77 percent).

- with cross-line deliveries more than twice the June level -

Some 8 percent of July's designated recipients, almost 303,000 people, were across lines of active conflict in hard-to-reach opposition-held areas of Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Idleb and Rural Damascus – more than double the 137,000 so targeted in June. The increase in dispatches in July was partly attributable to an easing of the logistical bottlenecks that had arisen following the government's introduction in April of new cargo loading regulations.

- but access to the northeast still difficult

However, heavy fighting and widespread insecurity meant that access to the northeast continued to be a significant challenge. Indeed no WFP food reached Ar Raqqa, which had 284,000 targeted recipients, while dispatches for Deir-ez-Zor and Al Hasakeh were sufficient to meet the needs of only 20 percent of their combined caseload of more than half a million people. Similarly, a resumption of hostilities in the Qalamoun and Kisweh regions of Rural Damascus meant that only 13 of the food assistance earmarked for that governorate in July got through.

Hard-to-reach communities are supported in Dar'a –

Cross-line access during the reporting period included the delivery of 2,000 one-month family food rations – for 10,000 people – to opposition-controlled villages in Dar'a, as part of a joint WFP-UNHCR convoy. The food, and HCR hygiene kits, were offloaded at a SARC warehouse in Al-Yadoudah on 24 July, with distributions there and in Zaizoun and Tal Shihab effected over the subsequent eight days. The most vulnerable IDPs were prioritized – receiving their first such assistance since the start of the crisis – though interviews on the ground by SARC and UN staff revealed that more than 36,000 people were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, including food. A plan to meet the additional requirements was prepared.

- and Deir-ez-Zor

On 4 August 18 WFP trucks containing 15,350 family rations – for nearly 77,000 people – crossed the frontline into Deir-ez-Zor governorate, having waited days at Sukneh in neighbouring Homs for clearance to proceed. It was the first time since May that WFP food reached the governorate. Two-thirds was to be offloaded in contested Deir-ez-Zor city, with the remainder destined for opposition-held Al-Mayadeen city to the south.

Airlifts to Al-Hasakeh continue

By 3 August more than two-thirds of the 10,000 family rations and 3,000 ready-to-eat food parcels being airlifted from Damascus in 23 rotations for some 50,000 vulnerable civilians in contested and opposition-controlled areas of Al-Hasakeh governorate (including Tal Hamis, Al-Shadaddeh, Markada, Ras Al-Ain and Arisha) had reached Qamishly. The resumption of the airlifts on 22 July was necessitated by an upsurge in fighting between Islamic State (IS) and the Syrian army, which precipitated widespread population displacements and blocked overland routes to the governorate.

First cross-border deliveries under UN Security Council resolution 2165

On 24 July the first inter-agency convoy provided for under UN Security Council resolution 2165 – adopted on 14 July and authorizing the movement of UN humanitarian aid into Syria through four border crossings – transported, among other items, 1,400 WFP family food rations via Bab Al Salam in Turkey for people in opposition-controlled Al Ma'ra district of Idleb governorate. Cooperating partners completed distributions within days. A second such convoy via Bab Al Salam, on 5-6 August, included 2,000 family rations for Azaz district in Aleppo. And a third, from Al Ramtha in Jordan on 6 August, carried 1,500 rations for hard-to-reach communities in southern Dar'a governorate.

AYMAN OMAR, 1978-2014



In heartfelt tributes to Ayman Omar, WFP's head of security in Syria who died in a road accident there on 28 July, colleagues recalled an exceptionally dedicated, compassionate, courageous, astute and fun friend, one who cared deeply about the people we serve and routinely went out of his way, often at great risk to himself, to ensure the safety of others.

One of the 36-year-old former Egyptian policeman's jobs in one of the world's most complex and dangerous crises was to negotiate safe passage for WFP food – up to 40,000 tonnes of it a month, on as many as 3,000 trucks – often across the fragmented war's front lines to besieged and other hard-to-reach locations.

That typically required protracted, painstaking negotiations – which could last days, weeks or even months – with a range of parties and armed groups to which the granting of access might offer no evident gain. It required making the best of weak and patchy phone and internet connections – most conversations with anti-government factions were via Skype, late into the night. And it required, before any discussion of delivery destinations, food quantities, beneficiary numbers or routes, a careful building of mutual trust.

So the job demanded a delicate mix of patience, perseverance, tenacity and persuasiveness – attributes Ayman had in abundance. There were ups and downs, there were setbacks, and there were breakthroughs. "He was one of the greatest problem solvers I ever met", said WFP Syria Country Director Matthew Hollingworth.

