

Situation Update

6 - 19 AUGUST 2014

SYRIA LEBANON JORDAN TURKEY IRAQ EGYPT

HIGHLIGHTS

- WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin visits Damascus
- Improved cross-line access spurs Syria deliveries
- Food convoy attacked in Deir-ez-Zor
- Insecurity precludes immediate UN return to Aarsal
- Beirut government okays WFP assistance for vulnerable Lebanese
- Pilot e-card schemes imminent in Jordan camps
- Social tensions persist in refugee areas of Turkey
- Fear of Islamic State provokes refugees to flee Iraq camp



WFP/Sandy Maroun



Rate of WFP food dispatches continues to improve –

Consistent with the progressive improvement since May in the overall volume of monthly WFP food deliveries within Syria, family rations for over 2.5 million people were dispatched in the 1-19 August period. That represented an encouraging 60 percent of the monthly target of 4.25 million people, and was 15 percent up on the level of dispatches achieved in the corresponding period of the previous month.

– boosted by further cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan –

Two more cross-border deliveries of WFP food into hard-to-reach areas of Syria under UN Security Council Resolution 2165 were made during the reporting period: one from Bab Al Salam in Turkey in support of 42,500 people in Dana and Harim, Idleb governorate; and another, via Al Ramtha in Jordan, for 2,500 people in Maallaqa, Quneitra governorate. That brought to five the number of cross-border shipments WFP was involved in since the 14 July passage of the resolution, which authorizes overland deliveries into Syria through border crossings with Turkey, Jordan and Iraq not controlled by the government.

– although cross-line gains are more significant

In-country food dispatches across lines of active conflict during the reporting period targeted 140,500 people in hard-to-reach, mostly opposition-controlled areas. That compared to 251,850 during the previous reporting period (23 July-5 August). More broadly and tellingly, however, in the six weeks following the adoption of SCR 2165 (14 July-19 August) cross-line dispatches targeted 445,000 people, a more than threefold increase on the 137,000 people targeted during the six-week period prior to the resolution (2 June-13 July).

Fighting continues to severely limit access to poverty-stricken Al-Hasakeh –

Access to the northeast continued to be especially difficult, not least because of military advances by, or conflict involving Islamic State (IS) there and across the border in Iraq. The humanitarian crisis in Al-Hasakeh – a function of its traditionally high poverty rates, the impact of prolonged drought conditions, the very limited reach of humanitarian agencies and the recent influx of Iraqi refugees – deepened as a result, making a sustained reopening of the Nusaybeen/Qamishly border crossing from Turkey all the more imperative.

– and provoke further displacement –

For example, fiercer fighting from early August between IS and the Syrian army precipitated the displacement of up to 10,000 more people from the villages of Al-Homr, Sabeh Secoor, Al Ghazl, Mjebra, Dube and Tahya, as well as from southern suburbs of Al-Hasakeh city to safer parts of the city and to Qamishly, where they were registered by WFP partners for receipt of food assistance. There was also conflict-induced displacement from the town of Yaroubiyah near the border with Iraq to Mabada, Qahtanieh and Jawadieh, where some 1,500 IDP families were given WFP ready-to-eat rations. To support these and other IDPs in the governorate, as well as refugees from the Sinjar region of Iraq, emergency WFP airlifts from Damascus to Qamishly continued. Airlifts delivered some 14,200 family food rations, 9,000 ready-to-eat meals and 21.6 mt of nutributter (sufficient for some 12,000 children).

– as well as an influx of Iraqi refugees

Many of the refugees from Iraq – some 50,000 crossed during the reporting period – passed through a recently-established camp at Nowruz, five kilometres north of Al-Malikiyeh city and run by the Kurdish Relief Committee. Most stayed 3-7 days before returning to Iraq, although a small proportion of families remained longer. There were some 14,000 people – most of them women and children – when an inter-agency assessment team visited on 12 August, finding many hungry and dehydrated, and some having lost family members on the way. Some 1,700 WFP ready-to-eat meals were distributed in the camp during the reporting period.

