

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 million people in need of assistance in Syria; half of them are in Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus.
- Over 660,000 Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and North Africa.
- Harsh winter compounds suffering in Syria and the region.
- Palestine refugees increasingly affected
- Humanitarian response requires US\$1.5 billion for the next six months

### FIGURES

Population	22 m
Governorates	14
People in need	4 m
Number of IDPs	2 m
Number of Syrian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and North Africa	664,081

### FUNDING (US\$)

**519 million**

Requested by the UN for activities inside Syria (January-June 2013)

**1 billion**

Requested under the Regional Refugee Response Plan (January-June 2013)



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## Needs grow as violence rages in Syria

### Over 4 million people in need of aid as harsh winter sets in; half of them in Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus

The UN estimates that 4 million people – nearly one in five of the pre-crisis population – are in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria. Roughly half of those in need are located in the three most affected governorates: Aleppo (19.8 per cent); Homs (14.8 per cent); and Rural Damascus (14.8 per cent) (SARC, January 2013).

The particularly harsh winter has compounded the suffering of people in need, especially IDPs living in shelters lacking adequate insulation with no winter clothes and no blankets. Even those who still have homes are suffering from the cold; often unable to heat their houses due to shortages of fuel and electricity.

Over 60,000 people have been killed since the onset of the crisis. Combatants continue to employ tactics that risk or target civilian lives. Rocket and bomb attacks in urban centres have been reported, including attacks on residential neighbourhoods, markets and aid convoys. The University of Aleppo was bombed on 15 January, killing over 80 people, including many students. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon swiftly condemned this as an “atrocious”. Also last week, 100 people, mostly women and children, were reportedly shot, stabbed and burned to death in Homs.

USG/ERC Amos has repeatedly called on all parties to the conflict to respect international human rights and humanitarian law, including requirements not to target civilians and to allow humanitarian access. She has called on those with influence over the parties to the conflict to do their utmost to secure an end to the fighting and to protect civilians.

### Syrians at the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance

Every day Syrians demonstrate their generosity by providing the first and greatest support for each other. Many of the 2 million internally displaced people are hosted by families and friends, in countless communities. Syrians’ long tradition of solidarity is also reflected by the support they provide to refugees from Palestine, Iraq, and Somalia living in the country.

### UN mission visits Homs, crosses conflict lines

On 21 January, a UN inter-agency mission of Emergency Directors visited Homs, home to 600,000 people in need of assistance. The delegation also crossed conflict lines into the city of Talbiseh, in the northwestern part of Syria, which has been battered by more than twenty months of violence. Extensive needs were witnessed in terms of food, healthcare and access to clean water. Children have been particularly affected by the fighting and urgently need psychosocial support and access to school. Buildings have been reduced to rubble and many people have lost their homes. The visit was coordinated by both the Government of Syria and the opposition. The crossing of conflict lines by the UN mission demonstrates that, where there is political will by all parties, there is a way to ensure that international humanitarian law and principles are upheld, even

during intense conflict. Given the growing needs, efforts are being made by the humanitarian community to establish a field presence and increase the scale of its operations in the area.

