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HIGHLIGHTS

- Agencies scale up response during July.
- Two million Syrians are affected by the conflict, including 1 million internally displaced people.
- More than 130,000 refugees have registered in neighbouring countries.
- Response plan to be reviewed to reflect increasing needs.
- To cover current and growing needs, the UN appeals to donors to increase funding.

FIGURES

Number of governorates	14
Total population	22.5 m (July est.)

FUNDING (US\$)

180 million
requested by the UN for activities inside Syria (US\$)

60 million (36%)
received for UN activities inside Syria

193 million
requested under the Regional Refugee Response Plan (US\$)

64 million (33%)
received for the Regional Refugee Response Plan

UN agencies deliver amid escalating violence

Scaling up essential assistance to people in need

Humanitarian agencies are gearing up the response. Since 1 July to date, WFP has delivered food rations covering more than 730,000 people. Distributions have been delayed, but will continue in August, with WFP targeting 850,000 people. From last month, the number of people reached through the provision of non-food items has increased from 135,000 to 220,000 people. Emergency health kits have been distributed to affected areas, with the capacity to assist 100,000 people.

UNHCR's non-food assistance has reached 80,000 beneficiaries this year, with 30,000 people reached over the last month. UNICEF has increased distribution of non-food items, reaching more than 52,000 beneficiaries in July. In addition, agencies are working to increase coverage in the water and sanitation sector. Over the last weeks, ICRC has assisted 17,000 people in this sector.

In close cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and 40 local organizations, humanitarian agencies continue to increase the assistance within Syria despite the security challenges on the ground. To strengthen capacity, UN agencies are offering technical, logistical and material support to local organizations. The UN presence in Syria is maintained through 11 agencies and seven offices, located in Damascus, Hassakeh, Ar Raqqa, Aleppo, Deir Ezzor, Dera'a, Lattakia and Tartous. In addition to 36 international staff, almost 1,000 national staff are employed by the UN. Moreover, UNRWA employs more than 3,600 local staff.

OCHA emergency funding allocation supports ongoing efforts

As the response plan remains underfunded, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, recently announced the allocation of US\$10 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). This allocation will enable UN agencies to immediately boost assistance levels, targeting 1.5 million people with food assistance, water, sanitation, emergency health services and essential items.

However, the allocation will not bridge the gap between existing needs and available resources. The current lack of funding leaves agencies unable to meet basic needs. There are no funds available to implement projects in key sectors, such as health, water and sanitation. Priority projects to secure access to emergency health services, potable water and essential items remain on hold.

Rising needs

Displacement in Damascus and Rural Damascus continues

The need for humanitarian assistance increases and deepens in step with the escalation of violence. An estimated 2 million Syrians have been affected by the crisis. About 1 million of these people have been internally displaced. Clashes in Damascus and Rural Damascus caused new waves of displacement, with some people forced to flee for the second or third time. For example, people who had previously left other affected areas, such as Darayya, Jdeidet Artouz, Mezzeh Basateen and Kisweh, were reported to be among the estimated 50,000 to 70,000 people who fled Mouadamiyeh in Rural Damascus.

Fighting has subsided in Damascus and Rural Damascus, but large numbers of internally displaced remain in schools and other public buildings. SARC has identified 70 sites in Damascus and 140 sites in Rural Damascus that internally displaced people are using as shelters. UNHCR is continually verifying the number of collective shelters and establishing the most pressing needs.

Thousands of people flee Aleppo violence

Reports from Aleppo indicate that thousands of people have been displaced. This includes people displaced from the city, as well as people who had previously sought shelter in Aleppo, fleeing from rural Aleppo or other governorates, especially Deir Ezzor and Homs. According to UNHCR, more than 15,000 people have taken shelter in 32 schools and university dormitories in the area. Others remain trapped in parts of Aleppo. They are subjected to ongoing violence, with limited access to food, water and medical care.

