

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1.4 million children to be vaccinated for measles and polio
- Over 300,000 Palestine refugees in need in Syria
- Carjacking and theft of aid items hinder humanitarian response
- Two additional refugee camps under construction in Turkey

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	458,555

FUNDING (US\$)

348 million
requested by UN for activities inside Syria

50% funded

488 million
requested under the Regional Refugee Response Plan

35% funded



Humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate

Number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increases

During the past two weeks, violence continued unabated throughout the country. Large scale movements were witnessed from various locations including 50,000 people to Kisweh in Rural Damascus. The number of Syrians fleeing Syria in the past two weeks has escalated to over 50,000, bringing the total of refugees in neighbouring countries to 460,000 people.

In the last two weeks, WFP visited Kisweh in Rural Damascus, a city where the number of internally displaced people (i.e.136,000) is almost three times that of the resident population (i.e.54,000). Many internally displaced people relocated from Homs in early 2012, while more recent arrivals originate from other parts of Rural Damascus, including from the town of Darayya, where almost 50,000 people fled military operations in one week.

People in Kisweh are in a desperate humanitarian situation, having fled their homes to escape fighting, traumatized by constant exposure to warfare, and lacking basic services. They are in urgent need of medicines, diapers and baby milk, as well as winter items such as carpets and mattresses. In collective shelters, they also lack hot water, regular electricity and fuel. Secours Islamique France is providing water and sanitation facilities to 2,200 internally displaced people residing in eleven collective shelters.

Fighting in Ras-al Ayn, near the border with Turkey, caused approximately 1,000 people to seek refuge across the border. Clashes in the Area of Separation in the Golan Heights supervised by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force have resulted in displacement within the area.

Clashes in densely populated urban areas, such as Aleppo, Damascus and Homs, impact the civilian population in particular. In this regard, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has repeatedly called on all parties to the conflict to comply with international humanitarian law, in particular to distinguish between civilians and persons directly participating in hostilities. Under international humanitarian law, attacks against civilians, or against civilian structures such as homes, schools or places of worship, are prohibited.

The worsening security situation in Syria is causing a rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation, which means the number of people in humanitarian need is increasing from 2.5 million to four million people.

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Conflict continues to affect the response

Humanitarian workers face growing difficulties

Over the past two weeks, there has been an increase in security incidents affecting humanitarian workers and convoys, which have resulted in the loss of goods and damage to vehicles.

There have been several instances of humanitarian aid trucks targeted or caught in fighting. On 13 November, an International Organization for Migration truck transporting blankets and other essential non-food items was hijacked on its way to Aleppo and, the following day, three Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) trucks loaded with 15 tons of humanitarian aid destined to Aleppo and Idlib were attacked. On 22 November, an UNWRA vehicle was carjacked at gunpoint on the road from Dar'a city to Muzyrab and, three days later, a UNHCR vehicle was caught in crossfire while on its way to Douma, in Rural Damascus.

Due to general insecurity, in the last week, in Dar'a and Latakia governorates, ten UNICEF-sponsored school clubs had to suspend their activities. Humanitarian partners also reported that drivers and contractors are reluctant to serve in some conflict-affected areas. For instance, the World Food Programme is facing difficulties in finding drivers willing to transport supplies to Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor and Rural Damascus.

Food Assistance still critical

1.5 million people targeted with food assistance in November

1.5 million people in all governorates are targeted by WFP with food assistance on a monthly basis. Between 5 and 26 November, over 1 million people have been reached with food parcels. WFP monitors assistance delivery but, in some areas such as Ar-Raqqa, Hassakeh and Rural Damascus governorates, monitoring has been hampered by insecurity and access constraints.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with the support of the Belgium Red Cross, is dispatching 15,000 food parcels to Damascus, to be distributed by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

Capacity building of SARC volunteers

United Nations agencies and the Syrian Government are training SARC volunteers on delivery of emergency food assistance to people affected by the conflict. Training activities have been completed in the Damascus governorate, are currently under way in Tartous, and will be organized in the Qamishly area, in the north-eastern part of the country.