### Over half of public hospitals damaged amid shortage of health supplies

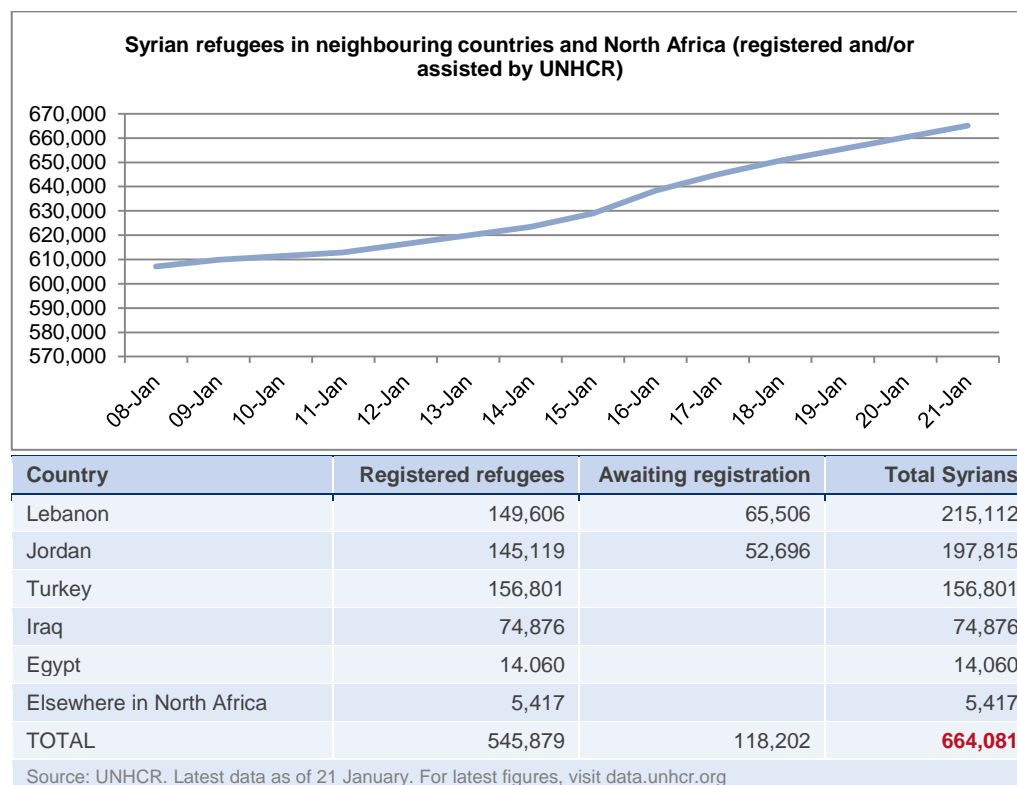
Medical facilities have been routinely destroyed or damaged by parties to the conflict. According to WHO, as of 31 December 2012, more than half of Syria's public hospitals (48 out of 88) have been damaged, and 27 are completely out of service. In Deir ez-Zor governorate, only one of six public hospitals is functioning, while in Homs, just seven of 13 public hospitals are in service. In Dara'a, three of nine public hospitals are fully functioning but the remainder offer only partial services. A smaller – but still significant – proportion of health centres have been affected. Of 1,919 public health centres in Syria, 198 are damaged and 117 are out of service.

Due to shortages of basic medicines, medical supplies and equipment, even complicated surgeries are often being performed using local anesthetic. According to Islamic Relief, medical supplies are severely low in many locations, leaving many without access to proper care. All health facilities in Homs visited by WHO during the reporting period indicated shortages in essential medicines and supplies, and authorities reported difficulties in delivering medicines to Dara'a. Many people in conflict areas are seeking medical care in informal clinics, fearing that hospitals will be subject to attacks.

USG/ERC Amos has repeatedly called on all parties to the conflict to abide by their International Humanitarian Law obligations to respect the inviolability of medical facilities.

### More than 125,000 Syrians flee the country in one month

Refugee flows slowed briefly due to winter storms that battered the region during the reporting period, but have since rebounded. Over the past month, more than 125,000 Syrians have fled the country and registered (or are awaiting registration) as refugees. As of 21 January, more than 664,000 Syrians had been registered or were waiting to be registered as refugees. According to projections in the regional Refugee Response Plan, refugee totals could reach 1.1 million people by June 2013.



## Many refugees cite fear of sexual violence as reason for fleeing Syria

A report released on 14 January 2013 by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), based on three IRC assessments among Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, identifies rape and sexual violence as a “significant and disturbing feature” of the conflict in Syria. Many respondents identified sexual violence as a primary factor in their family’s decision to flee Syria. Many Syrian women and girls relayed accounts of being attacked in public or in their homes, primarily by armed men. The rapes reported, sometimes by multiple perpetrators, often occurred in front of family members. Syrian survivors rarely report sexual violence due to “the stigma and social norms around the dishonour that rape brings to women and girls and their families”. Many interviewed by IRC said survivors fear retribution by their assailants, being killed by “shamed” family members, or in the case of girls, being married off at an early age “to safeguard their honour.” (IRC, January 2013). The full report is available at: <http://www.rescue.org/crisis-syria-0>

## Harsh winter compounds suffering across the region

The worst winter storm in years battered parts of Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory for several days starting on the evening of 6 January. High winds, frigid temperatures, rain and snow have affected many areas, creating particular challenges for conflict-affected people and refugees living without heating or in makeshift shelters. Weather conditions have since improved, although the provision of essential winter supplies remains a top priority.

