

# WFP's Response Inside Syria and in Neighbouring Countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq

Situation Report # 17

Reporting Period: 26 August- 1 September 2012



World Food Programme

Fighting Hunger Worldwide

## HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

**SYRIA** – The situation in Damascus, Rural Damascus and other governorates continues to deteriorate with enduring armed activities resulting in access constraints as well as growing humanitarian needs.

Budget Revision number 6 which increases the beneficiary caseload to 1.5 million beneficiaries from the beginning of September is awaiting early release during the first week of September.

August food dispatches arrived in all targeted governorates and distributions are on-going in the majority of targeted areas.

**JORDAN** – During the first month's implementation cycle, WFP distributed food vouchers to a total of 19,000 beneficiaries, an 83 percent implementation ratio. During the reporting period, WFP has provided an average of over 36,274 meals per day in both transit centres in Ramtha and Al Za'atari camp in Mafraq, reaching more than 18,000 beneficiaries daily.

**LEBANON**- The August cycle is on-going in the North and will be completed when UNHCR's NFI arrive from Tripoli. A total of 1580 households have received vouchers so far, while 229 households in areas with limited access or other restraints received food packages. The voucher programme will begin in Tripoli area in September.

The second round of August voucher distribution in Central Bekaa, postponed last week due to security threats, has now taken place this week for about 2,464 refugees. In August, 233 food packages (reaching about 1,000 persons) have been distributed through DRC to UNHCR registered households in Masharia al Qaa and other remote villages.

**IRAQ** - WFP is following up the second procurement of 162 mt of food from Turkey to meet the increased food needs of 10,000 Syrians in Kurdistan Region.

**TURKEY**- WFP presented its strategy for transition from government in kind to WFP voucher-based assistance for two camps in Yayladagi and discussed the operational arrangements with the Government in Turkey; the transition will start in mid-September.



Voucher beneficiaries in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon ©WFP/ Maria Anguera de Sojo

## Syria

## SITUATION UPDATE

The situation in Damascus, Rural Damascus and other governorates such as Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, Homs and Deir Ezzor continues to deteriorate with enduring armed activities resulting in curtailed access and growing humanitarian needs. Those who were forced to leave their homes due to the current events continue to seek shelter in public buildings, mainly schools.

Criminal activities including kidnapping and carjacking for ransom are also on the rise indicating an increased probability of risk to humanitarian field workers.

While the situation on inter-governorate highways remains unpredictable, international roads to the borders with both Jordan and Lebanon have been reopened for the time being allowing international and regional procurement as well as staff movement.

The on-going volatility coupled with unstable connectivity continues to pose challenges to WFP operations in terms of dispatch, monitoring and

procurement. Difficulties in securing trucks for food dispatches, especially to the cities of Aleppo and Homs due to the deteriorating situation, as well as diesel scarcity persist. Communication is inconsistent in Deir Ezzor and Aleppo governorates. WFP ICT unit has been working on arrangements for possible alternate means of communication for the Sub-Offices as well as field vehicles to facilitate the operation.

A joint UN mission to be led by OCHA and supervised by the UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) to assess the current humanitarian situation and needs in Homs as well as the possibility of establishing a fixed presence in the city has been organized to take place on 4 September, 2012.

***During the reporting period, on-going armed activities in several governorates in Syria caused access constraints and resulted in growing humanitarian needs***

## WFP RESPONSE

**FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME:** Starting September 2012, as per the latest budget revision of the Emergency Operation (EMOP), WFP will start providing food assistance to 1.5 million beneficiaries in all 14 Syrian governorates that have been directly or indirectly impacted by the current events.

As humanitarian needs inside Syria grow with the capacity of SARC being overstretched, WFP continues to provide financial support to SARC to cover offloading costs, salaries and incentives for their staff and volunteers in all 14 branches, ICT equipment, trucks and light vehicles, mobile storage units, and warehousing capacity. Training plan for SARC staff and volunteers is also being prepared to take place in September.

The food basket for the August cycle distributed during the reporting period contains rice 15 kg, bulgur 5 kg, pulses 4 kg, pasta 5 kg, oil 5 L, sugar 5 kg, canned beans 2.85 kg (10 cans) and salt 0.75 kg. The nutritional value of this basket represents 1,184 kcal.

WFP monitoring activities including household visits and market price collection continued in areas where the situation permitted.