Food convoy attacked in Deir-ez-Zor

An 18-truck convoy of WFP food for almost 77,000 people cited in our last Situation Update as destined for hard-to-reach locations in Deir-ez-Zor governorate was subsequently re-directed, for security reasons, to Ar-Raqqa. On 6 August, while still in Deir-ez-Zor on its adjusted routing, the convoy came under attack from an unknown group, killing two truck drivers, wounding two others and destroying or damaging the contents of four of the trucks. The remaining 14 trucks, with assistance for almost 70,000 people, proceeded to Ar-Raqqa, where distributions promptly got underway.

WFP Executive Director visits Damascus

During meetings with Prime Minister Wael Al-Haliqi and other members of the government in Damascus on 12 August, WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin pressed for improved humanitarian access to better ensure the timely and sustained delivery of assistance to all in need, wherever they may be. She welcomed a government commitment to boost cross-line access to hard-to-reach areas, as well as a pledge to work for the removal of recently-introduced requirements slowing the loading of aid trucks and their departure from warehouses. Noting the importance of ensuring that distributions be underpinned by quality assessments of need, Cousin said she looked forward to the successful completion of an upcoming Syria Household Food Security Survey to be co-led by two government agencies and WFP, whose first phase includes 25,000 household interviews across all 14 governorates.



WFP/Abeer Etefa

WFP's Executive Director Ertharin Cousin meeting with displaced women volunteering with an NGO to bake WFP wheat flour into bread for distribution to urban families who are unable to bake their own. As Cousin visited the bakery, the women invited her to try their bread and told her their stories. They said that they were displaced from Daraya in rural Damascus and feel that they are making a difference by helping other families.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Refugees registered and awaiting registration*:

1,159,643

Reached in August: 805,173

(796,638 vouchers; 8,535 parcels)

Plan for September**:

929,000
(889,000 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

compounded by recent attempts by humanitarian partners to provide assistance to the refugees – as well as the inability of security forces and the municipality of Arsal to ensure the safety of UN and NGO personnel, UN and NGO partners have been advised not to enter the city. A possible resumption of humanitarian assistance will be discussed after a second joint security assessment on 21 August.

Inter-agency security assessment rules out UN return to Arsal -

Since the eruption of clashes between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Syrian militants in the border town of Arsal on 2 August, security concerns have prevented UN agencies, including WFP, from accessing the area. A joint security assessment by WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and the UN Department of Safety and Security on 11 August found that although no armed confrontation had been reported since 7 August, the situation in Arsal remained tense and unsafe.

In light of increasing animosity between host communities and Syrian refugees – further

- though WFP's voucher programme continues to work for affected people

Although the situation in Arsal continues to prevent a full resumption of humanitarian aid, some humanitarian agencies, including WFP, have been able to continue to deliver some food, WASH, health, and shelter assistance. While WFP is not able to physically access Arsal – forcing the postponement of all monitoring and evaluation missions until further notice – food assistance continued to reach Syrian refugees through WFP's e-card programme. Some 8,867 previously distributed cards – providing assistance to 35,814 beneficiaries - were reloaded on 5 August. Beneficiaries could continue to redeem their e-cards in all 14 WFP contracted shops in Arsal, despite sporadic electricity cuts and landline issues.

Since the start of the clashes, humanitarian agencies have been developing and updating contingency plans to effectively respond to any further displacements. As a contingency measure, WFP presently has some 880 mt of food in stock, of which 440 mt are being dispatched to partner warehouses across Lebanon. In case of emergency, the first dispatch can be made available within 24 hours.

WFP plans roll-out of food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese

WFP is in the final stage of signing an agreement with UNRWA to start providing food assistance to Palestinian Refugees from Syria. Jointly funded with UNRWA, the assistance will provide some 42,000 beneficiaries with individual monthly rations at a value of US\$30 through UNRWA's existing ATM cards.

WFP's request to provide assistance to vulnerable Lebanese – in line with the Government's National Poverty Targeting Programme - was approved by the Ministerial Council during the reporting period. Expected to start in October, beneficiaries will receive US\$30 through the existing e-card modality, redeemable at any WFP-contracted shop across the country. Co-funded with UNHCR and the World Bank, WFP plans to reach 36,000 vulnerable Lebanese by December 2014.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees*: 609,692
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

'Self-targeting' initiative launched ahead of vulnerability targeting

WFP and partners have begun implementing a 'self-targeting' initiative, designed to encourage food secure Syrian families residing in communities to voluntarily remove themselves from WFP's assistance programme. The campaign, which includes posters displayed at distribution points, partner shops and UNHCR registration sites, as well as messages disseminated through focus group discussions, comes ahead of a planned transition to vulnerability targeting in September.

