

HIGHLIGHTS

- UN and partners provide assistance despite security challenges.
- Close to 1 million Syrians seek refuge in neighbouring countries and North Africa.
- Half of the Palestine refugee population in Syria may be displaced.
- Funding UN appeals remains crucial to enhance the response.

FIGURES

Population	22 m
Governorates	14
People in need of assistance	4 m
Number of Syrian refugees in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and North Africa	975,337

FUNDING (US\$)

519 million
requested by the UN for activities inside Syria (January-June 2013)

21% funded

1 billion
requested under the regional Refugee Response Plan (January-June 2013)

19% funded



Credit: OCHA/Romenzi

In this issue

[Civilians threatened by spiraling violence](#) P.1

[Diseases increase amid water shortages](#) P.1

[Response efforts continue despite challenges](#) P.2

[Close to 1 million Syrians refugees](#) P.5

Spiralling violence threatens civilians

Estimated conflict death toll near 70,000 as violence continues

The reporting period saw numerous bombings and gun battles, as well as rocket fire and air strikes – mainly in Aleppo and Damascus. Bombings and gun battles took place in Damascus, including mortar fire landing in populated central areas. At least four surface-to-air ballistic missiles were fired at populated areas of Aleppo city and a town in Aleppo governorate, according to human rights observers. About 90 children have reportedly been killed in these attacks in Damascus and Aleppo, prompting UNICEF to condemn these attacks in the strongest terms and calling all parties to ensure that civilians, especially children, are protected at all times from the conflict.

Grave human rights violations may constitute war crimes

Additional allegations of serious human rights violations emerged during the reporting period. In its report issued on 18 February, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic noted that all parties are becoming increasingly reckless with human life, including shelling of civilian areas and indiscriminate rocket fire, and that both sides in the conflict are responsible for human rights violations. The Commission stressed the need to act urgently to ensure justice for the crimes committed and recommended that the Security Council refer these acts to the International Criminal Court for investigation as possible war crimes.

Conflict increasingly impacts on people's access to health, education and basic infrastructure

Water shortages driving outbreaks of water-borne and sanitation-related diseases

Across the country, shortages of fuel and electricity have taken water pumps out of commission. As a result, people lack clean water for drinking and washing, and sewage and waste treatment services are often disrupted. According to UNICEF, per capita water availability in Syria has decreased to one third of pre-crisis levels, from 75 to 25 litres per person per day. These shortages have increased the incidence and risk of water-borne and sanitation-related diseases. According to WHO, 86 new cases of suspected hepatitis A were reported in the second week of February, mostly in Idlib, Rural Damascus and Aleppo. In addition, 111 new cases of leishmaniasis – a skin disease resembling leprosy – were reported (mainly in Aleppo and Hama), and the disease is spreading across Syria. Typhoid cases have also been reported. Displaced populations are at increased risk due to frequently unsanitary living conditions, lack of chlorination and unsafe drinking water.

Food insecurity on the rise

WFP reported that food insecurity has been rising in Syria for several months as the country faces extended shortages in basic commodities and falling domestic production. According to FAO, wheat and barley production has dropped to 2 million tonnes in 2012 from a normal level of 4-5.5 million tonnes per year prior to the crisis, with damages and losses in the agricultural sector amounting to US\$ 1.8 billion. WFP has indicated that insecurity has forced numerous shops to close, hampering their ability to replenish stocks. Milling capacities have likewise dropped sharply, affecting the supply of wheat flour and bread across the country, particularly in Latakia, Idlib and Tartous. Despite movement limitations due to security, WFP was able to continue some monitoring activities and found that internally displaced people living in temporary accommodation shelters struggle to cook their food, a consequence of power cuts and the prohibitive price of cooking gas.

Education services undermined by damaged and occupied schools

According to the Ministry of Education, 1,899 of the country's 22,000 schools are currently used as shelters, and another 2,445 have been damaged. UNICEF reports that in Idlib, 60% of schools have been damaged/destroyed or are being used as shelters, followed by Aleppo (38%), Dara'a (34%), Homs, Hama, Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Quneitra (18-22%). The security situation is found to have particularly affected attendance by girls, and concerns have emerged on quality of education due to shortened hours of schooling for children, overcrowding, double-shifting and lack of materials.

Government estimates \$11 billion in infrastructure damage

After two years of conflict, the Government of Syria estimates that the country is facing \$11 billion in infrastructure damage. As reference, according to the World Bank, Syria Gross Domestic Product in 2010 was \$59.15 billion – this means that the Syrian Government estimates reconstruction costs to be almost 20 per cent of total pre-crisis economic output in the country. Infrastructure damage poses a major challenge for the delivery of basic services to the population.

