

Background

Since 2011, Syria has been characterised by over ten years of ongoing fighting, widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure and the largest number of internally displaced people in the world. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 14.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, an increase of 1.2 million from 2021. Of these, 9.6 million people are in severe need due to a convergence of factors arising from a sharp deterioration of economic conditions, the loss of essential livelihoods and income, and limited access to basic goods and services. Erratic rainfall, historically low levels of water in the Euphrates River and human-caused shocks have reduced access to water for domestic drinking and has had a significant impact to harvests, livelihoods and electricity production. In addition, on 6 February 2023, a devastating earthquake with epicentre in Kahramanmaras region caused more than 4,500 deaths and more than 8,700 injuries in North-West Syria.

The humanitarian crisis continues to require a large-scale, sustained and comprehensive response from the humanitarian community to provide the affected population with critical cross-sectoral assistance.

In January 2013, the WFP-led Logistics Cluster was activated in Syria, as part of a streamlined effort to enhance coordination and operational capacity among the humanitarian actors active in Syria and augment the effectiveness of the overall response through the provision of a set of tailored logistics services. In September 2014, the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach was adopted as a result of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2165, bringing together separate regional operations into a single framework.

On 9 January 2023, the Security Council approved UNSCR2672, which authorised the use of Bab al-Hawa border crossing to send UN humanitarian assistance to northwest Syria until 10 July 2023. On 14 February 2023, the government of Syria confirmed that Bab al-Salam and Al Ra'ee border crossing points open for an initial period of 3 months to allow for timely delivery of humanitarian aid. The opening of these border crossings has been granted in the frame of the earthquake response and is unrelated to the UNSCR provisions.

The Logistics Cluster currently facilitates cross-border transhipment and storage services.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

Access and security constraints remain the largest challenges faced by the humanitarian community in reaching vulnerable communities with life-saving relief supplies inside Syria. Based on the last Gaps and Needs Exercise conducted in October 2021 and regular consultation with partner organisations, the Logistics Cluster identified the following logistics gaps:

- Need for consolidated logistics coordination and information sharing to reduce duplication of effort and increase operational efficiency.
- Restrictions on the movement of humanitarian cargo and the need to maintain Inter-Agency humanitarian crossline missions.
- Need for coordination and facilitation of cross-border transhipment services.
- Need for temporary common storage facilities inside Syria.
- Increasing need for dedicated logistics capacity strengthening initiatives, particularly among national actors within Syria.

Objectives

Based on the needs identified, the Logistics Cluster aims to provide the humanitarian community with facilitated access to sufficient and reliable logistics services and consolidated information related to logistics capacities to ensure a timely and uninterrupted supply of lifesaving relief items to affected populations in Syria and to enhance the capacity of the humanitarian community to deliver relief items to challenging locations.

Planned Activities

As the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, WFP fills logistics gaps faced by the humanitarian community in responding to the Syria Crisis through a range of different support services and activities. The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps by facilitating the provision of common services. The following list, neither definitive nor exhaustive, aims to mitigate these gaps based on the above. Services will be facilitated to support the WoS approach and the Logistics Cluster will adapt its activities, services and capacities in neighbouring countries as required.

Coordination and Information Management

To address common logistics gaps, minimise duplication of effort, and enhance operational decision-making, the following activities will be undertaken by the Logistics Cluster in collaboration with partnering organisations and key stakeholders:

- Facilitating Logistics Cluster coordination meetings in Damascus, Gaziantep, Aleppo and Qamishli, as well as other locations as required (accessibility permitting).
- Maintaining Whole-of-Syria Information Management activities to ensure that relevant and up-to-date logistics information is collected, analysed and subsequently made available to humanitarian organisations at regional level. This information will be shared through various IM products, including warehouse capacity maps, snapshots, operational overviews, coordination meeting minutes, assessments and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), city and governorate maps.
- Undertaking a Gaps and Needs Exercise through partner interviews, followed by a thorough report of findings to inform the Logistics Cluster's overall strategy.
- Maintaining dedicated mailing lists and information sharing platforms such as a dedicated webpage for the Syria Operation (<http://www.logcluster.org/ops/syr12a>).
- Consolidating Logistics information and recommendations from the existing platforms (such as Inter-Sector Coordination "ISC"; Humanitarian Access Working Group "AWG", HCT) for coordination and logistics issues solving purpose.

Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies or organisations, but rather to supplement them through access to common services. Access and security permitting, the following services will be provided on a no-cost-to-user basis, dependent on the availability of funds.

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.

Within Syria

Storage

- A common free-to-user warehouse facility is available in Qamishli (1,600 m²) to facilitate onward movement to further destinations. (Discontinuation of services in Qamishli was supposed to take place by December 2022, but this was delayed pending a visit to Qamishli for a final assessment. Because of the earthquake response in February 2023, the decision to discontinue free-to-user storage services in Qamishli has been further postponed).
- Additional storage space and locations may be implemented should potential gaps/needs be identified. For the earthquake-affected areas in North-West Syria (NWS), the Logistics Cluster can avail non-managed Mobile Storage Units (MSU) to humanitarian organisations upon request which will be treated on a case-by-case basis, based on availability. For the earthquake-affected areas in rural Aleppo, rural Damascus and Lattakia, the Logistics Cluster can avail free-to-user managed warehouse space in WFP-managed warehouses in Aleppo, Lattakia and Damascus upon request, based on availability. The provision of additional storage space is only applicable to earthquake-affected areas and for a period of three months (in line with the Flash Appeal).
- Criteria for eligibility: the Logistics Cluster will review partners requests on a case-by-case basis, based on the following indicative criteria:
 - National NGOs
 - UN Agencies and INGOs (exceptional cases)
 - Working in priority sectors (protection, early recovery, shelter, food, health)
 - Related to the earthquake response
 - Part of the Logistics Cluster partners community
 - No parallel funding

Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoys

- Coordination, together with OCHA, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), and other humanitarian partners to support the logistics aspect of inter-agency humanitarian convoys for crossline missions.

