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a weekly update for unrwa's donors

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situational overview

Speaking during a presentation to the United Nations General Assembly, UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi expressed "[extreme concern](#)" that most of the **518,000** Palestine refugees in Syria were now directly caught up in the conflict, and called for greater protection of civilians in the country. A significant number of Palestine refugees as well as Syrians "had been killed, injured and compelled to leave their homes", he said.

Grandi paid special tribute to the five Palestinian UNRWA staff members killed in Syria; the latest a female teacher. The loss reflected the vulnerability of the **500,000** Palestine refugees in the country and in the region in general.

The humanitarian situation in Syria has markedly deteriorated during the last week. Intense armed conflict persists in Aleppo and Damascus/Rif Damascus, particularly in the area of Yarmouk, home of approximately 79 per cent of the Palestine refugee population in Syria. Based on field assessments in Syria, it is believed that the population in need has surpassed the planning figure on which UNRWA's *Regional Syria Humanitarian Response Plan* was based (225,000) and now stands at over **300,000** Palestine refugees in Syria, three-quarters of the population.

Currently, there are **1,684** registered Palestine refugees who have fled Syria for Jordan. The number of Palestine refugees from Syria that have approached UNRWA in Lebanon is estimated to be approximately **9,666** individuals (**2,248** households).

Humanitarian access to areas throughout Syria continues to be impeded by the widespread nature of the conflict. UNRWA has responded to this challenge through increased co-ordination with its four area offices and partners, enhanced remote management modalities, and continued safety awareness of the Agency's staff members through the Syria field office's Operations Centre (OC). The OC tracks incidents and trends in real time with a view to advising on the safe continuation of humanitarian operations by the Agency's **3,814** staff members in Syria.

UNRWA has received requests for cash assistance from **59,000** households in Syria, with projections that the current rate of requests will mean that the Agency will receive **100,000** applications for cash assistance by the end of the year. UNRWA anticipates that its currently-available resources for cash assistance will be exhausted by January 2013.

syria

At a glance:

- Significant deterioration in the overall security situation this week, particularly in Aleppo and surroundings;
- There have been intense clashes in Damascus, particularly in the area of Yarmouk, resulting in at least 30 refugees killed including an UNRWA area staff member;
- Clashes and shelling also continue in the southern area of Rif Damascus, and in proximity to camps, resulting in the deaths of six refugees;
- There have been incidents apparently targeting ethnic-minority communities;
- Intense clashes were reported in the vicinity of Dera'a camp, resulting in a temporary refugee exodus and damage to UNRWA facilities.

Increased exposure to violence and displacement throughout Syria is compounding the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees. Food remains a critical priority for all, and non-food items included in UNRWA's response plan (in particular: mattresses, blankets, quilts, and hygiene kits) are needed.

UNRWA is re-doubling preparations to support Palestine refugees during the forthcoming winter season. Conflict-impacted refugees are expected to face grave challenges during the winter season in Syria, as many of them are no longer able to afford warm clothes, blankets, or quilts. Anticipated areas of concern include the limited availability of fuel for heating and the plight of refugees whose homes have been damaged or destroyed.

UNRWA seeks support from donors for projects to help refugees cope with the winter, including the procurement of items and the provision of cash allowing refugees to acquire warm clothes and household items.

Currently there are 1,886 internally-displaced persons (IDPs) sheltering in six UNRWA school buildings, marking a 22-per-cent increase over the last week. The majority of new IDPs have sought shelter in UNRWA facilities in Yarmouk, where the number of IDPs has risen by 207 individuals (39 per cent) over the last week. The displaced population residing in UNRWA school buildings is predominantly composed of women (approximately 34 per cent) and children (approximately 40 per cent).

Damascus

Hostilities continued to intensify in Damascus, particularly in the area of Yarmouk, resulting in at least 30 deaths of refugees this week including an UNRWA staff member. In the early evening of 4 November 2012, Agency teacher Dr. Rehab Awadallah was killed while she was walking on Al Jouni Street in the southeastern part of the Yarmouk residential area in Damascus. This is the fifth conflict-related death of an UNRWA staff member in Syria this year and the third in the Yarmouk area. The staff member's niece, a Palestine refugee, also died alongside her.

Tension in Yarmouk, and adjacent areas such as Hajar al Aswad, Yalda, and

Tadamon, have caused the displacement of an unconfirmed numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the north and northwest areas of the camp “ from Midan to Kfar Souseh, Nahr A'esha, and into the area of Darayya. Intense armed clashes occurred in Darayya. Areas of Qadam, Hajirah, and the camp in Qabr Essit experienced shelling, resulting in damage to homes. Access to the airport road is limited due to the high risk of exposure to violence in the vicinity. Clashes reportedly continue to the northeast of Damascus/Rif Damascus in areas of Harasta, Douma, Zamalaka, Erbeen, Barzeh, Jobar, and Qaboun.