### Flu prevalent in Syria as electricity shortages exacerbate winter’s toll

According to WHO, 93 per cent of morbidity cases reported in the first week of 2013 were due to influenza-like illness. The highest proportion of cases (38 per cent) were among children 5 to 14 years old. Influenza, a common winter illness, has been exacerbated as Syrians struggle to keep warm during an unusually cold season. Fuel shortages and price rises have prompted many Syrians to rely on electric heating. According to Syrian media, electricity production has been cut back significantly: Damascus now faces six-hour power cuts daily and Aleppo officials estimate only 40 per cent of the city’s electricity needs are being met.

### Cold and floods spark unrest in Za’atri refugee camp in Jordan

Harsh winter storms flooded areas of Za’atri refugee camp in Jordan, currently home to about 60,000 Syrian refugees, and strong winds wrecked scores of refugee dwellings. The draining of standing water began quickly, and UNHCR and partners have stepped up efforts to spread gravel and complete pre-fabricated units for camp residents. Partners have also distributed winter clothing, blankets, mattresses, and non-food items to affected residents, and UNHCR conducted a needs assessment on 14 January. Frustration over the conditions sparked unrest by refugees on 8 January. Some residents have called for Za’atri to be closed and relocated, while others emphasized that the major problem is a lack of sufficient support for the current site, rather than its location.

### Winter storms briefly disrupt some aid programmes

Winter storms closed roads and temporarily disrupted some aid programmes between 6 and 12 January. In Lebanon’s Bekaa valley, where over 51,000 Syrian refugees are currently living, UNHCR reported that blocked roads had left many areas inaccessible. UNICEF tried to access flooded areas, and a local partner was able to distribute in a few areas, but normal activities were postponed. In Syria, UNHCR suspended the delivery of essential non-food items for several days due to supply disruptions, and WFP cancelled food distributions on 12 January. Partners maintained activities in accessible locations, delivering plastic sheeting, blankets, tents, tarpaulins, mattresses, food and rent vouchers, and other items, as well as helping to drain water from flooded shelters. All programmes are now functioning normally.

## Palestine refugees facing critical conditions

### Unrest continues in some Palestine refugee camps in Syria

During the reporting period, occasional clashes took place in Yarmouk, including on 19 and 20 January. Approximately 30 per cent of the 150,000 Palestine refugees who lived in the camp before the 16 December clashes have now returned. Due to security reasons, all UNRWA offices in Yarmouk, which were closed on 17 December, are yet to resume their operations. In Sbeinah camp (14 km south of Damascus), UNRWA estimates that half of the 22,000 residents have fled in the wake of shelling. Communications with Sbeinah are intermittent, and all facilities are closed. Most of the Sbeinah displaced are staying with friends or relatives in and around Damascus. Clashes in several other camps were also reported, with movement restrictions hampering residents' ability to escape violence.

An estimated 400,000 Palestine refugees in Syria need humanitarian assistance. As of 17 January, nearly 9,200 IDPs were sheltering in UNRWA facilities – 88 per cent of whom are Palestine refugees. This represents more than triple the number of IDPs (2,631) sheltering in UNRWA facilities in early December. Since the unrest began, 57 UNRWA schools have been damaged and are not operational. Through its latest rounds of mattress, blanket and cash distribution, UNRWA has assisted approximately 150,000 persons.

### More Palestine refugees leaving Syria for Lebanon and Jordan

As conditions in Syria deteriorate, more Palestine refugees in Syria are seeking refuge in Lebanon and, to a lesser extent, Jordan. Some 20,000 Palestine refugees from Syria are currently in Lebanon, already reaching the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan estimate for June 2013. This has created increased pressure on UNRWA services: many UNRWA schools in Lebanon have moved to double-shift classes to accommodate additional needs and in Lebanon's southern city of Tyre, Rashidiyeh camp is already at full capacity. If the new arrivals stay in Burj Shemali through the summer, the camp will face a serious water shortage. In Jordan, Palestine refugees continue to face difficulties entering the country. Currently 3,285 Palestine refugees from Syria have made themselves known to UNRWA, and a new camp is scheduled to open near Zarqa, north-east of Amman, at the end of January.

## Partners deliver aid in Syria despite major challenges

### Number of local partners increases to boost food assistance

The Government of Syria last week released a list of 110 local non-government partners whom UN agencies could contract to expand the reach of humanitarian assistance in the country. Since September, WFP and partners have been aiming to dispatch food assistance for 1.5 million Syrians each month. However, volatile security conditions and overstretched capacity of partners has continued to be a challenge and the December food distribution cycle will only reach 1.3 million people. At the same time, needs are growing. Recent assessments reveal that a total of 2.5 million people are now in need of food assistance. After reviewing the operational capabilities of organizations on the approved list, WFP selected 44 new partners that should allow food aid to reach all 2.5 million people in need in the coming months.