Over 400,000 Palestine refugees require urgent assistance

UNRWA estimates that over 400,000 Palestine refugees in Syria cannot meet their basic needs and require urgent assistance. As many as half of the 525,000 Palestine refugee population may be displaced. Camps in Damascus and Aleppo are becoming increasingly difficult to access due to conflict in surrounding areas. Four refugee camps in Damascus are largely empty due to nearby conflict, and camps in Dara'a and outside Aleppo are also experiencing large-scale displacement. For example, UNRWA estimates that only 20,000 Palestine refugees remain in Yarmouk camp – once home to 150,000 – and is calling for restored humanitarian access. The majority of displaced refugees have moved to UNRWA camps and facilities in Hama, Homs, Latakia, the Dara'a countryside and safer parts of Damascus. As of February, 32,000 Palestinians had fled to Lebanon, while a further 4,000 have approached UNRWA in Jordan. UNRWA continues to provide assistance, although health centres and schools are frequently closed, and many have sustained damage due to conflict.

Aid activities continue despite major challenges

Major deterioration in security undermines efforts to aid most vulnerable

The rapid deterioration in security within Syria has resulted in a delay of UN missions out of Damascus. UN agencies and partners are working around the clock to develop strategies to deliver assistance while minimizing risk to aid workers who carry out their tasks often in very dangerous circumstances. Since the onset of the crisis two years ago, eight UN staff members and 15 Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) volunteers have lost their life. All efforts must be done to ensure that the safety and security of aid workers are guaranteed in line with International Humanitarian Law.

UNHCR Dara'a convoy reaches city

Following numerous attempts to reach Dara'a, a UNHCR-led mission left for the city on 19 February. The mission was joined by a convoy of nine trucks, eight carrying urgently needed relief items for 3,000 families delivered to SARC in Dara'a. A final truck carried items for 250 families which were delivered to the Syrian Women's Union branch in Dara'a for distribution. In terms of food distribution, WFP dispatched 17,400 family rations to Dara'a, enough to feed 87,000 beneficiaries.

Partners maintain aid to 25,000 in Idlib governorate despite major challenges

UN agencies have finalized plans for a second convoy to Idlib, in the north-western part of Syria, to meet the needs of 25,000 people in the area despite the significant logistics challenges in reaching the governorate. In particular, it remains difficult to find drivers willing to go to certain locations. The Logistics Cluster, supported by WFP and OCHA, is preparing the delivery of critical medicines and non-food items to Aleppo. Supplies are being provided by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Ministry of Health.

Food aid to reach 2.5 million people every month starting in April

During the February food distribution cycle WFP targeted 1.75 million people and about 1.1 million people – or 80 per cent of planned beneficiaries – had been reached by the third week of February in all fourteen governorates. During the reporting period, WFP also re-established the Jordan to Syria supply route, dispatching 374 metric tons of food, bought locally in Jordan, for over 370,000 people for one month via this route. This is the first time that WFP has been able to use this route since late December 2012 as insecurity has posed a risk to safe passage of trucks. Based on rising food insecurity and requests from SARC, WFP is currently scaling up in phases to reach 2.5 million people by April. WFP has also begun working directly with six additional NGOs to help reach the additional caseload. The six NGOs are among the 28 NGOs shortlisted by WFP for potential partnership.

In terms of promoting livelihoods, FAO has reached 1,000 herder families with animal feed packages, over 2,050 farming households with farming inputs, 500 vulnerable rural or peri-urban families with poultry production packages, and female-headed households with pregnant sheep. Over 900 seed packages are currently being distributed in Rural Damascus.

WASH partners target activities to boost water supply and prevent diseases

Partners are actively working to maintain critical WASH support, particularly in light of the rising threats of water-borne diseases. UNICEF increased the water supply by 20 per cent for about 55,000 people in suburban Aleppo, and WASH system rehabilitation projects targeting 365,000 people in Homs Governorate are in the pipeline. Five shelters also received safe water access. Hygiene promotion is a critical part of the reducing the risk of water-borne diseases. UNICEF has distributed over 3,000 family hygiene kits in Dara'a and rural Damascus. To date, Premiere Urgence has distributed hygiene kits for 111,780 individuals in Homs, Hama and Tartous governorates. Following reports of typhoid due to contaminated drinking water, 6 million chlorine tablets are expected to arrive in Syria on 7 March. The WASH sector has also created a taskforce to prevent and manage diarrhoeal disease outbreaks. HELP continues to provide WASH support that, at present, addresses the needs of approximately around 100,000 internally displaced people.