Schools offer refuge across the country

Military activity and displacement also continue in other areas of the country, including Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, Idlib, Homs, Hama, Dera'a and Jebel Akrad in Lattakia. A nation-wide survey has identified 330 public schools that are hosting internally displaced people. The figures, released by the Syrian Ministry of Education, show that people are staying in schools in 12 out of 14 governorates. No schools are reported to serve as collective shelters in Lattakia and Tartous. UNRWA has opened 18 of its 60 school locations to the internally displaced, providing shelter to about 8,000 people.

Refugee communities increasingly affected

One quarter of remaining Iraqi refugees leave over 10-day period

Clashes in the suburb of Sayyeda Zeinab, home to thousands of mainly Shiite Iraqi refugees, have prompted many to leave the country. Although the fighting has now subsided, UNHCR reports that more than 20,000 Iraqi refugees returned to Iraq between 21 and 31 July. This represents about one-quarter of the Iraqi refugee community in Syria.

Based on a rapid assessment by UNHCR, needs include proper documentation, food, shelter, and access to health care and basic items. IOM field teams continue to locate and identify Iraqi returnees, providing support in the process of registration with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement.

In Syria, UNHCR continues to offer assistance to remaining Iraqi refugees, including refugee hotlines and individual counselling services. In some cases, UNHCR also offers logistical assistance to refugees who wish to return to Iraq.

Palestine refugees host displaced Syrians

Developments over recent weeks have led to an increase in the number of Palestine refugees affected by the conflict. Out of a community of 500,000, UNRWA estimates that about 225,000 Palestine refugees need assistance. Refugees in Dera'a, Damascus and Aleppo have been particularly affected by the violence.

Clashes in Damascus prompted thousands of Syrians to seek shelter among the Palestine refugee community. Many Syrians displaced from conflict areas have concentrated in the Palestine refugee camp of Yarmouk, south of Damascus, which is home to 150,000 refugees in addition to a large number of Syrians.

UNRWA reports that the displaced people need cash assistance, medicines, and mother-child health services. The agency has so far administered the 18 UNRWA schools hosting internally displaced people, determining their needs, and coordinating assistance with other humanitarian partners, including UN agencies, SARC, and international NGOs.

Food insecurity set to intensify

Drought and instability leave 3 million people at risk

The Syrian agricultural sector is in decline, due to consecutive years of drought and the impact of 16 months of violence. Critical inputs, such as fertilizer, are no longer available, or only accessible at high investment costs. Furthermore, harvests have been disrupted as seasonal workers have found travel to agricultural districts, such as Aleppo, Ar Raqq and Hassakeh, too risky or simply impossible. As a consequence, about 3 million Syrians are at risk of food insecurity, according to a Joint Rapid Food Security Needs Assessment carried out by FAO, WFP, and the Syrian Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. The assessment was undertaken in June 2012 and published on 2 August. It revealed that strategic crops in a historically largely self-sufficient and export-earning sector are particularly affected.

Vulnerable groups faced with limited alternatives

The downturn in agricultural output and earnings exacerbates already existing vulnerabilities among the rural population. Prior to the onset of conflict in March 2011, more than 60 per cent of the rural population reportedly lived below the poverty line. The loss of employment opportunities and income leaves the rural poor with few options to ensure access to basic needs. This is especially the case for female-headed households, where resources are often limited, and for whom alternative employment or income generation are generally less available. According to the assessment, the livelihoods of such vulnerable groups could collapse within months unless urgent assistance is provided.

Rising needs warrant scaled-up response

Almost 800,000 receive food assistance

Price hikes, shortages and displacement impede access to food among Syrians. During the month of July, more than 800,000 people have received food assistance from WFP and ICRC. Food assistance is provided to people living in areas affected by the violence, including people located in or near areas subject to armed conflict, internally displaced, host families, and poor people in urban and rural areas.

Since 1 July, WFP has dispatched food rations covering more than 730,000 people. Assistance has been provided to internally displaced people across the country, including in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Homs.

WFP distribution has been delayed due to security constraints and developments on the ground. Rations have changed due to increased displacement to urban areas. Ready-made meals have replaced regular food rations due to shortages of cooking gas in some locations. The agency continues to distribute food under the July food-assistance cycle, targeting 850,000 people.