WFP implements e-card pilots in Azraq and Al Za'atri camps

In light of plans to transition from paper to electronic vouchers in Al Za'atri and Azraq camps, pilot programmes in both camps are scheduled to start in early September. The pilots, which will see 300 families in each camp receiving e-cards, will also include messaging campaigns to inform beneficiaries about the e-card modality. In preparation for the camp-wide transitions, WFP has met with UNHCR, the Jordanian Government's Syrian Refugee Directorate and cooperating partners to discuss the shift and coordinate an information campaign for beneficiaries. WFP plans to assist its entire caseload of Syrian refugees in camp and non-camp settings with e-cards by October.

Fewer beneficiaries reached as refugees continue to leave Azraq

During the first general voucher distribution cycle of August, WFP planned to reach just over 5,100 Syrian refugees in Azraq camp – only 43 percent of UNHCR's camp manifest. The significantly lower WFP target takes into account the large number of Syrians who have left Azraq camp but not yet been removed from UNHCR's list. WFP is now sharing its full list of beneficiaries from each general voucher distribution with UNHCR, allowing its sister agency to remove families that have missed three consecutive distributions from its list and thereby improve the accuracy of the camp manifest.

WFP monitoring prompts improvement in e-card programme

Some beneficiaries using e-cards have noted a delay in the loading of the monthly entitlement – normally loaded within the first week of each month – making planning for food purchases difficult. WFP is working to regularize the loading of cards to take place on the same day each month, thereby allowing families to better organize their household budgets and food baskets. Following reports of lengthy processing times at point-of-sale machines by beneficiaries and shop owners, WFP is working with partners to speed up connections.



WFP/Joelle Eid

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees*: 822,128

Reached in July: 216,294

Plan for August: 225,000 people in camps

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

Reconciliation of figures ongoing

The Director General of AFAD, Fuat Oktay, has called on the international community to do more to help Turkey cope with the presence of some 1.2 million Syrians in-country, of whom over 217,000 are living in 22 camps across the country. According to AFAD's latest figures, Turkey has invested US\$3.5 billion in managing the situation but has only received US\$224 million in international assistance.

Growing refugee numbers heighten urban tensions

The large presence of refugees in urban centres has become an increasing source of tension among local residents in south-eastern Turkey. In Ceylanpinar, where the WFP/Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) e-Food Card Programme serves one camp, staff have been advised to use added security when travelling to the region while local authorities are monitoring the situation closely.

Managers of some camps have told WFP that vulnerable urban refugees, those who are either homeless or begging on the streets to sustain themselves, will be relocated to camps in the near future – possibly adding significant numbers of Syrians to WFP's caseload. Within camps, AFAD is responsible for providing food assistance until beneficiaries receive their e-cards from WFP/TRC.

Turkey is also dealing with another influx of refugees; over 2,000 members of the Yazidi religious minority crossed into Turkey from Iraq in the past week. Most of these refugees are staying in urban areas in the eastern part of Turkey – Silopi, Viransehir, Diyarbakir and Midyat - and some are being relocated to Midyat camp. WFP will review food-security needs and look at options for assistance, in coordination with the Government.

E-card programme offers camp refugees more shop choices

The inclusion of six newly contracted shops into the WFP/TRC e-Food Card Programme in Nizip, Ceylanpinar and Akcakale marks the first time beneficiaries in the Gaziantep region have been able to access shops in urban centres. Beneficiaries have expressed satisfaction with the reportedly better quality food items at lower prices.

In an effort to expand the programme further, WFP has assessed three additional shops in the Ceylanpinar region for possible inclusion.

WFP establishes UN house in Gaziantep

The WFP-led UN house in Gaziantep has been officially opened. While WFP commenced operations in the new premises on 15 August, six other agencies—WHO, UNFPA, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR and FAO—will eventually be co-located in the compound. The co-location will support closer networking and cooperation among agencies and contribute to a more efficient and effective response moving forward.