298,300 vulnerable people in different locations reached with essential non-food items

During the reporting period UNHCR provided 76,000 people with essential non-food items, bringing the total number of people assisted in 2013 to some 298,300. Partners have managed to maintain the flow of critical non-food items despite extraordinary challenges, although overall deliveries are about two weeks behind schedule. The delay

is due to a lack of available trucks for convoys and inaccessibility of main UNHCR warehouse in Adra Umelya due to intense fighting over last three weeks. To mitigate the impact of the Adra warehouse, UNHCR is building a Rub Hall storage tent in a different Damascus neighbourhood as a contingency measure and may rely on WFP warehouses as needed. UNICEF has delivered essential non-food items to 431,315 beneficiaries. To date, Premiere Urgence has distributed hygiene and winterization kits to 10,330 people in Homs and Tartous bringing to more than 33,000 the number of people who received non-food items since the beginning of the project in October 2012.

As part of the UNHCR cash distribution programme, UNHCR has been delivering cash assistance to vulnerable Syrian families from Damascus. During the reporting period, 449 families benefited from the assistance bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 35,990 individuals who have been provided with assistance to the value of 84,922,000 Syrian Pounds (\$1,201,679). UNHCR is currently drafting plans to extend this cash distribution programme to Homs.

UNHCR also continued providing shelter, cash and non-food items assistance to almost 3,000 Palestinian refugees who came from Iraq (referred to as Palestinians ex Iraq). The majority of them live in Damascus although some reside in Latakia, Dara'a, Aleppo and Al Hol camp in Hassakeh.

Psychosocial support to children caught in conflict

UNICEF continues to provide psychosocial support to over 32,000 children in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs and Aleppo, including insecure locations. UNICEF is also supporting school clubs in 177 schools, with some 50,000 children participating (33.8 per cent of target). UNHCR has also sponsored recreational activities for 1,325 children. In addition, about 83,700 children have received essential school supplies from UNICEF.

Partners are also working to ensure that students have access to an appropriate and high-quality education. In Homs, 4,600 children and adolescents are taking remedial classes in 14 shelters; and 43 school-in-a-box kits were distributed in Homs city. UNHCR, working with GOPA, a national partner, is supporting remedial classes for some 240 Syrian and Iraqi students.

Mobile health teams to nearly double

Mobile teams reached 3,252 children in twelve governorates during the reporting period, providing medical check-ups. Since the beginning of 2013, UNICEF and a local partner established mobile teams that have reached 9,639 children (total 2013 target: 180,000 IDP children). With 28 mobile teams currently operating, UNICEF is expanding these teams to 50. In addition, 19,200 doses of PlumpDoz were distributed to IDP shelters in Homs. Meanwhile, WHO has provided: the Directorate of Health in Aleppo with medical supplies for 200 surgical interventions, two ventilators, three defibrillators and four reproductive health kits to treat 40,000 people for three months. WHO also provided the Jesuit Refugee Service organization in Aleppo with medical supplies for 1,100 surgical interventions.

UNFPA- supported 14 mobile teams were able to reach out 3,400 women with reproductive health services. Furthermore, 5 static clinics and an emergency obstetric hospital supported by UNFPA provided reproductive health services and emergency obstetric care to around 2,500 women of reproductive age.

Partners to rehabilitate over 250 shelters by June

UNHCR and the Ministry of Local Administration have finalized plans to work with humanitarian partners in the rehabilitation of 171 shelters across Syria by June. Work is expected to begin shortly. 58,896 IDPs (10,689 households) will benefit from this initiative. UNDP will partner with local NGOs in Raqaa to rehabilitate 300 (privately owned) community shelters housing 500 families. UNDP has also started programmes aimed at providing humanitarian assistance and restoring the disrupted livelihoods of the affected population, targeting 300,000 individuals.

During the reporting period, Premiere Urgence completed the rehabilitation of 6 communal shelters in Damascus and Al Ghuzlanieh (Rural Damascus) which had begun in 2012.

Community services offer some support for conflict-affected Syrians

UNHCR coordinated a variety of community services during the reporting period, intended to enhance the protection of civilians and foster greater independence among conflict-affected Syrians. Highlights include:

- Recreational activities for 1,325 children and vocational training for 30 women
- Outreach to some 275 people on psychosocial issues, reproductive health, sexual abuse and other topics
- Community donations of food, cash and clothing for some 85 families
- Legal counselling on documentation for 39 IDPs and at three shelters
- NFI distributions to women and children in a private shelter and to an elderly home in Dar al Safa
- DRC reached 1,970 people with skills development programmes in community centres, social and health counselling and protection and legal counselling