UNRWA facilities are operational with the exception of Yarmouk, Seita Zeinab, Douma, and Sbeineh.

IDPs in two UNRWA school buildings in Damascus as of 7 November 2012

Area	Men	Women	Children	Total
Yarmouk	195	311	237	743
Khan Eshieh	91	104	151	346
Ramadan	74	78	145	297
Total	360	493	533	1,386

Aleppo

The situation in Aleppo remains volatile with intense clashes persisting, including the use of aircraft and shelling in the vicinity of the town, Leramon, and the Old City. There are reports of clashes to the north of Aleppo and around Ein el Tal and Neirab camps. Approximately 1,210 banking cards have been distributed to vulnerable Palestine refugees in the Aleppo area, with cash assistance distribution planned in the coming weeks. UNRWA facilities remain operational.

IDPs in four UNRWA school buildings in Aleppo as of 7 November 2012

Area	Men	Women	Children	Total
Neirab	87	91	76	254
Ein el Tal	38	63	145	246
Total	125	154	221	500

Dera'a

Intense conflict took place within and in the vicinity of Dera'a camp starting on 3 November. The vast majority of refugees reportedly temporarily left the camp for neighbouring villages. There are unconfirmed rumours that armed elements were seen in an UNRWA school, which was subsequently shelled. UNRWA is monitoring the case to ensure that its facilities maintain their status as neutral and arms-free areas as required by the Agency's mandate. The majority of UNRWA facilities remain operational, including the area office. The health centre and schools in the camp remain closed as repairs are underway, with plans to reopen the facilities on 12 November.

Hama

There have been no developments with the situation in Hama this week, with the exception of shelling in the area of the citadel. UNRWA facilities remain operational.

Latakia

There are reports of increased security in the town and additional checkpoints. UNRWA facilities remain operational.

Homs

There are reports that aircraft are targeting the city centre, which remains inaccessible. UNRWA cash assistance and emergency food distribution for 3,500 households in the camp are currently underway.

jordan

There are currently 1,684 Palestinian refugees who have fled Syria for Jordan, representing a four-per-cent increase over the course of this week. Of this total number, there are 171 refugees residing in Cyber City, and seven families (40 refugees) residing in Za'atari camp. It is estimated that 77 per cent of Palestine refugees from Syria who have entered Jordan comprise women and children.

UNRWA continues to follow plans for authorities to establish a new camp for Syrian refugees in Mreijeb Al-Fhoud, close to Zarqa. It is anticipated that the camp will have the capacity to host 5,500 refugees in 800 caravans. In addition, the district governor of Ramtha confirmed that plans are underway to expand Cyber City by 200,000 square metres (50 acres).

UNRWA remains concerned about the occurrence of *refoulement* of refugees and continues to liaise on such cases with the relevant authorities.

lebanon

Currently there are 9,666 Palestine refugees from Syria who have entered Lebanon. UNRWA has organised child-friendly spaces for Palestine refugee children from Syria as part of the first phase of its programme of alternative education modalities. This week, UNRWA commenced the second phase of its programme, whereby more learning materials based on the Syrian curriculum are introduced. Starting in January 2013, UNRWA aims to offer more formal schooling for Palestine refugee children from Syria to enable them to continue and to complete their education. Currently there are 655 children participating in the alternative education modalities, representing approximately 60 per cent of the 1,086 Palestine refugee students from Syria who had requested to attend UNRWA schools.

current funding requirement

UNRWA is seeking **USD 54 million** through the revised Regional Syria Humanitarian Response Plan to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees in Syria and those who have fled across Syria's borders into neighbouring Lebanon and Jordan. The focus of UNRWA's response plan is Syria. UNRWA is seeking **USD 44 million** for the six-month period from September 2012 to February 2013 to address pressing humanitarian needs. The Agency is also requesting over **USD 8 million** to support Palestine refugees who have fled to

Lebanon, and **USD 1.5 million** for those currently seeking refuge in Jordan.

So far, and since the launch of the previous regional response plan earlier this year, **USD 17.567 million** has been received from the United States, Italy, Sweden (Sida), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) through its Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Emergency Response Fund (ERF), the Bizkaia regional government, the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO), Switzerland, and private donors. UNRWA is continuing negotiations with several donors for support to Palestine refugees affected by the crisis.



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