World Food Programme

REGIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATION 200433
Food assistance to Syrian populations in
TURKEY

Requirement: US$8,217,072   Resourced: US$4,771,972   Shortfall: US$3,445,100

Background

Since the start of the unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic and the consequent influx of Syrians into Turkey, the Government has formally declared and maintained an open border policy. The arrival of Syrian nationals in considerable numbers started in June 2011 and has continued with an ever upward trend in 2012. As of 16 August 2012, the total arrivals have reached about 70,000 with almost 61,450 Syrians receiving protection and assistance in camps in the four border provinces of Hatay, Sanliurfa, Gaziantep and Kilis.

Given the protection needs of Syrians who have arrived in Turkey, the Government officially adopted a temporary protection regime in October 2011 for all Syrian nationals crossing the border. The core elements of the temporary protection regime are:

- open border policy with admission to the territory for those seeking protection;

- protection against forcible returns (non-refoulement);

- access to basic reception arrangements, where immediate needs are addressed.

The Turkish government has been providing a high standard of assistance to Syrian hosted in their camps, spending a total of over US$240 million by early August.

WFP in Turkey

WFP did not have a programmatic presence in Turkey before this operation, though it did have a procurement and representation office in Ankara which closed at the end of 2011. WFP opened an operational office in Ankara in July 2012 in the UN house and is now looking for an appropriate location to base staff in the field.

Thanks to contributions from the governments of USA, Switzerland and UK, US$4.7M has been resourced to date towards the emergency operation in Turkey, leaving a budget shortfall of US$3.4M.

Updated 21 August 2012

WFP's Response to the Syria Situation

Turkey officially requested WFP support to assist the Syrian nationals in late May, agreeing an initial caseload of 30,000 people located in one camp in Kilis and four camps in Hatay.

A WFP mission conducted a voucher feasibility assessment in July after which they held discussions on implementation with the Turkish Government. Preliminary findings from the mission indicate that Turkey is a conducive environment for voucher implementation. The final report will be released shortly.

Challenges

Increasing numbers of refugees crossing into Turkey: As of 19 August, the Government of Turkey reported a daily arrival of 4,000 people from Syria, a refugee population close to 70,000, and the presence of many more in the country that are not registered and who need assistance. With the ongoing construction of four additional camps the Government is expecting to reach a camp capacity to host up to 100,000 people (13 camps in total).

Level of expectations in the refugee community: The Turkish Government has provided a very high standard quality of assistance, which can create expectations in the refugee community that WFP is not in a position to fulfill.

Working against the clock: The Government of Turkey has indicated that there is an urgency to see WFP implementing the voucher programme and sharing the burden of assistance to an ever growing number of refugees. A failure to do so might impact the credibility of WFP.

Way forward

Immediate identification, recruitment and deployment of a voucher expert to Turkey: One of the mission team members is being deployed initially, arriving on 21 August, while WFP defines longer term arrangements to jump start the voucher programme.

Recruitment of local support team in Ankara and finalization of an office set up.

In September, WFP will provide food assistance through a voucher programme to 30,000 Syrian who have found refuge in Turkey with plans to further scale up the operation to reach 60,000 by the end of the year.

The total cost for the operation in Turkey covering 30,000 people is US$ 8.2 million. This figure is an estimate and is subject to change as WFP finalizes Budget Revision 3 which will incorporate this assistance into the EMOP.