Services to Palestine refugees reduced amid violence

UNRWA is focused on meeting the immediate food and material needs of displaced Palestine refugees. Over 11,100 individuals are currently accommodated in 20 UNRWA facilities and 9 non-UNRWA facilities across Syria, receiving food and non-food items assistance from UNRWA. In addition, 60,088 families have received cash assistance from UNRWA in response to the humanitarian situation. UNRWA continues to operate its 23 primary healthcare centres across Syria, with security forcing the current closure of eight centres, and substantially reduced working hours for another seven health centres. On 24 February 2013, 50 of 118 UNRWA schools were open, and 24,592 elementary and primary students attended classes (36.5% of total student population). The Education Department successfully negotiated the use of an additional 19 government schools in Damascus.

More Syrians fleeing to neighbouring countries

Refugees likely to hit the 1.1 million within a month – dramatically ahead projections

The refugee crisis is accelerating at a staggering pace with the total number of Syrians having reached 975,337 – more than 220,000 during the month of February alone. Since early January, more than 40,000 people have fled Syria on a weekly basis. In four refugee-hosting countries – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon - the number of Syrian refugees has exceeded the UNHCR estimates for the January-June 2013 period. Initial UNHCR estimates had projected that 1.1 million Syrians would be refugees by June 2013 but at current rates, this figure could be reached by March 2013.

Noting the generous support provided by refugee-hosting countries in keeping the border open to people fleeing violence in Syria, on 27 February, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, stressed the need to reinforce international solidarity in support of these countries, stating that “helping them deal with the consequences of the refugee crisis is imperative, as the preservation of their economic and social stability is in everyone’s essential interest”.

Country	Refugees registered and/or assisted	Estimated number of refugees by June 2013
Egypt	32,405	30,000
Iraq	105,326	90,000
Jordan	316,863	300,000
Lebanon	327,896	300,000
Turkey	184,585	380,000
North Africa	8,262	N/A
Total	975,337	1,100,000

Source: UNHCR as of 4 March 2013. Refugee figures are based on estimates and thus may vary. For updated figures, visit <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees>.

*Figure provided by the Government of Turkey.

In addition to the above figures, around 28,000 Syrians have fled to various European countries.

Refugee crisis in Jordan worsens; February is the month with the biggest arrival figures

In Jordan, to date more than 316,000 Syrian refugees have been registered by UNHCR or are awaiting registration. The Government of Jordan estimates the total number of refugees to be higher, at approximately 420,000. February 2013 represents the month with the highest number of arrivals (over 75,000) with the pace of arrival clearly outpacing the registration machinery - some 53,000 refugees are currently awaiting registration - with an average of 2,133 people entering Jordan each day.

In order to strengthen its registration capacity, on 10 February UNHCR has opened a registration centre in Irbid which is processing some 700 refugees a day, in addition to the daily rate of around 1,000 people processed at the registration centre in Amman. As a result of these efforts, the waiting times for registration have been reduced to two and a half months.

327,000 refugees hosted in Lebanon

327,000 Syrian refugees are hosted in Lebanon, an increase of about 40,000 in the last two weeks alone. About 37 per cent of the total number of refugees are awaiting registration. In order to speed up registration, a new UNHCR operational centre has been opened in Zahle. As a result of these efforts, over 2,000 more refugees were registered in February than in the previous month.

In order to enhance refugee protection, a campaign was implemented targeting Syrian refugees to ensure that they register the birth of their children so as to allow their Syrian nationality to be recognized and prevent statelessness in Lebanon. In support of children's education, UNICEF, UNHCR, Amel Association, Save the Children and Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre implemented the back to school programme which brought the total number of Syrian refugee children registered in Lebanese public schools to 25,700 in February, up from 24,000 during the previous month.

Nearly 185,000 refugees hosted in 17 camps in Turkey

The number of Syrian refugees hosted in 17 camps in Turkey (in the provinces of Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, K. Maras, Hatay, Kilis, Adiyaman, Osmaniye, and Adana) has now reached almost 185,000 – about 20 per cent more than the beginning of this year. According to the Government of Turkey, there are an additional 100,000 Syrians who live outside camps in various provinces, mainly in Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay and Sanliurfa. Syrians who do not live in camps are registered in coordination centres in Gaziantep and Kilis co-managed by Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and the governorates.

105,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq

More than 105,000 Syrian refugees are now registered or assisted in Iraq, with 800 new Syrians arriving each day. More than 67,000 are staying in Duhok governorate, in Iraq's Kurdish region, where approximately 54,000 refugees are sheltered at the Domiz camp. Another 8,500 refugees are staying at the Al-Qaim camp in Anbar governorate. The Al

Qa'im border remains closed except for family reunification, limited to spouses with a maximum number of three cases per day, and for Syrians in need of medical attention who receive basic health services at the health unit established at the border.