FAO targets over 20,000 small herders and vulnerable farming households with crop and livestock assistance

FAO is implementing projects to provide crop and livestock assistance to people who have lost their livelihoods due to the conflict. A total of 20,045 small herders and vulnerable farming households representing 160,800 people are expected to benefit from these projects in Aleppo, Dar'a, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idlib, and Rural Damascus.

Shelter rehabilitation and NFI distribution remain priorities

Nearly 2,000 schools and other public buildings used as IDP shelters

Due to growing population displacement, the need for shelter and non-food items throughout Syria continues to rise. Many of the country's internally displaced people are currently housed in nearly 2,000 schools and other public buildings, which lack adequate heating and sanitation facilities. Low temperatures with the onset of winter are creating additional burdens, as shelters are not adequately insulated from the cold.

The Ministry of Local Administration has identified 70 collective shelters to be rehabilitated country-wide on a priority basis, starting in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs and Rural Damascus. As a starting point, thirty-four sites will be rehabilitated by UNHCR with the support of Secours Islamique France (nine shelters), Premiere Urgence (nine shelters), the Danish Refugee Council (one shelter), the Syrian Society for Social Development (eight shelters) and the Syria Trust (seven shelters).

UNHCR continues to visit shelters to assess the conditions in which internally displaced people live. Since last summer, UNHCR has assessed 149 shelters in several governorates including, during the past two weeks, in Aleppo, Damascus, Hassakeh and Homs. UNHCR has also visited some private houses in Al-Nabek, a town between Damascus and Homs, where internally displaced people rent rooms for 1,000 to 2,500 Syrian Pounds (about US\$ 14 – 35) per month. The assessment revealed that internally displaced people in these houses live in poor hygienic conditions and lack essential items, such as clothes and kitchen sets.

UNHCR delivers essential items to over 300,000 Syrians since March 2012

Since March 2012, UNHCR has provided basic relief items such as blankets, mattresses and bedding to 301,390 people, thus reaching over half of the 500,000 beneficiaries targeted by the end of 2012. During the past two weeks, UNHCR has provided non-food items to 20,830 persons, mainly in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. In Adra Oumaliyeh, a settlement in Rural Damascus where about 90,000 internally displaced people live in unfinished housing, UNHCR has provided non-food items to a total of 17,937 families, including 1,560 families during the past two weeks.

UNHCR also continues its financial assistance programme to support families in need. Nearly 61,000 people have benefited from this programme, including in Hassakeh, where a survey conducted on beneficiaries reveals that money has been used mostly for food, clothes and medicines.

Fighting hampers children's access to education

Children bear the brunt of conflict

UNICEF estimates about 1.1 million children, including 262,767 children under the age of five, have been affected by the conflict in Syria. Violence, insecurity and displacement are negatively impacting on children's physical and psychological well-being. Children are often forced to relocate several times and have limited or no access to basic social services. UNICEF also reports large increases in the number of children dropping out of school.

2,362 schools damaged or destroyed

According to the Syrian authorities, 2,362 of the country's 22,000 public schools have been damaged or destroyed due to fighting. Efforts are underway to repair the damaged buildings. To date, the Ministry of Education has repaired over 353 schools.

106 school clubs benefit over 23,000 children

UNICEF continues to offer educational activities to 23,319 school-aged children through 106 school clubs in Dar'a, Rural Damascus, Lattakia and Tartous governorates. The clubs offer remedial classes, recreational activities and psycho-social support.

People increasingly afraid to seek medical care

Access to health remains difficult

After 21 months, the Syrian crisis has had a negative impact on people's access to health. The escalation of violence has led to significant damages to health facilities, including hospitals, clinics and ambulances. At least one in four public hospitals across the country is out of service and those still functioning are overwhelmed with patients.

In areas experiencing high levels of violence, there are severe staffing shortages in hospitals and other health facilities, with staff often unable to report to work. Many health facilities across the country have been badly damaged with healthcare providers increasingly caught up in the conflict.

Patients and health care providers face obstacles when trying to access health care facilities. According to the ICRC President Peter Maurer, people in Syria are afraid to seek medical care because hospitals have become military targets.

SARC is facilitating people's access to health services. For example, in Homs, in an area where around 3,000 internally displaced people are currently staying, SARC converted a caravan into a makeshift clinic, which, in October, provided care services to 1,190 people.