Over the last week, the ICRC arranged for the delivery, through SARC, of food assistance to 52,000 people. Rations targeted affected people in Damascus, Homs, Hama and Rural Damascus. Additional items have been included in the food parcels to mark the holy month of Ramadan.

UNHCR and UNICEF increase distribution of non-food items

UNHCR continues to provide tens of thousands of internally displaced with non-food items. Since January 2012, the agency has provided assistance to an estimated 80,000 people, chiefly internally displaced people. In July, assistance was delivered to 30,000 people, 20,000 of whom were reached over the last two weeks. Among other items, 19,000 mattresses, 8,400 blankets and 4,500 hygiene kits were provided. Responding to urgent needs for non-food items in Aleppo, more than 9,000 mattresses and 18,000 blankets have been dispatched to SARC for further distribution, covering 15,000 people. UNHCR has also prepositioned non-food items in Aleppo, including 9,000 mattresses, 18,000 blankets and 3,000 hygiene kits.

UNICEF and partners have also scaled up delivery of non-food items. During July, UNICEF reached about 52,000 people, an increase from 12,500 in June. Assistance particularly targeted displaced families in Damascus and Rural Damascus, and consisted of hygiene kits, children's clothes, education bags and baby kits. Nearly 80 per cent of beneficiaries were children.

Water and sanitation efforts focus on schools

Schools are generally not equipped to receive displaced people, especially in terms of water and sanitation facilities. ICRC has supported SARC in installing water tanks, pipes and showers. Repair works have also been carried out in 10

UNICEF response Non-food items	
Month	Beneficiaries - Non-food items
July	52,100
June	12,500
May	39,825
April	3,328
March	5,967

schools accommodating 2,000 displaced people. ICRC has sent water and sanitation technicians to 12 schools in Damascus and Rural Damascus that currently host more than 5,000 people. In two locations in Rural Damascus, new water tanks have been installed, targeting 10,000 displaced people and the communities hosting them. UNICEF, in cooperation with Premiere Urgence, is providing water trucking. This amounts to 50,000 litres per day to 10 schools in the Damascus area, serving an estimated 5,000 people.

Regional refugee numbers have more than tripled

Refugee flow to neighbouring countries continues unabated

Over the last two weeks, more than 10,000 new refugees have registered with UNHCR. From April to August, the overall number of refugees has more than tripled, with marked increases in Jordan and Iraq. Refugee patterns tend to vary according to military activities on the ground and prevailing border arrangements.

Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries (registered or awaiting registration)			
	1 April 2012	19 July 2012	2 August 2012
JORDAN	7,000	36,450	40,146*
LEBANON	12,900	32,486	35,364
TURKEY	16,500	42,682	44,038
IRAQ	2,240	8,000	12,404
Total	40,000	119,618	131,952

Source: UNHCR. Figures are based on estimates and thus may vary.

* Some 50,000 Syrians have been identified by local organizations as in need of assistance, some of whom have been registered with UNHCR. According to the Government of Jordan, there are more than 150,000 Syrians in the country.

Refugee registration peaks in Jordan

Sustained violence in Dera'a, Homs and Damascus has resulted in an influx of refugees to Jordan, which currently hosts more than 40,000 Syrian refugees. July saw the highest number of registrations by UNHCR in Jordan since the onset of the conflict. Clashes in border areas and curbs on refugees' freedom of movement once in Jordan have since led to a decline in numbers.

To cope with the growing refugee population, Jordan's first official camp at Za'atari is now operational. With the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), some 500 refugees are transferred from transit centres to the camp on a daily basis. From a current refugee population of 1,600, the number is expected to grow rapidly. At full capacity, Za'atari can host up to 130,000 refugees.

The opening of Za'atari signals the phasing out and subsequent discontinuation of the system that allowed Syrian refugees to leave transit facilities with financial guarantees made by Jordanian nationals (the so-called "bail-out"). Upon transfer to the camp, the movement of refugees will be limited. The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization takes overall responsibility for camp management. WFP will

provide food assistance. UNICEF has commenced activities for children, and IOM has established a clinic through funds received from a CERF allocation.