*"During our monitoring visit in SARC distribution center in Sweida we met Oula. The 35 year old woman told us she arrived in Sweida a month ago with her husband and their two daughters. They fled the neighborhood of Al Tadamon in Damascus, when the shelling started. "I cannot believe we are going through this", she said. "We have never asked for assistance before, but now we don't have a choice. We left our home, our belongings, hoping it would be only for a few days. It's been three weeks now and I still don't know whether we'll be able to come back home at all. We chose to come to Sweida for our little girls: it's maybe one of the last few safe places in Syria. But life is extremely expensive here. The fact that we are able to benefit from food assistance through the Red Crescent is a huge relief for me and my family. We are grateful for what you are doing for us"...*

During the reporting period, WFP field monitors conducted monitoring visits to schools hosting people who left their homes in search of safety, SARC centres and local charities in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Quneitra governorates. Some of these schools are

mainly used to host people in need of shelter and some are used by SARC as distribution centres with permission from local authorities.

According to monitoring findings, Quneitra governorate has been hosting people coming from areas of Rural Damascus affected by recent events. Around 22,000 people have so far registered with the SARC branch distributing both WFP and ICRC food parcels. However, the humanitarian needs are significantly higher than available assistance can satisfy and SARC has requested to increase the allocation for Quneitra governorate.

As per reports from WFP Qamishly Sub-Office, the North-Eastern region is witnessing increasing numbers of families who fled Deir Ezzor and Aleppo in order to find safer places in Al-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh governorates. As of 28 August, the number of registered families was almost 23,000 in Al-Raqqa governorate and over 14,000 in Al-Hasakeh governorate. Priority is being given to newcomers as the current humanitarian needs exceed the planned allocation of the two governorates.

**LOGISTICS ACTIVITIES** – WFP continues to dispatch food to the final distribution points (FDPs) directly and/or through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

Food dispatches for the August cycle commenced on 10 August and concluded in Lattakia, Sweida and Quneitra while remain on-going in the rest of the governorates. As of 1 September, 110,950 rations for 554,750 beneficiaries arrived in all 14 governorates.

WFP is also coordinating with UNRWA for the dispatch of food to UNRWA-managed schools in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Aleppo hosting people who fled neighbouring areas.

11 rub-halls and 1,000 plastic pallets arrived in the country. 5 rub-halls and 500 pallets will be donated to SARC as part of logistics capacity building exercise. Six rub-halls will be utilized to enhance WFP warehouse

capacity in Damascus and Tartous governorates and the rest of the pallets will be used at WFP rub-halls.

**COORDINATION:** WFP established a logistics coordination mechanism in Damascus to improve inter-agency logistics coordination of the humanitarian community undertaking activities in response to the events in Syria.

On 28 August, a Logistics Sector Coordination meeting was held in Amman to ensure a coherent flow of logistics information to all stakeholders and to better identify needs and gaps in the logistics humanitarian response. The coordination structure will be further extended to include Beirut. Relevant logistics information products (such as maps, assessments, snapshots) are also being produced and disseminated to humanitarian actors.

WFP is providing free logistics services including surface transportation and warehousing to humanitarian organizations responding to the current events in Syria. Surface transport is provided to key storage hubs within the country where WFP undertakes handling and storage of organizations' cargo. Since 31 March, 2012 to date, WFP has provided handling services and transportation of over 2,700 m<sup>3</sup>/550 mt of hygiene and recreation kits, food, household equipment, clothes and other Non-Food Items (NFI) on behalf of DRC, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNFPA and WHO.

Shortages and increases in fuel costs have now been cited throughout the country, including major cities and in the port of Tartous. Therefore, a fuel depot with a capacity of 70,000 litres has been established in Damascus to serve the WFP light vehicle fleet. To ensure a predictable and sufficient supply of fuel for on-going operations, if needed, the depot can be utilized on a cost-recovery basis by other UN agencies, implementing partners, and commercial transporter.

## RESOURCE UPDATE

The EMOP is currently valued at US\$136 million.

More than US\$61 million has been resourced thanks to contributions received from UN CERF, USA, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, European Commission, UK, Finland, Ireland, Germany, Kuwait, France, Russia, and other multilateral donors in addition to carryover from previous operations.

