

HIGHLIGHTS

- Additional aid for winter urgently needed.
- WFP provided food to 1.5 million people in October.
- 11,000 people fled Syria in a single day.
- Funding constraints hamper humanitarian and refugee response activities.

FIGURES

Population	22 million
Governorates	14
Affected population	2.5 million
Number of IDPs	1.2 million
Number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and North Africa	408,000

FUNDING (US\$)

348 million
requested by UN for activities inside Syria

51% funded

488 million
requested under the Regional Refugee Response Plan

35% funded



In this issue

[Humanitarian needs continue to grow P.1](#)

[Needs assessments will enhance response P.2](#)

[Price hikes may trigger growing food insecurity P.3](#)

[Refugees urgently require winter items P.5](#)

Up to 4 million people expected to require assistance in Syria by early 2013

Violence causes rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation

While humanitarian needs increase in Syria the situation continues to grow more worrying and complex. Fighting and the cumulative effects of the crisis continue to affect over 2.5 million people inside the country. At least 1.2 million people are internally displaced, having fled the violence that has left thousands killed or injured. With the cold winter weather setting in and no foreseeable end to the fighting, the outlook for people trapped in the conflict – including Palestine and other refugee communities – is grim.

If developments continue on the current trajectory, the UN estimates that up to 4 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria by early next year. This number includes almost 2 million children and adolescents who are facing interruption of their education, have limited access to basic services and experience psychological trauma caused by violence and displacement.

Humanitarian access to areas in active conflict is often difficult. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) recently highlighted that there are several areas where no aid has been delivered and where humanitarian needs remain unknown. One such area is the Old City of Homs, where ICRC and the Arab Red Crescent (SARC) delivered medical supplies, food and hygiene items earlier this month. According to customary International Humanitarian Law, all parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate the safe passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need.

About 710,000 Syrian refugees expected in neighbouring countries by early next year

The number of Syrian refugees in the region continues to grow and is now close to 408,000 people. By early 2013 the number of refugees is expected to reach about 710,000 people. On 8 November alone, some 9,000 Syrians fled to Turkey following heavy battles between the Syrian Armed Forces and the armed opposition in the border town of Ras Al Ain in Hassakeh governorate. On average, some 2,000 to 3,000 refugees have crossed into neighbouring countries per day over recent weeks. Three-quarters of refugees are women and children, many of whom have suffered unbearable violence and abuse before they could flee.

Needs assessments in several governorates to enhance response

Humanitarian needs far exceed previous estimates

OCHA and other UN partners have recently carried out missions to Dera'a, Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Homs and Rural Damascus governorates. In all areas visited humanitarian needs were found to far exceed previous planning figures. For example, in Adra Oumaliyah, an industrial area northeast of Damascus, some 50,000-70,000 IDPs are staying in vacant, unfinished apartment blocks. Most of these IDPs recently fled fighting in the nearby towns of Duma and Harasta.

UN agencies urgently seeking assistance for IDPs ahead of winter

In many instances, IDPs live in unbearable conditions, marked by despair and destitution. Many IDPs are exhausted after protracted exposure to conflict. For example, in An-Nabk, 60 people from Homs are staying in tents on a former poultry farm. In Aleppo, more than 27,000 IDPs are hosted in cramped university dormitories. To meet the challenges of winter, these IDPs require warm clothing, heaters, blankets and shelter rehabilitation.

Winter is a particularly difficult and dangerous time for infants and children. UNICEF estimates that at least 75,000 children require immediate provision of blankets and warm clothes. Many children continue to live in shelters that are not at all protected from the winter chill. They currently lack access to basic services, including health facilities, schools and psychosocial support.

Further needs assessments to inform upcoming revised response plan

UN agencies have been granted access by the Government of Syria to conduct two parallel assessment missions starting this month. Multi-sector assessment missions are planned for the south, the north, as well as Damascus and its surroundings. The missions will support humanitarian planning, particularly the revised Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan which is expected to be finalized towards the end of the year. Missions will include UN agencies, SARC and relevant ministerial counterparts.

