

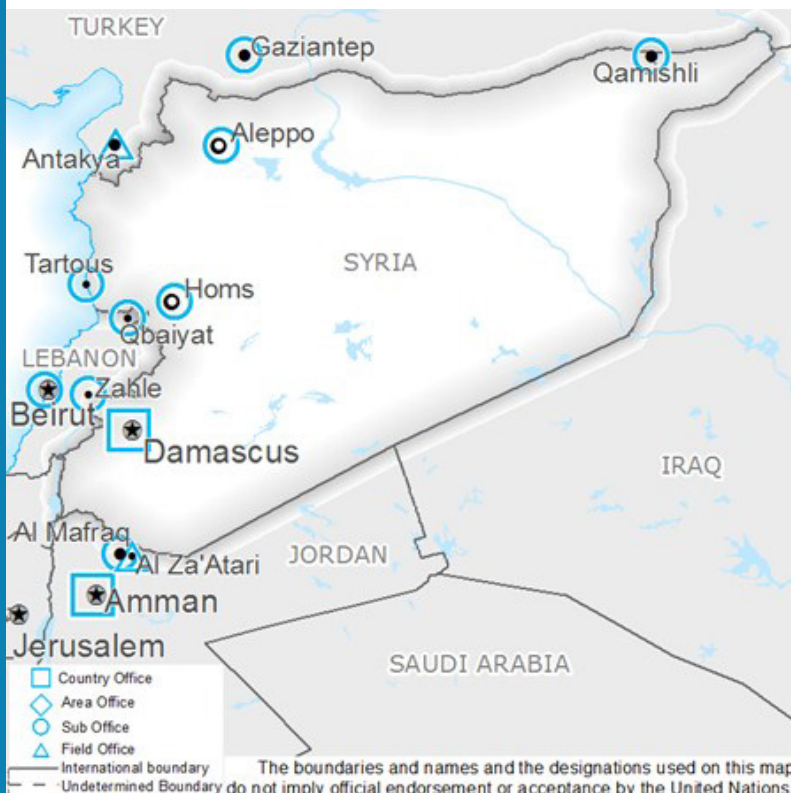
COUNTRY: SYRIA

Emergency Food Assistance to the People Affected by Unrest in Syria



HIGHLIGHTS

- In July, WFP delivered food for over 3,8 million people in 13 governorates
- Access constraints and administrative hurdles affected dispatch operations
- Food supplies for 563,000 people reach high-conflict areas through cross-border and cross-line operations
- Food for 35,000 reaches border towns of Tel Abyad and Kobane for the first time in several months
- CFSAM results suggest that increased crop production in 2015 is not expected to translate into significant improvements in household food security



Syria

In numbers

7.6 million people internally displaced
12.2 million people require humanitarian assistance
9.8 million people require food assistance

Funding Update:

US\$ 41 million are urgently needed by the end of August to avert a pipeline break in November 2015



World Food Programme

Situation Update

During the month of July, changing conflict patterns continued to fuel significant population movements inside Syria, as escalating violence forced thousands to flee their homes and villages in several parts of the country, while elsewhere lulls in fighting and shifting conflict patterns allowed the return of other previously displaced families.

Southern governorates

Thousands of families left their homes in Dar'a after fighting between government and opposition forces erupted on several fronts in the governorate. Over 35,000 people had left their homes by the second week of July following the onset of heavy clashes in Dar'a city in late June. The majority fled from the southern neighbourhood of Dar'a Al-Balad and surrounding villages to safer areas in the eastern and western parts of the governorate, while others sought refuge in fields along the Jordanian border. While a temporary de-escalation of fighting allowed many to go back to their homes around mid-July, returnees were forced to run again as heavy clashes resumed over the last ten days of the month. Some of the affected villages are now completely empty, while in other cases families evacuate their homes each morning seeking refuge in nearby fields, and return at night when fighting is minimal. In the north-west of the governorate, almost 8,000 people reportedly fled heavy fighting in Kafr Shams to nearby towns of Nawa and Hara, while in the south-east 13,000 people were temporarily displaced from Karak and Um Walad in mid-July, before being able to return later in the month as fighting subsided. Partners on the ground are monitoring the population movement and adjusting distribution plans accordingly. Amidst forecast of persisting fighting and population movement in the coming months, WFP is considering the possibility to deliver ready-to-eat rations from Jordan to assist families during the first critical days of their displacement.