For all the aforementioned logistics services, interested organisations are required to provide a completed Service Request Form (SRF) available [here](#), and submit it to syria.clustercargo@wfp.org to be considered for any transport or storage service.

Cross-border Operations

Under the umbrella of Security Council Resolutions 2165/2191/2258/2332/2393/2449/2504/2533/2585/2642 and most recently 2672, the Logistics Cluster provides coordination support and facilitates common services for cross-border operations from Türkiye into Syria.

Türkiye

The Logistics Cluster has set up a transhipment hub in Reyhanli, Türkiye, close to Bab al-Hawa, to avoid congestion at the border and ensure the quick transfer and delivery of humanitarian cargo. UN agencies and their partners arrange for Turkish trucks to transport their cargo from load points to the transhipment hub. UN agencies and their partners are also responsible for arranging Syrian trucks to come to the transhipment point. WFP, as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, is responsible for cross-loading cargo from Turkish trucks to Syrian trucks inside the transhipment zone. Transhipment operations are supervised by the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM).

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Concept of Operations, March 2023

Syria

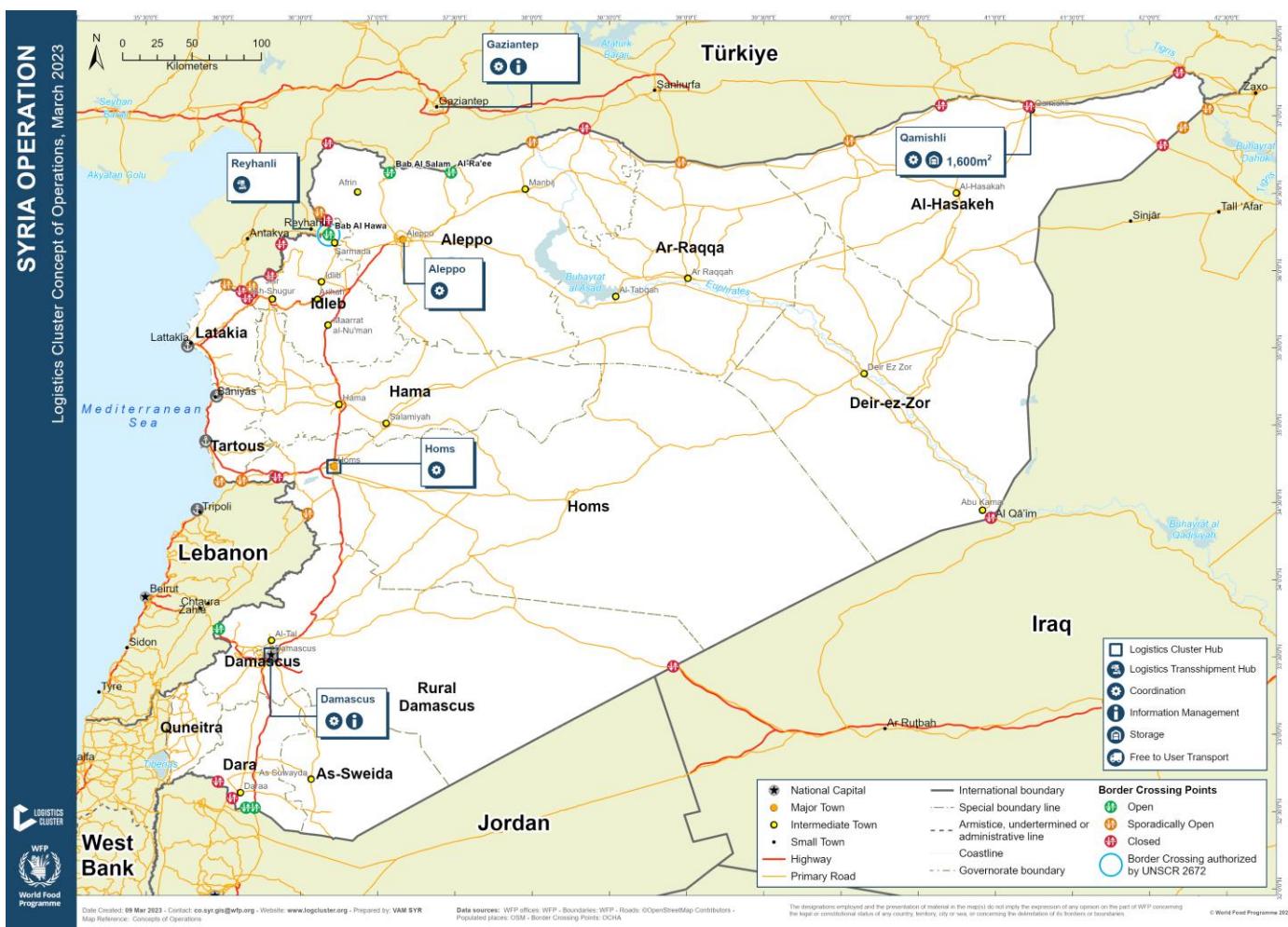


The Logistics Cluster will also provide support to ensure an unhindered flow of humanitarian cargo through the temporarily opened border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Al Ra'ee.

For transhipment services, interested organisations are required to submit a notification request email to Turkiye.clustercargo@wfp.org detailing requirements.

As “Provider of Last Resort” (PoLR) WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity, where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

Annex I ConOps Map



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