WFP/Christina Hobbs

A refugee buys food using the WFP/TRC e-Food Card in Harran camp.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

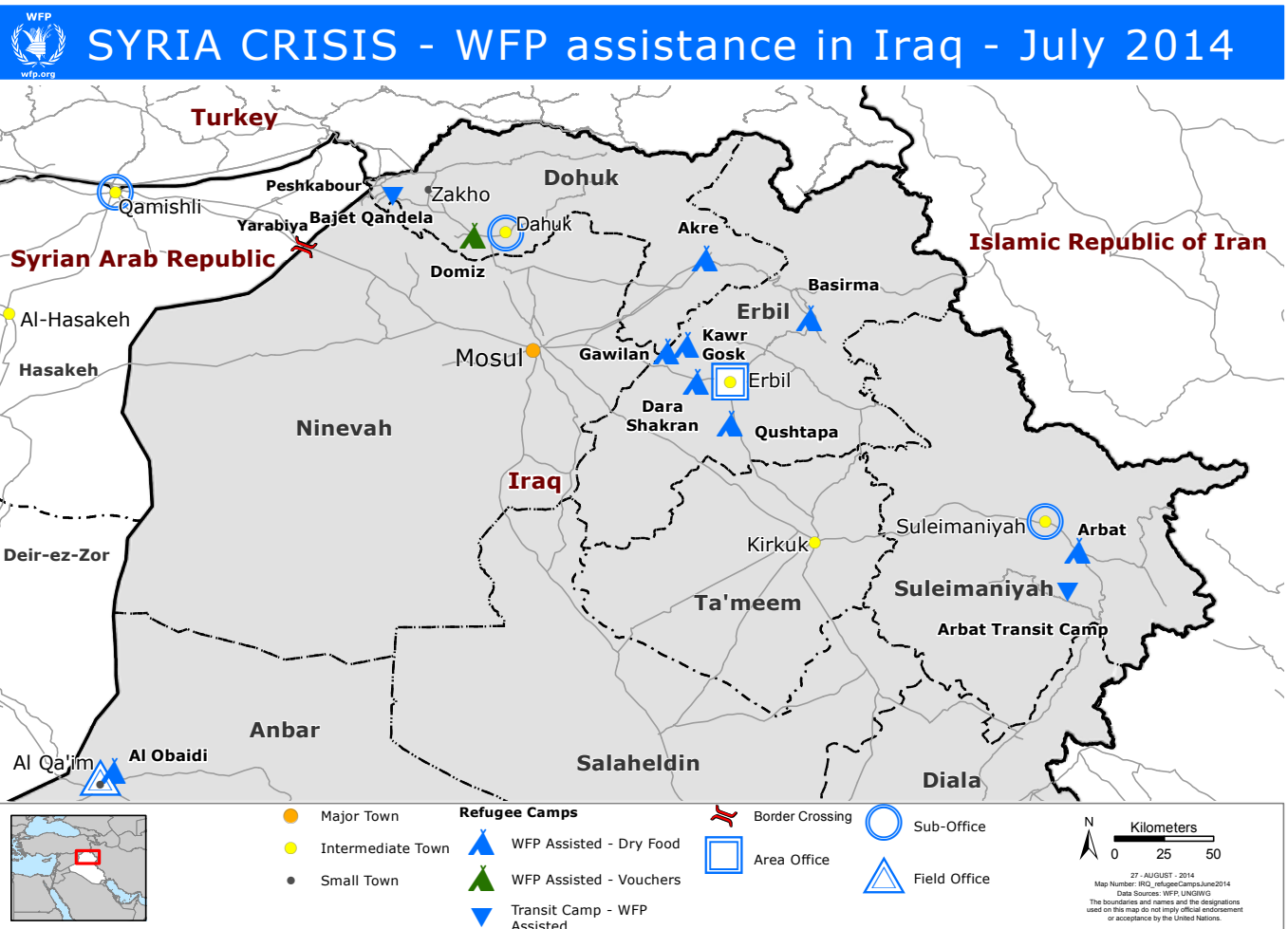
Refugees registered and awaiting registration*: 218,040
Reached in July: 78,561
Plan for August: 106,000