### UN fuel imports authorized

The Government of Syria approved UN requests to import fuel in support of humanitarian operations on 10 January. Under the agreement, WFP may import up to 200,000 litres of fuel per month for UN operations and up to 2.5 million litres per month for humanitarian use. WFP has requested suppliers to procure 150,000 litres via Lebanon, and the first tanker of fuel (38,000 litres) arrived in Damascus on 19 January. WFP plans to distribute much needed fuel to bakeries to assist them in increasing bread production. Bread

shortages have resulted in steep price increases, with people having to pay 40-60 SYP (\$0.5-0.8) per kilo compared to the 15-20 SYP (\$0.2-0.27) cost of subsidized bread which is in short supply.

### **Partners continue to provide critical health services**

Partners are working with Syrians to fill critical gaps in health care. WHO is supporting Al-Birrh charity hospital in Homs to provide free care, including trauma management, medicine and haemodialysis. However, hospital resources are dwindling quickly. WHO has mobilized a twice-weekly mobile clinic to visit 2,500 families who have returned to the Bab Amr area of Homs where it is also supporting the renovation of a health centre. Islamic Relief recently provided over 100 types of disposables for surgeries, first aid centres and intensive care units at 30 hospitals and 60 medical points, while IMC and SARC provided medical consultations to more than 2,400 people in Damascus and Rural Damascus. UNFPA continues to focus on reproductive health and psychosocial support. To date, the Agency has provided equipment enabling reproductive health services for 13,000 women in Ar Raqqa, Damascus, Rural Damascus and Homs governorates. UNFPA has supported about 5,000 cases of emergency obstetric care and a SARC/UNFPA clinic set up in a dormitory hosting 27,000 IDPs in Aleppo has provided 1,600 women with reproductive health clinical services.

### **1.5 million children vaccinated against polio and 1.3 million against measles**

Recent vaccination campaigns (26 November to 20 December) against measles and polio implemented by the Ministry of Health with the support of UNICEF and WHO reached 1.3 million and 1.5 million children under 5, respectively. The campaign covered 13 of Syria's 14 governorates but struggled to reach some conflict-affected areas. Children in the Bab Amr and Asheria areas of Homs were not reached and residents continue to face challenges accessing health care due to non-functioning health centres and security constraints. The campaign did not take place in the Deir-ez-Zor governorate as many people had relocated to other areas. UNICEF and WHO are discussing with the Ministry of Health an additional vaccination week against measles in 2013 which would target children under five who were not reached during this campaign.

### **10,000 people benefit from WASH support**

During the reporting period, UNICEF and its partners, including HELP, supported 10,000 displaced men, women and children in Rural Damascus with access to clean water, site cleaning and sanitation, hygiene kits, blankets and bed sheets. Première Urgence supported the delivery of safe water for over 5,000 people in 21 collective shelters and one mosque in Rural Damascus. During the last month, 5,000 family hygiene kits were distributed to 25,000 people in Homs.

### **Agencies distribute essential items for the winter**

From 8 to 13 January, UNHCR delivered essential non-food items to nearly 59,000 people and began to distribute winter clothes. To date, UNICEF has provided winter supplies, including medical supplies, hygiene kits, food for children, children's clothes, blankets, plastic mats, bed sheets and cooking stoves, to 263,700 vulnerable people in Ar-Raqqa, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hassakeh and Homs.

### **Shelter improvements to benefit over 20,000 IDPs**

During visits to shelters in Aleppo, Damascus, and Hassakeh in the reporting period, UNHCR found that residents face substantial health, protection and education risks. Health problems include an increase in leishmaniasis, hepatitis A, meningitis, lice and scabies among IDPs in Aleppo. Children in Hassakeh require treatment for dysentery, asthma and colds, and the elderly need medicine for chronic diseases. School enrolment varies widely among shelter residents. Between 25 and 80 per cent of children in visited Damascus shelters attend school, versus about 30 per cent in Hassakeh.

School drop-outs are prevalent, particularly in Hassakeh and the Damascus areas of Jaramana and Masaken Barzeh, as families seeking to re-locate due to protection concerns are struggling to find transportation due to poor security. Many shelter residents

have re-located to live with family or friends, often in extremely crowded conditions. These conditions reduce privacy and increase stress, leading to a rise in domestic disturbances. More support is needed both for displaced people and their hosts.