Central governorates

After having seized the ancient town of Palmyra, ISIL fighters advanced further west into Homs governorate and conducted a series of attacks on Farqalas gas station, approximately 45 Km east of Homs city, in an attempt to cut the supply line to Damascus and the southern Syrian governorates. Heavy fighting followed in the area, which forced WFP to suspend deliveries for over 26,600 people to nearby Qaryatein for the whole month of July. Fighting intensified during the month, culminating in ISIL fighters taking over Qaryatein itself, home to some 75,000 people living in the area, including 8,000 recently displaced people from Palmyra. Partners on the ground indicated that about 5,500 people sought refuge in safer surrounding areas, including Sadad, Fayrouzeh and Farqalas, where they are being registered and assisted by WFP partners. An undetermined number

of families fled escaped towards east and north to areas under ISIL control, however WFP is currently unable to verify the number and condition of these families.

In neighbouring Hama governorate, violent clashes between government forces and AOGs erupted in the north-western district of Madiq Castle, in Al-Ghab plain, following the takeover by AOGs of al-Shariah town on 4 July. Escalating violence resulted in the displacement of some 8,000 civilians in safer areas of rural Hama, while an additional 13,000 reportedly fled towards Khan Shaykun and Kafr Nobol districts in Idleb governorate. The situation further escalated at the end of the month, when ongoing fighting at the border between Idleb and Hama spread further east into Hama governorate, culminating in the take-over by AOGs of several government controlled locations in Sahl Al-Ghab. Preliminary estimates indicate that close to 19,000 fled the worst affected areas, while an additional 14,000 preemptively evacuated nearby villages fearing that fighting might spread further. Most of the newly displaced families sought refuge in calmer government-held areas of the same governorate or, in fewer numbers, in neighbouring Lattakia, where they are being registered and assisted by WFP partners.

North-eastern governorates

In Al-Hasakeh, over 100,000 new IDPs had been registered in several parts of the governorate by the first week of July, after ISIL fighters attacked the southern neighbourhoods of Al-Hasakeh city on 25 June. Of these, some 86,000 people received WFP food parcels, while through a joint WFP/UNDP project some 500 people residing in two shelters in Qamishly are receiving daily cooked meals prepared using WFP rations as well as meat and vegetables purchased locally. Fighting subsided over the second half of July, as government and Kurdish forces pushed ISIL fighters to retreat eastwards, allowing the return of over 72,000 people to their homes so far. However, the situation in the worst affected neighbourhoods of Al-Hasakeh city, including Al-Nashwa, Al-Villat, Leliyah and Al-Sharee'a, remain critical and many families are unable or afraid to return. Fighting caused widespread material damage, water and electricity supplies are cut off, many properties have been looted and the presence of unexploded ordnances and mines make the areas highly unsafe.

WFP Response

Overall achievements and challenges

Amidst a growing humanitarian crisis, WFP continues to target 4.25 million vulnerable conflict-affected people in Syria, through a combination of general food assistance, supplementary nutrition support for children under five, voucher transfers and school feeding activities. In July,

WFP delivered to partners in 13 of the 14 Syrian governorates sufficient supplies to assist over 3.8 million people, or 90 percent of the planned beneficiaries, through cross-border, cross-line and regular deliveries. In areas affected by bread shortages, assistance included wheat flour, which is either provided directly to the families in rural areas, or channeled to bakeries for bread production in urban areas where beneficiaries are less likely to have access to baking facilities.

A number of security and administrative constraints accounted for the operations to fall below target during July, when achievements decreased by 7 percent compared to the previous month.

The start of the planned shipments through the Nusaybin corridor was postponed owing to delays encountered in obtaining the necessary approvals from the Syrian authorities and, subsequently, the request from Turkish authorities to temporarily suspend all humanitarian deliveries through Nusaybin due to unrest in the surrounding areas. As a result, no quantities could be delivered to Al-Hasakeh from Turkey during July, causing WFP pre-existing stocks in the governorate to dry-up by mid cycle. Accordingly, WFP could only complete 52 percent of the dispatch plan for the month. Turkish authorities subsequently lifted the restriction, allowing planned deliveries to resume in early August with approval granted by all sides.

Cross-border operations from Turkey and Jordan, which account for approximately 18 percent of the overall plan, also suffered some delays, which resulted in only 65 percent of the planned quantities to be shipped from the northern and southern corridors. The outbreak of fighting in Dar'a city at the end of June, forced the suspension of cross-border deliveries through Ar-Ramtha border for three weeks. Deliveries could only resume on 16 July, resulting just over half of the planned 30,000 being delivered from Jordan. Moreover, delays in renewing the cooperation agreements with some of the partners also negatively impacted on cross-border deliveries from Turkey fell below plan, with only 96,890 of the planned 120,000 rations delivered during the month.