Aid delivery hampered by insecurity, access constraints

Delays to delivery due to insecurity

Insecurity causes delays to efficient aid delivery. Fighting around Deir Ez-Zor and unsafe roads leading to Hassakeh prevented WFP subcontracted trucks from reaching their destinations in the past week. Food stocks were re-directed to Ar-Raqqa. Deterioration of the security situation on roads leading to Quneitra City also prevented delivery of WFP commodities to the area.

There have been several instances of trucks carrying humanitarian aid caught in fighting over recent weeks. This has resulted in the loss of supplies and equipment. Last week a SARC warehouse in Aleppo was hit by a shell and caught fire. Thousands of family food parcels and hygiene kits were lost in the blaze.

On 4 November a UN staff member was killed in Yarmouk in southern Damascus. This latest fatality brings the death toll of UN staff to eight people this year. SARC has also seen several deaths among its staff. A number of doctors, nurses and other medical professionals have also been killed or caught in the crossfire while working to save lives.

1.5 million Syrians receive food assistance amid price hikes

Food insecurity expected to rise as families may turn to 'negative' coping strategies

The prices of some staple foods are on the rise. Wheat prices have increased 11 per cent due to disruptions in local supply chains. This is expected to worsen as the conflict continues. The Government is reported to have reserves to import the necessary food and non-food commodities, however at a high cost. As people struggle to make ends meet, WFP warns that households may turn to 'negative' coping strategies, such as reducing the number of meals or portion size, consuming lower quality food or taking children out of school so they might work to earn additional income.

WFP food assistance to 1.5 million people in October

WFP was able to dispatch food to 1.5 million people during the month of October, reaching 100 per cent of their target for dispatches. Food assistance was dispatched to all 14 governorates of Syria. The target for November is also 1.5 million people, although needs continue to rise. So far this month, almost 36,000 rations have been delivered to cover about 180,000 people.

Food distribution by ICRC in cooperation with SARC complements WFP assistance. During the month of October, ICRC delivered assistance to cover the needs of almost 150,000 people in Rural Damascus, Idlib, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Suweida, Tartous, Ar-Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor, Lattakia and Damascus.

Conflict has devastating and long-lasting impact on children

Syria's children remain victims of conflict

The violence across Syria is having a serious and long-lasting impact – whether physical or psychological – on hundreds of thousands of children. Many children have been forced to relocate several times and have had their education disrupted. In addition children are exposed to low quality care which in turn increases vulnerability to disease. There is a considerable shortage of protective environments for children.

23,140 children benefit from UNICEF psycho-social support

Some 23,140 school-aged children in affected areas are enrolled in schools clubs supported by UNICEF across Syria. Through these clubs, children have access to remedial classes, recreational activities and psychosocial support. School club activities are currently on-going in the four governorates of Dera'a, Rural Damascus, Lattakia and Tartous. Two new clubs opened in Rural Damascus over the past two weeks, bringing the total to 106 clubs. Further school clubs are planned with partners in Hassakeh, Homs and Quneitra, as well as in Ar-Raqqa and Hama.

The provision of essential school supplies continues. In Hassakeh, UN agencies have provided 20,575 school kits for primary school children.

Health sector in crisis receives UN support

UNFPA reports steep increase in C-sections among pregnant women

After more than 20 months, the crisis has had an impact on all aspects of the health sector. For pregnant women, recent data collected by UNFPA shows that 44 per cent of births in certain areas of Syria are currently via caesarian section. In many instances, women are unable to get to the hospital safely while in labour and may be opting for C-sections to be sure of a safer delivery. WHO recently signed an MOU with Syrian NGO

'Growth and Development' in Damascus. This NGO facilitates referral of patients in need of medical and surgical interventions as well as women in need of C-sections to health facilities where they can receive adequate health care.