UNHCR is supporting the rehabilitation of 39 shelters housing around 20,000 IDPs in Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus and Hasakeh governorates. Work began during the reporting period, with two shelters already completed. With funding from ECHO, DRC has completed five shelter rehabilitations in Damascus.

### **Third country nationals repatriated by IOM**

IOM has so far assisted in the evacuation of 3,200 stranded migrants from Syria to their country of origin. IOM has identified some 6,800 migrant workers who remain stranded in precarious circumstances and are in need of urgent repatriation assistance. In order to strengthen its emergency repatriation programme as well as continue providing lifesaving emergency aid inside Syria and neighbouring countries, IOM is appealing for an additional \$35.6 million.

### **Community services provide support to people living under strain**

The psychosocial toll of armed conflict is considerable, and a great number of people in Syria require support to cope. During the reporting period, IMC worked with SARC to reach 343 Damascus IDPs with psychosocial support services, SARC psychosocial support mobile teams visited 14 collective centres in Damascus and Rural Damascus, providing psychosocial support and recreational activities to 350 children, and UNFPA provided assistance to 500 women. UNHCR delivered information materials to SARC clinics on marriage procedures, birth registration and legal sanctions against sexual crimes and crimes against individuals.

### **107 school clubs benefit 25,500 children**

UNICEF continues to support school clubs in 107 schools in Rural Damascus, Dara'a, Lattakia and Tartous governorates, offering remedial classes, recreational activities and psycho-social support. During the last two weeks, 13 school clubs in Dara'a and six in Rural Damascus had to be temporarily stopped in preparation for mid-year exams and due to insecurity. However, the remaining 88 school clubs continued functioning, benefiting 20,750 children. UNICEF is also providing support to Première Urgence and DRC to implement school clubs targeting over 5,000 students in Damascus and Rural Damascus.

## **Greater support needed for Syrian refugees and hosts**

### **Growing refugee presence in Jordan strains national resources**

According to UNHCR, Jordan is currently hosting 197,815 Syrian refugees. The Government of Jordan estimates that some 280,000 Syrians are actually living in the country. Given its national budget deficit of \$5 billion, the Government of Jordan urgently needs the international community to adequately resource refugee response operations.

### **Shelter remains biggest challenge as Lebanon hosts over 215,000 Syrians**

UNHCR estimates that 215,112 Syrians are living in Lebanon, where shelter remains the most urgent challenge, in addition to education and health. The Government recently authorized UNHCR to open two transit centres (one in the north and one in Bekaa), each with capacity for 5,000 people. Additional collective centres are needed to address shelter needs. A back-to-school campaign has ensured enrolment of 31,000 students, although issues in language of instruction, capacity, special needs, bullying and non-enrolment remain. Some 22 hospitals have now been contracted to provide health care for Syrians in Lebanon, and referral criteria have been established.

## Hosting more than 155,000 Syrians, Turkey looks to improve camp capacity

The Government of Turkey reports that 156,801 Syrians are living in Turkey. This represents an increase of nearly 50,000 people since early November. All camps are reported to be operating at or above capacity, and expanding this capacity remains the main challenge. Five new camps are under construction by the Turkish authorities: Gazantep Nizip; Şanlıurfa, Harran; Kilis Elbeyli; Osmaniye Düziçi; and Adana. The first two camps are almost completed and the rest are expected to be completed in approximately 1 ½ months.

## High-Level Pledging Conference in Kuwait City offers opportunity to raise much-needed funds

A High-Level Pledging Conference for Syria, to be hosted by the Emir of Kuwait, His Highness Jaber III Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber al-Saba, will take place in Kuwait City on 30 January. This gathering, which will be chaired the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, represents an opportunity for the international community to pledge its support for meeting humanitarian needs resulting from the Syria crisis

Humanitarian partners are seeking \$1.5 billion for humanitarian operations in Syria and the region from January to June 2013 through the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan and the Regional Refugee Response Plan:

- The Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan requires \$519 million for 61 projects in ten sectors (Food; NFIs; Health; WASH; Education; Community Services; Livelihoods; Coordination; Staff Safety and Security; and Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications) in all governorates benefiting 4 million people.
- The Regional Refugee Response Plan requires \$1 billion to provide support to 1.1 million Syrian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In addition to the Syrian refugee population, the plan contains provisions to assist other groups affected by the Syria crisis, particularly third country nationals, refugees and asylum seekers located in Syria and Palestine refugees who have fled Syria to Lebanon.

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