For Ayman, the key was to convince his negotiating counterparts that the needs were pressing and our assistance neutral and impartial, building blocks, he believed, towards further dialogue and broader access.

"Ayman made work and life here very meaningful and doable", said WFP's Deputy Country Director Adeyinka Badejo. "Nothing was impossible. He always found a way".

LEBANON

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Refugees registered and awaiting registration*:
1,142,172

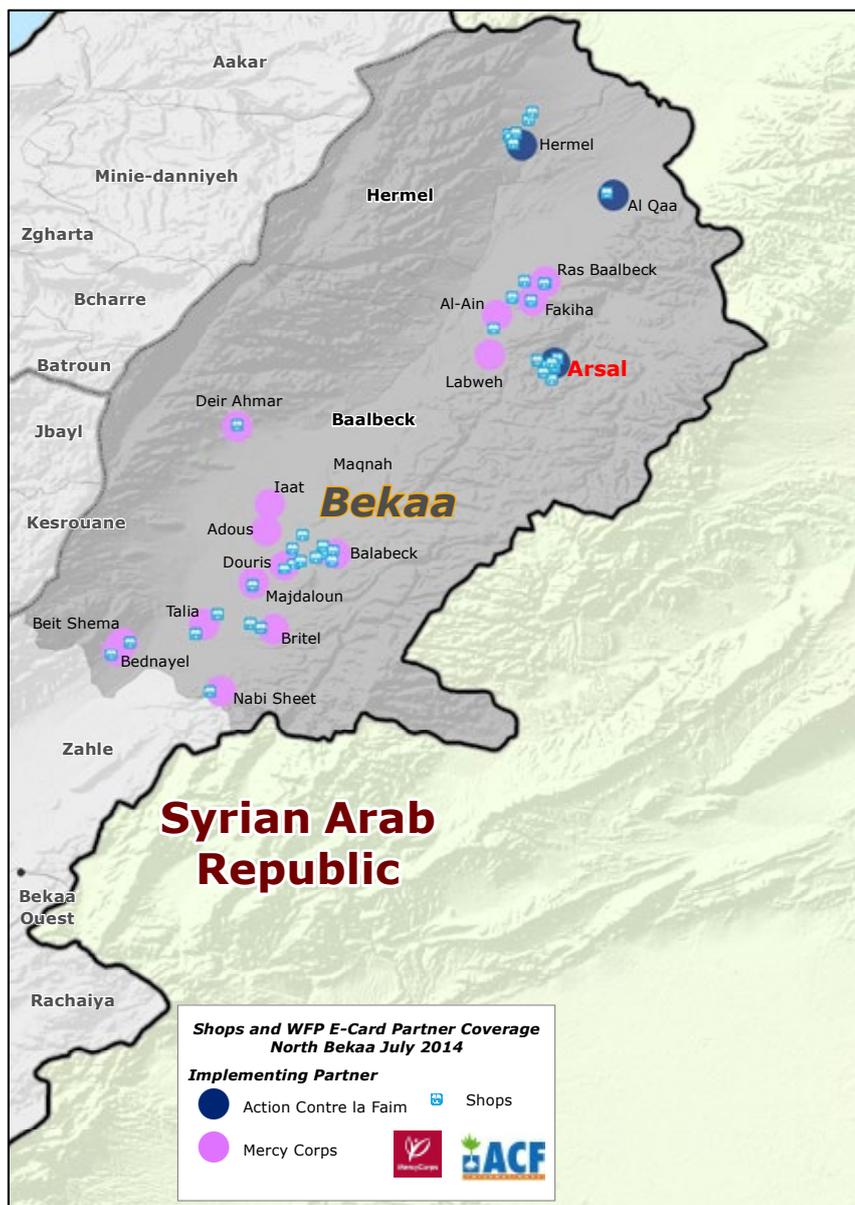
Reached in July: 810,466
(795,462 vouchers; 15,004 parcels)

Plan for August:** 880,245
(820,245 vouchers; 40,000 parcels)

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

**Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR manifest where WFP targets the most vulnerable 70% of the caseload for vouchers. The planning figure for parcels is the estimated/projected number of newly arrived refugees.

Reconciliation ongoing



WFP assisted over 810,000 Syrian refugees in July, and plans to reach 880,000 in August. On 5 August WFP started uploading e-cards with the monthly allocation of US\$ 30 per person.