Violence and unrest leave gaps in vaccination coverage

The on-going conflict has created challenges in implementing the routine national immunization programme. The Ministry of Health reports that the national vaccination coverage for the first quarter of 2012 dropped from 95 per cent to 80 per cent. In September, the Ministry reported that 132 out of 179 vaccination service vehicles had been destroyed and taken out of service. Despite the challenges, a national vaccination campaign targeting 1.5 million people is expected to start soon.

WHO supported over 98,000 people with medicines, services

WHO supported over 98,000 beneficiaries with medicines, surgical supplies and essential medical services including referrals during the month of October. In the first week of November, WHO provided Al-Moassat Hospital in Damascus with almost 10,000 ampules of urgently needed insulin and 20,000 tablets of Imuran medication for kidney transplants. WHO recently assisted the Ministry of Health with the delivery of 500,000 doses of vaccines for the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in Aleppo, targeting 150,000 children under the age of 5.

UNDP has provided two respiratory machines (expected to benefit 500 people) to a health dispensary in Moadamiya in Rural Damascus.

Humanitarian partners support access to water, sanitation facilities

ICRC, SARC have provided water for over a million people since early 2012

ICRC and SARC have provided water services for over a million people in the governorates of Damascus, Rural Damascus and Homs since early 2012. UNICEF has provided access to improved hygiene facilities to 107,000 people and drinking water for 6,000 people in Damascus.

In October, UNICEF and partners provided more than 4,500 IDPs with access to latrines and showers in collective shelters in Rural Damascus. Light rehabilitation of water systems and latrines has also taken place. To ensure water reserves, 28 water tanks have been delivered to 14 collective shelters hosting IDPs.

Refugee population grows as violence continues

11,000 Syrian refugees flee to Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey in 24 hours

On 8 November, 11,000 Syrian refugees fled to three neighbouring countries overnight. This included about 9,000 people who fled to Turkey and 1,000 to Lebanon and Jordan, respectively. UNHCR reports that about 6,100 Syrians have registered in Egypt, a substantial increase from past months.

The overall number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and North Africa continues to rise. The overall figure of 408,000 refugees does not include Syrians who have fled without registering, a number which may be in the tens of thousands in some countries.

Country	Refugees registered and/ or assisted	Projected number of refugees by end of 2012
Iraq	49,032	60,000
Jordan	118,398	250,000
Lebanon	118,633	120,000
Turkey	114,944	280,000
North Africa	7,844	N/A
Total	408,851	710,000

Source: UNHCR as reported on 12 November. Refugee figures are based on estimates and may thus vary.

Concerns rise over refugee children and access to education

Children make up about half of the Syrian refugee population. In addition to needs such as shelter, food and WASH, education is a growing concern among refugees. While neighbouring governments and aid agencies are providing support to schools and child-friendly spaces, Save the Children has warned that up to 40,000 Syrian refugee children are currently out of school in Lebanon and Iraq alone.

Nearly 50,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq

Syrian refugees, primarily from Hassakah governorate continue to cross into Iraq. Some 49,032 were registered with UNHCR as of 7 November. The majority of refugees are in the Kurdistan region, with over 31,000 in Duhok governorate, where the Domiz camp is located. On 20 October Al-Qa'im border crossing closed for Syrian refugees, leaving hundreds waiting to exit Syria. The border was previously open to women and children, but has since been reported to have closed except for medical cases and other urgent cases.

In Al-Anbar governorate refugees live in two camps while a third camp to host 20,000 refugees is planned at Al-Obaidi. Those not in camps are staying in host communities or public buildings as they await the expansion of existing camps or for new ones to be opened. Aid agencies report the need for more winter clothes, blankets and other items to help refugees cope with the upcoming winter months.

At Domiz camp, UNHCR estimates a population of 15,000, which is an increase of 2,000 people compared to late October. Health services are strained by the increasing number of people in need of support. WFP, in partnership with UNHCR and Islamic Relief Worldwide, is providing food packages for 10,000 refugees. Save the Children has distributed hygiene kits to 3,400 people.