Escalating clashes between government forces and ISIL forced WFP to suspend all dispatches to Qaryatein, in rural Homs for the whole month of July, preventing the delivery of food supplies for a planned 26,600 people in the area. Moreover, two OCHA-coordinated inter-agency convoys planned to deliver a total of 22,000 WFP rations to Al Houle (rural Homs), and Moadamiyeh (Rural Damascus) did not receive final approval to proceed from the relevant authorities, due to the prevailing security situation on the ground. Finally, persisting access restrictions continued to prevent deliveries to Deir Ezzor

and most of Ar-Raqqa governorates, as well as to high conflict areas in Rural Damascus, rural Homs, rural Hama and rural Aleppo.

Deliveries to hard-to-reach areas

In spite of these constraints, WFP was able to deliver food supplies for a total of 563,000 people living in high-conflict areas of the country, through a combination of cross-border and cross-line deliveries.

While no cross-line interagency convoys took place in July, coordination with local partners enabled WFP to deliver food assistance across the lines of conflict for 78,500 people in Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Rural Damascus governorates. This includes a breakthrough delivery to northern Ar-Raqqa, after more than eight months of disrupted access to the governorate. Following the liberation of Tal Abyad from ISIS control in mid-June, intense negotiations and coordination efforts were put in place, which culminated in the delivery of 2,000 rations through a local partner on 2 July. These quantities were distributed to 10,000 people from the Arab, Kurds and Turkmen communities, residing in Tel Abyad and several surrounding village. The liberation of Tel Abyad and the opening of a safe corridor connecting Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo governorates along the Turkish border paved the way for another breakthrough delivery to Ain Al-Arab (Kobane), in northern Aleppo, for the first time since May 2014. On 16 July, 10 trucks safely reached Kobane from Qamishly and through Tel Abyad, delivering 5,000 food rations in support of 25,000 people. The operation was implemented in coordination with the same local partner who facilitated the delivery to Tel Abyad and followed similar arrangements. In both cases partners on the ground reported alarming humanitarian conditions, and indicated that needs on the ground exceed the assistance provided so far. Accordingly, WFP is arranging to provide additional supplies along the Kurdish liberated corridor.

In addition, during the month of July, a total of 96,890 family food rations, were delivered through cross border missions from Jordan and Turkey in June, providing support for 484,450 civilians in opposition-held areas of Idlib (59 percent), Aleppo (22 percent), Dar'a (17 percent) and Hama, (2 percent). Due to security constraints which hampered deliveries from Jordan during the first half of the cycle, no cross-border deliveries took place to Quneitra governorate, as the limited quantities that could be shipped were prioritized for the governorate of Dar'a, witnessing high levels of fighting and population displacement throughout the month.

Progress in other activities

The voucher-based nutrition support for pregnant and lactating women continued to expand its reach during July, when a total of 4,640 women in Homs and Lattakia

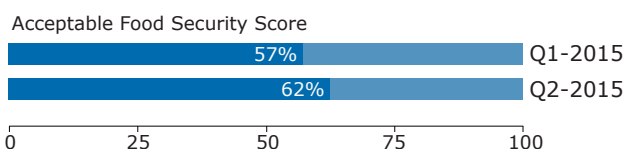
received coupons to purchase locally produced fresh products, a 14 percent increase compared to the previous month. In the meantime, arrangements are underway to further expand the scale and scope of the voucher scheme. During July a series of missions were conducted in Homs and Lattakia to assess the status of the implementation with the cooperating partners, visit distribution sites and retailers, and identify additional partners and retailers to facilitate a scale up of the programme in this areas. Additional missions took place in Tartous, during which potential partners and retailers were identified, and a market assessment was initiated, in view of the upcoming launch of the voucher programme in the governorate.

Following the end of the academic year at the end of May, the School Feeding programme transitioned to summer school clubs, remedial classes for children who have faced challenges during the year, starting from July. Over the months of July and August, the programme is targeting up to 192,000 children in participating school clubs in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs and Tartous. The expansion of the programme to Al-Hasakeh, as well as trainings for additional participating institutions carried out between April and May, will enable WFP to significantly scale up the school feeding target to 350,000 as of September upon the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year, according to enrolment estimates provided by the Ministry of Education. In parallel, a food technology mission conducted at the end of May to assess the local production capacity paved the way for a gradual transition to local procurement for date bars. A tendering process to enlist new suppliers was launched in July and the procurement of for 20 mt of commodities from a selected supplier as a trial batch, while other supplies are also being evaluated.