Heavy fighting in Arsal impacts WFP operations

Four days of fighting from 2 August between the Lebanese army and Syrian rebels in the border town of Arsal – the most serious spillover of Syria's three-year civil war into Lebanon – adversely impacted WFP's operations in North Bekaa: the violence caused the loss or destruction of refugees' e-cards, among other belongings; insecurity impeded access to programme supermarkets and shops; and electricity shortages disrupted e-card transactions. While bread, fruit and vegetables were in short supply, the availability of other foods was adequate, shopkeepers said. WFP suspended missions to North Bekaa. Recent UNHCR data put the number of Syrian refugees in Arsal at some 47,000, well in excess of the local population of 35,000. The hostilities precipitated significant displacement. Arsal's 35,000 e-card beneficiaries had their monthly entitlement credited on 5 August, and can redeem it at retail outlets across the country. WFP moved to supplement its limited stocks of food parcels in and around Arsal with additional supplies from Beirut. It also participated actively in inter-agency humanitarian assessment and contingency planning.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

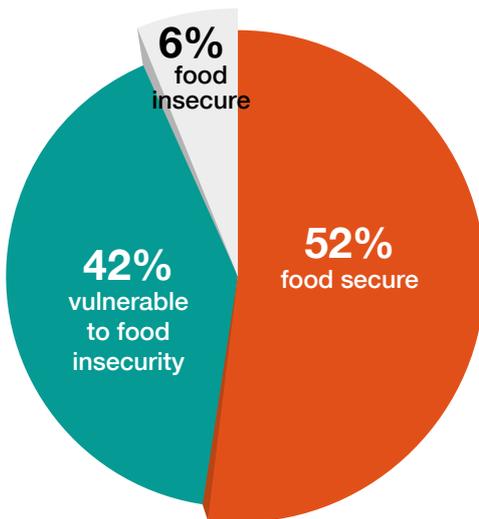
Registered refugees*: 608,889
Reached in July: 546,013
Refugees in communities: 461,588
Refugees in camps: 84,425
Plan for August: 564,805

*UNHCR registration figures

**Operational planning figures are based on the cleaned UNHCR manifest.

Reconciliation of figures ongoing

Food security among Syrian refugees in communities:



More than half of community-based Syrian refugees food secure

A survey of community-based Syrian refugees in Jordan, released on 24 July, found that only six percent of those assessed were food insecure. The Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise, conducted in January by WFP partner REACH, concluded that 42 percent of refugees were vulnerable to food insecurity, and that 52 percent were food secure.

The survey also showed that while refugees have a higher level of vulnerability to food insecurity upon arrival, vulnerability decreases for a short period of time upon receipt of WFP assistance. However, after a year, refugees increasingly adopt negative coping strategies to meet their basic needs and thus become more vulnerable. The results of the survey, carried out in coordination with the Vulnerability Assessment Framework inter-agency group, will be used to enhance the coordination of humanitarian aid and harmonise vulnerability criteria for targeting in the coming months. The full report can be downloaded at:

<http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/e/p/wfp266893.pdf>

WFP concludes Ramadan date distributions in communities

During the reporting period, WFP and the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) completed the Ramadan distribution of 1,000 mt of dates donated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in all regions of Jordan to both Syrian refugees and Jordanians in need. JHCO reached over 35,000 Syrian refugees and 39,000 vulnerable Jordanians during the holy month.

Water availability an issue in Al Za'atri camp -

Water consumption continued to be an issue in Al Za'atri camp. While ACTED and UNICEF asserted that there was sufficient water available in the camp, refugees protested over supposed shortages during the reporting period. UNICEF said that Syrian refugees consume more than three times the amount of water per person typically used in Jordan, a rate partly attributable to the fact that many Syrians residing in the camp come from relatively water-rich areas of southern Syria. ACTED and UNICEF are working to communicate the need to reduce water use in the camps in Jordan.



Distribution of dates in Amman

- and electricity a problem in Azraq

Due to harsh desert conditions, much of Azraq camp's infrastructure is not connected to the electricity grid. While solar power provides some light to family and communal areas, the lack of power connections available for household needs, such as refrigeration and lighting, is a source of dissatisfaction for refugees. To address such issues, beneficiaries are individually issued two vouchers each month which are redeemable simultaneously or separately at participating retail shops. Splitting the food entitlement between two vouchers provides beneficiaries with greater flexibility when shopping, allowing them to purchase items that require refrigeration, such as fresh produce, more often. Furthermore, WFP plans to transition from paper vouchers to e-card assistance in Al Za'atri and Azraq camps. A pilot for the e-cards will be conducted during the last week of August in both camps, with the full roll-out scheduled for September.