Around 8,400 people are hosted in two camps at Al-Qa'im in Al-Anbar. Refugees are receiving assistance, though additional support is needed, especially for winter. Response activities include flu vaccinations and an intermediate school opening. WFP food distributions in Al Qa'im are expected to start in mid-November.

Highest number of refugees crossing into Jordan in months

During the night of 8 November about 1,000 refugees crossed into Jordan – double the average daily arrival rate seen in the past few months. The increase arose amid reports of intensified fighting in southern Syria. In the past six months there have been 16 instances when around or over 1,000 Syrian refugees crossed into Jordan in a single night. IOM provides emergency transport for refugees once inside Jordan.

As of 11 November, UNHCR reports that 118,398 Syrian refugees have been registered or are awaiting registration in Jordan. The Government has said the overall number of Syrians in Jordan to exceed 230,000. Aid agencies report that both urban refugees and refugees at Za'atari camp are in need of winter items, food and education support.

Most Syrian refugees currently live in the governorates of Irbid, Mafraq and Amman. In the Za'atari camp, located in Mafraq, the camp population has reached an estimated 21,000 people. Arriving families recently told UNHCR that have been internally displaced for the last 6 to 12 months and that they left Syria because they were no longer able to afford the cost of living where they were staying.

Save the Children Jordan is working with 14 community based organisations supporting child protection in host communities. Since March 2011, UNHCR, UNICEF and partners have identified and registered 797 separated and unaccompanied children in Za'atari camp, host communities and transit sites through an inter-agency system.

Almost 3,300 students have registered for school since UNICEF and the Ministry of Education opened temporary learning spaces in Za'atari in October. The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization, with support from the Government of Bahrain has constructed a new school complex in Za'atari that will accommodate around 4,200 students. Some 17,000 Syrians are currently registered in Jordanian schools, of who more than 2,000 are on waiting lists.

Psychosocial activities for children are on-going at Za'atari camp. In the past weeks nearly 2,700 children benefited from psychosocial activities in UNICEF-supported Child Friendly Spaces. WFP distributed the first cycle of food rations for November, which included a food basket and bread. Some 271 communal kitchen units are also installed in the camp and in use by refugees. WFP also distributes meals and bread to people in Cyber City and King Abdullah Park in Ramtha. UNICEF and Mercy Corps have finished drilling a borehole as a longer-term solution for water.

UN assistance to an additional 15,000 refugees in Lebanon over past week

UNHCR reports that 118,633 Syrian refugees are registered or awaiting registration in Lebanon as of 9 November. UNHCR is expanding operations across Lebanon to reach the growing refugee community with food and shelter assistance. The number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon receiving aid from the UN has increased by 15,000 over the past week.

Many new arrivals report that they have lost contact with family members since arriving in Lebanon or that loved ones have died in the violence. Some said they fled their homes quickly to flee fighting. Previously located in the north and northeast, now refugees are being hosted in nearly all areas of the country, with a noticeable spread toward the south and the capital Beirut.

The humanitarian situation for refugees in Lebanon is growing in complexity. The onset of winter brings about an increasing need for warm clothes, blankets, stoves and fuel. In the Beka'a Valley, WFP is distributing vouchers with a value of US\$31 per person, per month so that 70,000 registered refugees can purchase some of these items. Other humanitarian partners are distributing stoves, fuel, blankets and supplies to prepare shelters for winter. The ICRC distributed food, mattresses, blankets, hygiene items, kitchen sets and other household items essential assistance to around 23,250 refugees from Syria and 4,630 Palestine refugees in camps.

A voucher system is also used to provide drinking water to refugees. In the Beka'a Valley UNICEF distributed more than 7,700 vouchers for water for the month December. UNICEF and partners have also distributed baby hygiene kits, hygiene kits, and WASH supplies to Syrian refugees. Humanitarian partners continue to provide food and non-food items to refugees in Beka'a and in the North.