Monitoring

Over 2015, WFP has been progressively increasing its monitoring capacity, particularly in high conflict areas of the country, which allowed for a broader coverage and more reliable sampling to assess the impact of WFP assistance. In July, a total of 367 monitoring and verification visits were conducted in 12 of the 14 Syrian governorates, representing a 28 percent increase when compared to June.

Monitoring data from the second quarter of 2015 highlighted some improvements in the food security among the household receiving WFP assistance, with 62 percent of the household showing acceptable food consumption scores compared to 57 percent during the first quarter of 2015.



Similarly, monitoring data collected among pregnant and lactating women benefiting by the voucher scheme indicated that the proportion of beneficiaries with acceptable food consumptions score increased by 16 percent when compared to the previous quarter. However, results raise serious concern over the food insecurity levels among newly displaced households, of which, approximately 29 percent had poor food consumption score.

Partnerships

A five day Mid-Term Review workshop was held in Damascus between 26 and 30 July to jointly assess the progress made during the first half of 2015, and discuss the way forward for the rest of the year. Over 120 people attended the exercise, including WFP staff from all offices in Syria and from Gaziantep and Amman hubs, as well as representatives of cooperating partners from all 14 Syrian governorates, including Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ezzor. The workshop served as a platform to identify strengths and challenges encountered during the year, share best practices, review the targeting criteria and all aspects of the implementation, while providing an opportunity for WFP and partners to provide feedback on the cooperation.

In parallel, a series of performance reviews workshops conducted between June and July with partners in Damascus, Tartous, Lattakia Homs and Hama, including SAR. The main objectives were to introduce the new evaluation tool to the cooperating partners, as well as to carry out a joint evaluation of both WFP and the cooperating partners' performance to date. The exercise will serve as a basis to determine the necessary steps to enhance the cooperation and evaluate future performance over the rest of the year.

Food and Agriculture Sector

A Food Security and Agriculture Sector meeting was held in Damascus in July, during which sector members provided an update on the progress of their activities. In addition partners discussed the findings of the joint WFP/FAO Crop and Food Security Mission (CFSAM) conducted in May 2015 to gather information on crop and livestock production levels and food-access issues. The final report, released at the end of July, indicated that In 2015 Syria's food production increased compared to the previous year, mainly due to favourable rainfall. However, it remains 40 percent lower than pre-crisis levels as crop production was adversely affected by consequences of the conflict, including reduced access to land, scarcity and high prices of

agricultural inputs and fuel, damaged irrigation systems and difficulties in marketing products due to insecurity and high transaction costs. Reduced production, combined with reduced government subsidies and currency depreciation continued to drive significant price hikes in 2015, further jeopardising access to food for poor households. Accordingly, households spend more than half of their income on food and are forced resort to negative coping strategies which increase their vulnerability to food insecurity. Therefore, although the 2015 crop production will be better than the previous year, it is not expected to lead to significant improvements in household food security outcomes.

In parallel, a Comprehensive Food Security Assessment (CFSA) is being finalized to update the understanding of the food security situation in the country. Between May and June 2015, a team of 200 trained enumerators interviewed a sample of 19,000 households in 12 of the 14 Syrian governorates, with the exception of Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ezzor, where security conditions did not allow data collection to take place. Data analysis is being finalized and preliminary findings will be reviewed during a workshop in Beirut between 16 and 20 August, followed by the final report expected in September.

Funding

In 2015, WFP has only received 32 percent funding this year against its appeal so far. Combined with late funding arrival, this has compelled WFP to reduce the planned food basket by an average of 20 percent every month and heavily rely on internal loans to be able to maintain a minimum level of support to vulnerable families on a monthly basis. Amidst persisting funding gaps, August ration is being further reduced by 26 percent, thus providing only 74% of the planned caloric transfer, while reductions are also expected in September and October. Given the current funding status, WFP will be forced to suspend the provision of life-saving assistance to 4,25 million people in Syria as of November, unless additional funds are secured urgently. Planned requirements for the November-December period amount to US\$ 98 million, of which 84 percent remain unfunded. Of this, US\$ 41 million are urgently needed by the end of August to avert an almost complete pipeline break in November, given average procurement lead times of 2-3 months.

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Operation	Project Duration	Planned number of people	Total requirements (in US\$)	Total received (in US\$)	Total Funded (%)	Shortfall for the November-December period (%)	People Assisted	
							Planned (July)	Reached (July)
EMOP 200339: Emergency Food Assistance to the People Affected by Unrest in Syria	Oct 11 Dec 15	4,500,000	2,209,500,064	1,182,711,593	54%	84%	4.25 million	3.8 million

Country: [Syria](#)

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