The majority of the new arrivals in Iraq originate from Hassakeh governorate with others arriving from Aleppo and Damascus governorates. Those from Hassakeh governorate report the lack of economic opportunities and basic services as the main reasons why they fled Syria whereas those fleeing from Damascus cite the ongoing violence and fear for their lives as determining why they left their country.

Egypt hosts 32,000 Syrian refugees

The number of Syrian refugees in Egypt continues to rise from 13,000 at the beginning of January 2013 to more than 32,000 today. Syrian refugees are mostly hosted by local communities in Alexandria, Greater Cairo, Damietta, Mansoura, Hurghada, Suez and Ismaila. Among them, a high prevalence of chronic illnesses, rehabilitative and mental healthcare needs have been identified.

Resettlement of refugees residing in Syria and repatriation of third country nationals

IOM continues implementing its programme to facilitate departures of refugees residing in Syria to resettlement countries in coordination with UNHCR. On 27 February, it organised transportation for 34 refugees from Damascus who transited through Lebanon before departing for re-settlement destinations in the United States. IOM also assisted 95 refugees from Syria (Iraqis and third country nationals) approved for resettlement in Canada and the United States and is now finalizing travel arrangements to facilitate resettlement departures for 924 refugees residing in Syria to third countries, primarily the United States, Canada and Australia.

IOM also continues to assist in third country nationals wishing to leave Syria to return home. During the reporting period, it has completed the screening and registration of 56 vulnerable migrants from Sudan (54) and Chile (2) which will be evacuated from Syria. To date, IOM has assisted 3,330 stranded migrants to return to their country of origin. A total of 7,040 stranded migrants have requested evacuation assistance from IOM.

From 4 to 22 February 2013, FAO organized a mission to assess the impact of the Syrian crisis on the neighboring countries, with a focus on agricultural livelihoods and food security. The mission developed a Response Plan addressing the immediate and mid-term agricultural livelihoods and food security needs of refugees and the affected host communities.

Aid efforts urgently need adequate resources

Funding update of SHARP and RRP

The \$519 million Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan and the \$1 billion regional Refugee Response Plan focus on life saving and emergency interventions to assist 4 million people in Syria and 1.1 million refugees in Syria's neighbouring countries during the January-June 2013 period. As of 4 March, they are only, respectively, 21 and 19 per cent funded. Adequate funding of the plans remains crucial for the implementation of an effective and efficient response.

46 projects receive ERF funds; 22 proposals under consideration

The Syria Emergency Response Plan (ERF) has received a total of US\$ 36.5 million contributions for the implementation of projects related to the Syria crisis. Of these contributions, to date, the ERF has allocated \$12.5 million to 46 projects – 63.5 per cent of the allocated funds are for activities in Syria, 20 per cent for activities in Lebanon, 12.5 per cent in Jordan, and 4 per cent in Iraq. 22 proposals are currently under consideration with a combined value of US\$6.5 million. A growing amount of ERF resources are being utilized to expand humanitarian access and invested in previously unreachable areas.

\$1.3 billion of the pledges made at the Kuwait conference still to be disbursed

At the Kuwait High-Level Pledging Conference for Syria hosted by the Emir of Kuwait on 30 January 2013 and chaired by the UN Secretary-General, donors generously pledged over \$1.5 billion to provide humanitarian assistance to Syrians in need. As of 4 March, about \$200 million of the pledges made have been committed, including over \$150 million for the SHARP (\$41.7 million), the RRP (\$100.8 million) and the Emergency relief Fund (\$8.9 million). The prompt commitment and disbursement of pledges made in Kuwait is necessary to ensure aid agencies can step up the response for meeting the ever growing needs.

Syria Humanitarian Forum holds seventh session

Some 400 representatives of UN Member States, agencies and NGOs attended the seventh Syria Humanitarian Forum in Geneva on 19 February chaired by Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos and hosted by the Swiss Government. The Forum condemned the escalating violence and human suffering in Syria and emphasized the urgent need to find a political solution to end the conflict and stop the bloodshed. Participants expressed their appreciation for the generous support provided by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey in supporting refugees from Syria and called for better burden-sharing with refugee hosting countries. Participants also urged donors to quickly fund commitments made at the 30 January Kuwait conference. A joint statement was presented by Belgium and supported by 49 Member States, including 27 European Union members, calling on all parties to the conflict to protect, medical personnel, facilities and transport and facilitate humanitarian access throughout the country in line with their International Humanitarian Law obligations.

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