UNHCR recently launched registration in Ghaziyeh, southern Lebanon, and has registered nearly 1,000 people. In southern Lebanon UN agencies and the humanitarian community distributed mattresses, blankets, food vouchers and hygiene kits to 32,000 people. Several NGOs report plans to extend refugee response program activities to Lebanon's south.

Education and child protection activities continue. Save the Children and UNICEF have previously reported that 30 per cent of Syrian refugee children drop out of school. To support school attendance, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education announced it will provide books to all students enrolled in Lebanese public schools, including Syrian refugees. Around 15,000 Syrian students have already enrolled at Lebanese schools and aid organizations are reporting there over 11,000 more children need to be enrolled in classes. The government has waived enrolment fees for Syrian refugees.

Over 9,000 Palestine refugees from Syria have approached UNRWA in Lebanon so far.

Nearly 115,000 Syrian refugees in camps in Turkey

During the night on 8 November, about 9,000 Syrians crossed into Turkey's Urfa province. The refugees fled intensified violence in Hassakeh governorate, along the Syrian-Turkish border. Most of the refugees were taken to camps run by the Government of Turkey in Ceylanpınar and Akcakale, though others are staying in host communities. Several refugees arrived wounded and were given medical treatment and two died of their injuries. Some of those who crossed into Turkey overnight are since reported to have re-entered Syria.

With the latest influx, the total number of Syrians in 14 government-run camps in 7 provinces is now approaching 115,000. Since 2 October, the number of Syrians present in refugee camps in Turkey has increased by about 17 per cent.

UNHCR has noted several spontaneous arrivals of Syrians who have crossed the border by their own means to join relatives in camps. Camp officials are consulting with the Government of Turkey in order to decide future action as some camps lack additional absorption capacity.

The Turkish Government and WFP provide food assistance to camp residents through an electronic voucher system. Each Syrian family receives an electronic Food e-Card loaded with 80 Turkish Liras (US\$45) per family member per month. This is enough to provide 2,100 kcal per person per day. Initially 25,000 refugees in five camps – one in Kilis and four in Hatay – can buy food with vouchers at local shops. Communal cooking facilities are available at the camps. The electronic programme is expected to be expanded.

Coordination includes international, regional and local initiatives

Sixth Syria Humanitarian Forum convenes in Geneva

Meeting at the sixth Syria Humanitarian Forum in Geneva on 9 November, participants raised concerns over the unrelenting violence that brings devastation to an ever-increasing number of ordinary Syrians – men, women and children. The Forum stressed that civilians continue to pay the price of conflict and that a political solution is required. Participants were also reminded of the serious funding gaps in both the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan and the Regional Refugee Response Plan, with calls to broaden the donor base.

Humanitarian Group discusses assistance priorities

On 5 November, representatives from UN agencies, ICRC, SARC, national and international NGOs as well as relevant ministries discussed ways to strengthen humanitarian response and coordination. The group identified planning, enhanced aid delivery mechanisms and data management as current priorities. Such coordination is expected to bring progress on expansion of international and local partnerships, needs assessments, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. UN agencies continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Syrians according to the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Response efforts undermined by shortfalls

Humanitarian response plan is 51 per cent funded

The Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan remains only 51 per cent funded. The plan focuses on lifesaving and emergency interventions envisaged to take place in 2012. As a result of the funding shortfall, critical sectors such as WASH and Health are only 25 per cent funded. Interventions in the Shelter and NFI sector, which includes a significant winterization package, are only 40 per cent funded. To meet current needs, an additional US\$170 million is required.

More funding urgently needed for refugees

The current Regional Refugee Response Plan seeks US\$488 million to assist Syrians who have crossed into neighbouring countries. So far, the response plan has received only 35 per cent of required funds, which is not nearly sufficient to provide adequate assistance to the growing number of refugees. An additional US\$316.4 million is needed to fully fund refugee response projects.

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