Stable refugee flows to Lebanon

An estimated 18,000 Syrians crossed into Lebanon between 18 and 20 July. The number of people crossing has since declined and stabilized at what appears to be a continuous flow of people moving back and forth between the two countries. An estimated 1,500 newcomers have settled in the Beka'a valley and are likely to register for assistance. However, the majority of new arrivals appear to draw on established networks in the Beirut area and are unlikely to require assistance. To assist Syrian refugees in the north and the Beka'a valley, WFP is providing direct food assistance to 24,000 people. An additional 6,000 people receive value-based food vouchers.

Upsurge of refugees highlights need for coordinated response in Iraq

In Iraq, crossings are now open at Al Waleed, Rabi'aa and Al Qa'im. The border with Syria officially reopened on 23 July. Since then, more than 4,500 refugees have arrived in the country, bringing the number of refugees to more than 12,000. According to UNHCR, the majority of recent arrivals have fled the violence in Damascus, Aleppo and Hassakeh Provinces. To date, IOM has distributed non-food items to more than 3,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq. UNHCR continues to distribute non-food items to refugees at Al Qa'im crossing.

Turkish absorption mechanisms under stress

Turkey's closure of its borders to commercial traffic has not affected access for refugees. However, many of the recent arrivals have fled from Aleppo, reporting difficulties en route, including snipers and roadblocks. Almost 45,000 refugees are now in the country. Official figures provided by the Government of Turkey suggest that the total camp population has increased by nearly 80 per cent over the last two months. This has put the current hosting capacity under stress, with refugees staying at seven camp facilities in the border Provinces of Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis and Ceylanpinar. It has also prompted preparations to open additional sites to accommodate 20,000 people. Food assistance and health services continue to be provided by the Turkish authorities. UNHCR is providing core relief items for emergency shelter.

Syrians seek refuge in Algeria, asylum in Europe

Syrians escaping the conflict are increasingly seeking shelter beyond the region. On 30 July, sources close to the Algerian Ministry of Interior estimated that 12,000 Syrians have entered the country, with other estimates as high as 25,000. Some of the Syrians are staying in parks and public buildings, according to UNHCR. The agency expects that existing needs for assistance go beyond the 70 people who have approached the UNHCR office in Algiers. To handle the influx, the Algerian authorities are considering the use of schools that are closed for the summer break.

In Europe the number of Syrian asylum seekers has markedly increased. As of 20 July, about 12,000 Syrian asylum applications have been submitted for review in European countries, according to UNHCR. The total of 8,920 Syrian applications during 2011 has thus been surpassed mid-year. Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, confirms the trend, reporting that an

average of 1,000 Syrian asylum seekers have arrived in Europe per month so far this year.

Coordination

The humanitarian response and current priorities are continuously assessed through the UN Country Team. The response plan is now under revision. The revised response plan is expected to adjust the number of people needing assistance inside Syria to 2.5 million.

Contingency plans are under review to reflect increasing needs. On 26 July, UNHCR hosted a regional contingency planning meeting with UN and NGO humanitarian partners. They reviewed the emergency response capacity and existing plans for Syrian refugees in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Under the revised refugee contingency plan, UNHCR will be prepared to respond to the needs of up to 350,000 refugees.

Close coordination with the donor community is ongoing. Monthly meetings are hosted by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator and the Regional Refugees Coordinator in Damascus, Amman, Geneva and New York.

Funding

Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan

The Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan remains only 36 per cent funded. This is despite growing and deepening humanitarian needs among the Syrian people, as well as expanded capacity among UN agencies and their partner organisations.

180 million
requested (US\$)

36 %
funded

Regional Refugee Response Plan

The increasing number of Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq is putting host authorities under considerable strain. To date, only 33 per cent of funds required to meet refugees' needs have been received.

193 million
requested (US\$)

33%
funded

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