* UNHCR registration figures
 Reconciliation of figures ongoing

Fear of IS pushes refugees to flee

Over 300 families who fled Gawilan camp near the border with Ninevah province, fearing a possible attack by IS forces, sought refuge in Domiz camp, western Dohuk governorate. WFP, in consultation with the Dohuk Modification Centre (DMC) and UNHCR, had prepared to include these families in its voucher programme and briefed refugees on the use of voucher in Domiz. However, prior to their inclusion, the families, who were

provided with hot meals daily by other food sector actors, were moved back to Gawilan camp as the situation had normalized. INTERSOS, WFP's partner in Gawilan, is reviewing the situation in order to commence food distributions next week.



Food reaches Al Obaidi camp despite insecurity

WFP's partner, Islamic Relief Worldwide, delivered 1,300 WFP food parcels to Al Obaidi camp in Anbar governorate on 21 August, bringing much-needed food assistance to the entire camp, which had been unreachable since June due to insecurity. WFP plans to dispatch more parcels in the coming weeks to cover the food needs of over 1,000 refugees in the camp for 2 – 3 months.

Erbil and Dohuk Governorates endorse move to vouchers

WFP and Erbil Governorate signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 13 August allowing the transition to voucher assistance for camp refugees in the governorate. The programme is expected to start in October in Kawergosk and Darashakran camps, giving retailers time to build and stock participating shops. The roll-out in Basirma and Qushtapa camps will follow shortly thereafter.

Similarly, DMC, the authority in charge of refugee affairs in Dohuk governorate, has also signed an MOU with WFP to move the voucher programme inside Domiz camp and expand voucher assistance to other camps in the governorate.

August distributions continue despite setbacks in July

WFP was unable to distribute food assistance in July to refugees in Darashakran, Kawergosk and Basirma camps due to the late delivery of food. As a result, distributions for August took place at the beginning of the month, ensuring that beneficiaries were reached as soon as possible. In total, 19,660 refugees were assisted in the three camps this month.

EGYPT

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees*: 138,844

Reached in July: 105,419

Plan for August:** 105,419

Plan for September*:** 100,000

**UNHCR registration figures*

***Estimate*

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

Reconciliation of figures ongoing

WFP's August distribution cycle began on 17 August in Alexandria and is to finish on 23 August in Marsa Matrouh. WFP is targeting over 105,000 beneficiaries for the August cycle, including 4,500 Palestinian refugees from Syria. Currently, UNHCR is conducting a verification exercise of all Syrian refugees using biometric data which is expected to continue for 2-3 months. It is anticipated that the number of registered refugees will be adjusted downwards as reports indicate that some refugees have left the country. As a result, WFP has revised its operational plan for August and September.

WFP opens new distribution site in Mansoura

In the wake of recent increases in Egyptian fuel and public transport prices, WFP is monitoring distribution sites in relation to their accessibility to beneficiaries and affordability. WFP has found that some 3,000 beneficiaries had been traveling more than 65km from Mansoura (in north-east Egypt) to Damietta to collect food vouchers. This was costly and made it difficult for them to use their vouchers, as they could only do so at the supermarket in Damietta. To better serve Syrian refugees in Mansoura, WFP has opened a new distribution site in the area, partnering with Fathallah supermarket. The first distribution in Mansoura was conducted on 18 August.

Vulnerability assessment data collection expected to start late August

WFP is currently refining its targeting approach in order to ensure it is reaching those most in need. Since the start of operations, WFP has given blanket assistance to refugees living in poorer areas, including Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta. More recently, it has also supported those identified as vulnerable in other areas such as Tanta, Marsa Matrouh and Mansoura. Based on expected vulnerability profiling results, WFP plans to target all refugees based on their assessed vulnerability and needs. WFP will start collecting data via household vulnerability questionnaires. The start date for over 30,000 household visits is pending final approval from the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) but is expected to start in the week commencing 24 August and continue until December 2014.