**The current shortfall stands at US\$75 million.**

**Urgent funding is also needed to start implementing activities under the special operation, aimed at augmenting WFP's capacity in logistics, communication and security amidst the increasingly challenging environment.**

### SITUATION UPDATE

As of 1 September, UNHCR has registered 46,703 Syrian nationals while the Government of Jordan reports that over 150,000 Syrians have entered the country. In addition, 6,709 people have registration appointments and 23,335 people are awaiting registration in Al Za'atari camp, bringing the number of people eligible for assistance to 77,165. As the situation in Syria persists, large numbers of Syrians continue to cross the Jordanian borders seeking asylum, mainly through the cities of Mafraq and Ramtha.

### WFP RESPONSE

In September, WFP is targeting 48,000 refugees registered with UNHCR in the communities and in the Cyber City transit camp with vouchers. WFP is also assisting an increasing number of Syrian nationals (an average of 18,000 this week) with hot meals in additional transit centers close to the border.

During the first month implementation cycle, cooperating partners distributed food vouchers to a total of 19,000 beneficiaries. The redemption of these was completed in the designated retailers.

WFP has provided an average of over 36,274 meals per day through its implementing partner *Tkiyet Um Ali* (TUA) in both transit centres in Ramtha and Al Za'atari camp in Manfraaq, reaching more than 18,000 beneficiaries daily.

WFP and UNHCR are working together to set up kitchen facilities for refugees at AL Zaatari camp to transition from hot meal distribution to dry rations. This will enable refugees to prepare their own meals and diversify their food consumption. The construction of kitchens facilities started on 29 August and will be completed on 16 September. WFP is currently prepositioning dry food commodities for Al Za'atari camp in Manfraaq Food Distribution Point.

In addition to hot meals, WFP is distributing welcome packages to new arrivals who come to Al Za'atari camp mostly in the middle of the night, requiring a 24/7 WFP staff presence. The welcome packages are comprised of six ready to eat non-perishable items and they are prepositioned at WFP's rubbhall in the Al Za'atari camp.

**Monitoring** Three WFP Field Monitors are dedicated to Za'atari and King Adullah Park, and another two are

The Government of Jordan has reconsidered bailing for extreme vulnerable cases and family reunions on humanitarian grounds and accepted some bailing on a case-by-case basis.

The rate of new arrivals remains high, with a daily average of 1,400 Syrians arriving at Al Za'atari camp over the past week, bringing the total number of those received in the camp to about 23,400. Those crossing illegally are transferred directly to the Zaatari camp.

dedicated to monitoring WFP's voucher programme including shop visits. During the reporting period WFP conducted 14 hot meal distributions and one shop along with 10 beneficiary interviews for the voucher programme. Main findings and following actions taken include:

**HOT MEAL DISTRIBUTIONS:** The timely distribution is challenging due to high number of beneficiaries; WFP is increasing distribution staff. Beneficiaries have highlighted a lack of dietary diversity; WFP is requesting partners to diversify hot meals. Refugees have requested to cook their own food, however there are no kitchen facilities in the camp; UNHCR is installing kitchens and WFP is constructing a food distribution center to allow dry ration distribution. Furthermore, the upcoming establishment of Food Management Committees will facilitate further the elevation of critical issues.

**VOUCHERS:** Following the request from beneficiaries, WFP has expanded the list to include fresh/ frozen meat, fish and chicken as well as other complementary items in order to meet the Syrians needs and habits. Vegetables and fruit are popular items. In addition, during the reporting period, shop monitoring form and distribution checklist has been developed and are being used in the field

*"Before the vouchers, some people had no money; they would look at the nearby shop and just dream to go inside. With the vouchers, now they do."*

Nourhan, 19 years old. Syrian refugee from Daraa at Cyber city centre in Ramtha.

### SITUATION UPDATE

As of 30 August, UNHCR has registered 42,947 Syrians in the country: 23,151 in the North and 17,827 in the Bekaa Valley, with the remaining 1,969 in Beirut and the Jabal area. An additional 15,054 Syrians have contacted UNHCR to be registered. Part of the registered caseload is awaiting receipt of their cards required to obtain WFP vouchers; WFP is assisting these refugees with family food packages and will

phase over to vouchers as soon as UNCHR finalises their registration.

Following the relatively tense security situation in the previous week, this week has seen a much calmer security situation with less impact on the project, allowing UNHCR registrations and WFP distributions to continue.