Measles and oral polio vaccination campaign targets 1.4 million children

On 26 November, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF, launched a measles and oral polio vaccination campaign targeting half of all children under the age of five in Syria, or 1.4 million children. UNICEF provided the Ministry of Health with 1.5 million doses of measles vaccine, in addition to syringes, safety boxes, vaccination cards, registry sheets for measles and polio, cold chain equipment and public information material for the campaign. WHO is providing 1.1 million vaccines which are pre-positioned at governorate level throughout Syria - half a million for children under the age of five and 153,000 for infants.

WHO supports the national hospital in Ar-Raqqa

Further to the UN inter-agency needs assessment mission carried out in Ar-Raqqa governorate on 20-23 October 2012, WHO has strengthened the trauma management capacity of the national hospital in Ar-Raqqa city, through providing an intensive care unit with three ventilators and three surgical supply kits for 300 surgeries. WHO also provided the hospital with five basic interagency emergency health kits, which contain enough supplies to treat 5,000 patients over a three-month period.

Humanitarian partners support water, hygiene and sanitation facilities

Première Urgence and Secours Islamique support WASH for over 75,000 people

Première Urgence has distributed more than 14,500 hygiene kits in Hama, Homs and Tartous governorates, benefitting over 71,000 people. Secours Islamique France, in partnership with UNICEF, has supported more than 4,700 internally displaced people in thirteen collective centres and two mosques in Damascus and Rural Damascus with drinking water, rehabilitation and maintenance of sanitary infrastructure.

Palestine Refugees are increasingly vulnerable

Over 300,000 of the 518,000 Palestine refugees hosted in Syria, including large numbers in Aleppo, Damascus and Dar'a, are now directly affected by the conflict. During the past week, eleven refugees were killed in the conflict in Damascus and Dar'a, bringing to 80 the total number of Palestine refugees reported killed since the beginning of this month. An increasing number of Palestine refugees are fleeing to neighbouring countries, including over 9,600 to Lebanon and more than 1,600 to Jordan.

The crisis impacts on Palestine refugee children's ability to attend school. A large number of UNRWA schools see their operations interrupted by insecurity, while six UNRWA school buildings currently host more than 2,900 internally displaced people (1,109 women, 1,094 children, and 703 men). UNRWA continues to provide home learning assistance to students in need. However, there is a high risk that a large number of Palestine refugee children, like their Syrian counterparts, will not be able to finish the school year.

While the Syrian Government has traditionally been a generous host to the Palestine refugee community and has facilitated UNRWA's work, the intensifying conflict has had detrimental consequences on the well-being of the Palestine refugees and to UNRWA's ability to deliver its services. UNRWA has been forced to reduce or suspend camp services on occasions due to insecurity. Five UNRWA staff members have been killed since the beginning of the conflict.

UNRWA currently provides cash, food and non-food items to an ever-increasing number of affected refugees. To date, UNRWA has provided cash assistance to 22,751 families in Syria.

Third Country Nationals

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has so far assisted the evacuation of 2,779 stranded migrants from Syria to their country of origin. In the last week, IOM repatriated 91 third country nationals (TCNs). An additional 67 TCNs are booked for departure in November and a further 599 TCNs are in the process of registration. Since November 2011, 6,356 stranded migrants from 37 countries have requested evacuation assistance from IOM to safely return to their country of origin. About 71 per cent of assisted migrants are female, many of whom are stranded domestic workers living in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, and Rural Damascus.

Regional Response

Nearly 460,000 Syrian refugees registered in neighbouring countries and North Africa

Syrian refugees increasingly flee across borders to seek safety. As of 27 November 2012, there were over 458,000 Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and North Africa – an 85,000 increase since 1 November, including 50,000 in the last two weeks. Jordan remains the country hosting the largest registered refugee community, followed by Lebanon and Turkey (see table). The number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries is projected to increase to 710,000 by early next year.