New 'self-targeting' initiative to be launched

Later in August, WFP and its partners are to implement a 'self-targeting' initiative, to encourage Syrian households that are not food insecure to voluntarily remove themselves from WFP's assistance programme. The initiative, which includes an information campaign at UNHCR registration sites and WFP distribution points as well as shops across the country, is to pave the way for a planned transition from blanket assistance to targeted interventions based on need.

School feeding programme continues into summer

To promote the enrolment and attendance of Syrian refugee boys and girls in camp schools, WFP distributes a daily nutritious snack to all children attending school in Al Za'atri and Azraq. The school feeding programme also helps to improve children's concentration. While the next academic year does not begin school until 24 August, summer classes started in Al Za'atri camp on 24 July and through its cooperating partners NRC and Relief International, WFP distributed date bars each day to all children in attendance. In Azraq camp, WFP reaches more than 800 pupils during summer school each day.

With e-card roll-out, improved shop service -

Following the completion of its distribution in 10 of the 12 governorates, WFP is currently issuing the e-card, which functions like a prepaid debit card, to all beneficiaries in the remaining two governorates of Amman and Irbid. Those who did not collect their e-cards during previous distributions will be reached during catch-up days held in each governorate. While WFP initially estimated that distributions would finish in late July, delays have pushed the projected conclusion to late August, by which time WFP will have converted 92% of registered Syrian refugee households living in communities to e-cards.

Amid the country-wide roll-out of the e-card programme, monitors have reported several developments in service by partner shops. Customer service by shop owners towards beneficiaries has improved, given they can now use their e-card in any partner shop in Jordan. In addition, more shops are running promotions on food commodities.



- and more hotline calls

WFP has also received an increased volume of calls on its beneficiary hotline related to the utilisation of e-cards. To manage the additional calls, WFP is taking steps to bolster the capacity of the hotline by hiring additional staff. WFP is also finalising contractual agreements with partner Jordan Ahli Bank to establish a call centre at the bank, whereby WFP staff will utilise the bank's existing call centre facilities to assist beneficiaries with issues related to their e-cards. In addition, WFP is coordinating with UNHCR to align their respective beneficiary hotlines more closely, which will expedite the process for updating beneficiary family sizes and contact information.

TURKEY

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees*: 808,576

Reached in July: 218,000

Plan for August: 225,000 people in camps

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

Reconciliation of figures ongoing

Deputy Prime Minister Beşir Atalay has called on provincial administrations to address the needs of the most vulnerable urban refugee populations by providing accommodation in camps. He noted that the existing 22 camps host 220,000 refugees and have the capacity to absorb some 30,000 more. WFP continues to monitor the situation closely.

More shops in refugee camps

In July, WFP and TRC contracted six new shops in urban areas near Ceylanpinar, Nizip and Akcakale camps in order to increase market competition and stabilize prices. All were assessed by WFP-TRC joint teams and their staff received training before inclusion in the programme. Point of sale (POS) machines were installed at the end of July and all shops are now operational.

Positive programme developments

In the Altinozu region, where there are no contracted shops inside camps, the governor has begun to provide a free bus service to residents to enable easier access to shops outside them.

During Ramadan, participating shops accommodated beneficiaries with modified working hours and traditional foods. Private donations were also sent to several camps in the form of extra food, money, clothes and hygiene kits. AFAD uploaded an extra TRY20 on its card for all beneficiaries to mark Eid Al-Fitr.

WFP has begun discussions with AFAD and TRC on support to the most vulnerable non-camp Syrian refugees. A concept paper is being developed which will look at possible options for the provision of food assistance.



A Syrian mother bakes Syrian-style bread for her family and neighbors with wheat-flour purchased on the e-card.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Refugees registered and awaiting registration*: 217,192

Reached in July: 78,561

Plan for August: 106,000

** UNHCR registration figures
Reconciliation of figures ongoing*

IS advances continue impacting WFP's operation

The advance of IS in Iraq continued to have a negative impact on WFP's operation in support of Syrian refugees during the reporting period. Since IS took control of the border town of Al Qa'im in Anbar governorate, including the refugee camp of Al Obaidy, WFP has not been able to access the town to provide food assistance to the camp. Nearly 1,000 refugees have fled the camp.