### WFP RESPONSE

In August, WFP is targeting over 33,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon:

**In the North**, the August cycle started in Akkar in mid-August: A total of 1580 households received 7800 vouchers; while 229 households with problem cases (eg households who came to the wrong distribution points and therefore could not receive their vouchers or where problems are being resolved in the UNHCR database) received food packages. Some vouchers were immediately redeemed in the surrounding selected shops; WFP staff made frequent inspections in all shops to make sure that the regulations were respected. However, the completion of the distribution in Wadi Khaled was postponed as UNHCR's NFIs (distributed alongside WFP vouchers) were blocked in Tripoli city. The voucher programme will begin in Tripoli area in September.

**In the Bekaa Valley:** The second round of August voucher distribution in Central Bekaa was postponed last week due to security threats, but has taken place this week for about 2,500 refugees.

WFP Bekaa received from WVI the July reconciliation documents on 29 August and the verification of the reconciliation from WFP part is ongoing.

In remote and conflict-affected border areas, WFP will continue to provide food parcels. About 233 food packages (reaching about 1,000 persons) have been distributed through DRC to UNHCR registered households in Masharia al Qaa and other remote villages.

### ASSESSMENTS

North: Shop assessments have been completed in the Tripoli area for the voucher programme, and 28 shops

have been selected by DRC and WFP. A shops training will be organized next week, and the contracts will be signed the same day. Moreover, the 24 selected shops in Akkar districts are now receiving the first redeemed vouchers of August cycle, closely monitored by WFP staff.

Bekaa Valley: DRC conducted extra shops assessment/selection in Baalbeck area and, with WFP, selected three shops to participate in the project from eight assessed.

A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted jointly with DRC for beneficiaries in Mahsari Al Qaa, an area difficult to access for WFP and partners, to assess their preference between vouchers and food parcels. While the final results of the FGD are being consolidated by DRC before sharing, preliminary results show that these beneficiaries would prefer assistance through vouchers even if they have to travel to shops in other areas to redeem them.

### MONITORING

Currently, WFP staff in the North is conducting monitoring visits on the 24 selected shops receiving the first vouchers in Akkar.

During the previous reporting period WFP in Bekaa Valley had conducted 12 HH PDM visits and five shop visits. Main findings include In general the beneficiaries as well as shopkeepers are satisfied with the voucher system however some misuse of voucher has been reported highlighting the need for beneficiaries to cover other urgent needs such as cooking gas, NFIs and hygiene products or to pay the rent.

WFP will continue monitoring, building a more comprehensive picture of voucher utilisation and

addressing issues raised. WFP has also shared the information with UNHCR who is now working with other organisations to see how the NFI assistance can meet some of the non-food needs raised by beneficiaries. WFP will also request a decision on the use of the UNHCR identity card in shops as this should reduce the opportunity for beneficiaries to sell their vouchers.

**Coordination:** Following the official request from HRC for WFP to assist Lebanese returnees, WFP will participate in a working group chaired by the Government of Lebanon High Relief Commission to develop an interagency assistance strategy. This caseload of less than a thousand families could be included in the WFP beneficiaries for the September distribution cycle if the strategy has been agreed.

## Iraq

### SITUATION UPDATE

According to UNHCR the total number of Syrian refugees has now reached 18,682 (13,989 are registered with another 4,693 awaiting registration). This number exceeds WFP's planning target for December (15,000), highlighting the need to revise the food requirements in the September RRP update. There has been an increase in the number of new arrivals at the Kurdistan Regional Governorate as some 2,784 Syrians have crossed the borders during the week. This brings the total number of Syrians hosted in Kurdistan to 14,410 including 3,166 in Domiz camp.

The construction of the UNHCR and Iraqi Red Crescent camp at Ksak (Talafar district of Ninewa)

#### WFP RESPONSE

WFP is targeting a caseload of up to 15,000 people Syrian nationals by December with the provision of direct in-kind food assistance; priority is given to those in the Domiz camp, Dohuk governorate.

The UNHCR registers required to prepare the WFP beneficiary lists not made available on time and has caused a delay in the distributions planned for 2 September. WFP, Islamic Relief, UNHCR and DDM will meet on 3 September to finalize distribution arrangements. WFP has agreed to a proposal to use temporary coupons for identification of refugees living in the camp to enable them receive their rations on time. Over 3,000 Syrians in the camp will receive their rations as the first priority group.

WFP is following up the second procurement of 162 mt of food ex Turkey to meet the increased food needs of 10,000 Syrians in Kurdistan Region.