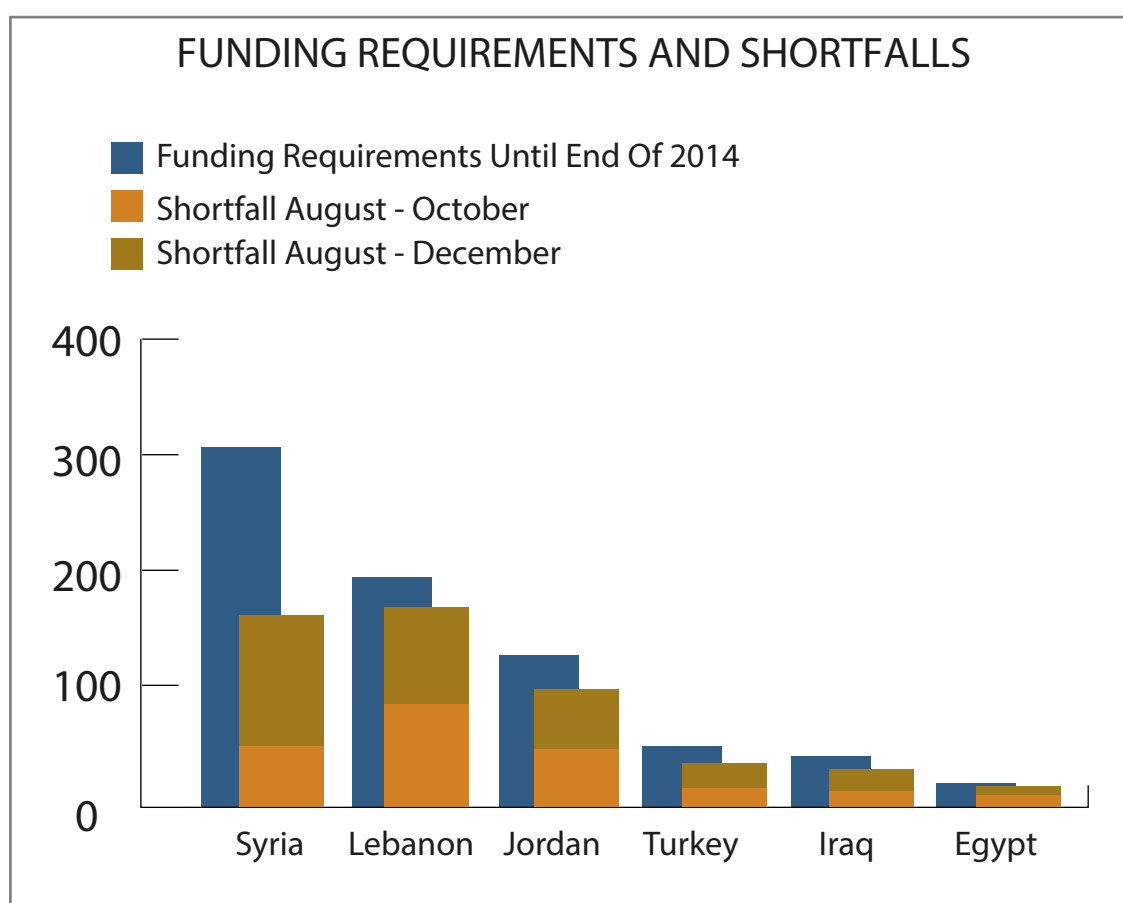
Highest level of inflation since 2008

In Egypt, the consumer price index increased by 3.3 percent from June to July and monthly inflation reached its highest level since 2008, according to CAPMAS. Monthly inflation for food was driven by a 7.4 percent increase for vegetables, a 4.6 percent increase for dairy products and a 3.2 percent increase for fish and seafood.

The inflationary surge has been triggered by revised energy prices, which has increased the cost of transporting food and beverage products. According to CAMPAS, the increase is also partly caused by a rise in demand for commodities during Ramadan.

WFP monitors transport and food prices to ensure their affordability for beneficiaries. If needed, the value of food vouchers will be revised upwards, based on vulnerability following the upcoming household survey.

FUNDING AND SHORTFALLS



WFP currently needs an additional **US\$228** 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\$52 million is required to support operations in Syria, while US\$176 is required for operations in the region.

A total of **US\$506** 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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