Stricter vetting in Domiz sees earlier completion of voucher distribution

A tightening of beneficiary verification procedures by the Dohuk Modification Center, the authority in charge of refugee affairs in the governorate, saw the number of beneficiaries reached in Domiz camp in July decline to 67,000, from 72,000 in June. As a result, WFP July distributions were completed earlier than in previous months. The stricter vetting ensured beneficiaries only received food vouchers for family members listed on their UNHCR registration cards. UNHCR identification documents belonging to families who had returned to Syria but were presented by unauthorised persons were seized and returned to UNHCR for cancellation.

Domiz residents prefer vouchers to in-kind food assistance

To ensure operations meet programme stipulations, WFP routinely monitors camp services and shops. In July, price and market monitoring began in camps in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, following their earlier roll-out in Dohuk. Monitoring at Domiz camp in July showed that beneficiaries prefer vouchers to in-kind food assistance, but also a perceived inadequacy of access to drinking water and toilets, especially for women.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees*: 138,373

Reached in July: 110,410

Plan for August:** 113,000

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

Proportion of refugees with "acceptable" food consumption score high, and rising

The proportion of Syrian refugees in Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta registering an "acceptable" food consumption score (FCS) rose to 93 percent in April-June from 92 percent in January-March, WFP post-distribution monitoring has shown. Those with a "poor" score declined to 1 percent from 2 percent. The FCS measures the frequency of food intake, dietary diversity and the nutritional value of foods consumed.

Suggestion boxes distributed to improve operations

The range of options for refugees to provide feedback to WFP and its cooperating partners expanded during the reporting period, with the erection of suggestion boxes at food distribution points. These complement the existing telephone hotline and Facebook page.

Sabeen's Story

A 26-year-old mother of three, Sabeen sits in a dark, empty room in her rented apartment in Alexandria. One of over 9 million people displaced by Syria's conflict, she fled her home in Damascus two years ago. "We had no choice but to leave. The bombs and gunfire scared my children – damaged them inside. Everything became unavailable or unaffordable."

Sabeen first went to Lebanon, which hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees. But the cost of living was too high and a tented camp was the only option, so she moved to Egypt. Although costs are lower, taxes and food prices are rising. "Milk for my children is very expensive and the prices of many items increase each month".

Her husband works 12 hours a day, but 80 percent of the EGP1,000 (US\$140) he earns each month goes on rent. His family is still in Damascus, but he cannot afford to send them money. Sabeen used to work as an English teacher in Syria but is now unemployed. "The only reason we can survive here is because of the support we receive. If we did not get the food vouchers, we could not eat properly. We get to choose our own food in our local supermarket. My daughter loves choosing ingredients for her favourite meals - it reminds her of the home we used to have."

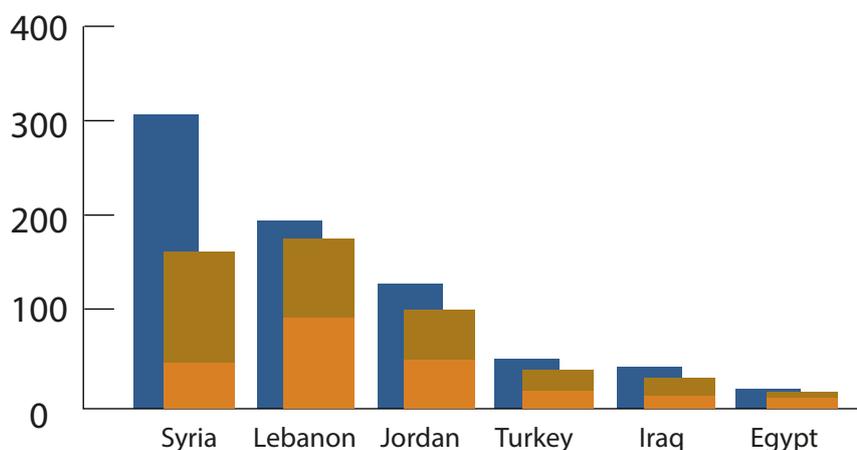


Sabeen's two children in her apartment

FUNDING AND SHORTFALLS

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND SHORTFALLS

- Funding Requirements Until End Of 2014
- Shortfall August - October
- Shortfall August - December



WFP currently needs an additional **US\$236 million** to fund its operations in support of 4.25 million people in Syria and 2.58 million people in the neighbouring countries for the next three months (August – October 2014). Of this, US\$48 million is required to support operations in Syria, while US\$188 is required for operations in the region.

A total of US\$534 million is still required to support operations until the end of the year.

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



Donors are represented in alphabetical order.

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