**Assessments:** The final report of the Joint UN Interagency Needs Assessment of Syrian Nationals in

with a capacity for 1,000 people is on-going. A UNDSS mission is assessing the security situation in the area for humanitarian movement. Iraqi returnees in this area will be accommodated in school buildings.

Al-Qaim camp is now hosting 2,090 Syrian refugees, while another 3,682 people in the area are accommodated in local schools and public buildings in the city. Construction works are in progress to expand the capacity of Al-Qaim camp which will have a capacity for 6,000 refugees. Food assistance is provided by the Government of Iraq and the local community.

Iraq is awaiting approval from the Kurdistan Region Government authorities before dissemination to stakeholders including donors. Preliminary findings of this assessment indicate that Erbil is conducive to voucher programme implementation to serve the Syrian nationals in the area, including those in Domiz Camp.

**Coordination:** Following the request from the Ministry of Displacement and Migration to assist Syrian national in Al Qaim, WFP is seeking CERF funding to meet emergency needs in the area, which will be included under EMOP BR4. UNHCR is installing various infrastructure in the camp including rubble-halls and they can provide additional storage facilities within short notice if required, including food storage.

## Turkey

### SITUATION UPDATE

On 30 August, 2012, the Government of Turkey reported that the number of Syrians registered and accommodated in the camps including those temporarily placed in the schools and those under medical treatment in the hospitals reached 80,410 persons. Reportedly the camp in Kahramanmaraş (15,000 capacity) as well as the one in Gaziantep-Karkamış (8,000 capacity) have opened. Currently there are 11 operational camps including five in Hatay, two in Gaziantep, two in Şanlıurfa, and one in Kahramanmaraş and one container city in Kilis; an additional three camps each with 10,000 capacity are under construction and planned to open during September 2012.

### WFP RESPONSE

The WFP Office in Ankara is being set up and voucher specialists have been deployed to Turkey to kick start the implementation of the project. WFP is deploying additional support staff in Ankara in preparation for the launch of the voucher programme, furthermore, identification and recruitment of additional international staff to support WFP operations is ongoing.

Budget revision number 3 of the Regional Refugee Emergency Operation which incorporates the caseload in Turkey in the operation was endorsed by the Project Review pending some changes and is now being finalized. WFP is planning to start its operation in Kilis camp and later on in Hatay province over the

Local authorities informed that there are already 4,000 persons transferred to Karkamış camp and about an additional 4,000 will be transferred from the schools. The camp in Kahramanmaraş is expected to receive people as of Monday 3 September.

According to the authorities, there are still over 8,000 people waiting across the border on the Syrian side that will be admitted gradually. The border is open and humanitarian assistance (food-water-medical assistance) is provided to Syrians at the 'zero point' of the border. The Turkish Red Crescent also continues to distribute relief items including food to the vulnerable people in the villages across the border.

second half of September to initially cover the need of 20,000 people, though this figure is likely to be reconsidered in BR #4 based on the revised interagency appeal expected to be consolidated in September.

Assesments: The final report of the voucher feasibility study recommends a phased transition from direct food assistance to a market based approach with food vouchers in camps where people have or will have cooking facilities and access to shops. The proposed assistance, to start in September and to cover the needs of some 30,000 people, is expected to be expanded as cooking facilities and access to shop is ensured.

## Resource Mobilization

Budget revision number 3 of the Regional Refugee Emergency Operation which incorporates the caseload in Turkey in the operation was endorsed by the Project Review Committee pending some changes and is now being finalized. WFP will start assisting a caseload of 30,000 by the end of the year, though this figure is likely to be reconsidered in BR #4 (as below).

The fourth revision of the budget is now being drafted, which will incorporate the additional caseloads of refugees in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey based on the revised interagency appeal expected to be consolidated in September

| DONOR                | CONFIRMED US\$    |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| USA                  | 8,000,000         |
| Japan                | 315,488           |
| ECHO                 | 3,676,471         |
| Switzerland          | 198,346           |
| CANADA               | 1,494,024         |
| UN CERF              | 2,904,292         |
| UN SRAC              | 1,070,000         |
| UK                   | 4,709,576         |
| Total confirmed      | 22,368,197        |
| REG EMOP 200433 Cost | 33,846,728        |
| <b>SHORTFALL</b>     | <b>11,478,531</b> |

Thanks to contributions from ECHO and the governments of USA, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, UK the UN CERF and the UN SRAC US\$22.4M has been resourced to date towards the Regional EMOP, leaving a budget shortfall of US\$11.5M.

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