Country	Refugees registered and/ or assisted	Projected number of refugees by early 2013
Iraq	58,883	60,000
Jordan	135,114	250,000
Lebanon	131,077	120,000
Turkey	123,747*	280,000
North Africa	9,734	N/A
Total	458,555	710,000

Source: UNHCR as reported on 27 November. Refugee figures are based on estimates and may thus vary. *Figure provided by Government of Turkey.

Syrians flee to Iraq

Severe winter conditions in Northern Iraq

Refugee numbers in Iraq continue to increase with more than 54,000 refugees registered or awaiting registration, the majority in the Kurdistan Region, with about half the registered population living in camps (Domiz in Dahuk governorate and Al-Qa'im in Al-Anbar governorate), while others live scattered among host communities. The Government has started construction on a new camp in Al Qa'im.

Syrian refugees, primarily from Hassakah governorate, cross daily into Iraq. According to IOM, approximately 40 per cent of people who entered into Iraq between August and October 2012 crossed at the Al-Qaim border. This border is now closed, except for emergency cases, and Syrian refugees mainly enter at the Al-Waleed and Rabia borders.

The Government of Iraq has stated that once it establishes a camp with a capacity of 3,500 people, it will reopen the Al-Qa'im crossing to Syrian refugees. Severe winter conditions are affecting Northern Iraq, and UNICEF has reported an increase in children suffering from flu and/or upper respiratory infections.

Urban refugees, camp residents need support in Jordan

UNHCR to provide 9,000 Syrian families with cash assistance

In Za'atri Camp, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has begun construction of porches to complement and augment individual tents. All households in Za'atri will receive a gas heater to be stored on the porch, in order to limit fire hazards. Winterization kits to be distributed include quilts, thermal blankets and winter clothing. UNHCR is encouraging donors to contribute to the purchase of prefabricated shelters which will provide more suitable shelter during the coming winter months, and Saudi Arabia has already donated 2,500 of these prefabs. Over one million litres of water are delivered daily to Za'atri camp through support from UNICEF and the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW).

WFP dry rations combined with UNHCR complimentary goods provides nearly 2,400 kilocalories per person per day for refugees staying in Za'atri camp. WFP continues to provide food vouchers for urban refugees, although the overall amount of the voucher may need to be increased, considering that a recent price monitoring survey concluded that an additional two Jordanian dinars per person per month are needed to account for price increases.

Cash assistance: an effective way to help Syrian refugees

Most Syrian refugees live in urban settings, whether in the capital city Amman or in towns in the country's northern governorates. UNHCR's financial assistance programme has

expanded to include more families, and added a “supplementary bonus” to cover the extra costs associated with winter. Some 50,000 people (including 1,000 Jordanian host families) will receive cash assistance from now until the end of 2012 in Irbid, Mafraq, and Amman governorates.

A recent assessment conducted by CARE Jordan indicated that cash assistance was urgently needed by the most vulnerable refugees, of which there are many thousands in Amman alone. Aid agencies are currently mapping urban populations to determine the needs of refugees living there and to understand the impact of their presence on host communities.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) also provides non-food items to around 7,500 refugees and host communities in urban areas, and cash assistance and vouchers are also provided to the most vulnerable.

Number of refugees in Lebanon surpasses projected figure for 2012

131,077 have registered or await registration by UNHCR, and there are tens of thousands of unregistered Syrians living in Lebanon. The Government has taken steps to support the protection of refugees, including providing Syrian refugees the option to renew their residency free of charge inside Lebanon, allowing those refugees who entered unofficially to regularize their status. Aid agencies are strengthening protection monitoring activities and outreach to refugees with specific needs, including those requiring psychosocial support. Both UNHCR and UNICEF have hired more social workers to work in 25 Government-run Social Development Centres in areas with high concentrations of refugees. NGOs including Mercy Corps and Arc-en-Ciel are providing psychosocial support to refugees and Lebanese children.

UNHCR and its partners are working on strengthening protection monitoring and improving outreach to refugees with particular needs, such as single heads of household, pregnant women, separated children, disabled persons and survivors of violence and torture. Efforts have also been increased to enhance psycho-social support. Shelter and winter items remain critical needs in view of the rapidly approaching winter. UNHCR has also recently initiated a two month rent assistance project for 100 vulnerable refugee families in Tripoli, and continues to help people secure places to live.

Over 9,705 Palestine refugees who have fled Syria have approached UNRWA for assistance. Many of these people are hosted in Palestine refugee camps, where conditions are often harsh and accommodation cramped. Alternative education activities are offered to these children, with over half of the 1,086 Palestine refugee children from Syria participating in these activities, and learning materials have been distributed.

As part of a ‘back to school’ programme, UNICEF is providing education materials, including new school uniforms, school bags and other essential school items, for 84 schools attended by at least 5,120 Syrian refugee students. Currently, 30 per cent of school-aged refugee children are enrolled in school.

Unregistered refugee children in particular require educational support. About 2,800 unregistered refugee students have received supplies and financial assistance for school fees from Save the Children. Another 11,000 are expected to receive support from UNICEF and the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre.

Turkey constructing two new camps

Trend: refugees joining their families in existing camps

The number of refugees in Turkey continues to increase, with some 123,747 people registered by the Government and assisted in 14 camps. The Government maintains an

open-border policy, allowing Syrians to cross into Turkey freely, whilst UNHCR provides protection and camp management advice to the Turkish authorities. The humanitarian community is providing assistance for camp residents, with the current focus on providing winter supplies such as heaters, blankets and materials to reinforce shelters.

The Government commenced the construction of two additional camps: one in Gaziantep that will have a capacity of 5,000 people and another in Sanliurfa province for 10,000. UNHCR reports a recent trend of new refugees arriving to camps where family members are already staying. The capacity to provide protection for refugees and the ability to enhance their psycho social wellbeing are both obviously enhanced when they are able to stay with their own families. When camps are full or close to full capacity, this may not always be possible. The Government and humanitarian agencies are monitoring this trend and working to develop a solution.

Across the border, thousands in need

According to Turkish local authorities, approximately 25,000 Syrians are currently present on the Syrian side of the border across from the Turkish Kilis and Hatay provinces. Recent shelling in the border areas of Harim in Syria (across from Hatay) recently resulted in hundreds of Syrians seeking safety in Turkey. Near the Turkish city of Ceylanpinar, across from Syria's Hassakeh province, clashes prompted approximately 1,000 Syrians to cross into Turkey and caused some Turkish schools to temporarily close for fear of being caught in the crossfire.

Revised response plan to be launched in December

Response plans under preparation

To address the escalating needs and enhance the response in Syria, the United Nations is currently in the process of revising the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP). The revision will be based on recent United Nations inter-agency needs assessment missions carried out in Dar'a, Ar-Raqqa, Hassakeh, Homs and Rural Damascus governorates and on additional assessment missions planned for the north, the south, and Damascus and its surroundings. The revised SHARP will be launched in December in conjunction with the regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), also under revision.

Humanitarian response remains underfunded

Humanitarian response plan only half funded

In spite of the growing humanitarian needs throughout the country, humanitarian agencies continue to face funding challenges. The US\$ 348 million Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan has only received half the required funding requested to respond to the needs of the 2.5 million affected population in Syria until the end of 2012. About \$ 174 million is needed to fund dozens of crucial humanitarian projects. Several agencies remain crucially under-funded. For example, WHO has received only 25% of the funds required to implement emergency health projects.

Regional Refugee Response Plan only 35 per cent funded

The current Regional Refugee Response Plan seeks \$ 488 million to assist Syrians who have crossed into neighbouring countries. It is still severely underfunded. To date it has received only \$ 171 million (35 per cent of the total requirement), which is insufficient to provide the necessary support to Syrian refugees. An additional \$ 317 million is required to fully fund projects aimed at Syrian refugees until the end of the year.

Emergency Response Fund receives nearly \$ 15 million

The Emergency Response Fund for Syria supports critical, underfunded projects in the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan and the Regional Refugee Response

Plan. To date, the Emergency Response Fund has disbursed \$6.9 million to 28 projects in Syria and neighbouring countries. The Government of Germany has pledged \$15 million in support of the Emergency Response Fund for Syria in one of the largest single contributions ever received by the Emergency Response Fund. The funds will be used to help refugees as winter sets in and provide food, essential medicines and warm clothing to the Syrian people.

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